"Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Whore":
Looking for evidence of gender inequality in sexual
harassment on Twitter.

Candidate Number: 22506

Supervisor: Dr. Sarah Cefai

Dissertation (MC499) submitted to the Department of Media and
Communications, London School of Economics, August 2014, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the MSc in Media, Communications and
Development.

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ABSTRACT

As the use of social media has become an intrinsic part of our everyday lives, so also, has the visual presence of abuse. As a result, the violent and persistent harassment of prominent women online has been covered substantially in the media. This harassment is neither recognised as sexual harassment nor as a societal problem, as it is often viewed as an unfortunate side effect of the anonymity offered by the Internet. This harassment should be seen as an example of gender inequality as it discredits and silences women's voices online and halts the process towards equality by creating a hostile and misogynistic environment, which renders the online sphere, solely available to men.

To find out in what ways sexual harassment online could be seen as evidence for gender inequality, the study used critical discourse analysis on fifteen Twitter tweets judged to be sexual harassment. By looking for representations of self/other and the use of governmentality, the study found that the tweets conjured up a discourse of patriarchy which adhered to stereotypical gender definitions, only leaving one subject position for females – that of a sexual object. Further, by following a feminist adaptation of Foucault's notion of governmentality, the sexual harassment could be seen as 'controlling the gender borders' and naturalising the power structure through judgment and subsequent punishment, if not adhered to. This study argues that the sexual harassment online needs to be acknowledged for what it is, gender discrimination, that leads to inequality as it impedes on a woman's freedom of expression and movement and confines her in a subordinate subject position, which ultimately maintains a patriarchal social structure online.

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, Jill Filipovic could not go to university without anonymous people confirming her whereabouts online and threatening to rape her (Citron, 2009). In 2007, Kathy Sierra had to move home, close down her technology blog and cancel all public speaking after having her home address and social security number aired online in conjunction with severe, aggressive and real rape and death threats (Bartow, 2009). She additionally received several graphic photographs where her head was photo-shopped onto the body of porn stars and with a noose around her neck (Ibid). In 2012, Anita Saskiaan, the creator of Feminist Frequency, was targeted maliciously on Twitter after starting a kickstarter campaign to get a more realistic representation of women in online games. In conjunction with rape and death threats, her YouTube and website was attacked and an online game called 'beat the bitch up' was created. In the same year, Caroline-Criado Perez received as many as fifty rape and death threats per hour on Twitter, after successfully having gotten Jane Austen on the British five-pound note. The threats spread to other females supporting her on Twitter, such as MP Stella Creasy, television critic Grace Dent and Guardian columnist Hadley Freeman, who also received a bomb threat (Mantilla, 2013).

Although society has reacted with shock and outcry towards the abuse these women experienced, this is not a new phenomenon, neither off- nor online. In contrast to the hopes that the Internet would erase sexism, ever since being open to the public, women have been targeted through verbal and graphic sexism and sexual harassment online. This is not to say that men are not targeted. However, as they are targeted to such a lesser extent, this can be seen as a gendered issue (Bartow, 2009). For example the University of Maryland showed statistical evidence that female usernames in chat-rooms received an average of 100 sexually explicit of threatening messages per day, whereas masculine names received only 3.7 (Citron, 2009: 379). Similarly, the American stalking resource centre has reported that approximately 60% of online harassment cases reported involves male perpetrators and female victims (Ibid). Furthermore, the PEW research centre found that "an 11 per cent decline in women's use in chat-rooms stemmed from menacing comments" (Bartlett et al., 2014: 3).

Regardless of these statistics, the attacks online are commonly ignored or overlooked by society at large. Many feel like the Internet is a 'wild wild west' and thus, anyone who wishes to participate will just have to have a tough skin. Further, the attacks deemed 'flaming' and 'trolling' are see as solely perpetrated by 'deviant individuals' and 'bored teenagers' writing harassing messages 'for fun' (Case and Lippard, 2009; Citron, 2009). As a result, for most women, the options given are to ignore their attackers, confront them or choose to go offline. Furthermore, many women who do stay online choose to use gender neutral or male usernames and censor their speech, to avoid the harassers (Ibid). Not only is society ignoring the gendered component of this issue, it rarely sees it as sexual harassment even though these messages online can "reflect intrusive, unwanted, and coercive sexual attention from which there is frequently no viable escape" (Fitzgerald, 1993b, quoted in Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995, p. 768). It is an attack on ones gender as it is being invoked discursively online in a threatening and degrading manner. It brands women as inferior sexual objects and increases the likelihood of offline sexual violence. Furthermore, studies have shown (Waerner, n.d.) that women who have been exposed to sexual harassment can develop eating disorders, depression and PTSD (post-traumatic-stress-disorder). Online sexual harassment has also led to suicide (Langelan, 1993).

As we are becoming 'digital natives', social networking sites will continue to grow in size and significance, as they are already the most visited sites globally (Chawki and el Shazly, 2013). However, if the recline of women online due to harassment continues, the issue of online sexual harassment will not only be an issue about mental as well as physical health and security, it will also become an issue of being able to participate completely as a full and free human being within society. If one cannot use the Internet to promote oneself or ones work, nor use it for social interaction, then one cannot fully participate socially, economically or politically within society. As a result, the harassment online also becomes evidence for inequality as it harms society by entrenching a male hierarchy online as well (Citron, 2009). Twitter has been chosen for this study because it has become a platform where abuse has become the most visible following the attacks of the women above. This thesis sets out to empirically provide evidence for the inequality produced online, by analysing a snap-shot of the sexual harassment a lot of women are experiencing daily on Twitter.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured in four parts and will first give a theoretical background through a literature review, followed by research methodology and data selection. The use of sexual harassment online will be looked at from within a socio-cultural construction of gender binaries that follows a patriarchal pattern. Against this backdrop, the tweets will be analysed through the lenses of feminist critiques of power and representation. This is followed by a discussion and a conclusion

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will review the theoretical framework, in which the analysis will be placed. It will outline definitions of sexual harassment, the actors and the spaces within it takes place.

Sexual harassment online

At its creation, many hoped that the Internet would become the manifestation of a Habermasian public sphere. His idea was, that people would free and equally meet and discuss matter of the public good. That meant that ones personal wants and needs, identities and statuses were left out of the discussion and only the strength of the argument would hold value (Calhoun, 1992). It was hoped that gender biases and stereotypes would wither away. Nevertheless, the Internet has proven to be highly emotional and rather un-egalitarian (Mouffe, 1999). As a result, the online structure has proven to operate in conjunction with our 'offline' society. Stereotypes are still adhered to and consequently women and men are equally unequal online as offline. This is most often seen in our mediation of sexuality, which can be positive (support groups for homosexual people) or negative, as in sexual harassment (Brickell 2012). Due to the 'collapse of time and space' on the Internet, the harassment can also become more pervasive and continuous, as the harasser can stay anonymous and can harass without being physically near the victim (McDonald, 2012). This has led to some victims of harassment stating that it feels like they never 'get a break from the

harassment' (Citron, 2009). As a result, sexual harassment online does not just increase, it has also evolved due to the nature of the Internet.

