8

Conclusion

Doing Digital Feminist Activism

On October 15, 2017, as we were in the final stages of completing this book, the #MeToo hashtag began trending on Twitter in response to a tweet by actress Alyssa Milano urging survivors of sexual violence or harassment to digitally document their experience with the hashtag. As a phrase coined in 2006 by African American community organizer Tarana Burke to help women from BAME and lower socioeconomic groups find "pathways to healing" through empathy (MeToo 2017), #MeToo has an important history that was mobilized and extended through Milano's tweet. Indeed, the hashtag functioned to expose the widespread nature of sexual violence in the wake of the allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, and sparked significant conversations about sexual misconduct in the workplace. In the coming days, the hashtag captured both public and media attention, being used over 12 million times in the first 24 hours alone (CBS 2017). We became aware of the hashtag when our own social media feeds unexpectedly became filled by stories from friends, family, and acquaintances who shared their experiences of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault. As the weeks and months passed, #MeToo transformed from a hashtag to a movement, inspiring *Time Magazine* to name its annual Person of the Year the "Silence Breakers," or those who "came forward with their stories about pervasive sexual harassment" (Zacharek, Dockterman, and Edwards 2017).

#MeToo is perhaps one of the most high-profile examples of digital feminist activism we have yet encountered, and it has been followed up by additional movements such as Time's Up, an organization raising legal aid funding to support low-wage victims of workplace sexual harassment. However, it follows a growing trend of the public's willingness to engage with *resistance* and *challenges to* sexism, patriarchy, and other forms of oppression via feminist uptake of digital communication. As feminist activism becomes more high profile, as celebrities

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and powerful women add their voices to such initiatives, we not only anticipate continued mainstream media attention, but scholarly attention to the diverse and often highly creative practices of resistance to rape culture. Yet, while it is easy to celebrate the rise of this digital feminist activism (and believe us, we *do* celebrate), it is pertinent to ask questions not only about what digital feminism does, or how it manifests itself, but how it is *felt* and *experienced* by the growing number of participants and organizers of such activist initiatives. This is where our study contributes significant and unique empirical findings that go beyond analysis of a social media trend (big data), digital artifacts (e.g., Tweets), or mass media headlines to explore the *lived experiences* of digital feminist activists and their challenges to rape culture.

Digital Feminism: Educating and Saving Lives

The first major contribution of this book is being able to demonstrate how engaging with feminism via digital technologies transforms our participants' lives. Across all of our data chapters we saw how tweets, Tumblr signs, and online testimonials were critical in not only giving people a voice to share experiences of sexual violence, but to have these experiences seen, heard, and validated. Despite very real barriers to participation, our research also uncovered how participating in digital feminist activism served as a healing process for survivors of sexual violence. For example, in chapter 6, we argue that stories shared with the #BeenRapedNeverReported hashtag worked as "affective currency" that drew survivors together and often encouraged tangible social action, such as reporting one's assault to the authorities or starting an online support network for survivors. In several instances this healing process even facilitated participants' desire to learn more about feminism, as they began to connect their own personal experiences with feminism as a political movement. In this sense, digital feminist activism has important implications for fields such as criminology, and those interested in understanding the "multiple, fluid and fragmented nature of justice" (Fileborn 2017, 1499). This is because having traumatic, troubling, or disturbing experiences of sexual violence heard by others has been shown to give victims a sense of justice, which is currently lacking through institutional or formal means (Fileborn 2017; Powell 2015).

Chapter 5 demonstrated how Twitter is practiced and used to connect globally diverse feminists across time and space, creating affective bonds and communities of like-minded individuals. We saw how participants conceived their debates, discussions, and feminist practices as activism, and how these activities led to changing relationships with friends, peers, family, colleagues, and

themselves. We also found that participants' experiences on Twitter and other social media platforms was politically charged (Papacharissi 2015), revealing strong personal investments in social struggle. Our findings therefore complicate ideas that social media encourages fantasies of individual change rather than genuine material transformations and activism (Dean 2009; Papacharissi 2015). Instead, we demonstrated how our participants experienced feminist digital platforms as extremely positive in generating community, connection, and support for feminist views, and solidarity in calling out rape culture. We saw how participants made use of the affordances of social media platforms such as Twitter for finding like-minded people to "identify with" online, and how the power of this collective understanding and sharing feminism transcended boundaries and geographical space. This awakening to feminism was present in our textual analysis and interviews across all six case studies. For example, many of our teenage participants in chapter 7 credited social media as the first portal for finding out information about feminism when it was not available in school, family, or local communities. We outlined the pedagogical dimensions of Twitter in-depth, as a platform identified by participants as essential for learning about feminism, and engaging and educating others around issues such as rape culture.

