Street Harassment at the Intersections:
The Experiences of Gay and Bisexual Men

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Abstract of Thesis

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The aim of this research is to explore whether and how gay and bisexual men experience street harassment – those public interactions committed by strangers that are targeted at individuals with specific (perceived) identities *because* of those identities. Street harassment is unwelcome and intimidating and makes people feed scared, uncomfortable, and humiliated, and research up to this point has mainly focused on the harassment of women by men. This study was conducted using only online methods, using a survey to interact with 331 gay and bisexual men from at least 42 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and 22 countries, in addition to follow-up interviews with 24 of those survey-takers. Ninety percent of the survey respondents reported sometimes, often, or always feeling unwelcome in public because of their sexual orientation, and 71.3 percent said they constantly assess their surroundings when navigating public spaces. This is not the case for everyone, though. Some men don't report these feelings because they may view victimization as inconsistent with their male identity, or they may just not experience it at all. The results also suggest important differences between the harassment of women vs. the harassment of gay/bisexual men. They also show interesting variety in experiences across identity categories – including age and race – in addition to differences depending on how men view their own masculinity and legibility of sexual orientation. Much more research is required to fully understand the experiences of particular groups, including transpeople, but that degree of focus was unfortunately beyond the scope of this study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction / Literature Review

Much work has been done in recent years to chronicle experiences of public/street harassment. Utilizing blogs, social media, and mobile technologies, the initial aim of this movement was to raise awareness of the issue by sharing the stories of individuals who are willing to publish their harassment narratives. Typically it is women who share their accounts of gender-based street harassment, though I have many times been the exception. In April 2011 I submitted and had published on the Stop Street Harassment blog (stopstreetharassment.org/blog) a post recounting an instance of harassment that happened earlier that day. I wrote, "A man saw me as I exited the Ballston Metro, lit a cigarette, and walked over to stand next to me. He began by asking a question about a metrobus and then asked me if I liked him. He continued, saying he was on the DL, liked my voice, and thought I was sexy and wanted to know if I liked big black cock. Then he asked if I wanted to see his. After repeatedly telling him that I was not interested he finally left me alone and walked away, probably to prey on another guy." While this harassment was gender-based – I was targeted because I am perceived to be (cis) male – it was also an act based on my perceived sexual orientation (which can certainly be the case in the harassment of women as well). After the man asked me a question about the transit system, he used his initial judgment of my appearance and his perception of my voice to determine that I was targetable. While I think this narrative challenges certain perpetrator/victim binary assumptions often found within street harassment discourse – namely that perpetrators are straight men and victims are women (Bowman 1993) – it

also importantly highlights the need to investigate alternative manifestations of public harassment – particularly acts against gay and bisexual men. It will be the aim of this study (through surveying and interviewing methods) to examine whether and how gay and bisexual men experience street harassment.

Street harassment is defined in many ways – and this paper will explore a variety of these definitions – though it is important to distinguish this form of harassment from other patterns of harassment and violence that gay and bisexual men commonly face. According to GLSEN's National School Climate Report (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz et al. 2012), for example, more than 80 percent of LGBT students had experienced verbal harassment, and a third of them experienced it often or frequently. Bullying in school settings is a very serious issue, but this is not the focus of my research. During International Anti-Street Harassment Week in April 2013, I helped the leaders of an LGBTQ harassment tweetchat refine their messages beforehand. One of the leaders emailed me the tweets she had prepared, and about half were specifically about school bullying. The statistics were compelling and highlighted an important issue but, I told her, that shouldn't really be the focus of a discussion about street harassment. Moreover, gay and bisexual men face workplace discrimination and endure violence within intimate partnerships (and the list goes on), but this is also not what I am focused on here. Street harassment specifically refers to acts that happen in public spaces and are committed by strangers – acts that, as illustrated in my narrative above, are targeted at individuals with specific (perceived) identities *because* of those identities. Street harassment is unwelcome and intimidating and makes people feel scared, uncomfortable, and humiliated. And this is a social problem. I often digest individual incidents of harassment

because that is how they are presented to us: one story at a time, one tweet at a time. But this issue is systemic and not a collection of isolated, unrelated events. It is important to conceptualize it that way, and to remember that these events occur in a society in which misogyny, homophobia, and racism circulate at all times.

Street harassment also exists in a context where violent, physical hate crimes occur. In spring 2013, a series of fatal attacks of gay men in New York City prompted public recognition of these crimes and, in countries around the globe where homosexuality is less accepted, this is a daily reality. In fact, it is not uncommon to read stories about gay men being killed around the globe simply because they are gay, or perceived to be gay. While my focus here tends to be on the more verbal and nonverbal (nonviolent) forms of public stranger harassment that consistently happen globally, these acts take place in a society where men *are* killed for their sexual orientation - thoughts that circulate as we navigate public spaces each day. According to a *Huffington Post* story titled "Street Harassment is an LGBTQIA Issue," Jae Cameron (2013) notes that "Even when it doesn't escalate, the fear of a comment turning violent is ever-present and becomes part of a very loud, constant, and exhausting voice that denies LGBTQIA folks the safety, security, and respect that we deserve." In addition, the term 'street harassment' by name might exclude these violent, sometimes fatal attacks. The word 'harassment,' for some, trivializes serious physical experiences, and it normally refers to acts that are troublingly persistent. This point is open to debate, but is an important one to make in describing how I operationally define street harassment for this particular research.

Hollaback, a significant piece of the movement to end street harassment, includes queer communities in its conception of who is or can be harassed. According to their

website, "Comments from 'You'd look good on me' to groping, flashing and assault are a daily, global reality for women and LGBTQ individuals. But it is rarely reported, and it's culturally accepted as 'the price you pay' for being a woman or for being gay" (ihollaback.org/about). While these types of harassment are very much related and indeed interconnected, the victimization of LGBTQ individuals, particularly men, is a separate issue worthy of its own attention. I do not contend that instances of queer male street harassment outnumber the amount of times women are harassed (after all, there are many more women than queer men), or even that queer men are harassed at equal rates as women are. But they can be and certainly are harassed, and it is this possibility of public harassment that maintains a certain level of fear that harassment might occur. And each instance fuels the fire. After the incident of street harassment I described above – which happened in a very public and populated area at a very busy time – I was shaken and left unconvinced that anywhere was a safe space. This sentiment, that public spaces are (straight) male spaces (Kissling 1991), reverberates throughout gender-based street harassment literature and indeed applies to the harassment of gay and bisexual men as well.

Feelings of being unable to safely navigate public areas is encapsulated in a definition of street harassment by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, an organization whose aim is to end violence against women of color. Though their mission does not have an emphasis on queer individuals – or men at all – their definition is vague enough to apply across identity categories. For them, street harassment is "An interaction in a public space that makes you feel sexualized, intimidated, embarrassed, objectified, violated, attacked, or unsafe. An interaction in a public space that restricts your

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movement or makes you modify your behavior in an attempt to avoid the possibility of being verbally and/or physically harassed." Gardner (1995), whose work focuses on women (while recognizing that all citizens are subject to public harassment), defines it in this way: "Public harassment is that group of abuses, harryings, and annoyances characteristic of public places and uniquely facilitated by communication in public. Public harassment includes pinching, slapping, hitting, shouted remarks, vulgarity, insults, sly innuendo, ogling, and stalking. Public harassment is on a continuum of possible events, beginning when customary civility among strangers is abrogated and ending with the transition to violent crime: assault, rape, or murder" (4). For my purposes, Hollaback's definition of street harassment is most useful because of its inclusion of queer populations. According to their website, "Street harassment is a form of sexual harassment that takes place in public spaces. At its core is a power dynamic that constantly reminds historically subordinated groups (women and LGBTQ folks, for example) of their vulnerability to assault in public spaces. Further, it reinforces the ubiquitous sexual objectification of these groups in everyday life" (ihollaback.org/about/faqs). Despite this recognition that gay and bisexual men (part of the GB in LGBTQ) are at a greater risk of being harassed on the streets, little work has been done to critically examine how this population fits into broader street harassment discourse.

Many authors indicate that men are victims of street harassment, too, but ultimately decide that including them is beyond the scope of their research. In her chapter titled "Multilayered Harassment," Kearl (2010) parenthetically notes that "While gay men are harassed and attacked for their sexual orientation, I am not focusing on them in this

chapter" – though she does include lesbians in her analysis. Laniya (2005) realizes that

the term street harassment "lacks any mention of the act as a gender-specific harm" (100).

She understands that women can harass men and that harassment among individuals of

the same sex occurs, and later says that "interesting power dynamics are at play when a

person harasses someone of the same sex and such a study would greatly add to the

discourse" (100). Tuerkheimer (1997) reserves space in a footnote to explain her

exclusion: "In addition, gay men somehow identified as such may be harassed based on

their orientation, triggering issues of power and sexuality similar to but not the same as

those involved when a woman is harassed on the street. These issues are outside the

scope of my discussion and merit separate treatment" (206). This area of overlap – where

the public harassment of women and gay/bisexual men looks the same (and where it

looks different) – is of interest to me in this research. Bowman (1993) defines street

harassment as occurring "when one or more unfamiliar men accost one or more women

in a public place, on one or more occasions, and intrude or attempt to intrude upon the

woman's attention in a manner that is unwelcome to the woman, with language or action

that is explicitly or implicitly sexual" (575). She lists six characteristics of street

harassment, the first two saying that the targets are female and the harassers are male

(523), though she footnotes the first one saying that "The harassment of gay men on the

street - 'gay bashing' - grounded as it is in homophobia, should be the subject of a

separate discussion" (523). Sullivan, Lord and McHugh (2010) agree that street

harassment is directed at various groups, including LGBT populations, and edits

Bowman's statement to say that targets are *usually* female and harassers are *usually* male

(238, emphasis mine). So, while many researchers acknowledge that gay/bisexual men

experience street harassment as well, those experiences have not been central to their bodies of research.