Definition

Consequently, Barak (2005) has restructured Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) definition of sexual harassment to fit its extension into the online sphere. They identified and named three classifications of sexual harassment offline, which are: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion. *Gender Harassment* is harassment due to ones gender and can include sexual and chauvinistic jokes, comments and insults. Online, these can be conveyed publicly and privately, visual as well as verbal, through for example posting and sending pornographic images, memes and so on. In addition, gender harassment online can also be passive. When someone communicates general misogyny towards no one in particular and everyone at the same time. This can for example be to showcase harassing usernames on Twitter such as 'cocksucker' and 'bestfuckinGermany' or 'WetPussy'. *Unwanted sexual attention* requires direct conversation between the harasser and the victim, as well as being unwelcomed (Ibid). This classification contains everything from "being touched without permission, causing fear or distress, sexual name calling and harassment to rape and sexual assault" (Barak, 2005: 72). Sexual harassment of this kind is generally seen on social networking sites, like Twitter and Facebook that have a chat function. Lastly, *sexual coercion* mainly focuses on incidents where choice is being taken away from the victim and there is a threat of physical or psychological violence if sexual advances are resisted. Thus, this category is often seen as a nuanced and complex spectrum that goes from rape to sexual coercion (Ibid). Although force cannot be used online, several tools can be used to solicit sexual coercion by putting pressure on the victim. For example, the cybrestalking experienced by Jill Philipovic, would come under the rubric of sexual coercion (Barak, 2005).

Much of the harassment is termed 'flaming' here defined as "displaying hostility by insulting, swearing or using otherwise offensive language" (Moor et al., 2010: 1536). It has been trivialised by commentators arguing that, it is only teasing, women can address it by not engaging or leaving the websites where this 'teasing' is going on and it only happens due to the unique norms of the internet (Citron, 2009). Thus, many of the 'flames' that can be defined as sexual harassment, are often attributed to

individual personalities that show 'anti-normative' behaviour. Called SNERT (snot-nosed Eros-ridden teenager) these attackers are often seen as a male angst-ridden teenager that are bored and harass people online 'for fun' (Denegri-Knott and Taylor, 2005).

Computer-Mediated Communication

Within academia, many scholars have argued that the anonymity offered on social networking sites such as Twitter, has created an atmosphere where these SNERTs can express more extreme and negative behaviour due to the lack of consequence. Furthermore, building on Zimbardo's (1968) theory of deindividuation in groups, it is believed that the individuals personal identity will take back-stage to a group identity where each member of the group is encouraging the others to become more and more extreme. They all want to be the 'ideal group member'. This would explain why many attacks grow more violent with time and don't recede (Mantilla, 2013). The Internet has "become the violator of moral standards, where individuals get lured by the nature of the medium to behave in deviant ways" (Denegri-Knott and Taylor, 2005: 93). By taking the stance that a reduced cues environment creates a more equal but negative environment of participation, these scholars inadvertently 'blame' the medium and create an online/offline divide, wherein the acts of harassment online are not seen as an extension of the harasser's personality offline nor as a societal cause (Moor et al., 2010).

Instead of blaming the media, others have argued that the reduced cues and anonymity offered by the Internet might induce depersonalisation. Contrary to deindividuation where one looses oneself in the group, under depersonalisation one still acknowledges ones own identity although the group one will be more salient (Postmes et al., 1998). This might lead to an uninhibited behaviour, but what determines if this behaviour is 'bad' or 'good' will depend on how these individuals use the medium and for what purpose. Called the SIDE theory (Social – Identity model of Deindividuation Effect), it argues that these behaviours need to be analysed within the context of each group's norms. Thus, flaming might be completely normal under the norms of some social networking sites. As a result, the medium is rather considered neutral, and its properties are being used strategically, and intentionally to "take advantage of the

benefits afforded by anonymity" (Christopherson, 2007: 3051). Similarly, AST (adaptive structuration theory) suggests that hostile sentiments found online is just an extension of offline thoughts, which would not be uttered in the identifiable offline public sphere but can be expressed due to the anonymity and norms offered on certain online platforms (Ibid).

History of sexual harassment

As argued by Azy Barak, the extension of offline sexual harassment online can be seen as the same tactics in use. Similar to the SNERT argument, historically sexual harassment has been viewed as an isolated and personal incident. Until being named by feminists in the 1970s, it was, equal to the harassment online seen as 'harmless fun' and a perk that came with the job. Even after becoming more visible and recognised after women started to become more and more visible in the work sphere, cases were often dismissed as 'only hurting a woman's feeling' (Citron, 2009). Similarly to the argument that women who are being attacked online should go offline, women being harassed in the work sphere have also been told to "change their supervisor, fields, or jobs if the sexual treatment at work becomes too uncomfortable to bear" (Citron, 2009: 394). Additionally, if women choose to stay online/at work, the harassment often becomes dismissed as "if it was that bad [the woman] would leave" (Ibid, p. 393).

In addition, the inclusion of Sexual harassment in law has arguably been one of feminisms greatest victories, but based on a quid pro quo definition, it has come under attack for not targeting the underlying causes of the problem and thus, not aiding in its eradication. To be able to do this, law should merge with theories of sexual harassment in the social scientific field. As a result, feminists have argued that sexual harassment should be seen as a tool to assert masculine power and control. Thus, we can position sexual harassment online within the larger feminist fights around patriarchy, sex/gender, representation and power.

Power/Knowledge/ Discourse

> In this context "power constitutes the *meanings* we give to the sexual world, […] it is *regulatory,* as it enables, constrains and moulds our engagements with sexuality on the Internet, [...] power is the agent of *inequality* as it directs the flow of sexuality in ways that privileges some actors and groups, and marginalises and dominate others. But these different dimensions of power do not play out in isolation" (Brickell, 2012: 29).

Power as meaning

Power is important as it gives a position from which one can create meaning, which is exercised through language. Thus, knowledge comes into being through powerful discourses that make up our world and creates 'truth' (Foucault, 1974). Furthermore, discourses can place individuals within our discursive construction of reality. These are called subject positions, but as different websites have different norms, they also give us different discourses in which our subject positions can be communicated (Brickell, 2012). The self is often constructed in opposition to 'the other' as man is in opposition to woman. Although the 'other' does not have to be negative, Van Dijk (1997) notes that this is often the case. This can lead to a negative other-representation and a positive self-representation. A way of doing this is by drawing on stereotypes adherent to the hegemonic construction of society. In our western society, the mainstream self can arguably be seen as a white, heterosexual western male (Ibid). Van Dijk further notes that the 'other' often gets classified as anything opposite the 'ideal self' and which might threaten the maintenance and legitimisation of their dominance such as homosexuals, people of colour, foreign religions, immigrants and feminists (Ibid). Furthermore, the power to represent the 'other' has historically come from the dominant force within society, and Case and Lippard (2009) notes that domination is reinforced through humour and trivialisation. Thus they argue that chauvinistic jokes have historically been used to reinforce hegemonic concepts and beliefs of sex inequality within society as well as to subordinate 'women' by ridiculing gender stereotypes.

Gender

When referring to gender the binary male/female still operates most prominently within society. Furthermore, gender cuts through cultures and societies, as it is a social stratifier and structures differences. However, gender is not universal, nor natural or biologically given (Haraway, 1990). For most feminist scholars, gender is rather a product of history (Ibid). A societal construction based upon the belief that certain actions and behaviours are representational of a gender (Skjelsbæk, 2001). As such, Butler (1993) states that gender is not something we are, it is something we do. We perform our genders without thought. As a result, Seifert (1994) argues that these gender constructions of what it means to be a 'real man' and a 'real woman' have become so entrenched, the are perceived as 'truth'. These gender stereotypes credit powerfulness, dominance, aggression and assertiveness to the male gender and associate powerlessness, nurture, softness, sexual attractiveness with the female gender (Epstein, 1998).

