

Online Community Response to YouTube Abuse

Jessica Lauren Herling

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science
In
Sociology

Neal King, Committee Chair
Toni Calasanti
James Hawdon

May 5, 2016
Blacksburg, VA

Keywords: Sexual harassment, YouTube, feminism, postfeminism, social problems

Online Community Response to YouTube Abuse

Jessica Lauren Herling

ABSTRACT (Academic)

This study draws on social problems literature about rhetoric in claims-making and social movement literature about credibility in framing to understand the construction of YouTube abuse and relationships between member role in the community and their frames/the reception of those frames. I also draw on feminist, non-feminist, and postfeminist literature to understand how YouTubers incorporate feminism into their claims about why YouTube abuse is wrong. Here feminism refers to understandings of sexual harassment as stemming from gender inequality, and non-feminist understandings of sexual harassment refer to individualized and degendered violations of rights and power imbalances. Postfeminist literature informs this study in understanding how a feminist issue has been disassociated with gender inequality and individualized. Drawing on this literature, I conducted a content analysis of YouTube videos and the comment sections on these YouTube video webpages to address how the community members responded to the sexual harassment problem. First, how do the YouTubers describe the problem? Second, what explanations for why the behavior is wrong, do the YouTubers use? Options include portraying the issue using a more feminist frame of “gender equality,” a post-feminist frame of gender-neutral “consent,” or a gender-neutral frame of “power imbalance.” Lastly, are there relationships between the YouTubers’ position in the community and/or gender, their responses, and positive and negative comments left on the videos? Analysis supports that YouTubers did not connect the issue to feminism and that YouTubers’ positions in the community relate to how they politicized the abuse and how much commentator support they received.

Online Community Response to YouTube Abuse

Jessica Lauren Herling

ABSTRACT (Public)

In 2014 an online YouTube community discussed accounts of sexual harassment depicted in YouTube videos and sexual abuse perpetrated against viewers, defined as YouTube abuse, that occurred within that community. These discussions spanned several months. A YouTuber is a content creator who creates videos and uploads them to YouTube. YouTubers, and people who comment on their videos, comprise the YouTube community. This community includes those who create videos, who often collaborate with each other, and those who comment on these videos on YouTube and by doing so interact with these content creators or at least with other viewers. This study analyzes these online community discussions about abuse, investigating relationships between the community member's popularity and connection to YouTube with how they framed the issue and their treatment by people who watch the videos. This study also analyzes how much feminism now influences public debate over sexual harassment of women, and investigates the possibility that non-feminist frames have taken over public discourses on these issues. Analysis supports that YouTubers did not frame the issue of abuse as feminist and that their popularity relates to how they framed the issue and how people responded to them.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my chair, Dr. King, for helping me construct and complete this project. I very much value and appreciate your help with my work and thank you for all of your suggestions and support that started from the very beginning of this project back in my first semester of graduate school. I also thank my committee members, Dr. Calasanti and Dr. Hawdon, for helping me undertake this thesis. Your guidance and suggestions have helped me immensely to grow as a student and as an academic. I also thank Maggie Nanney for your suggestions and help with my thesis documents and for allowing me to practice my many presentations with you, and Talitha Rose and Kristin Richardson for helping me think through my ideas about YouTube.

Table of Contents

Abstract (Academic)	ii
Abstract (Public)	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	vi
Introduction	1-4
Literature Review	4-23
<i>Social Construction of Social Problems</i>	4
<i>Warrants in Claims-making and Credibility in Framing</i>	5
<i>Multiple Claims-makers' Perspectives on Social Problems</i>	7
<i>Feminist Conceptualizations of Sexual Harassment</i>	9
<i>Non-feminist Explanations of Sexual Harassment</i>	13
<i>Postfeminism</i>	15
<i>YouTube</i>	19
Research Question	23-26
Methods	27-39
<i>Data Collection</i>	27
<i>Initial substantive coding</i>	31
<i>Secondary substantive coding</i>	33
<i>Data Analysis</i>	37
Findings	39-43
Discussion	44-48
References	49-55
Appendix: Code Sheets for Videos and Comments	56-60

List of Tables

Table 1: Most politicized statement the YouTuber made	39
Table 2: Professional role * Most politicized statement the YouTuber made Crosstabulation	40-41
Table 3: Professional role * Number of Positive Comments Crosstabulation	41
Table 4: Professional role * Total Number of Positive Comments about Content Crosstabulation	42
Table 5: Gender * Number of Negative Comments Crosstabulation	42-43
Table 6: Gender * Total Number of Negative Comments about YouTuber Crosstabulation	43

Introduction

My thesis will focus on an online community's response to *YouTube abuse*, sexual harassment and sexual abuse depicted in YouTube videos or perpetrated against their viewers. Online articles have been written about this YouTube abuse, detailing cases and identifying a YouTube community response to the abuse (Bennett 2014; Romano, Jaworski, and Votta 2014; Addington 2014). This community response to abuse and harassment took place over the course of several months, starting in March 2014, when people claimed to have been sexually abused by content creators in the YouTube community. In September 2014, a prominent YouTuber, Laci Green, led an online campaign against another YouTuber, Sam Pepper, for his videos where he violates women's bodies by touching them on the butts without their consent. I conducted a content analysis of videos made by YouTubers that respond to this abuse, which often feature support for victims of YouTube abuse and calls for action against perpetrators. I also studied the comments posted to pages that include these response videos. I measured the extent to which feminism continues to inform public debate over sex harassment of women, and the extent to which non-feminist frames have gained prominence. I also tested for correlations between these frames and the professional status of the YouTubers. These correlations allowed me to comment on the extent to which problems originally constructed by feminists have been reframed for a post-feminist culture. Study of interactions on these pages (people commenting on the videos) also allowed me to show how communities achieve that reframing and how social location informs members' contributions.

A *YouTuber* is a content creator who uploads videos to YouTube. YouTubers, and people who comment on their videos, comprise the *YouTube community*. This community includes those who create videos, who often collaborate with each other, and those who comment on these

videos on YouTube and by doing so interact with these content creators or at least with other viewers. Though people who watch the videos and discuss them with others offline may identify themselves as members of this community (these people also attend conferences related to YouTube), the definition for this study includes only those who interact on the YouTube site by creating videos and posting comments there.

In research on a YouTube online community, researchers have defined an online community as

a group (or various subgroups) of people, brought together by a shared interest, using a virtual platform, to interact and create user-generated content that is accessible to all community members, while cultivating communal culture and adhering to specific norms (Rotman and Preece 2010:320).

This definition emphasizes common purpose and sense of collectivity.

In this community, I differentiate between amateur and professional members because social movement scholars argue that professionals, as a result of their celebrity, frame social problems differently than others do (Meyer and Gamson 1995). Professional members have certain privileges from their popularity on YouTube, such as large fan bases, access to YouTube centers to create their videos, and opportunities to speak at YouTube conventions. These professional YouTubers can also use the YouTube platform to acquire money through advertisements on their videos. As a result of their popularity online and connections with the YouTube conferences and corporation, the professional figures in the YouTube community are a group distinct from the fans and the amateur members who watch their content, and are often peers of the content creators who partake in YouTube abuse. “News videos” also report on this YouTube abuse and are defined as channels that are not managed by a single YouTuber and that

often have multiple people reporting on issues. These channels can be associated with television news channels or be online/YouTube based channels.

Current research on sexual harassment can apply a feminist paradigm focused on gender inequality; or a non-feminist, degendered account focused on violating one's interests or privacy, or on objectification. These paradigms differ over both the cause of sexual harassment and the harm done from sexual harassment. Feminist scholars argue that sexual harassment stems from gender inequality. Both feminist and degendered accounts of sexual harassment address the harm done by sexual harassment. Feminists argue that it maintains gender inequality; and others focus on violation of a victim's interests/consent, or a power imbalance of occupational roles but not gender.

Given this conflict between feminists and non-feminist framings, my study investigates who employs these non/feminist frames and how others receive these frames. While I initially planned to analyze how the reception of feminist statements differs from non-feminist ones by viewing the comment responses, the lack of feminist videos did not allow me to analyze how people respond to online feminism.

My main research question is whether there is a relationship between the professional role of the responder to YouTube abuse and non/feminist content of their response. Some frame the problem in terms of gender and sexuality while others use nongendered language. In what ways do their responses to YouTube abuse represent it as an issue of gendered power, a gender-neutral problem of consent, or a gender-neutral power imbalance? Do aspects of their responses correlate with the responder's gender or position in the community? I ask how people respond to these YouTubers. Does support vary with the gender of the YouTuber, their position in the

community, or the amount of feminism in the frames? To investigate these research questions, I base my study in social problems, social movement, sexual harassment, and YouTube literature.

Literature Review

Social Construction of Social Problems

This study makes use of a social constructionist perspective on the development of social problems. Spector and Kitsuse defined “social problems as the activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to putative conditions” (2001:75) and departed from previous research that failed to study why specific issues evolved into social problems. This perspective focuses on “claims-making activity,” by which people argue that some occurrences harm their society and require their interference, by which they shape popular understandings of social problems (Spector and Kitsuse 2001:73). To generate support for the interference that they demand, claims-makers must focus on gaining public acceptance and attention to the problems they nominate (Best 1987). From the constructionist perspective, these claims-makers play crucial roles in shaping the constructions of problems that others may come to take for granted.

Becker (1963) and Lemert (1967) advanced a labeling theory of deviance, which argued that “social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviances” such that “deviant behavior is behavior that people so label” (Becker 1963:9). The creation of deviance requires what Becker (1963) refers to as *moral entrepreneurs*, people who draw on moral beliefs when drawing attention to behavior and attempting to control how others comprehend the problem. In this study, I treat YouTubers as claims-makers and moral entrepreneurs, who define YouTube abuse as deviance in their videos. In their videos about the problem, they construct YouTube abuse by framing it and suggesting sanctions.

Warrants in Claims-making and Credibility in Framing

Social problems and social movement scholars, while based in different literatures, identify similar concepts, rhetoric in *claims-making* and *framing*, respectively, that people use to persuade others of their constructions. I draw upon both of these literatures as I develop the concepts in my theory of the framing of sexual harassment.

The social problems literature shows how supplying *warrants*, or reasons why someone should support claims-makers' constructions of a problem, can gain public support. For instance, Joel Best's constructionist study of the missing children problem shows how claims-makers convinced U.S. citizens and government officials that this problem was widespread and about how it should be solved (Best 1987). Best draws on philosopher Stephen Toulmin's work on patterns in argument, to demonstrate how claims-makers craft their claims to win arguments over definitions of problems.¹ To persuade others, people need "warrants" for why others should connect the "grounds" to the claims-makers' "conclusion" that interventions are required (Best 1987:102). These "grounds provide the basic facts which serve as the foundation for the discussion which follows" (Best 1987:104), and warrants "are statements which justify drawing conclusions from the grounds" (Best 1987:108). In this way, claims-makers establish a conclusion based on certain grounds or facts; to persuade people to agree that their conclusion is based on those facts, they provide convincing warrants. For instance, providing specific cases of children harmed comprised the "grounds" for the conclusion that missing children is a serious problem (Best 1987:102). The missing child claims-makers then supplied "warrants", e.g. that all children ought to be rescued, to convince others to support the conclusion that people needed to

¹ Toulmin (1964) uses the terms "data," warrant," and "claim or conclusion" to describe the layout of an argument (97-98). Best (1987) substitutes "grounds" for data and "conclusion" for claim (102). I use Best's terms moving forward.

act to save them (e.g. by demanding government policies to protect children, etc.). Through these strategies of providing grounds and connecting the grounds to the conclusion through warrants, the claims-makers “hoped to affect the general public” and “official policy” to solve the missing child problem (1987:112).