Kearl (2010) provides one of the most recent and comprehensive works on gender-based street harassment available and delineates the social context in which street harassment occurs. According to her, street harassment happens "in a culture of worldwide gender inequality," "in a context of rape culture," and in "a context of victim blaming where women are put at fault for the harassment instead of the men who perpetrate it" (23-24). I think these contextual notes can be shifted to apply to the harassment of gay and bisexual men as well. First, much like gender inequality is a global issue, homophobia and heterosexism circulate on various levels throughout the globe as well. According to Herek (1990), "cultural heterosexism" (317), at least in the United States, is a backdrop against which anti-gay violence occurs. Next, Kearl (2010) notes that stranger rape and being alone in public are fears that few men have, though it certainly exists. In reality, other forms of violence against gay and bisexual men – like school bullying, mentioned above – create a narrative of violence starting at an early age – and this phenomenon has been especially salient in recent years. Finally, similar victim blaming occurs with gay and bisexual men as a result of certain modes of self-expression (by pointing to what someone is wearing, or how someone is walking, for example). Instead of focusing on preventing acts of violence by teaching the perpetrator that his actions are wrong, attention is placed on how the victim can ensure that it will not happen again (by dressing differently, or presenting himself in a more gender-normative way). In looking at these contextual factors combined, I hope that my research can assist in

identifying how this context exists for gay and bisexual men as well, at least for the form of harassment that fits into this heterosexist framework.

Recognizing this framework is important, as is understanding the differences between some of these terms. Herek (2000) makes a simple, but important distinction between homophobia and heterosexism. According to him, "homophobia has typically been employed to describe individual antigay attitudes and behaviors whereas heterosexism has referred to societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutionalized oppression of non-heterosexual people" (19). He finds limitations with both of these terms and offers 'sexual prejudice' to encompass negativity based on hetero-, bi-, and homo-sexualities (though more on an individual level). Another term that is often deployed, heteronormativity (Ingraham 1994, Warner 1995) is the idea that heterosexuality (the normative and institutionalized sexual orientation) exists as the natural standard for all legitimate social organization. It is also about celebrating heterosexual relationships and organizing social life around them. While not all incidences of street harassment of gay and bisexual men are in fact necessarily homophobic, they do all occur within a heteronormative society.

<div align="center">Recent reports</div>

Two recent reports released in 2013 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) offer interesting findings in relation to the street harassment of gay and bisexual men. Although these studies are very different from each other - and very different than my own research - they do present relevant data that warrants discussion. The FRA's report includes more than 93,000 LGBT respondents from EU member states and Croatia and

includes gay men, lesbians, bisexual men, bisexual women, and transpeople. Interestingly, and perhaps problematically, while answers can be filtered to only see the responses from gay men, lesbians, bisexual men, or bisexual women, the fifth option is simply 'transgender.' It is also unclear whether participants were able to choose more than one option when identifying themselves. The FRA's study also included much more than just street/public harassment, and indeed this was a very small percentage of the overall research. The NCAVP study (Chestnut, Dixon, and Jindasurat 2013) covers gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected populations and deals specifically with often physical manifestations of hate violence (which, as noted above, was not the focus of my research). And again, NCAVP's focus was much broader than street harassment, and included a much larger demographic than my research did. Despite these differences, these reports help to underscore the global presence of harassment against gay and bisexual men.

The fact sheet for FRA's report notes that "Some 66 percent of respondents across all EU Member States are scared of holding hands in public with a same-sex partner. For gay and bisexual men respondents, this figure amounted to 74 percent and 78 percent, respectively" (1-2). It is also clear that many gay and bisexual men avoid locations for fear of being assaulted, threatened, or harassed because of their perceived sexual orientation. In terms of the locations of these incidents, when asked where the most serious incident of harassment occurred, several of the options fit within the umbrella of street harassment, including street, square, parking lot, or other public place; public transport; and cafe, restaurant, pub, or club. It is significant that these locations are even options, given how under-acknowledged street harassment has been until recently. Using

their online data survey explorer is somewhat difficult and does not allow for cross-filtering of results, though these public manifestations of harassment certainly do account for a portion of harassment in the EU and Croatia. Levels vary from country to country and depend on how accepting the country is of non-normative sexual orientations.

According to NCAVP's study, verbal harassment in person makes up 13.6 percent of incidences of violence, while 12.7 percent is threats/intimidation, 9.7 percent is harassment, and 2.1 percent is stalking. These categories are broad and overlapping, though, because 16.5 percent of incidences are characterized as 'discrimination' (which would seem to fit for all or most of the other categories). It is also unclear where these incidences occur, though the report does differentiate between known offenders and unknown offenders, noting that 73 percent of unknown offenders are strangers (opposed to, say, police, who are often strangers as well). It would be interesting to see strangers included in the larger offender list (with all the known offenders) to determine where stranger harassment fits in more broadly. Nearly 60 percent of the harassment was characterized as heterosexist/anti-LGBTQ, which makes sense given that about two-thirds of the respondents identified as gay or lesbian. Again, this study includes a sample that is far broader than in my research, examines types of harassment and violence that fall well outside of street harassment, and seems to focus on physical acts of violence - which was not my focus. The research done by FRA and NCAVP is important for many reasons - for one, it shows how complex and multi-faceted harassment against gay and bisexual men is. The scopes of these two studies in particular also help to show how relatively narrow my focus is (though it is evident that much narrower research is still needed).

In June 2013, Pew Research Center released a report titled "A Survey of LGBT Americans: Attitudes, Experiences and Values in Changing Times" that presents results of a nationally-representative survey of 1,197 LGBT adults. Many of the participants experienced some sort of discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Included in the survey were six types of incidents (with corresponding responses): been subject to slurs or jokes (58 percent); been rejected by a friend or family member (39 percent); been threatened or physically attacked (30 percent); been made to feel unwelcome in a place of worship (29 percent); received poor services in a restaurant, hotel, place of business (23 percent); and been treated unfairly by an employer (21 percent). While discrimination from family members and employers does not fit into the stranger harassment framework I am concerned with here, the other categories are relevant figures in the examination of public harassment of gay and bisexual men. In particular, the study notes that gay men are more likely to experience slurs or jokes and physical attacks or threats than other identity categories. Nearly eight in ten (79 percent) gay men experienced jokes or slurs, a figure that was 60 percent for lesbians and 40 percent for bisexuals (the study does not differentiate between bisexual men and bisexual women). There were no significant differences in these types of discrimination based on the race of the survey-taker and there were few differences based on age. Pew does note, though, that geographically "LGBT adults living in the South are more likely than those living in the Northeast and Midwest to have experienced four or more of these incidents - 29 percent vs. 18 percent for the Northeast and 19 percent for the Midwest. LGBT adults living in the West are not statistically different from any of the three regional groups in this regard (22 percent say they've experienced four or more of these incidents)" (43).

While questions about discrimination and harassment made up a relatively small portion of the overall study, it is significant that these questions are being asked in a nationally-representative study by a reputable research body. Again, like the two studies cited above, and like ones to follow, incidences of public/stranger harassment is not the focus as it is in my research.

The Center for American Progress (CAP) published a report in 2011 called "Gay and Transgender Discrimination Outside the Workplace: Why We Need Protections in Housing, Health Care, and Public Accommodations" authored by Crosby Burns and Philip Ross. Again, the entire report is not relevant to my research, though the portions that reference public spaces shed light on obstacles faced by individuals with non-normative sexual orientations or gender identities. It notes that discrimination takes place in "restaurants, bars, libraries, museums, parks, hotels, shops, and public transportation such as buses and trains. A significant amount of evidence reveals that gay and transgender people are obstructed and often excluded from areas of public accommodation just like other discriminated-against minorities" (8). Crosby and Ross cite a 2001 study conducted by Empire State Pride Agenda which surveyed gay individuals in New York in relation to their experiences eating in a restaurant, entering a store, or checking in to a hotel. That particular study found that 37 percent of participants were made to feel unwelcome, 27 percent were treated inappropriately or with hostility, 25 percent were verbally harassed, 6 percent were denied service, and 5 percent were physically harassed. It is unclear what percent of participants may have been gay men vs. lesbians (the site that CAP links back to is no longer available), but these figures are

nonetheless significant and very telling of the harassment faced by men perceived to be gay in public. CAP also shares a story included in the Empire State Pride Agenda's study:

> "While buying a bike I met with a salesperson at the store. I was accompanied by my boyfriend and we put a deposit on a bike. We came back a few days later to get the bike and the salesperson said they sold it. When I complained about having left a deposit, the salesperson very loudly said, 'get the f--- out of here you faggots' and continued to repeat this in front of everyone in the store including the manager/owner" (9)

Experiencing verbal harassment like this simply for being gay is not uncommon, as evidenced by the study. CAP concludes its section on public accommodations by saying, "This type of discrimination is senseless, irrational, and just plain wrong. But far too many gay and transgender Americans live in fear of discrimination and harassment even in their own communities because it continues to exist" (9).

<p style="text-align:center">Earlier research</p>

An older report released in 2000 by The Scottish Executive Central Research Unit ("The Experience of Violence and Harassment of Gay Men in the City of Edinburgh) examines harassment and violence faced by men in Edinburgh, Scotland. In total, 246 face-to-face interviews were completed on a set questionnaire and an additional 54 men completed a questionnaire (not face-to-face). According to the report's forward, "There is a growing body of research to support the premise that *because of their sexual orientation* gay men experience higher levels of violence and harassment compared to the general population. Such violence and harassment can take place in the home, in their neighbourhood, in the workplace, in the streets or in other public places" (Morrison,

MacKay, and The TASC Agency 9; emphasis in original). It continues, "There is also some evidence that violence or harassment which is motivated by hate - be it hate based on difference of race, gender or sexuality - leaves the victim significantly more distressed than random crimes against the person or their property" (9). The report notes that 60 percent of incidents were stranger harassment and that only 9 percent of incidents were committed by someone known by sight. Almost two-thirds of incidents (62 percent) were committed on the street - a quarter were committed on the street near the respondents' homes, and 37 percent somewhere else on the street (1/8 occurred at home and 1/13 occurred at work). According to the survey's respondents, 77 percent of the harassment was motivated by anti-gay attitudes. Moreover, 40 percent experienced verbal insults, 20 percent experienced threats, approximately 20 percent experienced being followed on foot, and around 14 percent were followed by a car. This study appears to have only included gay men and only covered one very particular area geographically, but it is the kind of focused research that is needed in order to learn more about how particular demographics experience street harassment. What this study lacks is any mention of race (or other identity categories the survey respondents represented) - though this could simply mean that the entire sample was white (perhaps not unlikely in Edinburgh).

