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Science

Representing SlutWalk London in Mass and Social Media: Negotiating Feminist and Postfeminist Sensibilities

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Declaration

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Epigraphs

It has been a hostile climate for feminism: it didn't thrive, but it didn't die; it survives, it is nowhere and everywhere – and the phoenix is flying again. (Campbell, 2013, p. 4)

As Prometheus stole fire from the gods, so feminists will have to steal the power of naming from men, hopefully to better effect. (Dworkin, 1981, p. 17)

Abstract

When SlutWalk marched onto the protest scene, with its focus on ending victim blaming and slut shaming, it carried the promise of a renewed feminist politics. Focusing on SlutWalk London, this study examines representations and self-representations of the protest in British national newspapers, blogs and Tumblr posts to explore how this promise has been negotiated in the contemporary media space. Building on the notion that contemporary media culture is characterised by a postfeminist sensibility, this study asks: how and to what extent is SlutWalk London represented as a feminist intervention in this culture? In particular, how do representations of the protest, by the media and by activists themselves, reproduce or challenge a postfeminist sensibility? Following Rosalind Gill, the thesis conceptualises the elements of postfeminist sensibility as: choice; individualism and empowerment; natural difference; irony and knowingness; and a view of feminism as *passé* or 'done wrong'. The elements of feminist sensibility are conceptualised as: equality; solidarity and politicisation; intersectionality; anger and hope; and a view of feminism as current and relevant.

To explore representations and self-representations of SlutWalk, texts and images from newspapers and social media platforms, as well as interviews with organisers and participants, are analysed using content, discourse and thematic analyses. The findings reveal that protestors' self-representations (on social media and in interviews) are characterised more consistently by a feminist sensibility, while newspaper representations of protestors and of the SlutWalk protest display a more mixed picture of both postfeminist and feminist sensibilities. This indicates a process of negotiation between feminist and postfeminist sensibilities in social and mass media, and suggests that, while contemporary media culture maintains an overall postfeminist sensibility, SlutWalk is nevertheless represented in some spaces by a feminist sensibility. In particular, news items are characterised more consistently by a feminist sensibility, which marks a significant achievement; however, columns (especially by female, feminist authors) show a more postfeminist sensibility. This discrepancy highlights some surprising barriers facing feminist protestors seeking to intervene in the postfeminist media culture and fulfil their feminist promise.

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Chapter 1: The Journey and a Roadmap – An Introduction

The Journey So Far

My relationship with feminism in many ways reflects the changes that feminism has undergone over the past four decades. Growing up in the 1970s and 80s, first in England and then in Israel, I absolutely believed that I was equal to boys, deserved to be treated with respect and could achieve whatever I set my mind to. I chafed against female subordination and segregation in my Orthodox-Jewish education and insisted on serving my time fully in the Israeli Defence Forces, rather than signing a waiver that would exempt me on religious grounds because of my gender. As an officer in the early 1990s, I found my military service both empowering and eye-opening. In my role as welfare and women's officer, I represented the personal needs of all soldiers, as well as the particular needs of the women on the base, and was often the only female at the decision-making table. This was empowering especially in situations in which I came up against irony and sexism from male colleagues and won, and also instructive in the ways of the world. Once at university I discovered feminist theory and a framework within which to place my experiences, emotions and ambitions. And then came the world of work.

As a graduate with a double major in journalism/communications and English literature, I was keen to embark on a career in journalism and to help change the world for the better. After a year spent working for an independent production company researching a TV documentary, coordinating the post-production of a feature film and writing freelance for a local newspaper, I landed a job as researcher and assistant producer on a daily, live current affairs programme. I loved it. It was exciting, interesting and at the cutting edge of political television. I was also part of an almost all-female team, led by two female editors and two female producers. We did not really discuss gender or feminism, but equality and cooperation were the norm.

Then in 1998 I moved to London, hoping to get a job at the BBC. While that job was not forthcoming, I did secure a post as a spokesperson for a British government

department. Here I quickly rose through the ranks, but also noticed a variety of tensions that I had not previously encountered. Discussions about female politicians' and colleagues' ages, clothing, child-bearing and rearing were conducted around me in ways that made me question my own position. I began to wonder about how best to combine work with the possibility of becoming a mother. I noticed that some senior female figures did not have children, and that those who did either hardly saw them or seemed to find balancing work and life very stressful. It began to dawn on me that maybe it had all been a lie that we could 'have it all'. Looking back, I can also see that I pushed feminism aside in my drive to progress my career and fulfil my potential. I was an example of what McRobbie refers to as "the new female subject", who "despite her freedom, [is] called upon to be silent, to withhold critique in order to count as a modern sophisticated girl" (2009, p. 18). However, this silence was not entirely comfortable for me and I sought emotional solace and professional support within a small group of like-minded female colleagues.

By 2002 I was a graduate student of communications in Chicago, where I met two equally inspirational mentors, Kathy Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Bronstein, who nurtured and supported me through my Master's degree and encouraged me to consider applying to a PhD programme. However, I became a mother toward the end of my studies and upon our return to London I found it easier, in this new role, to return to my previous job rather than embark on a new and demanding career in academia. It was this period as a working mother that put me squarely back in touch with my feminism. The struggles and pressures I encountered during my children's early years, which seemed to me to be a particularly female experience, made me question the notion of a work-life balance. I recall Carolyn Bronstein telling me that this 'balance' was an illusion and that it was time we recognised that in fact we were facing a 'work-life compromise'. I came to realise that when I was led to believe that I could 'have it all', what was meant was that if I made personal sacrifices that were not required equally of men maybe I could do well in my career while also raising children; that society was doing its bit by letting me have that choice, and that the rest was up to me. Increasing frustration with my work-life compromise, as well as a change in government in 2010, which led to a 40% headcount reduction, created the opportunity for me to (re)consider an academic path.

In my application to the PhD programme, I proposed a research project that would look at politicians' use of mumsnet, an online forum for mothers in the UK, the ways in which this worked and failed to work for them, and why. However, once in the research environment, I found that I no longer wanted to deal with government/politicians' communications and was instead much more interested in the ways in which marginalised groups were utilising new online tools such as Facebook and Twitter. This was 2011. The Arab Spring and the phone hacking scandal were unfolding as I made my application, and the Occupy movement was launched as I prepared to begin my PhD studies. These felt like very exciting times for someone with a career-long interest in politics, media and communications. I wondered what the changes in the media landscape might mean for feminism and feminists. Would the mass media and other "powers that be" (Castells, 2007, p. 285) be open to hearing the demands of feminists? And then along came SlutWalk, which I saw as a potential case study through which to explore whether we can in fact talk about 'Facebook revolutions', as was common around that time, or whether these apparent surges in 'people power' were perhaps dependent on who the 'people' were, what 'power' they were seeking and from whom.

SlutWalk

SlutWalk marched onto the scene in response to comments made by a policeman in January 2011 to a group of female students at Toronto's York University, in which he advised them to "not dress like sluts" if they wanted to avoid sexual assault. Outraged by the slut shaming and victim blaming inherent in these comments, a group of women organised the first SlutWalk protest for April 2011 in Toronto (SlutWalk, 2012a). They used email, Facebook and Twitter to organise, and blogs and Tumblr to debate and discuss. Before long, the mainstream media took an interest, which helped to mobilise protestors as well to as stoke debate about the protest. Organisers expected a turnout in the low hundreds, but in fact over 3,000 took to Toronto's streets to protest against slut shaming and victim blaming. Within a month of the first SlutWalk, and inspired by it, women organised sister marches in cities across the globe. The name SlutWalk was adopted for the first protest because 'slut' is the word

used by that policeman in Toronto (Reger, 2014). It was picked up by SlutWalk organisers across the globe, with some in non-English-speaking countries adopting the name in translation (Han, 2016). Focusing on SlutWalk London 2011, this study examines representations and self-representations of the protest in British national newspapers, blogs and Tumblr posts to explore how SlutWalk has been depicted in the contemporary media space.

While all SlutWalks share the aim of ending slut shaming and victim blaming, each local protest has had its own organising group and mission statement. The London statement reads as follows:

The only way to stop rape is to put the blame where it belongs – on the rapist, whether they were a stranger, partner, client, relative, colleague, friend, or someone in authority. This is the duty of the police and courts, but instead of protecting us they are denying survivors of rape justice and allowing rapists to continue. Women searching for justice and safety from their attackers are faced with biased police, Crown Prosecution Service and judges who question what women did to deserve or provoke rape, our sexual or medical history, our occupation, our right to be in the UK... no wonder only 7 out of every 100 reported rapes end in a conviction. So let's turn up and take a stand. Everyone is welcome – all genders, races, religions, ages and sexualities. (SlutWalk, 2012b)

SlutWalk London was first proposed by a young woman on Facebook shortly after the Toronto march in April 2011. Two other women quickly offered to help her to organise and together they contacted the Crossroads Women's Centre for advice and support. Between them they put together a day of protest against victim blaming and slut shaming, and also a strong call for the police and judicial systems to change their ways of working and to begin delivering real justice to victims and survivors of rape. Like their counterparts in Toronto and around the world, the London organisers also used email, Facebook and Twitter as well as blogs and Tumblr. The march took place in London on 11 June 2011, and attracted over 3,000 participants and plenty of media coverage.

Academic interest in SlutWalk was not far behind the media coverage and has contemplated and critiqued the various conversations that took place in both mass and social media. Scholars have characterised SlutWalk in a variety of ways. SlutWalk

has been considered as a global/local phenomenon, as a case study in feminist use of social media (e.g. Darmon, 2014; Mendes, 2015) and, in particular, in relation to both neo-liberalism and feminism.

Emphasising its global reach and local relevance, SlutWalk (and its feminism) has been considered in particular geographical contexts. Kaitlynn Mendes (2015) analyses SlutWalks in multiple locations, while others examine specific sites, among them Australia (Maddison, 2013), Hong Kong (Garrett, 2015; Garrett & Ng, 2012), India (Borah & Nandi, 2012; Kapur, 2012; Mitra, 2012), Korea (Han, 2016), London (Lim & Fanghanel, 2013), Singapore (Gwynne, 2013) and Toronto (McCormack & Prostran, 2012; O'Reilly, 2012; Reger, 2014).

Despite, and also because of, its popularity and reach, SlutWalk has been critiqued as an example of postfeminism and neo-liberalism. For example, Kathy Miriam (2012) states that "SlutWalk, at its core, is an example of a kind of feminism that has effectively supplanted a collective world-changing project with individualized empowerment" (n.p.). Miriam here focuses on the claim voiced by some SlutWalkers that their personal sartorial choices are nobody's business. Conceptualising SlutWalk in this way does indeed situate it as an example of what Catherine Rottenberg (2013) identifies as 'neo-liberal feminism', which she contrasts with 'liberal feminism' and defines as "predominantly concerned with instating a feminist subject who epitomizes 'self-responsibility,' and who no longer demands anything from the state or the government, or even from men as a group" (p. 428). Thus, according to Miriam's line of argument, SlutWalkers are uncritically demanding the right to take personal responsibility for their bodies and well-being without considering the myriad of ways in which their well-being and bodies are dependent on social and cultural structures. Theresa O'Keefe's (2014) analysis of SlutWalk can also be understood as situating the protest as an example of 'neo-liberal feminism' – although she does not specifically use the term – when she asserts that SlutWalk's brand of feminism is "unquestionably rooted within patriarchal and capitalist values" (p. 5). Tram Nguyen (2013) is also critical of what she perceives as SlutWalk's postfeminist and neo-liberal roots, and particularly of the apparent focus of the marches on choice and individualism. However, she also accepts that SlutWalk may well represent an

intermediate, but nevertheless necessary, feminist “intermezzo” (p. 167). Nguyen (2013) promotes the idea of ‘intermezzos’, or interim periods, as part of feminism’s ongoing development and adaptation to changing social and cultural circumstances.

Other scholars also take a historical approach in their examination of SlutWalk, however their analysis is often different from that outlined above. For example, Annie Hill (2016) argues that SlutWalk is a “fresh articulation of feminist resistance” (p. 34), and situates it as a new phase in the long history of feminist activism, rather than as a departure from (Nguyen, 2013) or betrayal of it (O’Keefe, 2014). Bonnie Dow and Julia Wood (2014) also locate SlutWalk in a historical context. They acknowledge the contradictory views expressed by a variety of feminist commentators regarding SlutWalk, but nonetheless advocate the stance that feminism is not just one thing, and that dissent within feminist ranks is not new and is a sign of the ongoing need for the contribution that feminism can make to women’s lives. Further, Ratna Kapur (2012) positions SlutWalk as political and as “a politics worth savouring” (p. 18), while Rituparna Borah and Subhalakshmi Nandi (2012) state that SlutWalk is “a show of strength that is potentially a threat to the patriarchal establishment” (p. 420) and thus capable of facilitating the kind of meaningful social change called for by feminists.

In addition to considering SlutWalk’s position vis-à-vis feminism, scholars have attended to the protest’s reclamation of the word ‘slut’ and to the performance of some SlutWalkers as ‘sluts’. Before presenting the debates about SlutWalkers’ attire and use of language, I turn to the word itself to better contextualise these debates. Feona Attwood (2007) posits that the word ‘slut’ has been used throughout history to judge and police women and their behaviour. She also considers the practice of reclaiming words, particularly in the context of sexual politics and states that “struggles over sluttiness have... become part of a struggle over feminism itself” (p. 243). As such, she asserts that efforts at reclaiming the word are far from straightforward. She summarises the complexities as follows:

An understanding of the differing contexts in which women struggle over sex, technology, culture and terminology is clearly important if we are to appreciate what is at stake in that struggle. In the contemporary moment, ‘slut’ functions for some as an impossible space, the space of contradictions that cannot be resolved in language,

theory or practice; the source of conflict between generations and feminisms; a trap and a dead end. And certainly, 'slut' has its limits, threatening to obscure as much as it illuminates and always running the risk of merely reproducing a form of 'hate speak' against women. For others, it is precisely its impossibility that marks it as a potentially productive site, a space of resistance, change and new possibility. Whatever position we take, the reclamation of 'slut' provides an interesting development in this term's history, and it is important as a starting point for illuminating how women continue to engage with the representation of female sexuality. Whether our focus is the way 'slut' is used to police women's behaviour, the significance of sluttiness in popular culture, or its appropriation in mainstream and subcultural practices, an understanding of the ways it might unite or divide us as women and as feminists is crucial. (ibid p. 244)

Thus, it is not surprising that the question of whether 'slut' can or should be used to challenge victim blaming is hotly debated by commentators on SlutWalk. On the one hand there are those, like Theresa O'Keefe (2014), who assert that SlutWalkers fail in their reclamation attempts "as nowhere is the word 'slut' disentangled from patriarchal definitions, contested and re-imagined" (p. 8). O'Keefe (2014) further questions whether the word slut can or should be reclaimed at all and claims that any parody that may have been intended in SlutWalkers' outfits is lost on the male gaze(r). Similarly, examining images from news reportage, Tram Nguyen(2013) concludes that the depictions of women in 'sluttish' clothing "do little to disturb social understanding of a 'slut' – instead, they reify and concretize the concept of 'slut' as scantily clad, sexually immoral women" (p. 160). Both authors, using mass-media data as their source, consider that the attempt to reclaim the word 'slut', along with the performance by some SlutWalkers of 'sluttish' clothing, fails to challenge the patriarchal powers that signify women through their bodies and their sexuality, capitulating to these instead. In addition to these arguments, the use of the term 'slut' is further considered problematic because of questions regarding its varying applicability to women across categories such as 'race', class and age (Lim & Fanghanel, 2013; Miriam, 2012; Nguyen, 2013; O'Keefe, 2014; Reger, 2014; Ringrose and Renold, 2012).

However, Ratna Kapur (2012) dismisses arguments against reclaiming 'slut' as 'missing the point', and argues that "the fact that a cop could use the word in such a

derogatory manner opened up the right to appropriate the term and hurl it right back at him in a way that asserts women's sexual autonomy" (p. 15). Furthering this line of argument, Annie Hill (2016) claims not only that the word slut can and should be reclaimed, but that "SlutWalk enacts a strategy of resignification that... subverts interpellating women as bad or good, rapeable or respectable" (p. 32). Thus, according to Hill (2016), SlutWalk works to undermine the victim blaming inherent in the Toronto policeman's comments, as do SlutWalkers' parodic performances of 'slut'.

Hill (2016) further situates the policeman's comments as constitutive of a rape logic situated within rape culture. She defines rape logic as "a discursive and visual ideology that attaches sexual desire and consent to a woman's appearance; how a woman appears is claimed to communicate messages that men discern through looking" and rape culture as that which "refers to the social and structural norms that excuse perpetrators and demean victims, in effect shoring up and propagating a cultural climate whereby sexual violence can flourish" (p. 26). It is these norms that Hill (2016) claims SlutWalk successfully challenges through the reclamation of the word as well as its performance.

I can relate to both sides in these debates. My initial response upon reading about and seeing pictures of SlutWalk was one of consternation. I rolled my eyes and asked myself why women still felt the need to capitulate to the male gaze in order to make a point. However, as I explored the subject beyond the images of women in revealing clothing I changed my mind. It is especially because I attended to organisers' and participants' views, both in interviews and online, that I began to see things differently. And this is an example of why I am interested in the role of social media in general and self-representation in particular in relation to protest in general and feminist protest in particular. The mass media, while diverse, are nonetheless implicated in the neo-liberal political economy, which does not often tally with the feminist agenda for bringing about societal and political change. I am interested in the extent to which self-representation in online spaces offers feminists the opportunity to circumvent and influence the mass media by articulating their own agenda in alternative spaces. It is this interest that ultimately propelled me to work on this thesis. Kaitlynn Mendes (2015) argues that SlutWalk's call to stop blaming the victims

of sexual assault casts it as a feminist protest because “although feminism may have different goals, histories and understandings about the nature of women’s oppression in different parts of the world, one common concern has been violence against women” (p. 18). Ultimately it is the focus on addressing not only rape but society’s attitude towards its victims that marks SlutWalk’s aims as feminist and as a suitable case study for examining the representation of feminist protest in contemporary media culture.

Project Aims and Overview

This thesis explores the following overarching research question: How and to what extent is SlutWalk London represented as a feminist intervention in contemporary, postfeminist media culture? To address this question, three sub-questions are posed: How and to what extent does self-representation *by* SlutWalkers in social media and in person have a feminist sensibility? How and to what extent does representation *of* SlutWalkers in the mass media have a feminist sensibility? And what do the answers to these questions tell us about the state of feminism and contemporary postfeminist media culture?

I approach these questions as a feminist who adopts Gill’s definition of feminism and assertion that the term is used “to signal a concern with enduring gender inequalities and injustices, among a matrix of other forms of oppression relating to ‘race’, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, disability and health status” (2007a, p. 25). I cannot comfortably position myself within the myriad of sub-categories of feminism, despite Dow’s (1995) call for feminist scholars to situate themselves explicitly within feminism and to “name their feminism as such and... be sensitive to potential critiques of that stance” (p. 112). Therefore, like Mendes (2015), “if pushed, I would classify my position and the project as having a ‘feminist cultural studies perspective’” (p. 45). In particular, I strongly believe that never has the need for robust feminist critique been more urgent than now, when the world order appears to be rapidly changing so as, among other things, to threaten hard-won gains for women. On 21 January, 2017 I participated in the Women’s March on London, in solidarity with the Women’s March on Washington DC and marches elsewhere. It saddens me that such a march is still required exactly six years after the comments that led to the first SlutWalk taking

place in Toronto were made, on 24 January 2011. For a while it felt that the protests of 2011 heralded the beginning of a new feminist consciousness, especially around issues such as rape, sexual violence and harassment, and yet here we are six years later protesting against an American president who was elected despite bragging about sexually assaulting women. I hope that this thesis contributes to the efforts of feminist scholars to highlight and critique ongoing gender inequalities and injustices with a view to finally bringing about substantive change in representation and beyond.

Overview of Thesis

This introduction, Chapter 1, details my journey to a feminist media studies project through my personal and professional relationship with and experiences of feminism. It sets out the background to the SlutWalk protests and introduces the scholarly debates that have ensued. In particular, it establishes that the reviewed work thus far on SlutWalk focuses on discussions about the use and reclamation of the word 'slut' and of 'sluttish' performance by protestors, on SlutWalk's position in relation to rape culture and rape logic and on its situation vis-à-vis neo-liberalism. I also report on my own initial response to SlutWalk and my change of mind on the subject, on the root of my interest in this project, on the relationship between mass and social media and on representation and self-representation. Finally, I introduce my research questions and discuss my own feminism and the general contributions of the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework of the study, centred on the tension between feminist and postfeminist sensibilities in contemporary media culture. I review critiques of postfeminist media culture, followed by Rosalind Gill's account of postfeminist sensibility. Next I review scholarly and popular writing about feminism since the publication of Angela McRobbie's *Aftermath of Feminism* (2009) and develop an understanding of the issues and concerns common in contemporary feminism. With these in mind, I develop elements of feminist sensibility to be considered alongside Gill's elements of postfeminist sensibility. Together these form the theoretical basis for exploring whether SlutWalk is a feminist intervention into postfeminist media culture. Finally, I situate SlutWalk London within the theoretical relationship between feminism, protest and the media, and position framing theory as

a central theoretical component of the thesis, alongside representation and self-representation.

In Chapter 3 I discuss the methodological approach and research design of the study. I position the thesis within a feminist methodology and outline the rationale for a multi-method approach, which stems from the research questions, the aims of the project and the conceptual framework. Next I present and discuss the methods of data collection and data analysis, reflecting on the decision-making processes, problems and surprises that arose and the ethics involved in interviewing women who identify as feminists, as I do myself, many of whom are rape survivors. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the methods and consider options for future study.

Chapter 4 is the first of four empirical chapters. It reports the findings from interviews conducted with four organisers and 11 participants in SlutWalk London, drawing on thematic analysis of the data. The four themes explored are: clothing, 'slut', participation and feminism. First I explain how I arrived at these themes and the rationale for adopting each one for analysis. Next I analyse each theme, describing its content and the various ways in which interviewees discussed it. Finally, I situate the findings in relation to feminist and postfeminist sensibilities and explain how this chapter serves to contextualise the empirical chapters that follow.

Chapter 5 discusses findings from content and frame analysis of mass- and social-media texts about Slut Walk London. The two most commonly found frames, 'victim blaming' and 'sluts', are presented and defined. Next, they are discussed in terms of three themes: relationship to feminism; attitude toward SlutWalk; and type of text. Finally, the two frames and the three themes are related to feminist and postfeminist sensibilities.

Chapter 6 presents findings from discourse analysis of mass- and social-media texts about SlutWalk London. Two interpretative repertoires identified in the discourse about SlutWalk are defined: 'rape logic' and 'conflict'. I explain that there are two main and opposing strands (facets) in each repertoire and demonstrate how these are

constructed. Finally, I explore the two repertoires in the context of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities, as well as of representation and self-representation.

Chapter 7 is the fourth and final empirical chapter. Here I consider the images accompanying texts about SlutWalk London in newspapers and in blogs. These images are analysed using both content and visual analysis. The section that reports on the findings of the content analysis provides a context within which to consider the findings from the more interpretative visual analysis. Using both these methods, the images accompanying texts about SlutWalk London are explored in relation to feminist and postfeminist sensibilities, as well as to representation and self-representation.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by drawing the aims and research questions set out at the beginning together with the various empirical findings discussed throughout. The empirical findings from each chapter are discussed in relation to feminist and postfeminist sensibilities, and to representation and self-representation. The findings are also considered in terms of the conceptual and methodological contributions they make to the field of feminist media studies. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed, as well as possible future research avenues.

Chapter 2: Feminism and the Media – A Theoretical Review

Introduction

In her seminal text, *Gender and the Media*, Rosalind Gill (2007a) sets out elements of a postfeminist sensibility with which to critique media culture. Building on Gill's notion, I start this thesis from an assumption that contemporary media culture has a postfeminist sensibility and ask: what happens when a protest such as SlutWalk attempts to intervene in postfeminist media culture? What role do mass and social media play in this kind of intervention? And how do representations and self-representations of the protest and its participants negotiate with each other in a postfeminist media culture? These are the kinds of questions that I am grappling with as I consider and critique the literature and set out the conceptual framework for the thesis.

The framework centres on a tension between feminist and postfeminist sensibilities. In this chapter I review postfeminist media culture and the ways in which it is contemplated and critiqued (e.g. Carter, Steiner & McLaughlin, 2014b; Gill, 2007a, 2007b; McRobbie, 2009; Tasker & Negra, 2007). Next, I set out the elements of postfeminist sensibility proffered by Gill (2007a, 2007b). I then conduct a review of writing, both academic and popular, about feminism since the publication of McRobbie's (2009) contribution in order to develop an understanding of contemporary feminism with which to consider the intervention of SlutWalk in postfeminist media culture and of a feminist sensibility to be considered alongside Gill's (2007a, 2009a) postfeminist sensibility.

In order to theorise SlutWalk and its intervention for this project, it is necessary to consider the relationship between feminism, protest and the media. To this end I contemplate the literature on feminism and protest and on feminism and the media, positioning framing theory as a central component of these discussions. In addition, the relationship between social media and these theories is considered. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, I am interested in the tension between mass and social

media and especially in the potential opportunities that social media may offer protestors in general and feminist protestors in particular for intervening in the media landscape. Therefore I also examine the literature on representation and self-representation to establish how these bodies of knowledge may provide a useful secondary framework for this study. Finally, I set out my research questions, which guide the research design and empirical work of the thesis.

Postfeminist Media Culture

For the purposes of this thesis, I focus not on feminism or postfeminism in general, but rather on the ways in which feminism and postfeminism manifest in the media, in particular the news media. Sarah Projansky (2001) argues that postfeminist media culture has been in play since the early 1980s. While in her study of the portrayal of rape Projansky focuses on film, in this thesis I focus on the news media. The news media are a fruitful site for analysis because, as Gill (2007a), in her survey of gender and the media, states, “news is a cultural product that reflects the dominant cultural assumptions about who and what is important, determined by ‘race’, gender, class, wealth, power and nationality, and about what social relations and arrangements are deemed normal, natural and inevitable” (pp. 113-114). For similar reasons, many scholars have studied how feminism has been reported in the media (e.g. Barker-Plummer, 2010; Bronstein, 2005; Mendes, 2011a, 2015; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1992), as well as how feminism and journalism have interacted (e.g. Barker-Plummer, 2010; Carter, Branston, & Allan, 1998; Mendes, 2011; North, 2014; Ross & Carter, 2011; van Zoonen, 1998). However, to contextualise this study it is necessary to first set out a brief history of feminism(s).

Whether or not they agree with the use of the concept of waves, scholars concur that the first major organisation of feminism in the West can be dated to the mid-nineteenth century and the cause of women’s suffrage (e.g. Bryson, 2003; Mendes, 2011a). It is also recognised that demands for greater rights and freedoms for women existed elsewhere as well as earlier, and that even with the ‘first wave’ of feminism, the demands were more varied and complex than commonly perceived (Bryson, 2003; Mendes, 2011a). Scholars similarly agree that feminist engagement did not cease after the granting of suffrage to women (in the UK and US) in the early 20th century.

Collective activism for the further advancement of the rights and freedoms of women in the 1970s is known as the 'second wave' of feminism (Bryson, 2003; Mendes, 2011a).

A definition of the period following the second wave, approximately from the 1980s onwards, has not yet been fully agreed upon, in terms of either time or character, perhaps because we do not yet have sufficient temporal distance from it or because of the way that feminism in a variety of manifestations has remained in the public consciousness. Among those considering cultural manifestations of feminism in this period, some have discussed it in terms of a "backlash" against feminism (Faludi, 1992), others in terms of a break with the second wave – a "third wave" of feminism (e.g. Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Bronstein, 2005; Budgeon, 2011; Lotz, 2003), in terms of "postfeminism" (Gill, 2007a) or of the "aftermath" of feminism (McRobbie, 2009); or still others in terms of "fourth wave" feminism (Cochrane, 2013). Some have been entirely critical of the idea of waves (for a review of this critique see Winch, Littler, & Keller, 2016). However, I concur with Gill (2007a, 2007b) and McRobbie (2009) that, whatever one may call this period, it is marked by a simultaneous acknowledgement and repudiation of feminism that demands interrogation (Tasker & Negra, 2007). Therefore, this thesis takes as its theoretical starting point the assumption that we are operating in a postfeminist media culture and that "postfeminist media culture should be our *critical object*" (Gill, 2007a, p. 254 italics in original).

In her influential work critiquing postfeminist media culture, McRobbie (2009) positions it as undoing feminism through an "array of machinations... while simultaneously appearing to be engaging in a well-informed and even well-intended response to feminism" (p. 11). She explains that central to these machinations is the use of feminism in popular media culture as a reference point for highlighting the ways in which it has already succeeded (especially through discourses of empowerment and choice) and is therefore no longer needed. And that, because feminism is no longer needed, its politics can be discarded, thus reducing the chances of its re-emergence. Many other scholars (e.g. Banet-Weiser, 2007; Barker-Plummer, 2010; Carter, Steiner, & McLaughlin, 2014; Gallagher, 2014; Projansky, 2001; Tasker &

Negra, 2007) adopt this position; however, Walby (2011) disagrees: “Feminism is not dead. This is not a postfeminist era” (p.1). And yet it is precisely her reference to “people and projects which declare that they seek to reduce gender inequality but do not normally use the label ‘feminist’” (p.3) that exemplifies McRobbie’s point that in postfeminist media culture feminism must remain “unavowed” (p. 118), i.e. unnamed or, even more extremely, be “disparaged” (p. 16).

Among scholars who do adopt McRobbie’s definition of postfeminism as feminism “taken into account” (2009, p. 12), there is a fairly broad consensus that a number of features make up postfeminist media culture, including an evacuation of politics; a distancing from feminisms of the past in favour of ‘individualism’, ‘choice’ and ‘empowerment’; as well as assumptions of whiteness, youth and middle-class-ness. Feminist media studies scholars have critiqued multiple objects and sites of postfeminist media culture, for example television and film (Banet-Weiser, 2007; McRobbie, 2004; Projansky, 2001), magazines (Gill, 2009; Projansky, 2007), news (Orgad & De Benedictis, 2015), “feminist manifestos” (Rottenberg, 2013) and the media industry (Gill, 2014). In these studies, postfeminist media culture is a productive site for critique of the ways in which issues such as race, class and sexism are entangled and mediated.

However, there are also scholars for whom postfeminism is less relevant as a “critical analytical term” (Gill, 2016) than third-wave feminism (Bronstein, 2005; Budgeon, 2011), and for whom the lack of a single definition of postfeminism is problematic (Grindstaff & Press, 2014; Lotz, 2003). I concur with Lumby (2014) that, in order to make postfeminism a meaningful and useful concept, “scholars must unpack their understanding of the term”. I do this in the next section, where I engage with some of Gill’s (2007a, 2007b) elements of a postfeminist sensibility and set out how I adapt these for the purposes of this study.

Postfeminist Sensibility

Central to this thesis is Rosalind Gill’s (2007a, 2007b) work critiquing postfeminist media culture. In order to clarify my understanding of the term postfeminism and how to use it both conceptually and analytically, I subscribe to her assertion that

“postfeminism should be conceived of as a *sensibility*, and postfeminist media culture should be our *critical object*; the phenomenon which analysts must inquire into and interrogate” (2007a, p. 254 italics in original). I find the call to conceive of postfeminism as a sensibility and postfeminist media culture as a critical object compelling, and therefore in this study I adopt a number of the elements of Gill’s (2007a) postfeminist sensibility in order to construct a framework from which to conceive of and analyse products of the postfeminist media culture, namely newspapers. Her sensibility was first proposed a decade ago and yet, despite many innovations in the field of media and communications including the advent of social media, in many respects it still holds up well as a conceptual and analytic framework (Gill, 2016).

In developing her elements of a sensibility, Gill claims that “today’s media culture has a distinctive postfeminist sensibility organized around notions of choice, empowerment, self-surveillance, and sexual difference, and articulated in an ironic and knowing register in which feminism is simultaneously taken for granted and repudiated” (2007a, p. 271). In both her book and her article (2007a; 2007b respectively), when presenting the postfeminist sensibility, Gill deviates slightly from the list of elements with which it is compiled. However, the elements of choice, empowerment, natural sexual difference, irony and knowingness, as well as feminism both repudiated and taken for granted, are constants. I have therefore adopted these core elements for conceptual and analytical use. In addition, it is important to note her assertion that “postfeminism constructs an articulation or suture between feminist and anti-feminist ideas” (2007a, p. 268), as this entanglement is also adopted conceptually and explored analytically in this study.

Elements of Postfeminist Sensibility

In the following section, I set out each of the elements of postfeminist sensibility used here, starting with *choice*: “The notion that all our practices are freely chosen fits well with broader postfeminist discourses which present women as autonomous agents no longer constrained by any inequalities or power imbalances whatsoever” (Gill, 2007a, p. 260). The element of choice rests on the premise that feminism has achieved its goals and that it is now up to women to make our own choices, devoid of a political

context or a recognition that equality is, in fact, yet to be achieved. In addition, in postfeminist media culture not all choices are considered equal. According to McRobbie (2009), individuals are “compelled to be the kind of subject who can make the right choices” (p. 19), subjects that fit in with what Budgeon (2015) calls “choice feminism”, and failing to do so is judged harshly, particularly if this failing is characterised by “choosing” to display the “wrong” kind of femininity. According to Budgeon (2015, p. 314),

Choice feminism, while not a unified position or movement, coheres around a set of key principles including a privileging of individual women as best positioned to make choices about how to live; a belief that women are able to unproblematically exercise autonomy because of the achievements of feminism; a claim that traditional feminine norms are no longer connected to gender inequality; and that the role of feminism is to withhold judgement of the choices women make.

In this way, the past efforts of feminism are simultaneously acknowledged and rejected as no longer required, while the choices left to women are personal as well as prescribed and limited to a particular kind of femininity – that which McRobbie (2009, p. 67) calls the “post-feminist masquerade”, and in which women must “choose” to participate or be condemned.

The second element of postfeminist sensibility, as posited in this project, is that of *individualism and empowerment*. In her critique of race and postfeminism in media culture, Sarah Banet-Weiser (2007) claims that a central feature of the postfeminist media culture is a “focus on female individualism and individual empowerment” (p. 208), in stark contrast to the politics of feminism’s so-called second wave. According to Banet-Weiser (2007), by focusing on individualism and empowerment, solidarity and other forms of coalition politics are banished in such a way that, as Gill asserts, “even experiences of racism or homophobia or domestic violence are framed in exclusively personal terms in a way that turns the idea of the personal as political on its head” (2007a, p. 259). Politics are thus evacuated from women’s experiences, leaving them to seek empowerment through fulfilment of an individual kind. This is highly problematic, for, as Catherine Rottenberg (2013) asks: “What does it mean... that a movement once dedicated... to women’s liberation is now being framed in extremely individualistic terms, consequently ceasing to raise the spectre of social or

collective justice?” (p. 419). The supplanting of the political by the individual has been identified in multiple areas of life, such as education, work, home life – including parenting, as well as “physical and particularly sexual empowerment” (Tasker & Negra, 2007, p. 2). Sexual empowerment is especially relevant here, considering the focus on women’s individual responsibility for their physical and sexual safety that characterises the portrayal of SlutWalk, and also relevant to the element of *natural difference* discussed next.

The third element of postfeminist sensibility, *natural difference*, relates to a discourse that advocates “a frank acknowledgement of difference rather than its denial” (Gill, 2007a, p. 265), a natural (sexual) difference between men and women. According to Gill, sexual difference discourses

serve to (re-)eroticize power relations between men and women. At one level this simply means that difference is constructed as sexy. At another... discourses of natural gender difference can be used to freeze in place existing inequalities by representing them as inevitable and – if read correctly – as pleasurable. (p. 266)

The eroticization of male-female difference turns critiques of sexualisation on their heads by insisting “that sexual attractiveness is a source of power over patriarchy rather than subjection to it” (Roberts, 2007, p. 233), thus constructing natural (sexual) difference as empowering.

I further argue that the *natural difference* element not only negates full equality between men and women, but also legitimizes conceptions of natural, rather than structural, difference among women, for example along ‘racial’, generational or class lines. Conceptualising the element of *natural difference* as that which also breaks up potential solidarities between women and acknowledgements of intersecting discriminations, I include here McRobbie’s (2009) notion of disarticulation, which she develops from Stuart Hall’s theory of articulation.¹ In McRobbie’s words, disarticulation has “the effect of dispersing women across divisions of time and space, age and class, ethnicity and sexuality so that those who might otherwise have found

¹ For a comprehensive overview of Stuart Hall’s theory of articulation, which is beyond the scope of this chapter, please see Lawrence Grossberg’s interview with Hall on the subject (1986)

some common cause together are increasingly unlikely to do so” (p. 52). Thus, a postfeminist sensibility fixes inequalities between men and women, as well as among women, in place and undermines the need as well as the means to contest these.

The fourth element, *irony and knowingness*, focuses more on tone than on content. In discussing this element, Gill (2007a) explains that irony enables one to have one’s cake and eat it: by using irony when expressing sexist, racist, homophobic or other prejudiced views, it is possible to claim not to really mean what one says, thus creating a safe distance from potentially unpalatable views and neutralizing them. This ironic distancing acknowledges the potential feminist critique of unsavoury sentiments, “while simultaneously minimizing its importance” (Grindstaff & Press, 2014, p. 164) and in fact “makes feminist counter-critique particularly difficult” (Gallagher, 2014, p. 26). Thus the element of irony taps into the tired trope of the humourless feminist in order to ensure that the expression of nasty sentiments cannot be freely rebuked by feminist critics without invoking the claim that it was just a joke and that critics need to ‘get a sense of humour’.

The fifth and final element of postfeminist sensibility in this project, *feminism as passé or done wrong*, addresses the portrayal of feminism in media culture, “which is marked by a new kind of anti-feminist sentiment, which is different from simply being a question of backlash” (McRobbie, 2009, p. 1) and is instead characterised by an “entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist ideas” (Gill, 2007a, p. 255). This is in addition to the taking into account and repudiation of feminism discussed above. What this entanglement means, according to Lotz (2003), is that “mass media sources have offered legitimacy to those whose ideas verge on the anti-feminist while describing their positions as feminist” (pp. 2-3). By describing themselves as feminists, anti-feminist critics of feminism secure media space and tools for dismantling feminist arguments from within, thus enabling media outlets to remain perceived as neutral or even apparently feminist hosts of this in-fighting, which only serves to further undermine the political nature of feminism, characterising it as a thing of the past and judging new feminist expressions as misguided.

Feminist Sensibility

In order to devise a contemporary feminist sensibility from which to consider media texts and images, alongside the established notion of postfeminist sensibility, I examine here the literature on the state of feminism and its potential resurgence written since 2009, the publication year of McRobbie’s *The Aftermath of Feminism*. Across the various writings that I considered, both academic and popular, a number of recurring concerns emerge, which can be roughly divided into four categories: bodily integrity; sex, relationships and violence against women and girls; representations of women and girls in culture and the media; and education, work and pay.

Table 2.1: Key concerns in contemporary writing about feminism

Bodily Integrity	Sex, Relationships & Violence against Women and Girls	Representations of Women and Girls in Culture and the Media	Education, Work and Pay
Reproductive freedom (e.g. abortion rights); Self-determination (sexual and reproductive); Sexual pressures; Body image (beauty myths, eating disorders)	Rape and victim blaming; Harassment in public spaces; Sexual assault; Domestic violence/ abusive relationships; Pornography; Prostitution	Pornography, Page 3 and ‘lads’ mags’; Beauty and thinness; Focus on women’s physical appearance; Cultural sexism; Rape culture and victim blaming; Lack of women in broadcasting; Portrayals of female politicians	Pay gap; Maternity discrimination; Parental leave; Representation in public life; Education on sex and relationships; Sexism and harassment in schools, universities and the workplace

Naturally, there is some overlap between the various concerns outlined in the table above, but nonetheless a clear picture of the issues expressed by contemporary self-defined feminists emerges from these readings. In addition to these concerns, the

internet and its various platforms are discussed by authors as a channel that, while not free of the harassment and sexism found in the offline world, nonetheless offers a space for women and girls (and some men) to express their feminism and connect with likeminded others.

Elements of Feminist Sensibility

A close reading of the contemporary texts used to identify the key concerns outlined above, suggests a number of elements of feminist sensibility; these include: equality; solidarity and politicisation; intersectionality; anger and hope; as well as a definition of feminism as current and relevant. While these elements can helpfully be compared to Gill's elements of postfeminist sensibility, it must be stated that I am not proposing a strict binary. Instead the comparison is intended as a flexible tool whereby texts may display elements of either or both sensibilities. The comparison of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities is helpful in considering the complex tensions between them, in order to try and understand how the two are negotiated within contemporary media spaces and culture and the extent to which they are connected to each other. For as Sarah Banet-Weiser (2015b) advises, in relation to popular feminism and popular misogyny, "we need to think of the call-and-response connection between them" (n.p.).