Representation

This leads to the feminist critique of the representation of gender and sex within our society. Here, arguably, the man is represented as the norm and the woman as the anomaly. He is the subject and she the 'other', nothing more than a sexual object (de Beauvoir, 1997). The other is built on a stereotype that objectify women by "portraying them as passive, dependant on men and compliant" – namely mere bodies (Galdi et al., 2013: 2). Furthermore, research has shown that exposure to these objectifying stereotypes in the Media can have important social consequences (Ibid). It can create a greater acceptance of stereotypical attitudes surrounding gender-roles and sexual attitudes, a greater acceptance of sexual advances and a belief in 'rape myths' (Ibid).

Equally, Galdi, Maass and Cadinu's (2013) study on female representation and sexual harassment, suggested that the exposure to degrading TV portrayals of women "play a causal role in both gender harassment and sexual-coercion intentions and that this relationship with gender harassment is at least in part attributable to a shift in masculinity norms" (Ibid, p. 13). As they point out, these norms and values are part of society and are conveyed through the objectifying discourses in the media. By using a Madonna-whore classification, when representing women within popular culture and

society at large, women are represented as either a 'good' or a 'bad' girl. The first follows the societal standards which dictates that "women should not consummate a sexual relationship too often, too quickly, with too many men, or under the wrong circumstances" (Conrad, 2006: 310). The latter, the 'bad girl', exudes sexuality and defies male standards, just to be deemed a whore, no more than someone to have sex with. Arguably based on the essentialist thoughts around sex, body and gender conveyed by Christianity (Ibid). This has however put women arguably in a sexual paradox, as "liberation in regards to choice and diversity in domestic, sexual and kinship relations are still being judged by neoconservative values to gender, sexuality and family life" (McRobbie, 2004: 256).

Power as regulatory – governmentality

Power can also be a regulatory force, that shapes the subjects (here gender) based on the power of meaning (Brickell, 2012). Governmentality is thus not power from above, as in government, but power from everywhere, it is a power that infuses every corner of our society. The power of placing subjects within a hierarchy works through surveillance that produces and controls discipline. It operates through customs, habits, norms, believes and stereotypes of how one should be to fit into this society (Foucault, 1991). Furthermore, the panoptical gaze of governmentality becomes completely naturalised as the subjects internalise the gaze and without thinking, engage is self-government. As a result, Macleod & Durrheim (2002) argue that the panoptical gaze naturalises a discourse of judgment around female sexuality online, that has been deemed 'truth' by those who hold the power to create meaning.

Power as the agent of inequality

This governmentality can then become an agent of inequality as those who have the power to create and regulate meaning can subordinate other groups within society. As Foucault's governmentality helps explain how power relations operate locally in the everyday, feminists have embraced his theory to better their feminist critique of power (Allen, 1996). His 'circulation of power' shows how the power of gender inequality is ingrained in cultural discourses (Madonna-whore representations), social practices (the paradox of sexual activity) and institutional contexts (women get told how not to get raped) (Allen, 1996; Lillian, 2007). This becomes damaging because a subjects real behaviour may not correspond with the expectations placed upon them.

However, the subjects "take up particular gendered 'subject positions' discoursally constituted" to 'fit it' (Sunderland, 2004: 21). As a result, Cornell (1995) argues that women have become responsible for men's sexuality to the degree that the self-governmentality confines women into a certain set of behaviours. As they internalise "the power structures that inherently oppresses them" (Allen, 1996: 275).

However, Foucault (1977) argues that as long as the power flows freely through the capillaries of society, it is not damaging. Thus, he completely ignores that even though the power is flowing freely does not mean it cannot be 'damaging'. For him, objection to the power network should only come about if there is an outright state of domination. This notion of power as either free or oppressive does neither fit with the feminist as the oppression and subjugation of women can be free, dominant, sometimes evident, sometimes not and sometimes completely reversible (Allen, 1996). Women are also not completely restricted from exercising power, as Foucault's notion of domination dictates, rather it is limited. However flawed, Foucault's theories of power to create meaning and to govern shows the importance of using CDA to study the meanings within discourses of sexual harassment on Twitter, to see how these can create a meaning about 'women', that govern them in an unequal way.

Patriarchy

Within feminism, gender inequality is most prominently explained through patriarchy. However, not only is it highly contested, it is also quite loosely defined. At the core of it is the belief that social mechanisms in our society produce and reproduce an environment where men dominate women based on the construction of difference between masculinity and femininity (Pateman, 1998). In addition, it often conflates a woman's worth with her relationship with men and where her 'virginity' holds highest value (Jefferson, 2004; Slim, 2008). This study will draw on this argument, when looking for a discourse of patriarchy. The theories below all adhere to the core of patriarchy, which is about the dominant masculine power, what differentiates them is how they see it coming about and for what purpose within the context of sexual harassment.

Socio/Cultural

Sexual harassment here is seen as a product of our socio/political context, in where stereotypes built on our norms and values condition its behaviour (Barak et al., 1995). One of these is the *organisational model*. It proposes that sexual harassment is due to the organisation of society, where men hold most positions of power and exploit these to satisfy their sexual desires (Ibid). Thus, sexual harassment is about the sex, gained through the power patriarchy has accredited men. Furthermore, as men and women bring their gender roles into the workplace, where the male stereotype is one of being the sexual subject and the female one is to be the sexual object, Sbraga & O'Donehue (2000) argue that sexual harassment is normalised within the work sphere. This explanation of sexual harassment has also been called '*sex role spill-over theory*' as maybe some men might assign females in the office sexual object roles dictated by society and then adhere to them in an inappropriate way. Gutek et al. (1990) have also noted that sexual harassment is more common in male-dominated work spheres, than a mixed or female one, as they often value masculine qualities such as assertiveness, being tough; dominance and aggressiveness more (McDonald, 2012). It is then a possibility that a female co-worker might disrupt these in-group stereotypes of the hyper-masculine workspace. As a result, the chances of harassment are higher as she cannot conform to the hegemonic group (here white males) (Ibid).

These theories have done much to expose how the organisations reproduce gender binaries and uphold unequal power structures, which can facilitate sexual harassment (Sbraga, T & O'Donehue, 2000). However, it has been criticised for using the sex ratio at work to explain sexual harassment, as it would pre-suppose that all men sexually harass. It assumes that only higher positions of power harass and ignores lower or equal power harassment. It disregards that the sociocultural environment is continuously shifting and presupposes fixed gender identities. It further ignores that outside forces brought into the workforce might also facilitate sexual harassment (Ibid). Lastly, it neither addresses sexual harassment outside of the work sphere (McDonald, 2012).

Contrary to the organisational model, Pryor & Day (1988) created the *socio-psychological model*. Here sexual harassment is seen as an individual expression depending on ones norms and personality traits (Barak et al., 1995). Power can be

used as a "personal drive to assert sexual harassment" (Barak et al., 1995: 499). In this light Sheffield has viewed sexual harassment as an act of terror where men is only exercising their power and dominance over women to maintain male supremacy (Ibid). All these theories however have only viewed sexual harassment as an act of personal power. Instead MacKinnon argues "one should recognise that men dominate women socially, economically, sexually and that, from this position, they attempt to subordinate women and consequently create inequality as women are not held to the same standards as men**"** (Franke, 1997: 706; McDonald, 2012: 6). Several scholars (Ellis et al., 1991; Tangri et al., 1982) have contested this versions of the sociocultural model. Broadly speaking it has been criticised for automatically assuming that all harassment is heteronormative. That both harasser and the harassed are heterosexual and that it is the man harassing the woman (Barak et al., 1995; Sbraga, T & O'Donehue, 2000). Katherine Franke (1997) has also critiqued the sociocultural model of patriarchy for only focussing on sexual harassment against women, which she argues excludes the experiences of men. Even though these theories argue that sexual harassment is sex harassment, Franke argue that these become "flawed and fall short when faced with abnormal cases of sexual harassment. Such as same-sex harassment and harassment that is deliberate and often affects both men and women and for a specific purpose" (Stockdale et al., 1999: 1).