Complex Practices

Throughout the book, our second major contribution is to highlight how digital feminism is far more complex and nuanced than one might initially expect. For example, at the same time as high-profile campaigns and hashtags gain public attention, we have shown how feminists also make use of lesser-studied tools such as WhatsApp and iPhone chats. In this sense, our research draws attention to the multiple, complex, and nuanced ways feminists make use of a wide range of tools and platforms, many of which are currently "under the radar" from popular and scholarly attention. This was particularly the case given we have contributed significantly to an under-researched area of how young feminists use digital technology to discover and communicate their views in and around school. We demonstrated the complexity of practices such as operating a joint feminist Twitter account with peers at school or managing trolling from known classmates, all areas that we have had little understanding of to date.

When thinking about the political economy of digital feminist initiatives, we have also shown that in addition to making use of preexisting commercial platforms, others have commissioned, crowdfunded, and designed bespoke websites, blogs, and apps. This is not to say that these necessarily escape the trappings of communicative capitalism entirely (Dean 2005), in which the

exchange of communication props up an exploitative capitalist system. After all, some of our case studies using bespoke websites such as Hollaback! have built-in widgets or affordances to enhance the spread of testimonials across commercial platforms. The sharing and number of submissions are then used as evidence of impact, which in turn can be used to secure funding or support (see Hollaback 2017). In this sense, these feminist activists engage in a type of trade-off that many of us do; they strategically navigate their own use of commercial platforms—and the patriarchal contexts in which they are created—in order to harness the lucrative visibility and spreadability that commercial platforms offer.

Digital platforms and tools are often used in unexpected, and "slippery" ways, which are hard to predict, and which change over time. For example, although one might assume #BeenRapedNeverReported was mostly used to share personal experiences of sexual assault and the reasons they did not report it, our analysis revealed how the hashtag was also commonly used to share other people's experiences, providing communities of support and solidarity for victims, calling out rape culture. We were also surprised to see cases of the hashtag being hijacked by those wishing to draw readers to their own websites or organizations to gain new audiences or maximize profits. As another example, although some platforms such as Everyday Sexism or Hollaback! were designed to enable immediate sharing of experiences, we were in fact struck by the number of historical experiences being reported. That users "hack" (Warfield 2016) the intended use of these platforms to highlight the historic nature of these experiences is significant, and necessary to disrupt nostalgia for past times in which sexual violence and harassment was considered banal and accepted as just "boys being boys."[1] Finally, with Who Needs Feminism?, we witnessed a transformation from the start of the campaign where (sometimes smiling) individuals were photographed with their faces in full view, to a trend where the public tended to "hide" behind the sign as a means of further preserving their anonymity. In sum, although these campaigns are often designed to elicit particular testimonials or experiences, the public may not conform to these expectations.

Developing Strategies to Manage Mediated Misogyny

Third, our findings show that although it may be technologically easy for many to engage in digital feminist activism, there remain significant barriers to participation that require careful consideration. For example, in chapter 4 we detail how the emotional burden of engaging with testimonials of sexual violence as well as sustained trolling has prevented some volunteers from continuing their

work with Everyday Sexism. Likewise, nearly all our 46 participants in chapter 5 experienced some form of anti-feminist negativity or trolling online. We saw that speaking out about rape culture proved more emotionally draining for women and girls, especially if they referenced their *personal experiences* of sexual victimization, which was viewed as one of the riskiest activities online viewed across chapters 5, 6, and 7. Continuously coping with high levels of trolling and conflict was exhausting and defeating.