The first element of feminist sensibility is *equality* and I contrast this with the element of *choice* in postfeminist sensibility, as does Catherine Redfern (2013). She calls for a critique of the concept of choice, which she claims will help feminists to "understand and challenge our disadvantaged positions in a social system which is still structured by patriarchy and capitalism" (2013, p. xvii). Equality is also contrasted empirically with choice. Writing of a research project she undertook, Maura Kelly (2015) reports that "participants who publicly identified as feminists were more likely to include equality than choice in their definition of feminism" (p. 86). Authors set out a number of different types of equality which combine to form this element of a feminist sensibility, including: equal pay (e.g. Adichie, 2014; Bates, 2014; Gay, 2014); freedom from "the cult of beauty and thinness, the repeated attacks on reproductive freedom, violence against women" (Gay, 2014, p. 318); equality of representation in the media and in public life (e.g. Adichie, 2014; Bates, 2014; Cochrane, 2013); and "the right of women to enjoy and express their sexuality free from the double standards which

aggrandise men for sexual activity and shame women for the same” (Mackay, 2013, p. 2). Thus the element of *equality* in feminist sensibility consists of a feminist demand for equality for women in the realms of work, bodily integrity, public representation and sexual autonomy, and this is contrasted with *choice*, which assumes that equality has already been achieved and that the rest is now up to each individual woman.

The second element of feminist sensibility is *solidarity and politicisation*, which pertains to the need for feminists to politicise their claims and to come together across various socio-economic divides. *Solidarity* is contrasted here with *individualism*. For example, Nina Power (2009) claims that postfeminist media culture conditions us to focus on our individual behaviours to such an extent that “we miss the collective and historical dimensions of our current situation” (p. 34), a state of play that she critiques, asserting that it requires change. The collective is portrayed as central to feminist sensibility and social media is often presented as a key tool in facilitating this: “thanks to the rise of social media, there is a sense of cohesion and solidarity growing ever stronger between women and across borders and boundaries that enables us to stand alongside our sisters and solicit for them as never before” (Bates, 2014, p. 364). This soliciting is inherently political and within this element is a call for politicisation and change: “we need political change to ensure practical change”, continues Laura Bates (2014, p. 76). For, as Sara Ahmed says of solidarity, it “involves commitment, and work, as well as the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live on common ground” (2004, p. 189). It is asserted that, as well as for collective action, solidarity is necessary for emotional support: “The sense of solidarity that also comes with sharing stories can make a huge difference, because women no longer feel they’re... alone” (Bates, 2014, p. 173). In this element of feminist sensibility, the personal and political are inseparable: “We respond to individual experiences with the aim of collective change for all. That is what empowerment looks like” (Mackay, 2013, p. 3). Thus, *solidarity and politicisation* are contrasted with *empowerment and individualism*, which are key tenets of what Catherine Rottenberg (2013) refers to as ‘neoliberal feminism’. Similarly, Beatrix Campbell (2013) contrasts *solidarity and politicisation* with *choice*:

Twenty-first century capitalism presents itself as liberation logic: it pitches choice and competition against the dependency, mutuality and co-operation that are the

conditions of life itself. It shrinks the space of politics and, thus, the possibility of challenge and change. It recoils from social solidarity and shared care and, thus from rapport with women. (p. 5)

This assessment of capitalist society sits comfortably with what in this project is referred to as postfeminist media culture, which can be conceptualised as a by-product of capitalist-driven neo-liberalism, with its elements of choice, individualism and empowerment, in contrast to equality, solidarity and politicisation, which are elements of feminist sensibility. Thus, the element of *solidarity and politicisation* in feminist sensibility consists of a call for feminists to politicise their claims and act in unison to support one another as an end in itself as well as a means of bringing about structural change.

The third element of feminist sensibility is *intersectionality*, a concept introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw in the United States in the late 1980s “as a heuristic term to focus attention on the vexed dynamics of difference and the solidarities of sameness in the context of antidiscrimination and social movement politics” (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 787), in response to the double discrimination faced by Black women before the law, in particular. Crenshaw (1989) explains intersectionality as stemming from the reality that black women are discriminated against both as a result of their gender and of their ‘race’. Sometimes they experience discrimination as women, sometimes as people of colour, sometimes as both – in what she calls “double-discrimination” (p. 149). On the basis of the recognition of this double discrimination, Crenshaw calls for intersectionality to be taken into account in any analysis of discrimination (1989). This is a call taken up by self-professed third-wave feminists (e.g. Baumgardner & Richards, 2000) and adopted by contemporary feminist authors.

Kira Cochrane (2013), in her analysis of contemporary so-called fourth wave feminism, states that intersectionality “seems to be emerging as the defining framework” (pp. L925-930). The particular ways in which intersectionality manifests as an element of feminist sensibility include feminist concerns with “the living wage, immigration, justice for asylum seekers, disability rights, LGBT rights, the movement against cuts, against corporations and capitalism” (Cochrane, 2013, pp. L1135-1140); as well as concerns with “the incredibly narrow media representation of women as beautiful,

sexualised objects... [and] the overwhelming likelihood that the majority of women made visible to us in everyday media will be young, heterosexual, cisgendered, middle or upper class and non-disabled” (Bates, 2014, pp. 288-299). In addition, intersectionality is considered in relation to age, and contemporary activism by “people of all ages” (Bates, 2014, p. 367) is offered as proof. Inter-generational cooperation is portrayed as important, especially in contrast to a climate where younger and older feminists are often pitted against each other in postfeminist media culture, with younger feminists and their actions usually found wanting in comparison to their elders (Mackay, 2011). Thus, the element of *intersectionality* in feminist sensibility consists of a call for feminists to acknowledge, consider and act upon the different ways in which women experience discrimination across lines of ‘race’, age, class, ability, sexuality and other categories; and to come together to demand structural change that benefits all women. *Intersectionality* contrasts with *natural difference* in that it rejects the idea that our differences are natural and therefore insurmountable. Instead it calls for a re-articulation of political concerns.

The fourth element of feminist sensibility is *anger and hope*. The inclusion of *anger* is a little surprising since, after all, one of the ways in which postfeminist media culture has undermined feminism is by portraying it as “fuelled by anger and hostility to men” (McRobbie, 2009, p. 26). However, despite this problematic characterisation, contemporary feminists are embracing their anger with gender inequality and using it constructively. For example, Cynthia Carter (2014) states that “such actions [a range of online anti-sexism political activism] are drawing upon individual and collective anger to bring about greater gender justice” (p. 652). And Finn Mackay (2011), in her research with young contemporary feminists, recognizes some of the same triggers for anger as reported by women involved in ‘second wave’ feminism: “Experiences of sexism in mixed social movements, the impact of male violence and a resentment of the demeaning portrayal of their sex in the media and wider society, all gradually turned to an anger and political consciousness” (p. 173).

Hope is often mentioned alongside *anger*, and the two go hand in hand in this sensibility. Indeed, when Sara Ahmed (2004) describes her personal emotional

journey to feminism, she mentions anger first and hope last, connecting the two on a continuum of emotions. Ahmed (2004) explains that “anger is not simply defined in relationship to a past, but as opening up the future” (p. 175). Furthering this idea that anger at past or present injustices can be constitutive of hope for a better future, Cochrane (2013) explains that “women who were brought up being told that they were equal to men, that sexism, and therefore feminism, was dead, are starting to see through this. And while they’re pissed off, they’re also positive, bubbling with hope” (pp. 126-130). Setting these emotions in a historical perspective, Campbell (2013) asserts that “History has not been on the side of women – but feminism is an optimistic politics” (p. 8). And indeed feminism must be optimistic and hopeful in order to “allow us to feel that what angers us is not inevitable, even if transformation can sometimes feel impossible” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 184). Thus the element of *anger and hope* in feminist sensibility consists of acknowledging and harnessing a productive emotion, *anger*, which has the potential to mobilize women to act, to demand justice and to be *hopeful* about the potential for meaningful change – as opposed to the element of *irony and knowingness* in postfeminist sensibility, which silences critiques of alleged humourlessness.

The fifth and final element of feminist sensibility pertains to the ways in which feminism is portrayed and perceived. Feminist and postfeminist sensibilities differ from each other in their relationship to earlier moments in feminism: while postfeminist sensibility takes feminism into account in order to repudiate and reject it, contemporary feminist sensibility reclaims and embraces feminism; postfeminist sensibility sees the present as unproblematic and looks back to the earlier feminist movement with derision and cancellation, while feminist sensibility looks at the present as something requiring change and to the future in hope of finding said change, inspired by the past. It views feminism as *current and relevant*.

In the texts I reviewed to inform the formulation of elements of feminist sensibility, some authors position their feminism in contrast to how feminism is portrayed in postfeminist media culture. For example, Gay (2014) asserts that “I don’t want to cavalierly disavow feminism like far too many other women have done” (p. 319); and Campbell (2013) laments that “when feminism is repudiated, inequalities stretch and

crimes against women attract impunity” (p. 61). Both use language borrowed from Gill (2007a) and McRobbie (2009) and their analyses of postfeminism. In addition to contrasting their own feminism to the feminism found in postfeminist media culture, some authors explicitly set out their positive relationship with contemporary feminism. For Gay (2014), feminism is about “advocating for gender equality in all realms, while also making the effort to be intersectional, to consider all the other factors that influence who we are and how we move through the world” (p. xiii). Other authors describe feminism as being about nothing less than changing the world (Adichie, 2014; Redfern, 2013), and all situate feminism as *current and relevant* to their lives and to the lives of others around the world.

The table below summarises the elements of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities that are used conceptually and analytically in this thesis.

Table 2.2: Elements of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities

Feminist Sensibility	Postfeminist Sensibility
<i>Equality</i> : feminist demand for equality for all women in the realms of work, bodily integrity, public representation and sexual autonomy	<i>Choice</i> : assumes that equality has already been achieved and that it is now up to each individual woman to make the right choices and to create her own destiny
<i>Solidarity and Politicisation</i> : need for feminists to politicise their claims and come together in collective action within and across borders and boundaries	<i>Individualism and Empowerment</i> : almost complete evacuation of political discourse from one’s narrative. Everything is personal, nothing is political
<i>Intersectionality</i> : requirement to acknowledge, consider and act upon the ways in which women differ (e.g. ‘race’, age, sexuality, class, physical ability) and how these differences intersect and create multiple forms of discrimination	<i>Natural (Sexual) Difference</i> : views sexual difference as appealing, explains and freezes in place structural inequalities; views differences between ‘classes’ of women as natural and therefore insurmountable

<p><i>Anger and Hope:</i> anger at persistent, structural gender inequalities, but also confidence and hope that change can and will be brought about. Humour can be used as a tool to bridge the two</p>	<p><i>Irony and Knowingness:</i> use of irony to deflect the destructive consequences of expressing prejudiced views. Knowingly relies on the trope of feminism as humourless in order to reject critique</p>
<p><i>Feminism as Current and Relevant:</i> feminism as that to which feminists turn in solidarity and anger in order to build and sustain an equal and hopeful future</p>	<p><i>Feminism as Passé or Done Wrong:</i> feminism as a thing of the past, which has done its job and is now redundant; new feminist calls critiqued for ‘doing it wrong’</p>

Representation and Self-Representation

The postfeminist and feminist sensibilities detailed above are examined in relation to representation in newspapers and self-representation in blogs and on Tumblr. Therefore, in this section I outline the aspects of representation theory that are conceptually pertinent to this project, namely a constructionist approach that relies on framing theory to examine the ways in which the feminist SlutWalk protest is represented and self-represented in mass and social media.

The importance of the ways in which feminism, feminists and their demands are represented in the media stems from the fact that representations of women, feminists and feminism in media culture have long been a contested field (e.g. Carter et al., 1998; Gill, 2007a; Mendes & Carter, 2008; Ross and Carter, 2011). It is well established that it is important to study these representations to explore the variations of this terrain. Research to date shows that positive or even balanced representations of feminism, feminists and their demands are rare (e.g. Ashley & Olson, 1998; Barker-Plummer, 2010; Bronstein, 2005; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1992; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1994) and that, instead, they are regularly delegitimized and depicted as deviant (e.g. Ashley & Olson, 1998; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1992). It is thus necessary to continue to explore the ‘battleground’ on which feminism and feminists interact with the news media. In addition, the advent of new forms of online media, which have the potential both to infiltrate the mainstream news agenda and to

communicate directly with the public (Castells, 2007), must be studied in order to “establish the sites and sources of disturbance. To understand the relationship between public and private meanings, between texts and technologies” (Silverstone, 1999, p. 18). In particular, it is the relationship between texts and technologies in mass and social media representations that I seek to explore by examining representations and self-representations of SlutWalk and SlutWalkers.

Representation is a social practice in which, among other things, “current beliefs and myths about women and sexuality are (re)constructed” (Liesbet van Zoonen, 1994, p. 21). Media representations, according to Shani Orgad (2014), are both images and texts that are produced and reproduced in the media and that carry meaning. She lists as examples all manner of media ‘texts’, from still photographs and graphs through video content to written and spoken texts in analogue and digital media platforms, and states that these representations “construct meanings, offering understandings of what the world is, and why and how it works in particular ways” (p. 134). In this thesis I examine news reports, columns, opinion pieces, letters to the editor and the images that accompany these in newspapers. I also examine blog and Tumblr posts and the images that accompany these online, and while, of course, these too are representations, I consider them to be different. I consider these to be self-representations, on the basis that blogs and Tumblr posts are “consequent upon the self speaking on behalf of itself” (Thumim, 2012, p. 4), rather than being spoken about by others, as in representations in the mass media.

According to Orgad (2014), “the constructionist approach argues that any representation is inherently and inevitably a construction, a selective and particular depiction of some elements of reality, which generates certain meanings and excludes others” (p. 134). The constructionist approach, that representation is constructed by choosing which elements of ‘reality’ to include and which to omit, is a compatible framework within which to use Entman’s (1993) framing paradigm, as I do in this thesis. Entman states that to frame “is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text*” (p. 52 italics in original).

Framing was first proposed as a mechanism for studying the organisation of experience by Goffman (1974). In the late 1970s Tuchman (1980) built on the concept of framing to study its use in news rooms, while Gitlin (2003) took the framework into the study of media constructions of the New Left. Since those interventions, framing has been adopted in studies of protest-media relations in general (e.g. Entman, 2003; Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Wolfsfeld, 1984) and of feminist protest in particular (e.g. Ashley & Olson, 1998; Bronstein, 2005; Mendes, 2011a, 2015; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1992). While it is established in these studies that, in the media-protest framing “exchange” (Wolfsfeld, 1984), the media hold the most power, it is also accepted that they are open to “a range of interpretations” (Liesbet van Zoonen, 1994, p. 41) and that media frames can occasionally be successfully challenged, for example by social movements which “offer competing constructions of reality” (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Theodore, 1992, p. 373). Indeed the enhanced opportunity to challenge powerful frames is part of the celebrated potential of what Castells (2007) calls “horizontal networks”, which are constituted by “the diffusion of internet, mobile communication, digital media, and a variety of tools of social software” (p. 246). While there is no question that the new tools of communication offer opportunities for the less powerful to communicate more widely, we are still living in a period of hybrid communications (Chadwick, 2013), in which mass media and “mass self-communication” (Castells, 2007, p. 252) converge. The framing of protest and protest-media interactions are further discussed in relation to the findings of this thesis.

I adopt Nancy Thumim’s (2012) notion of self-representation as an alternative to Castells’ (2007) horizontal networks, because of its close relation to representation: “The concept of *self-representation* contains an even more explicitly political claim than *representation* and this is because the term itself contains a challenge to the idea that it is the job of one set of people to represent another set of people” (italics in original p. 8). Thumim’s approach is particularly relevant to this project because she focuses both on the political potential of self-representation and on the emotional dimension of its content: “The concept and discourse of self-representation contains a valorisation of experience which has a therapeutic function and at the same time invokes the possibility of material political outcomes, which has a democratic function” (p. 9): a combination of the personal and the political. As shown in the

empirical chapters, SlutWalkers value the march itself as an opportunity to share feelings and they also use platforms such as blog and Tumblr posts to construct emotional appeals as part of their political demand for change.

Self-representation by feminists using digital technologies is not specifically discussed by Thumim (2012); however, the use of forms of digital self-representation, such as blogs, by feminists is variously explored by other scholars (Carstensen, 2014; Carter, 2014; Gajjala & Oh, 2012; Keller, 2012, 2016; Lacey & Perrons, 2015; Mendes, 2015; Wajcman, 2000). Blogs (short for web log) are “a web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal (or log) for an individual” (Coleman, 2005, p. 274); and Tumblr posts appear on the web-platform of that name, which is a service that allows users to post content to a short-form blog (Wikipedia, 2015). Blogs are “fast becoming sophisticated listening posts of modern democracy” (Coleman, 2005, p. 274) and as such are important cultural products for study. Specifically for this project, blogs and Tumblr posts are interesting because they bring with them “immense potential for decentralised networking and discussion, which supports the needs of feminist political activism” (Carstensen, 2014, p. 490). However, it is important to note that, while online platforms offer feminists new opportunities to connect and to mobilize for political activity, the internet’s significance could be overstated (Wajcman, 2000). This exaggeration of the internet’s role risks neglecting the potential for offline and online environments to interact (Carter et al., 2014), and for extreme harassment to take place online and be facilitated by the affordances of social media (Lacey & Perrons, 2015), such as anonymity.

While of course it is wise to be circumspect and to recognise the risks attendant on online feminist activism, there is no longer any question that social media such as blogs and Tumblr “facilitate both online and offline feminist political engagement” (Carter, 2014, p. 645). In fact Catherine Redfern found that 70% of the feminists surveyed in a study she conducted “agreed that ‘the Internet has been instrumental to today’s feminist movement’” (2013, p. 15). It is for these reasons that I examine representations and self-representations of SlutWalk London and its protestors in mass and social media, to determine the extent to which the feminist promise of the

protest is negotiated and fulfilled in the battleground that is contemporary media culture, which is comprised of both mass and social media.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this chapter I posed some of the questions that guided me in constructing the conceptual framework of the thesis, namely: Can a feminist protest such as SlutWalk successfully intervene in the postfeminist media culture? What role do the mass and social media have in this kind of intervention? And how do representation and self-representation interact in this context? In order to begin to answer these questions, I reviewed postfeminist media culture and various critiques of it as a taking into account and a repudiation of feminism. I then set out Gill's elements of postfeminist sensibility, namely: choice; individualism and empowerment; natural difference; irony and knowingness; and feminism viewed as passé and/or done wrong. I also reviewed texts about contemporary feminism, which highlighted four main areas of concern: bodily integrity; sex, relationships and violence against women & girls; representations of women and girls in culture and the media; and education, work and pay. I then set out my own elements of feminist sensibility, with which to compare and contrast Gill's, namely: equality; solidarity and politicisation; intersectionality; anger and hope; and feminism as current and relevant.

Table 2.3: Summary of sensibility elements

Postfeminist Sensibility	Feminist Sensibility
Choice	Equality
Individualism and Empowerment	Solidarity and Politicisation
Natural Difference	Intersectionality
Irony and Knowingness	Anger and Hope
Feminism as Passé or Done Wrong	Feminism as Current and Relevant

Next I discussed the mass media as constructed reality and media culture as a discursive battleground in which meaning is framed and negotiated between the mass media and its challengers, particularly protestors. I subscribe to the view that this interaction now takes place in what can be described as a hybrid media system, where social media offer protestors additional means of being heard, and where these means may offer feminist protestors an access previously unavailable to them. At the

same time, I acknowledge that the current so-called hybrid media system may simply replicate the offline world of sexism and misogyny and may even pose the risk to protestors of extreme harassment. Finally, self-representation in blogs and on Tumblr is presented as a fruitful way of exploring how feminist protestors mediate themselves, without the need for intermediaries, which could lead to a re-balancing of their representation in the mass media.

This study builds on the bodies of knowledge about gender and feminism in the media and contributes to the discussion of postfeminist media culture, particularly to the notion of postfeminist and feminist sensibilities. I hope that the methodological and empirical chapters that follow offer new ways of examining media reportage of feminism in general and feminist protest in particular. Thus, the overarching research question for the study is:

- How and to what extent is SlutWalk London a feminist intervention in contemporary, postfeminist media culture?

And the research sub questions are:

- How and to what extent does self-representation by SlutWalkers in social media and in person have a feminist sensibility?

- How and to what extent does representation of SlutWalkers in the mass media have a feminist sensibility?

- What do the answers to these questions tell us about the state of feminism and of contemporary postfeminist media culture?

Chapter 3: Methods and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, methodological approach and methods for this project. The relationship between the methods and the data is discussed. This includes a consideration of the practical, ethical and feminist dimensions of the project as well as a description of my corpus of data and how I analysed it.

My aim in this thesis is to explore whether the ways in which SlutWalk London is represented in the mass media differ from the ways in which it is self-represented by participants in online spaces, with a particular focus on the tension and negotiation between postfeminist and feminist sensibilities. As explained in previous chapters, this aim stems from an interest in the ways in which social media may or may not empower the less powerful (Castells, 2009) and a desire to explore the extent to which the hybrid nature (Chadwick, 2013) of contemporary media culture offers opportunities for feminists to make themselves heard (Gajjala & Oh, 2012).

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And the research sub questions are:

- How and to what extent does self-representation by SlutWalkers in social media and in person have a feminist sensibility?

- How and to what extent does representation of SlutWalkers in the mass media have a feminist sensibility?

- What do the answers to these questions tell us about the state of feminism and contemporary postfeminist media culture?

The data sets analysed to answer the research questions are as follows: transcripts from interviews conducted with organisers and grassroots participants in SlutWalk London 2011; newspaper articles in which SlutWalk London 2011 and its participants

are represented and the images that accompany these; blogs and Tumblr posts in which participants in SlutWalk London 2011 self-represent and the images that accompany these.

In an attempt to compare like with like, I limited the corpus to printed texts and the images that accompany these. National newspaper texts, including news articles, columns, opinion pieces and letters to the editor were analysed to answer the research questions about representation in mass media. For the questions about self-representation in social media, I analysed blog and Tumblr posts written by participants in SlutWalk London 2011. I excluded the “compressed message[s]” (Sennett, 2013, p. 25) found in Facebook posts and tweets because: 1) these are “too fragmentary or brief to perform a political analysis” (p.25); 2) they are mainly used to signpost logistical information on other websites; and 3) they are not readily comparable with the newspaper dataset. I also analysed data from interviews conducted with participants in SlutWalk London 2011 in order to situate this study within the context of their experience and to make it visible (Taylor, 1998).

Research Design, Approach and Methods

This is a feminist media studies project and I adopt a feminist methodology, which “aims to outline an approach to research consistent with feminist aims of challenging gender inequality and empowering women” (Taylor, 1998, p. 358) and which “is politically *for* women” (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 16, italics in original). Feminist methodology is a broad church and I adopt Shulamit Reinharz’s (1992, p. 6) definition of feminist research methods, that they are “methods used in research projects by people who identify themselves as feminist or as part of the women’s movement”, which is applicable here.

The ways in which a feminist methodology is utilised are highlighted throughout this chapter. While feminist methodology does not imply “a single model or formula” (DeVault, 1990, p. 96), it does demand a commitment to work “for the transformation of the condition of the lives of women” (Brunskell, 1998, p. 39), as well as “a reflexivity which stresses the accountability of the analyst” (Gill, 1995, p. 166). Reflexivity, according to Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (2012), “takes place along all

stages of the research process – from the formulation of the research problem and the shifting positionalities of the researcher and participants through to interpretation and writing”, and in the case of reflexive feminist research, she continues, reflexivity starts before the project begins.

As a feminist, I am interested in exploring whether or not, and to what extent, the techno-optimistic view of the potential of social media platforms to bring about social change is applicable when it is feminists who are challenging the ‘powers that be’. That is why the core of this thesis is an examination of mass and social media texts and images, but also why I attend to protestors’ and organisers’ own accounts, for I believe that these must be heard and heeded in order to fully understand a feminist protest such as SlutWalk.

Because this is a project in which questions about both ‘what’ and ‘how’ are asked, the approach is a multi-method one: content analysis of texts and images is used to compare and contrast the recurrence of frames (Entman, 1993) in representations and self-representations of SlutWalk London; discourse and visual analyses are used to explore how representations and self-representations are constructed; and thematic analysis is used to examine the content of interviewees’ speech. The decision to use multiple methods stems not only from the nature of the research questions and data, whereby “scholarship focusing on message analysis should be committed to the use of a variety of methodologies” (Neuendorf, 2011, p. 277), but also from the feminist nature of this project, which calls for mixed methods as a way of robustly examining the various means by which representations of SlutWalk and SlutWalkers are constructed and negotiated (e.g. Bronstein, 2005; Brunskell, 1998; Finch, 2004; Gill, 2007a; Mendes, 2011a; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1994).

Interviews and Thematic Analysis

In order to gain an in-depth, first-hand account of SlutWalk London organisers’ and participants’ “beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations” (Gaskell, 2000, p. 39) in relation to the protest, I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews in late 2013 and early 2014, each lasting between one and three hours (see Appendix 1: Topic Guide

for Interviewing SlutWalkers; Appendix 2: Sample Transcript). Like Taylor (1998), I chose the semi-structured interview method because of its “compatibility with my commitment, as a feminist scholar, to allowing women to describe their experiences in their own terms” (p. 366).

Interviewees were recruited using a number of strategies, including: when presenting at feminist conferences (academic and popular), calling for participants at the end of my presentations, mingling with attendees while there and handing out a call-for-participants leaflet (Appendix 3); on Twitter, tweeting with the SlutWalk Twitter handle to reach its followers and organisers, asking conference organisers to tweet a call to participants on my behalf, and asking recruited participants to tweet about their interview experience (a form of snowball recruiting); directly contacting the Crossroads Women’s Centre, which were mentioned by a number of my interviewees as being involved in the protest. As a result of these efforts, I succeeded in recruiting 11 grassroots participants and four organisers.

I found the process of recruiting interviewees very stressful and was nervous that I would not succeed, especially as I started the process two years after the initial protest took place. I was concerned that people might not be willing to give up their time or to revisit their experiences after such a hiatus. Ultimately, I managed to recruit five participants at four separate conferences; five other participants were recruited in direct response to tweets that I sent out or that conference organisers sent out on my behalf; two were recruited thanks to tweets sent out by other interviewees after being interviewed; and three were recruited when I called the centre where they worked on the recommendation of other interviewees who had noted their involvement with SlutWalk London.

The interviews yielded rich data, despite taking place two years after the protest. Leads to additional interview candidates dried up after this, leaving me with a total of 15, which is a relatively small number. It is likely that the two-year interval was responsible for the low response rate, as those involved may no longer have been following SlutWalk’s online platforms or may no longer have felt it was relevant to them. I am, however, delighted that interviewees included both organisers and

participants. Other studies of SlutWalk have focused on one or the other, whereas I found the combination illuminating. The organisers articulated a clear set of objectives, with structural concerns at their core, while participants expressed a wider variety of reasons for participating in SlutWalk, including personal and structural ones.

I am also delighted that there was diversity within the cohort in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, race and physical ability, despite the fact that the interviewees were predominantly white, British and female, and that just over half were either students or academics. All interviewees identified as feminist (see Appendix 4: Participant Information). This means that in most instances the interviewees and I shared at least one demographic attribute. On the one hand this helped to quickly and easily build rapport, albeit in differing ways, with each of the interviewees. On the other hand, as Oakley (1981) states, “ethical dilemmas are greatest where there is least social distance between the interviewer and interviewee” (p. 55), and I attempted to bear this in mind throughout the processes of recruitment, interviewing and analysis, trying to balance the need to build rapport and to maintain ethical distance.

The ethics- rapport tension stemmed both from acknowledging potential power relations between us, and from a desire to encourage interviewees to feel comfortable and be willing to answer my questions fully. Following initial contact, whether at conferences or on Twitter, interviews were arranged by email. Shulamit Reinharz (1992) states that “several feminist interviewers have attempted to foster trust by downplaying status differences” (p. 30). Thus, in order to offer participants control over the circumstances of the interview, if not the questions themselves, I asked interviewees to select when and where the interview would take place. All of them selected cafés, restaurants or pubs near their homes or workplaces, except for ‘Linda’, who invited me to her office, and the three women from the Crossroads Women’s Centre, Cristel, Lisa and Niki, who invited me to the centre. However, when I met the interviewees it became apparent during our interaction that none felt that I had any kind of higher status, and in fact many expressed sympathy for my ‘unfortunate’ position as a lowly student having to ask for people’s time.

One unexpected turn of events was when I arrived at the Crossroads Women's Centre to discover that the interviewees, whom I had planned to interview individually, wanted to be interviewed together. I consented to their request, despite the fact that I had not prepared for a group interview, because I wanted to accommodate them. This put me somewhat at a disadvantage, and I was quite nervous throughout the interview, trying to adapt the questions and to 'chair' the session to enable all to talk freely and still try to produce useful data. I am pleased to say I was successful in this.

All interviewees were asked to read and sign an informed consent form (Appendix 5: Consent Form) which also provided for anonymity. Following transcription of the interviews and analysis of the media texts, it became clear that the organisers had been identified by name many times by other interviewees and in the press. I therefore asked the four organisers by email whether they would agree to be identified by name in the thesis, for the sake of clarity and consistency. Cristel, Lisa and Niki replied in the affirmative; however, 'Natasha' did not reply, and I therefore use her pseudonym throughout this study. Interviews were recorded, with permission. The semi-structured question schedule (Appendix 1: Topic Guide for Interviewing SlutWalkers) started with questions about feminism, proceeded to questions about SlutWalk, and ended with questions about the role of social and mass media. At the end of the interview I offered to answer any questions and address any further issues, and this often led to further discussions, some relevant to the study and some not.

I was surprised by how many of the interviewees were victims/survivors of rape. For many this had been the key motivator for participation in SlutWalk: a chance to speak up against what they perceived as rape culture and to find comfort in numbers. This aspect of interviewees' lives required an additional layer of sensitivity and attention to the ethics of interviewing (e.g. DeVault, 1990; Oakley, 1981; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Taylor, 1998), about which I was meticulous. I felt the truth of Reinharz's assertion that "ethical questions are heightened in feminist interview research because feminists try hard to avoid perpetuating the exploitation of women" (1992, p. 27). For example, one of the interviewees had to reschedule a few times because of episodes following a variety of trigger events in her life. I became quite concerned

that our interview might also become such an event, and shared my concerns both with her and with my supervisor. However, she was insistent that she wanted to participate and I wanted to enable her to do so as that was her wish. I discussed this further with my supervisor, who advised me that I should attempt to enable her voice to be heard if that was her desire, which it clearly was. Therefore, she and I rescheduled the interview a number of times until it was able to take place. At the beginning of the interview I made it very clear that we could stop at any time if she felt uncomfortable and that we could also skip any question that she did not want to answer. During the interview I proceeded with caution, reflecting with her on how she was feeling and whether she was happy to proceed. In addition, when she mentioned emotional difficulties she had had in the past I enquired about the support she had in place to help her and she reassured me that she was indeed well supported. I am happy to report that the interview was not only productive for my research but, more importantly, was by her own account a positive experience for her. We remained in touch immediately after the interview, during which time I endeavoured to ensure that there had been no negative repercussions for her. Despite the emotional and ethical complexities described above, the interviewee was extremely engaged in the process and we enjoyed a very warm and positive exchange. This was the most emotionally and ethically complex of the 15 interviews.

I attempted to comply with all interviewees' requests regarding timing and location and throughout the interviews I made sure that they were comfortable with the questions and with the way that the interview was progressing. I also followed up with interviewees to check how they were feeling after having spoken with me. All interviewees stated that they had enjoyed the interview process, that it had felt good to think back to the protest and to talk about it. Many also agreed to try to help me recruit additional interviewees, and in a few cases this succeeded. I too enjoyed the interviews and felt privileged to hear their stories. The conversation flowed sometimes in direct relation to the interview schedule and at other times much more freely. I enjoyed their company and felt immensely grateful for their generosity of spirit and generosity with their time. They gave thoughtful responses and reflected deeply on their experiences, reasons for participating and analysis of the protest and its media coverage. I would have liked to remain in touch with the interviewees, as a

number of them suggested; however, I was concerned that this might not be appropriate and therefore, once I had ensured that the process had been a positive one for all, I did not maintain contact. I have thought about the interviewees throughout the research and writing-up process and will, as promised, share this thesis with all of them once it is completed. I hope that they will feel I have done their accounts justice.

The interviews took place at an early stage of the research for this project, before I had fully developed the conceptual framework. I therefore at one point considered omitting this data from the thesis, also because of the small number of interviews. I decided to keep them in because they bolster the self-representation element of the study, which would otherwise have been much thinner in comparison to the newspaper texts. In addition, as Liesbet van Zoonen (1994, p. 145) states, including different data sets increases “the generality” of the findings. Thus, by including first-hand accounts of participants and organisers I hoped to expand the scope of meaning produced in this study. In particular, by attending to the direct accounts of SlutWalk participants and organisers I was able not only to explore their version of what participating in the march was ‘really’ like, especially in contrast to the ways in which it was reported in the media, but also to hear their assessment of the media coverage of the protest.

After spending many hours transcribing the interviews and reliving the interview experience through this process, I began the analysis in earnest. I was guided by Braun and Clarke’s (2006) work on thematic analysis. This entailed reading and re-reading the transcripts numerous times and highlighting recurring themes. The initial themes identified through this close reading of the interview transcripts were: ‘Victim Blaming’, ‘Slut’, ‘Feminism’, ‘Attitude to SlutWalk’ and ‘Media’. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), I compiled excerpts from the transcripts under each of the headings, which became the codes. I then read through these codes looking for themes. Next, I compiled a table (Appendix 6: Coding for Thematic Analysis: Codes and Themes) and looked for connections between them. From this process I identified connections between themes, and thus the most prominent themes, which were: Stop Victim Blaming (demand for change); Opposition to SlutWalk (by others, on grounds of name

or tactics); Clothes (variety of; to make a point; as media logic/tactic); Feminism (SlutWalk as positive feminism; as gateway to feminism; inclusive and diverse, especially of men). Next I rearranged the codes under these headings. Following the further guidance of Braun and Clarke (2006) as well as Frith and Gleeson (2004), I reviewed the codes and found that four umbrella themes captured the talk in the data: ‘Clothing’, ‘Slut’, ‘Participation’ and ‘Feminism’, and that these could be effectively deployed to analyse the interview data. The results of this can be found in Chapter 4.

Table 3.1 Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Clothing	‘Slut’	Participation	Feminism
Sub-themes	Irrelevant to rape; What I/others wore; Clothing and the media	Using the word ‘Slut’; ‘Slut’ and the media	Diversity of attendees; Diversity of speakers; Other types of participation	Inclusive feminism; Gateway to feminism; Solidarity- building

Discussions of the media cut across themes and are thus picked up in more than one theme.

Content Analysis of Media Texts

Content analysis was chosen as a central method for this thesis for a number of reasons: 1) To summarise and quantify (Neuendorf, 2002) a large corpus of media texts about SlutWalk London 2011; 2) To pay “attention to objectivity/intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 10); 3) To “identify patterns in authorship, subject matter, methods and interpretation” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 155), which were central considerations in this study; 4) To monitor the way women were represented in newspaper articles and images, to identify patterns in their representation and to reveal the sexist and/or anti-feminist nature of these (Reinharz, 1992).

For the mass-media data set, I used NexisUK to search UK national newspapers, with search terms SlutWalk + London and Slut + Walk + London for the period 1 April 2011

(date the London march was first proposed on Facebook) to 30 June 2011 (three weeks after the march took place, on 11 June 2011). The first combination yielded 80 results and the second combination yielded 65 results, including repetitions and items with only a cursory mention, which I edited out because they were not actually about SlutWalk and were therefore not relevant to the kinds of question asked in the coding frame (Appendix 7: Coding Frame for Texts). I decided to retain articles about SlutWalk that were not specifically about London if these were about the protest movement in general or the British protest movement in particular, but to discard those that were about a specific SlutWalk outside London. This was because the focus of my study was London and each satellite protest has been organised locally and with a particular emphasis – I did not want to distort the findings about London by including other site-specific articles. The final newspaper corpus comprises 82 items.

For blogs, I conducted a Google blog search for the same period (1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011), using the same search terms, which yielded 55 results. I edited out all blogs not written by self-representing participants in SlutWalk London, image-only blogs, and also those written by my interviewees, to avoid their indirect identification. I also explored blogs that the original 55 linked to, and filtered these in the same way. The final blog corpus comprises 24 items. For Tumblr posts, I searched the slutmeansspeakup.tumblr.com website and selected all the entries for 2011, a total of 19 items. In selecting the blogs and Tumblr posts, I also considered the relevant ethical concerns. On the one hand, the posts are public and therefore can be conceived of as available for use in a similar way to newspaper articles. However, they were not necessarily written by professional authors and their authors may not have considered that their texts would be used in any way other than being read on the social media platform. Therefore, and to avoid what Niina Sormanen and Epp Lauk call the “major ethical concerns regarding social media” research, which are “the possible misuse and abuse of the information gathered” (2016, p. 64), I made a number of strategic choices, which are detailed in the section on discourse analysis, below.

Frame analysis was used as a method of content analysis in this study, to identify trends in the data. Because these are the basic tenets of framing theory and have the advantage of being readily applicable to a variety of types of text, I decided to

operationalise Entman’s (1993) four framing functions to analyse the media texts corpus; these are: problem, cause, moral judgement and solutions. I sampled 20% from each data set and read these looking for the four functions in each. This process is recommended by Neuendorf (2011), who advises that “the content analyst should...seek additional clues from a thorough examination of the pool of messages constituting the defined population” (p. 280). This examination generated the following themes for each framing function.

Table 3.2 Functions and themes

Functions	Problem	Cause	Moral Judgement	Solutions
	Victim blaming, slut shaming and other attitudes that excuse rape (18) Dressing like sluts, reclaiming the word slut and naivety of SlutWalkers and women in general (9) Structural and cultural inequalities, including the police, justice system, culture of sexualisation and rapists (4)	Rape culture/ victim blaming (13) Natural differences between men and women (6) Structural and cultural inequalities, including sexualisation, objectification, misogyny, sexism and patriarchy (12)	Rape victims never to blame (13) Provocative dress invites attack (7) Structural and cultural inequalities, including media representation of SlutWalkers and media logic, blaming the victim not the perpetrator, sexualisation but no recognition of women’s sexual autonomy; systematic harassment and assault of women, sexism and misogyny (7)	Go out and protest to raise awareness (16) Women should avoid sexual harassment/ assault by dressing modestly (6) Tackle structural and cultural inequalities such as sexualisation and rape culture, poor policing and delivery of justice, sexism and misogyny (8)

A code book and coding frame were developed from this process for the purpose of inter-coder reliability. The second coder, a fellow PhD student, was sent the code book and coding frame, along with samples of (a different) 20% of the corpus. Inter-

coding was useful for ironing out some issues of exhaustiveness and exclusivity (Neuendorf, 2011), due to which the coding frame was amended for the next stage of analysis (Appendix 7: Coding Frame for Texts). There was 83% inter-coder reliability for the functions: 'problem', 'cause' and 'moral judgement' and 72% agreement for the function 'solution' (a difference of two items). Thus the overall reliability across functions was 80.5%, which is considered good agreement by both Krippendorff (2004) and Neuendorf (2002).

Once inter-coding was complete I embarked on an analysis of the whole media text corpus, using the coding book and frame. Next I compiled a list of questions with which to cross reference the data (Appendix 8: Questions for Analysis CA Texts). These questions worked to unpick the coding book data input, and served to generate visual representations of the data in Excel and to assist in the analysis, which is presented in Chapter 5. Entman (1993) asserts that 'problems' are the most important of the four framing functions. The two most common 'problems', which I labelled 'victim blaming' and 'sluts', were central to the analysis process and acted as frames. These two frames correspond neatly with the two sensibilities set out in the Chapter 2: feminist and postfeminist, and are elaborated on in Chapter 5.

Discourse Analysis of Media Texts

Discourse analysis, "a concern with discourse itself, a view of language as constructive and constructed, an emphasis upon discourse as a form of action, and a conviction in the rhetorical organization of discourse" (Gill, 2007a, p. 58), is used in this thesis to examine a subset of the media texts data sets. Discourse analysis was chosen to complement content analysis of media texts in order to get to the 'how' part of the research questions: how are SlutWalk and its participants constructed in newspapers and in social media? And also to address findings from the content analysis which required further enquiry, such as the notion of SlutWalk as an example of 'feminism done wrong', which emerges from Chapter 5. Discourse analysis was also chosen because it "has an enormous amount to offer feminists", according to Gill (1995, p. 167), in particular in exploring "a range of questions concerning the reproduction of gender power relations" (p. 167). In her influential work on feminist critical discourse analysis, Michelle Lazar (2007) asserts that the discourse of "popular postfeminism" is

in “urgent need of critique” (p. 154), because of the way it constructs feminism as already accomplished and therefore no longer necessary. She goes on to state that the use of feminist critical discourse analysis is a form of activism, aimed at revealing the ways in which social structures such as the media work to sustain oppression and prevent equality. In this thesis I thus take up Lazar’s (2009) call to examine how “post/feminism” (p. 340) is communicated in an attempt to illuminate how feminist and postfeminist discourses are negotiated within and between newspapers and online spaces.