Post-structuralist

By applying post-structuralism, Franke argues that instead of seeing sexual harassment as a socio/cultural norm to supress women, it should be seen as a practice of power, which seeks to regulate and uphold our societal practices. These practices deem women as heterosexual objects and men as heterosexual subjects. By challenging how these practices dictate what it means to be a 'real man' and a 'real woman', Franke (1997: 771) argues that: "we take away the constant view of 'women as the victim' and open up for harassment of all types, which seek conformity to our social". Similarly, Hollway & Jefferson (1996) point out, that we need to move beyond this narrow idea of gender stereotypes. Instead of adhering to rigid 'grand narratives' we need to accept that the world we live in is multi-layered and complex. Sexual harassment should not be defined solely in terms of women as victims and sexual objects. In reality, women are also sexual subjects that might want, enjoy and solicit sexual attention in the workplace, as some women might see sexual

gratification as female empowerment. Hollway and Jefferson (1996) do not dismiss the countless of accounts of women affected by sexual harassment and their statements that they felt powerless, victimised and scared, but rather argue that one should see these forces work alongside several unconscious ones that create a more fluid, complex and contradictory identity that allows for someone to move from object to subject and vice versa (Hollway and Jefferson, 1996). To encompass this, Skjelsbæk's (2001: 226) definition seems to be the most fitting:

> "The (potential) perpetrator and his/her ethnic/religious/political identity becomes masculinised whilst the victim's ethnic/religious/political identity becomes feminised. Further, the masculinised and feminised identities are situated in a hierarchical power relationship, where masculinised identities are ascribed power and feminised identities are not."

Skjelsbæk argues that society, albeit constructed, polarise gender relations in a patriarchal way. Based on this notion, Epstein (1998) points out that sexual harassment is an act of punishment for not fitting into society's patriarchal gender-boxes (McDonald, 2012). Combining, Franke's (1997) model of sex discrimination (in which sexual harassment falls under as a mode of discrimination) with Skjelsbæk's definition of hierarchical masculinisation, allows us to explain how women can harass women, and men; and how men can harass men as well as how this harassment can be sexual, non-sexual and sex-based harassment. They are all "a technology of gender harassment as it feminises women and masculinises men" (Franke, 1997: 771).

Gender Harassment

In light of the 'gender boxes' argument, Mantilla (2013) argues that 'flaming' and 'trolling' should be seen as gender harassment as most flames are directed at women and launched by men. Especially as the common result, of flaming is the departure of women from the online environment. These have been seen as 'flamed out'. The term 'Flamed out' visualises how the violence used to control women's behaviour offline, has been extend into our online world (Barak, 2005: 79). Nevertheless, not only is this link rarely made, often the severity of sexual harassment (on-as offline) is being

belittled and not taken seriously. This has led to Quinn (2002) researching the continuous prevalence of sexual harassment, with the conclusion that "men recognize behaviours in SH policies while at the same time objectifying and attenuating empathy in refusing to see their behaviour as harassing" (McDonald, 2012: 11). This had led to a discussion of definitions. Whilst Franke argues for a term change from sexual harassment to sex harassment, Epstein argue that these should all just be subsections under the umbrella term – gendered harassment, as any sexual harassment is harassment of ones gender (Epstein, 1998):

> "The real question is whether the issues of human interaction involved in sexual Harassment is different in kind from the issues of humane interaction involved in other forms of discriminat[ion.]... Gender harassment differs from sexual harassment [..] only in the choice of weapon used. Both types of activity are motivated by the same purpose-to inform women of their place and role in the workforce-and have similar effects-to offend, humiliate, and embarrass " (Ibid: 165).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Although the theories of sexual harassment are well equipped to explain targeting, consequences and the law, neither of these deal with the questions of origins and causes of online sexual harassment. Scholars like Citron (2009), Bartow (2009) and Waerner (n.d.) suggest that hierarchical gender power relations might cause and condone online sexual harassment but none of them have empirically explored the phenomenon.

Thus, the aim of this thesis is to create a link between online behaviour to gender inequality to show that it is rather a societal issue than an individual one. Merging the feminist theories of underlying cause of sexual harassment, with computer-mediated theories of online behaviour and conduct. This will be done by looking at the social network Twitter and more precisely at tweets deemed sexual harassment (based on Barak's (2005) revised definition of Fitzgerald et al. (1995)). The thesis will examine if there is an identifiable discourse of patriarchy within them. By looking for

discourses that resonate a positive self-representation and a negative other-representation in which both the self and the other are being defined based on society's stereotypes about masculinity and femininity. This will help to understand the social realities that discourse can represent (van Dijk, 1997). It will further use a feminist adaptation of Foucault's theory of governmentality, to analyse how this representation creates gender power relation on Twitter, and how surveillance has naturalised a discourse of judgment based upon these power relations (Macleod and Durrheim, 2002). This thesis will form a feminist critique of what it believes to be 'damaging discourses,' which only renders one subject position for women. By applying feminist theories of power, sexual harassment can then be seen as controlling 'women's' adherence to this subject position. In doing so, it arguably, limits a woman's freedom of expression and movement and it impedes on her chances of being a complete human being (Cornell, 1995). As a result, this thesis will argue that sexual harassment should be seen as a sub-section of gender harassment, which ultimately is about maintaining the unequal power relations within society, and thus should be seen as evidence for gender inequality (Franke, 1997). To highlight how behaviours online are not executed in a vacuum, to show that they are a part of a larger societal issue of female representation that should not be tolerated. Hopefully, then, this thesis will help to understand and combat sexual harassment online in a more productive way in the future.

This thesis sees gender as a societal construction of 'male' and 'female' based upon traits believed linked to our sex and that have become 'truth' in our society. As Skjelsbæk (2001) has identified that often these constructions adhere to patriarchal gender binaries, where the male gender is assigned power and the female gender the opposite. Albeit being severely flawed, this theory cannot be overlooked nor dismissed. Additionally, this thesis will use the term 'women' as the world is still organised through social categories such as 'men' and 'women'. It is not to say that it does not understand that these categories are not universal as gender intersects with sexuality, race, class, religion and so on. As a class 'women' are still subordinate to the class 'men' and they are systematically discriminated against, as 'women' (Lillian, 2007) and the usage of the term still seems politically salient. It is also viewing the medium that is the Internet, to be neutral. By using the SIDE-theory in

conjunction with ATS, it sees sexual harassment on Twitter as a strategic use of the anonymity offered when online (Christopherson, 2007).

RESEARCH QUESTION

This research project will thus, try to provide evidence for the following research question:

"In what ways is sexual harassment on Twitter evidence for gender inequality?"

To be able to answer this question, it will further ask:

"How are gender relations being constructed within Twitter? "

"Is this harassment revoking gender stereotypes which renders the subject position for women: as sexual objects, passive, weak, a victim etc.?"

"Is the harassment expressing, reproducing and naturalising patriarchal powers?"

METHODOLOGY

This section explain the rational for using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as it engages with questions of power within a social issue (Chouliaraki, 2008).

Sample

To be able to analyse how power relations are constructed within online sexual harassment, the research project collected tweets, using Martin Hawksey's Twitter Archiving (Tags v5) tool which collects and sorts tweets directly into a Google spreadsheet. Further the project followed and collected tweets from a Twitter account called "End Online Misogyny" as it is an online watchdog re-tweeting and reporting users who harass and save the evidence of harassment on the website: http://www.endmisogyny.org/. As this is content freely published online, this research viewed it as public and used it without consent. This project also used a categorisation table as a preliminary elimination process that identified which tweets could be categorised as "harassment" and were suitable for CDA. This was done by following the categorization of how different terms can be used on Twitter, proposed by Bartlett et al, (2014: 7).