Scholars of social movements have specified another factor in the success of the construction of a social problem, the resonance of the framing with its intended audience, which depends in part on the credibility of the activists² (Snow and Benford 2000). Providing a specific application of Goffman’s (1974) framing concept to collective action, Snow and Benford (1988) argue that activists tell others how to respond to “relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists” (198). Activists use these collective action frames to identify behavior as a problem deserving attention, to gain public support for it and to solve it.³

Collective action frames vary in terms of how many issues they include and if these interests “resona[te]” or correspond with the interests of the public (Snow et al. 1986:477). How successful activists are at getting their collective action frames accepted by the public and their movement participants can result from a frame’s “resonance” with the people, which can be based on the activists’ perceived credibility (Snow and Benford 2000:618). Drawing on research that demonstrates the importance of credibility to activists when framing their positions in Peace

² While Snow and Benford (2000) address other factors that affect frame resonance (i.e. credibility of the frame, its relevance to movement participants’ lives, etc), I focus on credibility of the activists.

³ Scholars specify activists’ use of both *diagnostic framing*, referring to “problem identification” or the outlining of a problem and whom to hold accountable, and *prognostic framing*, referring to “problem resolution” or how to go about combating the problem (Snow and Benford 1992:137). These frames are similar to rhetoric in claims-making. For the purposes of this study, I will use the claims-making language of grounds, warrants, and conclusions to refer to how people persuade others to understand an issue from their perspective.

Movements (Coy and Woehrle 1996), Snow and Benford (2000) argue that “[h]ypothetically, the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator and/or the organization they represent from the vantage point of potential adherents and constituents, the more plausible and resonant the framings or claims” (621).

Literatures on claims-making and framing suggest strategies for claims-makers to win public support for their claims: the provision of warrants that link grounds to conclusions, and the role of activist credibility in the resonance of framing. YouTubers can attempt to persuade others of their claims by providing warrants for their conclusions. In this study, the grounds include incidents and definitions of YouTube abuse, the warrants include causes of and/or harm done by the abuse, and the conclusions include that the abuse must be stopped and that community polices toward that end must be adopted. Factors for successful resonance of such framing include the YouTuber’s perceived credibility.

Multiple Claims-makers’ Perspectives on Social Problems

As different groups make claims, constructions of problems vary. For instance, Jane Mildred (2003) categorized child sexual abuse claims-makers as more or less supporting the accused or the victim. Along this continuum, Mildred identified an activist position, shaped by “commitment to a larger group or issue,” which supported claimants as opposed to the accused (2003:497). These claims-makers labeled radical feminists as activists who believed that child abuse occurred frequently and that male domination contributed to sexual abuse.

Other scholars have demonstrated that constructions can depend on professional domains. For instance, Mary deYoung (1996) shows that professionals, such as psychiatrists and federal investigators, involved themselves in the claims-making process to garner public attention and support services for satanic abuse. Depending on their position, these claims-makers focused on

different aspects of the problem. For instance, religious groups often focused on how the satanic cults represented an antithesis to God, while psychiatrists focused on the cases where adult patients remembered past experiences of satanic abuse. These latter professionals attended conferences about personality disorders and worked to define such memories as symptoms of disorders. These groups had different professions and as a result often provided different perspectives that supported public's agreement that satanic ritual abuse against children constituted a problem.

Other scholars also document the possibility of multiple claims-makers contributing to the social construction of a problem. In an analysis of the social construction of youth gun use to commit crime, scholars found that youths rarely used assault weapons to commit crime despite there being much scholarly and public attention to the claim that youths frequently use these weapons (Ruddell and Decker 2005). Given this misconception about youth gun use, the scholars posit four different groups, media, law enforcement, interests groups, and youth, that can contribute to this claim that youths are using these weapons and suggest that some of the groups can do so for their own benefit, such as police gaining more money to combat a social problem where youths are using assault weapons to commit crime.

Celebrities' professions also affect their frames when they endorse social movements. As claims-makers in social movement campaigns, they risk negative backlash if their views strike others as extreme (Meyer and Gamson 1995). Because they need public support for their success, they may wish to reframe movement goals in ways that depoliticize the argument and may thus be more likely to speak of benefits for a wider audience. They may refer to collective or universal rights, as opposed to arguing for a specific stigmatized/minority "group's special benefits by right", i.e. a celebrity supporting "civil rights" without alienating their audiences as

opposed to supporting the Black power movement (Meyer and Gamson 1995:191). This relationship, however is twofold: when celebrities join a movement, they also bring public support and participants to a movement's cause. To participate in the movement, celebrities must have "standing", "a recognizable legitimate interest in the outcome of a political question or movement" (Meyer and Gamson 1995:189). Meyer and Gamson (1995) apply this legal concept to social movements and explain it as a "socially constructed legitimacy to engage publicly in a particular issue" (190). Standing allows celebrities to support a cause without rejection.

YouTubers vary in professional role within the community, which may affect how they construct their claims, and in particular how they invoke feminism in the warrants of their claims. Professional YouTubers can aspire to celebrity because of their popularity and connection to YouTube. Endorsing a non-feminist frame could help professional YouTubers avoid controversy and negative public feedback to their claims and thus be celebrated by a wider variety of consumers. Additionally, people can join movements as a result of a celebrity's endorsement, suggesting a positive association between celebrities and support for the movement. These professional YouTubers, who are often peers and or close friends of the perpetrators of YouTuber abuse, have close relationships with YouTube, and are distinct from amateurs, have legitimate standing in this issue. As a result of this standing and popularity, they could receive more support for their claims than amateurs do.

Feminist Conceptualizations of Sexual Harassment

This study draws on feminist literature about sexual harassment to inform its categorization of YouTubers' videos as either feminist or not. Some of those videos incorporate "gender equality" or "violence against women" frames into their claims about YouTube abuse, invoking a feminist analysis of the behaviors they target. Feminist scholars identify *gender*

inequality as a crucial component of sexual harassment. For instance, legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon links gender to sexuality, arguing that “women are sexually harassed by men because they are women, that is, because of the social meanings of female sexuality, here, in the employment context” (1979:174). Her theory influenced the U.S. Equal Employment Occupation Commission (EEOC)’s (n.d.) definition:

it is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person’s sex. Harassment can include “sexual harassment” or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person’s sex.

In her development of the gender inequality framing of sexual harassment, MacKinnon applies Marx’s concept, of alienated work in a capitalist society, to sexuality in a patriarchal setting (1982). She argues that men’s control of sexuality constrains women and naturalizes that constraint just as capitalist/state control of private property constrains workers and alienates them from an understanding of exploitation. In this way, she describes sexuality in a context of power and recognizes that because men control the state, with its monopoly on legitimate violence, sexual relations between men and women are always shaped by men’s power over women. Gender is inextricably linked with sexuality, and gender socialization serves the purpose of creating women to be sexual for men. Men can use sex as power when they rape women; and sex is still about the power of men over women in other ways because men, posed by these relations as subjects, often pursue women, positioned as objects, with force in sexual encounters. This sexual inequality, where sexuality is controlled and defined by men in the way that relations of production are controlled by capitalist owners of the means of production, subordinates women

and naturalizes the gender dichotomy (MacKinnon 1982). She recognizes that men as a group have power to define society, and so men define what is considered objective, masking that this male perspective affects how we think about sexuality. As a result, women are complicit in this system because they do not know that their unequal situations are socially constructed.

MacKinnon completes the Marxist analogy to class by arguing that only through consciousness raising in collective action (e.g., recognizing that women's reproductive labor is least respected and that they are treated as sexual beings for men's sexual satisfaction and recognizing the social construction of their subordinate positions and men's domination), can women challenge gender inequality and gain liberation.

MacKinnon (1979) used this gender inequality frame to construct sexual harassment of women in public life, observing that men exploit this gendered sexuality in the workplace. Sexual harassment that sexualizes women in the workplace limits their professional achievement and economic independence from men.⁴

⁴ Other legal scholars (see Franke 1997; Schultz 1998; Abrams 1998) critique MacKinnon's focus on heterosexual cases and resulting theory that does not apply to other nonsexual forms of sexual harassment. Those include cases of hostile work environment where male bosses harass women and act differently towards men and women. These other legal scholars explore how to connect sexual harassment more closely to sexism (Franke 1997), sex stereotypes (Superson 1993; Farley 1978), and gender socialization (Grauerholz 1994) and to emphasize sexual harassment's function to sustain workplace inequality in both sexual and nonsexual encounters (Schultz 1998). Despite the disagreements over the roots of the gender inequality, these scholars recognize gendered power as crucial to understanding why sexual harassment occurs. Other feminists focus on how her theories of sexual harassment and pornography blur the lines between intersecting but distinct inequities of gender and sexuality. These criticisms are important to recognize because the YouTubers who respond to YouTube abuse can ignore gender in their claims. However, YouTubers' exclusion of gender does not mirror critiques from feminist scholars who argue that MacKinnon's focus on gender is misplaced, because the latter still recognize gender inequality as a problem. For instance, Gayle Rubin argues that MacKinnon's conceptualization of sexuality as inherently oppressive as related to gender norms is wrong because while feminism analyzes gender relations, it "lacks angles of vision which can fully encompass the social organization of sexuality" (1999:170). In addition, Judith Butler argues that MacKinnon's conceptualization of sexual harassment as connected with heterosexualized gender

Empirical studies support the idea that gender inequality relates to sexual harassment as both causing sexual harassment and sexual harassment maintaining it. In this way, from structural points of view, workplace context can cause sexual harassment because sexual harassment occurs more often in spaces where there are more men than women (Gruber 1998). Sexual harassment maintains gender inequality in the workplace by keeping women subordinate (Acker 1990). From interpersonal perspectives, masculinity is sustained in the workplace through men's relationships with one another (Quinn 2002). Here men enact masculinity through "girl watching," such as men commenting on women's appearance and sexualizing them, and contribute to a gendered workplace where men fail to recognize their behavior as harassing because they view women as objects (Quinn 2002:386). Acting appropriately masculine, men create a game out of harassing women and use these behaviors to bond with one another and maintain gender inequality. In these instances, gender is crucial to understanding sexual harassment, where forms of gendered power, whether in the structures of organizations or reproduced among men, cause sexual harassment or where sexual harassment maintains it.

Scholars, supporting MacKinnon's theorizations about sexual harassment, have pursued this view of "sexual harassment as a gendered expression of power" and have connected it to the idea that gender identity affects sexual harassment (Uggen and Blackstone 2004:64). In the study, researchers found first that both younger aged men and women encounter sexual harassment, and second that sexual harassment greatly affected women by causing them to be uncomfortable, such as when men got too close to and touched them. Here sexual harassment

roles, ignoring other forms of possible sexual harassment between men and women and genderqueer individuals, actually reinforces the gendered binary between men and women (2004:55). When YouTubers are not talking about gender, they also do not recognize gender inequality, which remained an important concern for Rubin and Butler in their critiques of MacKinnon.

can be understood as maintaining gender inequality by keeping women subordinate; or as stemming from gender inequality because women are unequal to men and often do not have the authority to resist.

Feminists focus on both the cause of and the harm done by sexual harassment, defining both in terms of gender inequality. Gender inequality and gendered power cause sexual harassment, and sexual harassment is harmful because it supports gender inequality and disadvantages women. These feminist understandings about the cause and harm of sexual harassment inform my coding for how some YouTubers address sexual harassment as stemming from gender inequality and as maintaining it.