What we demonstrated was the significance of developing digital literacies and how our participants employed a range of complex strategies to cope with online conflicts and abuse in the form of mediated abuse. For instance, participants in chapter 5 had located perpetrators in real life to challenge their behavior, threatening to contact their school, or working with Twitter to shut down a serial troll. In chapter 5 we found that all the schools discussed including our research school had poorly developed responses to digital harassment or trolling, leaving girls to cope with online conflicts on their own. Significantly, we found that the male participants struggled to cope with anti-feminist men and those who shamed their masculinity or reproduced MRA ideology. Although we only had a small sample of men, we found that despite their rhetorical claims about wanting to challenge rape culture online, only one, a trained violence prevention worker, felt confident enough to engage and challenge reactive masculinity politics. Given the rise of campaigns such as the UN's HeForShe, which encourage men to be feminist allies, this raises important questions about what unique strategies men need to adopt not only to practice everyday feminism, or fight back against trolls, but also to engage around issues of sexism and toxic masculinity in everyday life.

Making Visible Affective Digital Labor

The fourth major contribution of this research is making visible the labor involved in digital feminist activism and showcasing the ways campaigns don't simply just "run themselves." Indeed, none of our case studies emerge "out of thin air," but were instead the result of complex negotiations, actions, and initiatives by various groups of people, who have donated countless hours to these projects, with little to no financial compensation, security, or even recognition. This study highlights how the labor involved in such campaigns is often precarious, highly affective, invisible, and time-consuming. Although most of our participants described their involvement as extremely fulfilling and life-changing, it was often exhausting, tedious, and draining, and led to burnout, particularly for our feminist organizers. We also explore the ways

in which the perspectives and experiences of some feminists—often those who are white, cis-gendered, and middle class—receive elevated public visibility and celebration that often eludes feminists with more marginalized identities. Alongside others who have shown how factors such as age, technological skills and fluency, and income impact feminists' ability to engage in digital activism (see Fileborn 2017; Fotopoulou 2016b), our research has demonstrated how disability, age, social status, personal self-confidence, and communities of support also impact the experience of activism. In sum, experiences of doing digital feminist activism can vary widely across groups, and can only be comprehensively understood through not only technological, but affective, material, and cultural analyses.

While the previous sections highlight some of our key contributions and arguments, the remainder of this chapter explores some of the challenges of studying digital feminist activism, including ethical issues, accounting for how power and privilege play a role in terms of who speaks about which issues, and how our findings offer insights into the context of popular feminism and the problems presented by digital misogyny and trolling. We conclude the chapter by exploring some key aspects of what digital feminism does and enables, and some final questions about what some future directions of digital feminist activism might be.

Challenges of Studying Digital Feminist Activism

In addition to providing key insights from our research, we hope this book will be used to guide those interested in studying digital cultures. Indeed, one of the key, and surprising findings, is that studying digital cultures was much more difficult than we initially anticipated—practically, emotionally, and psychologically. In part, some of our challenges were linked with specific ethical protocols. For example, when recruiting research participants, we were not allowed to use our personal social media accounts, and instead had to set up project accounts. This was challenging for many reasons. For example, although we have healthy followings on our personal Twitter accounts, we were not able to utilize these to recruit participants. Indeed, when we tweeted a call for participants, we had no replies. We instead had to be creative and ask our friends and colleagues to retweet our call for participants to generate greater responses. Although we recognize that ethics procedures are necessary and important, they also provide obstacles, such as our ability to make use of social media, but also to access more teen participants. Working with teenagers in schools is ethically challenging and required prolonged negotiation with our university ethics committees, and

school leadership to enable us to engage with and capture the experiences of teens experimenting with Twitter in their teen feminist club.

On an emotional and psychological level, in addition to feeling inspired by feminist resistances to rape culture, we were also at times left deeply upset and traumatized. For example, there were several points during the research where we had to take breaks from the textual data collection and analysis, because we found reading story after story of assault, abuse, and harassment too traumatic. Our in-depth interviews also covered many sensitive topics, and while these often left us moved, they were often very emotional and took enormous amounts of mental energy to process. As a research team, we also experienced trolling after presenting our work at an academic conference. Here, trolls mobilized to question the legitimacy of our project, attack us, and our funders. Although these attacks were relatively unspectacular compared to those experienced by feminist scholars studying MRAs or #Gamergate, they nonetheless demonstrate the "risks" researchers face for studying feminist activism in digital spaces.

Power and Privilege in Researching Digital Feminist Activism

As scholars have argued, alternative and autonomous feminist initiatives such as newspapers, zines, and websites have the potential to challenge existing power structures and hierarchies (see Srberny-Mohammadi 1996; Zobl and Drueke 2012). That being said, while alternative feminist activism provide space for feminists to come together, research has highlighted how issues of power and privilege mean that most high-profile initiatives are developed by those with relative "privileges, access to cultural capital, and power" (Zobl 2009, 7), namely, white-middle class, cis-gendered Western women. As such, taking a cue from critical technology studies, it is pertinent that scholars pay greater attention to the digital environment and how "forms of discrimination may be built and designed into the architecture of the Internet, just as in other forms of material structures" (Harvey 2016, 12; see also Latina and Docherty 2014).