Comstock (1991) outlines his survey results related to verbal harassment in his seminal text *Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men*. His sample included 291 individuals (125 women and 166 men, 233 white and 68 people of color). In total, 89 percent said they were targeted by heterosexual people because of their sexual orientation, including threats of violence, insults, and names like faggot, dyke, sissy, manhater, queer, pervert, and others (92 percent of women of color, 85 percent of white women, 95

percent of men of color, and 89 percent of white men). Of the language used by the

harassers, 71 percent disparaged homosexuality; 39 percent referred to God, religion, or

the bible; 32 percent boasted of heterosexuality; 26 percent referred to AIDS; 26 percent

was anti-feminist or anti-woman; 13 percent was racially insulting; and 9 percent was

ethnically insulting. Relevant to my research, 41 percent happened outside a lesbian or

gay bar, 32 percent in a predominantly straight neighborhood, 29 percent in a place for

the general public, 24 percent on the street in a mostly gay/lesbian neighborhood, and 21

percent on public transportation (other options included high school, college, work, and

home). Harassers were also overwhelmingly identified as a stranger (62 percent), while

all other responses tended to be known individuals (except perhaps police, which was 14

percent). Harassers were also identified as 89 percent male, 75 percent white, and 51

percent age 21 or younger (though it is unclear how this may have differed in relation to

the person being harassed). Additionally, when looking at the number of harassers, there

was only one in 39 percent of reported incidents, two harassers in 19 percent of incidents,

three harassers in 14 percent of incidents, and four harassers in 14 percent of incidents

(then the figures drop off significantly). Incidents occurred alone 35 percent of the time,

with one other person 35 percent of the time, and with more than one other person 30

percent of the time. While verbal, public harassment of gay and bisexual men was (again)

not the primary focus of Comstock's work, these figures clearly indicate that, decades

ago, street harassment was very much an issue. Acceptance of LGBT individuals has

certainly increased over time, though street harassment endures. The Pew Research

Center's study interestingly notes that 92 percent of respondents think society is more

accepting of LGBT people now than it was ten years ago and 92 percent said it would be

even more accepting of LGBT people in ten years from now. Only 19 percent, however, said there is "a lot" (30) of social acceptance of LGBT people today, and 53 percent thought a lot of discrimination against LGBT people exists. Even though respondents overwhelmingly think society is now more accepting than when, say, Comstock conducted his survey, only about one in five think there is *a lot* of social acceptance.

Writing more than three decades ago, di Leonardo (1981) makes observations that are possibly interesting areas of overlap between the public harassment of women and gay/bisexual men. For example, she notes "a fantastic rise in the number of women concerned with being physically fit. This change places women outdoors, in areas they wouldn't travel otherwise, at all times of day and night. Not only running, but simply commuting to and from dance, self-defense or exercise classes, tennis courts or softball fields places women outdoors more often" (54) and thus subject to more harassment. This relates to work done by Kimmel and Mahalik (2005) on gay male body image concerns. According to them, "Results also extend the applicability of the minority stress model to body image concerns for gay men by supporting earlier scholars' speculations that experiences of prejudice, internalized shame, and the desire to feel more powerful against anti-gay attacks may contribute to gay men's desire for a powerful physique" (1187-1188). Some gay men may compensate for effeminate perceptions and reject gay stereotypes by performing in a more traditionally masculine way, which requires that they work out to become physically fit. For these gay men, this masculine performance relates to a variety of psychological and physical health issues. Evidently, the reproduction and perpetuation of heteronormativity is unhealthy, particularly for men who try to 'live up' to societally normalized heteromasculinity. To what degree gay or

bisexual men are successful in masking their non-normative sexuality is unclear, and the way male and female bodies are consumed certainly varies from person to person. My main interest here is the desire for both of these groups to be physically fit, which is ultimately (mostly) healthy for their bodies but unhealthy in separate ways (because they are harassed while in public, or because – for men – they are 'performing' to combat their internalized shame of being/looking gay). di Leonardo (1981), in trying to rationalize why men harass, says that the "most obvious answer is the rise of feminist militance: women are refusing to serve, to be deferent to, to avoid competing with, to take abuse from men – in the home and at work" (54). Similar dynamics may be at work in the harassment of gay and bisexual men. As support for marriage equality and workplace protections shift to the mainstream in the United States, it is possible that some incidences of harassment are direct responses to this acceptance of LGBT folks. These two trains of thought are related but not parallel; women might be subject to more harassment *because* they work out/are outside more often, while men may work out to *avoid* harassment.

<div align="center">Contemporary, online landscape</div>

Since street harassment awareness-raising efforts are largely Internet-based, and since the topic is now very often written about online, academic resources and formal reports only tell part of the story. Sharing stories of harassment, such as the one I shared in the opening, continues to be a popular way of documenting incidences, raising awareness, and communicating to others that they are not alone in experiencing street harassment. The voices of men who have been harassed have unfortunately not entered this conversation very often, though. On the Stop Street Harassment blog, I can only find one

other street harassment story (other than ones I have submitted) that was specifically submitted by a gay man to tell a personal story of harassment. In a post titled "Pennies and Homophobic Slurs in Los Angeles," Dave Cano writes the following: "I was recently, on two separate occasions, called a 'F' & thrown pennies at while walking in my own neighborhood. It was a terrifying & humiliating experience. And while those thugs did make me 5 cents richer, it was totally uncalled for, especially in 2013. What a reminder of the struggles the gay community still faces – even in L.A!" This post's author touches on several points I will return to later: his (presumable) aloneness, his harassment by a group of men, his location. Cano submitted this story after reading an article I had published on *Huffington Post* and then tweeting to me that he was inspired by it. I encouraged him to speak out and share a story, and he did so immediately. The other related post is one called "Humanity Could Care Less," a story written in 2008 by a woman named Linda who recounts an incident of public harassment that takes place in a restaurant while she is with a gay male friend. Her friend was wearing makeup and people would not stop staring (though she says staring is a kind way of describing the public's reaction). She writes, "The poor boy wanted to EAT, and that's what he got. I hate how people don't even have manners anymore, just because people are gay does not mean they're animals in a zoo and meant to be stared, pointed, and looked down upon." Over on Collective Action for Safe Spaces' website (formerly Hollaback DC!), I see stories from two gay men - one who was called "faggot" by a van full of men simply while standing on the corner of the street ("It Made Me Realize How Dangerous DC is for the LGBT Community"). He says that he is not flamboyant, that he was wearing a t-shirt and jeans with some bracelets on his wrist. His reference to what he is wearing

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speaks to physical indicators of one's sexual orientation - indicators that I asked questions about in my research and that I will explore later. The other post on the Collective Action site ("Harassed by a Young Woman") was from a gay man who was, along with his boyfriend, harassed by a woman on a bus. According to him:

> As soon as I sat down, a young woman (with suggestive cup in hand) pointed at my (*sic*) and acclaimed to her friends, "Oh my Gawd, he's so fine. Look at him! Sooo fine!". The friends pointed to my boyfriend and said, "him?" and the girl boasted, "not him, HIM!" pointing back at me. For the 2 stops to follow, the young lady stated that "He's chunky!! Just the way I like them!", "And he's got grey eyes!! I love that!" (for the record, my eyes are blue), and also told my boyfriend, "Is that your boo? You better hold on to him! If you lose him, I'll find him and f*ck him". As we stood to exit the train at Columbia Heights, she cooed "Oh, and look at that, he's tall too!!! MMMMM!".

This interaction presents a dynamic that is less explored both in this paper and in street harassment discourse at large, mainly because of how relatively rare it is in comparison to other configurations. The story told here, though, illustrates that it certainly does exist and requires more attention in future research - which I will address later.

On Hollaback!'s website, a handful of gay men have submitted stories describing mostly homophobic interactions. In a post titled "Kevin's Story: Why say it twice?", Kevin shares an experience he had with his boyfriend during which they were called 'faggots' (twice) by a man who was walking past them. It was daylight, and he says they were not holding hands or doing anything that would have signaled they are together or even gay. He further notes "...it certainly frightened me and is discomforting to have this

happen only a block from where I live!" In "HOLLA ON THE GO: 'Needless to say, offended,'" a man describes the following experience:

> I'm a tiny gay asian that looks feminine and people think it's okay to assume I am either gender. I remember once during a vacation I was walking down a rather dirty street and someone yelled at me, "Hey, come here let's have some fun." I turned around and it was some hulky guy. His friend then said, "Nah, little girls are tight; you'll break her." At this point I walked away, but then the same guy yelled, "Shit, it's a guy. Suck my dick, faggot." Needless to say, offended.