The reasons for using mixed methods are set out above and the combination of discourse and content analysis is a common one (e.g. Bronstein, 2005; Mendes, 2011b; Mendes, 2015; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1992), which helps to generate robust answers to the questions at hand, for as Potter and Wetherell (1994) assert “precisely the sort of detail that is lost in more traditional quantitative analytic techniques such as content analysis... is often crucial in discourse analytic studies” (p. 58). The difference being that, while content analysis is concerned with what is said and with what frequency, discourse analysis in all its forms, stems from “a conviction of the central importance of discourse in constructing social life” (Gill, 1996, p. 141). Neuendorf (2004) specifically advocates combining content and discourse analysis and argues that the findings from each can complement the other, resulting in robust research results. As this thesis demonstrates, the combination has enabled me to examine some of the ‘big picture’ findings from the content analysis in greater detail and thus to broaden the exploration of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities.

In order to conduct discourse analysis and to make the media texts data more manageable, I selected 20% of each type of text for the corpus (five blogs, four Tumblr posts, four news articles, five columns, three opinions and four letters). In the selection process, I tried to maintain the proportional representativeness of the corpus in terms of source, gender of author, relationship to feminism and focus on, as well as degree of support for, SlutWalk (see Appendix 9: Discourse Analysis Corpus Table).

I considered the ethics of analysing and citing from these sources. Permission was sought from all bloggers to use their texts, with or without their name. Only Natalie Lasance responded and granted full permission to use her blog and her name. Others did not respond. Therefore, in order to respect the fact that bloggers may not have been able to anticipate that research use would be made of their posts, I tried to choose blog posts published on non-personal platforms such as online journals and magazines (e.g. Open Democracy), where the expectation of privacy is removed. Hence the choice of three blogs which were all written for sites that function as online magazines, and of another blog which operates as a professional platform, totalling five blog posts. It was not possible to seek permission from the Tumblr posters, as only first names, which may or may not be pseudonyms, were given. It was after many deliberations, in particular with regard to the assertion that “just because it is accessible does not make it ethical” (boyd & Crawford, 2012, p. 671), that I decided to use these posts. I made an assessment that, as they were on a public Tumblr platform which does not link to or otherwise identify posters in any way other than the names they choose – in these cases first names only, there was little risk of them being identified through citation in this thesis. I also believe that their self-representation of their reasons for marching in SlutWalk deserves to be compared and contrasted with newspaper representations of the march and its participants, in order to better understand participants and attend to voices that would otherwise not be heard.

I read and re-read the corpus in detail multiple times, taking notes and highlighting linguistic content, meanings and topics, form, grammar and cohesion, and trying to reveal constructive processes, argumentative organisation, taken-for-granted stories, variation and consistency within and between texts, as well as silences and gaps (Gill, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1994; Tonkiss, 1998). Rosalind Gill (1996) states that, “there is now a huge variety of perspectives that lay claim to the name ‘discourse analysis’” (p. 141) and in this project I follow the type of discourse analysis that is associated with sociology and social psychology (Gill, 1995, 1996, 2009; Potter, 1996; Potter and Wetherell, 1994; Tonkiss, 1998; Wetherell & Potter, 1988).

In order to examine the ways in which SlutWalk London is constructed in both representations and self-representations of the protest and its participants, and in particular to explore feminist and postfeminist sensibilities in these constructions, interpretative repertoires were used. According to Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter (1988, p. 172) “Repertoires can be seen as the building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of actions, cognitive processes and other phenomena... [and] the presence of a repertoire will often be signalled by certain tropes or figures of speech”. While they refer to spoken texts, interpretative repertoires have also been applied successfully to media texts (Gill, 2009; Lachover, 2014; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1992). Further, Gill (2009) states that interpretative repertoires are “a unit of analysis that allows scholars to go beyond individual or discrete expressions to begin to identify patterns across and between texts, and to connect these to wider contexts and social formations” (p. 351). I have found interpretative repertoires particularly useful in highlighting the ways in which feminist and postfeminist sensibilities are negotiated, through the employment of patterned linguistic constructions, within and between texts as well as within and between representations and self-representations.

Content and Visual Analyses of Media Images

The ways in which women are depicted in news texts and images is a subject of ongoing discussion and analysis (e.g. Carter, Branston, & Allan, 1998; Gill, 2007a; Mendes & Carter, 2008; Tuchman, 1978; van Zoonen, 1994), with recent research suggesting that they are “more likely to appear in photographs and other illustrative material than in written news texts” (Jia, Lansdall-Welfare, Sudhakar, Carter, & Cristianini, 2016, p. 2), demonstrating that, while some progress has been made over the last 20 years (Ross & Carter, 2011), there is still a long way to go to achieve gender parity of representation in the media.

The visual aspect of the representation and self-representation of SlutWalk is central to the way in which the protest has been perceived, discussed and critiqued. Indeed, Theresa O’Keefe (2014) discusses SlutWalk as “spectacle” (p. 6) and Tram Nguyen (2013) asserts that the mass-media images of SlutWalk “do little to disturb social understanding of a ‘slut’” (p. 160). Whereas, Annie Hill (2016) states that SlutWalkers’

“appearance is a critical part of resistance” (p. 36). The aim of Chapter 7 is to explore the tension between these assessments of SlutWalk’s visual representation, using both content and visual analysis, and to examine the ways in which the concepts of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities are negotiated in relation to the visual. Triangulating the two methods, similarly to the texts, offers a robust analysis of both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of representation.

Having identified the corpus of media texts for analysis, I set out to identify the corpus of media images. NexisUK is a text-only service, so, armed with the list of newspaper items, I spent considerable time at the British Library using their microfilm, paper archives and online databases to find the original pages, with the images that accompany the texts, and was successful apart from with a handful of texts that, for a variety of technical reasons, could not be found in these ways. Images from blogs were easily collated from the blog posts themselves.

While all the images attached to each text were initially counted, content analysis was only conducted for images which depicted SlutWalkers (n=41 for newspapers and n=85 for blogs) because it is in those images that the representation and self-representation of SlutWalkers take place. For visual analysis, 20% of images were selected for their proportional representativeness, which amounted to n=9 in the newspaper corpus and n=18 in blogs. Each image is a unit of analysis, so, where more than one image of SlutWalkers accompanied a text, each image was analysed. Images from Tumblr were not included in the corpus because there were only three recurring images on this section of the SlutWalk website and none of these were of SlutWalkers themselves, but rather of banners or the banner-making process.

For the content analysis, rather than using the frame analysis functions of ‘problem’, ‘cause’, ‘moral judgment’ and ‘solution’ utilised in the content analysis of texts, which cannot be readily applied to images, I extrapolated questions from the table below (Table 3.3 Elements of Feminist and Postfeminist Sensibility), where, for example, the variable ‘solidarity’ is examined with questions about the number of SlutWalkers visible in the picture and ‘politicisation’ is examined with questions about placards and body art depicted. Full details are presented in Chapter 7.

Table 3.3 Elements of postfeminist and feminist sensibilities

Postfeminist Sensibility	Feminist Sensibility
Choice	Equality
Individualism and Empowerment	Solidarity and Politicisation
Natural Difference	Intersectionality
Irony and Knowingness	Anger and Hope
Feminism as Passé or Done Wrong	Feminism as Current and Relevant

A code book and coding frame were developed from this process for the purpose of inter-coder reliability. The second coder, another fellow PhD student, was sent the code book and coding frame along with 20% of the corpus. After discussion of the questions, answers and what they meant, a check for inter-coder reliability was carried out. Overall reliability for the function-related questions was 86.6%, which is high; however, within that a number of questions yielded low agreement, such as 55% agreement on the question about age and 60% on the question about clothing. Not only are these low scores, but they relate to questions which are important theoretically. The second coder and I went through the questions for each image in the sample corpus, agreed that we had each miscoded on a number of images, and on a few others agreed to disagree. The final tally was an overall level of agreement of 93.75, which is excellent according to Krippendorff (2004) and Neuendorf (2002), with 90% agreement on how many SlutWalkers were in the image, 95% agreement on whether body art was visible; 90% on gender; 80% on age; 100% on 'race' and 75% agreement on whether the clothes were 'sluttish'. We concurred that the level of agreement on clothes would be improved further if the coder thought about the question in terms of whether a picture editor would describe the people in the picture as dressed in a 'sluttish' fashion, rather than having to apply his own judgment, with which he was uncomfortable. Overall these are very satisfactory levels of agreement and, after some fine tuning, the coding frame (Appendix 10: Coding Frame for Images) was ready for analysis of the full corpus. Next I compiled a list of questions to ask of the data (Appendix 11: Questions for Analysis of Images CA Data). These questions work to scrutinise the coding book data input, and serve to generate visual

representations of the data in Excel and to assist in the analysis, which is presented in the final empirical chapter, Chapter 7.

In addition to content analysis of the images, I conducted visual analysis, for, as Philip Bell (2001) states, “having conducted a content analysis, the researcher can then interpret the images or the imagery in qualitative ways... Typical or salient examples can be further analysed to fill out the qualitative description of ‘what the data mean’” (p. 27). I started by sifting the newspaper images for representativeness, to identify the “typical or salient examples” (p. 27) and whittled the list down from 41 to 30 items.

Next I identified the credit-holders for each of the newspaper images and contacted these, seeking permission to use, and removed from the list any unattributed images. I wanted to analyse approximately 20% of the data set, so between six and eight newspaper images and between 15 and 20 blog images. I contacted the bloggers whose images I was considering using. One said no, two said yes (Catherine Elms and Natalie Lasance) and many did not reply. I compiled two documents with images for which I had permission, one each for newspapers and blogs (Appendix 12: Images for Analysis Newspapers and Appendix 13: Images for Analysis Blogs), with a total of 26 images for analysis. Following steps set out by Rose (2007) and by Lister and Wells (2001), I analysed the images and the findings of this analysis are detailed in Chapter 7.

Conclusions

In this chapter, the methodological approach is presented. I have explained the use of multiple methods, the differences between these, and how they work together to offer rich data and robust analysis. I have set the approach within the context of a feminist methodology, highlighting the ways in which the analysis is reflexive, ethical and *about* as well as *for* women. I have demonstrated how the various methods combine to tackle the question of representation and self-representation in the context of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities in media texts about SlutWalk London and its protestors.

The findings generated by the various forms of analysis are presented in the following four empirical chapters, organised by method: thematic analysis of interview data (Chapter 4); content analysis of mass- and social-media text (Chapter 5); discourse analysis of mass- and social-media texts (Chapter 6); and content and visual analysis of mass- and social-media images (Chapter 7).

The overall research design offers a broad analysis of the representation and self-representation of SlutWalk London and provides an interesting and potentially useful new conceptual framework – that of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities – with which other feminist interventions can be analysed to contribute to the growing body of knowledge about the state of feminism in contemporary media culture.

The limitations of the study as outlined here are: 1) the interview chapter could be more generalizable if there were more interviews to analyse and if these also included interviews with journalists; 2) the interview data could benefit from discourse analysis; 3) the frame analysis could have been conducted inductively; and 4) the interpretative discourse analysis could be supplemented with critical discourse analysis, as could the visual analysis. I reflect further on these limitations in Chapter 8, which concludes the thesis.

Chapter 4: SlutWalkers Speak Up – Thematic Analysis of Interviews

Introduction

This chapter focuses on participants' and organisers' interview-based accounts of SlutWalk London in particular, and of feminism and the media more generally. The distinction between participants' and organisers' accounts manifests mainly in the ways in which they discuss the aims of SlutWalk, with organisers taking a more strategic approach to what they set out to achieve, and grassroots participants reflecting more on their personal reasons for participating.

The discussion draws on semi-structured interviews with 11 grassroots participants and four organisers of SlutWalk London 2011, using thematic analysis. The interviewees ranged in age from late teens to mid-sixties (two teenagers, four in their twenties, two in their thirties, three in their forties, three in their fifties, and one in her sixties); were mostly, but not exclusively, white (13 White, one Asian and one Black); were mostly, but not exclusively, female (12 female, one male, one woman of transgender history, and one person who did not identify as male or female); and were either students (five), academics (five), activists (two) or other professionals (five). While I did not explicitly ask, many of the interviewees stated that they had experienced rape or other forms of sexual assault. All of the 11 participants are identified by pseudonyms, whereas three of the organisers (Cristel, Lisa and Niki) are quoted using their real names, having waived their anonymity. The fourth organiser's name, 'Natasha', is also a pseudonym. Further details about the interviewees and how they were recruited are presented in the methodology chapter and in Appendix 4 (Interview Participant Information).

Despite the difference in approach between grassroots participants and organisers noted above, all the interviewees agreed that the purpose of SlutWalk was to bring about change, be this *to raise awareness about rape*, e.g. "I wanted to make people more aware that it wasn't just, like, strangers in the street" (Kate, personal communication, 27.11.13); *to change attitudes*, e.g. "because all of the time that the

conversation focuses on the activities or attributes of the victim of sexual assault, we can't have the other conversation about how it is that we live in a society in which people do these things" (Deb, personal communication, 6.11.13); or *to demand institutional change*, e.g: "most women who go to the police for help after they've been attacked in whatever situation, domestic violence, child abuse, rape by strangers, etc., our experience over the years is that we are demanding that the police take that seriously and prosecute their rapists" (Lisa, personal communication, 15.1.14). This desire for change was an overarching motivator for interviewees which framed the ways in which they discussed the specifics of SlutWalk.

All interviewees identified as feminists and viewed equality as a key tenet of feminism. For example, Linda defined feminism in terms of caring "about and support[ing] the fight for equality for women" (27.2.14); Chris described feminism as "standing up for the rights of anybody who's oppressed because of their perceived gender as a woman or a girl" (27.1.14); and Sylvia stated that being feminist means you "believe in equal rights, regardless of gender" (29.11.13). These definitions of feminism express a feminist sensibility, using words such as 'equality' and 'stand up for', and this outlook frames the ways in which they discussed SlutWalk.

After intensive reading, re-reading and mapping of the interview transcripts, four main themes were identified in the interview data: 'Clothing', 'Slut', 'Participation' and 'Feminism'. The discussion that follows is structured in accordance with these themes.

Clothing

SlutWalk started in reaction to a policeman's comments, in which he implied that a woman's choice of clothing was what determined the likelihood of her being sexually assaulted (SlutWalk, 2012). Thus the conception of the movement was intrinsically connected to the theme of women's clothing. When the first SlutWalk march took place in Toronto, some protestors came attired in 'sluttish' clothing. This became a focus of media coverage and of subsequent sister marches across the globe, including in London.

Possibly as a result of the centrality of clothing to SlutWalk from the beginning, this was one of the main themes in interviewees' accounts. Within the clothing theme a number of sub-themes were identified, covering the following topics: relevance of clothing to rape cases; discussions of what interviewees and others wore to SlutWalk; and how clothing worn at SlutWalk was reported in the media.

Clothing as Irrelevant to Rape

All interviewees supported SlutWalk's stance that clothing was irrelevant to rape. For example, Deb, an academic in her twenties, stated that: "how someone is dressed should be entirely irrelevant to their safety" (personal communication, 6.11.13). Moreover, for Deb and others, this belief was a central reason for deciding to participate in SlutWalk: "to challenge the idea that the way that someone is dressed is a consequence for how they are treated in terms of safety or violence" (6.11.13). This is important, considering the remarks that led to the organisation of SlutWalk in Toronto and some of the media commentary about SlutWalk, which assigns at least partial responsibility for rape to women and their clothes, as I discuss in Chapter 6 (e.g. Alibhai-Brown, 2011; Marrin, 2011; Selway, 2011).

In addition to rejecting the clothing-rape link in general, participants were specifically critical of the accepted use made of it by the justice system. For example, Livia, who was still at school when she participated in SlutWalk London, questioned the institutional bias against rape victim/survivors at the heart of the protest: "Women shouldn't be judged, you know, judged in court for what they wore and what they did" (personal communication, 4.12.13); Livia also invoked the perpetrators of sexual violence and called into question the attitude that assigns blame to victims and their clothes, but not to their rapists: "like, men are these sort of animals who, like, literally just can't control themselves [at the sight of a woman in revealing clothing]" (4.12.13).

Thus, clothing as an excuse for rape was invoked to reject institutional and cultural victim blaming as well as to call into question assumptions of natural difference between men and women that displace responsibility for rape from the perpetrator to the victim by way of her clothes. The undermining of assumptions of sexual difference, combined with the rejection of a woman's choice of clothing as a reason

for sexual violence being perpetrated against her, situate the discussion of 'clothing as irrelevant to rape' within a feminist sensibility.

What I/Others Wore

Because SlutWalk is frequently discussed in relation to the 'sluttish' attire that some protestors have worn, the question of what to wear concerned interviewees in their preparations for the march, while what others were wearing was something they noticed on the day. All but one of the interviewees wore everyday clothing, as opposed to 'sluttish' clothing, to the protest.

In thinking about what to wear, interviewees recounted different considerations, such as media coverage of previous SlutWalk marches, interviewees' feelings about their bodies, personal dress preferences, as well as political considerations. For example, Kate, a professional woman in her twenties, considered media coverage of earlier SlutWalks in her decision making:

because there was all the stuff in the news about people wearing revealing clothes and everything, um, I think I couldn't decide where I stood on that whole thing and what I wanted to do, so I think I just wore my normal clothes, which are quite kind of tomboy-ish. (personal communication, 27.11.13)

While Kate decided to wear everyday clothes because she was ambivalent about the concept of wearing revealing clothes as a protest tactic, others such as Naomi, a woman in her forties, decided not to wear 'sluttish' clothes because of her age and her relationship with her body: "I was not comfortable, actually, myself, revealing a lot of my older flesh, my mature flesh" (personal communication, 20.11.13). Similarly, Rosie, a twenty-something student, chose her outfit on the basis of her sartorial preferences: "I chose what I was going to wear... Jeans and a T shirt and a pair of Doc Martens... I've never been particularly...I don't tend to wear revealing clothing" (14.11.13). In contrast, Livia, who was a teenager at the time, chose to wear a revealing outfit to make a political point about victim blaming and slut shaming:

the dress thing, I suppose because I mean, yes, it was short, but it is something that I would wear and have worn, and so I wanted to, like, show that I was wearing that there, and... if you had been sexually harassed or raped while wearing that, then I don't think that someone... you know, that should be... that should effect the

sentencing of the person who harassed you, what you were wearing, all the sort of slut shaming stuff. (personal communication, 4.12.13)

Livia is the only one of the interviewees who decided to wear a revealing dress and she did so to make the political point that if a woman was assaulted in a dress like hers she should not be blamed and her perpetrator should not be excused on the basis of that dress. Livia's decision ties in with the earlier theme, that clothing is irrelevant to rape and is political. On the other hand, Kate's decision to wear everyday clothes, while also political, was a rejection of the tactic of dressing revealingly. Others opted to wear everyday clothes for more personal reasons. However, this did not stop them participating, which reveals a political engagement with the protest and a rejection of the postfeminist call to women and girls to make themselves 'visible' in particular, usually hyper-feminine, ways (Banet-Weiser, 2015a).

In discussing the clothes worn by those around them at SlutWalk London, there is a consensus among the interviewees that attendees wore a variety of clothes. For example, Natasha, the young woman who first suggested organising a SlutWalk march in London, noted that "people were wearing all sorts of different things. Some people were in their underwear, some people really dressed up, a lot of people, like, most people were just wearing their everyday clothes" (personal communication, 26.1.14). The wearing of everyday clothes was interpreted by Lisa, one of the organisers based at the Crossroads Women's Centre, as a political statement:

some people came in the clothes they were raped in, to make a point, some people dressed as outrageously as they could and others wore their everyday clothes. It was a real big mix. And I think it was a tactic, personally, which is useful to... generally there was an agreement among all the people participating that whatever you wear, you never deserve to be raped. And that was a point that was made. (personal communication, 15.1.14)

Thus Lisa, like the other interviewees, asserted that, whatever people wore to SlutWalk, they were making the political statement that clothing and rape are unrelated and that therefore, victim blaming by police, judges or journalists is always misguided and wrong. This assertion is noted, alongside a critique of the media coverage by interviewees, in particular that the mix of clothes "didn't get well enough reported in the media" (Lisa, personal communication, 15.1.14), and neither did the fact that:

quite a number of people turned up in tracksuits. I was very struck by one woman's placard that said: 'These were the clothes that I was wearing when I was raped' and it really gave the lie to that whole thing about asking for it, you know, that whole myth about 'if you dress provocatively, what do you expect?' (Lisa, personal communication, 15.1.14)

As these comments demonstrate, interviewees noted the variety of clothes on display at SlutWalk London, and interpreted the mix as proof not only that clothes should not act as an excuse for rape, but also that women are raped regardless of what they are wearing. In addition, and perhaps because of their political commitment to severing the clothing-rape link, interviewees noted with disappointment the media focus on the 'sluttish' outfits rather than the wider picture and message.

SlutWalkers' Clothing and the Media

In discussing SlutWalkers' clothing and the media, interviewees spoke about two main aspects. One was how SlutWalkers' clothing was reported, particularly by comparison with how they perceived the clothing situation in 'reality'. The other was the way in which SlutWalkers' clothing was used as a tool by protestors to garner necessary media coverage and the consequences of the application of this media logic.

Interviewees believed that they were well placed to compare the media coverage with their first-hand observation of the event and that there was a discrepancy between the way SlutWalk was represented and the way they as participants perceived it. For example, Sylvia, a professional woman in her thirties, stated that the media "only pictured the people who were wearing the outrageous outfits, which were few" (29.11.13). Linda, an academic in her forties, concurred that the media coverage did not reflect the reality on the day: "when you read press reports and you see images, they tend to sort of pick out women in fish-nets and that kind of thing, but that wasn't the impression I had at all of who was there" (27.2.14).

The discrepancy between media representation of the protest and its reality was perceived as problematic by interviewees because it contributed to a misunderstanding of the protest itself. As Sylvia surmised "that's why a lot of feminists still claim they don't like SlutWalk, but I don't think they are the ones who have been

on it, because they talk about the outfits and those outfits are few and far between” (personal communication, 29.11.13). Here Sylvia made an interesting point about critics of SlutWalk basing their criticism on media representation rather than by attending the protest in person or at least attending to the self-representation of those who did participate.

It was precisely because non-participants were likely to form an opinion of SlutWalk based on media reports that participants thought how SlutWalk was represented was important. But media coverage is a complex matter and interviewees took differing stances on the media-protest relationship (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993) and its consequences. Although Sylvia asserted that reportage did not reflect reality, she nonetheless rationalised the discrepancy: “I think that if it wasn’t called SlutWalk and if some of the women weren’t dressed in heels and short skirts then the media wouldn’t give us any coverage, and coverage is the point” (29.11.13). Kate, a professional in her twenties, elaborated on why coverage was ‘the point’:

Because a lot of people, that’s all they read. You know, even if it’s like the *Daily Mail*, showing half naked women, saying ‘sluts go on a walk cause they’re angry’ or something, then it’s at least about the issue to some extent and that is reaching a huge audience. (personal communication, 27.11.13)

Thus it is clear that interviewees understood that extreme tactics can be beneficial in garnering necessary media coverage to reach a wider audience. They took as given the importance of gaining media coverage, and accepted the premise that to achieve media coverage for a protest such as SlutWalk making women’s bodies visible was part of the deal. In addition to identifying the need to reach a wide audience “by any means necessary” (Niki, personal communication, 15.1.14), others also recognized that “the role [the mass media] play is kind of legitimising” (Naomi, personal communication, 20.11.13). Thus mass-media coverage is not only important for reaching new audiences, but also in order to acquire legitimacy for the cause and to mobilize non-participants.

Conversely, some interviewees commented that there were also disadvantages to embracing the media’s logic and rules and not all of them believed that any publicity is good publicity. For example, Natasha, who initiated and organised SlutWalk London,

stated that “it was just like ‘Oh, loads of naked women, wow!’” (personal communication, 26.1.14), which she was concerned could serve to reduce the protest to merely more titillating media images of women among many. Similarly, others saw a wilful misunderstanding of what SlutWalk was trying to achieve and a reduction of the issues to facile debate. For example, Alice, a woman of trans history in her fifties, opined that: “the news was playing its usual game of pulling out the people who are more condemnatory. I felt it unhelpful because SlutWalk is a tactic. It’s not an end in itself” (personal communication, 21.11.13).

However, others noted that some of the coverage was more mixed. For example, Rosie, a student in her twenties, observed that

some of them did have pictures as well of, you know, interesting placards, normally dressed or at least differently dressed women... some chose older people and things like that. And the more balanced and the more interested in the actual event the article and the paper seemed to be, the more range of people they actually showed. (personal communication, 14.11.13)

Rosie acknowledged that the representation of SlutWalk in newspapers varied in content and images, depending on the way that the protest was reported. This is an interesting reflection about the nature of the protest-media relationship, whereby, depending on their agenda, media outlets are likely to report the same event differently. This observation is corroborated in the content analysis of text and images and is further discussed in the following chapters.

In sum, interviewees agreed that the media had depicted mainly SlutWalkers in revealing outfits, and that the performance element of the protest had helped to garner media coverage needed to reach and mobilize new audiences. However, interviewees expressed differing views about the consequences of the media coverage of SlutWalk. Some interviewees were worried that by depicting mainly scantily clad women the message of the protest would be obscured and misunderstood, whereas others viewed the focus on ‘dressed up’ protestors as a necessary trade-off to achieve legitimacy and make audiences take notice. Still others noted that, while some of the coverage wilfully misunderstood and misrepresented the protest, there was media reportage that was quite balanced and informative. Thus

the perceived focus by most of the media on ‘sluttishly’ dressed protestors was a contested issue among participant interviewees. However, in what can be assessed as a show of protestor solidarity, their critique was aimed at the media coverage rather than at those who participated wearing revealing clothing, further lending their critique a feminist sensibility.

‘Slut’

SlutWalk is a protest against victim blaming and slut shaming (SlutWalk, 2012). While the *clothing* theme discussed above addresses the victim blaming aspect of SlutWalk, the *slut* theme addresses the slut shaming aspect of the protest. Even though the name of the protest came from the language used by the Canadian policeman in his advice to students (Reger, 2014), the adoption of the term ‘slut’ was deemed controversial by many and was central to interviewees’ accounts. In this section, ‘slut’ includes the pros and cons of using the word and its use in and by the media.

Using the Word ‘Slut’

One of the most discussed aspects of SlutWalk is its name (Hill, 2016). Among interviewees, the use of the word ‘slut’ was discussed in a variety of ways. Some interviewees were concerned about the idea of reclaiming words in general, as well as being specifically concerned that using ‘slut’ as a slur discriminates against women in differing ways, particularly along racial lines, and therefore its reclamation is problematic. Indeed, two out of the 15 interviewees for this project were concerned about the use of the term ‘slut’ in this sense. For example, Rosie, a student in her twenties, recounted that “there was that discussion about whether or not you can reclaim the word slut, if it’s a white privilege thing to be able to say ‘I’m a slut’ as a point of pride” (personal communication, 14.11.13). Thus, some SlutWalkers were aware of the ways in which different forms of discrimination can intersect and were concerned about the risk that the use of the word ‘slut’ might perpetuate this double bind.

However, the concerns that Rosie articulated, above, about the potential for intersectional discrimination in the use of the word ‘slut’ were largely alleviated by the way that SlutWalk London was organised, and in particular by the speakers invited to talk at the end-of-march rally. Rosie explained that “I also remember seeing when

they announced some of the speakers that they were, basically from black women's groups, sex workers' rights groups, and I remember feeling more comfortable at that point" (14.11.13). Thus those interviewees who were uncomfortable with the adoption of the word slut because of its potentially racially divisive implications, were reassured by the awareness demonstrated by SlutWalk London's organisers of intersectional discriminations and concerns. This point is explored further in the next theme, 'participation'.

Other concerns about the use of the word 'slut' were acknowledged by interviewees, in addition to the intersectional ones discussed above. However, some interviewees were dismissive of these further critiques of using the word 'slut'. For example, Linda, an academic in her forties, explained that

there's critics of SlutWalk who don't like the use of that term because they think it can't be altered; to me [this] completely misses the point because using the word is making people, they have to think about it, you know, so it just seems such a nice, simple gesture that refuses to be diverted from the actual problem. Not 'what should women be doing, then', it doesn't matter, they shouldn't be subjected to these problems and inequities. (personal communication, 27.2.14)

Thus, Linda assessed the focus by some of SlutWalk's critics on the use of the word 'slut' as missing 'the point'. The 'point', as Linda presented it, being that women were 'slut shamed' in the first place. Other interviewees also expressed the view that the discussion of whether or not the word 'slut' should be used by SlutWalk was an unnecessary distraction. For example, Kate, a professional in her twenties, stated that "I think there was too much discussion about the word 'slut' rather than what the issue was about... I just feel that's just a bit of a waste of time to talk about" (personal communication, 27.11.13).

While deliberations about whether or not the word 'slut' should be used might distract from the political aims of the protest, some interviewees acknowledged that its use by organisers did act to mobilise them to participate. For example, Linda was positively attracted to the protest by the word: "the idea of it being the beginning of something, a really kind of visible, political protest I was absolutely fascinated by and thought 'How fantastic is this', so that was why I wanted to go" (personal

communication, 27.2.14). She further explained the power that she thought the word 'slut' held:

I think what I like about the use of that word, I mean like why it's significant, it's like holding this mirror up. So, um, if we take on the word slut, if we say 'yes, I am', then what are you going to do? It really illuminates what's being said. Rather than going 'no I'm not a slut' or 'we've got to define slut differently' or all these kind of manoeuvres, it's such a kind of simple thing to go 'ok, so if I say I'm a slut, you know, now what's your move?' And really just insisting on that simple point

The use of the word as outlined by Linda in this quote is also discussed by Hill (2016) in her analysis of SlutWalk as a response to rape logic. Hill states that "SlutWalk shows how term and referent can be reworked when the target speaks in that name rather than dodging or denying it" (p. 32). Thus, the word 'slut' can be seen as a subversion of rape logic, a mobilizer of protestors, as well as potentially problematic in terms of perpetuating intersectional discrimination.

'Slut' and the Media

Interviewees focused on three main aspects when discussing the use of the word 'slut' and the media: 1) how the use of the word 'slut' helped to generate publicity and mobilize supporters; 2) a concern with some of the ways in which the use of the word was critiqued in the media; and 3) contemplation of the fact that the word 'slut', as a topic, was found only in newspapers and not on self-representing blogs.

'Slut' Generates Publicity and Mobilises Supporters

Linda, an academic in her forties, attested that she wanted to attend SlutWalk because of its use of the word 'slut'. Other interviewees stressed that the word 'slut' has the power not only to mobilise participants directly but also to generate publicity that might mobilise more supporters indirectly and widely. For example, Sylvia, a professional in her thirties, described her experience of attending a pre-march meeting called by the organisers of SlutWalk:

I remember in that meeting getting quite angry or frustrated, actually, that all these women were concerned that the word 'slut' was being used and they weren't comfortable with that word, and I was saying 'but this is amazing, the media is picking up on it, it's a global phenomenon. If it was called 'March Against Rape', no one would take any notice. It's the fact that it's called the SlutWalk that's made the media, for

right or wrong reasons, it's given us publicity.' So I remember being really frustrated at that (personal communication, 29.11.13)

Tapping into the debate related by Sylvia above, other interviewees also engaged with the question of whether all publicity is good publicity. For example, Lisa, an activist in her fifties and one of SlutWalk London's organisers, asserted that "it's important to have publicity, even bad publicity, because it did bring a number of people to it that wouldn't have otherwise heard about it" (15.1.14). This point was borne out by Daniel, an academic in his thirties, who stated that "I guess this sort of hostile coverage, just made it feel like it was more important to go out there and, you know, stand up and be counted" (personal communication, 21.11.13). This form of mobilisation, as a result of negative or disparaging media coverage, has been documented in previous studies of feminist protest (e.g. Barker-Plummer, 2010; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1994) and illustrates the complex nature of protest and media relations (Wolfsfeld, 1984). Interviewees' accounts of their perception of the media coverage of SlutWalk demonstrate that consumers of news are not necessarily dissuaded by negative reporting from participating in a cause they believe in, and actually might be persuaded to take part as an act of support in the face of perceived unreasonable critique.

Critique in the Media of Use of 'Slut'

However, despite many interviewees holding the view that media coverage is important and being aware of the complexities involved in garnering media attention by using contentious words and actions, many were disappointed by the nature of the critique levelled at SlutWalk, especially by "people that you would expect to be on our side" (Niki, personal communication, 15.1.14). Of the discussions about the use of the word 'slut' in the media by some feminist media authors, Niki, an activist sex worker in her fifties and one of SlutWalk London's organisers, said

They were faced with this fantastic occasion and the best they could do was to write whingy, mean-spirited, critical little articles saying 'Is it going to help us if we call ourselves 'Slut'', I mean, for god's sake! You know, it was such a deliberate misunderstanding of what was actually happening in front of their eyes, that it was really malicious. (personal communication, 15.1.14)

Alice, a writer and woman of trans history in her fifties, suggested that the critique of SlutWalk's use of the word 'slut' by feminist writers in newspapers stemmed from a

generational divide between authors and participants: “What I didn’t enjoy, and I thought there was an age divide, was some older feminists acting all shocked by this and the way that the newspapers positioned this as ‘is this what feminism was designed for?’” (personal communication, 21.11.13). Alice’s question is reminiscent of arguments made by Faludi (2010), that feminism has for decades been beset by inter-generational conflict, to its own detriment.

However, Linda, an academic in her forties, put the critique down to journalistic practices more generally: “I don’t think it’s dealt with the topic very well, it likes sensationalist images and it likes its boring things of ‘here’s somebody saying what’s good about SlutWalk and here’s somebody saying what’s bad about SlutWalk’” (27.2.14). Either way, these concerns demonstrate that while media coverage offers clear advantages, such as wider reach and mobilization than a protest can accomplish alone, it also carries reputational risks due to inherent media practices.

However, it was agreed that the majority of the negative publicity, especially regarding the use of the word ‘slut’, came in the run up to SlutWalk London 2011, whereas the reportage of the march itself was much more supportive. For example, Natasha, the young woman who initiated SlutWalk London, observed that

it was really annoying because a lot of the focus was on the word ‘slut’... [but] what I found was that actually on the day that it happened pretty much every newspaper did an article about it and they were really positive. Like, they were talking like they were writing a manifesto for us more than reporting the event, so that was really great, whereas in the run up to it, a lot of the newspapers had been negative. (personal communication, 26.1.14)

Thus, interviewees assessed the critique of SlutWalk and its use of the word ‘slut’, as manifested in the news coverage before the London march took place, as problematic and disappointing. In particular, they were frustrated by the apparent generational divide between feminist media authors and SlutWalk participants. However, the critique by these authors was also rationalised as a pattern characteristic of mass-media journalistic practices more generally.

Discussion of 'Slut' in Mass vs. Social Media

In addition, interviewees agreed that the focus on the word 'slut' is a problem particular to the mainstream media. For example, Lisa, an activist in her fifties and one of SlutWalk London's organisers, stated that

in terms of comparing [the Tumblr posts with] what came out in the mainstream media, that's what got really hidden, which was a real shame. Because they really did just focus on, you know 'should we be using the word 'slut'?...They never got into really what people were saying and what they were demanding. (personal communication, 15.1.14)

Interviewees stressed that the discussion was broader in what were at the time new media outlets – online spaces – in which “you do get so many more different views of things, different ways to look at things”, according to Linda, an academic in her forties (27.2.14). Nonetheless, Natasha, the young woman who kick-started SlutWalk London, admitted that it was thanks to the combination of on- and off-line media, or media hybridity (Chadwick, 2013), that people turned out in their thousands:

I posted it in a lot of Facebook groups and on other Facebook pages, you know, things against rape and feminist groups. I posted a link and said, 'look, I'm organising this' and then it did it by itself. The media kind of, I mean, it's like a really scandalous thing, so the media picked it up and when the newspapers started writing about it, that's when we got loads of people. (personal communication, 26.1.14)

Thus, interviewees noted that discussion of the word 'slut' in a way that undermined SlutWalk and its goals had taken place mainly in the news media, whereas online, and in particular in the self-representations in the Tumblr feed started by SlutWalk London, there had been instead a much more nuanced discussion. The differences between these two forms of representation and how they relate to feminist and postfeminist sensibilities is examined further in the following chapters.

Interviewees also noted that, despite the risks inherent in the media-protest interaction, the means were justified by the end, which in this case was a much larger and more diverse turnout than expected, thanks to the newspaper coverage.

Participation

In addition to issues pertaining to clothing and the use of the word 'slut', interviewees discussed the nature and degree of participation that they witnessed on the day, with particular focus on the variety of attendees and of speakers at the post-march rally. Thus interviewees demonstrated a keen awareness of issues of intersectionality, solidarity and politicisation, which are in evidence in the discussions detailed in this section.

Diversity of Attendees

Interviewees derived pleasure from the perceived variety of attendees at SlutWalk London. Linda, an academic in her forties who was initially nervous about attending the march as she had not been on a protest for years and was concerned that she might not feel comfortable, was relieved when she finally got to the meeting point that "it wasn't a particular kind of thing that a particular kind of person had come to, I didn't feel kind of out of place at all" and that "it was incredibly varied" (personal communication, 27.2.14). What relieved her anxiety was that, in contrast to the way previous SlutWalks had been reported, SlutWalk London appeared to have attracted such a variety of people in terms of age, gender and dress that she felt she fitted in.

The variety of attendees was important to all interviewees, from Sylvia, a professional in her thirties, who stated that "I think it was a real mixture" (29.11.13), through Niki, an activist and organiser in her fifties, who asserted that "it was really diverse in all ways" (15.1.14), to Chris, a forty-something professional who said that "what I liked about this, regardless of what it did or didn't achieve, it had a wonderful atmosphere, it was such a positive thing, so very inclusive" (personal communication, 27.1.14).

Interviewees stressed that diversity and inclusivity were politically important aspects of SlutWalk. For example, Naomi, a student in her forties, stated that she enjoyed the atmosphere, but also commented on the solidarity evoked by the protest: "women celebrating being together and perhaps being more powerful as one voice... united about one issue", and that issue was "that they should not be called a slut and blamed for getting raped" (20.11.13). Others noted that the politics of diversity were carried through to the placards, in which "different sectors of women were represented",

according to Niki (15.1.14), an activist and organiser in her fifties. Thus interviewees emphasised their impression that SlutWalk London was diverse and inclusive as well as their assessment that the diversity of participants and inclusive nature of the protest were not only pleasant but also political, demonstrating solidarity and intersectionality.

In addition to commenting on diversity in general, interviewees noted specific forms of inclusivity. Age, race and gender are particularly important demographics to note for these interviewees, because of the fact that SlutWalkers are so often depicted in the mass media as young white women, to the exclusion of others.

On age, there were conflicting reports by interviewees. For example, Chris, a forty-something professional, noted that participants were quite young: “One thing that I did really notice was that everybody was quite young. In fact, I’d say that the majority of people were probably younger than me” (personal communication, 27.1.14). However, where observed, the youth of protestors wasn’t perceived as a problem. For example, Nina, a student in her twenties, stated that “you don’t expect young women to be interested in feminism... so it was actually quite nice to see them being involved and being so vocal about it and chanting as well” (personal communication, 16.1.14). Thus, even among those who perceived that most participants were young, this was taken as an encouraging sign that SlutWalk was bringing feminism to younger women who one might not expect to participate in a march against rape victim blaming.

However, the majority of interviewees observed a greater age range. For example, Cristel, an activist and SlutWalk organiser in her sixties, recounted that “the youngest would be in their twenties, going all the way through to, I don’t know, but also some women brought their little children to SlutWalk, some even held the banner. So yes, it was really fantastically diverse” (personal communication, 15.1.14). And Rosie, a student in her twenties who went on the march with her mother, stated that “I remember my mum saying she felt quite old, there were a lot of younger people. But as the march progressed she said, okay, there’s older people here as well” (personal communication, 14.11.13). Overall, while a majority of young people was noted, there were many more older people than participants had expected on the basis of media

reports of previous marches, and this was seen as a positive and important aspect of SlutWalk.