Non-feminist Explanations of Sexual Harassment

Studies that employ a non-feminist perspective posit sexual harassment as an individual problem or as independent of gender inequality. For instance, legal courts originally defined sexual harassment as an anomaly, wherein a few people in positions of authority exploited people working beneath them, rather than as a pattern or a result of a social structure (The Harvard Law Review Association 1984). Other scholars provide a degendered definition of sexual harassment, to incorporate as many instances as possible in their theories. They focus on harm done by sexual harassment, the violation of individual rights, ignoring people's interests, intruding upon privacy, and objectifying others, and the cause of sexual harassment, a power imbalance between groups.

Sexual harassment occurs "if and only if there is inadequate consideration of the interests of the person subjected to it" (Crosthwaite and Swanton 1986:100). Here Crosthwaite and Swanton argue that other theories of sexual harassment, such as those that focus on the treatment of women as sex-objects, discrimination against women based on their sex, and abuse of

positions of authority, are included in their definition on the basis that women are mistreated because men ignore their interests in these specific scenarios.⁵ Adopting Edmund Wall (1988)'s conception of coercion to sexual harassment to explore the wrongness of that behavior, Jaimie Leaser and William O'Donahue (1997) also define harm as ignoring individual interests. Wall argues that coercion occurs when someone forces another to act against his/her own interests, to serve as an object of another's will. Coercing someone into sexual behavior is wrong because it "involves one thinking, purposeful human being forcing his interests and desires upon another in violation of the other person's interests"(Leaser and O'Donahue 1997:43).⁶

Harm from sexual harassment arises from a violation of a person's right to privacy in "wrongful communication" (Wall 1991:375). This harm from sexual harassment refers to both not respecting and ignoring someone's "right to consent to the communication of sexual matters involving [them]" (375).⁷ Sexual harassment also results in harm when a person harasses another because he/she ignores that person's subjectivity and instead treats him/her as a sex object (Leaser and O-Donahue 1997). Sexual harassment is harmful because perpetrators do not respect

⁵ Crosthwaite and Swanton (1986) recognize that harm done by sexual harassment matters because it supports gender inequality by discouraging women from paid work and contributing to the belief that men are superior. Their theory of how sexual harassment promotes harm differs from gender inequality because they do not attribute sexual harassment to gender inequality. Instead they focus on the individual harm of sexual harassment (against one's interests, rather than group interests) and then argue that women, because they are individuals, not because they are female individuals, have their interests disregarded. As stated, "[s]uch behaviour need not involve inequalities in authority relations" (Crosthwaite and Swanton 1986:100). They do not conceive the wrongness of sexual harassment as gender inequality causing sexual harassment.

⁶ While ultimately offering another reason for the wrongness of sexual harassment (sex object literature reviewed later in this section), these scholars provide a useful explanation of the wrongness of sexual harassment, in terms of harm done to one's interests.

⁷ Although Wall uses gendered language in his definition of sexual harassment, sexual harassment is not "sex discrimination" and can victimize both men and women (Wall 1991:381). He recognizes that sexual harassment could be used to support gender inequality, but argues that this is not crucial to understanding sexual harassment.

people and treat them as sex objects as opposed to human beings who have the ability to choose to engage in sex for their own pleasure.

Here sexual harassment is understood as degendered harm done between individuals (i.e. against one's interests, privacy, and as objectification) as opposed to inequality among groups. While these non-feminist explanations individualized the problem, other scholars recognize that sexual harassment results from a power imbalance between groups. Power relationships are important to understanding sexual harassment cases between faculty and student relations (regardless of gender) (Dziech and Weiner 1990). These relationships involve a "power imbalance," i.e. that the educators occupy different roles and have more power, where a "misuse of power and role by a faculty member" occurs that should be included in academic policies against sexual harassment (Dziech and Weiner 1990:21)

Sexual harassment scholars disagree on what causes sexual harassment and what harm results. These non-feminist frames, with the exception of the power imbalance framework, focus on harm done as a violation of the individual and his/her rights, whether referring to interests, privacy, or objectification. The power imbalance framework focuses on the cause of sexual harassment as a misuse of power between groups. While power imbalance does recognize that sexual harassment is a problem between groups, gender inequality does not cause the sexual harassment.

Postfeminism

Given that feminists first constructed sexual harassment as a social problem (Cortina and Berdahl 2008), how did claims about it become separated from those about gender inequality? Some feminists argue that we have entered postfeminism, wherein people believe that gender inequality has ended.

This postfeminism responds to feminist concerns but deems further activism unnecessary and outdated. By “means of the tropes of freedom and choice that are now inextricably connected with the category of ‘young women,’ feminism is decisively ‘aged’ and made to seem redundant” (McRobbie 2007:27). Feminist scholars have found that postfeminism frames much popular culture, from entertainment television shows, scripted television shows, and magazine articles (Gill 2007), to movies (McRobbie 2007), speeches about women’s health issues (Stone-Watt 2012), and media reactions to and reporting of celebrity domestic abuse cases (Patterson and Sears 2011). This postfeminist media may depict obstacles impeding women, but then ignore their structural origins and never show how feminism could help (Ouellette 2002). Young women also share postfeminism in interviews. One study documented that, while young women might avoid the title “feminist,” they recognized gender inequality and did not display anti-feminist ideals (Aronson 2003). This finding demonstrates how young women adopt a postfeminist frame by distancing themselves from the term feminism while still sharing a feminist ideal of gender equality.

Gill (2007) argues that much of this rejection of feminism operates within a neoliberal discourse that focuses on the individual who has choices and is also responsible for her decisions, about such matters as sexualization and maintaining a clearly gendered body. Within this postfeminist framework, feminism appears unnecessary because gender equality has already been achieved. Postfeminist rhetoric frames sexist and racist remarks as ironic because the perpetrators are supposedly only joking. Postfeminism ignores the context that creates or influences these choices. In this way, neoliberal ideologies of free choice dominate postfeminist rhetoric and ignore any political or cultural factors that could cause or influence behavior. This focus on the individual shapes how young women understand their own situations. For instance,

in a study of young women's perceptions of victimization, subjects retained "individualized" understandings about their experiences (Baker 2010:201). Related to neoliberal ideologies that focus on the individual as the cause for problems, the young women accepted personal responsibility for their circumstances and did not apply a feminist framework and identify contextual factors, such as gender inequality, that could affect their lives.

Postfeminism relates to YouTubers addressing YouTube abuse because sexual harassment and abuse are examples of issues theorized and empirically studied by feminists. Removing a feminist label would demonstrate dismissing feminist concerns, an example of postfeminism. Individualizing, rather than recognizing the systemic nature of YouTube abuse, would reflect a postfeminist framework.

The media also have the opportunity to affect how people understand the roots of sexual harassment and can demonstrate this postfeminist trend of individualizing sexual harassment. For instance, in a study on how the media documents cases of sexual harassment in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, a majority of news articles did not state that unequal societal expectations for men and women cause sexual harassment, and instead were more likely to focus on separate cases as opposed explaining it as an interrelated problem or as an explicit result of societal gender inequalities (McDonald and Charlesworth 2012). These researchers identified different codes, individual, systemic, and gender inequality about sexual harassment in the articles in their analysis. Individual frames focused on the sexual harassment as an act between people. Systemic frames referred to "a problem at the level of the organization or industry and/or that it involved problematic workplace cultures," whereas gender inequality recognized the "context of broader issues concerning disadvantage, or loss of opportunities in employment or the sexualization of women (or men) in the wider society" (McDonald and

Charlesworth 2012:98). Systemic articles discussed the interrelatedness of the issues with the workplace, such as referencing a culture where this behavior occurred. Gender inequality articles stated that sexual harassment and other issues such as sexual abuse were related as aspects of gender inequality and men's power over women.

Journalism about domestic abuse also can ignore gender inequality. Bullock argues, "ignoring men's violence against women is perhaps media's most fundamental way of reinforcing the patriarchal status quo" (2007:51). Newspapers frequently published articles on singular events, making them appear unrelated to similar cases and gender unequal relations. In certain instances, when newspapers did report on more than one case at a time, they presented the problem as systemic. Other articles portrayed domestic abuse occurring as a result of the attributes of individuals involved, to avoid connections to larger problems. Most did not connect domestic abuse to gender inequality, patriarchy, or power.

Explanation of abuse in terms of individual motivation also occurs among athletes and sports reporters. Journalists construct soccer players' sexual abuse as the result of individuals separate from the culture of the sport or gendered power (Toffoletti 2007); and younger female sports fans also understand this abuse in terms of individual people (Mewett and Toffoletti 2008). In terms of athlete perpetrators, "[p]layer misbehaviour becomes a private, individual concern outside of the gender-power nexus informed by larger political, economic and social structures" (433).

Advocacy groups and reporters depoliticize issues by avoiding discussions of group conflict. Dimitrov (2008) shows how "fan advocacy" groups gained some cooperation from soccer leagues in addressing sexual abuse, by encouraging input from male players and clubs and focusing on how to be good examples for the prevention of violence against women in the sports

community. The advocacy group inspired players to wear purple armbands in support of stopping abuse at a game because they balanced “fans–clubs, perpetrators–victims, prevention–prosecution, males–females, and on-field–off-field” in their message. As a result, “[t]he ‘oneness’ of the message ha[d] depolarized the publics” (Dimitrov 2008:96). The reports on mass shootings also depoliticized the issue not only by individualizing the problem but also by ignoring how masculinity and larger cultural beliefs relate to young men involved in mass shooting (Knop 2012). These mass shootings also depoliticized the issue by ignoring inequality amongst groups. For instance, a gender-neutral discourse also surrounded news reports on mass shootings, another clearly gendered crime. Reporters mostly used gender-neutral language when discussing what causes mass shootings and solutions to the problem. Knop (2012) argues that, “if these articles fail to recognize this as a gendered issue – one that is specifically about boys and men – then these ‘answers’ will be missing the point” (56).

In some workplaces sexual harassment continues to be understood as an issue of gendered power (Uggen and Blackstone 2004); but many media outlets, including newspapers and online news, never mention gender inequality. While sometimes authors recognize the systemic nature of sexual harassment, newspaper and online journalists typically focus on individual cases. This research informs my study as I analyze how YouTubers construct the issue of sexual harassment and abuse in their community, i.e. as related to individual behavior, a systemic issue, or gender inequality, and if the frames depict feminism or postfeminism.

YouTube

Since Google purchased YouTube in 2006, the website has become more institutionalized and commercialized as a “professional broadcasting channel” (Kim 2012:54). Media companies now demand royalties in the form of shares of revenues from advertising sponsors of videos, and

sometimes demand removal of copyrighted videos, transforming the format of YouTube from more user-generated content (UGC) to more professionally generated content (PGC) (Kim 2012). Some media companies realized the potential of YouTube and started business relationships with the company, using it as a promotional tool and source of revenue from advertisements. As Kim (2012) recognizes, “[o]n YouTube, PGC and UGC videos coexist, but old customers of YouTube since its beginning would recognize the increasing dominance of sponsored and copyright protected videos” (61). In addition to the argument that YouTube has a strong institutional nature as a result of media companies producing content on the website and monetizing videos through advertisements, another perspective identifies how YouTube also embraces a participatory culture because people, particularly youth, interact easily on the website and create content together (Chau 2010). This participatory culture exists in a space where “a few individuals tend to rise to leadership roles because of their contribution to the community” and where “YouTube’s Partnership Program raises the status of selected well-known contributors of the community by giving privileges such as allocation for longer videos and advertisement revenue” (Chau 2010:68).

YouTube Partnership Program is a program where content creators can partner with YouTube to gain money from their videos (i.e. advertisements and paying to view the content) (YouTube 2015). While this program would be helpful for finding prominent members of the community because partners are often successful, there is not an accessible and exhaustive list of members. Despite popular YouTubers having different opportunities, Chau (2010) argues that youth still participate in the YouTube culture, such as viewing and commenting on videos.