This story is interesting because it begins as a gender-based harassment experience as the man is perceived to be a woman, but quickly shifts to a very homophobic encounter. The presence of more than one harasser is perhaps significant here, and I will discuss homosocial interactions more in my findings. In "Kent's Story: Hatred and bigotry are still ever present in our world," Kent describes what happened to him one day in Madison Square Park: "The man was about 6 foot 2 inches (two inches shorter than me); but heavier than me; yelling 'faggot' and slurred threats my way. He sped up to intentionally cross my path at this narrowed point....Passing within a foot of me, he yelled 'faggot' again and threatened to beat me over the head with a bottle he had in his hand." This happened in close proximity to many other people and it was still relatively light outside, making the experience even more terrifying. Kent closes his narrative with a thought that I often return to when thinking about street harassment. He says, "It just reminds me that hatred and bigotry are still ever present in our world; no matter the 'advances' we in the Gay Community believe we are making, and no matter the 'acceptance' we seem to be seeing from the general population; we still have to be vigilant and cautious as there will

always be people out there meaning us harm." This sentiment is too true. Despite recent legislative and judicial advancements, the constant harassment - and fear of harassment - remind men who are not heterosexual (or are perceived that way) that they are still, somehow, different.

These three Hollaback! stories are all good examples of the anti-gay harassment men experience, but this is not the only form of public harassment that exists. In "Willie's Story: 'I'd never been more afraid,'" Willie shares what happened to him one night while he is at the gym. An older man followed him into the shower area of the locker room (though Willie says the man had already showered) and stood in the stall across from him. When he looked over, the man was masturbating. He says, "I didn't know what to do or say so I kinda backed up into my stall a little more to move away from him and he kept stroking and started reaching for me." He confronted the man and rushed out of the locker room, but the effects were very real. According to him, "I'd never been more afraid or shaken up in my life...It was sick and creepy and I don't understand why because a man can 'tell I'm gay' he thinks he's entitled to invade my personal space and make me feel disgusting." While this incident did not occur 'on the street,' the gym is still a public space and the harassment was committed by a stranger. Most noticeably, instead of using slurs to disparage Willie, the man sexualizes him - saying "damn!" as he walks by, masturbating in the shower while watching him, and trying to touch him. This man's actions were not complimentary - they were objectifying - and Willie's voice is a crucial one as the views of harassed men continue, slowly, to add to this discourse.

In the past, men's voices in the street harassment conversation were nearly exclusively the voices of bystanders or allies. In a Stop Street Harassment blog post in October 2010

titled "Sexual Harassment is Not a Compliment, No Matter the Harasser," a post written by a man, the editor notes that "Normally only stories from men who are sharing stories as bystanders or allies in ending gender-based street harassment are those posted on here, but I thought it was worth offering this perspective because it similarly shows that sexual harassment of men, just like sexual harassment of women, is construed as a compliment and is not taken seriously, as it should be." The post's author recounts being harassed for being small and wearing glasses, saying he is "not the typical 'hunky' man that you women always seem to go for." Posts like this one (which begins "Hi ladies") make clear that, while men can feel harassed for particular facets of their appearance, they are not universally harassed *because* they are men the way that women are harassed *because* they are women. His perception of the incident should not be trivialized, but it is also important to separate this harassment from the forms being discussed here. In a blog post in September 2011 titled "Men: Share Your Voice," the site invites men to participate in two ways: either by blogging as a male ally or by sharing bystander stories. These perspectives are indeed critical; more men need to be engaged, and participating in these ways are effective ways to hear these perspectives. The post did not call for personal harassment narratives of men. This may not have been the aim of this particular post, and it may not have been the aim of the blog at that time. The language is now much more inclusive, like Hollaback's website, and welcomes the narratives of all people (as evidenced by its publication of mine).

One organization working toward incorporating queer voices is Safe Streets AZ, a project of the Southern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault - "part of a movement to track, map, and end public harassment experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and

queer-identified youth" (http://safestreetsaz.com/about/). The site mostly acts as a

resource center, offering ways to get involved, resources for getting help, and literature

on the topic of public harassment. It also houses a timeline of harassment narratives,

much like the other sites cited above. Nearly every story posted is one submitted by a

(usually teenage) woman, though other queer individuals have posted too. One story

submitted by a genderqueer individual who identifies as queer details a story of being

harassed for appearing to be gay, being called a faggot by a man in a truck ("Your street

harassment stories: '...pulled up in a truck, blocking my way'"). A 15-year-old trans man

describes the pain of being cat-called, especially when he is perceived as the gender he

has transitioned from. He says, "I see myself as male, so when men say things like 'hey,

hottie' and 'nice ass,' they aren't commenting on ME. They're going off of looks, and

they aren't even looks I want" ("I'd rather be complimented on who I am rather than on

my appearance"). This happens to gay men too, as detailed by the Asian man cited above,

but it is, of course, more pervasive in trans populations. While gay and bisexual men are

not necessarily the ones posting here, the stories of queer individuals offer a critically

important perspective since most stories on other sites are submitted by cisgender women.

My study focuses on gay and bisexual men, but individuals who identity as genderqueer

or transgender should be the focus of future research.

As Cameron (2013) notes in the *Huffington Post* piece cited earlier, after talking to

queer friends and collecting stories from this community, "the message is clear: street

harassment disproportionately happens to, and has a strong impact on, members of the

LGBTQIA community." While street harassment remains a largely understudied issue in

general, the experiences of queer communities - including gay and bisexual men - have

very clearly been missing. In the pages that follow I will describe the methods I used to begin to chip away at this phenomenon, which I hope prompts even more specific and nuanced research.

Chapter 2: Methods

In this study I collected quantitative data using an online survey (see Appendix A) that was then illuminated by more qualitative, contextualized individual online interviews (see Appendix B). At the end of the survey, participants were asked if they would like to participate in a possible follow-up interview. They were provided with an email address on the survey for them to contact and communicate their interest, and I responded to those individuals separately with an identical initial round of questions. Since this was not a local survey and individuals from very diverse locations participated, follow-up interviews were done online as well via email. Once they responded to these questions, I determined whether I had any follow-up questions for each participant on an individual basis and emailed those as well.

I ultimately had 331 useable survey responses. When individuals responded who openly identified themselves as someone other than a gay or bisexual man, I immediately discarded their surveys and did not tally them in the process. Others were discarded because I could not conclusively determine whether or not the respondent was a gay or bisexual male (see my findings for more on this). Ninety men expressed interest in doing a follow-up interview, 106 men said they were not interested, and 118 said they were not sure, but that they would contact me if they decided at a later time that they wanted to participate. Of those, 58 survey participants actually emailed me to take part in the interview process, and an even smaller number actually answered any questions. In the

end I had a group of 24 men who participated in the interview portion (a group I further describe in my findings).

Jayaratne and Stewart (2008) identify several criticisms of quantitative methods, though most significant to this study is their observation that quantitative data seems simplistic and superficial in nature when presented strictly in numerical form, and that data can be interpreted incorrectly or overgeneralized without the sort of context that I hope my follow-up interviews provided. Miner-Rubino and Jayaratne (2007) also note this lack of context, pointing to a popular feminist criticism that "researchers reduce people simply to numbers while ignoring the contextualized lives in which they live" (300). Since this study was largely exploratory, I expected that my interview data would inform much of the survey results and provide a more contextualized view of public harassment enacted against gay and bisexual men. It is important to note, however, that my study does not aim to generalize to all gay and bisexual men's experiences with harassment from this sample and it will not try to measure any sort of harassment prevalence among this group. While I hope to show that this is not an isolated problem, clearly it will be impossible to make any sort of conclusive statements or generalize that a certain percentage of *all* gay men face this sort of harassment.

Critical to this research is informed consent. I obtained consent from all research participants. Consent occurred after recruitment and prior to beginning the online survey and again prior to beginning the follow-up interview (for those who choose to do so). It was done completely electronically. I posted a disclaimer explaining the purpose of the survey, how people's responses will be used as data for a thesis, and that the survey will be taken anonymously with a promise of confidentiality of the information they provide.

Questions that ask for identifying information were not comprehensive enough to identify participants individually. The survey company (surveymonkey.com) does not require people to enter any information about themselves prior to taking the survey, so there is no way to trace the responses to the survey participants. The first page of the online survey was a consent form that research participants read before taking the survey. The bottom of the form reads, "To ensure anonymity, your signature is not required. Your willingness to participate in this research study is implied if you proceed with completing the survey" (see Appendix A). They were also able to exit the survey at any point if they wished to discontinue their involvement. For the follow up interview, participants emailed streetharassmentthesis@gmail.com if they were interested in participating in that portion of the research. I responded with a separate consent form, which read, "To ensure anonymity, your signature is not required. Your willingness to participate in this research study is implied if you proceed with completing the interview questions" (see Appendix C). They could also end their participation at any time. Though email addresses are often people's names, I will not be collecting or recording this information and it will not be attached to their answers in any way.

In keeping with online strategies for collecting data, my recruitment efforts involved contacting Twitter and Facebook users to disseminate my survey to their followers. I contacted fairly popular and influential individual users who tweet/post about queer news and politics (among other things). My hope was that the gay and bisexual men who follow these users have somewhat of a queer consciousness and may already frame this type of discrimination as some sort of systemic marginalization rather than as the price you pay for being gay/bisexual. In their recognition that this type of harassment is a

larger, societal issue, I thought it might be possible that these men cared more about contributing to a larger collection of knowledge (my research) and would be more likely to take the survey. Since men post infrequently on sites like stopstreetharassment.com and the numerous regional Hollaback sites (as I detailed in the previous section), contacting these organizations to recruit men to learn about their experiences was not a recruitment method that I used (though I hope their participation in these types of projects increases in the future). Since this a feminist project in its aim to examine the victimization of an oppressed population, I also targeted individuals active in online feminism to tweet or post a link to my survey. Strictly using online recruitment strategies is not without its drawbacks, though. While having people post various recruitment messages on their Twitter and Facebook pages allowed me to reach a large number of people, it was also very easy for these messages to be seen by people who I was not targeting. That is, these posts could very well have been recirculated (via retweeting or reposting), which ultimately would have decomposed my original targeted sample. Though I think this is an issue with many online recruitment methods, it is important to be aware that, when using the Internet, it is difficult at times to maintain focus when so many people have access to what the researcher is doing. It was also difficult to maintain the original recruitment messages that I originally sent out. Individuals recirculated my survey link with separate messages than those I posted, typically to ask their own gay and bisexual male followers to take my survey about street harassment. While it was not necessarily framed in a way that altered my original message, it was still something other than my approved recruitment posts. This risk exists with much research done online. Of course, there were also more general concerns about using an online survey as the

primary means of data collection, such as the reality that people may take the survey more than once, provide false information or, inevitably, fill it out as a joke. Online dissemination of my survey did, however, allow people to click directly on a link and hopefully ease the process of beginning it so, while these drawbacks exist, using online strategies was most pragmatic for this research.