The search terms are '#Rape', 'Rape', '#Whore' and 'Whore'. They were chosen after preliminary research showed that sexual harassment most often use sexual derogatory language when invoking gender harassment as well as the threat of rape when invoking unwanted sexual attention and/or sexual coercion (See (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). The hashtag (#) was included to see if there was a difference in use of the term when it was and wasn't hashtaged. Of each of the four search terms logged from Twitter, a randomised sample of 100 tweets were selected for categorisation. Furthermore, the categorisations were: 'serious/ non-threatening/news', 'colloquial/casual/metaphor', 'Threat/abusive/aggressive', 'general misogyny', and 'other/porn' (Bartlett et al., 2014). The search term 'Whore' was logged from the 18th of June to the 28th of July and contained an amount of 30122 tweets, the search term #Whore was logged from the 30th of June to the 2nd of August and contained 1589 tweets. The search term #Rape was logged from the 24th of June to the 28th of July and contained 14339 tweets. The search term Rape was logged from July the 1st to

the 22 of July and contained 14973 tweets. The tweets collected from 'Misogyny Online', was logged from March to August 2014.

However, the researcher is aware of the fact that these tweets are not representative of a larger population, as it is only representative of those who tweeted within the specific time that the data was collected. According to Beevolves 2012 report on Twitter usage, of those willing to disclose their gender and age on Twitter, 53% of the users were female and the rest male, while 73,7% landed in the age category 15-25. The next largest category was 26-35 with 14,9%. The report further states that the most users are situated either in the USA or the United Kingdom and from a global standpoint there is a heavy bias towards industrialised nations and western societies. Within these there are 'digital divides' that reflect patterns of inequality (Mautner, 2005: 816). As this research will only collect tweets in English from people who are e-literate and have access to the Internet, this project will cautiously assume that the tweets analysed will represent literate young people (age 15-35) with access to the Internet, in the 'industrialised west' within the timeframe given above (Bevolve, 2012).

With over 100 million active users in 2011, Twitter has become one the biggest social networking sites. People can communicate through short messages called tweets, which are limited to 140 characters. Its popularity lies in its function as both "a telephone conversation (a one-to-one interaction) and as a bulletin board (a one-to-many interaction) as well as a many-to-many interaction" (Major, 2014: 124). The four main ways to use Twitter is 1) viewing what people you follow has tweeted (comes up in a newsfeed), 2) view tweets that mention ones name or is tweeted directly at yourself with the symbol '@', 3) search for users or topics or 4) viewing 'top stories'. You can search and find 'stories' in the search bar and look for related hashtags (#). To hashtag a topic and the hashtag itself is a way of self-categorising one's content and one or more hashtags might become popular/ 'trending' (Ibid).

The strength and favourability of analysing Twitter when investigating the issue of sexual harassment is because of its "contemporary relevance for the articulation of social issues" (Mautner, 2005: 809). This is because the Internet reacts immediately to social change and tweets written are published the second they are written. It was

chosen over traditionally print media, as it is slow to publish in comparison, as well of it being less accessible. Additionally, CDA was chosen over content analysis because it will give the researcher valuable insight into the current manifestation of online harassment, not just its quantity (Ibid).

Critical Discourse Analysis.

CDA is rarely used on online content. Possibly the pitfalls are too many. Even though the larger number of data offered online might build a stronger argument for the researcher, the sheer number of unsorted and unevaluated data can also become a problem. It is hard to identify what is eligible for analysis and what is not. As these texts can be constantly edited or removed at any given time, they are highly unstable and instant, which makes it hard to create a fixed sampling frame (MacKenzie, 2014; Mautner, 2005). To be able to grasp the full meanings of online texts, CDA needs to evolve beyond solely doing text-based interpretations because online materials often uses "multiple modes of expression, including emoticons, hyperlinks, images, videos, gifs, graphic design and colour" (MacKenzie, 2014: n.a)

Regardless of these shortcomings, using CDA on online speech can be highly rewarding as it gives insight into how social problems manifests itself online (Mautner, 2005: 812). Thus, CDA was chosen as it is first and foremost interested in "uncloaking the hidden power relations, largely constructed through language and to demonstrate and challenge social inequality reinforced and produced through discourse" (University of Strathclyde, n.d.: n.a)**.** Furthermore, Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to CDA was chosen because it enables the researcher to position the interpretation of language in microanalysis within a larger societal structure of power and inequality found in macro-analysis (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002). The three stages are: Description, interpretation and explanation. Overall these three stages can be thus explained: "description is about textual analysis, interpretation constitute the examination of discursive practices of the textual interaction, which explanation underscores broader social practise that frame the social interaction" (Rambe, 2012: n.a.).

As Fairclough's CDA takes the position of Foucault, that language/discourse is not a neutral medium for describing the world, CDA fits well with the feminist critique of

the issue of online sexual harassment that this project is conducting (University of Strathclyde, n.d.). Arguably, this is because CDA can 'make visible' how language helps to construct a negative hegemony by presenting the dominant groups thinking as 'common sense' Fairclough (1992) uses the term 'naturalisation' for this phenomenon (Ibid). Thus, Sunderland (2004) argues that CDA can 'make visible' how a 'sexist language' has been naturalised. It can further expose how it upholds and reproduces gender binaries, which are inherently heteronormal. By using Foucault, Fairclough allows the analyst to move beyond a notion of power as oppression and opens up for resistance and social change (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002).

Critiques

However great the merger of Foucault and feminism, Allen (1996), argues that the circulation of power is insufficient in explaining how it is specifically relevant for women and can only partially be used when creating a feminist theory of power. Furthermore, Critical Discourse Analysis has also been criticised for being subjective and too critical, looking for a negative critique that might not be there. Not letting the text speak and running the danger of overlooking subtle but important linguistic nuances (Gill, 1996). CDA has also been critiqued for rarely acknowledging that a text can be interpreted differently from CDA (University of Strathclyde, n.d.). To avoid this, the categorisation of tweets will be used to guide the sampling for CDA to make sure that the tweets chosen are representative. The researcher will be as self-reflexive as possible, acknowledging that CDA is a highly subjective interpretation of texts. She will also be aware of her own subject position as a white, western, female who identifies herself as a feminist; who is assuming a critical stance against the gender binary, and its unequal power relationship. And that she will bring this view along with her positioning, into the analysis she is doing.

Operationalization

Under description the analysis will focus on the textual level, and especially on the usage of the lexical items 'whore' and 'rape' and how they are used within different text genres. Under interpretation it will further look at how the 'self' and the 'other' is produced as it can show how the text classifies the world into an 'us' and 'them' (Chouliaraki, 2008: 691). It will further investigate how the writers are trying to legitimate their discourses. Within explanation/social practice, the thesis will look at

what figure worlds the text and its discourses are creating and what worldviews they bring to life (Gee, 2010). These are important as they link the micro and the macro analysis together. By doing so, the thesis can link the text within a larger social relation (Ibid). Seeing if sexual harassment online is re-constructing our hegemonic social culture which is heteronormative and patriarchal basing itself on gender binaries (Franke, 1997; Lillian, 2007; Sunderland, 2004)**.**

RESULTS / ANALYSIS

This section presents the findings of evidences for a discourse of patriarchy. It will present between two and five tweets within each category followed by an analysis. The categories are representation/gender stereotypes, judgement, and abusive threats.