While YouTube has become more institutionalized with media companies more involved and their content becoming more popular on YouTube, other scholars note that YouTube

remains a company that features both amateur made video and professional content (Burgess and Green 2009). These scholars, who researched top videos on YouTube, i.e. most discussed, most “favorited”, most viewed, and drawing the most posted responses, found that while more media companies had the most viewed videos, more user generated channels had the most discussed and favorited videos and the most videos with the most posted responses. Additionally, in terms of popularity with subscribers, more “YouTube stars,” described as “whether strictly ‘amateurs,’ SMEs” (small-to-medium enterprises), “or even musicians backed by major labels whose brands were developed within YouTube social network” had the most subscribers as opposed to media companies (Burgess and Green 2009:59). However, the authors claim that the view that amateurs and media companies are polarized is misinformed and that the lines between the two types of content are more blurred. As Burgess and Green argue (2009), YouTube seems to be “occupying an institutional function – operating as a coordinating mechanism between individual and collective creativity and meaning production; and as a mediator between various competing industry-oriented discourses and ideologies and various audience- or user-oriented ones” (37). Demonstrating this complexity of amateur versus professionals on YouTube, video-bloggers or vloggers, while creating their own content, can also be doing so for income. Thus, YouTube as a “continuum of cultural participation,” (Burgess and Green 2009:57) provides an area for people and media companies to interact and create content. These YouTubers also have opportunities to affect the culture of YouTube. For instance, Burgess and Green (2009) also found that YouTubers have also addressed issues in the community in their vlogs, specifically related to difficulties that female vloggers face on YouTube. Female vloggers often face sexist and misogynistic comments, and two YouTubers created a video exploring the topic where they

commented on how sexism against female vloggers would deter women from participating in the community.

Online platforms also provide opportunities for people to engage in harassment. For instance, other researchers investigated online pranking, or videos that depict people pranking others uploaded to the Internet, and describe it as the “dark side of participatory culture” (Hobbs and Grafe 2015). In these videos, researchers found that 12 year old and younger children being pranked were more the focus of the American videos, as opposed to the German ones studied, and that these videos focused on the person’s emotional state after the prank. Sexual harassment occurs online in both verbal and picture forms, such as threatening someone to stop commenting in a conversation thread and sending them pictures of genitalia through online websites and e-communication (Barak 2005). Hateful, sexual, and violent comments towards women made online can be also labeled as “e-bile,” in addition to “cyberbullying” and “flaming,” and can be seen as commonplace behavior on the Internet (Jane 2014:532). This sort of misogyny is oftentimes present in comment sections. For instance, victims’ supposed responsibilities for domestic abuse and a disregard for the problems’ structural significance comprised misogynistic comment sections regarding domestic abuse laws (Stoleru and Costescu 2014). When feminists do voice their opinions online about issues of sexism and sexual harassment, they receive a harsh backlash where others attempt to shame them into silence (Braithwaite 2013).

Researchers documented male and female vloggers’ different experiences with comments posted on their YouTube videos. When coding for positive and negative comments posted on YouTube videos of two comparably popular YouTube stars, researchers noted comments left on videos about the content of the video and the YouTuber, including the way one looks and how one acts, as well as racist, sexist, and sexual remarks (Wotanis and McMillan 2014). They found

that the female's videos were more likely to draw misogynistic and negative comments than the men's video page were, especially those derogatory comments that focused on the YouTuber's sexuality. To manage these responses, female YouTubers used such tactics as exaggerating stereotypical male and female behaviors for comedic purposes.

This scholarly literature portrays YouTube as a site where increased institutionalization and the continuance of a participatory culture create a mixture of professional, defined as media companies, and amateur content. Professional YouTubers in my study represent the mixture between professional and amateur. They are not strictly professional content creators like media companies, but instead represent the hybrid between a media company and an amateur video creator because they can have ties to companies but also are individual content creators. This blend of professional/amateur is important for my study as I analyze if the professional YouTubers frame their views differently as a result of their possible affiliation with YouTube. Additionally, this literature explains that YouTube is also a site for harassment to occur, such as pranking, relating to my study because YouTube abuse condemns such behavior. As demonstrated misogynistic and sexist comments are not uncommon behavior for women who use the Internet. These studies inform the decision to analyze whether female YouTubers who create response videos to YouTube abuse receive more negative and sexist comments than their male peers. This online space also allowed me to look for a non-feminist take-over of an otherwise feminist issue because I can view the interactions between the YouTubers making the non/feminist claims and other people commenting on the videos.

Research Question

Social problems and social movement framing literature inform this study's view of YouTubers as claims-makers who define and attempt to control YouTube abuse as they create

their videos condemning the abuse and harassment. My theory of their constructions draws on feminist and non-feminist theories of sexual harassment, as well as the history of postfeminism. I propose that YouTubers' frames fall along a political continuum, with concern for gender inequality at one end, focus on nongendered social systems in between (which may just happen to involve people of the opposite sex), and individualist understandings at the other end. To analyze the comments left on the videos about YouTube abuse, this study also applies concepts from literatures on misogyny and sexism in online environments, and from the framing literature on resonance, to understand how gender, position in the community, and identification as feminists vary with positive and negative comments. To analyze the relationship between professional role in the community and the amount of feminism in the claims, this study draws on social movement literature about how celebrities depoliticize frames in social movements.

I conducted a content analysis of YouTube video responses to YouTube abuse. This study addresses how the community members responded to the sexual harassment problem. First, how do the YouTubers frame the problem? YouTubers can either ignore the systemic nature of the problem or address it as a systemic issue apart from gender. Second, what warrants, or explanations for why the behavior is wrong, do the YouTubers use? Options include portraying the issue using a more feminist frame of "gender equality" or "violence against women," a post-feminist frame of gender-neutral "consent," or a gender-neutral frame of "power imbalance." Lastly, are there relationships between the YouTubers' position in the community and/or gender, their responses, and positive and negative comments left on the videos? (i.e., is there a relationship between the YouTubers' positions in the community and their uses of feminist frames, between their genders and negative comments, between their positions in the community

and positive comments about them, or between their uses of feminist frames and negative comments about them?). The research hypotheses are as follows:

In keeping with findings that news media portray sexual harassment and abuse in non-systemic (individual) terms instead of using systemic frames or connecting the issue to gender inequality (McDonald and Charlesworth 2012; Bullock 2007; Toffoletti 2007; Mewett and Toffoletti 2008), I expect that

1. YouTubers construct YouTube abuse more often as a non-systemic problem than as a systemic issue.

Feminists describe sexual harassment as a problem of inequality amongst groups (as opposed to equal groups): men abusing their power over women (MacKinnon 1979). Given the postfeminist literature stating that we have entered into an era where women's issues have been disconnected from feminist labeling (McRobbie 2007; Aronson 2003; Gill 2007; Baker 2010), I expect that

2. YouTubers construct YouTube abuse more often in non-feminist terms than in feminist terms that recognize sexual harassment as an issue of gender inequality between men and women.

I draw on social problems literature that demonstrates people belonging to different groups construct problems in different ways (deYoung 2006), and that celebrities often construct claims about an issue in ways that can result in public favor (Meyer and Gamson 1995). Feminism seems to be an unpopular (and unprofitable) topic because feminists draw hostility in online environments (Braithwaite 2013), young women avoid using feminist labels to talk about women's issues (Aronson 2003), and YouTube and YouTubers make a profit from views and subscriptions (Burgess and Green 2009). As such, I expect that

3. Professional members of the community construct the problem in terms less feminist, less focused on gender inequality, than do the amateur members.

I also draw upon a YouTube literature that states that there are professional divisions on YouTube (Kim 2012; Burgess and Green 2009), where popular user-generated channels (as opposed media companies) have more comments on their videos. Additionally, celebrities also bring supporters when they join a movement and can join a movement if they have legitimate standing (Meyer and Gamson 1995). Snow and Benford (2000) also explain that a social movement leader's perceived credibility in a movement is important for a frame's resonance with the movement participants. As such, I expect that

4. Professional YouTubers will receive greater acceptance of their responses than do amateur members.

Feminist scholarship demonstrates that gender inequality causes different experiences of harassment for men and women (MacKinnon 1979; Uggen and Blackstone 2004) and gendered power relates to sexual harassment of women (MacKinnon 1982). Other scholars demonstrate that women experience specific forms of gendered sexual harassment online (Barak 2005; Jane 2014; Stoleru and Costescu 2014; Wotanis and McMillan 2014) and that feminists receive negative reactions online (Braithwaite 2013). Given these literatures that explain that gender inequality causes women to experience harassment, I expect that

5. Female YouTubers receive more negative comments about themselves and less acceptance of their responses to YouTube abuse than do the male YouTubers.
6. YouTubers who use a feminist frame are more likely to draw negative comments than those who do not use a feminist frame.

Methods

This study analyzes both the claims-making by YouTube community members and news videos and comments left on their video pages. I include the news videos in my study to see whether they construct YouTube abuse in a distinct way because they are a group distinct from YouTubers. The individual YouTube community members and YouTube news channels will constitute the units of analysis for this study.

Data Collection

The scope conditions for this study include YouTube videos responding to accounts of YouTube abuse created after March 2014, when a recent sexual abuse case concerning a prominent YouTube member, Tom Milson, and an underage fan surfaced, until February 2015. I collected videos from March 2014 because several accounts related to YouTube abuse surfaced after the 2014 Tom Milson case and had garnered public attention (i.e. Internet news articles detailing the scandals). As such there had been a surge of responses from YouTube community members in the form of blogs and videos relating to consent. I extended the scope of the study to February 2015 to include YouTube abuse allegations in September 2014 because there was a large amount of backlash to these allegations. In September 2014 YouTubers responded to new allegations of YouTube abuse related to Sam Pepper's violation of women's bodies in a "prank" video where he touched women's butts. However, that he received backlash for posting the videos casts doubt on the truthfulness of his claims that this video was always planned as a "prank."

While YouTube abuse can be traced to January 2012, this study will analyze the responses from community members in 2014. Reasons for limiting the scope of this study in terms of the timeline include the difficulty in retrieving information from 2012 about the

scandals because YouTube streams a large amount of videos, with around 300 hours of video uploaded to the site per minute (YouTube n.d.). As well, searching this website for past content can be difficult. I also limit the scope for this study to this time range because professional members of the YouTube community fluctuate over time, and it would be difficult to decide who was a professional member in the past as opposed to now. For instance, it would be especially difficult to decipher if their subscription count has changed since 2012, which is highly likely since subscription counts also fluctuate over time.

Data for this study came from viewing 53 videos created by YouTubers about the sexual abuse and harassment cases and reading comments left on these videos. To gather data on the subject, I searched the YouTube website using the search terms “YouTube abuse” and “YouTube sexual abuse” to find videos created by YouTube community members on the subject.⁸ The search terms “YouTube abuse” and “YouTube sexual abuse” did not bias my sample by referring to it as abuse because I am interested in how YouTubers who are condemning this behavior, rather than supporters and defenders of the abusers, construct this problem. “YouTube abuse” and “YouTube sexual abuse” also recalled a variety of videos with titles related to sex and consent, community, and sexual abuse. These terms encompassed a variety of videos and provided a systematic way to collect a portion of the vast amount of videos related to YouTube abuse. While more videos are available, for instance, those addressing specific perpetrators, the “YouTube abuse” and “YouTube sexual abuse” search terms allowed for videos to be captured that related to all of the perpetrators.

⁸ I excluded playlists from data collection. Playlists are grouped videos that any user can create for a variety of reasons. For instance, users can create a themed playlist or simply group random videos together because they liked them. As a result, playlists can feature up to 1,000 videos, depending on the user, and can feature only one video about YouTube abuse. Because these playlists can feature hundreds to thousands of videos but might not feature a video on YouTube abuse, they were excluded from the search criteria.