Even though this study aimed to measure street harassment that is enacted based on perceived non-normative sexuality, and thus could certainly include heterosexual men, I identified potential participants based on self-identification as either gay or bisexual. This was done for several reasons. The degree to which gay and bisexual men enact particular brands of masculinity, as my findings will make evident, already varies so widely without the inclusion of heterosexual-identified men. There is also the issue of heterosexual men – even in an anonymous online survey – failing to admit that others have perceived them to be not heterosexual, or not masculine, and thus the target of harassment that is generally reserved for individuals who occupy lower and less powerful social positions. My hope is that by measuring self-perceptions of both masculinity and physical indicators of sexual orientation within a gay and bisexual male demographic, the need to broaden the way I identify potential participants – that is, including heterosexual men in the future or not – becomes visible. For this project, including heterosexual men was simply beyond the scope of my research. Including transpeople was also beyond the scope of my research, though this is thornier terrain. Transpeople who identify as gay or bisexual men could have certainly responded and, while I think these identities almost certainly present additional unique challenges when navigating public spaces (and thus separate from what I am studying), it is impossible to know if this is the case with any of

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my participants. None of my survey participants noted this identity in any of the open-ended questions, nor did any of my interview participants mention a trans identity in our email exchanges.

Risks involved in this study were very minimal, especially when compared to what a person might encounter in his daily, public life. If someone has had a traumatic street harassment experience, discussing it may have triggered those memories – though participants were not required to take part in the interview portion of the research, and they were free to relate only the information they felt comfortable sharing on the survey. It is likely that individuals are reminded of these experiences other times as well – not just while taking part in surveys related to it. The participants may have benefitted from getting to speak about a topic about which they feel strongly or about which they have not had the opportunity to speak at all. In addition, knowing research is being conducted on this topic will remind or inform these men that they are not alone in experiencing street harassment, so a sense of empowerment may result (as I comment on below). Moreover, and more broadly, benefits to science and humankind are possible, such as new and important insights into the public harassment of gay and bisexual men.

The online survey was created using surveymonkey.com and was hosted on a professional-level (not basic) account. Because my account was not free, it had a heightened level of security (specifically, the advanced security option of SSL encryption). According to surveymonkey.com, "SSL is short for Secure Sockets Layer, and it is a protocol initially developed for transmitting private documents or information via the Internet. It essentially works through a cryptographic system that secures a connection between a client and a server. Many websites use this protocol to obtain

confidential user information and it is supported in all modern browsers." Survey

Monkey does not use information collected on surveys in any way and all URLs to the

survey were encrypted. I did not use Survey Monkey's email invitation service because

doing so would have allowed them to collect all addresses entered into the website. All

encrypted links were posted elsewhere online and were not connected to an individual's

email address. IP addresses were also not collected or attached to individual responses, a

setting that I manually enabled for my account. My account itself is password protected

and I was the only person with access to it. I only logged into the account from my

password-protected personal computer at home (never in public) and I did not allow my

computer to save my password or automatically log me in without entering my log-in

information first. Nothing related to my research was saved on a flash drive.

I took several measures to maintain confidentiality throughout the follow-up interview

process. Participants who opted in to this portion of the research emailed an address that

was not connected to anything other than this research project. I am the only individual

who had access to this account, which was only ever accessed from my personal

computer and never from a mobile device. I sent interested participants a consent form

and initial set of questions. Even though it is typical for people to include their names as

part of their email addresses, I did not use these email addresses in any way and their

names/emails will not be attached to any of their responses within the results presented

here. I printed out each interview and deleted the email from my inbox and from the trash

folder, and I only printed out the body of the email (the actual content of the interview) so

that email addresses were not connected to individual responses. I also encouraged

everyone to permanently delete any correspondence between us, especially content that

they would not want discovered by someone else. Even though the risk of accounts being hacked and information being released was minimal, these precautions were important to take given the nature of some of the disclosed information. Additionally, I only accessed my account using Google Chrome's "incognito" mode, so all new cookies were deleted after I closed the browser window.

This method of interviewing was used for several reasons. Most obviously, having an exact transcript of the interview made it much easier to review (and more accurate) than if it were somehow recorded and then transcribed. Next, I am already potentially excluding certain people by requiring that surveys be completed online. By using email as the platform for interviewing, I hoped to reach as many participants as possible since email accounts are typically free and easy to sign up for (and do not require one to download a program to use). Using a program like Skype to either instant message or call someone requires not only that someone can download the program, but that he has additional devices (like a microphone) attached to his computer. That method might have disqualified some participants from taking part in the interview process, especially if they rely on a computer that is not their own. Performing interviews via telephone, too, has costs attached to it, both in the ownership of a phone and in the call itself. Moreover, since the nature of the information being shared could be difficult to talk about for some people, speaking via telephone or Skype may have been intimidating or uncomfortable. Using email seemed to be the most accessible option and one that people likely felt comfortable using.

I initially thought of using Twitter as my primary site of recruitment because of its power to recirculate messages in such a useful way. As a user of the microblogging

service for more than five years, I knew that finding an audience for my survey would be simplest among an online community who could both access it in a place they already regularly check and then share it with literally one click. And I was surprised by the amount of sharing that took place. Each time I posted one of my four approved recruitment messages, many people – some who I knew, but most who I did not – found it important enough to retweet to their community of followers. Prior to these methods being approved, I created a Twitter account from which I planned to promote my survey and began retweeting stories about harassment and violence against queer individuals – mostly to set the tone for my future thesis-related tweets, but also to avoid operating an account that was exclusively links to my survey without other substantive messages. I did not use a picture of myself or use my name in connection to this account because I thought keeping my personal Twitter separate from my academic pursuits would be possibly important, though I wasn't exactly sure why. I didn't want my profile picture or self-description (which uses descriptors like feminist) to persuade some people to participate or –perhaps more likely – discourage others who otherwise may have been interested. While this seemed plausible on paper, executing this strategy (once my methods were approved) proved difficult. Though I had amassed a small group of followers on this account, survey responses did not accumulate as I hoped they would. I started simultaneously promoting the survey on my personal account and soon realized the potential of this strategy. I was able to reach a lot more people, but Twitter users who were familiar with both of my accounts weren't sure which one to mention when talking about my research. Eventually, I discontinued using the @SHThesis twitter handle I created for my thesis because it was ineffective. Several influential gay Twitter users and

other popular queer and feminist individuals tweeted about my survey – often linking back to my personal account – and these endorsements helped tremendously. I quickly received hundreds of responses and dozens of emails from gay and bisexual men who were interested in participating in the follow-up interview. I was shocked by the response but glad it happened while tweeting as Patrick McNeil, and not as a generic, impersonal, and newly-created Twitter account. If I was going to engage with these individuals as co-creators of knowledge, it made sense to me that they communicate with me directly from the beginning of the process.

This co-construction comes in reaction to potential hierarchies that sometimes exist between researchers and the people being researched (Hesse-Biber, 2007). I often found myself impressed by participants' contributions and wished I had asked certain questions on my survey that, months earlier when I created it, I had not considered as much. Several participants spoke about harassment from other (usually older) gay men, statements that sparked in my own mind instances of this form of harassment. While I knew that harassment came overwhelmingly from men, a point made clear in survey responses, I was surprised by some of the results that pinpointed other gay men as the perpetrators. During my creation of the survey, I was so focused on a completely binarized hetero/homo model of oppression that I had not paid much attention to this other form with which I was also familiar. I also wish I paid more attention to geography. Many of my interviewees spoke in terms of their locations, often blaming local environments on certain instances of harassment. While future research can target these and other aspects of public harassment of gay and bisexual men, it was the men in my research who found holes in my questioning, explored new topics, and asked questions of

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clarification when necessary. When one of my participants said, "I feel that we are almost talking about two separate things, so I just want to clarify so that I can help you as much as I can," I knew he and others were as committed to this topic as I am. Even in the survey phase, people wanted me to know they were helping. Even though it was anonymous, some people felt compelled to tweet to me to tell me that they had taken it, or that they had emailed me about the interview. While I obviously could not trace which response was theirs, I was impressed by these public announcements about their participation. I tweeted back to these men because not doing so would possibly be ill-received by someone who had just spent a chunk of time helping me with my research. One of the first men to email me about participating in the follow-up interview wrote this in his email:

> "This is something I really think needs to be looked at, and think it's great that you're doing your thesis on this! I'm confident in my sexuality, but sometimes I find myself being afraid without even realising when I see a group of people walking towards me even during the day, I automatically expect a comment or prepare myself for one even though the majority of the time nothing is said. So again really think this is such a good thing you're looking into!"

This participant's often-unwarranted concern is a topic I will return to later, but his excitement about this research is noteworthy. I shared his excitement, which often made me question my objectivity in researching a phenomenon that was so personal. As Sprague (2005) notes, though, these biographical connections and emotional reactions can be resources for interpreting my survey and interview data.