When it comes to race, again the observations were varied. Chris, a forty-something white professional, noted that “there were people from ethnic minorities there, but when you think about the population of London as a whole I don’t think it was representatively diverse” (personal communication, 27.1.14) and Kate, a white professional in her twenties, also stated that participants were “probably mostly white” (27.11.13). However, Cristel, a black activist and SlutWalk organiser in her sixties, recalled that “part way through the march I remember looking and seeing that there were a hell of a lot of black women’s faces” (personal communication, 15.1.14); and Niki, a white activist and SlutWalk organiser in her fifties, asserted that “I haven’t seen that kind of numbers of women of colour and women from different backgrounds and different situations on a feminist march before, ever” (personal communication, 15.1.14). Thus, while a majority of white participants was noted, interviewees stressed that there were nonetheless many people of colour and certainly more than they expected.

On gender, while many interviewees agreed with Kate’s assessment that the march was made up of “like 80% female” participants (27.11.13), a strongly recurring theme among them was one of delight at the inclusion of men in SlutWalk. This is interesting given that “among British feminist activists, the role of men in feminism is still contested” (Baily, 2015), that feminists’ supposed rejection of men is a recurring trope of critique of feminism, and that one of the critiques of postfeminist media culture is that it works to support patriarchy.

Many interviewees contrasted SlutWalk with other feminist protests with respect to male participation. For example, Chris, a forty-something professional who does not identify with either gender, stated that “I thought it was a very powerful statement because it was a walk of all genders, it wasn’t just women. Because there are other events [that exclude men] that I haven’t been on because I wouldn’t have felt comfortable” (personal communication, 27.1.14). And Sylvia, a thirty-something professional, commented that she

really loved the amount of men who were there, standing up and saying 'this isn't right'. I don't really agree with the kind of marches, like Reclaim the Night... that excludes men, because I get so much, I got so much from the men marching with us as well at SlutWalk (personal communication, 29.11.13)

Cristel, an activist and SlutWalk organiser in her sixties, noted that "there were supporting men. I mean, we're not talking mountains, but there were definitely men who wanted to be on the SlutWalk especially because there are feminist marches from which they have been excluded in the past" (personal communication, 15.1.14). Cristel's choice of language, "supporting men", calls to mind Michael Kimmel's (1998) proposal of a "Gentlemen's Auxiliary" (p. 67), which recognises that there are men who support feminism, but suggests that they play a secondary role to that of female feminists and in which men "remain accountable to headquarters" (ibid), as opposed to having a strategic role. The language of support recurs in accounts from other interviewees. For example, Livia, a teenage student, said that she

was also really pleased to see that there were lots of men there, and lots of men supporting their girlfriends, lots of men who didn't even have their girlfriends there... and yes, basically, just the, sort of, the amount of men was pleasing to me (personal communication, 4.12.13)

Jessica Baily (2015, p. 455) asserts that "involving men may also be a response to the broader socio-political context. In a 'postfeminist' era characterised by negative perceptions of feminism, including men may be a useful strategy for challenging stereotypes and making feminism more appealing". It is possible that a desire to make feminism more appealing is part of the reason that the interviewees welcomed male participants. While this could be interpreted as exemplifying a postfeminist sensibility, it can also be seen as inclusive, especially as men were involved solely in a supporting role, not in a strategic or organisational one, and SlutWalk's messages against rape, victim blaming and slut shaming in culture and institutions was not tempered by their participation. It can also be seen as a pragmatic, liberal feminist acceptance that women cannot bring about the necessary societal change without the support of sympathetic men.

Attendance by people with disabilities was also a point of note for interviewees. Chris, a forty-something professional, was concerned that "I didn't see anybody in a

wheelchair. That's not to say there weren't disabled people there, there may well have been, but I didn't see any visibly or noticeably disabled people" (27.1.14).

Whereas Lisa, one of the organisers, stated that "we had two wheelchair users right at the front of the march" (15.1.14), and this is evident in some of the images of the march displayed in the media coverage and discussed in Chapter 7. Rosie, who is herself disabled, communicated with SlutWalk London organisers to help them make the march as accessible as possible and said that "I know my suggestions were taken on board" and "the fact that they seemed so interested in it and so concerned about making it accessible, even at a basic level, was, it gave me some confidence that they, yes, that they were quite, they took it seriously" (personal communication, 14.11.13).

Thus, it can be stated that interviewees were concerned with the ways in which a variety of discriminations potentially intersect in relation to participation in SlutWalk; namely, ability, gender, race and age; and that while overall most were satisfied that best efforts were made by SlutWalk to be inclusive, nonetheless interviewees painted a complex picture, of which an assortment of perceptions were expressed.

Diversity of Speakers

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the few interviewees who were unsure about the protest because of the use of the word 'slut' had their concerns allayed by the list of speakers drawn up for the post-march rally. For example, Deb, an academic in her twenties, stated that "hearing about the groups and organisations that were participating and the people who were going to speak... it looked to me like the organisers had really made an effort to provide a platform for a wide variety of voices" (personal communication, 6.11.13). Interviewees who had not had the same concerns also mentioned the diversity of speakers at the rally as a positive aspect of SlutWalk London. For example, Linda, an academic in her forties, had the impression that

there was a real range of people who had been invited to speak... It felt like the speakers seemed, each one seemed to add a little bit more, like, 'and this affects trans women, and this affects, this particularly affects black women', you know, so that it was, even though it was kind of gathering around this particular thing, it seemed big enough to include that diversity (personal communication, 27.2.14)

For all interviewees who mentioned the speakers, the main point discussed was their diversity. In particular, the inclusion of sex workers was mentioned time and again as

a positive and eye-opening aspect. For example, Deb, an academic in her twenties emphasised that:

there were a series of speakers and in particular I remember a speaker from... I think it was the English Collective of Prostitutes, and she spoke very powerfully about the kind of language that gets used to describe women who have sex and women who engage in what is seen as sexual activity, and listening to that made me think 'yeah, this is actually precisely the sort of thing that needs to be said, people need to be given a platform and a microphone to say these things' (personal communication, 6.11.13)

Thus, not only did the diversity of the grassroots participants who came out on the day inspire the interviewees, so did the range of speakers that the organisers had invited, marking SlutWalk London out as both intersectional and political in its representativeness and tone.

Turnout and Reach

Another element of SlutWalk London celebrated by interviewees was the sheer number of attendees. Putting it mildly, Livia, a teenage student, said that "there were a lot more people there than I thought" (personal communication, 4.12.13). Whereas Daniel, a thirty-something academic, excitedly recounted that "it was amazing to be part of such a big protest, there were tens of thousands of people brought to the streets of London for a feminist cause, which doesn't happen every day... being part of that was actually very special" (21.11.13). For some the turnout was validating. For example, Sylvia, a steward on the 2011 march, remembered that "when I looked behind me and I could basically see the whole of Piccadilly just filled with people, I felt pretty awesome, actually" (personal communication, 29.11.13). And Cristel, one of the organisers, commented that "you looked down from the platform, you looked down on this sea, I mean it really was like that, it really was. It felt like Trafalgar Square was full" (15.1.14). The large turnout was absolutely something that interviewees took a lot of pleasure in, as well as a lot of validation from, and which created a strong sense of solidarity and hope that with such significant numbers, perhaps change was possible.

In addition to SlutWalk bringing out large numbers in London, interviewees were also keen to emphasise the fact that the protest they joined was not an isolated, Western

one, but that the movement has relevance across the globe. For example, Naomi, a student in her forties, “enjoyed seeing the SlutWalks sweep the globe” (personal communication, 20.11.13). However, it was not just in contrast to the narrow representation of SlutWalk as a young, white, Western woman’s protest that interviewees celebrated SlutWalk’s wide reach. They also hoped that the global appeal could help the protest grow in power and appeal. Thus Rosie, who had been concerned about the limitations of SlutWalk’s appeal, was encouraged by its global reach and political potential:

when I started seeing that other countries were doing it, I felt a bit more positive. It felt a bit more international, then I was kind of hoping that it could get more, it could be a movement, it could be going somewhere interesting (personal communication, 14.11.13)

Underlying the discussions with interviewees about clothing, about the use of the word slut and about the diversity and reach of SlutWalk is a feminist sensibility which demands an end to victim blaming and slut shaming. This demand is supported by a sensitivity to intersectional concerns, a positive display of solidarity and political ambitions to effect change.

Feminism

Despite some interviewees noting that SlutWalkers in London were mainly young, white and female, overall they agreed that it was more diverse than portrayed in the mass media and, thanks to this diversity and that of the speakers lined up for the rally, interviewees credited SlutWalk with demonstrating a particularly inclusive brand of feminism, which acted as a gateway into, or back into, feminism. Interviewees credited SlutWalk with raising awareness about a variety of feminist concerns, chief among them victim blaming and slut shaming, as well as institutional sexism and a lack of justice for sexual assault and rape victims and survivors. SlutWalk was also credited with providing survivors with a safe environment in which to share stories and seek comfort and support.

Inclusive and Accessible

The inclusive nature of SlutWalk London was specifically noted with regard to its feminism. For example, Naomi, a student in her forties, reflected that “the other thing about feminism that’s important to me is inclusivity... I think in the past feminism has

gotten into trouble with people, groups excluding other groups, and I like the SlutWalk for its inclusiveness” (personal communication, 20.11.13). This was a recurring theme among older interviewees: that feminisms of the past had been perceived as insufficiently inclusive, to which SlutWalk acted as a welcome antidote. Along similar lines, Linda, an academic in her forties, commented that “certainly it was just the most positive experience of a feminist thing that I’d had in a long time” (27.2.14) and that SlutWalk helped to reconcile some of the difficulties she had struggled with in relation to in-fighting within feminism over the years.

On the other hand, younger interviewees spoke of SlutWalk as introducing them to feminism. For example, Livia, who was a teenage student at the time, described how SlutWalk ignited her interest in feminism:

going on the walk was when I sort of first starting reading the [feminist blog] Vagenda and actually became interested in that sort of thing, because I sort of thought, this is really a problem, and there were lots of things which I didn’t know before then, like the fact that, you know, that women who have been raped do get quizzed, like, on what they wore, and all that sort of thing, even if they’re just... like, even if the rapist was, you know, their boyfriend and they were at home, and it’s, like, oh, well, you know, how short was your nightie, kind of thing? And it’s just like, yes, I think that was where I sort of learnt about all that stuff. (personal communication, 4.12.13)

Other younger interviewees such as Rosie, a student in her early twenties, stated that SlutWalk “showed a lot of people who were interested in feminism, that it was something that could speak to them” and that it empowered them to embrace their feminism publicly: “[after participating in SlutWalk] I felt more comfortable in identifying myself as a feminist, publicly, not just with friends” (personal communication, 14.11.13). Thus, even though she had been interested in feminism before SlutWalk, it was participating in the march that solidified her position as a feminist.

Slightly older interviewees such as Daniel, who is an academic in his thirties, also noticed SlutWalk’s ‘gateway’ role: “One thing it has achieved... is that it’s been part of a process in which it’s brought many younger people into kind of thinking about themselves as feminist activists, and making it seem acceptable and that they’re not

alone” (21.11.13). This point was supported by Nina, a student in her late twenties, who reflected that SlutWalk:

definitely raised awareness and that’s something that I really enjoyed because I think that maybe the young women who did go there maybe started with quite a superficial idea of it as the freedom of being dressed as a slut and not being harassed, or stuff like that, but then by the end of it I do think that probably a different level of awareness of the issues has been achieved (personal communication, 16.1.14)

This speaks back to the point, discussed earlier, regarding the use of the word ‘slut’, that by gaining publicity new supporters can be mobilized, and also to the point that inclusivity and solidarity encourage politicisation.

Solidarity-Building

SlutWalk is also discussed as an opportunity for rape survivors to share their experiences of rape and institutional sexism with others, many for the first time. In fact, this is one of the main achievements of SlutWalk, according to Natasha, one of the organisers: “I think what it did achieve was that it made a lot of people feel that they could be together with a load of other people and say that the rape that happened to them wasn’t their fault and they didn’t do anything to deserve it, and I think that’s an incredibly powerful thing” (personal communication, 26.1.14).

Many of the interviewees attended because they were rape victims/survivors and were eager to join in a protest against the practice of slut shaming and victim blaming. Niki, one of the organisers, claimed that “a lot of women love SlutWalk because it was the first time they were able to speak about their experience and get the kind of confirmation of being with other women who’d suffered the same” and that “that’s the best anti-dote to victim blaming” (personal communication, 15.1.14). Kate, a professional in her twenties, found it “comforting to be around lots of other people who kind of understood my experience” (27.11.13). Similarly, Sylvia reflected that “there were a lot of people stepping up and saying ‘I’ve been raped, this isn’t good’ and people around the world were taking notice and I wanted to be part of that” (29.11.13); and Chris “felt even more strongly about the issue because when I talked to people I realised that what I’d experienced, what my mother had experienced, was far less severe than what some of the people had gone through” (27.1.14). Thus, interviewees experienced SlutWalk as solidarity-building as well as consoling. This

supports Nancy Thumim's (2012) claim that self-representation is a therapeutic act and casts participation in protest as an additional form of self-representation.

In addition to the stories of rape that were shared, so were stories of institutional sexism, according to Niki, one of the organisers: "SlutWalk was an occasion for an absolutely incredible outpouring of horror about how much violence, how much rape and how little justice women have got" (personal communication, 15.1.14). The lack of justice, be it from the police or the judicial system, was a key element for the organisers of SlutWalk London, which was also highlighted in the Tumblr posts titled "why I'm marching" initiated by Natasha, another of the organisers: "a lot of people wrote in to that saying 'oh, I was raped and I felt blamed for it and you know, it was really terrible and I want to show the world that it wasn't my fault'" (personal communication, 26.1.14). A sample of these self-representational Tumblr posts are analysed in the following chapters.

Thus, SlutWalk was cast by interviewees not only as feminist, but as a positive, inclusive and reinvigorated feminism that calls older feminists back to the fold and reaches out to younger, uninitiated feminists-in-waiting. It was also described as building solidarity between victims/survivors of rape through the therapeutic act of sharing and self-representing in person and online.

Conclusions

Thematic analysis of 15 interviewees' accounts of their issues and concerns about SlutWalk London are discussed here in accordance with four themes: 'Clothing', 'Slut', 'Participation' and 'Feminism'.

All interviewees agreed with SlutWalk's premise that clothing is irrelevant to rape cases and none assigned even partial responsibility to victims. Fourteen interviewees wore everyday clothes to the march because they were ambivalent about complying with a perceived dress code. One interviewee wore a revealing dress to make the point that no one should be blamed for rape because of what they were wearing. All interviewees contrasted the 'reality', in which a minority of protestors wore revealing outfits to SlutWalk London, with the media depiction of the march as one by

young, white, scantily clad women. Many accepted the media-protest relationship, whereby protestors rely on the mass media for coverage, even negative coverage, in order to reach and mobilise a wider audience, as well as to be granted legitimacy; while in turn, the media seek out the most 'newsworthy' aspects of the protest.

For most interviewees, the use of the word 'slut' was unproblematic and if anything, they felt that too much time was spent discussing it in general and in the mass media in particular. However, the negative coverage that the word generated was seen as a necessary price to pay for much needed media attention and also served to mobilise some interviewees. Interviewees noted a difference between coverage in the run-up to the event compared with reportage of the march itself, with the former being more negative than the latter; and between mass- and social-media coverage, where also the former was more negative than the latter. Nonetheless, interviewees were disappointed by the critique from feminist media commentators, whom they felt wilfully misunderstood the purpose of SlutWalk, instead of supporting it.

Among those who were concerned about the word, the list of participating organisations and speakers allayed those fears, thanks to their diversity. The intersectional approach of the organisers, whereby women from a variety of walks of life were invited to speak and to relate to the issues of victim blaming and slut shaming from different angles and experiences, was noted by interviewees as reassuring and inspirational.

The cross-section of attendees was also noted with pleasure and relief, arousing feelings of solidarity and celebration among participants. The ranges in age, race and gender were favourably compared to the media coverage as well as to previous feminist protests, especially the participation of men, who were very much welcomed in a supporting role. The turnout of thousands of protestors in London and the roll-out of SlutWalk across the globe also inspired a sense of solidarity and of potential for political change.

SlutWalk was credited by older interviewees with reigniting their feminism, and by younger interviewees with performing a gateway to feminism; it was also credited

with providing rape survivors with an invaluable opportunity to share their experience of rape and institutional sexism and to seek solace in numbers. Thus, SlutWalk was depicted as contributing to the politicisation of many participants.

Interviewees had a keen understanding of the difference between representation and self-representation, and for the most part accepted the necessary trade-offs required to achieve much needed media coverage. However they went to serious lengths in their accounts to point out the discrepancies between the ways in which the protest was portrayed and the 'reality' on the day, and that they felt betrayed by the harsh criticism levelled at SlutWalk and its participants by certain feminist media commentators.

In their accounts, interviewees displayed a strong feminist sensibility. They identified as feminists striving for equality, which is the key word used in their definitions of feminism. They discussed SlutWalk and their experience of it in terms of solidarity and politicisation, were comforted and reassured by its diversity and by the intersectional approach taken by organisers and speakers; they were angry with the status quo and hoped to be able to bring about change. Even when they talked in terms of empowerment, this was to say that SlutWalk empowered them to become more confident, active feminists.

Many of the issues raised by the interviewees are further explored in the following chapters, which examine mass- and social-media texts and images through the lenses of representation and self-representation, as well as feminist and postfeminist sensibilities.

Chapter 5: *Victim Blaming* or *Sluts*? – Content Analysis of Media Texts

Introduction

In this chapter I present an analysis of two text-based data sets: mass media (n=82), comprised of newspaper items which appeared in a broad range of UK nationals; and social media, comprised of blogs (n=24) and Tumblr posts (n=19). I present and analyse the two most common frames found in the mass- and social-media texts about SlutWalk London 2011. The two opposing frames, *victim blaming* and *sluts*, are identified using Robert Entman's (1993) key framing functions: problem, cause, moral judgement and solution. These frames are important because they are the most frequently found in the media texts and, crucially, because of how they relate to feminist (*victim blaming*) and postfeminist (*sluts*) sensibilities.

In addition to the two frames, three themes were identified following a close reading of the texts and these are used to discuss the frames. Themes are a useful mechanism with which to compare frames because, as stated by David Altheide (1996, p.31), "Themes are the recurring typical theses that run through a lot of the reports. Frames are the focus, a parameter or boundary, for discussing a particular event". The three themes adopted to analyse the data are: relationship to feminism; attitude towards SlutWalk; and type of text. Authors' gender is discussed within the three themes. The findings below are thus presented by theme in order to facilitate the comparison of frames.

The working hypothesis of this study, building on the established literature about postfeminist media culture (e.g. Gill, 2007a; McRobbie, 2009; Tasker & Negra, 2007), is that the mass-media texts will display a mostly postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007a, 2007b), whereas the social-media texts will display a mostly feminist sensibility, because they self-represent and therefore bypass the postfeminist media culture gatekeepers (Castells, 2007; Gajjala & Oh, 2012; Haraway, 1990; Thumim, 2012; Wajcman, 2000). The hypothesis also assumes that this discrepancy will manifest in a number of ways: texts written by women are likely to have a more feminist sensibility

than texts written by men (Barker-Plummer, 2010; LeRoux-Rutledge, 2013; Mendes, 2011), 'soft' news will have a more feminist sensibility than 'hard' news (Barker-Plummer, 2010; Mendes 2011; North 2014; Ross & Carter, 2011) and the attitude towards SlutWalk as a feminist protest will be more positive in the social-media texts than in the mass-media texts (Mendes, 2015).

Framing

Drawing on Robert Entman's (2003, p.6) established theoretical assertion that problem definition, "which often virtually predetermines the rest of the frame", is the most important function, the two most commonly identified problems in my corpus, *victim blaming* and *sluts*, are adopted as the two main frames. This choice is corroborated by Kaitlynn Mendes (2015) in her study of the global spread of SlutWalk, wherein, despite variations in corpus selection and research methods, she identifies two similar frames: 1) SlutWalk as challenger to rape culture and 2) SlutWalk as misguided.

In my study, the *victim blaming* frame defines the problem as one in which victims are blamed for their own rape; in which women are shamed by having the word 'slut' hurled at them; and in which the blame for rape is shifted away from the perpetrator and is excused in other ways by members of law enforcement institutions and others. This frame largely maps onto the feminist sensibility, in which a demand is made for equality for women, for example before the law; in which women recognise the need for politicisation and solidarity to tackle inequality; in which they assert that rape affects women across demographic divides; and in which they are angry about the current state of affairs, but hopeful that change is achievable. Thus, following Entman's (1993) four framing functions, the *victim blaming* frame defines the problem as victims being blamed; the cause is rape culture; the moral judgement is that rape victims are never to blame; and the solution is to take political action.

The *slut* frame defines the problem as women dressing like sluts, reclaiming the word 'slut', and also defines as problematic SlutWalkers' naivety in thinking that they can achieve anything by protesting. This frame closely maps onto the postfeminist sensibility, in which personal choice is paramount; in which each woman's decision,

for example about what to wear, is seen as individual and bearing personal consequences for which no one else (for example a rapist) carries responsibility; in which there is a natural difference between men and women whereby men cannot control their sexual urges at the sight of a scantily clad woman, and therefore women must take heed; and in which it is acceptable to treat victims of sexual assault, and others protesting, with irony and contempt. Thus, again following Entman's (1993) four framing functions, the *slut* frame defines the problem as women dressing/behaving like sluts, trying to reclaim the word slut and trying to change society; the cause is a natural difference between men and women; the moral judgement is that women should accept personal responsibility for anything that happens to them, including violence; and the solution is that women should make better sartorial and behavioural choices.

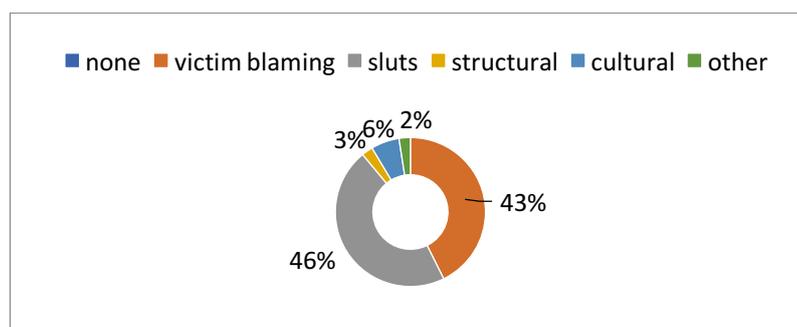
Entman further asserts that solution is the second most important framing function, as it "directly promotes support (or opposition) to public policy" (2003, p.6). The two solutions most commonly found in the texts are *SlutWalk* and *dress modestly* and the data are also analysed in relation to these.

Table 5.1 Sensibilities, frames and solutions

Sensibility	Frame	Solution
Feminist Sensibility	Victim blaming	SlutWalk
Postfeminist Sensibility	Slut	Dress Modestly

However, it should be noted that this direct correlation, while prevalent, is not consistent, as is described below. In 46% of the newspaper texts, the frame used is *sluts*, whereas in 43% of the newspaper texts the frame used is *victim blaming*.

Figure 5.1 Newspaper texts frame distribution

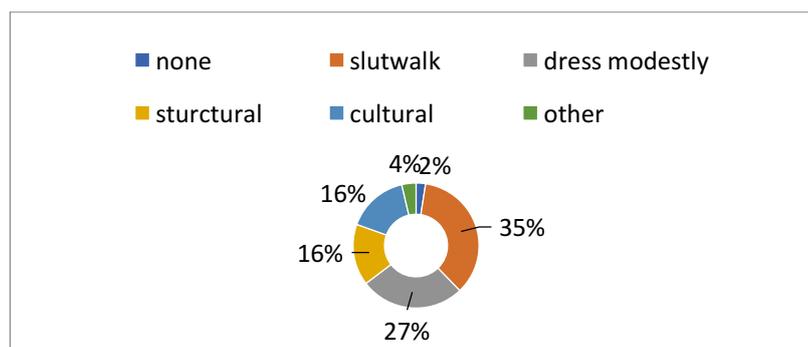


The *sluts* frame is closely associated with postfeminist sensibility, because of the way it focuses on choice and individualism, including by problematising the way individual women choose to dress and behave. This frame implies not only that it is a woman's choice to dress in a certain way, but that a natural difference between men and women exists, which means that men are unable to withstand sexual urges that a woman's dress might stir up. Thus, it is the woman's individual responsibility to take this risk into account and to police her appearance accordingly.

The *victim blaming* frame is closely associated with feminist sensibility. The frame removes blame for sexual violence from the individual victim, placing it instead with the perpetrator and at the same time critiquing the structural and/or cultural inequalities which willingly assign the blame for violence to victims. In so doing, the frame politicises the personal experience of rape and sexual violence.

Two main solutions are proposed in the newspaper texts, which are closely associated with the two frames: *SlutWalk* relates to *victim blaming* and *dress modestly* relates to *sluts*. In 35% of the mass-media texts the solution is to *SlutWalk* – go out to protest/raise awareness. In 27% of the texts, the solution is to *dress modestly* – women should dress modestly in order to avoid sexual harassment/assault; girls should not be encouraged to be/dress like sluts. Thus, overall, more mass-media texts propose the feminist sensibility solution, but the solution is distributed more evenly across other possible remedies than is the case with the problem.

Figure 5.2 Newspaper texts solution distribution



In contrast to newspaper articles, the only frame that is used in blogs is *victim blaming* (100%). When it comes to the solutions to the problems defined in the blogs, 92% propose to *SlutWalk* – go out to protest/raise awareness. Similarly, 95% of the Tumblr posts use the *victim blaming* frame and when it comes to the solution to the problem defined in the Tumblr posts, a full 100% propose to *SlutWalk* – go out to protest/raise awareness.

Frame Analysis

In this section I present the findings of content analysis of media texts by theme. The themes are: relationship to feminism; attitude towards SlutWalk; and type of text. Authors' gender is discussed within the three themes. The themes help to map the two frames onto feminist and postfeminist sensibilities.

Theme 1: Relationship to Feminism

This theme interrogates the relationship between SlutWalk and feminism. Included in this theme are questions pertaining to 1) whether or not feminism is mentioned in the text and if so whether it is mentioned as current and relevant (feminist sensibility), as a thing of the past and/or as 'done wrong' (postfeminist sensibility); 2) whether or not the author explicitly identifies as feminist; 3) the authors' gender; and 4) the type of text.

Mention of Feminism and Framing

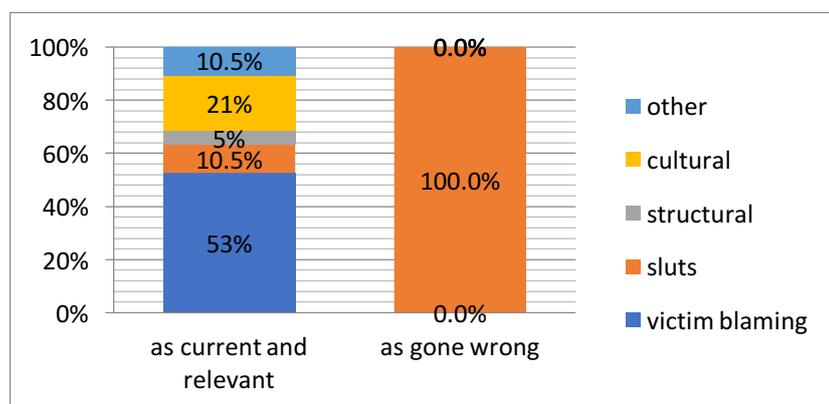
There is an almost 50-50 split between newspaper articles that do and do not mention feminism. Of the 82 newspaper items, 49% *do not* mention feminism at all. Of these, 57.5% of the items identify the problem as *victim blaming* and thus are framed with a feminist sensibility. In contrast, 37.5% are framed with a postfeminist sensibility as they identify the problem as *sluts*. Thus among newspaper items that *do not* mention feminism more than half have a feminist sensibility.

Among the 51% of newspaper items in which feminism *is* mentioned, it is mentioned in three key ways: 1) as *current and relevant*; 2) as *a thing of the past*; and 3) as *done wrong*. The two most common ways in which it is mentioned are as *current and relevant* (23%) and as *done wrong* (24%). Thus, among newspaper items that *do* mention feminism, one quarter have a feminist and one quarter a postfeminist

sensibility. In light of the theoretically received wisdom, that contemporary, Western media culture is a postfeminist media culture characterised, among other attributes, by defining feminism as dead or at the very least as a thing of the past (e.g. Banet-Weiser, 2007; Gallagher, 2014; Gill, 2007a; McRobbie, 2009; Power, 2009; Press & Tripodi, 2014; Tasker & Negra, 2007), it is interesting to note that only one (female) author mentions feminism explicitly as *a thing of the past*. However, this does not necessarily indicate that the newspaper coverage of SlutWalk does not display postfeminist sensibilities, but perhaps simply that the terminology has shifted. In particular, feminism as *done wrong* is a new way of defining the state of feminism that warrants further examination to determine the extent to which it represents a departure from or a continuation of the repudiation of feminism found in previous studies. This will be further explored in Chapter 6.

The single item that mentions feminism as a *thing of the past* is framed using the postfeminist sensibility frame *sluts*. The items that mention feminism as *current and relevant* are framed using the feminist sensibility frame *victim blaming* in 52.6% of items, compared with only 10.5% of the *current and relevant* items that are framed using the postfeminist frame *sluts*. In contrast, 100% of the items that mention feminism as *done wrong* are framed using the postfeminist sensibility frame *sluts*. This highlights the strong, positive relationship between the frame *sluts* and postfeminist sensibility.

Figure 5.3 Newspaper texts feminism and framing



In the social-media texts, Tumblr authors tend not to mention feminism in their writing, with only 10.5% of them doing so. Of those that do, 50% mention it as *current and relevant* and 50% mention it as *other*. More bloggers, but still only 46% of these,

mention feminism. Of those who *do* mention feminism, a full 90.9% mention it as *current and relevant* and 9% mention it as *other*. Thus, no social-media texts mention feminism as *done wrong* or as *a thing of the past*, pointing to a feminist sensibility.

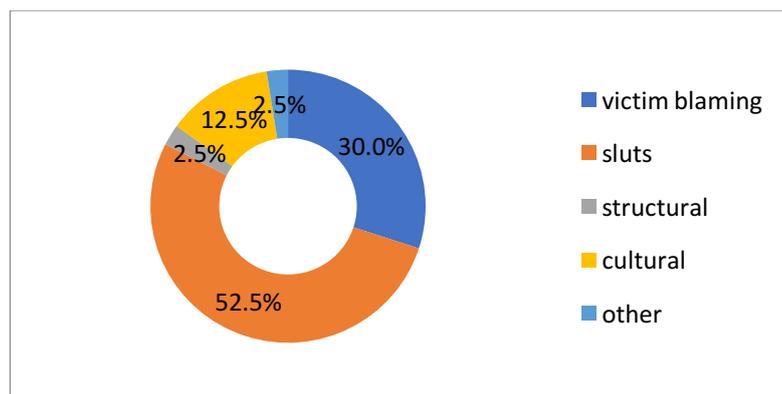
Author's Feminism

The number of authors of newspaper texts who explicitly identify as feminists (49%) is almost equal to those who do not (51%). However, this equality does not carry through when it comes to framing the newspaper items.

Among the 51% of newspaper authors who *do not* explicitly define themselves as feminists, more than half (54%) use the feminist sensibility frame *victim blaming*, compared with 40% who use the postfeminist sensibility frame *sluts*.

By comparison, among the 49% of newspaper authors who *do* explicitly define themselves as feminists, only 30% use the feminist sensibility frame *victim blaming*, whereas more than half (52.5%) use the postfeminist sensibility frame *sluts*. This inverse pattern, whereby an author *not* identifying as feminist is more likely to use a feminist sensibility frame and an author who *does* identify as feminist is more likely to use a postfeminist sensibility frame, is surprising – I would expect a self-identified feminist author to be more likely than not to use a feminist sensibility frame.

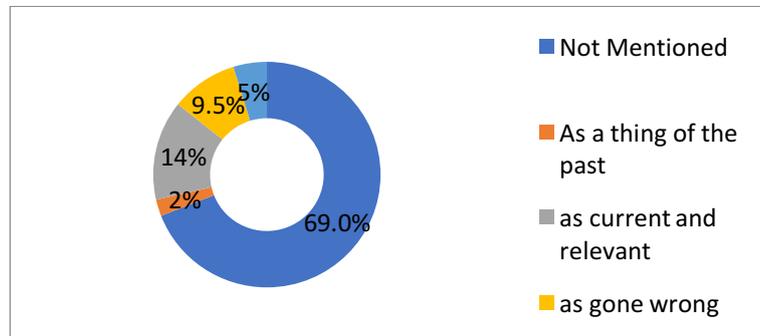
Figure 5.4 Newspaper texts: Feminist-identified authors and framing



Of the 51% who *do not* state their feminist status, 69% do not mention feminism in their writing, 2% mention it as *a thing of the past*, 14% mention it as *current and relevant*, 9.5% mention feminism as *done wrong*, and 5% as *other*. Of the 49% who *do* state or clearly imply that they are feminists, 27.5% do not mention feminism in their

writing, none mention it as a *thing of the past*, 32.5% mention it as *current and relevant*, 40% mention feminism as *done wrong*.

Figure 5.5 Newspaper texts: Not-feminist-identified authors and framing



Thus, the authors who *do* identify as feminist are more likely to mention feminism in their writing, but that writing most commonly critiques SlutWalk as an example of *feminism done wrong* (40%), followed quite closely by feminist-identifying authors who hold SlutWalk up as an example of feminism that is *current and relevant* (32.5%). This tendency on the part of explicitly feminist authors to critique SlutWalk as feminism *done wrong* is surprising; considering theoretical expectations explored in Chapter 2 that feminist content producers will generate more feminist content than non-feminist content producers, I would expect the inverse results from these data.

Moving to the social-media data, only 10% of Tumblr contributors explicitly identify as feminists. This amounts to two authors. One of these (5%) discusses feminism as *current and relevant*, while the other (5%) does not discuss feminism at all, and both use the *victim blaming* frame, thus framing their posts with a feminist sensibility. Of the 90% of Tumblr contributors who *do not* explicitly identify as feminists, 94% frame their posts using *victim blaming*, thus also framing their posts with a feminist sensibility.

In the blog posts, on the other hand, 54% identify as feminist and 100% frame their posts using *victim blaming*, thus also framing their posts with a feminist sensibility. All 42% of bloggers who mention feminism also identify as feminists. An additional 12.5% of bloggers identify as feminists, but do not discuss feminism more broadly. No bloggers who mention feminism refer to it as anything other than *current and*

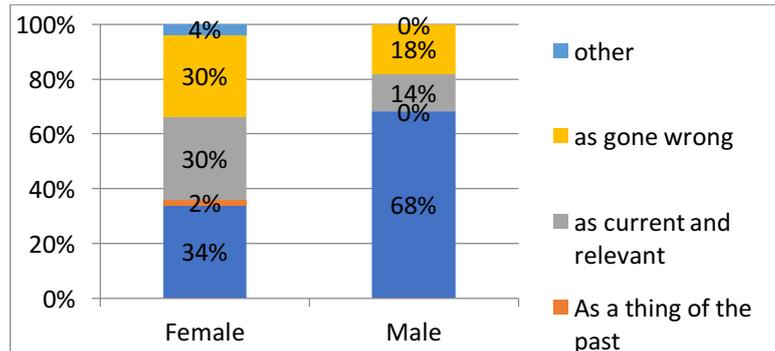
relevant. Thus, while social-media posters do not necessarily identify as feminists or discuss feminism in their posts, they nonetheless use the feminist sensibility frame.

Feminism and Author's Gender

The matter of an author's gender is noteworthy and is often discussed in the literature (Barker-Plummer, 2010; Tuchman, 1980; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1994; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1998). While assertions have been and continue to be made about the impact that female content producers could and should have on the media content that they produce and that is produced around them, it is far from guaranteed that this impact is always pro-feminist, for, as Liesbet van Zoonen (1994) points out, this would necessitate that all female communicators are feminist and, even if this is the case, that the "individual communicator is sufficiently autonomous" and can therefore bypass any restrictions on the expression of her view, in the shape of "colleagues, technical requirements, professional values, organisational routines, etc." (p.64). Nonetheless, it is often assumed that, if only there were more females in the media, the media output would be more pro-feminist (LeRoux-Rutledge, 2013).

When cross-referencing the relationship to feminism by author's gender, 66% of female authors mention feminism, compared with 32% of male authors. Of the female authored items that *do* mention feminism, 2% mention it as *a thing of the past* and 30% each mention it as *current and relevant* and as *done wrong*. Of the male authors who *do* mention feminism, 14% mention it as *current and relevant* and 18% mention it as *done wrong*. This suggests that men are slightly more likely to define feminism as *done wrong* than as *current and relevant*. However, compared to men, a larger percentage of women define feminism both as *current and relevant* and as *done wrong*. Thus, an author's gender is not a particularly good predictor of her/his view of feminism.

Figure 5.6 Newspaper texts: Feminism mentioned and author's gender



Of the 24 blogs analysed in this study, 96% are written by women. In 52% of the blogs feminism is not mentioned. The blogs that do mention feminism are written by women, and feminism is referred to as *current and relevant* in 43.5% of these. Of the 19 Tumblr posts analysed in this study, 95% are written by women and 5% (one post) by a woman of trans history. In 89.5% of posts, feminism is not mentioned at all. In the two posts in which it is mentioned, it is mentioned once (5%) as *current and relevant* and once (5%) as *other*, and both of those are by female authors.

One can only speculate as to why so few social media authors mention feminism, despite framing their work with a feminist sensibility. However, this is not an isolated phenomenon. Recent survey-based research, with a sample of 8,000 participants, conducted on behalf of the Fawcett Society shows that while “over two thirds of people (67%) support equality for women and men... only 7% of people across the UK actually describe themselves as feminist”, with women “more likely to be sympathetic to feminism (74%) and to identify as feminist (9%)” (Fawcett Society, 2016). However, the reasons behind the discrepancy between being sympathetic to and identifying as a feminist remain inconclusive in terms of this survey, despite questions pertaining to age and relationship to the word ‘feminism’.

In its report, *Confronting Gender Inequality*, the LSE Commission on Gender, Inequality and Power surmises that the gap between sympathising with and identifying as a feminist might be “in order to avoid backlash” (2015, p.52). Press and Tripodi (2014) assert that it is likely a conscious distancing from feminisms of the past, and McRobbie (2009) might see this as an example of that which must remain “unavowed” (p. 118). While these explanations are all possible, how then to explain the finding from the

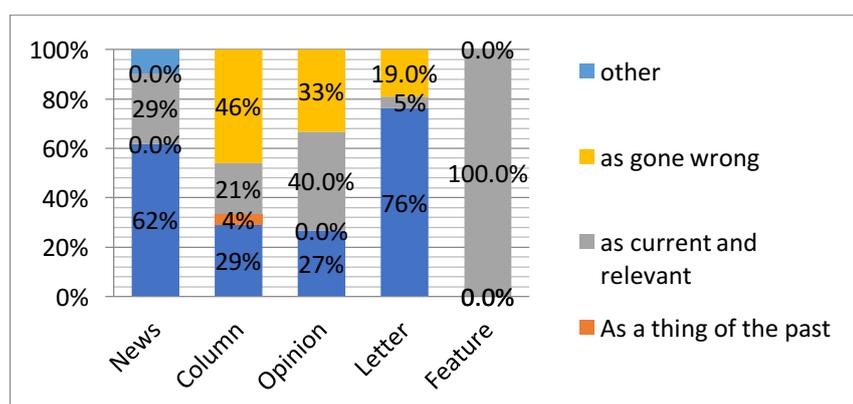
interviews presented in Chapter 4 that participants are comfortable and confident defining themselves as feminists? Could it be because of the difference in setting between an interview and the blogosphere? Or are there other considerations? These questions require further research beyond the scope of this thesis.

Feminism and Type of Text

When examining the approach towards feminism in terms of type of text, it appears that more than half of news items (62%) do not mention feminism at all and of those that do mention feminism almost all mention it as *current and relevant* (75%). No news items mention feminism as *done wrong* or as *a thing of the past*, therefore it can be said that the news items that do mention feminism mention it with a feminist sensibility.

Just under half of all the columns (46%) mention feminism as *done wrong*, which is interesting considering that 87.5% of columns were written by women. The single column that mentions feminism as *a thing of the past* was also written by a woman. This strengthens the suggestion that the gender of the author is not a particularly good predictor of an item's view of feminism, and even suggests that women often use their column inches to critique SlutWalk as *feminism done wrong*, bringing to mind theories of generational conflict between feminists (Faludi, 2010), and also similar critiques of SlutWalk found in academia (e.g. O'Keefe, 2014). Of the remaining columns, 29% do not mention feminism and 21% mention it as *current and relevant*. Thus, the columns that do mention feminism mention it mainly as *done wrong*, using a postfeminist sensibility frame (50%), with far fewer (21%) mentioning it using a feminist sensibility.