Of the samples, the thesis picked five tweets from the categories 'colloquial/casual', 'generally misogynistic' and 'threat/abusive', which would be suitable for CDA. This is because tweets under generally misogynistic can be seen as gendered harassment. So can those who are casual and colloquial although they can also fit within unwanted sexual attention together with tweets that are threatening and/or abusive as long as they are conversational tweets and not comments. It was further a conscious decision to leave porn out of the analysis as the debate if porn is damaging or sexually liberating (Brickell, 2012) was too broad to be able to discuss within the scope of this thesis. On top of this ten tweets re-tweeted or tweeted at the Twitter profile 'End Online Misogyny', Stella Creasy and Feminist Frequency was chosen to showcase examples of tweets deemed 'sexual coercion'.

Representation/ Gender stereotypes
The construction of self/other within tweets is one of the positive self-representation and negative other-representation that adheres to the gender stereotypes of what it means to be a 'real man' and what it means to be a 'real woman' (Franke, 1997). Looking at the selected tweets unravels the embedded representations:

Tweet 1 [male users]

"FUCK YOU DRAY YOU THOT BITCH WHORE SLUT FAGGOT NIGGA"

Tweet 2 [male user]

"You're a girl right? Show your tits or get off the Internet @misogyny_online"

At the textual level these two tweets have different approaches. Tweet one uses capital letters and offensive language whilst tweet two uses small letters and no offensive language. On the discursive level, both are 'othering' the people targeted in these two tweets. In tweet one, several of van Dijk's (1997) stereotypes have been used such as ' thot' (slang for hoe, or the casual term for a whore), 'bitch', 'whore', 'slut', 'faggot' (slang for homosexual) and 'nigga'. These are all, derogatory and can be read as offensive, as it degrades women, homosexuals and Africans. Tweet two is 'othering' the female receiver of the message by reducing her place on the Internet to a sexual object. The reduction of a woman's person to a sexual body-part, arguably communicates that women are solely seen as a tool for male pleasure, not having the right to be more than "tits and cunts" (Citron, 2009: 389).

What the stereotyping in these tweets conjures up is a Madonna-whore classification (Glick and Fiske, 2001). As both sender and receiver of tweet one are males, it becomes clear that it is not just the sex that is being attacked but sexuality and gender as well. Therefore, it fits with Epstein's (1998) argument that sexual harassment is punishment for not adhering to the gender boxes (for not being a heterosexual male). It also fits with Skjelsbæk's (2001) definition as it feminises the victim by using female derogatory language. Examples of the upholding of patriarchal gender stereotypes can be seen in the Twitter sample underneath, where these women/girls attacked are judged for being the 'bad girl'/whore, contrary to the 'good girl'/ Madonna.

Judgement

Tweet 3 [female users]

> "Your 14 and your posting pictures of yourself "topless tubing". No wonder
> no guy wants a meaningful relationship with you. #Whore"

Tweet 4 [female users]

> "RT @FemaleTexts: Twinkle, twinkle little whore, you're at school not jersey
> shore."

Tweet three and tweet four can be seen as judgemental in the sense that they are evaluating women's public conduct. By using the lexical item 'whore' to describe the receiver of the message, the sender of tweet four is judging the sexual conduct of the receiver. By invoking judgement the senders of both tweets are conveying a positive self-representation and a negative other-representation as the person doing the judging in the 'right' and the judged to be in the 'wrong'. As both are tweeted from female users, these tweets invoke a 'good girl' vs. 'bad girl' representation. Tweet three also invokes a patriarchal discourse by stating that "no wonder no guy wants a meaningful relationship with you", hence, saying that if a girl is not acting appropriately after societal norms, she looses the right or the chances to have a 'meaningful relationship' with a guy. By using the hashtag #whore the sender want anyone on Twitter who searches for #whore to know. In this sense, the word gets a stronger intonation, as it has the possibility of reaching a much wider audience. It also invokes the sense that it is the girl's 'job' to act properly; otherwise the 'guy' will not want her. What is being left out is also that she is thus, only 'suitable' for casual relation, presumably sexual (Conrad, 2006). Tweet four also invokes judgment of the receivers presumed attitude in 'public', here defined as the school. The use of "not jersey shore" also invokes a certain behaviour that correlates with the use of 'whore'. This will however be discussed under the section intertextuality.

Not only is the Madonna/whore representation invoked, the girl in tweet three is caught in McRobbie's (2004) paradox, where the liberation of the internet has let her

express herself and consequently she is judged on the basis of neo-conservative view of 'femininity'. Both tweets first exercise judgment and then offer advice in how to be /conform to the stereotype 'woman'. It is what Foucault deemed "the conduct of conduct", the ways in which adherence to a societal organisation through surveillance that naturalises the judgment exercised (Macleod and Durrheim, 2002: 48). Tweets can be seen as adhering to the naturalised patriarchal discourse that society has about female sexuality. Namely that a woman's worth is decided through her relationship with men and her sexual 'purity' (Slim, 2008). As a result, certain actions like "tubing topless" are not condoned.

Naturalisation

The normalisation of the judgment of female sexuality explained above can be seen within the sample in the way that this judgment is talked about as 'common sense'. A judgement that everyone has come to believe as 'truth' (Chouliaraki, 2008).

Tweet 5 [male user]

> "rape is okay with ugly girls, they ain't important anyways this is science #YesAllWomen"

Tweet 6 [female user]

> "Once a whore, you're nothing more. Sorry, that'll never change"

On the lexical level, in both tweet five and six girls are being negatively othered as 'ugly girls' and 'whores'. Consequently the self is produced positively as the 'intelligent' writer of the messages, who knows better. This naturalisation of the 'truth' that women have to be attractive and 'moderate' (Epstein, 1998) comes through this 'factual' textual genre. The naturalisation is stated as: "this is science". Following the 'gender box' argument, the women who are unattractive are being punished for not being the sexually attractive object that feminine beings are supposed to be (Ibid). Tweet six also naturalises the 'truth' of its factual statement with the apologetic 'sorry that'll never change". Suggesting that once a woman has been deemed a 'whore' her 'reputation can never be redeemed'. Thus, although never

stating that it is the 'truth', this comes across, as the message is being conveyed without debate (Conrad, 2006).

Humour

Another way that this judgment can become apparent is through humour. As humour is a way to express beliefs or sentiments not condoned in 'official discourse' (Case and Lippard, 2009).

Tweet 7 [male user]

"@misogyny_online You're such a joke to people that people purposely tweet you stupid shit and you're gullible enough to believe it. Lmao "

Tweet 8: [male user]

"@misogyny_online @WHITEDICK RAPE IS HILLARIOUS YOUR DAD IS DEAD AND FEMINISM IS FUNNY BECAUSE THEY'RE WRONG LOL THEY SHOULDNT BE ABLE TO VOTE"

These tweets can be consumed as a joke at the expense of the receiver of the message, 'misogyny_online'. As tweet seven states, it is just to make fun of her. Tweet eight conveys itself as a 'joke' by using the use of the acronym LOL (laughing out loud), 'rape is hilarious' and 'feminism is funny'. Tweet seven uses the acronym LMAO (laughing my ass off) for the same effect. Following Case & Lippard (2009) this would constitute an adherence to patriarchy, as it is defending its arguments by preventing a serious retort from the women or the causes they are attacking. This is the appeal of using humour, as one can quickly use the defence of:" It was a joke", "just kidding" or the "don't you have a sense of humour" (Ibid: 241). This argument can be seen in tweet seven, where the sender is telling 'misogyny_online', is that she is too stupid to 'take ' the joke in the harassment or the 'flames' she is receiving. Whillock (1995) argues that the avoidance tactics often advertised by law enforcement against cyber harassment, has little to no effect. His reasoning that any tactic used shows that the harassment has had an effect, the exact goal of the 'flames. Instead, he argues, it adds reaffirmation, fuel to the flames and often escalates the attack (Lillian, 2007). Although the 'flames' can be explained as the norm on Twitter

(Denegri-Knott and Taylor, 2005), Case & Lippard (2009) warns against the belief that humour is inconsequential. To the contrary, it is through humour that our societal perspectives towards current issues (most particularly toward contentious and controversial issues) are being represented. As it is consistently the powerful group that is the joke tellers, humour can be seen as a tool for the dominant group to assert and defend their position of power.