This is certainly reflected in our study, in part due to the case studies that we selected. As white, middle-class, cis-gendered female researchers located in the UK and Canada we selected "mainstream" digital feminist campaigns with which we, as feminists, were already familiar. Upon critical reflection however, we may understand "mainstream" as reflecting dominant—white—culture, a realization that gives us pause. Our selection then reflects our own privileged positionality, and must be regarded as only an impartial and incomplete look at contemporary digital feminist activism. As we document throughout this book, an

intersectional lens guided our analysis, and we paid particular attention toward the ways in which those with marginalized identities participated in our chosen case studies. Nonetheless, we recognize that BAME and LGBTQ+ communities are harnessing the power of digital platforms (see Fischer 2016; Rapp et al. 2010; Williams 2016), and that these identity-specific campaigns are not present in this book. We acknowledge that this is both due to our positionality and the lack of media attention and mainstream visibility that digital feminist activism by black, Indigenous, queer, disabled, and other marginalized groups receive. In hindsight, hashtags such as #BlackGirlMagic, #YouOkSis, or #SayHerName or other campaigns such as Idle No More would have provided a more inclusive focus to the book.

Conducting intersectional analysis of digital spaces is methodologically challenging, largely due to the anonymity built into the platforms we are studying. In nearly all cases it was difficult to ascertain various identities such as ethnicity or sexuality from a singular tweet or submission. While the interview component of our methodology was crucial to understanding the multiple identities of our participants, our relatively limited interview sample meant that we really only have an incomplete picture of the kinds of people who participate in digital feminist activism. While we interviewed some disabled, BAME, and LGBTQ+ respondents, the majority identified as white, cis-gendered, and middle class; the adults were university educated, and our research school was located in a largely middle-class catchment area. In part, while this skew is likely down to the sites we examined (as we discussed earlier), it nonetheless remains the case that online spaces reproduce offline power structures and dynamics that marginalize and disadvantage some groups over others (see boyd 2011; Fileborn 2017; Harvey 2016).

In addition to power imbalances between BAME and LGBTQ+ groups, our interviews reveal the way that other factors enabled or disabled participation in digital feminist activism as well (see also Fotopoulou 2016a). For example, several participants had disabilities that impacted the longevity of their activism and the types of activities in which they could be involved. Our teen participants also revealed the ways age, social status, technological savviness, and levels of confidence played important roles in their various engagements. For example, some of the more popular girls felt confident and able to engage their feminist politics in potentially hostile or risky environments, such as Twitter, while others experienced anxiety and fear of saying the "wrong thing," or being trolled.

We need to recognize how power and privilege determines who engages in digital feminist activism and who is primed to set the agenda for such activism. While we have highlighted some of these issues throughout the book, they remain pertinent to consider in the wake of #MeToo, which has been made visible by wealthy, primarily white, celebrities. We must then continue to ask: Whose

experiences are absent from our Twitter feeds and the pages of Everyday Sexism? Whose stories go unrecorded on Hollaback!? And which teenage girls do not join into a hashtag such as #CropTopDay, or do not participate in a feminist club at school? These questions are in our minds as we complete this book, and we encourage other researchers to remember them as they study digital feminist activism.

What Does Our Study Tell Us about Popular Feminism, Postfeminism and Anti-feminist Backlash?

As we noted in our Introduction, feminism has become both "hyper-visible and normative" (Banet-Weiser 2015) within contemporary media and popular culture, and this had a range of variable effects for our participants. While there is no doubt that our feminist organizers are indeed passionate about the work they were doing, in our current climate of precarity, it is clear that in some cases, their involvement can be described as "hope" (Kuehn and Corrigan 2013) or "aspirational" (Duffy 2016) labor—in which their un- or undercompensated labor is used to help secure future employment or opportunities. Yet, while the labor of the many goes unrewarded, as feminism continues to gain popularity, and is increasingly marketable and "brandable" (see Banet-Weiser 2012; Mendes 2017; Rottenberg 2014), we must be wary of the ways it is being co-opted to suit corporate agendas. In particular, we must keep a critical eye on the ways corporations, nonprofits, or NGOs might make use of unpaid labor, while simultaneously profiting from feminist activism and organizing (Mendes 2017).