Figure 5.7 Newspaper texts: Feminism and type of text



The prominence of the definition of SlutWalk as an example of feminism *done wrong* among self-identifying feminist columnists is interesting. Many of these cite their feminism and even state their agreement with the core goal of SlutWalk – to stop blaming victims of sexual assault. But then, in the guise of taking umbrage at the protestors’ tactics of provocative dress, they proceed to define the problem as women dressing like sluts or reclaiming the word slut, consequently framing their columns using a postfeminist sensibility – *sluts*. This act of laying responsibility for rape with women and their sartorial choices, to my mind, calls into question their use of the term ‘feminist’ to define themselves and instead signifies a postfeminist sensibility. This recalls Gill’s (2007a) assertion that “what makes contemporary media culture distinctively postfeminist... is precisely this entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist ideas” (p. 269). I would argue that what we are seeing here is an espousal by some feminist columnists of anti-feminist messages, so that on the one hand they protest their feminism and support for SlutWalk’s goals, but on the other they hold SlutWalkers to account for their tactics, using a postfeminist sensibility to frame the discussion of these. It appears that, rather than accepting SlutWalkers’ brand of feminism as different from their own but nevertheless valid, these columnists choose to dismiss and undermine it as *done wrong*. It would be far more beneficial to feminism and its causes if critics were to recognise the catholic potential of feminism (Bonnie J Dow & Wood, 2014), rather than attempting to quash it. The nature of the critique of SlutWalk in these columns as feminism *done wrong* is further explored in Chapter 6, using discourse analysis.

When it comes to opinion pieces (15), the distribution is more equal, with 27% not mentioning feminism, 40% mentioning it as *current and relevant* and 33% as *done wrong*. Opinion pieces are different to columns, in that column writers are regular, salaried contributors to the paper, whereas opinion pieces are written as a one-off contribution, either solicited or volunteered, by an ‘expert’ or someone with a particular interest in the subject. It could be argued that the two types of text could be amalgamated and indeed, given the relatively even distribution within opinion pieces, in this instance doing so would make very little difference. However, it is interesting to examine the ways in which writers in the employ of media outlets choose to use their voices, and the fact that the picture that emerges is so much less

balanced and less favourable to feminism, with so much more of a postfeminist sensibility than that which emerges within the opinion category.

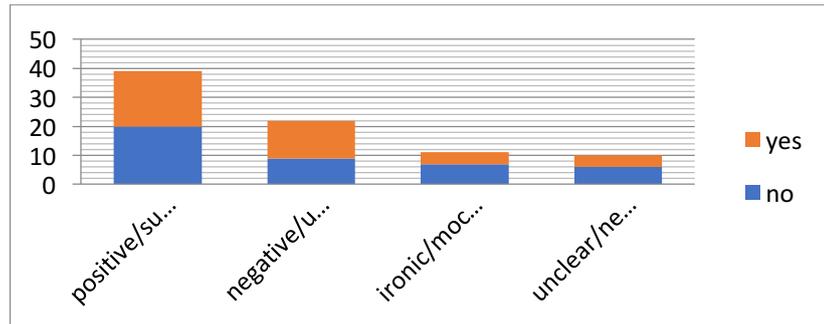
In contrast, the writers of letters to the editor are overwhelmingly disinterested in feminism, with 76% not mentioning it, 5% mentioning it as *current and relevant* and 19% mentioning it as *done wrong*. However, the *done wrong* is significantly larger than the *current and relevant* category among those motivated enough to write in to a newspaper and also to have their letter selected by the letters editor for publication. The single feature article in the corpus mentions feminism as *current and relevant*.

Thus, it can be said that overall the news and feature items, i.e. those written by professional journalists, are the ones that do not classify feminism as *done wrong* at all, whereas items written by columnists, opinion holders and letter-writers offer a more mixed, albeit negative, view of feminism in relation to SlutWalk.

Feminism and Attitude towards SlutWalk

When cross-referencing the overall stance towards SlutWalk in the media texts with the authors' own stated feminism, a similar number of supportive items (51%) were found to be written by authors who *do not* explicitly identify as feminists and by authors who *do* explicitly identify as feminists (49%). A larger number of unsupportive items (59%) were found to be written by those who *do* identify as feminists than by those who *do not* (41%). This creates a picture of authors who identify as feminists but do not support SlutWalk, and ties in with the situation discussed earlier of feminist authors who define SlutWalk as feminism *done wrong*. The lack of support for SlutWalk by feminist-identifying authors is further explored in Chapter 6, using discourse analysis.

Figure 5.8 Newspaper texts: Feminism and attitude



All 24 bloggers and all 19 Tumblr posters express a supportive stance towards SlutWalk, regardless of gender or whether they identify as feminists or otherwise mention feminism.

Theme 2: Attitude towards SlutWalk

This theme interrogates the attitude towards SlutWalk displayed in newspaper texts and in Tumblr and blog posts. Included in this theme are questions pertaining to 1) the relationship between support for SlutWalk and the way the text is framed, using a feminist or postfeminist sensibility; 2) the relationship between support for SlutWalk and the author's gender; 3) the relationship between support for SlutWalk and the type of text.

Of the 82 newspaper items, 48% express a positive/supportive stance to the protest, 27% are negative/unsupportive towards SlutWalk, 13% are ironic/mocking and 12% are unclear/neutral/mixed. Given that an ironic/mocking stance is also a negative one, it is illuminating to note the percentage for ironic/mocking and negative/unsupportive combined: 40%. While this is much higher, it is still marginally lower than that for those offering a positive/supportive stance towards SlutWalk (48%). Nonetheless, for other forms of comparison it is useful to separate the ironic/mocking stance from the negative/unsupportive stance, in particular as irony and knowingness are one of Gill's (2007a, 2007b) elements of a postfeminist sensibility.

As mentioned above, all social-media texts are positive towards SlutWalk.

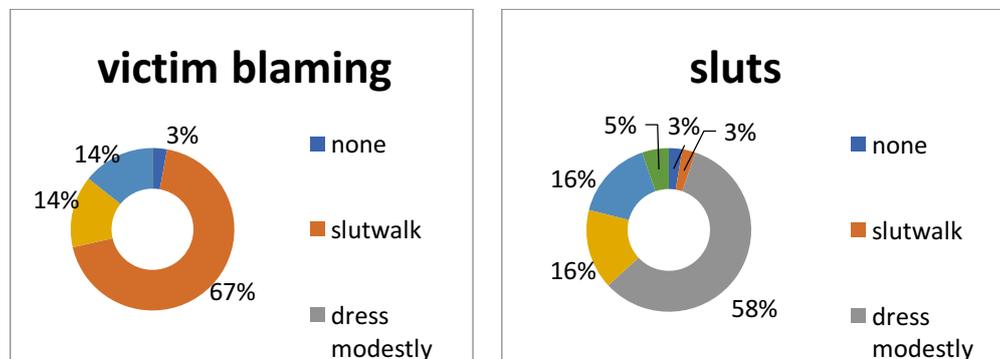
Attitude towards SlutWalk and Framing

Of the 39 items in the newspaper data set that express a positive/supportive attitude towards SlutWalk, an overwhelming 79.5% use the feminist sensibility frame *victim*

blaming, while none use the postfeminist sensibility frame *sluts*. On the other hand, and with even stronger agreement, of the 22 items that express a negative/unsupportive attitude towards SlutWalk, 100% use the postfeminist sensibility frame *sluts*, as do all 11 items that take an ironic/mocking attitude towards SlutWalk. Thus there is a stronger connection between negativity and postfeminist sensibility than between positivity and feminist sensibility.

In addition to the two frames identified in the newspaper texts, *victim blaming* and *sluts*, two main solutions are also identified in the texts: *SlutWalk* (feminist sensibility) and *dress modestly* (postfeminist sensibility). When cross-referencing the frames with the solutions, the following emerges: when the item applies the feminist sensibility frame of *victim blaming*, the solution proposed is the feminist sensibility solution, to *SlutWalk*, in 67% of the items. There are no items framed using *victim blaming*, which propose the postfeminist sensibility solution, to *dress modestly*. Thus, the main feminist sensibility frame generates only a feminist sensibility solution.

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 Newspaper texts: Frame and solution



When an item applies the postfeminist sensibility frame of *sluts*, in 58% of these items the solution proposed is the postfeminist sensibility solution: for women to *dress modestly*. In 3% of these items it is the feminist sensibility solution: to *SlutWalk*.

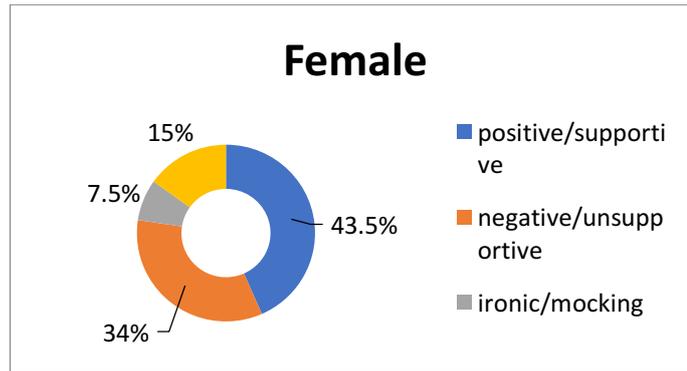
These findings demonstrate that there is strong agreement between the attitude held towards SlutWalk and the item's frame: a positive attitude engenders a feminist sensibility frame, which places the blame for rape outside of the victim; whereas, a negative attitude engenders a postfeminist sensibility frame, which places the blame

firmly with the victim. This is true in the social-media coverage as well, where all items express a positive attitude towards SlutWalk and use the feminist sensibility frame. When it comes to the solution proposed in the blogs, 92% propose to *SlutWalk* – go out to protest/raise awareness, while as for the solution proposed in the Tumblr posts, a full 100% propose to *SlutWalk* – go out to protest/raise awareness. Combined with the positive attitude towards SlutWalk in the social-media texts, this confirms the assumption that social-media authors frame their texts using a feminist sensibility more than mass-media authors do, as well as being more supportive towards SlutWalk.

Attitude towards SlutWalk and Author's Gender

Of all the newspaper stories that express a positive attitude towards SlutWalk, 59% were written by women. Of the women who wrote about SlutWalk, only 43.5% wrote positive items, 34% wrote negative/unsupportive items, 15% wrote unclear/neutral/mixed items and 7.5% wrote ironic/mockingly items. If the negative/unsupportive items and the ironic/mockingly items are combined, the result (41.5%) is similar to the ratio between positive and negative items in the overall corpus: an almost complete balance between those written in support and those written to the detriment of SlutWalk. This is fascinating, considering the extensive debate in the literature about the potentially feminist role of female media producers and the likelihood that more women content producers will generate more feminist output (Barker-Plummer, 2010; Gill, 2007a; Mendes, 2011; Tuchman, 1980; van Zoonen, 1994; van Zoonen, 1998). There are a number of possible explanations to consider: 1) less than half of all women overall are supportive of SlutWalk, so this is a representative breakdown; 2) women writing in newspapers are particularly unsupportive of SlutWalk; or 3) women writing in newspapers do not have the freedom to express their support for SlutWalk. Either way, the numbers show that simply having more women in media production roles does not necessarily generate content supportive of feminists and their activism.

Figure 5.11 Newspaper texts: Attitude of female authors



The same picture is apparent with regard to male authors, however an ironic/mocking stance is more common among the male authors than among the female ones, which corroborates Gill's (2007a, 2007b) claim that the postfeminist element of irony and knowingness is a tool commonly used by men to undermine feminism. This seemingly equal split between authors of both genders and their attitude towards SlutWalk is further illuminated below by breaking down the newspaper items by type of text.

Attitude towards SlutWalk and Type of Text

Given the starting point of this thesis, that contemporary media culture is postfeminist (Gill, 2007a; McRobbie, 2009), it is astounding that 71% of the news items are positive towards SlutWalk. However, only 29% of columns are positive towards it. This is particularly surprising, as the literature-based assumption would be that 'soft news' should be more positive than 'hard' news items (e.g. Mendes, 2011). When it comes to opinion pieces, 60% are positive towards SlutWalk, while letters are more negative, with just 38% expressing a positive attitude. However, overall and particularly as a result of the high number of positive *news* items, the majority, and close to but still less than half, of the mass-media items overall are positive (47.5%), even when negative and mocking items are combined (40.2%).

Theme 3: Type of Text

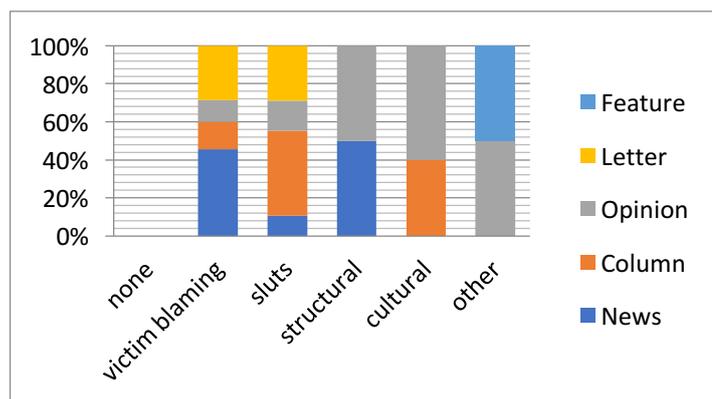
This theme interrogates the relationship between the way SlutWalk is portrayed and the type of text the representation appears in. Included in this theme are questions pertaining to the relationship between type of text and the way it is framed, using a feminist or postfeminist sensibility.

The type of newspaper coverage is quite diverse, with most items falling into the category of ‘column’ (29%), closely followed by ‘news’ (26%), ‘letters to the editor’ (26%), ‘opinion pieces’ (18%) and only one feature article (1%). This demonstrates that the largest proportion of types of coverage can be categorised as ‘soft’ news, which includes columns, opinion pieces and letters to the editor. The variety of types of text is interesting to consider, as it is often asserted that “soft news formats such as columns, features and letters to the editor... provide a potential space for in-depth feminist analysis” (Mendes, 2011, p.160). Therefore, it could be expected that the ‘soft’ news items, and thus the bulk of the coverage of SlutWalk London, would be positive and framed with a feminist sensibility, despite the postfeminist media culture in which they were written. However, as Kaitlynn Mendes acknowledges a few pages later, soft news formats can also provide “space for anti-feminist voices” (p.165), or for ‘postfeminist sensibilities’, as demonstrated in this chapter.

Type of Text and Framing

The feminist sensibility frame *victim blaming* is the most prominent frame in the ‘hard’ news coverage, i.e. the items written by professional journalists, with 76% of news items framed in this way. The second most prominent frame in the ‘hard’ news coverage is *sluts* but, with only 19% of items, it is much less significant.

Figure 5.12 Newspaper texts: Type of text and framing



The column items are skewed the other way, with 70% of items using the postfeminist sensibility frame *sluts* and only 20% using the feminist sensibility frame *victim blaming*.

There is more of a spread across the 15 opinion items, with 26% using *victim blaming* as the frame and 40% using *sluts* as the frame. However, in the letters to the editor

there is an almost even split between the two frames: 47% of letters use *victim blaming* as the frame whereas 52% of the letters use *sluts* as the frame.

As described earlier, when examining the coverage by feminism and type of text, it is noteworthy that the news and feature items, i.e. those written by professional journalists, are framed using a feminist sensibility, whereas items written by columnists, opinion holders and letter-writers offer a more mixed, albeit postfeminist, sensibility frame of SlutWalk. Some possible explanations for this are that the discrepancy in the way in which items about SlutWalk are framed could be: 1) generational, i.e. age gap between the author and her subjects; 2) professional, i.e. whereas ‘hard’ news reporters might feel compelled to adhere to professional standards of balanced reporting, ‘soft’ news writers are bound by no such norms and indeed may often feel compelled to express potentially controversial views; or 3) one of timing, i.e. when the story is written: before, during or after the event.

As previously stated, the finding that ‘hard’ news uses a feminist sensibility frame and ‘soft’ news uses a postfeminist sensibility frame contrasts with the conventional wisdom that “traditional ‘hard’ news articles are simply incapable of challenging patriarchal discourses because they lack the space and narrative freedom to interrogate these ideologies fully. That said, columns and features are much more amenable to this type of work” (Mendes, 2015, p.189). This unexpected inversion of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ news in relation to feminist/postfeminist sensibility framing indicates that, in the case of SlutWalk London, hard news items are where feminist progress can be seen, whereas soft news items, and columns in particular, are where feminist and anti-feminist entanglement persists. The nature of this entanglement will be further explored in Chapter 6, but the reasons for it require examination beyond the scope of this thesis.

Conclusions

Two main frames are identified, using Entman’s (1993) key framing functions, in the media texts about SlutWalk London 2011: *victim blaming* and *sluts*, which correspond to two sensibilities, feminist and postfeminist respectively. The assumption that, compared with representation in the mass media, self-representation in social media

is more likely to be framed using a feminist sensibility and to display a positive attitude towards SlutWalk was confirmed; overall, more of the mass-media texts use the postfeminist sensibility frame (46%) than the feminist sensibility frame (43%), whereas the social-media texts are framed almost entirely using the feminist sensibility frame and display a positive attitude towards SlutWalk. It is informative to attend to the details, as a more nuanced picture, particularly of representation in newspapers, emerges when the frames are discussed with the help of three themes: relationship to feminism; attitude to SlutWalk; and type of text. Within all three themes, the gender of the author is also considered.

The biggest surprises in the data reported in this chapter are the inverse relationships between newspaper authors' gender and stated feminism, and the framing of their media items, as well as support for SlutWalk. The new definition of feminism as *done wrong* also warrants attention, as do the limited number of social-media bloggers and posters who identify as feminists, despite framing their items using a feminist sensibility and being supportive of SlutWalk. The findings demonstrate that the representation of SlutWalkers in newspapers offers a complex picture of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities, whereas the self-representation by SlutWalkers on social media adheres directly to a feminist sensibility.

Gender in relation to media production is much discussed in the literature (Barker-Plummer, 2010; Ross & Carter, 2011; Tuchman, 1980; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1994; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1998). The need for more female media producers is generally agreed upon, although it is conceded that the presence of female producers does not necessarily lead to feminist content, as is demonstrated here. Most of the newspaper authors writing about SlutWalk are female, however the majority of these frame their articles with postfeminist sensibility. In addition, most female columnists identify as feminists, while using a postfeminist sensibility to frame their articles. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the reasons for these surprises; however, the entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist ideas (Gill, 2007a) is discussed further in the next chapter.

On the other hand, while most of the bloggers and Tumblr posters are female, very few of these identify as feminist, and yet they frame their posts using a feminist sensibility. This contradiction is not unique to the findings of this thesis. Recent research carried out for the Fawcett Society (2016) demonstrates that while most people support feminist principles of equality only a small minority identify as feminists. The LSE Commission on Gender, Inequality and Power (2015) has addressed this discrepancy and inferred that people stop short of calling themselves 'feminist' to avoid being associated with negative perceptions that surround the term; others have drawn similar conclusions (Press & Tripodi, 2014). However, the findings presented in Chapter 4, whereby interviewees happily define themselves as feminists, suggest a more complex picture. Are women online deterred from identifying as feminist for fear of what Banet-Weiser calls "networked popular misogyny" (Banet-Weiser, 2015b), whereby 'popular feminism', or perhaps any feminism, is met with hatred and harassment online? This question requires further research beyond the scope of this thesis.

In addition, and contrary to expectations (Mendes, 2011, 2015; Ross & Carter, 2011; Tuchman, 1980; van Zoonen, 1994), the findings in this chapter show that 'soft' and 'hard' news are not necessarily good indicators of the way an item will be framed in terms of feminist or postfeminist sensibilities. In this case, 'hard' news items were more likely to use feminist sensibility framing, whereas 'soft' news items were more likely to use postfeminist sensibility framing.

The findings indicate that in order to successfully intervene in postfeminist media culture feminist activists should seek to disseminate their views to professional news and feature writers, who are more likely to use a feminist sensibility frame. This finding is surprising given previous research, which demonstrates that news media are more likely to frame feminism and feminists as deviant and to delegitimise them (Ashley & Olson, 1998; Barker-Plummer, 2010; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1992), and would benefit from further research.

The definition of SlutWalk's feminism as *done wrong* is new, and it is surprising that it has been coined predominantly by self-identified feminist columnists. While it is new,

it is undoubtedly connected to the definition of feminism, found in postfeminist media culture, as passé or dead (Gill, 2007a; McRobbie, 2009). What is particularly surprising about this is that it is not espoused online by networked misogynists (Banet-Weiser, 2015b), but by female, feminist newspaper columnists. The critique of SlutWalk in columns as feminism *done wrong* is further explored in Chapter 6, using discourse analysis.

Chapter 6: *Rape Logic and Conflict*— Discourse Analysis of Media Texts

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the newspaper and social-media texts about SlutWalk London 2011 using discourse analysis, in order to attend to the ways that language has constructed discussions about the protest in the media. This chapter illuminates some of the main trends identified in the content analysis presented in Chapter 5, such as the assessment that SlutWalk represents feminism *done wrong*, the lack of support for SlutWalk by self-identified feminist columnists, the entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist ideas and the presence of feminist or postfeminist sensibilities in representations and self-representations of the protest.

The analytic strategy adopted here follows Wetherell and Potter's (1988) practice of interpretative repertoires. They define these as "the building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of actions, cognitive processes and other phenomena" (p. 172). I found this method useful in parsing the competing views and constructions of such a contested event as SlutWalk. Wetherell and Potter (1988) analyse talk using interpretative repertoires, but discourse analysis of media texts has also been conducted following this practice (e.g. Gill, 2009; Lachover, 2014; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1992), as I do here.

As a result of close reading of the media texts, I identified two main interpretative repertoires that structure discussions of SlutWalk London 2011 and its participants: *Rape Logic* and *Conflict*. Each of the two repertoires is divided into two "major facets" (Wetherell & Potter, 1988, p. 178). Facets exemplify the ways in which authors construct their texts to make sense (Wetherell, 1998). The facets were identified through analysis of the texts, whereby it emerged that opposing narratives were constructed in each repertoire, in support of contrasting versions of SlutWalk. Thus, in the *Rape Logic* repertoire, the first facet is 'rape logic', whereby rape is cast as a logical outcome of women's choices and behaviour, typically regarding clothing ('sluttish'), alcohol consumption and being out at night. In this facet of the repertoire,

women are held at least partially responsible for sexual assault, especially if their clothes are deemed provocative, if they have consumed alcohol and/or been out (late) at night. The second facet is 'rape myths', whereby rape is cast as being about violence and control, not sex, and therefore not about a woman's clothing or behaviour. In this facet, women, or their clothes, are never to blame for sexual assault; instead, rapists and a variety of institutional inequalities are held responsible.

In the *Conflict* repertoire, the first facet is 'conflict', whereby SlutWalk is cast as divisive and responsible for a number of clashes, for example between different types of women; between men and women; and between SlutWalk and feminism. The second facet is 'solidarity', whereby SlutWalk is cast as a political protest that engenders solidarity among women of all types united against sexual violence, and solidarity between likeminded men and women; and casts SlutWalk as feminist. Both repertoires rely on a variety of linguistic and thematic discursive tools, which can be identified across the various texts and which help to construct the "common sense which organizes accountability" (Wetherell, 1998, p. 400) in each facet, for example lists and repetition; similes and metaphors; disclaimers ('-but-'); and facts and figures, as detailed in the analysis of both repertoires that follows.

This chapter is divided into three sections, one for each repertoire and a discussion which brings the analysis together to explore how the findings relate to feminist and postfeminist sensibilities as well as representation and self-representation.

Rape Logic

In this repertoire rape is constructed variously, by facet. Thus, in the 'rape logic' facet, rape is cast as a logical consequence of women's dress and behaviour, placing responsibility for safety from sexual assault with women rather than with the perpetrators of violence. On the other hand, in the 'rape myths' facet, rape is cast as a violent crime committed (mainly) against women that is outside of women's control, is a result of male assertion of power – not sex – and that is therefore never the fault of victims' choice of clothes or behaviour.

Lists and Repetition

In both facets of this repertoire, lists and repeated detailing of women's clothes are used by authors in newspapers, blogs and Tumblr posts to emphasise, to convince and to deflect counter-arguments, thus making a common-sense appeal regarding the inherent stance. In the 'rape logic' facet of the *Rape Logic* repertoire, long lists that fetishise the clothes worn by SlutWalkers are compiled in newspapers, for example: "...dressed in rubber and basques, fishnets and slinky black dresses. There was a lot of serious cleavage, a few bare bottoms... and a few nipples bursting out of bra tops and corsets"(Mills & Angelina, 2011); or "Protesters in uplifted bras, thongs, Playboy outfits, corsets, red ribbons..." (Alibhai-Brown, 2011). These lists are titillating and rely on culturally familiar tropes of what constitutes 'sexy' clothing (and un-clothing) and on assumptions that women who appear in this way are available for sex, potentially even non-consensual sex. Thus, by constructing these lists authors forge a link between clothing and sex and lay the foundations for the argument that wearing such clothes implies that a woman is inviting sexual advance. The implications of describing SlutWalkers and their clothing in this way are twofold: 1) agency for sex is shifted from a woman to her clothes, implying that consent is given by virtue of messages inscribed in her attire (Hill, 2016); and 2) responsibility for unwanted sexual attention is transferred from the perpetrator to the victim, or her clothes.

In contrast, the 'rape myth' facet of the *Rape Logic* repertoire also lists clothing, but to achieve the exact opposite effect, that is to undermine the logic that a woman and her clothes can be held responsible for rape. For example, Elle Rebecca (2011) writes on Tumblr that women "have been raped in sweatpants, jeans, t-shirts and yes even miniskirts. Women have been raped popping to the shop in their pyjamas, going for a jog in the park in their sports gear, lying around their house in a tracksuit". This list acts to construct rape as a mundane threat facing all women, regardless of their outfit or activity. It constructs rape as something out of the control of its victims and which no amount of personal policing can prevent. The logic here, that "Women get raped regardless of what they are wearing, where they are or what they have been drinking" (Rebecca, 2011), serves to sever the connection between attire and rape and thus to construct such a connection as a 'rape myth'.

In the 'rape myth' facet, lists are also used to illustrate the amount of policing that is required of women in order to protect themselves against rape: "to be safe, be careful, watch my back, don't come home too late, cover up" (Carey-Campbell, 2011). In this facet it is asserted that it makes much more sense to demand that men do not rape than to require women to work so hard to avoid a crime over which they have no control.

Thus, lists are used in both facets of the repertoire to corroborate opposing accounts either by constructing a cause-and-effect relationship between clothing and rape or by deconstructing and critiquing such a relationship. The use of lists in the 'rape myth' facet appears to be in response to their construction in the 'rape logic' facet, bringing to mind Banet-Weiser's (2015b) "call-and-response connection" (n.p.), albeit in reverse, whereby here misogyny makes the call and the response has a feminist sensibility.

Use of Disclaimers (-but-)

Disclaimers are used in the 'rape logic' facet of the *Rape Logic* repertoire to "ward off potentially obnoxious attributions" (Wetherell & Potter, 1988, p. 176). It is remarkable to note the repeated use of the disclaimer 'but', which allows authors to make two, often conflicting, statements along the lines of 'I'm a feminist, but...', or in this case 'victim blaming is wrong, but women shouldn't dress like sluts if they don't want to be raped'.

For example, when Minette Marrin (2011), in her column in the *Sunday Times*, states that "When women are victimised by rape it is indeed wrong to blame the victim, but it is foolish to imitate the victim if she has put herself in harm's way by behaving like a slut", the conjunction is used to call the 'wrongness' of victim blaming into question. She states that it is "wrong to blame the victim", but proceeds to do just that by implying that "the victim" is to blame by putting "herself in harm's way". The internal conflict inherent in this statement functions to construct a logical discourse in which a woman's behaviour ("like a slut") can be held against her and justify her rape.

Similarly, the conjunction 'but' is used to undermine the fact that rape is pervasive and not clothing-related: "Rape is a universal evil – and women in burkas with their unambiguous 'stay off' sign are still as likely to be victims as the flesh-flashing demonstrators on Saturday. But to objectify yourself in defiance is still objectification" (Alibhai-Brown, 2011). This formulation serves to brush aside the assertion that rape affects women across social and sartorial divides, to strengthen the clothing=rape logic, and to justify the critique of SlutWalk as doing something wrong. It creates a clear separation between distant "women in burkas", who definitely don't deserve to be raped – because they are modestly dressed – and "flesh flashing demonstrators", who are addressed directly and personally as "yourself", and who potentially bring rape upon themselves because of their revealing clothes.

The use in this fashion of the disclaimer 'but' works to entangle feminist and anti-feminist ideas (Gill, 2007b). It acknowledges that victim blaming is wrong (feminist idea), but blames them anyway (anti-feminist idea): "...this is not about blaming the victim, but reducing the risks" (Alibhai-Brown, 2011). However, this conjunctive phrase is problematic: if critiquing women's choice of attire is not about blaming the victim, then it cannot be about reducing the risks; if there is no connection between a woman's clothes and whether or not she is raped, then outfit selection does not pose a risk. The only risk is posed by the rapist. Thus, the use of the disclaimer 'but' serves to accomplish a double effect: acknowledging the facts only to repudiate them.

Figures of Speech

Similes and metaphors are used by authors to support (in the rape logic facet) or subvert (in the rape myth facet) a cause-and-effect relationship between clothing and rape. By making comparisons with culturally familiar examples such as illness or fire authors tap into established ideas about inevitability and choice, which they uphold or undermine (depending on the facet), thus making an appeal for support for their particular common-sense construction.

For example, a common simile in the 'rape logic' facet of the repertoire is the comparison of the cause-and-effect relationship between smoking and cancer to that of clothing and rape. By making this direct comparison, authors not only construct a

direct cause-and-effect relationship between a woman's choice of clothes and her likelihood of becoming a victim of rape, but also provide a common-sense solution, similar to the one given by the Canadian policeman: to avoid being victimised, don't dress like a slut. This causal construction ignores the fact that, unlike smoking and cancer, there is no established link between rape and attire. Also implied in the cancer-rape comparison is an inevitability logic. When rapists are equated with cancer, all responsibility is removed from rapists and their behaviour is thus accepted as an inevitability against which women must police themselves.

In addition to rape being compared to cancer, people are also equated with animals in some 'rape logic' constructions. In his letter to the *Independent*, Peter Lewis writes that "Throughout the animal world, males are programmed to respond to females that send out signals that they are ready to mate. When a woman dresses in a sexually provocative way, she is stimulating a hard-wired male response" (2011). This comparison with the animal world naturalises (Couldry, 2008) the 'rape logic' interpretation of the relations between rapists and their victims and also features a logic of inevitability, whereby women send out signals, men respond in accordance with their programming, and nothing can be done about this state of affairs. However, this construction skips a number of steps. The first is that people are not animals. Humans do not send out biological signals; instead we communicate, using agreed-upon social signals such as speech. Second, clothing is not a signal: while people may dress to express certain moods or inclinations, clothes do not function instead of speech or indeed instead of consent. And third, if clothes were an unmistakable signal then 'mating' with a woman on the basis of her clothing choice would not be rape, but consensual or at the very least 'natural'.

Conversely, in the 'rape myth' facet of the repertoire, similar discursive devices are used to question the pervasive 'rape logic' discourse. For example, Caitlin Moran (2011) constructs the following comparison to undermine the argument of a causal relationship between clothing and rape: "The purpose of SlutWalks clearly isn't to inspire instant priapism in any male onlooker. To say so is like criticising trick-or-treating kids, dressed as Dracula, for trying to summon the spirit of Satan". The comparison between SlutWalkers' attire and children dressing up treats the clothes-

rape relationship with derision, something that is “clearly” ridiculous, even fantastical, like conjuring “the spirit of Satan”. In effect, by making this comparison, Moran is relying on cultural knowledge about Halloween to ridicule and undermine the existing construction of the clothes-rape causal relationship.

In a similar vein, Tumblr poster Elle Rebecca (2011) constructs a common-sense argument against the conflation of clothes and rape: **“Telling a victim of rape that they deserved it because they looked sexual is like telling a burn victim it is their fault because they looked flammable”** (bold in original). By equating rape-victim blaming with burn-victim blaming the gap in compassion afforded to the two types of victim is highlighted and the practice of victim blaming is called into question. However, while the examples of similes used in the ‘rape myth’ facet are an interesting counterpoint to those used in the ‘rape logic’ facet, they are less fluent. This is possibly because rape logic is such an established trope of contemporary culture (Hill, 2016), and due to the challenge of de-naturalising the culturally familiar relationship between rape and clothing.

Facts and Figures

Facts and figures are ignored, used or misused by authors in the ‘rape logic’ facet to support their claims about rape and clothing, whereas authors in the ‘rape myth’ facet use facts and figures to substantiate their own claims or to undermine those constructed using ‘rape logic’.

For example, one columnist states that “I have no idea if there is more rape than in previous ages when it was a completely hidden crime” (Alibhai-Brown, 2011), and goes on to state that “the conviction rate is now nearly 60 per cent” (which is blatantly untrue; the actual figure is 6.5%). The contrast between the two statements implies that while rape might be a travesty, albeit one we just have to put up with, it is in fact now being effectively dealt with (60% conviction rate!) and thus does not pose a structural problem requiring attention. Having taken the wind out of the sails of any call for action on rape, such as SlutWalk, by alleging lack of evidence or its fabrication, other and uncorroborated evidence is presented to blame the victim: “In recent years there is more evidence that drunkenness among young women (and their revealing

clothes in some cases) make them vulnerable to sexual assault” (Alibhai-Brown, 2011). The author does not mention what this evidence is or where it comes from, but simply uses the veil of authority conferred by the word ‘evidence’ to promote her (unsubstantiated) claim and support the rape logic that rape is an individual problem brought about by women, their choice of clothes and their behaviours.

On the other hand, Aimee (2011) on Tumblr uses facts and figures to contextualise SlutWalk and make the case that the protest is needed to raise awareness that the police and judiciary are not protecting victims or prosecuting rapists effectively enough: “At 6.5%, the UK now has the worst conviction rate in Europe besides Ireland, despite the fact that there is supporting evidence in 86.7% of charged cases of rape”. The contrast between the two facets of the *Rape Logic* repertoire with regard to use of facts and figures is stark. Proponents of the ‘rape myth’ facet try to counter claims that rape is not a problem requiring attention by the use of facts and figures, whereas proponents of the ‘rape logic’ facet ignore or fabricate facts and figures to confer legitimacy on victim blaming.

Myths, Magic and the Real World

In this section use of language from a particular realm is used to compare the facets of the *Rape Logic* repertoire. The use of terms that relate to and conjure up cultural understandings of myths and magic in contrast to reality and truth works similarly to the ways in which figures of speech, for example, work: that is by encouraging readers to believe one thing over another. Thus, SlutWalkers combine the terms ‘rape’ and ‘myth’ to signal that the various excuses made by sections of society, culture and the establishment for rape and rapists’ behaviour are wrong. For example, Aimee (2011) writes in her Tumblr post: “The biggest rape myth is that the victim does something to provoke a rapist... There is no such thing as an invitation or a provocation for something that, by definition, is forcing someone to do something that they don’t want to partake in”. The “myth” that Aimee is referring to is that a woman’s clothes can be blamed for her rape and that her clothes somehow signify a willingness to be raped. Aimee highlights the fact that if the woman wanted to have sex the interaction would not be classified as rape. By breaking down the rape logic, she constructs an

alternative version of common sense that designates victim blaming as 'myth' and therefore without basis in reality.

In contrast, Marrin (2011) in her *Sunday Times* column constructs an opposing argument: "There is something... unrealistic about taking the line that men ought not to be aroused by provocative behaviour: the fact is, it is provoking. Men ought not to let themselves be provoked into sexual attacks of any kind. But not all men are sensible and rational, or in much control of themselves". In this construction, Marrin asserts that it is "unrealistic" for women to expect to be safe from rape if they behave (including by dressing) 'provocatively'. She places responsibility for rape squarely with women and their behaviour, absolving rapists almost completely of accountability for theirs and depicting male sexual arousal as uncomplicatedly and directly linked to rape, thus contributing to rape logic and constructing it as 'realistic'.

In a similar vein, Brendan O'Neill (2011) in his *Telegraph* opinion piece suggests that SlutWalkers "seem to want to... dress as sluttishly as they like while also being surrounded by some magic forcefield... which protects them". The use of the term "magic forcefield" implies that SlutWalkers' demand to not be blamed for rape, regardless of their outfits, is so unrealistic that it belongs in the realm of magic and fairy tales. The implication is that rape is logical: because of the natural differences between men and women whereby, barring the existence of some otherworldly power ("magic forcefield"), men cannot be relied upon to not rape a woman dressed in revealing attire, and therefore women need to take heed.

Conflict

In the *Conflict* repertoire, SlutWalk is cast either as a cause of conflict or as a source of solidarity. Thus, the first facet in this repertoire is 'conflict', whereby SlutWalk is cast as divisive and responsible for a number of clashes, for example between different types of women; between men and women; and between SlutWalk and feminism. The second facet is 'solidarity', whereby SlutWalk is cast as a political protest that engenders solidarity among women of all types united against sexual violence; solidarity between likeminded men and women; and casts SlutWalk as a worthy continuation of previous feminisms and as *current and relevant*. These are

accomplished by using a variety of thematic and linguistic discursive tools, as described next.

Lists and Repetition

Lists and repetition are used in texts that construct 'solidarity' between women across demographic divides. For example, Selma James (2011) lists the structural barriers that stand in the way of rape being eradicated. She also repeats the word "until" in her opinion piece in the *Guardian* newspaper, creating a sense that the need for societal change to protect women is urgent as well as relevant to a variety of types of women:

Sex assault won't be eradicated until asylum seekers can report crimes to the police without fear of deportation. Until sex workers can report crimes to the police without fear of being criminalised. Until mothers can report crimes to the police without fear of their children being taken from them by social services. Until transgender women can report rape without their status as real women somehow being called into question. And until black women can report rape without being disbelieved because of the colour of their skin.

This repetition, coupled with a long list of the myriad ways in which sexual assault is both pervasive and institutionally bound, politicises the call for an end to victim blaming by repeatedly referring to the police, thus highlighting their role in rape cases. It is implied that many structural changes are required in order to address the intersectional discrimination that makes up the problem of rape in our society. In addition, by creating a diverse list of rape victims, from asylum seekers through sex workers and mothers to transgender and black women, James is giving the lie to the rape logic argument that 'sluttishly' dressed women are the main, if not the only, victims of rape.

Also constructing SlutWalk as a protest that encompasses all sorts of women and engenders solidarity, Mark Townsend (2011) writes in his news report in the *Observer* that "Mothers and daughters, teenagers, pensioners and a significant number of men were among those protesting against what they say is a culture of blame directed at victims of sexual assault, rather than their rapists and abusers". In contrast to listing participants by their clothes, as seen in the previous repertoire, here participants are listed by age and gender. A crowd of people both young and old, women and men, is

depicted, thus constructing a sense of solidarity and intersectionality. This is reinforced by the juxtaposition of the list of participants with the political aims of the protest.

Lists are also used in blogs to construct SlutWalk as a movement of solidarity, for instance by listing the speakers who addressed SlutWalkers at the rally which took place at the end of the London march: “the London walk was addressed by speakers representing a range of backgrounds including black and Islamic women, disabled women, sex workers and transgendered people” (Lasance, 2011). By emphasising the diversity of the formal speakers, Natalie Lasance constructs SlutWalk as political and inclusive and also suggests that SlutWalks’ aims are relevant to all women, regardless of background.

The author of the blog *Bangs and a Bun* acknowledges the pervasive nature of cultural and structural victim blaming and constructs solidarity between herself and other women in the face of it, using repetition and listing:

Every woman has these things she must do, these ideas she feels keep her safe, because we know, deep down, that if we are ever assaulted, it’s our behaviour that’s put under the microscope, our sexual history that’s dissected, our attire that’s seen as consent (Carey-Campbell, 2011)

This blogger constructs an ‘everywoman’ who stands for all women and serves to demonstrate the widespread nature of what she has to contend with. In the course of this sentence, the third person pronoun “she” turns into “we” and then into “our”, signaling that “she” and “we”/ “our” are interchangeable, thus constructing a sense of solidarity. The sentence is constructed to cast doubt on the efficacy of the strategies it lists. The *Bangs and a Bun* blogger does not sign up to the logic that makes sense of sexual violence by “depicting women’s appearance as causal or contributing to sexual violence” (Hill, 2016, p. 24). Instead, she suggests that the listed behaviours need to be carried out in order to withstand scrutiny, not to actually prevent assault. Thus, when she states the things that women “must do”, she classifies these as “ideas” that every woman “feels” keep her safe, rather than actions that effectively protect her (Carey-Campbell, 2011).