Indeed, my relationship with many of the interviewees felt more personal than professional. I built rapport by engaging in aspects of Oakley's (1981) participatory model, particularly by sharing my own biography with research participants. Though my sexual orientation may have been assumed by virtue of the research topic, I often drew on personal stories to relate to what some of the men told me or to covertly provide an example of what I really meant by public/street harassment. Some individuals seemed unclear about the definition of street harassment as it is spoken about in this research, or were providing stories that had no connections to their sexual orientation (being harassed by a homeless person for money, for example), so my examples were meant to spark instances in their own lives when similar things may have happened. While this may have distracted them from sharing other, equally valid experiences, it seemed necessary in some cases. For some individuals, knowing they were not alone in their feelings of discomfort in public may have aided them in acknowledging and sharing their stories. I was pleased with the level of comfort that some of my interviewees clearly had while writing to me, and one participant disclosed a rape that happened to him ten years ago. My heart ached, and my emotions intensified reading that he had never told anyone before me. Though I was familiar with resources and provided him with them (thanks to an internship at the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), it was not something that I expected to happen and not something for which I was totally prepared. I wondered how this might affect his present safety assessments of public environments and whether or not he thought his sexual orientation played a part in his assault (he would have been about ten years old at the time). He thanked me for the information I gave to him and told me I could email him or contact him through social networks if I ever wanted to talk. He

used exclamation points and emoticons. I had to negotiate my desire to ask more questions about an obviously painful part of his past with what I suspected was a still-present trauma that I risked unsettling. Just because he told me about it did not mean he wanted to talk about it. I ended my questions with this participant on what I thought was a positive and helpful note for him, and I am thankful that I was able to be there for someone who had kept something private for so long. While this level of relationship-building was the exception, my closeness with several of the interviewees gives me confidence in the stories they shared – many of which will be featured in the next section.

Between the time of my surveying/interviewing and of my actual completion of this body of research, I wrote on this topic because of its timeliness (such as during International Anti-Street Harassment Week) and because of its general importance. I also received an award from Stop Street Harassment for my writing and activism, and for drawing attention to the public harassment of gay and bisexual men. As I did this research, immersing myself in the community working to end street harassment was important to me. I did not want to sit behind my computer, isolated, as the topic of street harassment (at least of women) became a popularly-discussed topic on the feminist blogosphere. So I joined in. I contributed to several blogs regarding the research I was doing, sharing preliminary findings and often drawing on my own experiences to help broaden the way people conceptualize street harassment. When researching such an under-investigated issue, however, this becomes complicated, especially when looking for contemporary, Internet-based references. When I google the terms "street harassment" + gay + men, many of the results are pieces of my writing, writing that references or refers to me, or pieces that mention this tangentially or only in a comment (though these

references can be useful, too). This was a method of research and writing that I did not

realize I would engage in prior to beginning the process, and indeed, many writers would

be unable to do this because of their research topics. I am grateful that my writing has

been so well-received and hope that the next section of this paper - where I will discuss

my findings - prompts much more public discussion.

Chapter 3: Findings

My online survey, the questions from which are detailed in Appendix A, garnered 331

responses from gay and bisexual men from at least 42 states, the District of Columbia and

Puerto Rico, and 22 countries. Since not everyone reported a geographic location it is

impossible to know exactly how many other areas are represented, though I think the

reach of my survey is indicative of how beneficial online methods can be. About 91.1

percent of the respondents identified as homosexual and about 8.9 percent identified as

bisexual (see Figure 1). One respondent preferred the term gay because he felt the term

homosexual was pathologizing (saying "homosexual sounds like a medical condition"),

and another said he was not sure if he was gay or bisexual (but that he is one of the two).

Of the respondents who reported a race/ethnicity, 82 percent identified as white or Anglo

American, 13.8 percent as Hispanic or Latino, 6 percent as Asian American, 3.9 percent

as black or African American, and 2.8 percent as Native American or Alaska Native (see

Figure 2). Forty-seven of the 48 people who did not respond included an "other" response,

though many of these responses seem to be a variation of what would normatively be

conceived of as white. The sample is fairly young (see Figure 3). The largest age group

was 18-20, which comprised 38.6 percent of the sample, followed by 21-24 (34.7

percent), 25-29 (11.6 percent), 30-34 (7.1 percent), 34-39 (2.9 percent), 40-49 (4.5

percent), and 50-59 (0.6 percent). None of the respondents identified as 60-69 or 70 plus

(which may be because of the survey's exclusive online presence). While this sample

could certainly be more diverse, particularly with respect to race, I think it is adequate for

this study and likely a reflection of the Twitter users who propagated my survey to their

followers.

Figure 1.

Sexual Orientation of Survey Participants

8.90%

91.10%

Gay ■ Bisexual

Figure 2.

Race/Ethnicity of Survey Participants

| | White or Anglo American | Hispanic or Latino | Asian American | Black or African American | Native American or Alaska Native |

Figure 3.
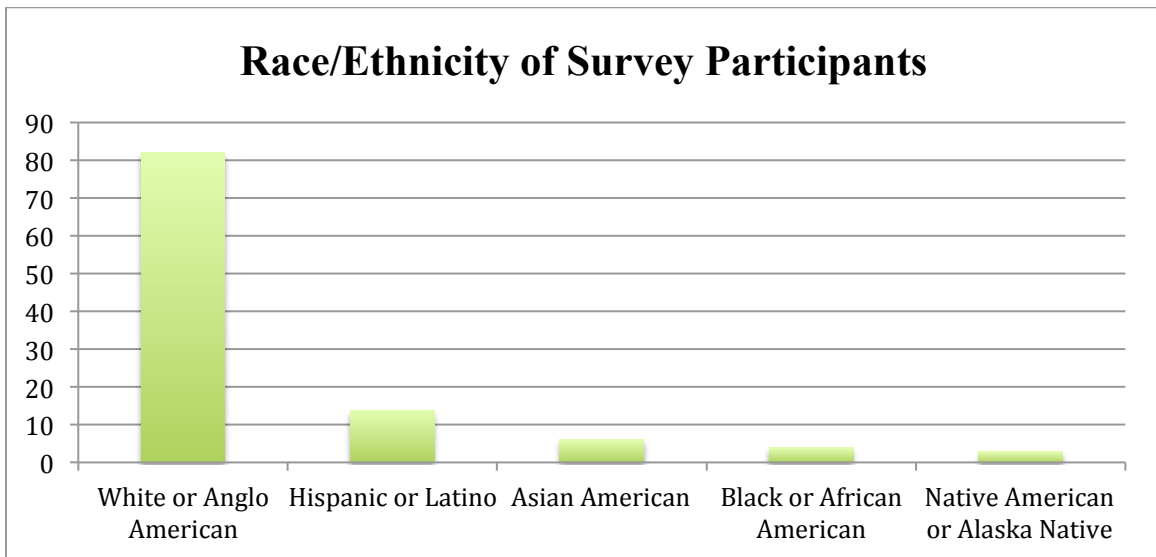
Age of Survey Participants
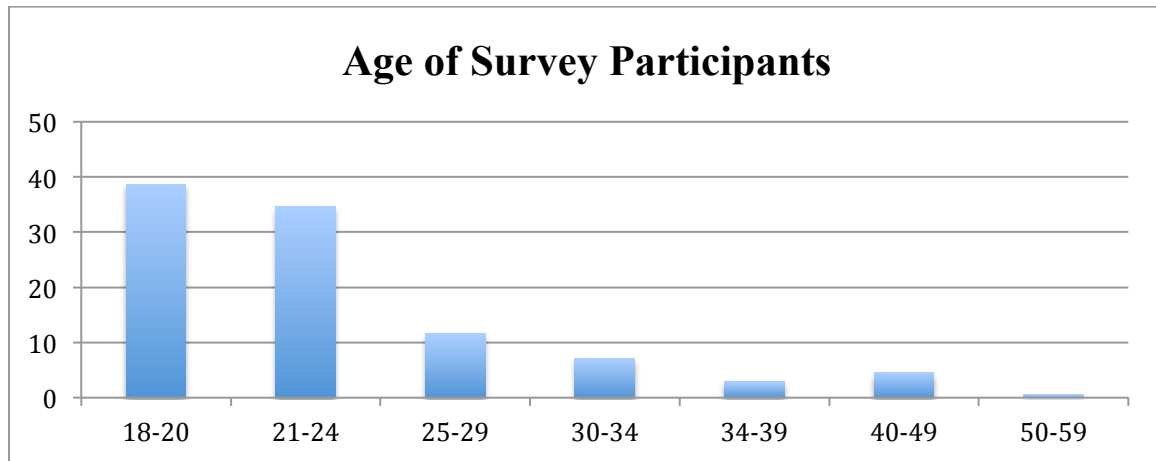
Twenty-four men participated in the follow-up interview (see Appendix B for list of initial questions) and they were, on average, close to 24 years old – an age that is slightly on the older side when compared to the larger sample of survey participants (though still fairly young). All but three reported living in the United States (those three were from Argentina, Canada, and London), and one identified as bisexual while the other men identified as gay. A majority of interview participants identified as white and they in general followed a racial breakdown similar to that of the survey takers. Since these men were able to discuss their experiences with harassment at length, it is difficult to tell whether they necessarily experienced more harassment than the larger group. Some likely participated in that portion of the research because they had experiences to talk about, while others discussed not experiencing harassment at all because of the way they are perceived in public – which will be discussed in more detail below.

For people who did not report their gender and/or sexual orientation on the survey, I had to individually decide whether I had enough information to keep their responses or

whether their status as a gay or bisexual man was unclear. I looked at why they are harassed (because of sexual orientation/gender – question 2), who they are with when the harassment occurs (male significant other, another non-heterosexual friend – question 7), and if the interactions happen with someone of the same or different gender and sexual orientation (question 9). When evaluating these responses was inconclusive, I deleted responses for potentially falling outside of my desired sample. I did not want to risk aggregating responses that fell outside of the gay/bisexual male demographic and having my results skewed in one direction or the other. Even for one respondent who answered every question on the survey except gender, there was not enough information disclosed within the survey for me to conclude that the individual was male. More often than not, I could not conclusively say that a respondent was male/female or gay/straight/bisexual, so the responses were deleted from my sample. These measures were necessary because individuals who identified as a woman, heterosexual, or both responded, and these responses were deleted immediately. Some respondents did not report an age, though I included these responses in my research because they fit into my targeted demographic (so it is possible that there were respondents represented in the two oldest age groups). I was also concerned with duplicate responses and, while it is possible that a person could have stopped one survey and then restarted another one later - thus giving me two responses from the same person – I thought the chances of this happening were minimal. While this may be preventable in a more controlled, in-person research environment, I think the benefits of my online methods outweighed these possible drawbacks.