Abusive threats

Within the sample there are also tweets that are using vicious language that is abusive and conjures up credible threats of threats of rape, exposure and death.

Tweet 9 [male user]

> "@stellacreasy YOU BETTER WATCH YOUR BACK ….IM GONNA RAPE YOUR ASS AT 8PM AND PUT THE VIDEO ALL OVER THE INTERNET"

Tweet 10 [female user]

> "@VABVOX Leave the commissioner @cecilia_c_chung alone! You are a total CUNT and the reason lesbians DESERVE to get raped!! DIE!!!!"

Tweet 11 [male user]

> "@femfreq Really? Okay then. FUCK YOU, I'M GONNA KICK YOU IN THE PUSSY. (Trigger Warning)"

At the textual level, all three of these tweets are invoking aggression by using capital letters, exclamation points and threats of violence. Furthermore, all three reduce the receiver of the messages to sexual body parts (Nussbaum, 1995) such as "your ass", "you are a total cunt" and "pussy" which is invoking a sense of negative other-representation. Tweet ten is additionally being attacked for (allegedly) being a lesbian. On top of this, the sender of tweet eleven is also explicitly targeting the creator of female frequency, Anita Sarkeesian, as his username is "AnitaFucker5000" (see appendix). As two of these women have been outspoken online, Mantilla (2013)

argues that they are being attacked for having spoken up about feminism, patriarchy and misogyny within different spheres of our society. This could also be true about the following tweets targeted at 'misogyny_online' as she is outspoken about misogyny online:

Tweet 12, [male user]

"@misogyny_online seriously get raped and die you ugly piece of shit"

Tweet 13 [male user]

"I'll rape u idiot choke on my dick @misogyny_online"

Both tweets invoke a negative other representation with words like "ugly piece of shit" and "idiot". Tweet twelve has added a 'seriously', to add aggression to the threat. As many of these tweets are sent without any context or real critique as well as often without provocation, SIDE theory would see this as the norm on Twitter. Consequently it makes it easier for others to join in, even people that do not believe in the messages they send (Denegri-Knott and Taylor, 2005). Moor (2007) argues that regardless of intent, a message should be considered harassment if the receiver experiences it as such. Otherwise, humour could be used to discard its offence. Regardless of intent, these tweets patrol the borders of societies gender roles offering threat of punishment for deviation from the norm (Mantilla, 2013). This analysis would fit with Foucault's governmentality of sexuality. As it would see the naturalisation of the judgment and threat of punishment of female sexuality based on gender stereotypes as having become the norm within Twitter. Within the sample, this threat is, except in tweet thirteen, always of sexual punishment. According to Wood (2006) sexual violence should be seen as a tool, used strategically to terrorise or punish a specific group in society. Outright antagonism is "reserved for subordinates who fail to defer or question the existing social inequalities" (Glick and Fiske, 2001: 110). Equally, Card (1996), in conjunction with MacKinnon, argues that rape can be used to communicate male dominance. Furthermore, tweet nine sent to Stella Creasy also highlights the importance of the woman loosing her 'honour' publicly.

Intertextuality

Within our sample, there are also evidence of female-to-female attacks, attacks on lesbians, homosexuals, race and class. When using the theory of patriarchy, these cannot be explained. Thus, patriarchy has been criticised for automatically assumes that all harassment is heteronormal, and adhere to the binaries that are woman/man, victim/perpetrator (Hollway and Jefferson, 1996). Neither is patriarchy able to deal with the intersection of gender with other social categories (Skjelsbæk, 2001). According to Fairclough, intertextuality is important within CDA because it shows what other texts and discourses the current text is building on (Fairclough, 1993). By identifying similar intertextualities, the researcher can expose the sender's 'natural beliefs' (Sunderland, 2004).

Tweet 14 [male user]

"@_Fucko_ Rape is cool. #YesAllWomen"

The use of the hashtag #YesAllWomen together with a negative other-representation of women, i.e. by using derogatory stereotypes such as 'whore', 'slut', 'rape is cool', these users are deliberately discrediting the #YesAllWomen cause by discrediting it though humour and belittlement. The #YesAllWomen is used on Twitter to highlight the continuous prevalence of sexism in today's society.

Furthermore, the tweet from user "saygoodbyeanita" to the user "femfreq" is showing an outright discourse of abuse

Tweet 15 [unknown user]

"@femfreq Can u live with 20/30/40 years of this abuse? Cause we will never give up and now have the backing of Anonymous"

First, the username, 'saygoodbyeanita" is a direct attack on the receiver of the message, Anita Sarkeesian. Secondly, the threat gets more weight due to its intertextuality through the sentence "now have the backing of Anonymous". Anonymous is a loosely structured online group known for shutting down websites

through DDoS (Distributed-Denial-of-Service) (Citron, 2009). Even though not outright misogynist, the sender is threatening the receiver with the power of being targeted by anonymous, if (possibly) the receiver does not stop doing what she is doing. Which in the case of 'femfreq' is talking about female representation in online games (Saskiaan, 2014).

The use of intertextuality to the American reality TV show called 'jersey shore' in tweet four judges the receiver and says she acts like she is on the show. The show is known for its depiction of the working class as 'uncultivated' as "both men and women on the show express their 'uncultivated natures' by having a lot of sex and showing a lot of skin, usually after consuming vast quantities of alcohol" (Grindstaff, 2012: 199). The interdiscursivity also shows a negative other-representation of the working classes based on stereotypes, often seen by dominant groups within our western society (van Dijk, 1997).

DISCUSSION

As highlighted in the analysis section, sexual harassment online can be seen as a form of inequality as it does not uphold men to the same standards than women. Specifically the sexual ones, where men are not being judged or asked to take responsibility for their sexual behaviour in the same manner than women are (Cornell, 1995). The analysis found three ways that this inequality is being communicated on Twitter. Namely by invoking a discourse of patriarchy within tweets deemed 'flames'. These flames are creating a representation of women through gender stereotypes that is rendering them sexually u-/attractive, stupid/unintelligent, reduces their subjectivity to a passive sexual body part such as 'tits', 'cunt' and 'ass' as well as deeming them 'whore' and 'slut'. There is a distinct judgment coming from the surveillance of the female sexual behaviour based on the gender stereotypes outlined above. Thus, these messages on Twitter can be seen as 'patrolling the gender boundaries'. Threat of punishment follows if these gender boundaries are crossed (Mantilla, 2013).

The representation of gender stereotypes can fit with the argument posed by Conrad (2006), that women's subject position is one of sexual object, rendered either the

Madonna or the whore. These tweets are targeted at the latter and are possibly judging the 'whore' for being sexually frivolous. The surveillance of the female sexuality has become naturalised to the point where it is governed by the self and other. Thus the power to create meaning is also the power to adhere to the meaning. This governmentality is what Foucault has deemed 'the conduct of conduct' (Brickell, 2012). As the tweets are stating that 'women' should not act like whores, they are placing the responsibility of judgment upon the shoulders of women. As a result, they internalise these stereotypes and self-censor, or govern to adhere to these pre-conceived notions of what it means to be a 'woman' in our society'. As stated previously women are being told 'how not to get raped' whilst men rarely are told 'don't rape' (Lillian, 2007). If women are responsible for men's sexuality, this self-governmentality of their sex and sexuality is important for self-protection (Cornell, 1995).