Indeed, as scholars have noted, not only is mainstream feminism increasingly compatible with the market values of neoliberalism (Rottenberg 2014), but grassroots activists are ever more drawing from the logic of marketing and promotional culture to "brand" their activism to stand out and create affective ties in a highly competitive market (Mendes 2017). We have considered these tensions by trying to draw out the sites of contradiction and complexity as feminist activists, both at the highly organized level, as well as "everyday" Twitter feminists work on promoting their views through social media platforms. Gill (2016) has suggested the co-optation, recuperation, or reterritorialization of feminism is largely uneven. Neoliberal feminism may be most evident in commercially produced glossy women's magazines, books, newspapers, or even high-profile activist initiatives such as the Time's Up movement, but we found women navigate these initiatives in a range of complex ways. Some of the feminist

initiatives we explored were radical in nature, and are indeed identifying and challenging structural forms of oppression through intersectional analysis.

But at the same time as we see newfound representations of popular feminisms we see ever stronger rejections of feminism evident in the growth of anti-feminism such as the virulent spread of MRAs, and intensification misogynist hate speech (see Jane 2017) that are hallmarks of what Ging (2017) calls the "manoshpere." History has shown that whenever feminists begin to agitate and make progress in their quest for social change, it is met by a "backlash" (see Bevacqua 2000; Faludi 1992; Mendes 2011b). Although we have highlighted how feelings of solidarity, community, and support were common, trolling and mediated abuse is also a reality for many who use digital technologies to engage with feminism. To date, digital providers and social media companies such as Twitter have admitted they "suck at dealing with abuse and trolls" (see Hern 2015).

Whether it is accusations of a growing "witch-hunt" against men (see Livsey 2018), or the rise of "networked misogyny" (Banet-Weiser and Miltner 2015) and MRAs (Gottell and Dutton 2016), the contemporary backlash is here, albeit in new forms. Indeed, in recent years there is a growth of research on digital spaces devoted to men's rights that is characterized for its "truly remarkable gallery of antifeminist content" (Menzies 2007, 65; Ging 2017). Although much MRA and alt-right activity has historically been "hidden," others have noted their increased visibility as they gain political strength and numbers (Ging 2017; Nagle 2017). Just as feminists in the past have turned to alternative, quiet digital spaces to forge communities, MRAs are using the same tactics to counter feminist rhetoric, ideologies, and gains. In our professional lives, as we deal with young people within and outside educational institutions, we are aware of the growth of new, alternative masculinities that oppose feminism. Although many activists, policymakers, and movements "increasingly see bystanders as significant social change agents" (Rentschler 2017, 565; Henry and Powell 2017) our research demonstrates that digital intervention is often complex, and not always effective, and may lead to negative consequences for the intervener. Although research is paying more attention to bystanders (see Banyard, Moynihan, and Plante 2007; Rentschler 2017), this is an under-researched area that scholars could continue to explore, particularly as bystander intervention program are being rolled out across university campuses and by groups such as Hollaback!

Bystander interventions (both digitally and in person) in schools are another important area to consider. While there have been years of anti-bullying bystander interventions, gender-blind bullying policies have largely failed to address gendered and sexualized violence (Stein 2003; Ringrose and Renold 2010) with bystander interventions aimed at sexual harassment only recently developing. These could show promise if they focus on tackling coercive masculinities but

they must also recognize the intermeshing of online and offline in the production of sexism and sexual double standards among young people (Dobson and Ringrose 2016). Our findings showed how schools are failing to address sexism or sexual violence both online and offline as reported by our participants across international contexts of the US, Canada, and the UK. We found evidence that schools were not only failing to protect girls from rape culture experienced in and around school (such as street harassment on the way to school), but that they sanctioned rape culture through uniform and dress code policies in ways that remained largely unrecognized. Furthermore, they completely failed to acknowledge or address trolling, cybersexism, or sexual harassment online (see also Ringrose and Renold 2016a). Schools need to confront the complex nature of digital media as both an area where problematic behavior can proliferate, such as rape jokes and trolling as we demonstrated; but also recognize that digital technology can afford important opportunities for young people to fight back and exert their voice through digital political participation. Schools would do well to try to harness the pedagogical possibilities of social media for social justice and transformation around gender and sexual equity in ways that have been successful in university contexts (Guillard 2016; Kim and Ringrose 2018).