Defining street harassment

I began my survey by asking participants how they define street harassment, a definition that – even in academia and other arenas – is very much discussed and debated. I expected that, since my recruitment messages specifically targeted gay and bisexual men, this aspect of their identity would be prevalent in these definitions. Of the 331 respondents, 227 of them answered this question and only 12 of these definitions referenced sexual orientation, among other identity categories, as a reason for harassment. One individual defined street harassment as, "Others speaking ill of you while on the street or from a car, loud enough for you to hear, about your sexual orientation." Another respondent said it was "Being put in a unsafe and uncomfortable environment due to you're [*sic*] sexual orientation/sex/race. More specific: derogatory terms toward a person, dirty looks, discrimination, and/or violence towards someone." Since street harassment has been popularized as a largely gender-specific form of harassment, it is possible that some men do not conceptualize it as something by which they could possibly be affected. This thought process is documented in research on gay and bisexual male domestic violence. According to Letellier (1994), domestic violence is something that the men in his study viewed as only ever happening to women and thus do not consider themselves battered. He says, "As is the case with male incest survivors, many battered gay and bisexual men do not conceptualize their experiences as abuse and see victimization as inconsistent with their male identity. As a result, many gay and bisexual men who have experienced considerable violence by their partners do not assign a 'victim' label to their own experience because they cannot see themselves as men *and* as victims" (98-99; emphasis in original).

These feelings are reflected in the responses of some of my interviewees who expressed conflicting thoughts when asked to share experiences of street harassment. One gay man in London said, "I've never felt unsafe or unwelcome in public, but any times I have it tends to be at night when alone and walking home from the tube." While it is unclear whether or not this fear stems from his sexual orientation, there are still dissonant thoughts evident in his declaration that he *never* feels unsafe or unwelcome (but then says there are times when he does). Another respondent reported the following:

I have never felt legitimately unsafe or unwelcome in a public place. However, there have been a few times when I felt unsafe. For example, once (several years ago) I had gone and seen a movie with friends and we went out to eat afterward. Eventually, everyone left except me, as I was waiting to be picked up. Then, there was a group of guys (probably around 18 or 19 at the time; I was 15) who kept looking over and pointing at me. And soon, they got up and started walking over in my direction. Then, my dad pulled up and I left, but I felt that I could have been in trouble if my dad hadn't been there right then. That's the most unsafe I've ever felt; thankfully, no physical harm has ever been done to me. Also, I get called 'fag' and 'queer' a lot in public, but that's more of an annoyance than a worry.

This individual expresses that he never feels unsafe or unwelcome in public, but then shares an experience when he did feel unsafe. Additionally, he says that he is often the target of homophobic slurs in public, but categorizes this as an "annoyance" instead of something about which he worries. While it is impossible to know how he actually feels, seeing himself both as male and as victim – like the battered men in Letellier's (1994)

research – may not be something that he can cognitively negotiate. One other respondent said that he has never directly been harassed and has only been witness of such activity. According to him, "I have witnessed violent harassment from across the street when I have been in Oak Lawn, Dallas' gay district. There have been times when presumably homophobic straight men have driven through shouting hateful anti-gay remarks and even throwing bottles at people walking. But again, never to me directly." This individual sees himself removed from anti-gay violence happening nearby and rejects that it affects him even though he is also gay. I find these direct/indirect instances difficult to place. I often find it stressful to read stories about anti-gay violence and certainly feel affected when I witness public acts, but this is clearly not something experienced identically by every gay or bisexual man.

Since street harassment is often discussed in terms of gendered violence – and is often talked about in terms of the prototypical construction worker/young female dyad – I thought less during the creation of my survey about gay and bisexual men being harassed by other gay and bisexual men. While I knew from experience that this type of harassment occurs, my attention was on more anti-gay forms. One gay man living in Chicago spoke exclusively of this type of harassment when asked to share about a time when he felt unsafe or unwelcome in public. According to him, "I have felt unwelcome in public many times. As a frequent/daily rider of the CTA trains, I constantly feel uncomfortable when there are older men making suggestive gestures at me, regardless of the time of day or location. Also, I feel like whenever I visit the Boystown area of Chicago that I am constantly unwelcome, mostly because there are a large number of men who make obscene gestures at me or check me out so thoroughly that I feel violated."

This respondent's feelings of violation are echoed in some of the survey results. Gay men ranked highest in whistling at my respondents, trying to get their numbers, and touching/grabbing them in a sexual way. This also makes sense given the age of my survey participants. Since about 73 percent of my sample is age 24 or younger, there is certainly opportunity for this type of harassment to occur. Though older/younger harassment seemed to be the gay-on-gay form (for lack of a better term) represented by my research participants, this does not discount possibilities of younger gay and bisexual men perpetrating this form of harassment as well.

Of course, not all gay and bisexual men experience street harassment in any form, which in many ways has to do with the legibility of their sexual orientation. According to my survey, about 10 percent of my respondents (34/329) said they have never been harassed or felt unwelcome in public because of their sexual orientation. One gay man in Seattle said, "I seem to have never experienced 'street harassment' in the forms described in the survey, so it hasn't caused me to reflect on it very much (other than to be grateful I haven't experienced this kind of harassment)." Another respondent specifically cites legibility in his response. According to him, "I don't recall ever being harassed for my sexual orientation. I grew up in a liberal state, I have only been publicly out for a year and a half, and for the most part I 'pass' as straight, so I haven't really been in any situations where I would have been harassed." When I asked him why he thought he passed as straight, he said that he does not "neatly fit into stereotypes that society expects gay people to fit. I am not very feminine, I enjoy sports, I dress very plain, etc. I've never had anyone ask me if I was gay, because apparently if you're not flamboyant, you're not gay." Still another interviewee pointed to these physical indicators of legibility

in discussing his non-harassment. He said, "I've honestly never been harassed by a stranger for being gay because it's not an easy thing for me. I don't have a physical 'tell' per se, some of my friends don't believe me but like, hello? Have we not ever HAD a conversation?" This respondent believes his sexual orientation is a more obvious part of his presence than it appears to be to others, but understands that he does not have any of the stereotypical "tells" of the normative gay or bisexual male individual.

<center>Legibility of sexual orientation & defining masculinity</center>

I was interested in asking about these physical indicators on my survey (see Appendix A, question 14) in an attempt to determine exactly what gay and bisexual men view as the most legible aspects of their sexual orientation. Some respondents cited characteristics that they believed would instantly categorize someone as gay or bisexual: wearing gay rights shirts/pins/stickers (these could also be worn by allies – though I was particularly amused by one boy who said he wore a button that says 'it's raining men'), being in public with a boyfriend or husband (and presumably acting in an intimate way), or staring at other men one might find attractive. Others thought the physical location of bodies spoke to a potential non-normative sexual orientation, like being in a city such as San Francisco or being in or around a gay club or bar. Several interviewees mentioned geography in explaining why they felt they were subject to (usually) more public harassment, many times contrasting small towns with cities in documenting the urban flight that Halberstam (2005) terms metronormativity. According to Halberstam (2005), "the metronormative story of migration from 'country' to 'town' is a spatial narrative within which the subject moves to a place of tolerance after enduring life in a place of suspicion, persecution, and secrecy" (36-37). Herring (2010) views Halberstam's version

of the city as "an urban mecca to which rural-identified queers must assimilate" (14), though his work focuses more on queer anti-urbanism. One of my interview respondents who spoke to this rural/urban binary said, "Growing up in a small community, which is already part of a small province, there are many times I felt unsafe and unwelcome in public. Just walking down the street at times and getting yelled at from a passing vehicle, on a rural stretch of road, was enough to make me feel uneasy, and that happened on a fairly frequent basis until I moved to a city." He used to hear shouts of "fag," "faggot," "queer," and "homo" and, while he said that he experiences much less harassment now that he lives in a city, it does still happen. Another interview respondent spoke to the ignorance of people in his small hometown. According to him, "I grew up in a very small town in upstate NY where most of the people there do not even know what being gay is, and for the select few that do, they think all homosexuals have HIV/AIDS and are in fear of contracting the disease. I graduated with 146 other students and didn't know any other gay men or women I could confide in and I was most definitely not about to talk to a school therapist about my sexuality, so I hid it." A bisexual respondent from a small town in Iowa mentioned the ignorance of people in his town who were unable to understand his sexual orientation. While he tells others he is about 75 percent attracted to men and 25 percent attracted to women, most people simply conceptualize this as 100 percent gay – an accusation from gay individuals as well. He categorizes this as a sort of passive harassment since his bisexuality at times creates feelings of marginalization by both straight and gay communities. This conflation of bisexuality with homosexuality makes it difficult to come out and forces some individuals in small towns, as Halberstam notes, to live their lives in secrecy.