On the other hand, in the *Conflict* repertoire, repetition of forms of personal address (e.g. I, you, we, they, our) is used in both facets to interpellate women from a position of solidarity or of conflict. For example, when Jane Moore (2011), in her column in the *Sun* newspaper commands women to

Take personal responsibility for the way you conduct yourself because, regrettably, if you dress and behave in a sexually provocative manner on a night out then you are increasing the chances of attracting attention from the wrong sort of man and may suffer the consequences

An individual is directly addressed in the second person. This form of address conjures up a presumably young woman whose behaviour requires improvement. She needs to police herself better in order to avoid “the consequences” of a lack of such self-surveillance, which one can only assume are violent and sexual. Through the use of the pronoun “you”, the author distances herself from her addressee. The personalised message can also be understood as addressed to many, so the requirement to stay safe is a direct imperative addressed both to individual women and to women as a group. The repetition of “you” constructs conflict between the author and her addressee/s.

A cause-and-effect formulation is used here to construct the inevitability of the clothes/behaviour-rape connection, much as in the postfeminist sensibility ‘rape logic’ facet discussed in the previously described repertoire. In addition, “the wrong sort of man” is not directed in this address to alter his behaviour, but rather the women invoked here carry sole responsibility for protecting themselves from “the consequences”.

In the ‘conflict’ facet, repetition is further used to emphasise the discrepancy between SlutWalk and feminism. For example:

Feminism has nothing to do with dressing in next to nothing and then affecting surprise and outrage when men find it a turn-on. That's men for you. Feminism has nothing to do with getting off your face on cheap cocktails and then being amazed when some creep takes advantage of the fact that you can't put one foot in front of the other. Feminism has nothing to do with having a fit of the vapours when someone uses the word ‘slut’ (Selway, 2011)

Here Jennifer Selway positions SlutWalk as in conflict with feminism. In order to achieve this positioning, she sets out a list of things that feminism is not about, but that SlutWalk apparently is, such as dressing immodestly, getting drunk and being upset when called a slut. This characterisation of SlutWalk wilfully ignores the stated intentions and purpose of SlutWalk (SlutWalk, 2012a). It also upholds a variety of sexist and classist positions. It blames women for their choice of attire while absolving men from any responsibility for the way they treat women (“that’s men for you”); it uses disparaging language to judge women for drinking alcohol (“getting off your face”) and makes a classist assumption (“cheap cocktails”) about the type of women who engage in this behaviour. This excerpt also trivialises the objection raised by protestors to the use of the derogatory term ‘slut’ by a policeman, depicting it as some kind of outdated, hyper-feminine response (“a fit of the vapours”), while omitting the fact that it was not used by any old “someone”, but by a representative of law enforcement in his official capacity.

Repetition is also used in the ‘conflict’ facet of the *Conflict* repertoire to construct a view of feminism as an individual project, reminiscent of what Catherine Rottenberg (2013) calls Neoliberal Feminism. Thus, “real” feminism, as opposed to that demonstrated by SlutWalk, is depicted as being “about looking after yourself, being independent and taking responsibility for your own safety and for your own body” (Selway, 2011). This construction vacates feminism of political content and erases all forms of solidarity. The personalisation of feminism is characteristic of the way it is depicted in this facet of the *Conflict* repertoire, demonstrates clearly that the contest between doing feminism ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ is a contest between the personal and the political, and highlights the threat that a political movement like SlutWalk poses to those who position feminism solely as a personal project (Gill, 2007a; McRobbie, 2009).

In contrast, repetition is used in the ‘solidarity’ facet of the *Conflict* repertoire to emphasise the opposite – the political nature of SlutWalk. Describing protestors, Selma James (2011) highlights how:

They hate rape and all who protect the rapist, from police to the media. They hate the cuts and how women are going to be pummelled. And they hate being defined and divided by the powers that be. This was the new women's movement.

Here SlutWalk's message is cast as political by emphasising its concern with structural inequalities. As if in response to assumptions that women and their clothes can be blamed for their rape, James (2011) announces outright that SlutWalkers "hate rape", leaving no doubt that they are not 'asking for it'. Thus it is again apparent that there is a call-and-response connection (Banet-Weiser, 2015b) between the feminist and postfeminist sensibility constructions of SlutWalk, albeit in the opposite direction to that set out by Banet-Weiser. Here the feminist constructions in the 'solidarity' facet of the *Conflict* repertoire are responding to the misogynistic call of the 'rape logic' facet of the *Rape Logic* repertoire.

However, it is not just rape that SlutWalkers are depicted as hating, but also the societal structures that are depicted as enabling, or at the very least not effectively preventing, rape, "from police to the media". The list of things that SlutWalkers hate is extended even further into the political arena, with protestors portrayed as hating "the cuts and how women are going to be pummelled". This statement works to further politicise SlutWalk by articulating it with concerns about policies that unduly affect women, but are not directly linked to the movement's stated aims. While the word 'slut' is not used, its use by the Canadian policeman is connoted when it is asserted that "they hate being defined and divided by the powers that be". In this statement, it is affirmed that SlutWalk is not about whether or not women can or should be called, or indeed can or should reclaim the word, 'slut', but rather about refusing to allow others to tell women who they are or to seek to divide and rule them through naming. The use of repetition responds to (Banet-Weiser, 2015b) and contests others' construction of SlutWalkers and SlutWalk, repositioning them as women united against the establishment and as a "new women's movement". Thus we see that through repetition SlutWalk can be constructed as feminism *done right*.

Generational Divide

In addition to repetition and lists, conflict is constructed in this repertoire through the culturally familiar trope of a generational divide. For example, in an *Independent on Sunday* news article (McCorkell & Pickford, 2011), SlutWalk is constructed as "largely

led by a grassroots younger generation". In a *Sunday Times* news article (Mills & Angelina, 2011), Marcelle D'Argy Smith, former editor of the British edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, is quoted as saying that SlutWalkers "are girls with raging hormones intent on flaunting their bodies. I don't think they know what they're doing". In this construction, SlutWalkers are portrayed as young, hormonal and uninformed, and therefore not to be taken seriously. They are dismissed offhandedly and their aims and ambitions undermined. SlutWalk is also limited, in terms of age and attire, to only a part of its constituency.

Also in the *Sunday Times*, SlutWalk is undermined through infantilisation, for example: "There's something childish about showing off in public and then getting cross because people pay attention" (Marrin, 2011). By calling the protestors "childish" and accusing them of "showing off", this statement invokes the image of a toddler throwing a tantrum; "getting cross" is something that parents or teachers do when children exasperate them, so this language choice reinforces the portrayal of SlutWalkers as petulant children who cannot handle the repercussions of their actions and need to grow up. In this way, Marrin (2011) constructs protestors as naïve, but also solidifies the logic that by "showing off in public" women who get raped are just 'asking for it', and that rape can be dismissed as simply "people pay[ing] attention" to scantily clad women, thus also supporting the 'rape logic' facet of the previous repertoire.

Continuing the use of the parent-child dynamic to support the idea of a generational conflict, Alibhai-Brown (2011), in her *Independent* column, constructs SlutWalk as a conflict between mothers and daughters: "Now when we tell our daughters not to dress like slappers, they will answer back, eyes flashing with disdain for our hopelessly outdated view of women and men. And rape". This invocation of the mother-daughter relationship speaks to the imperative to protect our children from harm. The assumption is that the harm is rape and the protection required is to police daughters' attire so as to prevent it. The use of the derogatory term "slappers" as a stand in for 'sluts' serves to reinforce the notion that a woman's (or girl's) attire determines her likelihood of being raped. Thus the cultural trope of a generational divide is used to

create conflict between women and undermine SlutWalk as a movement, while solidifying the 'rape logic' discussed earlier.

Name Calling

Name calling, as seen in the example above, where "slappers" is used instead of 'sluts' to describe both the SlutWalk protestors and women who dress in revealing clothing, is another way that women are shamed and divided in the 'conflict' facet of this repertoire. In her letter to the *Sunday Times*, Caroline Cardew-Smith (2011) constructs 'sluts' as different from other women: "if you dress like a slut, don't be surprised if you get treated like one", while in her column in the same newspaper, Minette Marris (2011) creates a more explicit conflict between women, sluts and sex workers: "There is no universal human right to dress and behave like a sluttish, half-naked, drunken streetwalker touting for sex, without occasionally being taken for one".

Both these examples promote the problematic logic that it is acceptable to rape a "streetwalker" and therefore, if a woman behaves like Marris's perception of one, said rape victim has no right to protection. Again, a woman's consent is supplanted by her appearance and behaviour, whereas the rapist's behaviour is not acknowledged, or is in fact constructed as 'normal'. And thus, by dint of name calling, hierarchies of women are constructed which indicate a 'logical' degree of female culpability when it comes to rape. The name calling found in newspaper texts speaks back to the question of name reclamation discussed in the interview chapter and in the literature (Hill, 2016; McRobbie, 2009), and demonstrates the ways in which name calling is a culturally normalised form of oppression and discrimination, against which name reclamation can sometimes be productively used.

Gender Divide

In addition to the various clashes amongst women that are constructed in the 'conflict' facet of the *Conflict* repertoire, SlutWalk is constructed as a clash between women and men. For example, in their opinion piece in the *Guardian* newspaper, Gail Dines and Wendy Murphy (2011) construct male violence against women as a problem central to SlutWalk: "Signs made by protesters showed that women are angry with being blamed for male violence and fed up with the failure of the culture to hold men accountable". SlutWalk is thus constructed as having a male-female

conflict at its heart, as opposed to a conflict between those who oppose rape and the blaming of victims, and those who do not. However, as mentioned by interviewees, by Mark Townsend (2011) above, and as the blogger on *Bangs and a Bun* points out, “there were men who marched along to show their support” (Carey-Campbell, 2011). Thus, the notion of SlutWalk being about a male-female conflict is contested in the coverage of SlutWalk across the media, with men also portrayed as marching in solidarity with SlutWalkers. The two facets of the *Conflict* repertoire, ‘conflict’ and ‘solidarity’, are in tension with each other here. On the one hand SlutWalk is indeed a protest against male sexual violence towards women, but on the other there is a desire not to tar all men with the same brush and indeed to actively include those men who support the cause.

Some men who support SlutWalk express their solidarity. For example, Tom Deadman (2011), who represents the White Ribbon campaign of men against male violence, asserts in his letter to the *Independent* that “we do a great disservice to the victims of male violence and the majority of decent men by pretending that men are turned into mindless lust-machines by a scantily clad woman”. By constructing the rape logic, that men are naturally different to women and therefore cannot and should not be held responsible for their violent actions towards women, as a “pretence” and as a “disservice” not only to the victims of male violence but also to the “majority of decent men”, Deadman reminds readers that male sexual violence should not be excused on the grounds of ‘difference’ nor be blamed on its (female) victims. In the act of writing this letter, Deadman has both undermined the victim blaming logic and actively demonstrated his support for SlutWalk, its message and protestors, thus constructing a potential to resolve the male-female conflict inherent in many of the depictions of SlutWalk. Similarly, Elle Rebecca (2011) in her Tumblr post *Why I am Marching* writes: “**men if you don’t like this view that all men are rapists and feel that no one deserves to be treated this way, join the march**” (bold in original). By addressing men directly, Elle Rebecca gives the lie to the criticism that SlutWalk is man-hating (O’Neill, 2011), and instead creates solidarity between all those who “feel that no one deserves to be treated this way”, regardless of gender. Thus, while the ‘conflict’ facet of this repertoire perpetuates the cultural trope of male-female conflict

that has accompanied women's calls for justice for generations, the 'solidarity' facet does away with this age-old construction.

Past and Present

Attempts to undermine SlutWalk's feminist credentials are made by harking back in a nostalgic tone to feminisms of the past, for example by stating that "the SlutWalkers are betraying the struggles of genuine liberationists from the best of the feminist past" (Marrin, 2011) or remonstrating that older feminists who do support SlutWalk show "a shameful abdication of the responsibility they took on when they became torchbearers for women's rights" (Alibhai-Brown, 2011). Both these female columnists construct SlutWalk as outright treachery toward a former, reified version of feminism. In this way they construct themselves as feminists who, in their acquired wisdom, can inform the reader that SlutWalk is *doing feminism wrong* and actually stands in conflict with 'real' feminism.

However, in the 'solidarity' facet of the *Conflict* repertoire, SlutWalk is actually constructed as a positive continuation of earlier feminisms, both in time and in content. Earlier, it was noted that SlutWalk is depicted by Selma James (2011) as "the new women's movement". Thus, SlutWalk is afforded forward-looking properties, in contrast to its construction as a betrayal of the past, as noted above. Indeed, it is even claimed that "SlutWalk [is] light years ahead of the 1970 women's liberation march which made way for it" (James, 2011). In this way SlutWalk is constructed not only as feminist, but as a continuation of and even an improvement on past feminisms.

One of the ways in which SlutWalk is considered an improvement on previous feminisms is in its "multiplicity of voices" (McRobie, 2011), which "felt like a response to the critique from within feminist circles that the SlutWalk protests reinforce elitist, white, straight, 'Sex and the City' consumer-feminism, or imply that only women who dress a certain kind of way are emancipated" (McRobie, 2011). By acknowledging certain aspects of the feminist critique of SlutWalk, the blogger Heather McRobie undoes these and confirms SlutWalk's position as feminism *done right*, having learned from feminism's past.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to use discourse analysis to attend to the ways that language has been used in newspaper and social-media texts to construct SlutWalk London 2011. I adopted interpretative repertoires as my analytical strategy. Two main repertoires were identified: *Rape Logic* and *Conflict*. Each repertoire is made up of two facets that act like sides of a coin. In *Rape Logic* these are 'rape logic' and 'rape myths'; and in *Conflict* 'conflict' and 'solidarity'.

In the *Rape Logic* repertoire, a number of tactics are used to construct each facet. For example, lists of clothing are used to connect clothes to rape ('rape logic') and also to undermine this connection ('rape myths'); the disclaimer 'but' is used to defend promoters of 'rape logic' against accusations of victim blaming; figures of speech are used to support a cause-and-effect relationship between clothes and rape ('rape logic') as well as to subvert it ('rape myths'); facts and figures are utilised to both promote ('rape myths') and deny ('rape logic') the need for structural change regarding rape; and tropes of myths, magic and reality are evoked to either blame rapists ('rape myths') or remove their responsibility ('rape logic').

In the *Conflict* repertoire, a variety of tactics is also employed to construct each facet. For example, lists and repetitions are used to construct a demand for structural change and to depict SlutWalk as diverse and inclusive ('solidarity'); repetition of forms of address individualises the cause and constructs conflict between women ('conflict'); the trope of generational divide is invoked to infantilise SlutWalkers ('conflict'); name calling is used to divide women ('conflict'); and the trope of a battle of the sexes is utilised to undermine solidarity as well as to construct it. SlutWalk is depicted as both a betrayal of feminism ('conflict') and a welcome continuation of it ('solidarity'), by using repetitions and invoking old tropes about the nature of feminism.

Discourse analysis of the newspaper and social-media texts reveals that elements of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities can be identified in each repertoire. In the *Rape Logic* repertoire, the 'rape logic' facet displays a postfeminist sensibility, in that its

constructions imply that rape is a matter of a woman's choice to dress provocatively, that rape is an individual problem, caused by the natural difference between men and women. The 'rape myths' facet displays a feminist sensibility, in that its constructions imply that rape has nothing to do with choice or a woman's clothing, but rather that there are structural inequalities in society that perpetuate violence against women; that the solution is to be found in politicising the issue and joining together in solidarity across divides to demand change.

Similarly, in the *Conflict* repertoire, the 'conflict' facet displays a postfeminist sensibility whereby women are implored to make sensible choices; to take care of themselves and their bodies out of consideration for the natural differences that exist between men and women, between whom there is ongoing conflict. In this facet, feminism by young SlutWalkers is constructed as *done wrong* and SlutWalk is constructed as a betrayal of feminism. On the other hand, the 'solidarity' facet displays a feminist sensibility whereby women demand the equality to be able to conduct themselves in safety; they politicise their demand for structural change and promote solidarity and intersectionality with all who support the cause. In this facet, SlutWalk is constructed as a continuation of and an improvement on past feminisms and thus as *current and relevant*.

Interpretative discourse analysis of newspaper and social-media texts representing and self-representing SlutWalk and SlutWalkers reveals a mixed picture of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities co-existing in the newspaper data set in general, with columns in particular displaying a postfeminist sensibility. Self-representing bloggers and Tumblr posters construct a feminist sensibility in the social-media data set, which often responds to calls expressed in the mass media and in postfeminist media culture more widely. While this is an inversion of Banet-Weiser's (2015b) call-and-response connection between what she terms popular feminism and popular misogyny, her concept of a push-and-pull relationship between, in this case, expressions of feminist and postfeminist sensibility is nonetheless fruitful for this thesis; we witness a negotiation taking place.

The clear discrepancy in sensibility between columns and blogs/Tumblr is interesting given that they share stylistic characteristics, namely in being personal accounts which attempt to present a point of view and to persuade. As Gill (1995) asserts, “we – as feminists – want... not truth but *justice*. Claims about domination are claims about injustice, and as such they belong on the terrain of politics and in the realm of persuasive speech and action” (p.178, italics in original). It is therefore troubling that, when writing persuasively about injustice, columnists do not follow the example of blog and Tumblr posters and make political claims, but rather seek to ‘empower’ women and victims of rape by placing sole responsibility for safety with the women themselves while absolving rapists and the criminal justice system, of whom they should be making political demands. Of course, despite columns and blogs/posts all being examples of persuasive writing, these belong to different genres and are also subject to different professional requirements. And it is precisely as a result of these differences that there may be reason to be optimistic about the promise of online spaces to promote justice claims with a feminist sensibility; however, it is yet to be determined how much these claims can hope to intervene in and negotiate with the relatively postfeminist sensibility of the mass media in general and newspaper columns in particular.

Chapter 7: Looking Like a Slut – Content and Visual Analyses of Mass- and Social-Media Images

Introduction

SlutWalk has been widely discussed in academic writing (e.g. Darmon, 2014; Dow & Wood, 2014; Hill, 2016; Mendes, 2015; Nguyen, 2013; O’Keefe, 2014; Teekah, Sholtz, Friedman, & O’Reilly, 2015), as well as in popular publications, the press and various online platforms; however, I have not encountered in-depth, empirical studies of the images of SlutWalk. This gap is addressed here. The images of SlutWalk require analysis in particular because, as Kaitlynn Mendes states in her book about the protest (2015, p.191), “it was the visual representations of the movement which led to many feminist critiques about the movement”. Further, the images require analysis as part of the large body of literature that examines representation in the media of women and their bodies (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2009; Mulvey, 1975) and of women and protest, especially as I position this project as a feminist media studies project. As Rosalind Gill (2007a) states, “feminist analyses of the media have been animated by the desire to understand how images and cultural constructions are connected to patterns of inequality, domination and oppression” (p. 7). It is also crucial to analyse images of SlutWalk because “images have historically played an important role in the constitution of protest and political action” (Pantti, 2013a, p.1); because “the visual is central to the cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies” (Rose, 2007, p. 2); and because images have been key to depicting gender relations in the media (Gill,2007a).

The images also warrant attention in light of the literature about the use of women’s bodies in protest (e.g. Butler, 2009; Lehmuskallio, 2013; Sasson-Levy & Rapoport, 2003). As Ashley Bohrer (2015) states in her discussion of feminism, intersectionality and nude protest, “when feminist activists disrobe for ‘women’s issues’, the images of their naked bodies operate on a plane of intelligibility that affirms the idea that feminist liberation is fundamentally about what is acceptable for a woman to do with

her body” (p. 14). Central to the discussion of SlutWalk and its images is the question of whether the ways in which some SlutWalkers have used their bodies and clothes (or lack of clothes), and the ways in which they have subsequently been represented in the media, are compatible with the idea of what feminist protest is ‘supposed’ to look like.

To recall, this project’s research question is: how and to what extent does SlutWalk London constitute a feminist intervention in the contemporary postfeminist media culture? The analysis of images which appeared alongside newspaper articles aims to answer the sub question: how and to what extent does the representation of SlutWalkers in newspapers have a feminist sensibility? The analysis of images which appeared in blog posts aims to answer the sub question: how and to what extent does the self-representation by SlutWalkers in blogs have a feminist sensibility? It is expected that the representation of SlutWalkers in the mass media will display less of a feminist sensibility than the online self-representation of SlutWalkers, given the hypothesis that newspapers will reflect a male-dominated view of ‘reality’ (Gill, 2007a) and that blogs have more scope to challenge the hegemonic world view (Castells, 2007).

Content analysis of images is particularly appropriate in this case, which asks questions about feminist sensibilities in a postfeminist media culture, because it enables the analysis of images “not as evidence of the who, where and what of reality, but as evidence of how their maker or makers have (re)-constructed reality” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p.5). The content analysis presented here of images of SlutWalk London examines in what ways the protest was represented and self-represented in newspapers and in blogs.

In addition to the content analysis, visual analysis of a sample of images was also conducted, following Philip Bell (2001), who proposes that content analysis research should be supplemented and extended by way of an in-depth exploration of key examples. This is necessary because “the major problem with [content analysis] is its failure to pick up on differences and on how things are changing” (Gill, 2007a, p.45). Thus, in order to fully interrogate how SlutWalk London is represented and self-

represented in newspapers and blogs, 20% of each corpus was subjected to further examination to determine the similarities and differences between the two.

Before presenting the findings in this chapter, I set out the conceptual framework which guided the analysis. I present: ‘solidarity’ and ‘intersectionality’ and the ways in which these are used here; the question what do SlutWalkers wear? as well as a discussion of the importance of captions; and how the above criteria relate to notions of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities. Next the analysis is presented. It is divided into two sections by method: content and visual analysis, followed by the conclusion.

Conceptual Framework

The coding frame for content analysis of images was devised to relate directly to the selected elements of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities, i.e. solidarity vs. individualism and intersectionality vs. natural difference.

These elements of the two sensibilities are the variables of the coding frame, with values attached to each, as set out in the methodology chapter and recapped below. The elements were chosen from the longer list of feminist and postfeminist sensibility elements used when considering the texts in previous chapters, because 1) of the way in which they lend themselves to considering questions about the visual, as opposed to elements such as choice and equality, which are less readily visually depicted; and 2) discussions about the representation of SlutWalk in the media texts have focused on these aspects of SlutWalkers’ depiction, as shown in Chapters 5 and 6. This is particularly the case with the variable ‘intersectionality’ because much of the critique both of SlutWalk and of its depiction in the media has emphasised how the protest was depicted and perceived as a movement of young white women in ‘sluttish’ clothing, to the exclusion of others.

Table 7.1 Elements of postfeminist and feminist sensibilities in images

Postfeminist Sensibility	Feminist Sensibility
Individualism and Empowerment	Solidarity and Politicisation
Natural Difference (sex, age, race)	Intersectionality

During the analysis, a number of themes recurred that can be mapped on to these two elements of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities. The depiction of mainly young

white women dressed in a variety of ways can be mapped onto ‘natural difference/ intersectionality’; the depiction of banners and placards bearing personal and/or political messages can be mapped onto ‘individualism and empowerment/solidarity and politicisation’, as can the difference between wide/deep shots that depict many protestors, compared with close-ups of one or two women. Another manifestation of ‘solidarity’ that was not coded for in the content analysis, but that recurred in the visual analysis, was images of protestors linking arms or otherwise displaying physical togetherness.

In addition, during the analysis it became apparent that references to culturally familiar visual representations of protest were recurring: images depicting protestors in urban public spaces engaged in protest-specific behaviours such as marching, chanting, carrying banners and placards, and gathering for speeches. Some protestors posed for the camera but even those who did not are depicted behaving in a way that implies their awareness of being in a public space and engaging in protest activities that negate any sense of passivity and/or involuntary exposure. In addition to their active role as protestors, many of the SlutWalkers depicted also appear to be fully engaged and even enjoying themselves. Indeed, in many instances SlutWalkers enact what Annie Hill (2016) terms “an oppositional gaze” (p. 27), whereby they expose and ridicule attempts to objectify them, by exposing and speaking back to the idea of objectification.

Solidarity and Intersectionality

Solidarity and intersectionality are conceptually useful in both the content and visual analyses of the images. In the content analysis, the following questions are asked to determine the degree of solidarity and intersectionality in the corpus.

Table 7.2 Content analysis: Variables, questions and values

Variables	Questions	Values
Solidarity	1) How many identifiable SlutWalkers can be seen in each image?	None; one; a few=2-5; many=a group of more than 5 but still countable; very many=too many people to count
	2) Are the SlutWalkers carrying placards, and if so is the message on the placard personal or political?	Yes/No

		Personal/Political ²
	3) Have the SlutWalkers created body art by drawing or writing on their bodies, and if so are the drawings personal or political?	Yes/No Personal/Political
Intersectionality	1) What is the gender of the SlutWalkers in the image?	Unclear; women only; more than half women; balanced mix of men and women; more than half men; men only
	2) What is the age of the SlutWalkers in the image?	Unclear; only young; mixed but more than half young; balanced mix of ages; mixed but more than half not young; only not young
	3) What is the race of the SlutWalkers in the image?	Unclear; only white; mixed but more than half white; balanced mix of races; mixed but more than half not white; only non-white

The more SlutWalkers depicted, the further towards ‘solidarity’ the image is placed. If a placard is carried and its message is political, the further towards ‘solidarity’ the image is placed. If body art is seen and its message is political, the further towards ‘solidarity’ the image is placed. The more values of the variable ‘solidarity’ an image displays, the more it is considered to exhibit a feminist sensibility, whereas the more values of the variable ‘individualism’ an image displays, the more it is considered to exhibit a postfeminist sensibility.

Similarly, the more a mix of genders is depicted, the further towards ‘intersectional’ the image is placed. The more a mix of ages is depicted, the further towards ‘intersectional’ the image is placed. The more a mix of races is depicted, the further towards ‘intersectional’ the image is placed. The more values of the variable ‘intersectionality’ an image displays, the more it is considered to exhibit a feminist sensibility, whereas the more values of the variable ‘natural difference’ an image displays, the more it is considered to exhibit a postfeminist sensibility.

² For the purposes of coding and in relation to placards and body art, the code ‘personal’ is applied when the text expresses something about the bearer themselves, especially using the pronoun ‘I’ or ‘my’; the code ‘political’ is applied when the text expresses a message that is more issue-based, such as ‘no means no’.

It is important to note that intersectionality is obviously not achieved simply by depicting a range of genders, ages and races of protestors. Rather, it is imperative to examine how a protest which self-represents as conscious of intersecting discriminations is depicted in these terms, especially considering that SlutWalk is frequently critiqued as a protest of young white women to the exclusion of others. In addition, the values used to signify the variable 'intersectionality', such as gender or race, could be considered signifiers of the variable 'solidarity'. However, as both work in the same way to place an image on a feminist-postfeminist sensibility spectrum and are only addressed in relation to one variable or the other, I consider this distinction between variables to be clear enough to be deemed valid.

These are, of course, blunt tools and risk being considered crude (e.g. Bell, 2001; Gill, 2007a). Nevertheless, I would argue that conducting content analysis in this way offers a broad view of the data, to be supplemented by more qualitative methods, thus offering a nuanced and detailed analysis of the images of SlutWalk London overall. Solidarity and intersectionality also emerge as central to the visual analysis when examining similarities and differences in images both within and among representations and self-representations of SlutWalkers. However, before moving on to discuss the images themselves, I next set out two further concepts that facilitate the analyses that follow: what SlutWalkers are depicted as wearing, and how images are anchored using captions.

What do SlutWalkers Wear?

What SlutWalkers are depicted as wearing to protest is a point of contention among both SlutWalkers themselves and their many critics and supporters. Neither the organisers of the original SlutWalk in Toronto nor the organisers of SlutWalk London, which is the focus of this study, set out a dress code for attendees. However, images depicting 'sluttishly' dressed protestors at the former set the tone both of the conversation and of the images of subsequent SlutWalks, including London, which is why images of SlutWalkers are so important in this case.

Evidence from interviews with organisers of and participants in SlutWalk London, along with written reports in the media and online, suggests that the majority of

SlutWalkers dressed in everyday clothes. A number of interviewees surmised that images of scantily clad protestors were used to serve the commercial demands and journalistic routines of the media. For example:

I suppose in terms of news values... that I think the media has, because of this kind of continuing thing... and the whole thing about women being sexualised and so on, I think mainstream media is constantly feeding those images back to us and showing... There is such a repetition of that kind of telling women off, while showing women in their underwear... that it just seems to have become the currency in which things are discussed and it's that annoying thing of, like, 'but that is what they were protesting about and you've just turned it back into a picture of a woman in her pants again!' So I suppose I just wasn't surprised to see that (Linda, personal communication, 27.2.14)

In the content analysis, images given the values of 'more than half in everyday clothes or only everyday clothes' are considered to have a more feminist sensibility (e.g. Figure 7.10 below). Images given the values of 'more than half 'sluttish' clothes' or 'only 'sluttish' clothes' are considered to have a more postfeminist sensibility (e.g. Figure 7.13 below).

Table 7.3 Content analysis question about attire

Question	Answers
What are SlutWalkers wearing?	unclear; only 'sluttish' outfits; a mixture of outfits, but more than half 'sluttish'; a balanced mixture of outfits; a mixture of outfits, but more than half in everyday clothes; only everyday clothes.

However, the distinction is not clear cut because many images of women in 'sluttish' clothes could be considered to be simply proving the point that it does not matter what women wear – violence against them is never permitted. Nonetheless, following Gill (2007a), who claims that “there is nothing innocent about sexualized representations of women; they are part of the operation of power which trivializes women’s perspectives and keeps them ‘in their place’” (p.117); and the fact that the interview evidence suggests the majority of participants did not dress ‘sluttishly’, images that focus on SlutWalkers in revealing outfits are classified in the content analysis as having a postfeminist sensibility.

The issue of attire is further addressed using visual analysis, especially because, as Ashley Bohrer (2015) asserts: “The very thing which makes the protestor vulnerable to

violence – her body – becomes a site of power in the demand for accountability and the freedom of association” (p. 5). It is this tension between the assessment of the images of SlutWalk as a capitulation to the male gaze and the assertion that the use of the body as a site of protest speaks back to and critiques cultural practices of objectification and violence that interests me here.

Captions and Anchoring

In addition to the attire of SlutWalkers depicted in images, another way to determine how the image is being deployed is by attending to its context, or anchoring (Barthes, 1977). Captions are particularly important for this ‘fixing’ (Barthes, 1977) of meaning, since “images are ambiguous until identified, explained and authorized by the accompanying text” (Pantti 2013b, p.3). Therefore, captions are examined in both the content and the visual analyses. The content analysis coding frame includes a question about whether or not the image is accompanied by a caption. For the variable ‘caption’, the values attached are: ‘none’; ‘states plain facts’; ‘explains or contextualises the image’.³ The distinction between stating plain facts and explaining or contextualising the image is important because it points to the ways in which newspaper editors and bloggers try or do not try to (re-)construct reality to suit their views (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). However, it is worth noting that in newspapers the choice of caption, and indeed of image, does not rest with the photographer or even with the journalist. In fact, “who chooses the picture to be used on a page is an indicator of power” (Tuchman, 1980, p. 151), and it is usually the picture editor or the editor (p.151). Thus it is possible that a discrepancy may be found between the sensibility of the text, the image and its caption. Therefore, the relationship between image and context is further explored in the visual analysis. The findings from the content analysis are presented first.

³ ‘States plain facts’ means that the caption only contains factual data, for example “SlutWalkers protest in London on Saturday”, whereas ‘explains or contextualises the image’, means that other, subjective, information is included, for example, “Angry SlutWalkers strip off to demand the right to wear whatever they want”.

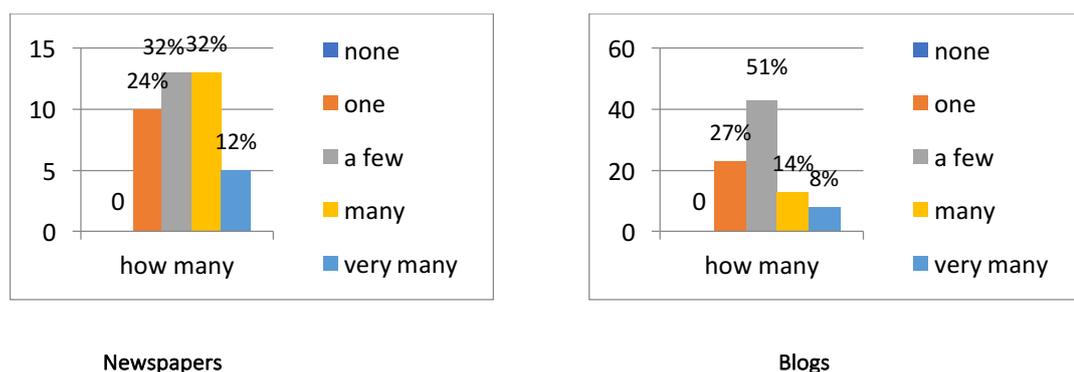
Content Analysis

While all images attached to each text were initially counted, only images which depict SlutWalkers (n=41 for newspapers and n=85 for blogs) are analysed because it is in those images that the representation and self-representation of SlutWalkers takes place.⁴ In what follows I discuss the findings from content analysis along three lines: solidarity and intersectionality; depictions of SlutWalkers' attire; and captions and anchoring.

Solidarity and Intersectionality

The findings in the figures below are surprising as they show that images in newspapers are placed further toward the 'solidarity' end of the spectrum than images in blogs, in terms of how many SlutWalkers are depicted.

Figures 7.1 and 7.2 How many SlutWalkers shown

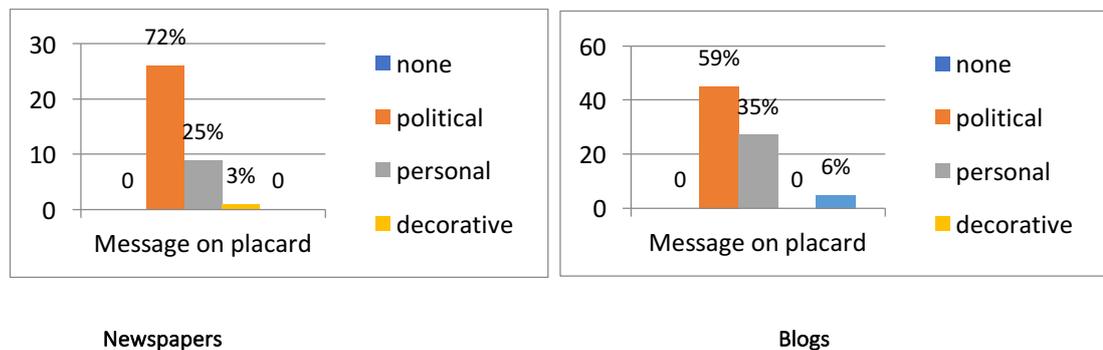


We see that there are more images depicting 'many' and 'very many' SlutWalkers in the newspaper images than in the blogs. This is surprising because feminist media studies wisdom holds that "news does not reflect reality, but presents a consistently more male-dominated view of society than exists in actuality" (Gill, 2007, p.115), and techno-deterministic wisdom suggests that "individual autonomy projects, and insurgent politics... find a more favourable terrain in the emerging realm of mass self-communication" (Castells, 2007, pp. 258-259). Thus, the expectation that images on blogs will display a more feminist sensibility than images in newspapers is confounded.

⁴ For further details on sampling, including why only images on blogs (and not Tumblr) are used, please see methodology chapter.

In addition, ‘solidarity’ is examined for indications of ‘politicisation’. I use the term politicisation to indicate engagement with or discussion of politics. In the content analysis, ‘politicisation’ is determined by whether SlutWalkers are carrying placards, and if so the type of message on those placards. In 88% of both the newspaper and the blog images, the SlutWalkers are carrying placards.

Figures 7.3 and 7.4 Types of message on placards



It is surprising that there are an equal number of SlutWalkers carrying placards in the newspaper and the blog images, where one might expect the result to be a higher number in blogs; and even more surprising that the number of political placards is substantially higher in the newspaper images than in the blogs, where one might expect the online self-representations to be more political than the mass-media representations.

Body art slogans and imagery drawn on bodies – can also be considered political, depending on the type of message in the body art. Only 15% of newspaper and 14% of blog images depict a SlutWalker with body art.

Table 7.4 Solidarity in images depicting SlutWalkers’ body art

Type of Body Art	Newspapers	Blogs
Political	33%	42%
Personal	67%	33%
Decorative	0%	25%

These results are interesting because they show quite a stark and confounding contrast between the two data sets when it comes to depicting protest and the female body. When there is a choice to focus on the body, the newspaper images are nearer the ‘individualism’ end of the spectrum, because of the higher incidence of ‘personal body’ art, whereas the blog images are placed nearer the ‘solidarity’ end of

the spectrum, because of the higher incidence of ‘political’ body art; following the results set out above, one would expect the findings to be reversed.

Moving on from ‘solidarity’ to ‘intersectionality’, the three main variables through which ‘intersectionality’ is examined are ‘gender’, ‘age’ and ‘race’. The more SlutWalkers in an image are depicted as young white women, the less intersectional an image is considered and the more of a postfeminist sensibility it is deemed to convey.

Table 7.5 Intersectionality in images of SlutWalkers

Variables	Newspapers	Blogs
Gender	54% women only 5% mix of genders	46% women only 9% mix of genders
Age	66% young only 5% mix of ages	46% young only 13% mix of ages
Race	76% white only 2% mix of races	66% white only 2% mix of races

Looking at these findings it becomes clear that while neither the images of SlutWalkers in blogs nor those in newspapers can be placed close to the ‘intersectionality’ end of the spectrum, there is nonetheless a marked difference between the two data sets. The newspaper images feature ‘women only’ almost 10% more frequently than the blog images and feature a ‘balanced mix of genders’ almost 50% less frequently than the blogs. The newspaper images feature ‘only young’ SlutWalkers 20% more frequently and a ‘balanced mix of ages’ only about a third as frequently as the blog images. The newspapers feature ‘only white’ SlutWalkers 10% more frequently than the blogs; however, both datasets show an equally low incidence when it comes to depicting a ‘balanced mix of ‘races’’. Thus, despite the fact that neither data set is placed particularly close to the ‘intersectionality’ end of the spectrum for any of the three variables, the findings confirm expectations that images on blogs will be more intersectional and thus convey a more feminist sensibility. These findings are further explored in the visual analysis of images reported later in this chapter.

What do SlutWalkers Wear?

From commentary in the media, as well as in academic publications (e.g. Nguyen, 2013; O'Keefe, 2014), I expected to find mainly depictions of SlutWalkers in revealing outfits, especially in the newspaper data set. The theoretical starting point that the mass media portray and perpetuate a postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007a; McRobbie, 2009; Tasker & Negra, 2007) also supports this assumption; however, it was somewhat confounded.

Table 7.6 SlutWalkers' outfits in images

Outfit	Newspapers	Blogs
Only Sluttish	17%	10%
Balanced Mix	24%	10%
Only Everyday	34%	48%

The findings about the outfits SlutWalkers are depicted as wearing demonstrate that the incidence of 'only sluttish' attire is lower than expected in the newspapers, but even lower in the blogs, and that the incidence of 'only everyday' clothes is higher than expected in the newspapers but even higher in the blogs. These findings place both data sets closer to the 'intersectionality' end of the spectrum, with the blogs closer than the newspapers. It also leaves one asking why so many columnists formed the impression that the outfits worn by SlutWalkers were so very problematic, if the incidence of images of women in only 'sluttish' clothes was only 17% in newspapers. I surmise that the extent of objection (by feminist columnists in particular) to SlutWalkers' use of revealing attire relates to Ashley Bohrer's (2015, p. 7) claim that

One of the most persistent critiques of nude protest from the left has been that by undressing, protesters, especially women, are contributing to a culture of objectification. Because women are identified culturally with their bodies, the argument goes, their nudity can only be seen as complicit in their dehumanization

Thus, despite the relatively small use of images of scantily clad women, the images that did portray women in various stages of undress evoked such a strong objection that an impression was created that these images are the main way in which SlutWalk is depicted. Additionally, the extent and nature of the objection by some commentators to these images creates a circular effect, whereby the critique itself

objectifies the women portrayed in the images and negates their “power of resistance” (Bohrer, 2015, p. 9) to the situation against which they are protesting.

Captions and Anchoring

In the newspaper data set, there is an almost equal split between images with and without a caption, with 52% including and 48% not including a caption. Where a caption is included, 85% of these contextualise the image, compared with 15% that do not. However, it is important to remember that it is routinely not the journalists who choose the image, caption and headline to go with their written work, but rather the photo or section editor (Tuchman, 1980), and that therefore, even alongside a news article framed with a feminist sensibility, one may find an image that is framed entirely differently. This brings to mind again the point made by van Zoonen (1994) that feminist female journalists cannot necessarily overcome the structural restrictions imposed by “colleagues, technical requirements, professional values, organisational routines, etc.” (p.64).