I compiled a sampling frame through verifying that the video matched my requirements and that the video featured YouTubers talking about the YouTube community and abuse and news videos. When compiling my sampling frame to define my population, I included the channel name, video name, video upload date, number of channel subscribers, number of video views, search term, last video upload date, and video URL. To be included as data in this study, videos were either a YouTuber “vlog,” a video where YouTubers speak to their cameras or narrate their opinion on the matter, or a news source reporting on the issue. A vlog often features a YouTuber in the thumbnail for the video. If the thumbnail included a picture of someone looking at/talking to a camera and did not use the terms such as “news channel” in their channel description, then I included it in the sampling frame as a “vlog.” If the video appeared to be a “news video” wherein multiple people are talking about the issue, I marked it as such. Since “YouTube abuse” recalled hundreds of videos, I used two criteria to include a video in the study. First, I included videos whose titles related to the subject matter (i.e. used language such as “YouTube abuse,” “sexual abuse in the YouTube community,” “YouTube community,” “YouTube scandal,” or other variations that relate to sexual harassment and abuse in the community) rather than abuse at large (i.e. a video about sexual abuse). Second, of those recalled I included the videos whose thumbnails featured a person talking to their camera, a news channel logo, and/or a group of newscasters.

The population for this study is all YouTubers who made videos criticizing YouTube abuse. Playlists that feature videos about YouTube abuse in addition to recommended videos for watching that appear alongside and after videos about YouTube abuse demonstrate that the population cannot be accessed systematically. To access videos by professional members, a nonsystematic element to my sampling was introduced into my study by snowball tactic of

following videos that appeared alongside the videos retrieved with the search terms “YouTube abuse” and “YouTube sexual abuse.” This method means that there was no way of knowing how large the population is or whether my sample of it is random. My aim with this study was to capture a large sample and obtain a reasonable sense of the community to conduct a fair test of the theories. Not having the population trends means that I cannot generalize past my sample.

I used the search terms and snowball tactics from August 2015 until January 2016 and collected data in January 2016. After amassing a sampling frame of 277 videos, I listed the titles in an Excel Spreadsheet and conducted a stratified sample to compile a sample of 50 videos and to make sure to have a good amount of professional and amateur members. I used a random number table to find a random start, and then took every 6th case from the list until I reach 50 videos. I oversampled professional members of the community to make sure to include their framing and opinions on YouTube abuse because the search terms used typically return many amateur member’s videos.

In addition to the 50 videos, I added 4 videos from professional YouTubers that did not make the random sample for a total of 54 videos to be sure to analyze notable and prominent YouTube abuse videos. I also excluded one video that made my sample because it did not comment on YouTube abuse. Not all videos had comments (one YouTuber disabled their comments and others did not have any). In total I analyzed 53 videos and 46 sets of comments. One of these videos is a news video, and so 52 out of the 53 videos are YouTubers. While amassing this sample of videos, I downloaded copies onto my computer.

YouTube does not allow users to download complete comment sections, and because popular videos about YouTube abuse can have thousands of comments, I analyzed at least 20 of the most recent comments left on the videos in addition to any replies to those comments. To

collect these comments, I selected to view the comments that are “Newest first.” On any comment that has a thread, I selected “view all # replies” and copy and pasted the comments into a Word document. I initially coded the comments using track changes and comments in Word. I then downloaded PDF versions of these Word documents into the Qualitative Software system Nvivo to group codes that remained unclear.

To make sure that I collected at least 15 viable (related to the subject matter) comments to analyze from videos with many comments, I collected at least 40 of the most recent comments. Less popular videos had fewer comments, often less than 15 comments, and so I often analyzed all of comments left on those videos. I limited my sample to 40 comments per video because YouTube allows for comment threads, where users can respond directly to another user’s comment and start a conversation. As many as 89 comment replies to 2 comment replies can be present in 1 comment thread. I analyzed any replies to original comments on a video in addition to the 40 comments because there is such variety in number of comment replies, and I wanted to get as much diversity of comments as possible, not 40 comments from 1 comment thread.

Initial substantive coding

To develop categories for YouTubers and their constructions of this problem, I coded for *aspects of the YouTuber*, including the *professional role* and *gender of the YouTuber*; and elements of the *YouTuber’s frames*, including mentions of gender inequality and specifications of non-systemic vs. systemic frames.

Professional role – Information such as access to YouTube space, attendance at conferences, etc., that indicate a professional YouTuber’s connections with the corporation would help better distinguish professional members from amateur members. Because I do not

have access to this information, the community member's frequent video uploads and subscription count will serve as indicators for their popularity and involvement in the community. Thus, they have to be content creators who manage their own YouTube channel, they have to have updated their channel within the last six months of their YouTube abuse video, and they have to have more than 50,000 subscribers to be considered prominent and thus occupying a distinct professional role.⁹

YouTuber's gender – YouTuber's gender refers to a YouTuber stating in the video that he/she is a man/woman or other or if he/she presents as a man, woman, or other.

Description of the problem includes both mention of *systemic vs. non-systemic causes* or *harms*.

Systemic – I adapt McDonald and Charlesworth's (2012) codes for the non-systemic and systemic frames. A systemic problem results from behavior widespread beyond the YouTube community. In this case, larger patterns *cause* the problem. For instance, YouTubers identify the problem as rooted in cultural dynamics of the community, such as YouTubers having power over their fans, and explain that this sort of abuse occurs outside of YouTube community as well. Systemic *harm* refers to harassment and abuse as maintaining problematic parts of the culture, i.e. creators' ability to abuse their fans in that culture. Systemic framing includes calling for a change in community standards to stop abuse or providing statistics about abuse in society in addition to treating the problem as being rooted in a larger cultural issue, not just the people involved in the abuse allegations.

⁹ I use prominence to mean professional role in this YouTube context because, to many YouTubers, YouTube can be more like a job, especially if they are involved in the YouTube Partnership Program. My suggestion is that the more prominent (as operationalized by a higher the subscriber count), the higher likelihood that they are involved with the YouTube company and are involved with YouTube in ways that other lower subscriber count members are not (i.e. partnering with YouTube, having access to YouTube workspaces, speaking at conferences, etc).

Non-systemic – As documented by other studies, framers may pose sexual harassment as isolated incidents occurring between individuals (Mewett and Toffoletti 2008), who are unlike others, abnormal, (Bullock 2007) and engage in sexual harassment mainly as an “individual choice” (Toffoletti 2007:433). On the one hand, the *harm* of the behavior is that individual victims are hurt. On the other hand, the *cause* of the behavior is certain individual perpetrators who harass and abuse. Additionally, the problem would be solved if certain people left the community without referring to a change in community standards about abuse. To be coded as a non-systemic problem, YouTubers would use language such as that YouTubers who abused people should leave the YouTube community and stop making videos or that the certain people in the community are the problem with no reference to changing the community to disallow sexual harassment/abuse in the future, such as scrutinizing content creator/fan interactions. The people made the decision to abuse and there were not structures that caused their behavior. In this way, a video can be coded as systemic if the YouTuber calls for the abusers to be removed from the community but also recognizes that the abuse problem cannot be solved simply by removing these individuals – wider collective action is necessary because the problem is systemic. Responses will be considered non-systemic by default unless they refer to specific interrelated processes that cause the behavior, such as referencing how the online culture causes the behavior.

Secondary substantive coding

To test the hypothesis about relations between professional role and framing, I use codes described above to categorize YouTubers’ claims and community members’ comments to responses. Categories include a feminist frame of “gender equality” or “violence against

women,” a postfeminist gender-neutral frame of “consent,” or a postfeminist gender-neutral frame of “power imbalance” as explanations for why the behavior is wrong.

Drawing on feminist scholars, (MacKinnon 1979; Uggen and Blackstone 2004; McDonald and Charlesworth 2012), a “gender equality” or “violence against women” code refers to YouTubers specifically connecting YouTube abuse to structural and systemic issues related to gender inequality in society and issues of gendered power. For instance, to be coded using a feminist frame, YouTubers would make explicit connections to patriarchy, that the abuse and harassment is a widespread problem of men abusing power over women, and/or that it happens to women in different contexts, not just online. To be coded as this frame, YouTubers would locate the *cause* of sexual harassment and abuse as resulting from gender inequality and/or that the *harm* in sexual harassment and abuse is that it sustains gender inequality.

Drawing on postfeminist understandings of the decreased recognition of gender and feminism in discourse about women’s issues (McRobbie 2007; Aronson 2003) and individualizing issues to ignore contextual factors (Gill 2007; Baker 2010), I created a postfeminist gender-neutral frame of “consent” to code for how YouTubers ignore gender and contextual factors that can cause sexual harassment. This code also draws on non-feminist theories of sexual harassment (Wall 1991; Leeser and O’Donahue 1997; Crosthwaite and Swanton 1986), which locate harm in violations of individual interests and consent rather than equality. This code refers to YouTubers describing YouTube abuse in terms of forcing someone to engage in sexual activity. To be coded as using a postfeminist gender-neutral frame, YouTubers would use language such as consent and respect for people in their discussions about why YouTube abuse is wrong with no regards to gender. To be coded as this frame, YouTubers

would locate the *harm* done by sexual harassment and abuse in that it violates the consent of and disrespects the individual.

Based in literature that recognizes sexual harassment as arising from a nongendered power imbalance (Dziech and Weiner 1990), a postfeminist gender neutral frame of “power imbalance” refers to YouTubers describing YouTube abuse in terms of people abusing their power over other people, with no respect for gender, and that this behavior is wrong because people have responsibilities in positions of power to not abuse that power. In this way, YouTubers discuss how YouTubers abuse and harass people in positions lower than them, such as fans and less popular YouTubers. To be coded as using a nongendered power imbalance frame, YouTubers would use language such as YouTubers abusing fans and having a responsibility to not abuse them, given their position of power over them. To be coded as this frame, YouTubers would locate the *cause* of sexual harassment and abuse as people misusing their power against another.

Drawing on literature showing that women in online environments experience misogynistic and sexist remarks (Stoleru and Costescu 2014; Jane 2014; Braithwaite 2013), I adapted Wotanis and McMillan’s codes (2014) for capturing positive and negative comments about content creators on YouTube. I draw heavily on Wotanis and McMillan’s codes for documenting positive, negative, and spam comments, but I also adapted them for my study because they were too specific for my purposes. I do not need to analyze if comments referenced how one looked, etc., I am interested in if people are critical of the person or the content of the video.

To measure the effect of aspects of the YouTuber, i.e. gender and position in community, on support expressed by viewers, I coded the comments on the videos for *positive*, *negative*,

mixed/unclear, *spam/unrelated*, and *self* comments, and for focus solely on content of the video, both the YouTuber and the content of the video, and solely on the YouTuber. *Positive comments* refer to people agreeing with the YouTuber's message, the YouTuber and his/her message, or the YouTuber. *Negative comments* refer to people disagreeing with the YouTuber's message, the YouTuber and his/her message, or the YouTuber. *Mixed/unclear comments* refer to comments that do not clearly state a positive or negative position on the matter of YouTube abuse in relation to the YouTuber and the YouTuber's message. In this way, people can disagree/agree with only parts of the YouTuber/YouTuber's frame of the issue or with the issue itself. Additionally, comments can include those where it is unclear if the person is critical of the YouTuber or not. *Spam/unrelated* comments do not refer to the content of the video (i.e. about YouTube abuse) and appear to want people to view their own YouTube channel or appear to be random or do not comment positively or negatively on YouTube abuse. Lastly, *self* codes refer to YouTubers commenting on their own videos.