Self-protection is important as non-conformity can lead to punishment. The rape threats on Twitter can be read as a reminder of what will happen if 'women don't stay in line'. It is the extreme end of power as governmentality where women are being governed through force (Glick and Fiske, 2001). As the threat of this punishment is sexual, it also conveys that a rape woman is the ultimate defeat. Arguably because a woman's worth is derived directly from her relations with men. Loss of a condoned sexual behaviour is loss of worth and as a result, she is nothing more than a 'whore' (Jefferson, 2004; Slim, 2008). As long as society is rewarding those who do conform and "uphold the patriarchal status quo" and subsequently punishing the rest, no real equality will arise (Glick and Fiske, 2001: 109). The discourse of patriarchy is also fostering inequality as it is conjuring up a 'truth' about women and men within society where women are being subjected to stereotypes that force them to conform through self-governmentality. Loosing their freedom of expression and movement which ultimately is restricting and confining them within their behaviour (Cornell, 1995). Consequently, "to strain away from 'ladylike' means to be held accountable, punished and left without (male) protection" (Ibid: 170). This can be seen as inequality as women are at the mercy of men. Macleod & Durrheim (2002) have called this the 'gendered subjectivity', the way that men's conjugal authority is reproduced and maintained. Cornell (1995: 175) sees sexual harassment at the heart of female subordination as they are being imposed an identity of "fuckees".

The sexual harassment on Twitter cannot be analysed in isolation from context, as it's not just women who are being attacked. This project has identified the attack on homosexuals, men and feminists. Within the intertextuality section of the analysis, many of the tweets analysed especially ridiculed the feminist cause in conjunction with the sexual harassment of women. If sexual harassment is about maintaining the hierarchical gender power structures within society, then a feminist is someone who is outright fighting against that. Instead of seeing feminism as equality, it is often defined as power over men (Glick and Fiske, 2001). By creating a discourse about 'evil feminists', Lillian argues that the powerful are trying to perpetuate their power structure by discrediting the feminist by using stereotypes such as "angry", "irrational", "emotional", "stupid" "bitter", "man-hating" (Lillian, 2007: 275). Linking this discretisation of the cause with real, violent and aggressive threats of sexual abuse SH becomes a powerful discursive tool to drive women away from feminism. By being despised or feared by women, feminism in itself would loose support and as a result, patriarchal power relations would be upheld.

Nevertheless, society is not as black and white, as it would have rendered all men conscious perpetrators of patriarchal dominance. It would also have rendered all women victims, and every act heterosexual. However, women do have power, although limited (Allen, 1996). They are also perpetrators and sexual subjects. They are not *just* attacked for being women, as this would not explain the multiple variations of sexual harassment beyond the heterosexual. It can, in addition, not explain why some men engage in the behaviour online and why others don't (Herring, 2005). Instead, by viewing sexual harassment as a way of reconstituting gender hierarchies where masculinity is regarded as powerfulness, and femininity the opposite, more variation of sexual harassment is possible. By arguing that the threat of harassment in itself masculinises the potential perpetrator and feminises the potential victim, then sexual harassment of the same sex, the opposite sex, for the sexual enjoyment and for non-sexual purposes can be explained as well. It is about becoming the one with the power to dominate. The harassment online becomes gendered because it "employs negative descriptive gender stereotypes of what women are or should be" (Epstein, 1998: 163). It also becomes a punishment for not fitting with these gender stereotypes. Consequently, Epstein argues that sexual harassment

should be seen as a tool wielded to gain the goal of gender submission. As a result, this thesis argues that the sexual harassment analysed on Twitter should be redefined as gender harassment and acknowledged as gender inequality because one gender is being supressed through the patriarchal discourse of governmentality placed upon their gender of the other.

Reflections on methodology and results

Although the methodology chosen helped in answering the research question, there were issues with using CDA of tweets . The frame was difficult to establish. Many tweets seemed like harassment in isolation, but did not fit with the definition when viewed in the conversational context it was in. There are also the argument that many of the users that tweet aggressive and harassing threats of rape, when investigated have proven to be proxy users, set up by one 'real' user and appropriated only to send out 'spam' (MacKenzie, 2014). When looking at the data collected for this thesis, the researcher noticed that most of the users only tweeted something sexually harassing once. It was only a very small amount that persistently tweeted aggressive threats of rape. Due to constraints, this thesis only chose tweets from the sample that did not cross over into the visual. This limited the depth and strength of the analysis as most CMC today move beyond the textual (Ibid). The scope neither allowed for a visual analysis of the self-representation of sender and receiver of tweets by looking at their Twitter profiles. This would have given the analysis valuable insight into what they hold as important feature about themselves and can form a further development of this study. One could in addition have looked for patterns between the women targeted to see if there is commonality in the self-representation, for example by naming oneself a feminist. For a more nuanced and complex understanding of this issue, any further research should include visual analysis as well as CDA.

CONCLUSION

This study has looked at the underlying discourses of patriarchy within sexually harassing tweets, to evaluate in what ways sexual harassment should be seen as evidence for gender inequality. The methodology involved CDA of fifteen tweets deemed sexually harassing following Barak's (2005) adjustments of Fitzgerald et al.'s

(1995) definition of the term. The tweets were analysed looking for discourses of gender and representation that would re-produce and naturalise unequal patriarchal power relations and subject positions. In doing so it highlights that the discourses found online should be seen as 'damaging' and builds an empirical bridge to gender inequality, arguing that the former should be seen as a tool to maintain and reproduce the latter. As long as this is not recognised, a discourse of acceptance of this inequality is conveyed online.

The power of the Internet is well established. It offers possibilities for resistance and hopes for democracy but equally it has also aided in re-inscribe societal inequalities. People engaging online still adhere to norms and power relations structured by our offline society (Brickell, 2012).The dominant discourses around gender relations are especially visible in sexually harassing tweets online. They conjure up a discourse of patriarchy around gender stereotypes and their representation. It further seems to indicate that these tweets are also used as a way to patrol these gender binaries and assure continued adherence to them. Consequently, this study argues that the tweets are an attack of the non-compliance to ones gender. Seen as a way of imitating the freedoms of being a complete human being and should be deemed gender harassment, which is aimed at keeping one gender more unequal to the other. This study hopes that the reader remembers that the power of domination explored in this study is just one of many. It has to be read in conjunction with the knowledge that the female gender might also be supressed economically, socially, culturally, politically and so on. Sexual harassment online/offline is just one part of a lager societal suppression, embedded in a large and complex culture of misogyny.

This research hopes that it has in a small way contributed to shed light on sexual harassment online and how it is reproducing discourses about gender so naturalised that the inequality it is upholding, is overlooked. As it is set in the context of Tweets written in English, it would be interesting to see some further research being done cross-culturally. Such a study would be great to evaluate the results found in this study and open up a larger investigation of global gender inequality online. Any research in the future should try and combine theories of online behaviour and computer-mediated communication with theories of sexual harassment to get a complex analysis of sender, receiver, media and the society and how they are all

linked together. Most ambitiously, this research should be paired with a study into 'post-feminism' and the societal shift to individuality and political correctness, and the influence this has had on the sexual harassment online debate. Such as study would hopefully bring to the fore a complex picture of a society still adhering to gender hierarchies in which sexual harassment online could be placed.

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