Conversely, many of the images on blogs are taken by the blogger rather than a professional photographer and are simply uploaded with the text. There is no editor to pick the images and contextualise them, and possibly for this reason only 16% of images in the posts about SlutWalk London on the blogs carry captions. Perhaps for similar reasons, those that do carry captions that contextualise the images (93%, compared with 7% that do not), tend to be along the lines of “these are old-school activists keeping it simple so that the strong message stands out” and “Fran and Stuart with their excellent placards”, because the rest is said by the author/photographer in the blog itself.

The potential importance of a caption, and the difference that can be made by stating plain facts or contextualising the image (Pantti, 2013b) is best demonstrated by an example, which will follow in the next section, where findings from visual analysis are presented.

Visual Analysis

For the visual analysis, 20% of the corpus were selected for their representativeness, which amounts to n=9 in the newspaper corpus and n=18 in the blogs. Here too I

discuss the findings along three lines: solidarity and intersectionality; depictions of SlutWalkers' attire; and captions and anchoring.

Solidarity and Intersectionality

Despite the fact that the content analysis tells us there are more images depicting 'many' and 'very many' SlutWalkers in the newspaper images than in the blogs, some of the images on the blogs display many more protestors than do any of the images in the newspapers.

For example, Figure 7.5, depicts a sea of people in Trafalgar Square and is taken from the south side of the square towards the iconic figure of the National Gallery.

Figure 7.5



Credit: www.ohdearism.com blog by
Natalie Lasance

We see a temporary stage at the bottom of the image and between this and the National Gallery at the top of the image are a very large number of people. Banners and placards are visible but not legible, except for a green one near the stage which is seen from behind and in mirror writing reads "WOMEN AGAINST RAPE", the name of a voluntary organisation involved in the organisation of SlutWalk London as well as a political message. This is an image that portrays solidarity: the sheer number of people, the impossibility of making out their personal identities or attire, and the obvious fact that they are there to protest for a common cause. In addition, the long shot from behind the stage, at the rally rather than during the march, further removes the focus on women's bodies. No images that depict such a sea of anonymous people are found in any of the newspaper articles in the corpus. Although images of such large crowds are not found in the newspapers, other images in newspapers do portray solidarity in numbers.

Figure 7.6



Credit: Tony Kyriacou for Rex Images

For example, in Figure 7.6, the large banner in the centre of the image makes clear the nature of the protest. Seven marchers are seen holding up the banner, which covers their bodies from shoulders to ankle. They appear to be chanting and their feet show movement. The marcher on the far left is linking arms with another marcher and in front of them is a wheelchair user, making the number of identifiable protestors nine. This amounts to 'many' protestors; however, once the additional protestors visible behind the front row are taken into account it amounts to 'very many' protestors. The impression of a crowd is given, helped by the placards and balloons held aloft and the deep shot. This image, or slight variations on it, appears five different times in the newspaper corpus.

A similar image is found on Natalie Lasance's blog www.ohdearism.com.

Figure 7.7



Central to Figure 7.7 is the same banner found in the newspaper image above (7.6).

Seven marchers are holding the banner in this image as well, and they are also

covered by it from shoulders to ankles and appear to be walking. Some, but not all, of the protestors are the same as in the newspaper image. Other marchers with additional placards are flanking those carrying the banner, but the wheelchair user cannot be seen. Here too, behind the front row, a crowd of protestors are visible, going back into the distance in this long-shot image, with balloons and additional placards observable. This is also an image of solidarity.

Figure 7.8 is an image that appeared in the *Independent on Sunday* on 12 June 2011, the day after SlutWalk London took place, and is one of a series of five images that accompanied a full-page news article.

Figure 7.8



Credit: Jason Alden

In the image above we see two young women in focus, with other protestors out of focus behind them, each carrying a placard with messages that highlight the double standards towards men and women pertaining to sexual activity and their social repercussions, which is political. However, the choice of language in the message on the left is problematic: Why the distinction between a 'sexually active' male and a 'promiscuous' female? Why are they not both termed 'sexually active'? The text on the right-hand placard, conversely, is unproblematic and rests firmly within the core messaging of SlutWalk London that rape is caused by rapists and not by any other external factor. Despite these nuances, both placards are considered political. It is interesting to contrast the political nature of the placards with the women's 'sexy' attire, of which mainly lacy tights are visible, and which can be described as 'sluttish'.

Further discussion of what SlutWalkers are depicted as wearing follows in the next section. For now I will also point out that, while the two placard-carrying women are the focus of the image, other protestors wearing everyday clothes and carrying placards are visible behind them.

Figure 7.9



It is interesting to compare the attire of the two women in Figure 7.9 to those in Figure 7.8 and in particular to note that, while the woman seen here on the left is exposing her body, her attire is not coded as 'sluttish', as opposed to the attire in Figure 7.8. In addition, she uses her body to convey a written message, which the women in Figure 7.8 do not.

This image (7.9), by Sassy at www.sassylapdancer.blogspot.co.uk, is of two women standing together surrounded by others in Trafalgar Square. The woman on the left, apparently dressed for the beach, is carrying a placard bearing a personal message, while the other woman is carrying a placard with an illegible message. The legible

message, while personal, is also political, especially in the context of SlutWalk, which holds as a key tenet that consent is what differentiates rape from non-coercive sexual encounters. Thus, even though the message on this placard is coded as ‘personal’ for the purposes of content analysis because of the use of the possessive ‘my’, upon further examination it becomes clear that things are not that cut and dried and that overall this placard could be deemed ‘political’ for the larger claim that stands behind it. The same can be said of the body art visible on the woman’s midriff.

Figure 7.10



In this image (7.10), which appears on the blog www.londoniscool.com, we can see mainly women, but at least one man (in black polo neck and sunglasses), of various ages from ‘young’ (the two women front right) through the decades, and of various races, with a majority of non-whites among the seven women at the front of the image. As such, I would say that this image displays a high degree of ‘intersectionality’. However, most images, even on the blogs, and certainly not in the newspapers, were not quite so diverse. It is rare to find images that portray a high degree of diversity across all three variables at once, and more common to find images with a degree of diversity in at least one variable.

From the interviews conducted with organisers and grassroots protestors, it appears that participants in SlutWalk London were more diverse than many had anticipated: they included men, although it was still a female-driven protest; they also comprised a mix of ages and races. In terms of age, while many interviewees mentioned how pleased they were that not only young people participated, it was acknowledged that

young protestors were a majority. It was certainly noted by interviewees that, although participants were less white than portrayed in the media, overall there were more white than non-white SlutWalker participants.

It was very mixed from a gender point of view... One thing that I did really notice was that everybody was quite young. In fact I'd say that the majority of people were probably younger than me... there were people from ethnic minorities there but when you think about the population of London as a whole, I don't think it was representatively diverse. (Chris, aged 44, personal communication, 27.1.14)

However it is not the actual turnout on the day or whether or not this was balanced in terms of gender, age and race, that is examined here, but rather the differences between the findings from each of the datasets and the constructed worlds these offer up, with blogs placed significantly closer to the 'intersectionality' end of the spectrum across variables.

What do SlutWalkers Wear?

As demonstrated by the images shown above, while there is no shortage of women in revealing clothing, they do not appear in all the images and even in those where they do appear front and centre they are surrounded by others in everyday clothes. It is precisely the tension that arises from this use of the body and attire that I am trying to parse by examining the images of SlutWalk London. Annie Hill (2016) asserts that "SlutWalk protesters contest the discursive and visual ideology of sexual violence when they speak back to rape logic and enact an oppositional gaze" (p. 27). I concur that the nature of the images is such that little room is left to doubt that the women depicted are protesting against what many of them might term 'rape culture'.

Figure 7.11



Credit: Getty Images

This image (7.11), which appeared in two different newspapers, does indeed depict at its centre a woman with large, exposed cleavage held in what seems to be a form of underwear. However, her expression is more sardonic than sexual or pleased and the placard she is holding makes it clear that she is dressed that way in an attempt to push back against the idea that a woman's attire is relevant to sexual assault. While the *text* on the placard is coded as personal in the content analysis, because of the reference to 'me', in the visual analysis I understand *the image as a whole* to be both personal *and* political. The pink flag with the symbol of radical feminism in black at its centre carried by another marcher, behind and to the right of the central woman, and the everyday clothes of the other protestors depicted in the image, including police in high visibility jackets, help to create an overall impression that cannot readily be defined as sexualised or un-political. This type of image can be considered an example of call-and-response (Banet-Weiser, 2015b) between feminist and postfeminist sensibilities, whereby protestors use their bodies in such ways as to respond to and indeed to critique the status quo.

Figure 7.12



Credit: Jason Alden

Figure 7.12 appeared, along with four other images, in a full-page news article in the *Independent on Sunday* on 12 June 2011. It depicts white women of different ages and in a mix of outfits carrying placards and expressing themselves verbally. The woman at front centre is not young, is carrying a political placard and is wearing everyday clothes. The woman behind her left shoulder is wearing a corset and bunny ears (possibly in reference to Playboy, which opened a London club at about the same time that SlutWalk London took place in 2011) and is very expressive. This is not a depiction in which “the new female subject is, despite her freedom, called upon to be silent, to withhold critique in order to count as a modern sophisticated girl” (McRobbie, 2009, p. 18), for these women are in no way silent or uncritical of the status quo.

This is not to say that there are no sexualised depictions of SlutWalkers, but rather to point out that overall, even in the newspaper coverage, which on this indicator

conveys a more postfeminist sensibility than the blogs, the images are not straightforwardly sexualised or reductive. Even taking into account Gill's (2007) assertion that "where once sexualised representations of women in the media presented them as passive, mute objects of an assumed male gaze, today sexualisation works somewhat differently in many domains" (p.258), I would argue that SlutWalkers are represented as taking their sexualisation and reclaiming it, much like they are reclaiming the word slut, for political purposes. As Judith Butler (2009) states

When we act, and act politically, it is already within a set of norms that are acting upon us, and in ways that we cannot always know about. When and if subversion becomes possible, it does so...because a certain historical convergence of norms at the site of my embodied personhood opens up possibilities for action (pp. xi-xii)

Therefore, I assert that with respect to SlutWalkers' attire the images in the newspaper and especially in the blog depictions convey a feminist sensibility.

Captions and Anchoring

Figure 7.13



Credit: AP/PA Images

This image (7.13) of four young white women wearing bras, no tops and a combination of shorts, boots and jeans, chanting and marching ahead of a crowd of men and women in everyday clothes, carrying political placards, bearing the word 'SLUT' on their exposed midribs and linking arms was taken at the 2011 Boston SlutWalk. It appeared in three separate UK newspapers, the *Independent*, the *Observer* and the *Daily Mail* on the 10th, 15th and 16th of May 2011 respectively, before SlutWalk London took place.

In the *Independent* the image appeared in the British news section, directly above the article headline, which reads “Women mobilise for first British ‘SlutWalk’ rally” (plain facts, albeit inaccurate ones, because these women are rallying in the USA), without a caption. The image is slightly cropped in length, cutting off the women’s legs below the knee and the sky above the crowd of protestors. The cropping focuses the attention more closely on the women’s exposed body parts and restricts the vista to a very concrete city-scape.

In the *Observer* the image appeared in the middle of a full-page feature article that canvasses for opinions about SlutWalk across three pages, with a caption that reads “A SlutWalk in Boston, held in response to the Toronto police officer who said women should not dress provocatively” (contextualising), beneath a banner that reads “IN FOCUS: Feminism” (contextualising) and next to the redacted headline “SlutWalk: sending the wrong message?” (contextualising). The actual article headline, on the page before, reads “SlutWalk – wrong message, poor taste or a great idea?”. The image is cropped to include only the two women on the left and focuses much more closely on them. They are seen from their feet to just above the tops of their heads, with the sky cropped out. The placard carried by the woman with glasses is even more prominent in this image, as are those worn, held and carried by the crowd behind her, all of which are political.

Finally, in the *Daily Mail* the image appeared with the caption “Controversial: The SlutWalk in Boston, which attracted 3,000 demonstrators” (contextualising) and directly above the article headline, which reads “Fighting for the right to be a ‘slut’ demeans us all” (contextualising). This version of the image is cropped to exclude the woman on the far right. The focus on the three women is quite tight, showing them from the knees up and with reduced cityscape and sky. The image sits in the middle of a full-page piece by columnist Janet Street Porter.

Examining one image as it appeared in different newspapers shows what a difference captions can make. The *Observer* caption situates the protest as political, clearly linking it to the remarks made by the Toronto police officer which sparked the SlutWalk protests, and focuses on the political message carried by the SlutWalker in

glasses. The *Daily Mail* piece situates the protest as “controversial” and “demeaning”, thus undermining its message as well as the women portrayed in the image. In both these cases, the headings and captions reflect the spirit of the wider article.

Conclusions

This chapter examines how London SlutWalkers are represented in images in newspapers and blogs respectively. It was expected that the images in blogs would be framed with a more feminist sensibility than the images in newspapers. Overall this was found to be the case in the results of the content analysis of images, with some notable surprises:

1. Newspapers represent a higher frequency than blogs of images of ‘very many’ SlutWalkers, connoting solidarity among and between protestors.
2. SlutWalkers are depicted carrying placards with a similar frequency in newspapers and in blogs.
3. When marchers are depicted carrying placards, the message shown is more frequently political in newspapers than in blogs, connoting politicisation of protestors.
4. In newspapers, there are more depictions of SlutWalkers in everyday clothes than in ‘sluttish’ clothes, connoting intersectionality.

The visual analysis helps to extend the findings of the content analysis of the images. In particular regarding the question of whether SlutWalk London is indeed, as claimed by some, depicted as a movement of young white women in sluttish clothing demeaning themselves, capitulating to the male gaze and undermining an important message about rape culture. The data shows that the representation of SlutWalkers in images in newspapers and blogs is more complex than the above assessment allows for.

In terms of numbers of SlutWalkers, the content analysis would lead us to believe that the newspaper corpus displays a more feminist sensibility than the blog corpus, thus confounding expectations. However, despite there being perhaps more images that depict ‘very many’ SlutWalkers in newspapers, it is only on blogs that images of seas of people are found. These images, more than others, convey a sense of solidarity through sheer numbers. However, it should be acknowledged that bloggers are able

to post as many pictures as they choose in a single post, which is why so many more images from blogs are in the corpus. This means that bloggers can include pictures of seas of people that perhaps newspapers, which have space limitations, may not find illustrative enough of the particular protest and may therefore choose to exclude.

When it comes to politicisation, again the content analysis presents a picture whereby not only are there similar amounts of placard-carrying and body-art-bearing SlutWalkers in newspapers and in blogs, but those depicted in newspapers are more likely to be carrying political messages. However, when visual analysis was conducted to examine the text of the placards and the body art in more detail it transpired that many of the personal messages can also be considered to be political, once one is released from the binary nature of content analysis and explores the wider context in which the placards and body art are depicted. Thus, many more of the placards depicted on blogs than the content analysis allows for help to create images that convey a feminist sensibility. This convergence of personal and political is interesting when considering Gill's (2007) analysis of individualism as an element of postfeminist sensibility, whereby "even experiences of racism or homophobia or domestic violence are framed in exclusively personal terms in a way that turns the idea of the personal as political on its head" (p.259). In the case of SlutWalk London, the personal is often also political, marking those images as having a feminist sensibility.

While images on blogs are found to display more diversity of participants than images in newspapers across the variables of gender, age and 'race', neither data set is particularly 'intersectional', and even the blogs do not exhibit a strong feminist sensibility in this sense. However, there is a marked difference between newspapers and blogs within this variable, with images on blogs displaying more intersectionality than images in newspapers, as shown in the content analysis. The content analysis, however, examines each variable independently, and it is only when conducting visual analysis that images are examined as a whole and it becomes apparent that, much like in the variable 'solidarity', only images on blogs display diversity across all three variables, although this is by no means common. Despite its scarcity, this marks images on blogs as having a more feminist sensibility.

The content analysis also demonstrates that fewer SlutWalkers than expected are depicted in newspapers wearing 'only sluttish' attire, and that the incidence of this value is even lower in blogs, whereas many more than expected SlutWalkers are depicted wearing 'only everyday' clothes in newspapers and the incidence of this value is even higher in blogs. These findings place both data sets closer to the 'intersectionality' end of the spectrum, with blogs closer than newspapers, and both displaying a relatively feminist sensibility.

This does not, of course, mean that women are not depicted wearing 'sluttish' attire, and it does not take away from the problematic nature of using the body in this way, even in protest. However, when it comes to visual analysis, it becomes apparent not only that 'sluttishly' dressed women do not appear in all images, but that even in images in which they do appear front and centre they are usually surrounded by others in everyday clothes. It is this tension that arises from the use of the body on the one hand and sluttish attire on the other that I am trying to parse by examining the images of SlutWalk London.

The finding that fewer than expected SlutWalkers are depicted wearing 'sluttish' attire leaves one asking why so many critics find the outfits worn by SlutWalkers to be so very problematic. Is something else going on here? Is this perhaps not so much about the clothing, but about the disruption of the status quo? On the one hand, it can be argued that when women voluntarily dress in a sexualised way and are thus represented in the mass media and self-represented online they concede power and submit to the very regime of oppression against which they are protesting: "when the [cultural] content [online] reproduces the existing power relations, the potential of user-generated content is called into question" (Gajjala & Oh, 2012, p. 5). However, I would argue that there are further considerations at play. These images do depict women in 'sluttish' attire, but at the same time, and especially in blogs, the sense of solidarity in numbers and political messages of intersectionality across gender, age and 'race', as well as these women's obvious conviction that the status quo is unacceptable, displays SlutWalkers as angry and committed to change.

Therefore, I would argue that, while the protestors may be wilfully misunderstood by their critics, SlutWalkers depicted in revealing clothing are not necessarily internalising the male gaze, but rather reflecting it back in order to critique the rape logic that clothing determines rape. This assessment does not, however, completely de-problematise the situation, for, as Gill (2003) asserts, "In this way, sexual objectification can be presented not as something done to women by some men, but as the freely chosen wish of active, confident, assertive female subjects" (p.104), which "makes critique much more difficult" (p.104). This tension is perhaps one of the characteristics of feminist sensibility which needs to negotiate its way within a media culture with a postfeminist sensibility.

In conclusion, it is interesting that the differences between the image data sets are not vast; that newspapers do not display as much of a postfeminist sensibility as expected, and neither do blogs display as much of a feminist sensibility as expected. It is surprising to discover the relatively low incidence of 'only sluttish' clothing, considering the general uproar about the way women dressed and were depicted on SlutWalks. All this leads to a number of unresolved questions: what does this say about the ways in which the sensibilities of postfeminist media culture are internalised by contemporary feminist activists? What does it say about the ways in which postfeminist sensibility is responded to and critiqued by protestors with a feminist sensibility? And what does it say about the promise of the internet? Is SlutWalk London another case in point for Cynthia Carter, Linda Steiner and Lisa McLaughlin's (2014) claim that although "women are using the internet and social media for entrepreneurial, activist, journalistic, and intellectual pursuits... Nonetheless, the democratizing and feminist potential of new media may be exaggerated" (p.2)? Further research is needed to continue to explore these questions.

Chapter 8: Conclusion – Discussion, Contributions, Limitations and Further Research

Introduction

This research set out to answer the overarching question: how and to what extent is SlutWalk London a feminist intervention in postfeminist media culture? Specifically, it aimed to examine whether self-representation on social media platforms offers feminists opportunities to express feminist activist views, to be heard in the mass media, and ultimately to bring about social change in relation to gender inequality. I sought to explore the extent to which techno-optimistic views about the transformative capacity of social media were applicable to feminist demands for change in postfeminist media culture. In order to address the overarching research question, I specified three sub-questions: how and to what extent does self-representation by SlutWalkers in social media and in person have a feminist sensibility? How and to what extent does representation of SlutWalkers in the mass media have a feminist sensibility? And what does this tell us about the state of feminism in contemporary, postfeminist media culture?

To address these questions, the study has been informed by theories of feminist and postfeminist sensibility, representation and self-representation, and framing. At the core of its conceptual framework is a tension between feminist and postfeminist sensibilities in contemporary media culture. I took as my starting point Rosalind Gill's (2007a) notion of postfeminist media culture, and specifically her account of postfeminist sensibility. Building on Gill and other writings on postfeminism (e.g. McRobbie, 2009; Tasker & Negra, 2007) and on accounts of feminist media culture (e.g. Bates, 2014; Campbell, 2013; Cochrane, 2013; Mackay, 2011, 2014), I developed the notion of a feminist sensibility in tension and negotiation with a postfeminist sensibility. Theories of representation (Hall, 1997) and self-representation (Thumim, 2012), provided the theoretical lens with which to consider the differences between the media texts, as did those of protest-media relations (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993;

Wolfsfeld, 1984). Entman's (1993) approach to framing as theory and practice provided a bridge between the theoretical and analytical sections of this thesis and contributed greatly to the research design.

I developed a mixed-methods, feminist approach to address the research questions, including: thematic analysis of interviews with organisers of and participants in SlutWalk London; content analysis of newspaper and social-media texts; discourse analysis of newspaper and social-media texts; and content and visual analyses of newspaper and social-media images.

In this chapter, I review the empirical findings from the previous four chapters and discuss these in relation to the theoretical framework of the study. In particular, I reflect on the tension between feminist and postfeminist sensibilities, how it manifests, how it is negotiated, and whether the notion of a postfeminist media culture with a postfeminist sensibility is still relevant a decade after Rosalind Gill first proposed it. I do this in light of developments in technology, as well as of those within feminist theory and feminist media studies, in the ten years since Gill's publication, as well as recent changes in the political realm. Finally, I consider the methodological contributions of this study as well as its limitations, and suggest directions for further research which emerge from the findings of this thesis.

Discussion

When, in December 2012, I first encountered Rosalind Gill's (2007b) article, in which she sets out her proposed elements of postfeminist sensibility, and Angela McRobbie's (2004) article, in which she discusses postfeminist culture, I experienced a light-bulb moment. I was in my second year of the PhD and had been struggling to situate my interest in the negotiation of SlutWalk's representation in mass and social media within a conceptual framework that would be productive and illuminating. I had wanted to examine the ways in which self-representation in social media might differ from representation in mass media and, in particular, what any discrepancies might tell us about the potential of social media texts to make a meaningful intervention in the wider media culture. Thus I began to think about developing a comparable sensibility to sit alongside Gill's postfeminist one, with which to examine

representations and self-representations. During this time feminism and its apparent revival, particularly thanks to digital affordances, was a widely-discussed topic (e.g. Bates, 2014; Carstensen, 2014; Carter, 2014; Cochrane, 2010, 2013), and there was no shortage of material with which to reflect on what the elements of a feminist sensibility might be. However, I was daunted by the task of constructing a companion sensibility to accompany Gill's, considering her respected position within the field. I therefore continued to grapple throughout the research process with the construction of the sensibility as well as with my position with regard to SlutWalk.

A fundamental stage in the research that enabled me to address the questions I was grappling with was conducting interviews with activists and participants in SlutWalk London. Listening to my interviewees helped to further crystallise my views on contemporary feminism and on digital media, as well as on SlutWalk itself. By sharing not only their experiences of marching, but also their experiences of rape, which had brought them out to protest, the interviewees helped me to recognise that SlutWalk's core issue was a protest against rape and rape culture. They also helped me to think about media logic (Altheide, 2016) and the promises and traps it poses for protests such as SlutWalk in the sense of protest-media trade-offs (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Wolfsfeld, 1984). Most of all they helped me to understand that, while analytically productive, the binary nature of comparing feminist and postfeminist sensibilities does not reveal the whole picture, which is far more complex.

For example, all the interviewees agreed that clothing is irrelevant in rape cases and the majority of interviewees wore everyday clothes to SlutWalk, thus demonstrating a feminist sensibility; and yet they all recognised the utility of some protestors wearing 'sluttish' clothing in order to garner mass-media attention, thus acknowledging the logic of postfeminist media culture, while at the same time critiquing the nature of some of the resultant mass-media coverage using a feminist sensibility. A similarly complex account of the use of the word 'slut' is found in the interview data. For most interviewees, the decision to use the word 'slut' in protest was unproblematic, from a feminist sensibility perspective that considers name reclamation a political act. In addition, they considered it to be useful in gaining media attention in postfeminist media culture. However, some of the media coverage that focused on the name of the

protest was also judged by interviewees to be disappointing, hurtful and anti-feminist. Thus, the interviewees demonstrated how complicated it is to try to change the system (neo-liberalism/patriarchy) by using the very mechanisms by which that system is perpetuated (the mass media). The assessment by some interviewees of some of the media coverage, particularly that written by female, self-identified feminist columnists, as anti-feminist is corroborated in both the content and the discourse analysis of the media texts, the findings of which reveal that the concept of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities is analytically productive.

The content analysis revealed a number of key findings. The least surprising finding, considering the techno-optimistic literature (e.g. Castells, 2007; Haraway, 1990), is that self-representation in blogs and Tumblr posts was largely framed with a feminist sensibility. What was more surprising was that representation in newspapers was found to use both feminist and postfeminist sensibility frames. Considering the prominence given to postfeminist media culture in recent studies (e.g. Gill, 2007a; McRobbie, 2009; Mendes & Carter, 2008), I expected to find a much stronger trend in news representations towards a postfeminist frame. Yet the findings showed a far less clear picture than anticipated. However, the most surprising findings related to social-media and newspapers' framing of feminism. Thus, most bloggers and Tumblr posters did not identify as feminists; however they did frame their posts exclusively with a feminist sensibility. In contrast, when authors in newspapers, and particularly columnists, did identify as feminists or mention feminism, they were more likely to frame their posts with a postfeminist sensibility. Thus, we see a surprising inversion in the feminism-framing relationship, whereby feminism is unavowed (McRobbie, 2009) in feminist-sensibility-framed blogs and Tumblr posts, whereas it is acknowledged, though repudiated, in postfeminist-sensibility-framed newspaper columns.

An additional surprise from the content analysis was that SlutWalk was frequently described as feminism 'done wrong'. This is a newly identified way of describing feminism; it is different from the disavowal of feminism and its definition as *passé*, which is how postfeminist media culture has been described as treating feminism (e.g. Gill, 2007a; McRobbie, 2009). I argue that this is a new form of recognition and repudiation, whereby feminism is acknowledged as being relevant, but viewed as

currently being done wrong. This new iteration appears to embrace the name feminism, but to look back through nostalgia-tinted glasses to an earlier and better version of it. However, while longing for feminisms past, it neglects the collective element of previous feminisms and instead seeks to cast that which is needed now as an individualistic version. In this way, SlutWalk's expression of feminism is deemed 'wrong' for refusing to allocate personal responsibility to individual choices (of dress, behaviour, etc.) by women, but rather seeking to collectively assign blame to structures and institutions that support and perpetuate misogyny. Thus it would seem that it is precisely in the ways in which SlutWalk continues the goals of second wave feminism that it is found to be doing feminism 'wrong'.

A further surprise was an inversion of the way in which 'hard' and 'soft' news treats feminism and feminist activism. Traditionally, it has been found that hard news has been less supportive toward feminist protest than soft news (e.g. Mendes, 2011a; Ross & Carter, 2011; Liesbet van Zoonen, 1994). However, in this study, hard news items were found to be more likely than soft news to use a feminist sensibility frame and to be supportive of SlutWalk.

This inversion of sensibilities requires further research to explore whether it can be found in other cases, and if so what this might tell us about changes in the way in which soft and hard news frames feminism and feminist activism, and therefore which types of journalist feminist activists should address when seeking to secure positive media representation. Further research is also required to understand why bloggers and Tumblr posters, despite framing their posts with a feminist sensibility, did not identify as feminists, and also to better comprehend why self-identifying feminist columnists framed their texts with a postfeminist sensibility, whereas hard news reporters framed theirs with a feminist sensibility.

On the other hand, discourse analysis was productive in further exploring the new definition, in relation to SlutWalk, of feminism as 'done wrong', as well as the ways in which support or critique of SlutWalk were constructed. In particular, through the use of interpretative repertoires (Wetherell, 1998; Wetherell & Potter, 1988), discourse analysis highlighted the ways in which texts with postfeminist sensibility perpetuated

rape logic, situated rape within the realm of choice feminism (Budgeon, 2015) and constructed feminism as an individual project of the self, what Catherine Rottenberg (2013) has called neoliberal feminism, which no longer seeks “social or collective justice” (p. 419) even, I would argue, for rape victims and survivors. Rottenberg (2013) suggests that the neoliberal feminist subject is aware of gender-based inequalities, that she disavows the structural forces that create these inequalities, instead accepting full personal responsibility, and that this responsibility can be seen in particular in relation to achieving a joyous work-life balance. I suggest that this argument can be extended into the realm of physical safety, whereby the neoliberal feminist columnist implores women to take sole responsibility for protecting themselves against sexual violence in order to do feminism ‘right’. On the other hand, discourse analysis helped to demonstrate how texts with feminist sensibility challenged rape logic by constructing the assertions made by its proponents as myths, and situated rape as a societal and cultural problem requiring structural change and both SlutWalk and feminism as political projects which require and engender solidarity, thus situating SlutWalk within liberal feminism.

The tension between feminist and postfeminist sensibilities can, in some respects, be contemplated as one between generations of feminism, in particular when the feminist sensibility of self-representing, mostly by young posters online, is contrasted with the postfeminist sensibility of the representation of SlutWalk in newspapers by older, self-identifying feminist columnists. However, this is complicated by the fact that the interviewees and protestors whom I interviewed were of ages *across* the spectrum from their teens through to their sixties; that they all identified as feminists; and that they identified SlutWalk as a gateway either into feminism for the first time (younger interviewees) or back into feminism (older interviewees). These findings support those reported by Finn Mackay (2014) that differences within contemporary feminism are political, not generational.

Rosalind Gill (2016) also contemplates the utility of the concept of generation to discussions of feminism. She asserts that “a focus on *political and ideological differences* within feminism is more empirically relevant and productive than one that relates to birth dates” (italics in original, p. 612). The findings of this thesis

corroborate Gill's (2016) observation by showing that older SlutWalkers had more in common politically with younger SlutWalkers than they did with some of their generational contemporaries, the columnist critics of SlutWalk. There were plenty of older SlutWalk supporters who differed from the columnist critics not in generation but in their politicisation, as opposed to the latter's espousing of individualism and empowerment as signifiers of feminism. Thus postfeminist sensibility remains a relevant analytical category, even a full decade after it was first proposed, during which time many social and technological changes have taken place.

The question of intergenerational feminism is a topical one and was recently the subject of a special issue of *Feminist Media Studies*. The editors of the special edition, Alison Winch, Jo Littler and Jessalynn Keller (2016), in their introductory article, assert that a productive way to contemplate the concept of generation is through the term "the conjuncture" (p. 562), which is "a space of struggle, the space where established forces defend themselves and opposition forces struggle" (2016, p. 562). Viewing the findings of this thesis through the lens of the conjuncture, it is possible to conceive of the columnists who critique SlutWalkers' feminism as 'done wrong', using anti-feminist language, while self-identifying as feminists, as a case of "established forces" defending themselves against new feminist forces. However, the virulent language and constructions used by these established forces suggest that even the notion of the conjuncture may not fully capture the nature of the interaction demonstrated in this thesis. By way of possible explanation, Diane Negra (2016) suggests that "the anti-feminist views that are sometimes expressed by women are sometimes misdirected critiques of deficiencies of the current social order" (p. 727). Negra's (2016) suggestion could partially elucidate the entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist ideas (Gill, 2007a) expressed by columnists about SlutWalk. Alternatively, postfeminist sensibility such as that used in particular by older female columnists who self-identify as feminists, when discussing SlutWalk, can potentially be examined as an example of what Catherine Rottenberg and Sara Farris (2015) term the "righting" of feminism, whereby feminism is co-opted by non-emancipatory agendas in a move to further empty it of its politics and to thus continue to reduce its threat to patriarchy. Thus, it is apparent that there are a variety of conceptual frameworks with which it would be possible to further examine the findings and questions raised by this thesis, and which

would help to further illuminate the complex nature of postfeminist media culture and the negotiations required in order to intervene in it.

This study not only confirms the ongoing relevance of postfeminist sensibility as an analytical category, but also suggests that examination of the construction of feminism can be further enhanced by attending to what I have termed feminist sensibility, made up of five key elements: equality; solidarity and politicisation; intersectionality; anger and hope; and feminism as current and relevant. This concept is particularly fruitful for the investigation of articulations of feminist politics on digital platforms – a key agenda in current feminist media studies (e.g. Banet-Weiser, 2015b; Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2015; Carstensen, 2014; Carter, 2014; Keller, 2012; Keller, 2016; Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2015; Press & Tripodi, 2014). Crucially, as I have argued in this thesis, it is important to explore the ways that both feminist and postfeminist sensibilities not only differ from each other but also how they ‘talk’ to each other within the media space.

More specifically, this thesis indicates that there is a call-and-response connection (Banet-Weiser, 2015b) between feminist and postfeminist sensibilities, although this operates differently to that described by Sarah Banet Weiser (2015b) in relation to popular feminism and popular misogyny. Banet-Weiser (2015b) demonstrates how popular networked misogyny responds to increased media coverage of instances of what she terms popular feminism. However, in this thesis I find instead that it is feminist-sensibility interventions online which respond to postfeminist-sensibility media culture, wherein rape logic and feminism as an individual project are the accepted norms that are critiqued in feminist online spaces. Thus, in this case, it can be claimed that networked feminism is responding to popular misogyny. This is true also of the findings of the content and visual analysis of images studied in this thesis, whereby even images of scantily clad SlutWalkers appear to be responding to and critiquing the type of sexualised images of women that are the currency of postfeminist media culture (Gill, 2007a, 2016). Thus we see another twist in the “long and winding road” (Ross & Carter, 2011) that women and news traverse together, in terms of representation within news organisations as well as on the pages of newspapers.

To conclude this review of the empirical findings, I now draw the various findings together to answer the research questions. The findings reveal that SlutWalk London has made a feminist intervention in postfeminist media culture, especially and surprisingly in news items; however, they also reveal that this intervention has been resisted, in particular in unexpected quarters, namely by self-identifying feminist columnists. SlutWalk organisers and participants decried the nature of the critique levelled at the movement by these columnists and indeed I found the postfeminist sensibility framing by these columnists of SlutWalk as feminism 'done wrong' surprising and new. The discourse analysis further established that the critique had a postfeminist sensibility, relying as it did on an entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist ideas (Gill, 2007a) in which the anti-feminist ideas ultimately superseded the feminist ones. In this construction, ideas of choice, individualism and difference trumped those of equality, solidarity and intersectionality, positioning the postfeminist sensibility firmly within the wider doctrine of neoliberal politics.

Thus the representation of SlutWalk in the mass media has a feminist sensibility in the 'hard' news items and a postfeminist sensibility in the 'soft' news items, which is a surprising result. On the other hand, the self-representation by interviewees, bloggers and Tumblr posters, even when they did not identify as feminists, had a feminist sensibility, highlighting priorities of equality, solidarity and intersectionality, expressing anger at the status quo and hope that societal change towards gender equality might be possible. The feminist sensibility of those engaged in self-representation sits comfortably within the wider doctrine of liberal feminism, which seeks to bring about gender equality by changing existing institutions and structures, such as the media, police and courts.

The thesis has demonstrated that social media provide new spaces where feminists can call for change, and can sometimes also be heard farther afield, in the mass media, although this reach should not be overstated. At the same time, just like in previous iterations, there are diverging views in social and mass media, as well as in the wider culture, about the societal change required and the ways to achieve it. I agree with Bonnie Dow and Julia Wood (2014) that these differences indicate the

strength rather than weakness of the commitment of feminists to change – a strength that was on display when hundreds of thousands of women and men worldwide came out to protest against the election of a misogynist as US president. However, as Trump’s election demonstrates, there is still a long road to travel before gender equality is achieved.

Contributions, Limitations and Further Research

The study makes a number of methodological contributions. First, the conceptualisation of the companion concept of feminist sensibility, to complement Gill’s (2007b) postfeminist sensibility as an analytical category, will hopefully prove a useful tool for future research, in particular in other cases where feminist interventions are attempted, such as protest. Second, appropriating Entman’s (1993) framing categories (problem, cause, moral judgement and solution) as analytical devices for establishing the frames of media texts has been shown to be a productive way of conducting frame analysis and can provide a standard approach to using this method. Third, the application of Wetherell’s (1998) and Wetherell and Potter’s (1988) interpretative repertoires to media texts demonstrates its applicability beyond talk, while the notion of facets displays this method’s particular utility in parsing discourse of competing political standpoints within media culture. This is especially useful in the study of feminist media discourse, which seeks to analyse the negotiation of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities in media spaces. Finally, the analysis of images of SlutWalkers fills a gap in the research to date on the movement, and provides further evidence of the ways in which blogs and newspapers diverge in their sensibilities.

There are also a number of methodological limitations to this study. In particular, the number of interviewees was relatively small and therefore the findings from the interview data are not widely generalisable. The thematic analysis of interviewees’ accounts could benefit from discourse analysis to attend to the ways in which their accounts were constructed as well as to what they said. The frame analysis of the mass- and social-media texts could have been conducted inductively, rather than deductively using framing theory as a guide, thus providing a grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) approach. And both discourse and visual analysis could have

been conducted from within a critical rather than interpretative framework, which would have brought an additional, ideological, perspective to the study.

In addition, a number of empirical findings require further research that it was not possible to conduct here. Namely, an investigation of the inverse relationship between declared feminism and framing in both mass and social media. It would be interesting to conduct interviews with both bloggers and columnists to explore why the former do not identify as feminists, even though they frame their texts with a feminist sensibility, and why the latter frame their texts with a postfeminist sensibility even though they identify as feminists.

Finally, in order to extend the generalisability of the conceptual and analytical framework developed here, which combines postfeminist and feminist sensibilities into a comparative tool, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study of other feminist protests. In particular, I would like to apply this framework to the recent women's marches in order to have a more up-to-date view of feminist and postfeminist sensibilities in contemporary media culture. It would be interesting to examine and compare self-representation of women's marches and protestors and representation of women's marches and protestors in the mass media to explore whether similar patterns to those found in this thesis would emerge.

Writing this thesis has been a long and sometimes arduous journey. Along the way I have taken comfort from Thomas Mann's (1947) assertion that writing is something that is more difficult for a writer than it is for other people. I have certainly found it difficult at times. But I have also found it profoundly joyful. In particular the interaction with participants and organisers of SlutWalk London was a wonderfully gratifying experience. I felt honoured and humbled by their stories and their act of sharing them with me. Later, when transcribing, I also felt deep sadness and horror at the stories of sexual violence, but also a profound sense of respect and pride in their acts of survival and resistance to rape culture.

I started this thesis as a communications practitioner and media scholar interested in the ways in which new-media technologies might enable feminist, activist voices to

penetrate the wider media culture and potentially bring about societal change. I end it committed not only to the need for ongoing feminist media studies but also, more than ever, to working towards eradicating male sexual violence against women and girls, both from within the academy and as a feminist activist.

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Appendix 1

Topic Guide for Interviewing SlutWalkers

Questions	Supplementary Questions	Notes
<i>Introductory Questions</i>		
Personal background: name, age, occupation, gender	Where are you from? Where do you live? Which SlutWalk did you participate in?	
What does it mean to be a feminist?	Would you describe yourself as one?	
If so, how does being a feminist manifest itself in your case?	Life-style choices? Relationships? Activities?	
Have you been involved in a protest before?	If so, which? Have you been involved since?	
<i>Getting Involved</i>		
How did you hear about SlutWalk?	Mass media? Social media? Friends? Voluntary organisation? Posters? Email?	
What made you decide to participate?	Which SlutWalk/s did you participate in?	
Did you have any contact with the organisers?	How did that work?	
Did you make any preparations?	Social: who did you go with? Costume: what did you wear? Accessories: did you make, take or pick up any placards?	
Please tell me about your experience on the day	How did you feel? Who else was there? What were the messages? What did you think? Did you give any thought to what might happen next?	
What happened next?	Did you talk about it with others? Did you write about it?	
How did participating in the protest affect you?	Did it: make you want to get more involved? Feel disillusioned? Empowered? Disappointed? Introduce you to new people, experiences, etc?	
What did you set out to achieve?	How did you think you might do that? Did you achieve it?	
What do you think Slutwalk set out to achieve?	How did SlutWalk go about doing that? Do you think it has been achieved?	