To ensure reliability of this study's findings, I had an additional coder unfamiliar with my hypotheses code 10% of my data, and measured the degree of intercoder agreement using Cohen's kappa (K value), a tool used to measure agreement for ordinal and nominal data (Cohen 1968). A K value between .61-.80 represents "substantial agreement" and a K value between .41-.60 represents "moderate agreement" (Landis and Koch 1977: 165). The measurement of agreement (K value) for the variable political is .467, for the variable positive comments is 1, for the variable positive comments about content is .643, for the variable negative comments is 1, and for the variable negative comments about YouTuber is 1.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data captured from the videos and comments by categorizing the coded responses into if they explained the issue as non-systemic or as systemic and why they considered the behavior to be wrong (“gender equality” or “violence against women,” a postfeminist gender-neutral frame of “consent,” or a postfeminist gender-neutral frame of “power imbalance”). From this information, I created a fourth variable, POLITICAL, which combined the non-systemic/systemic and the why the behavior is wrong variable. I treated this variable as an ordinal scale variable to capture the most politicized statement a YouTuber made.

The new categories include:

- *non-systemic and/or consent*, where a YouTuber only framed the issue as between individuals and may mention consent, as the least political category;
- *culture*, where a YouTuber recognized that larger cultural forces affected the problem unrelated to power dynamics in YouTube;
- *power imbalance*, where a YouTuber recognized that there was inequality between groups; and
- *gender inequality*, where a YouTuber recognized that there was inequality between gendered groups, as the most political.

Non-systemic and/or consent and culture are considered non-politicized because they do not recognize inequality between groups. Power imbalance and gender inequality are considered politicized frames.

For preliminary data analysis, I used SPSS to compute descriptive statistics, including counts of how many YouTubers used certain frames. I also correlated these dependent variables with the independent variables professional status, gender, and professional status x gender by

creating ratios. I compared how many professional vs. amateur, men vs. women, and professional men vs. professional women vs. amateur men vs. amateur women differed on non-systemic/systemic and why the behavior is wrong. If there was a noticeable difference (i.e. more than 20%) between the independent variables (i.e. man versus women and their usage of non-systemic/systemic language), then I used SPSS if sample size allowed.

For statistical analysis comparing the relationships between the responder's gender or position in the community and the substance of their response, I measured the significance of the correlations with chi square tests. I found no gender differences between men and women related to if they frame the issue as non-systemic or systemic or why they believe the behavior is wrong. Sample size of professional men and women were too small to test for gender differences within professional status, and there were no differences between amateur men and women related to if they frame the issue as individual or systemic or why they believe the behavior is wrong.

I included in the findings a chi-square showing my analysis of professional status and the political variable because this variable combined the systemic/non-systemic with the code that captured why the YouTubers believed the behavior was wrong and allowed for the largest number of YouTubers to be analyzed in a test. Because of my small sample size, it was difficult to fill cells in my table, and this test allowed for more YouTubers to be incorporated into the test.

I also downloaded the comments on the video into a qualitative software system and searched for patterns that emerge among the positive, negative, and mixed/unclear comments. I included positive and negative comments in my analysis as they relate to my research questions and transformed the continuous variables into discrete variables to run chi-square tests. I created categories for the variables number of positive comments, total number of positive comments about content, number of negative comments, and total number of negative comments about the

YouTuber and tested the relationship between professional status and number of positive comments and gender and number of negative comments.

Findings

I included fifty-three videos in the analysis of this study, including fourteen professional YouTubers, thirty-eight amateur YouTubers, and one news video. Thirty of the YouTubers were women (nine professional and twenty-one amateur). Twenty-one of the YouTubers were men (four professional and seventeen amateur), and two videos featured both men and women (one of which was a news video). My original first hypothesis stated that YouTubers more often construct YouTube abuse as solely a non-systemic problem as opposed to a systemic issue. All YouTubers in this study framed the issue in non-systemic terms. They discussed the cause of the problem, the perpetrators hurting victims, or the harm done, victims being hurt by the crime. As shown in Table 1 (below), twenty-seven (51%) framed the issue as amongst individuals and did not connect the issue to a larger cultural or systemic source. The analysis shows a larger difference between non-politicized and politicized framings of YouTube abuse. This table also shows that thirty-four (64%) used less political frames of non-systemic and/or consent and culture than the more political frames of power imbalance and gender inequality. The analysis also supports hypothesis 2: YouTubers more often construct YouTube abuse in non-feminist terms as opposed to feminist terms. YouTubers more often discussed the issue in non-feminist terms. As shown in Table 1 (below), only three YouTubers (out of fifty-three) mentioned gender inequality as a reason for why YouTube abuse was wrong.

Table 1: Most politicized statement the YouTuber made

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Non-systemic and/or Consent	27	51

Culture	7	13
Power imbalance	16	30
Gender inequality	3	6
Total	53	100

The analysis does not support hypothesis 3, that professional members of the community construct the problem in terms less feminist, less focused on gender inequality, than do the amateur members. Amateur YouTubers in my study more often used non-feminist frames and used the lesser political frames. For instance, as shown in Table 2 (below), the cross-tabular analysis showed instead that three (20%) of the professional YouTubers as opposed to zero of the amateur YouTubers politicized the issue as relating to gender inequality. As shown in Table 2 (below), twenty-one (55%) of the amateur YouTubers treated the issues as non-systemic and/or mention consent as the issue as opposed to six (40%) of the professional YouTubers. The Pearson Chi-Square showed that these relationships were both statistically significant at the .05 level with a p value of .023.

**Table 2: Professional role * Most politicized statement the YouTuber made
Crosstabulation**

			Most politicized statement the YouTuber made				Total
			Non-politicized		Politicized		
			Non-systemic and/or Consent	Culture	Power imbalance	Gender inequality	
Professional role recoded	Professional (including News)	Count % within Professional role	6 40%	3 20%	3 20%	3 20%	15 100%
	Amateur	Count % within Professional role	21 55%	4 11%	13 34%	0 0%	38 100%

Total	Count	27	7	16	3	53
	% within Professional role	51%	13%	30%	6%	100%

The analysis supports hypothesis 4, that professional YouTubers will receive greater acceptance of their responses than do amateur members. Professional YouTubers received more acceptance, defined as positive comments, than amateur YouTubers. As shown in Table 3 (below), more professional YouTubers (including News) (67%) received lots of positive comments compared to amateur YouTubers (21%). The Pearson Chi-Square showed that this relationship was statistically significant at the .05 level with a p value of .003.

Table 3: Professional role * Number of Positive Comments Crosstabulation

			Number of Positive Comments			Total
			Few	Moderate	Lots	
Professional role recoded	Professional (including News)	Count % within Professional role	1 7%	4 27%	10 67%	15 100%
	Amateur	Count % within Professional role	18 47%	12 32%	8 21%	38 100%
Total		Count % within Professional role	19 36%	16 30%	18 34%	53 100%

Moreover professional YouTubers received more acceptance of their content, defined as positive comments specifically about content, than amateur YouTubers. For instance, as shown in Table 4 (below), more professional YouTubers (including News) (67%) received lots of positive comments about content compared to amateur YouTubers (21%). The Pearson Chi-

Square showed that this relationship was statistically significant at the .05 level with a p value of .004.

Table 4: Professional role * Total Number of Positive Comments about Content Crosstabulation

			Total Number of Positive Comments about Content			Total
			Few	Moderate	Lots	
Professional role recorded	Professional (including News)	Count % within Professional role	1 7%	4 27%	10 67%	15 100%
	Amateur	Count % within Professional role	16 42%	14 37%	8 21%	38 100%
Total		Count % within Professional role	17 32%	18 34%	18 34%	53 100%

The analysis does not support hypothesis 5, that female YouTubers receive more negative comments about themselves and less acceptance of their responses to YouTube abuse than do the male YouTubers. Female YouTubers did not receive more negative comments than male YouTubers. As shown in Table 5 (below), more men (50%) received greater amounts of negative comments than women (39%). The Pearson Chi-Square showed that this relationship was statistically significant at the .05 level with a p value of .049.

Table 5: Gender * Number of Negative Comments Crosstabulation

			Number of Negative Comments			Total
			None	Few	Lots	
Gender	Women (including Both)	Count % within Gender	19 61%	3 10%	9 29%	31 100%

Men	Count	11	8	3	22
	% within Gender	50%	36%	14%	100%
Total	Count	30	11	12	53
	% within Gender	57%	21%	23%	100%

Moreover, female YouTubers did not receive more negative comments about themselves than male YouTubers. As shown in Table 6 (below), most men and women did not receive any negative comments about themselves (68% respectively). The Pearson Chi-Square showed, however, that this relationship was not statistically significant at the .05 level with a p value of .677. Since smaller sample sizes make it more difficult to achieve statistical significance when doing statistical analysis, increasing my sample size will let me find statistical significance more easily and better test this hypothesis.

Table 6: Gender * Total Number of Negative Comments about YouTuber Crosstabulation

			Total Number of Negative Comments about YouTuber			Total
			None	Few	Lots	
Gender	Women (including Both)	Count	21	5	5	31
		% within Gender	68%	16%	16%	100%
	Men	Count	15	5	2	22
		% within Gender	68%	23%	9%	100%
Total		Count	36	10	7	53
		% within Gender	68%	19%	13%	100%

Lastly, hypothesis 6 stated that people who use a feminist frame are more likely to get negative comments than people who do not use a feminist frame. This hypothesis could not be tested because there were few feminist frames in my data.

Discussion

Feminists have defined sexual harassment as a social problem for decades (Cortina and Berdahl 2008), and feminist scholars continue to theorize how gender inequality is crucial to understanding why sexual harassment occurs (MacKinnon 1979; Gruber 1998; Acker 1990; Quinn 2002). This feminist frame can be relevant to thinking about why YouTube abuse occurs because YouTube abuse is a gendered issue where popular male YouTubers abused and harassed female YouTubers and fans. Despite the relevance of gender inequality to issues of abuse and harassment, including YouTube abuse, however, YouTubers did not connect the issue to gender inequality. Findings from this study suggest a postfeminist turn in discussions about women's issues, as YouTubers in my sample did not make explicit connections to feminism or gender inequality. Instead, they framed the abuse as an issue of consent or power imbalance, mirroring non-feminist definitions of sexual harassment (Wall 1991; Leeser and O-Donahue 1997; Crosthwaite and Swanton 1986; Dziech and Weiner 1990).

My findings support the theory that we are living in a postfeminist era, in which people reframe feminist concerns in terms of individuals rather than groups in conflict (Gill 2007; Quinn 2002). The fact that YouTubers framed the issue in individualist terms dovetails with other studies on women's issues that found that news media framed abuse as a problem amongst individuals as opposed to a system or matter of inequality (McDonald and Charlesworth 2012; Bullock 2007; Toffoletti 2007). Few YouTubers discussed how gender inequality relates to YouTube abuse. This avoidance of gender issues could be a strategy for gaining support from their followers against YouTube abuse. For instance, Dimitrov (2008) argues that the Australian football league's anti-sexual abuse campaign focus on addressing men and women and avoiding

blaming men are possible reasons for its success. However, I cannot assess this possibility with my data.

Despite the success of gender-neutral campaigns, however, gender-neutral messages can also have adverse effects. For instance, when explaining the reasons for why boys and men commit mass shootings, Kalish and Kimmel (2010) emphasize “[i]t is the gender culture that is an important element in each of these young men’s decision-making” (462). How these male shooters, who failed to attain a hegemonic masculinity throughout their lives, turn to violence as way to reclaim that masculinity, is important to understanding why school shootings occur.