What Does Digital Feminism *Do*?

When we take a broad look at our study and our many findings, it is neither productive nor possible to conclude this book with one overarching claim. Instead, we want to finish by thinking about the road forward, and future implications of our work. We are keenly aware of the ways the activism we study is not merely a "media artifact"—instead we are talking about real people, who have experienced real violence, and the sharing of such experiences often has offline legal, political, social, or cultural implications. Although the point of contributing personal testimonials may in part be to gain some sense of power, agency, or justice, what can, or should contributors expect from such digital participation? While digital feminist activism is complex, and strategies of resistance vary across diverse campaigns, hashtags, and practices, considering our main findings, we have identified some key features of what digital feminism aims to do. Although we do not claim these features are found within all campaigns, nor that they are entirely new, they nonetheless provide a sense of the aims and objectives of much contemporary activism.

First, our research reveals how digital feminist initiatives often seek to make visible issues of inequality, access, power, abuse, and patriarchy. Making oppression visible has always been a key tenet of feminist activism, and in this sense, digital feminist activists carry on long and rich traditions of their forbearers. In

our contemporary culture, this visibility is necessary to combat notions we live in a postfeminist society, where feminism is unnecessary, redundant, harmful or passé (Gill 2007b; McRobbie 2009). A significant tenet of visibility involves speaking about those previously "unspeakable things" (see Penny 2014) such as sexual violence, harassment, and abuse (see also Keller, Mendes, and Ringrose 2018). Thus, drawing on Sara Ahmed (2017), we may conceptualize this visibility as part of the work of feminist cataloguing necessary for showing "that this incident is not isolated but part of a series of events: a series of structure" (30). The activist work that we foreground in this book is part of a structure that, we hope, gives evidence of the structure of patriarchy that undergirds many of the experiences we have explored here (Ahmed 2017).

Second, although many organizers and contributors to these sites already identified themselves as feminists, or recognized sexism, racism, and other oppressive ideologies, our study demonstrated the potential of these digital feminist campaigns as tools of collective consciousness-raising. Often, the media texts we analyzed contained specific articulations of how their authors now see individual instances of sexism as part of a wider structural problem of patriarchy. Our interview data also confirmed that many participants of digital feminist campaigns, such as those who contributed to the #BeenRapedNeverReported hashtag for example, often gained a better understanding of feminism through their participation, and several of our interviewees adopted a feminist identity after engaging with online feminist campaigns. This is remarkable, as it points to the ways in which digital feminist activism may function as a low-barrier entry point for other types of feminist activism and a more robust feminist politics.

Third, through the consciousness-raising discussed earlier, digital feminist activism produces connections, solidarities, and communities among participants. We trace this at several points in the book, including in chapters 5, 6, and 7, where we discuss how many of our interviewees developed a range of affective connections with others through their digital feminist activism. While we often consider sitting at the computer or tapping on our phones as a solitary activity, we argue that digital feminist activism is ultimately a collective activity and that the creation of these connections—despite sometimes only being temporary and ephemeral—are powerful.

Fourth, digital feminism seeks to challenge inequalities and oppression, getting the public to question taken-for-granted cultural norms and practices, including dress-code policies, street harassment, or sexualized "banter." These practices and norms are challenged through a range of strategies including humor and asking questions, and practical measures such as policy interventions, forging new communities, lobbying, and education. In some cases, these challenges may take on material forms, such as Hollaback!'s HeartMob app, which gathers

resources to help people report or cope with digitally mediated harassment, or #MeToo's spin-off campaign Time's Up, as discussed earlier.