<i>The Media</i>		
What media do you consume/ use?	Mass media? Which? Social media? Which? Blogs? Which? Other?	
Did you look out for coverage of the protest?	Online: news/blogs? In mass media? Social media	
If so, what did you think of the coverage?	Positive/negative? Validating? Disappointing?	
Did the coverage contribute to the way you felt about the protest?		
Do you use social media:	Personally? Which? How? Professionally? Which? How?	
Did you use social media to:	Prepare for the protest? How? Communicate with others? Who? In advance? On the day? After the protest?	Examples, please?
What, if anything, did you expect social media to be useful for?	What did you not expect?	
What, if anything, was it useful for?	What was it not useful for? Did it pose any problems?	
What, if anything, did social media help you to achieve?	What, if anything, did it help SlutWalk to achieve?	
Does social media offer feminists/activists particular opportunities?		
What role, if any, has the mass media played in your activities?	How did this come about?	
What, if any, do you think the impact of the mass media has been?	Positive, negative, no impact	
For those who attended both marches:	What were the differences between them?	
What, if any, advice would you give to someone setting out to make a social/political change?	What would you do differently next time?	
Has there been a next time?		
Anything you'd like to add or ask?		

Appendix 2

Sample Interview Transcript (Kate, professional, 20's)

KD: What does it mean to be a feminist?

Kate: For me it means that you have an awareness of inequality between genders in society that you think isn't right and should be fixed.

KD: And would you define yourself as a feminist?

Kate: Yes.

KD: And how does that manifest itself in your life?

Kate: Um... I think it means that I'm a lot more conscious and aware when I see sexism, since becoming a feminist, because I became a feminist quite suddenly at 18 after reading a book, *My Secrets of Silence* by Adrienne Rich, [text redacted to protect anonymity] and before that I hadn't seen the need for feminism, but once I read that I kind of saw sexism everywhere and, um... kind of got more and more into it.

KD: And had you been involved in any kind of protest before SlutWalk?

Kate: Yes, a lot. I've been at demonstrations since I was 9 years old. I started going to animal rights demonstrations. And then I organised my own demonstration outside Parliament about sex education. But I can't remember if that was before or after SlutWalk, though.

KD: What was it about sex education?

Kate: Um, Nadine Dorries was, um, trying to advocate abstinence for girls so I organised the campaign outside parliament, a demonstration outside parliament for that. Just because it was outrageously sexist. But, yeah, I've got a history of, you know, going to protests. And also, I've been to anti-war demonstrations and anti-cuts demonstrations, because I'm in the Socialist Party as well.

KD: Which SlutWalk, or was it both that you participated in?

Kate: The first one, in London.

KD: And how did you hear about it?

Kate: I can't remember the precise thing, but probably got invited to it on Facebook. Because I was aware of the ones in America, so following the news stories around that, and so many of my friends are involved in protests and demonstrations, if there's

a big protest happening in London I normally get invited to it on Facebook! So it was probably that.

KD: And what made you decide to participate?

Kate: I was really inspired by the story from America, and the demonstrations and, kind of, the fact that they were organised by young women; and apart from the issue being really important, it felt like it was going to be a different type of demonstration to the usual crowd, because I hadn't really been on any feminist demonstrations before.

KD: Different in what way?

Kate: Well, because it was about a feminist issue and because it wasn't organised by middle-aged men in trade unions.

KD: So you mean different to the previous protests you have attended? Rather than different to other feminist protests?

Kate: Yeah. Because I hadn't been to any other feminist protests before.

KD: You briefly mentioned "apart from the issue being really important". What did you think the issue was that SlutWalk was about?

Kate: Mainly about victim blaming... yeah.

KD: Thank you. Did you have any contact with the organisers?

Kate: Not at the time, but that's just reminded me, actually. My parliament demonstration was afterwards, because I got one of the organisers of SlutWalk to speak at it. So that's just reminded me of the sequence of events. So I wasn't in contact with the organisers, but then afterwards, after the demonstration, they used one of my Instagram pictures on their blog so I asked them to credit my picture.

KD: And did you make any kind of preparations beforehand?

Kate: I made a placard, a banner thing. And I suppose that the other side of things which made that protest important to me was, at the time I was considering reporting my own experiences of abuse to the police, so that's what my placard was about. It had, like, a statistic saying, I can't remember the statistic but something like: "like 64% of other abusers, my rapist was my boyfriend" or something like that. So making the placard was the only real preparation.

KD: Did you make any social preparations to go with, um...

Kate: Yeah, one of my friends and ex-girlfriend came with me.

KD: And what made you decide to make that the message on your placard?

Kate: I think I wanted it to make people more aware that it wasn't just, like, strangers in the street or, you know, because I think that's what most people normally think, and I think that's what I was brought up to think as well.

KD: And did you give any consideration to what you would wear to the protest?

Kate: Yeah, because there was all the stuff in the news about people wearing revealing clothes and everything. Um, I think I couldn't decide where I stood on that whole thing and what I wanted to do, so I think I just wore my normal clothes, which are quite kind of tomboy-ish. So I didn't wear anything particularly special that I remember.

KD: But you did think about it?

Kate: Yeah!

KD: And would you say, thinking back, that you noticed and, if you can remember, whether... how would you say that you fitted into the crowd of people who attended?

Kate: I think most people were wearing just normal clothes, but a few people were wearing kind of revealing kind of fetish-y type clothes or underwear, but that was a low percentage, I would say. Most were just wearing normal clothes.

KD: And did you communicate with other people on Facebook or elsewhere about organising going or did you just get invited and go? How did it work?

Kate: I knew that Queer Resistance was going and I'd been involved in some anti-cuts demonstrations with Queer Resistance so my plan was to kind of join their queer block on the march.

KD: So how did you...

Kate: I saw their stuff on Facebook.

KD: And did you make arrangements to meet them or did you just kind of hope to find them?

Kate: I didn't message them about it, I saw that people that I knew were going to be there, in that group, and then me and my friend, just between us, decided to go and join that.

KD: Can you tell me about your day and your experience on the day?

Kate: Well, I went up on the train, and I was quite conscious about my sign on the train, when I wasn't at the demo, and I kind of held it facing myself because I didn't really want to freak people out too much on a train!! And then, when I was there, I saw lots of people from the Socialist Party that I knew, so that was nice, and it was

nice seeing all the people that I knew from Queer Resistance there as well, and meeting new people. There was lots of people taking photos, like more than any other demo that I've ever been on, so much more press and photography going on. And also lots of people with home-made signs and all the people with interesting slogans were having their pictures taken. I got my picture taken dozens of times. I didn't really know what facial expression to have when people were taking my photo, um, so that was a bit weird (laughs), because obviously you're used to smiling for a photo, but that didn't really fit, so that was a bit weird. And then the march was quite good. There was lots of chanting. I can't quite remember what the slogans were, but there were some good chants going on, and onlookers seemed quite supportive. Lots of demos that I've been on, people shout "Get a job", so... and there wasn't much of that, so... (laughs).

KD: So would you characterise it as a positive experience?

Kate: Yeah, definitely, it was, um... quite comforting in a way. Particularly at the end, there were loads of speeches and they were really inspiring. There was one about a sex worker that was quite interesting as well and comforting to be around lots of other people who kind of understood my experience.

KD: And we talked about the dress, but beyond the dress, how else would you characterise the participants?

Kate: Um, young, as in, mostly under 40. Probably most of them were around 25 or younger. I'd say, like, 80% female, probably mostly white people. They tended to look, ah, I was gonna say middle-class, but actually not more so than other demonstrations, and I think that actually there might have been more of a mixture of classes than at other demonstrations, actually. I think possibly because, I would imagine, being called the SlutWalks, and it being about kind of wearing tarty clothes, at least to some people that might have been more attractive to more working-class people, because I think working-class people are more likely to wear clothes like that and get called those names, basically, yeah.

KD: And did you find that interesting?

Kate: Yeah, yeah I did.

KD: And while you were participating, did you think about 'what next'?

Kate: Um, not a lot, because for me the demonstration was an action in itself, it wasn't necessarily to then make something happen. It had a purpose for bringing

people together and raising awareness. And I guess in bringing people together further actions might happen, but there wasn't really a clear demand coming from the organisers. It wasn't really targeted at anyone in particular or making a demand so... you know.

KD: But in terms of raising awareness, do you think that that happened?

Kate: Yeah, definitely. I think it definitely has and I think it's part of a growing increase in discussions around feminist issues in the media over the last maybe five years.

KD: What do you think about that?

Kate: I think it's good. I think it still feels too slow for me (laughs), but it's better than it was five years ago, because things are being discussed that I sort of feel like were put to bed since the 70s, um...

KD: Things like what?

Kate: Well, just talking about inequality and sexism in general and anything that comes under that category. Things like victim blaming, you know, there's been loads of stuff in the press about that, not necessarily from a feminist or, you know, talking about female victims in particular, but, you know, there's been a lot of discussion about abuse in recent times. And then, I don't think there's been that much about women in the workplace, really, or, like, the financial disparity, but I think there's been some stuff about women's bodies and objectification, not necessarily all of which I agree with, but at least it's being talked about.

KD: Now, you mentioned that you took some pictures. What did you do with them and did you do anything else during the protest?

Kate: I didn't take a lot because it was quite hard when I was holding my banner (laughs), but I think I took a few and I put them on Instagram. Um, that's it.

KD: Um, did you get many reactions to your banner?

Kate: Just people taking photos and one woman came up to me and said that she was a survivor as well and I didn't really know what to say. But a lot of people kind of looked at me awkwardly. Like, they read it and then you could see they went auww [indicating pity and/or discomfort], and then they didn't really know how to react. That was interesting.

KD: Have you got a picture of your banner?

Kate: On Instagram, but I can send it to you. And it's, well I don't know if it still is, but it was on the SlutWalk website. Oh, and I left my banner behind, as well.

KD: Left it behind where?

Kate: At the... where there were the speeches, at Trafalgar Square.

KD: OK, why? Did they ask people to do that?

Kate: No. I didn't really fancy taking it home. I kind of wanted to move on from that.

KD: Fair enough. Um... do you remember who the speakers were?

Kate: I don't know their names. I just remember there was someone talking about the oppression of the sex worker or victimisation of the sex worker.

KD: Um... So what happened next? You left your banner there, the day ended... Did you talk about it with anyone? Did you write about it? Did you think about it?

Kate: Um, I was quite interested to see how the media would write it up, whether they would just take it for all the half-naked people or whether it would be more broad than that. Um...

KD: And what did you find?

Kate: I think it wasn't as bad as the coverage of the American stuff. I think it was more mixed than that, but obviously they would show the more shocking, the more interesting photographs, of people in interesting outfits or lack of clothes. Um, but I don't really blame them for that, because it's more interesting and more unusual and that's what always gets coverage. I think there was too much discussion about the word slut rather than what the issue was about, and people arguing about whether it was right to use the word or not and I just feel that's just a bit of a waste of time to talk about.

KD: So you looked at coverage and that's what you found, and were you disappointed or...

Kate: Um, I was disappointed but I wasn't surprised.

KD: And did it have any bearing on how you felt about participating in the protest?

Kate: Not really, 'cause I think you've got to do what you can and I think the protest was right and we didn't do anything wrong, it was needed, and even if the coverage and a lot of the discussion wasn't around the core subject, at least it was getting close to it. So I didn't feel differently about the protest, no. I didn't really talk about it that much with people afterwards, no...

KD: And did you write about it?

Kate: I don't think I did. I think normally I would, well not normally but quite often I would write about something that I'd been involved in, but I think, um, because of my

personal experience... and I hadn't, I didn't really want to share that on Facebook or on my blog, [redacted to protect anonymity] so that's the main reason I didn't really... I, like, talked about, and I knew that they didn't look at my Instagram and also I didn't identify it as my placard on Instagram, so I was a bit kind of self-censoring in how I talked about it or didn't, because of that.

KD: So I've got two questions here that I think you've answered, but tell me if you've got anything to add. The questions are: what did you set out to achieve and what do you think SlutWalk set out to achieve?

Kate: Well, for me it was about raising awareness and, you know, how rape isn't just strangers. And I think, with SlutWalk, it was broader... but it was related. It was about um...not blaming the victim.

KD: Now coming on to the media, which again we've talked a bit about already, but can you just tell me what kind of media you consume, and by that I mean both online and offline...

Kate: Yeah... I never read newspapers offline or magazines. I don't really read anything offline. I use Twitter a lot, [redacted to protect anonymity], so I'm on Twitter all the time and on Facebook all the time. But then, within those, a news article will pop up and then I'll read that particular blog or that particular post. And that will be either, like, BBC News or quite often Pink News, or the *Guardian* website, those are normally...

KD: Would you go to BBC or *Guardian* news or Pink News of your own accord or would it just be as a result of a link?

Kate: I never go to them. It's always as a result of a link on Facebook or Twitter. But then I follow them all on Facebook and Twitter so it might be from them rather than necessarily from a friend.

KD: OK, yeah, interesting. So... and so when you say that you looked out for coverage of the protest, how did you do that?

Kate: Actually I think I did do a Google search for the protest, basically because I wanted to see if I was in any of the photos (laughs), because I'd had my photo taken that many times, I did do quite a lot of image searches.

KD: And how long after the event did you continue to search?

Kate: Not more than a week, maybe just a couple of days or something.

KD: And did you find a picture of yourself?

Kate: Maybe one [redacted to protect anonymity].

KD: We've talked about whether you used social media to prepare for the protest, didn't we? And the answer was? Not really?

Kate: Not really to prepare, other than, that's how I kept informed of when it was happening. Like, the event page was my main way of knowing where, when...

KD: Yeah, OK, and that was on Facebook, rather than on Twitter?

Kate: Yeah.

KD: And what, if anything, would you expect social media to be useful for with regard to a protest in general and a feminist protest like SlutWalk in particular?

Kate: I think it brings together people who might not otherwise have any connection... Um... it doesn't rely on people knowing each other in real life, it just relies on people having a common interest. I find it really useful for organising protests. Like the protest I organised outside parliament, that was all organised on social media.

KD: So, how would that work?

Kate: I did a lot of outreach. Basically [redacted to protect anonymity], I used various Twitter tools to search people's bios for UK and Feminist or UK and Socialist or whatever the key words were around it. And then sent them all a tweet saying "Thought you might want to know this is happening" and then, as a result of that, got loads of Facebook fans, got lots of people saying they were going to come to the event. I even got donations for the council fee through Twitter by saying I've got to pay these fees, and for loudspeakers, but then I decided to refuse to pay the council so then I refunded everyone.

KD: OK, so you used it to reach out to people, mobilising them and also organising the time, the place...

[redacted to protect anonymity]

KD: So you Facebook in parallel, because on Facebook people can actually say that they're coming or not.

Kate: Yeah, so the tweet I sent out linked to the Facebook event page.

[redacted to protect anonymity]

KD: Do you think social media offers any kind of particular opportunities for feminists or women in particular?

Kate: Yes, because I think if the issues are very personal and difficult to talk about face-to-face, it could quite often be easier to talk about, like, digitally. Mmm, yeah, so

things about abuse or things about body issues, particularly if you can be anonymous, so on forums and things that can be massively helpful, if you can be anonymous. And I think women and feminists are more likely to have experienced things that might make the ability to be anonymous particularly helpful. Or even if it's not anonymous, just having that distance or that thinking space to write things rather than to say things might often be easier.

KD: But then of course lately we've seen some of the downsides of anonymity as well...

Kate: Like people harassing people and stuff?

KD: Yeah. So how do you think that weighs up?

Kate: Um, actually I think it's a lot safer. If you're gonna get harassed, then if you're being harassed online, you can leave that space, or you can, you know, it's not gonna physically effect you, so I think harassment online is a lot less dangerous or worrying because you do have that protection of it not being face-to-face.

[redacted to protect anonymity]

KD: We've talked about the effect or impact of social media. What about mass media, either in print or online? And I mean newspapers, TV, radio...

Kate: Yeah, I think it has a massive impact and I think it's very unfortunate because I think it's controlled by advertisers and business and the leading political parties, who are all very right-wing and it's all about money.

KD: You say you think it's massive, but in what way? Particularly with regard to protest.

Kate: I think mass media tends to only cover things if there's violence or damage and I think, this is why I actually think anarchists are very useful, because when there's a demonstration and the anarchists don't kick off, the mass media takes no notice; but then when the anarchists kick off, at least it gets in the mainstream press, and then, even though the discussion was about them smashing windows, there's a couple of lines about the rest of the protest.

KD: But what do you think the trade-off is?

Kate: The impression people get is that these are people who want to kick off and they haven't got a proper point to make, but I think it's better than not getting coverage at all.

KD: So would you apply that to SlutWalk and say that it's better for there to be some scantily clad women there so as to ensure photos at least, if not full coverage, rather than not?

Kate: Yeah, definitely. I think shock tactics, you know, even if people say some things are a distraction from the main issue, quite often the main thing isn't a story, isn't news, isn't shocking and therefore won't get coverage. So if you have something shocking, and then even if that is 95% of the story, it might get people thinking who haven't thought about it before and, you know, make people aware and then prompt them to go and read more about it, so I definitely think it's worth all the shock stuff just to get into the press.

KD: Why is it important to get into the press?

Kate: Because a lot of people, that's all they read. You know, even if it's like the *Daily Mail*, showing half-naked women, saying "sluts go on a walk cause they're angry" or something, then it's at least about the issue to some extent and that is reaching a huge audience.

KD: Larger than the social media audience, would you say?

Kate: In general yes, like, I think your average *Daily Mail* article is gonna have more reach than your average thing on social media. But sometimes, something can go hugely viral in social media, but normally what happens is that if it gets massive in social media then it will get coverage in the mainstream press.

KD: how does that relationship happen in your mind, between social media and mass media?

Kate: I think generally it happens in social media first, because I think that journalists are looking at what is trending in social media and then they go "ooh, this is a big story, let's write about that". I think that's very common; but I think that mainstream press is online so much now that it's almost impossible to happen the other way, because if something's going to be in the newspaper then it's also going to be online in the newspaper. All the newspapers have Twitter profiles, they're always going to tweet all their articles and then those tweets kind of go viral and then if a tweet about a newspaper article goes viral is that... it's kind of crossing the border between whether we're talking about mass media or social media. It's... so it's kind of impossible to answer.

KD: Why didn't you attend the second SlutWalk?

Kate: I can't remember. Maybe I was just busy that weekend or something! I think I might have had something else on that weekend.

KD: Are there any lessons that you have learned in organising protests, particularly about that relationship between protest and media?

Kate: Before I answer that, can I just say that because at SlutWalk it was very evident that it was just organised by one young woman, that really inspired me to think "oh, I can organise a protest so I think that is probably what gave me the confidence to organise the one outside parliament and the one this weekend, because before I thought that other people organise protests and I go to them, kind of thing, and that's quite interesting. But, in terms of what I'd pass on, is that anyone can do it and it's quite straightforward, all the information's out there. I just Googled How to do a demo at parliament"... I think the other thing that I'm starting to gain confidence is that you don't really have to ask for permission... But also, yeah, you have to get out and tell people about it, they're not just magically going to find your Facebook event. You have to go and find people who might be interested in it, you have to talk about it and write articles about it and blog about it and reach out to people on Twitter about it. Don't expect it to happen on its own, it is quite hard work.

KD: Talking about blogs, when you looked for coverage of SlutWalks, did you look for blogs as well? Did you read any blogs?

Kate: I probably read some on The F-Word, I quite often read The F-Word and I'm sure they would have covered it. I quite like their articles normally. But I didn't read a lot of blogs.

KD: Anything else that you'd like to either add or ask?

Kate: I don't think so

-Ends-

Appendix 3

Call for Participants in a PhD Project

Were you at SlutWalk London? If so, can you help?

What is it?

I'm a PhD candidate in media and communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). My PhD project aims to explore the relationship between the media and protest movements.

How will I do it?

I propose:

To conduct interviews with protestors who participated in either or both London SlutWalks (2011/12); and

To analyse mass-media coverage and social-media texts about the protests.

How can you help?

I am looking for people who participated in SlutWalk London in 2011 and/or 2012 and are willing to be interviewed for this project, to help me record and analyse this important feminist protest.

Interviews will take approximately one hour, at the interviewees' convenience, and will remain anonymous and confidential.

If you participated and/or know someone who did, please contact me or put them in touch with me to discuss further and set up an interview date and time.

Contact me:

Keren Darmon, PhD Candidate, Department of Media and Communications, LSE

Email: k.n.darmon@lse.ac.uk ; Twitter: @KerenDarmon; Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Researching-Slutwalk-London-2011-2012/478417082273829?fref=ts>

Appendix 4

Interview Participant Information

Name/ Pseudonym	Age Range	Occupation	Ethnicity	Gender	Definition of Feminism	SlutWalk Role	SW Outfit	Interview Date	Interview Location
Kate	20-29	Professional	White British	Female	Equality	Participant	Everyday clothes	27.11.13	Pub
Deb	20-29	Academic	White British	Female	Equal opportunities	Participant	Everyday clothes	6.11.13	Café
Linda	40-49	Academic	White British	Female	Equality	Participant	Everyday clothes	27.2.14	Work place
Chris	40-49	Professional	White British	N/A	Equal rights	Participant	Everyday clothes	27.1.14	Café
Natasha	15-19	Student	White British	Female	Protect the vulnerable	Organiser	Everyday clothes	26.1.14	Café
Lisa	50-59	Activist	White British	Female	N/A	Organiser	Everyday clothes	15.1.14 at Crossroads Women's Centre	
Cristel	60-69	Activist	Black British	Female	N/A	Organiser	Everyday clothes		
Niki	50-59	Activist/ Sex Worker	White British	Female	N/A	Organiser	Everyday clothes		
Nina	20-29	Student	White Other	Female	Politically active	Participant	Everyday clothes	16.1.14	Café
Sylvia	30-39	Professional	White British	Female	Equal rights	Participant	Everyday clothes	29.11.13	Café
Naomi	40-49	Student	White Other	Female	Equality	Participant	Everyday clothes	20.11.13	Café
Alice	50-59	Writer	White British	Woman of transgender history	Supporting the disadvantaged	Participant	Everyday clothes	21.11.13	Café
Livia	15-19	Student	White British	Female	Equality	Participant	'Sluttish' dress	4.12.13	Café
Rosie	20-29	Student	White British	Female	Equality	Participant	Everyday clothes	14.11.13	Café
Daniel	30-39	Academic	Asian British	Male	Equality	Participant	Everyday clothes	21.11.13	Café

Appendix 5

Consent Form

Interview conducted by Keren Darmon, PhD Candidate, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed by me about the SlutWalk London protests for my PhD project at LSE. My research is about protest and the media.

Please read the form of words in bold below and sign and date, if you agree.

I agree to take part in an interview for Keren Darmon's research project about protest and the media.

I am happy to put forward my views as invited by the researcher.

I understand that my interview will be audio-recorded for purposes of accuracy and later transcribed.

I also understand that I will have an opportunity to review my transcript and correct any inaccuracies, if necessary.

In addition, I understand that transcripts will only be handled by the researcher, who will abide by high standards of confidentiality and anonymity.

I am aware that the integrated findings of this project will form part of researcher's PhD thesis and may also be reported in future research publications, conferences, and presentations.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name

Signature

Date

Appendix 6

Coding for Thematic Analysis: Codes and Themes

Victim Blaming	'Slut' and 'Sluttish'	Feminism	Attitude	Media
<p>Stop victim blaming</p> <p>Rape myths: by stranger; in public spaces; at night; because of clothes</p> <p>In the media</p> <p>Clothes irrelevant to rape</p> <p>Fear of assault (as way to police women's appearance)</p> <p>Institutional failures</p> <p>Need institutional change</p> <p>Need to redirect blame from victim to perpetrator</p>	<p>Term of abuse</p> <p>Word that cannot be reclaimed</p> <p>vs. something that makes people think/pay attention</p> <p>Word as racially problematic</p> <p>Debate about word is distraction from real issues</p> <p>Use of word stems from policeman</p> <p>Dressed in variety of clothes to make point</p>	<p>What is feminism? (equality; awareness of sexism; opposing oppression; to be politically aware/active ; to support other women)</p> <p>I am a feminist (all)</p> <p>Sexism is pervasive</p> <p>SW united women against slut shaming and victim blaming</p> <p>SW as inclusive feminism (incl. sex worker rights, black</p>	<p>Felt very inclusive (gender, age, race; sex workers; trans people; disabled); quite young, female</p> <p>Place to share personal stories ("outpouring of horror" Niki)</p> <p>Change police, asylum, legal (sex work) and court procedures</p> <p>Raise awareness</p> <p>Variety of clothes to make point</p> <p>Diversity of speakers (race, asylum, sex work, Laurie Penny)</p> <p>About rape and violence</p> <p>SW as gateway to feminism</p> <p>SW as positive feminist exp.</p> <p>Great to have men support</p> <p>Feminists who don't like SW weren't on the march</p> <p>SW is inclusive, friendly, positive;</p> <p>inspiring; great atmosphere;</p> <p>placards; chants;</p> <p>Most in everyday clothes</p> <p>Change attitudes/ raise awareness</p>	<p>Victim blaming by media</p> <p>Tumblr</p> <p>Heard about SW in media: FB, newspaper</p> <p>Clothes as media logic: coverage is the point</p> <p>Strategic use of media</p> <p>SW coverage: scantily clad young women;</p> <p>news-positive/columns-negative</p> <p>Feminist journalists vs. SW SM as opportunity for women, feminists, feminism & as risk</p>

<p>Women don't feel safe 6.7% conviction rate I am a rape victim/survivor Opportunity to come together and say rape isn't my fault Never deserve to be raped</p>	<p>What I wore (everyday clothes – 14; short dress – 1) Most in everyday clothes; some in revealing clothes; in clothes raped in (tracksuits) ; Clothes as media logic Dressing up as discourse 'Slut' as controversial Double-edged sword of focus on 'slut'</p>	<p>women's rights, etc.) Some feminists opposed SW because of name & tactics Feminists who don't like SW weren't on the march deliberately misunderstood Some feminists are morally opposed to sex workers Feminist critique of SW as distracting and undermining Men as allies SW has been used to question feminism</p>	<p>Comforting/supportive/thoughtful Personal Big (thousands); full of people Grassroots outpouring Global/ international</p>	<p>SM=media plurality Older vs younger feminists Delegitimise SW Lots of media/photos Media as debate platform Mass media still has power Media coverage=more exposure FB for logistics Media double standard (sexualise but against sexuality) Fury at some coverage SM=social media</p>
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Appendix 7

Coding Frame for Media Texts

Background Questions

1. Date of publication
2. Headline
3. Data set: 1=Mass media; 2=Blog; 3=Tumblr
4. Source: 1=Guardian; 2=Observer; 3=Independent; 4=Times; 5=Telegraph; 6=Mail; 7=Mirror; 8=Sun; 9=Express; 10=Daily Star; 11=personal blog; 12=post on other blog platform; 13=Tumblr
5. Type of text: 1=News article; 2=column; 3=opinion piece; 4=letter to the editor; 5=feature article; 6=blog post; 7=Tumblr entry
6. Author name; or 0=not mentioned
7. Author gender: 0=unclear; 1=Female; 2=Male; 3=Transgender; 4=N/A
8. Is SlutWalk the main focus of the item? 1=yes; 0=no
9. Is there an image?: 1=yes; 0=no
10. Is the author identified as feminist? 1=yes; 0=no
11. Does the item mention feminism? 1=yes; 0=no
12. If yes, is it mentioned?: 0=not mentioned; 1=as a thing of the past; 2=as current and relevant; 3=as done wrong; 4=other
13. Is the overall stance toward SlutWalk?: 1=positive/supportive; 2=negative/unsupportive; 3=ironic/mocking; 4=unclear/neutral/mixed

Function-related Questions

14. What is the *problem* defined in the media text? 0=none; 1=Victim blaming, slut shaming and other attitudes that excuse rape; 2=Women dressing like sluts, reclaiming the word slut and naivety of SlutWalkers in particular and women more generally; 3=Structural inequalities, including the police, justice system, media industry and rapists themselves; 4=Cultural inequalities, including sexualisation and/or objectification; 5=other
15. What *cause* of the defined problem is identified in the media text? 0=none; 1=Victim blaming and rape culture; 2=Natural sexual difference between men and women; 3=Structural inequalities, including misogyny, sexism and

patriarchal structures; 4=Cultural inequalities, including sexualisation and/or objectification; 5=other

16. What *moral judgement* is conveyed in relation to the problem defined?

0=none; 1= Rape victims are never to blame; 2=Provocative dress invites attack; 3=Structural inequalities are at fault, including: the systematic harassment and assault of women with impunity; the pervasiveness of sexism and misogyny in society; 4=Cultural inequalities are at fault, including: the way SlutWalkers are represented in the media is unfair; women are sexualised but not recognised as equally sexual; 5=other

17. What *solution* is proposed to the problem defined in the media text? 0=none;

1= SlutWalk/ go out to protest/ raise awareness; 2=Women should dress modestly to avoid sexual harassment/assault; girls should not be encouraged to be/dress like sluts; 3=Tackle structural inequalities, such as poor policing and delivery of justice, sexism and misogyny 4=Tackle cultural inequalities, such as sexualisation and objectification; 5=other

Appendix 8

Questions for Analysis of Media Text Data CA

Analysis of Background Questions within Data Sets

Mass Media

- 1) Source (Q4): bar chart of which media outlets the items appeared in
- 2) Type of text (Q5): bar chart of what kinds of text the items were
- 3) If possible, cross-reference what kinds of text (Q5) appeared in which media outlets (Q4)
- 4) Breakdown of authors by gender (Q7)
- 5) If possible cross-reference of gender (Q7) by source (Q4) and by type of text (Q5)
- 6) Pie chart of Q12: how feminism is mentioned
- 7) Cross-reference of 'how feminism is mentioned' (Q12) with gender of author (Q7)
- 8) Cross-reference of 'how feminism is mentioned' (Q12) with type of text (Q5) and possibly also with media outlet/source (Q4)
- 9) Cross-reference of 'how feminism is mentioned' (Q12) with feminism of author (Q10)
- 10) Pie chart of Q13: stance towards SlutWalk
- 11) Cross-reference of 'stance towards SlutWalk' (Q13) with gender of author (Q7)
- 12) Cross-reference of 'stance towards SlutWalk' (Q13) with type of text (Q5) and possibly also with media outlet/source (Q4)
- 13) Cross-reference of 'stance towards SlutWalk' (Q13) with feminism of author (Q10)

Blogs

- 1) Source (Q4): bar chart of whether the item is an individual blog or a blog on another platform
- 2) Authors by gender (Q7)
- 3) Pie chart of Q12: how feminism is mentioned
- 4) Cross-reference of 'how feminism is mentioned' (Q12) with gender of author (Q7): only if it looks like there might be any kind of patten based on items 2 and 3 above
- 5) Cross-reference of 'how feminism is mentioned' (Q12) with feminism of author (Q10)
- 6) Pie chart of Q13: stance towards SlutWalk
- 7) Cross-reference of 'stance towards SlutWalk' (Q13) with gender of author (Q7): see item 4 above
- 8) Cross-reference of 'stance towards SlutWalk' (Q13) with feminism of author (Q10).

Tumblr

- 1) Authors by gender (Q7)
- 9) Pie chart of Q12: how feminism is mentioned
- 2) Cross-reference of 'how feminism is mentioned' (Q12) with gender of author (Q7)
- 3) Cross-reference of 'how feminism is mentioned' (Q12) with feminism of author (Q10)
- 4) Pie chart of Q13: stance towards SlutWalk
- 10) Cross-reference of 'stance towards SlutWalk' (Q13) with gender of author (Q7): see item 4 above
- 11) Cross-reference of 'stance towards SlutWalk' (Q13) with feminism of author (Q10)

Analysis of Function-Related Questions within Data Sets

Mass Media

- 1) What was the distribution of answers for each function (Qs 14-17)?
- 2) When the problem (Q14) is 0, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 3) When the problem (Q14) is 1, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 4) When the problem (Q14) is 2, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 5) When the problem (Q14) is 3, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 6) When the problem (Q14) is 4, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 7) When the problem (Q14) is 5, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 8) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with media source (Q4)
- 9) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with type of text (Q5)
- 10) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with gender (Q7)
- 11) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with feminist (Q10)
- 12) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with feminism (Q12)
- 13) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with SlutWalk (Q13)

Blogs

- 1) What was the distribution of answers for each function (Qs 14-17)?
- 2) When the problem (Q14) is 0, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 3) When the problem (Q14) is 1, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 4) When the problem (Q14) is 2, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 5) When the problem (Q14) is 3, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 6) When the problem (Q14) is 4, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 7) When the problem (Q14) is 5, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 8) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with media source (Q4)
- 9) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with gender (Q7)
- 10) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with feminist (Q10)
- 11) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with feminism (Q12)

Tumblr

- 1) What was the distribution of answers for each function (Qs 14-17)?
- 2) When the problem (Q14) is 0, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 3) When the problem (Q14) is 1, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 4) When the problem (Q14) is 2, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 5) When the problem (Q14) is 3, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 6) When the problem (Q14) is 4, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 7) When the problem (Q14) is 5, what is the distribution of answers to Qs 15-17?
- 8) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with gender (Q7)
- 9) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with feminist (Q10)
- 10) Cross-reference problem (Q14) with feminism (Q12)

Appendix 9

Discourse Analysis Corpus

News (4)	Columns (5)	Opinions (3)	Letters (4)	Blogs (5)	Tumblr (4)
Andrew McCorkell and Mary Ann Pickford, 12.6.11, <i>The Independent</i> ; Mark Townsend, 12.6.11, <i>The Observer</i> ; Eleanor Mills and Francesca Angelica, 12.6.11, <i>The Sunday Times</i> ; Bella Battle, 15.6.11, <i>The Sun</i> .	Jennifer Selway, 14.5.11, <i>The Daily Express</i> ; Minette Marrin, 15.5.11, <i>The Sunday Times</i> ; Caitlin Moran, 21.5.11, <i>The Times</i> ; Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, <i>The Independent</i> ; Jane Moore, 16.6.11, <i>The Sun</i> .	Gail Dines and Wendy J. Murphy, 9.5.11, <i>The Guardian</i> ; Brendan O'Neill, 6.6.11, <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> ; Selma James, 19.6.11, <i>The Guardian</i> .	Peter Lewis, 14.6.11, <i>The Independent</i> ; Tom Deadman, 16.6.11, <i>The Independent</i> ; Name supplied, 18.6.11, <i>The Independent</i> ; Caroline Cardew-Smith, 19.6.11, <i>The Sunday Times</i>	Natalie Lasance, 11.6.11, <i>oh dearism</i> ; Sarah Cheverton, 13.6.11, <i>Women's Views on News</i> ; Muireann Carey-Campbell, 13.6.11, <i>Bangs and a Bun</i> ; Heather McRobie, 13.6.11, <i>Our Kingdom on openDemocracy</i> ; Cathy N, 13.6.11, <i>Workers' Liberty</i> .	Elle Rebecca, <i>why I am marching</i> ; Kelly, <i>why I am marching</i> ; Elane, <i>why I am marching</i> ; Aimee, <i>why I am marching</i> .

Appendix 10

Coding Frame for Images

Background Questions

18. Date of publication
19. Headline
20. Data set: 1=mass media; 2=blog; 3=Tumblr
21. Source: 1=Guardian; 2=Observer; 3=Independent; 4=Times; 5=Telegraph; 6=Mail; 7=Mirror; 8=Sun; 9=Express; 10=Daily Star; 11=personal blog; 12=post on other blog platform; 13=Tumblr
22. Type of text: 1=news article; 2=column; 3=opinion piece; 4=letter to the editor; 5=feature; 6=blog post; 7=Tumblr entry
23. Photographer name: if not stated=0
24. Photographer gender: 0=unclear; 1=female; 2=male; 3=transgender; 4=N/A
25. Is the photographer identified as feminist? 1=yes; 0=no

Function-Related Questions

26. Does the image have a caption? 1=yes; 0=no
27. If yes, does the caption: 0=none; 1=state plain facts; 2=explain or contextualise the image; for '1' and '2', what does it say?
28. Does the image show SlutWalker/s? 1=yes; 0=no
29. If no, what is in the image? 0=SlutWalkers; 1=other image from SlutWalk (i.e. placard, dog); 2=image, unrelated to SlutWalk (i.e. author portrait, image relating to something else in the item); If '1' or '2', end here
30. If yes, how many identifiable SlutWalkers can be seen in the image? 0=none; 1=one; 2=a few (2-5); 3=many (group of over 5 but still countable); 4=very many (too many people to count)
31. Are the SlutWalkers in the image carrying placards? 1=yes; 0=no
32. If yes, are the placards: 0=none; 1=political; 2=personal; 3=decorative; 4=unclear; What do the placards say?
33. Is body art visible on any of the SlutWalkers in the image? 0=no; 1=yes
34. If yes, is the body art: 0=N/A; 1=political; 2=personal; 3=decorative; 4=unclear; What does the body art say/show?
35. Is the gender of the SlutWalkers in the image: 0=unclear; 1=women only; 2=more than half women; 3=balanced mix of men and women; 4= more than half men; 5=men only
36. Is the age of the SlutWalkers in the image: 0=unclear; 1=only young (under age 25); 2=mixed but more than half young; 3=balanced mixture of different ages; 4=more than half not young; 5=only not young (over age 25)

37. Is the race of the SlutWalkers in the image: 0=unclear; 1=only white; 2=mixed but more than half white; 3=balanced mixture of different races; 4=more than half non-white; 5=only non-white
38. Are the SlutWalkers wearing: 0=unclear; 1= only 'sluttish' outfits; 2=a mixture of outfits but more than half 'sluttish'; 3=a balanced mixture of outfits; 4=more than half in everyday clothes; 5=only everyday clothes

Appendix 11

Questions for Analysis of Images Data CA

Analysis of Background Questions within Data Sets

Mass Media (Q3=1)

- 1) Source (Q4): bar chart of which media outlets images appeared in
- 2) Type of text (Q5): bar chart of what kind of text images appeared with
- 3) Cross-reference source (Q4) with type of text(Q5)
- 4) Photographer by gender (Q7)
- 5) Cross-reference gender (Q7) by source (Q4)
- 6) Cross-reference gender (Q7) by type of text (Q5)
- 7) Is photographer feminist (Q8)?

Blogs and Tumblr (Q3=2&3)

- 1) Source (Q4): bar chart of whether the item is an individual blog, a blog on another platform or on Tumblr
- 2) Type of text (Q5): bar chart of what kind of text images appeared with
- 3) Photographer by gender (Q7)
- 4) Cross-reference gender (Q7) by source (Q4)
- 5) Cross-reference gender (Q7) by type of text (Q5)
- 6) Is photographer feminist (Q8)?
- 7) Cross-reference gender (Q7) by feminism (Q8)

Analysis of Function-Related Questions within Data Sets

Mass Media (Q3=1)

- 1) Table of how many images have a caption (Q9)
- 2) Of those that have a caption (Q10), bar chart of answers 1 and 2
- 3) How many images show SlutWalkers (Q11)? Note: this is the purposive corpus
- 4) Of those that don't show SlutWalkers, what do they show (Q12)?
- 5) How many SlutWalkers (Q13)?
- 6) How many show SlutWalkers carrying placards (Q14)?
- 7) What is the nature of the placards shown (Q15)?
- 8) How many show body art (Q16)?
- 9) What is the nature of the body art (Q17)?
- 10) Cross-reference Qs 15 & 17 with source (Q4)
- 11) Cross-reference Qs 15 & 17 with type of text (Q5)
- 12) Breakdown of gender, age, race, clothing (Qs 18-21), separately
- 13) Cross-reference Qs 18-21 with source (Q4), separately
- 14) Cross-reference Qs 18-21 with type of text (Q5), separately
- 15) Cross-reference Qs 18-21 with gender (Q7), separately
- 16) Cross-reference Qs 18-21 with feminism (Q8), separately

Blogs and Tumblr (Q3=2&3)

- 1) Table of how many images have a caption (Q9)
- 2) Of those that have a caption (Q10), bar chart of answers 1 and 2
- 3) How many images show SlutWalkers (Q11)? Note: this is the purposive corpus
- 4) Of those that don't show SlutWalkers, what do they show (Q12)?
- 5) How many SlutWalkers (Q13)?
- 6) How many show SlutWalkers carrying placards (Q14)?
- 7) What is the nature of the placards (Q15)?
- 8) How many show body art (Q16)?
- 9) What is the nature of the body art (Q17)?
- 10) Cross-reference Qs 15 & 17 with source (Q4)
- 11) Cross-reference Qs 15 & 17 with type of text (Q5)
- 12) Breakdown of gender, age, race, clothing (Qs 18-21), separately
- 13) Cross-reference Qs 18-21 with source (Q4), separately
- 14) Cross-reference Qs 18-21 with type of text (Q5), separately
- 15) Cross-reference Qs 18-21 with gender (Q7), separately
- 16) Cross-reference Qs 18-21 with feminism (Q8), separately

Appendix 12

Sample of Images from Newspapers for Analysis

Credit from top to bottom: Tony Kyriacou/Rex Features; AP; Getty images; Getty images; Getty images





Appendix 13

Sample of Images from Blogs for Analysis

Credit: Oh Dearism/ Natalie Lasance









Credit: Sassy Lapdancer