Drawing on social movement literature, I expected professional YouTubers to frame in terms unrelated to feminism, because they have professional ties to the YouTube company and might wish to avoid a politicized stance that could narrow their audience and thus limit success. I found, instead, that relatively high proportions of professionals framed in terms of gender inequality and discussed the politicized systemic nature of the abuse. Explanations for this distribution of frames include the potential use of controversial statements to rising YouTubers that can draw attention and thus more views of their videos. A YouTuber celebrity may be distinct from more apolitical kinds because YouTubers receive money from ads on videos regardless of their content. These findings, however, are limited because there were so few feminists in my sample.

My findings support the claim that celebrities can associate with a movement if they have standing and that people can join movements because of a celebrity’s association (Meyer and Gamson 1989). I expected that people would accept professional YouTubers’ frames more than those of amateurs, and my findings supported this. Professional YouTubers, celebrities in this

community, can draw support for a cause, more easily than can amateur YouTubers, because of their popularity, credibility, and standing related to the issue.

My findings do not support my expectation that female YouTubers would receive more negative responses, especially about themselves, than men would. Though online misogyny continues to plague women, men also receive negative feedback about their videos when speaking about issues of sexual harassment and abuse. One possible reason is that sexual harassment is still perceived as a feminist issue, even though the YouTubers did not connect it to feminism, such that any man's discussion of it would draw negative feedback. Specifically, when men comment on YouTube abuse, people could attack their masculinity for speaking about a feminized issue. For instance, one of the negative comments that a male YouTuber in my study received attacked his status as a man, implying that he was not a masculine man, for discussing this issue.

This study, with its focus on comments on YouTube videos, aimed to capture the extent to which people accept feminism in the context of women's issues. Because I found so few feminist videos, I was unable to analyze how people respond to feminism in an online context. On the one hand, the dearth of feminist videos could suggest that people are unwilling to talk about feminist issues online because of online misogyny and anti-feminist rhetoric (Barak 2005; Jane 2014; Stoleru and Costescu 2014; Braithwaite 2013). On the other hand, it could also suggest that people do not connect issues of abuse to feminism. Given the prominence of YouTuber videos that used a non-systemic/consent frame or did not connect the issue to inequality, I suggest that people employ postfeminist frames when discussing women's issues. Regardless of the reason that feminism is not present in online discussions, however, YouTubers

did not connect the issue to gender inequality, and so I could not test for how people responded to feminism.

To capture this relationship between the public and feminist frames of sexual harassment and abuse, one could study responses to feminism by examining the feminist discourse in women's centers on college campuses and within the community and feminist events on campus. These women's centers often sponsor feminist-themed events, such as Take Back the Night rallies and marches, events centered on stopping harassment and abuse. Participant observation and/or surveys at these events could capture how people think about women's issues. How do they conceptualize issues of sexual abuse and harassment at these feminist events? Do they recognize gender inequality as the cause of sexual harassment or has postfeminism also infiltrated women's centers and events? How do people respond to feminist claims of sexual harassment? Future research could analyze how people respond to feminist ideals centered in these events.

Other limitations of this study include its sample size. I analyzed 53 videos, 14 of which were from professional YouTubers. This small number of professional YouTubers means that tests that I was able to run, such as chi-square that showed substantively significant results, were statistically insignificant. A larger sample of professional members could show significant findings. Additionally, having a small number of professional members means I was unable to test for interaction effects of professional status and gender on relationships between a YouTuber's status and gender, and their frames and negative comments. Lastly, some of my intercoder reliability K values suggested that my codes had "moderate agreement" (Landis and Koch 1977: 165). In future work, I can improve my code explanation sheets to improve this K value.

YouTubers' responses to YouTube abuse in my study demonstrate a postfeminist sensibility, where issues of gender inequality have been disconnected from what was originally defined as a feminist issue. Whether these detachments from feminism co-vary with one's professional status remains unclear. How people respond to a claims-maker can depend on the claims-maker's social position, i.e. people join movements because of celebrity endorsement. In this study, gender was associated with some difference in responses, i.e. some men received more negative comments. Online misogyny, however, remains an issue for many women every day, and future research should compare differences in online flaming for both men and women. Future research, in arenas where feminism is more visible, should also explore how professional/amateur men and women construct feminist issues, and how people involved in the cause accept or reject their claims.

References

- Abrams, Kathryn. 1998. "The New Jurisprudence of Sexual Harassment." *Cornell Law Review* 83:1169-1268.
- Acker, Joan. 1990. "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations." *Gender and Society* 4(2):139-158.
- Addington, Catherine. 2014. "Sexual Abuse Allegations Rock YouTube Community." *NYULocal*, Retrieved Sept. 22, 2015 (<http://nyulocal.com/entertainment/2014/03/14/sexual-abuse-allegations-rock-youtube-community/>).
- Aronson, Pamela. 2003. "Feminists or Postfeminists? Young Women's Attitudes Toward Feminism and Gender Relations." *Gender and Society* 17(6):903-922.
- Baker, Joanne. 2010. "Claiming Volition and Evading Victimhood: Post-Feminist Obligations for Young Women." *Feminism and Psychology* 20(2):186-204.
- Barak, Azy. 2005. "Sexual Harassment on the Internet." *Social Science Computer Review* 21(1):77-92.
- Becker, Howard S. 1963. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bennett, Alanna. 2014. "Why The YouTube Community Is Standing Up Against Sexual and Emotional Abuse." *Bustle*, Retrieved Sept. 22, 2015 (<http://www.bustle.com/articles/18565-why-the-youtube-community-is-standing-up-against-sexual-and-emotional-abuse>).
- Best, Joel. 1987. "Rhetoric in Claims-Making: Constructing the Missing Children Problem." *Social Problems* 34(2):101-121.

- Braithwaite, Andrea. 2013. "'Seriously get out': Feminists on the Forums and the (War)craft on Women." *New Media & Society* 0(0):1-16.
- Bullock, Cathy F. 2007. "Framing Domestic Violence Fatalities: Coverage by Utah Newspapers." *Women's Studies in Communication* 30(1):34-63.
- Burgess, Jean, and Joshua Green. 2009. *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Butler, Judith. 2004. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Chau, Clement. 2010. "YouTube as Participatory Culture." *New Directions for Youth Development* 2010(128):65-74.
- Cohen, Jacob. 1968. "Weighted Kappa: Nominal Scale Agreement with Provision for Scaled Disagreement of Partial Credit." *Psychological Bulletin* 70(4):213-220.
- Cortina, Lilia M., and Jennifer L Berdahl. 2008. "Sexual Harassment in Organizations: A Decade of Research in Review." Pp. 469-497 in *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Behavior: Volume One: Micro Approaches*, edited by J. Barling, C. L. Cooper. London: SAGE Publications.
- Coy, Patrick G., and Lynne M. Woehrle. 1996. "Constructing Identity and Oppositional Knowledge: the Framing Practices of Peace Movement Organizations During the Persian Gulf War." *Sociological Spectrum* 16:287-327.
- Crosthwaite, Jan, and Christine Swanton. 1986. "On the Nature of Sexual Harassment." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 64:91-106.
- deYoung, Mary. 1996. "A Painted Devil: Constructing the Satanic Ritual Abuse of Children Problem." *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 1(3):235-248.

- Dimitrov, Roumen. 2008. "Gender Violence, Fan Activism and Public Relations in Sport: The Case of 'Footy Fans Against Sexual Assault.'" *Public Relations Review* 34:90-98.
- Dziech, Billie W., and Linda Weiner. 1990. *The Lecherous Professor: Sexual Harassment on Campus*. 2nd ed. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Farley, Lin. 1978. *Sexual Shakedown: The Sexual Harassment of Women on the Job*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Franke, Katherine. 1997. "What's Wrong with Sexual Harassment?" *Stanford Law Review* 49(4):691-772.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2007. "Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of Sensibility." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10(2):147-166.
- Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Grauerholz, Elizabeth. 1994. "Gender Socialization and Communication: The Inscription of Sexual Harassment in Social Life." Pp. 33-45 in *Conceptualizing Sexual Harassment as Discursive Practice*, edited by S. G. Bingham. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Gruber, James E. 1998. "The Impact of Male Work Environments and Organizational Policies on Women's Experiences of Sexual Harassment." *Gender and Society* 12(3):301-320.
- The Harvard Law Review Association. 1984. "Sexual Harassment Claims of Abusive Workplace Environment Under Title VII." *Harvard Law Review* 97(6):1449-1467.
- Hobbs, Renee and Silke Grafe. 2015. "YouTube Pranking Across Cultures." *First Monday* 20(6)
Retrieved September 2, 2015
(<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/5981/4699>).
- Jane, Emma A. 2014. "'You're a Ugly, Whorish, Slut': Understanding E-bile." *Feminist Media Studies* 14(4):531-546.

- Landis, J. Richard, and Gary G. Koch. 1977. "The Measurement of Observer Agreement for Categorical Data." *Biometrics* 33:159-74.
- Lemert, Edwin. 1967. *Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Leeser, Jaimie, and William O'Donahue. 1997. "Normative Issues in Defining Sexual Harassment." Pp. 29-49 in *Sexual Harassment: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, edited by W. O'Donahue. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Kalish, Rachel and Michael Kimmel. 2010. "Suicide by Mass Murder: Masculinity, Aggrieved Entitlement, and Rampage School Shootings." *Health Sociology Review* 19(4):451-464.
- Kim, Jin. 2012. "The Institutionalization of YouTube: From User-generated Content to Professionally Generated Content." *Media, Culture & Society* 34(1):53-67.
- Knop, Brian. 2012. "'These kids are killing each other': Gender-Neutral vs. Gender-Specific Framing in the School Shooting Media Discourse." Pp. 53-63 in *The Harms of Crime Media: Essays on the Perpetuation of Racism, Sexism and Class Stereotypes*, edited by D. L. Bissler and J. L. Connors. Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. 1979. *Sexual Harassment of Working Women: A Case of Sex Discrimination*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. 1982. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory." *Signs* 7(3):515-544.
- McDonald, Paula, and Sara Charlesworth. 2012. "Framing Sexual Harassment through Media Representations." *Women's Studies International Forum* 37:95-103.

- McRobbie, Angela. 2007. "Postfeminism and Popular Culture: Bridget Jones and the New Gender Regime." Pp. 27-39 in *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and Politics of Popular Culture*, edited by Y. Tasker and D. Negra. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Mewett, Peter, and Kim Toffoletti. 2008. "Rogue Men and Predatory Women: Female Fans' Perceptions of Australian Footballers' Sexual Conduct." *International Review for Sociology of Sport* 43(2):165-180.
- Meyer, David S., and Joshua Gamson. 1995. "The Challenge of Cultural Elites: Celebrities and Social Movements." *Sociological Inquiry* 65(2):181-206.
- Mildred, Jane. 2003. "Claims-makers in the Child Sexual Abuse "Wars": Who Are They and What Do They Want?" *Social Work* 48(4):492-503.
- Ouellette, Laurie. 2002. "Victims No More: Postfeminism, Television, and Ally McBeal." *The Communication Review* 5:315-335.
- Patterson, Natasha, and Camilla A. Sears. 2011. "Letting Men Off the Hook? Domestic Violence and Postfeminist Celebrity Culture." *Genders* 53. *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*. Web. Retrieved May 16, 2016.
- Quinn, Beth. 2002. "Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of 'Girl Watching.'" *Gender and Society* 16(3):386-402.
- Romano, Aja, Michelle Jaworski, and Rae Votta. 2014. "A Guide to YouTube's Biggest Sex Abuse Scandals." *The Daily Dot*, Retrieved Sept. 22, 2015 (<http://www.dailydot.com/entertainment/youtube-sex-abuse-scandals-guide/>).