Finally, we contend that digital feminism is being used to meet victims' various justice needs, both within and outside of legal frameworks. Rather than simply being used as new tools to seek conventional forms of justice, digital "technologies are mediating new social practices of informal justice" (Powell 2015, 573; see also Fileborn 2017). As demonstrated by popular hashtags such as #MeToo and #BeenRapedNeverReported, new technologies have provided some victims of sexual violence and harassment a way to "to tell their stories in their own way, in a setting of their choice" (Herman 2005, 574), making them feel heard and supported, and giving them some sense of comfort and justice. Powell (2015) argues that the proliferation of hashtags and apps to share traumatic experiences constitutes a positive "development of new technosocial practices of informal justice" (580). We reported on these types of practices in chapter 5 when one participant used "digilante" (Jane 2017) tactics to challenge misogynistic and sexually shaming comments of school boys by threatening to report them to their teacher. Receiving positive feedback in digital spaces gives some individuals the confidence to report their experience to authorities as we also document in chapter 5 where a participant went to Twitter and Interpol to find and charge a serial troll. Significantly this elevation of visibility and voice around experiences of sexual violence may be doing work to shift the epistemic fallacy connected to rape and women sexual survivors (Alcoff 2018). This may be the greatest potential social shift where the connectivity and support online spreads out a mass of experience in a form of public pedagogy that becomes difficult to discount and silence.

In Closing: What Can Digital Feminism Achieve?

Given these potentialities of digital feminist activism, we want to finish with some open questions, in order to think broadly about what digital feminist activism can achieve. The answer is not straightforward and difficult to measure. When seeing movements such as #MeToo, and its aftermath, it is difficult to contend that digital feminism is meaningless, yet it can be difficult to measure its impact. It is virtually impossible to predict where it will go to next. This is particularly true for our "hidden," "quiet," or "obscure" case studies, whose actions are often invisible to the public. Will these campaigns continue to gain momentum, or will they die out, only to be replaced by the next big "fad"? The answer again depends on the campaign itself and its requirements of a core group or organizers to keep it alive. A dedicated #MeToo website has already been established,

seeking donations for Tarana Burke's Girls for Gender Equality grassroots organization. Hollaback! has been successful, but as an NGO, needs to constantly seek out funding. Although Who Needs Feminism? attracted mainstream visibility for over a year, it eventually died out because its organizers could not sustain their unpaid activism while pursuing careers and having a work-life balance. And while hashtags such as #BeenRapedNeverReported have had a mini-revival in light of #MeToo, there is no doubt the pace of its use has slowed dramatically. Yet, while it is easy to count the number of powerful (white) men being fired, sued, or imprisoned, ideological shifts and broader cultural change can be far more difficult to measure. Even when figures are banded about such as 12 million people engaging with a hashtag, our analysis reveals the unexpected ways this content is engaged with. What proportion of #MeToo contributors are trolls? What proportion are simply making banal comments about the hashtag? To what degree is the movement being co-opted by organizations and individuals seeking to draw traffic to other sites?

As Papacharissi (2016) argues, "Change is gradual. Revolutions may spark instantaneously, but their impact is not instant; it unfolds over time, and for good reason. Revolutions are meaningless unless they are long. They have to be long to acquire meaning" (321). In teasing out the temporal and material nuances of digital feminist activism, this book reveals how the practices of engaging in feminist politics to effect social change is complex, and varied, and is experienced differently between groups, influenced by factors such as age, ability, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, social status, and power. In some cases, digital feminism has immediate reach, is highly visible, popular, and mainstream. We have shown how feminist activism often requires intensive and prolonged labor from high-profile organizers to maintain its visibility and wide reach. Its legacy may be long-lasting, producing tangible legislative, political, or cultural change. Powerful men may be fired, put on trial, or sent to prison. These initiatives may lead to feelings that change is happening, that justice has been, or will be achieved. While most digital feminist activism never reaches these high-levels of public visibility and may not contribute to tangible feelings of immanent society-wide changes, we have shown that participating in the everyday dynamics of these movements and counterpublics is hugely significant and experienced as life changing in the micromoments of connecting, dialoguing, and findings solidarity with others. Many of our participants deliberately seek out "quiet," "hidden," or seemingly "safe" spaces, restricted to a few trusted friends to explore their feminism. In other cases, they rely on the anonymity afforded by platforms such as Tumblr and Twitter to take account of and make visible their experiences of rape culture. Although the labor involved may not be as time-consuming as managing high-profile campaigns, it is often highly effective, carefully thought out, and

personally meaningful. Our participants have demonstrated repeatedly how the personal is political, and networked feminisms may well be contributing to the spread and reach of resistance to rape culture enabling large-scale cultural shifts and tangible policy or legal outcomes. Indeed, while the provocative tagline "Time's Up" invokes the sense of urgency and reckoning affectively produced through networked feminism, issuing an immediate challenge to all, as the adage goes: only time will tell.