- Rotman, Dana, and Jennifer Preece. 2010. "The 'WeTube' in YouTube – Creating an Online Community Through Video Sharing." *International Journal of Web Based Communities* 6(3):317-333.
- Rubin, Gayle. 1999. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." Pp. 143-178 in *Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader*, edited by P. Aggleton and R. Parker. London: UCL Press.
- Ruddell, Rick, and Scott H. Decker. 2005. "Kids and Assault Weapons: Social Problem or Social Construction." *Criminal Justice Review* 30(1):45-63.
- Schultz, Vicki. 1998. "Reconceptualizing Sexual Harassment." *The Yale Law Journal* 107(6):1683-1805.
- Snow, David A. and Robert D. Benford. 2000. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26:611-39.
- Snow, David A. and Robert D. Benford. 1988. "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization." *International Social Movement Research* 1:197-217.
- Snow, David A., E. Burke Rochford Jr., Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford. 1986. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation." *American Sociological Review* 51:464-481.
- Spector, Malcolm, and John Kitsuse. 2001. *Constructing Social Problems*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Stoleru, Maria, and Elena-Alis Costescu. 2014. "(Re)Producing Violence against Women in Online Spaces." *Philobiblon* 19(1):95-114.
- Stone-Watt, Sarah. 2012. "A Postfeminist Apologia: Susan G. Komen for the Cure's Evolving

- Response to the Planned Parenthood Controversy.” *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric* 2(3/4):65-79.
- Superson, Anita M. 1993. “A Feminist Definition of Sexual Harassment.” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 24(1):46-64.
- Toffoletti, Kim. 2007. “How is Gender-based Violence Covered in the Sporting News? An Account of the Australian Football League Sex Scandal.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 30:427-438.
- Toulmin, Stephen. 1964. *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Uggen, Christopher, and Amy Blackstone. 2004. “Sexual Harassment as a Gendered Expression of Power.” *Annual Sociological Review* 69(1):64-92.
- U.S. Equal Employment Commission. (n.d.) “Sexual Harassment.” Retrieved June 29, 2015 (http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/sexual_harassment.cfm).
- Wall, Edmund. 1988. “Intention and Coercion.” *Journal of applied Philosophy* 5(1):75-87.
- Wall, Edmund. 1991. “The Definition of Sexual Harassment.” *Public Affairs Quarterly* 5(4):371-385.
- Wotanis, Lindsey, and Laurie McMillan. 2014. “Performing Gender on YouTube: How Jenna Marbles Negotiates a Hostile Online Environment.” *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6):912-928.
- YouTube. “YouTube Partnership Program Overview.” 2015. Retrieved Sept. 22, 2015 (<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/72851?hl=en>).
- YouTube. “Statistics.” (n.d.) Retrieved Sept. 14, 2015 (<https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>).

APPENDIX: Code Sheets for Videos and Comments

Videos:

Aspects of the YouTuber

1. *Professional role* refers to prominence in the community and possible relationship with YouTube. Options include professional members and amateur members.

Professional members:

- are content creators who manage their own YouTube channels
- have updated their channels within the last six months of their YouTube abuse video
- have more than 50,000 subscribers.

2. *YouTuber's gender* refers to stated or otherwise presented status as male, female or other.

YouTuber's frame

3. *Political* refers to how political of a statement a YouTuber made.
 - a. *Least political:*
 - i. *Individual and or consent* refers to YouTubers talking about individual victims who are hurt from the abuse or individual perpetrators who harassed and abused, without reference to any group membership in common. YouTubers commenting on the cases of abuse is an example of a non-systemic frame. I.e. explaining that Sam Pepper abused his fans. YouTubers discussing individual action, i.e. you need to respect others also counts as a non-systemic frame. YouTubers may also describe YouTube abuse in terms of individuals forcing others to engage in sexual activity, coercion, manipulation, or in terms of a violation.
 - ii. *Culture* refers to YouTubers discussing shared group values that structure YouTube abuse. YouTubers discussing how norms related to sexuality and/or gender, i.e. rape culture, cause/relate to YouTube abuse is an example of an apolitical stance that refers to cultural dynamics larger than the individuals involved in the abuse; however these group values are not related to how groups have power over one another in a workplace or YouTube culture.
 - b. *Most political:*
 - i. *Power imbalance* refers to a systemic issue where YouTubers describe YouTube abuse in terms of members of one group abusing their power over members of another, with no mention of gender. In this frame, abuse is wrong because people have responsibilities in positions of power to not abuse that power. YouTubers use language such as YouTubers abusing fans and having a responsibility to not abuse them, given their position of power over them. Other examples include discussing YouTuber's

positions of responsibility, their abuse of popularity and power, or abusing audiences/fans.

- ii. *Gender inequality* refers to YouTubers framing the abuse as a systemic issue between men and women as groups and connecting the abuse to a larger pattern of gendered abuse.

Comments:

Content of comments

1. A *positive comment* is an agreement with the YouTuber's message and/or the YouTuber.
 - i. A *positive comment about a YouTuber's content* agrees with the YouTuber's message. Examples include:
 - a. Agreements: "Pepper spray him" and "I honestly don't know how Sam Pepper has 2,000,000 subscribers this is terrible." This comment agrees with the YouTuber's message (that the perpetrator was wrong or that harassment is bad), but does not reference the YouTuber.
 - b. Expression of emotion: "Damn, I knew Alex Day was an abuser, but I didn't know about Danny Hooper. I had an hour long chat with the guy, once and he seemed like a genuinely sweet, nice guy. This is what worries me, abusers don't show it on their faces or wear it on their sleeves. I have a friend who was assaulted by her ex, who, to the world, is a cute, shy, blonde, glasses wearing boy who is a bit of a nerd. Not a violent sex offender. She lost most of her friends when she tentatively told somebody what happened." This quote demonstrates that the commentator expresses sadness about people in the community being YouTube abuse perpetrators and agrees that the abuse is wrong (referencing that different kinds of abusers are what worries them).
 - c. Comments that reference a personal experience with abuse: These comments agree that abuse is bad. I.e. "I feel like I was manipulated into doing things I wasn't comfortable with. My ex would want me to do things, and if I didn't he'd get so angry, and make huge fights. I was only with him for three months but regret every second of it. I regret letting myself get sucked it. I didn't even like him that much. The only reason shit happened in the first place was because I was guilted into it. Felt like I owed him. In hindsight I know I didn't owe him anything, and I've told him so when I broke up with him."
 - d. Complimenting the video: I.e. this post is great.
 - ii. A *positive comment about the YouTuber* refers to a compliment about the YouTuber with no mention of content in the video. Examples include:
 - a. Complimenting or praising the YouTuber in some way, i.e. "You are my absolute inspiration!" I love you, thank you so much, etc.
 - b. Complimenting their actions, such as "Keeping the community continually aware is important, so good job...!" Other examples include praising the action and not the content (well said!, which compliments how they said it, that they made a video on the topic, or that they subscribed to their channel).

NOTE: The usage of “you” in a comment (when not replying to another commentator) will be understood as addressing the YouTuber. Additionally, if the comment does not reference the YouTuber’s name or other commentators specifically, since the commentator is still commenting on the video, it is implied that YouTuber is one of the people that the comment is addressing and is coded as positive about the YouTuber. For instance, by commenting on a video, it is implied that the YouTuber is being grouped into a category (in addition to people that are commenting on the video in support of the YT) because the comment is being posted on their video and can be read in dialogue with the YT, i.e. thank you feminists.

2. A *negative comment* refers to people disagreeing with the YouTuber’s message or the YouTuber.
 - i. A *negative comment about a YouTuber’s content* in their video refers to people disagreeing with or not supporting the YouTuber’s message in their video. Examples include:
 - a. Comments that specifically address the YouTuber, and imply that the YouTuber has no point, meaning that they disagree with the YouTuber. I.e. “AND YOUR POINT IS.....”
 - b. Comments that express disapproval for the video/message without referencing characteristics of the YouTuber making the video, such as such as gender or position in the community. An example of a comment that disagrees with the YouTuber’s frame is “Who cares the videos are funny” because it did not reference the YouTuber but disagrees that YouTube abuse is wrong. Other examples include saying that the people who are accused did nothing wrong or that the issue is not important.
 - ii. A *negative comment about a YouTuber* refers to criticism, disapproval for the YouTuber, such as mocking them or disagreeing with them by referencing characteristics, i.e. gender or position in the community, or by insulting using derogatory phrases. Examples include
 - a. Direct insults to the YouTuber, i.e. “I think this gross lesbian is jealous cos no one want to go inpregnate her” and ““Shut up u bitch, your voice is annoying as fuck,” which negatively criticize the YouTuber but do not reference video content, YouTube abuse.

NOTE: The usage of you language in a comment (when not replying to another comment) will be understood as addressing the YouTuber. Additionally, even if the comment does not reference the YouTuber person or other commentators specifically, since the comment is still commenting on the video, it is implied that YouTuber is one of the people that the comment is addressing. For instance, the comment “a bunch of whores treated as such.... Stop feminazis” says to “Stop feminazis.” It is implied here that the YouTuber is being called a feminazi (in addition to people that are commenting on the video in support of the YT) because the comment is being posted on their video and can be read in dialogue with the YT.

3. *Comments not in analysis:*

- a. *Mixed/unclear comments refer* to comments that do not clearly state a positive or negative position on the matter of YouTube abuse in relation to the YouTuber and the YouTuber's message.
 - i. *Mixed comments* refer to when people disagree/agree with only parts of the YouTuber/YouTuber's frame of the issue or with the issue itself. Examples include:
 - a. A comment that both agrees and disagrees with the YouTuber and/or their frame. I.e., "These types assholes are the reason why feminazis exist. I hate both feminists and these rapist assholes." In this comment, the person both agrees with the YouTuber (that people who harass people are bad) but disagrees that feminism and people who talk about issues of sexual harassment are productive.
 - b. A comment that both agrees with the YouTuber but disagrees with their content, or vice versa.
 - ii. *Unclear comments* refer to it being unclear if the person is critical of the YouTuber/YouTube abuse or not. It also includes those where it is unclear if the person is referring to YouTube abuse. These comments could express both disapproval/approval for the YouTuber and the video/message, such as agreeing/disagreeing with parts of their video or comment on the YouTuber/message in addition to it being unclear if the person is mocking the YouTuber. Examples include
 - a. Comments that cannot be coded because they are not clearly negative or positive, i.e. "Are you crying or do u just talk like that?" This comment is responding the YouTuber, but it is unclear if the person is being critical of the YouTuber for crying or if the person is genuinely interested in if the YouTuber is crying. In contrast "im not trying to be an asshole, but is it just me or does she always seem like she's gonna cry??" is a comment that can be more easily categorized. This comment would be categorized as negative about the YouTuber because it implies that the YouTuber is always crying, which is a negative comment about the YouTuber herself.
- b. *Spam/unrelated comments* do not refer to the content of the video (i.e. about YouTube abuse) and appear to want people to view their own YouTube channel or appear to be random. Examples of random comments include
 - i. Comments where someone is asking for other people to subscribe to their channel or to watch their videos.
 - ii. Comments that appear nonsensical, i.e. "Taco's are good all because of carrot diarrhea ninja turtle massacre snail hat" or ""the marxism marches on."
 - iii. Descriptive comments about the YouTuber's style or appearance and/or compliments not about YouTube abuse, i.e. you are pretty.
 - iv. Comments that are neither positive nor negative about YouTube abuse but just comment on the issue and do not agree/disagree that YouTube abuse is bad.

- v. Comments that state what happened but do not give an opinion, i.e. YouTube abuse is happening in the community.
- c. *Self* refers to comments left by the YouTubers who created the video.