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One interviewee spoke to a sort of reverse flight and discussed what he felt was a need to tone down signs that he might be gay. He said, "The town I am from is generally liberal, but every time I come home I feel the need to 'act straight.' This could be influenced by my parents, who are somewhat ashamed of my sexuality at times, or by the need to fit in with the community that is predominantly heterosexual." Another interviewee spoke similarly about his best friend. He said, "My best friend is his own person, and he doesn't care what anyone thinks. I love it, but I know he gets slightly uncomfortable coming back to Iowa and tones it down a little bit. He won't wear the clothes he wants to etc. Even then, we'll notice people staring, we usually just laugh it off, but it is kind of uncomfortable." They were not alone in feeling this way. Some of the survey participants echoed this need to alter their appearance in public spaces to avoid being harassed. One individual wrote, "I'm always conscious to never hug my books because that can signal me as being feminine, which is what most people take as being gay. When I'm standing on the bus, I make sure my hand/wrist joint is not bent and that it is uniform." Another survey participant responded, "I dress generally fashionably and make an effort with my appearance however in public I am generally very toned down and I feel that I appear rather masculine or at least neutral." These respondents' uses of masculinity and femininity are interesting given how thorny a terrain this is when speaking about homosexual and bisexual male identities. This conflation of male non-normative sexuality with femininity – and the rejections of both homosexuality and femininity in definitions of masculinity – is highlighted in participants' survey responses.

Legibility was generally described in terms of the way people speak, what they wear and how they style their hair, how they walk or posture themselves, and their general use

of gestures and mannerisms – the "physical tells" that my interviewee spoke of above. While my question specifically asked for physical indicators of sexual orientation, the responses were overwhelmingly consistent and speak to the ease with which perpetrators of violence can identify and target men they deem gay or bisexual. According to Herek (1991), gay men are stereotypically seen as having feminine characteristics, and these connections to femininity/masculinity are seen consistently throughout my survey responses. One respondent said people can probably tell he is gay "mainly because I'm not perceived as masculine as I 'should' be, so people pick up on the feminine tendencies I have." Another individual said, "I tend to dress relatively fashion-forward for somebody my age which people may perceive as having to do with my sexuality. I've been told that because I listen to Lady Gaga and similar artists, I must be gay. I hate sports, have played the flute (a typically feminine instrument) for eight years, and can carry a conversation about arts and fashion better than most males." One other respondent offered this list: "Clothing, the way you walk, the way you talk, how you carry yourself (in a feminine way), the actual physicality of your body, where you are." Moreover, one individual said he dresses fashionably in clothing that straight men wouldn't usually wear.

This inextricability of nonconforming gender performances and presumed non-normative sexual orientations forces some individuals, like those quoted above, to 'act straight' and be fearful of harassment by strangers in public settings. My survey respondents were asked to identify actions they take or have taken because of actual or feared public interactions with strangers (see Appendix A, question 10). Of the 303 respondents who answered this question, 71.3 percent reported constantly assessing their surroundings when navigating public spaces – a figure that speaks to the anxieties felt by

gay and bisexual men who fear being harassed because of these physical indicators. I find this number to be concerning. One of my interviewees said he does not have a lot of experience with street harassment but that he does at times feel uncomfortable around some people, like "bros," because of his sexual orientation. When I asked him to say a bit more about bros and why he was afraid of them, he said he was not sure if he should actually be afraid of them. He said he had no past experience with this category of people but gets "scared sometimes that they may think it would be 'cool' to mess with a gay kid." This response speaks precisely to what I find so concerning about the street harassment of gay and bisexual men. Though it may happen less often than gender-based street harassment of women, gay and bisexual men still think about and, at times, agonize over it. While the aim of this paper is not to delineate any sort of exhaustive list of negative mental health outcomes that may be associated with street harassment, this constant assessment of surroundings is part of what Meyer (1995) includes in his model of minority stress. Meyer defines minority stress as "psychosocial stress derived from minority status. This concept is based on the premise that gay people, like members of other minority groups, are subjected to chronic stress related to their stigmatization" (38). Central to this concept is perceived stigma, a heightened level of which results in gay and bisexual men having a high degree of vigilance. Meyer (1995) says that "such vigilance is chronic in that it is repeatedly and continually evoked in the everyday life of the minority person. This vigilance is stressful in that it requires the exertion of considerable energy and resources in adapting to it" (41). The most common coping strategy, according to Hetrick and Martin (1987), is learning to cover up this aspect of their identity. They note that "individuals in such a position must constantly monitor their

behavior in all circumstances: how one dresses, speaks, walks, and talks become constant sources of possible discovery" (35). This hypervigilance – a reconciliation of gay identity with the stigma attached to it – can result in coping fatigue. Meyer (1995) warns, "High levels of stigma, then, will lead gay men to chronically experience stress as they feel that they must remain vigilant to avoid being harmed" (41). He says that being called a homophobic slur may result in fears of future violence and deep levels of rejection that are disproportionate to the event that caused them. Further, this harassment may cause individuals to associate their sexual identity with feelings of pain and punishment rather than feelings of love and intimacy – indeed a very unhealthy outcome (Garnets, Herek and Levy 1990, 370). While everyone experiences events like these differently, it is clear that street harassment – at least the anti-gay forms referenced here – can have very real impacts on the mental health of those individuals who are targeted.

Constantly assessing one's surroundings was not the only action taken in response to actual or perceived acts of harassment (see Figure 4). Survey respondents also reported avoiding specific neighborhoods or areas (68.6 percent), avoiding making eye contact (67.3 percent), crossing the street or taking another route (58.7 percent), talking on a cell phone (55.8 percent), and wearing an iPod or headphones (52.5 percent) – all in order to avoid potential unwanted interactions with strangers. Some respondents reported taking much more drastic measures to avoid these situations and, though they happen much less frequently, I still find them to be a significant addition to this discussion. Five percent of those who answered this question said they have moved to another neighborhood in response to actual or feared interactions with strangers, and 3.3 percent of the respondents said they have changed jobs because of harassers in the area or on the

commute. While these statistics equate to 15 and ten men, respectively, the fact that it

happens at all is disturbing and warrants attention.

Figure 4.

Actions Taken in Response to Harassment
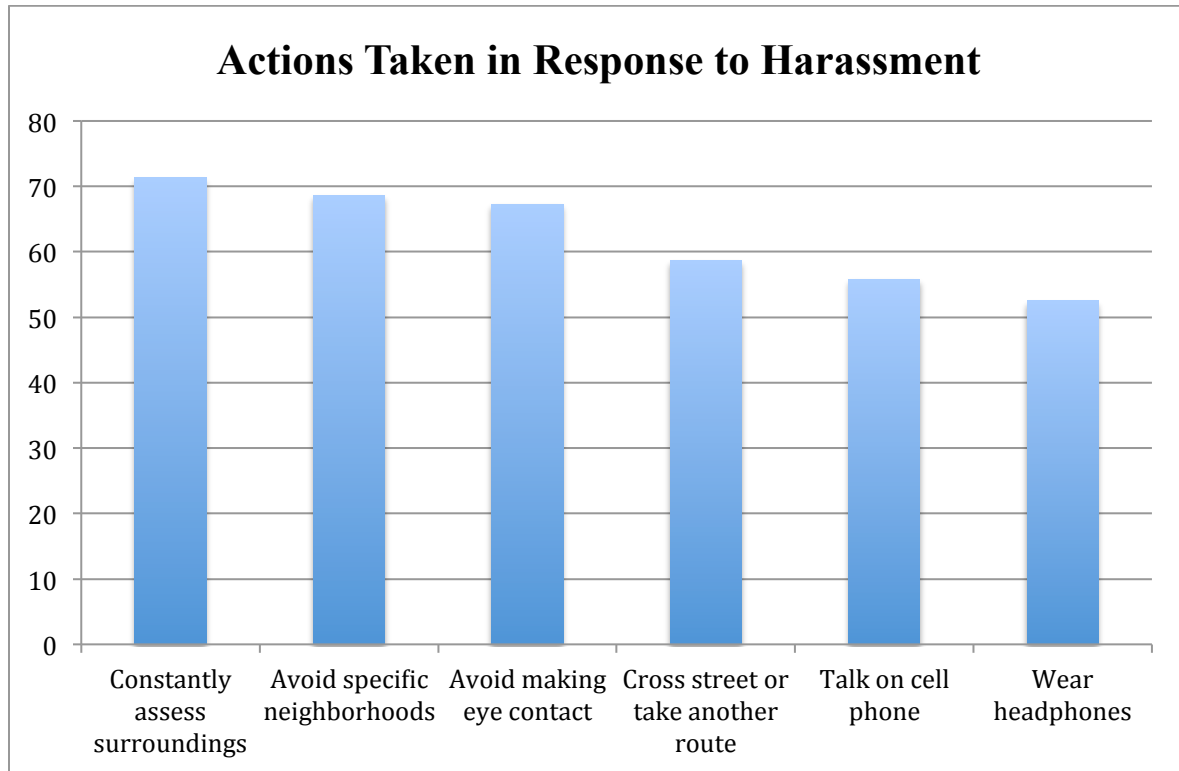
Many of these physical indicators were also included in survey respondents'

definitions of masculinity (see Appendix A, question 12). Not surprisingly, these

responses made a clear connection to hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987, Connell and

Messerschmidt 2005), which refers to the cultural ideal of masculinity that supports the

domination of other men and the subordination of women. This form of masculinity is

not the most common and is enacted by only a minority of men, though it is normative

and the one most often endorsed by society. While the subordination of women is

certainly an important aspect of hegemonic masculinity, the focus here is on men's

domination over other men – specifically those who fail to meet society's

conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity. Of the 290 definitions I received, common words included were sports/football, manly, muscular/muscles, strong/strength, testosterone, tough, dominant, powerful, assertive, confident/confidence, leader, superior, athletic, burly, aggressive, macho, gruff, competitive, emotionless, stoic, cocky, virile, machismo, and bold. Many of the definitions also specifically referenced heterosexuality and men's discussions of women as characteristic of masculinity. Some of them placed masculinity in direct opposition to femininity, while others, like those who included words like 'emotionless' in their definitions, did so less explicitly. Other respondents characterized deep voices, particular modes of dressing, and specific mannerisms as masculine, creating an opposition to some of the physical indicators of their sexual orientation. While some definitions excluded gay and bisexual men from possibilities of masculinity, a few explicitly sought to include them.

Some of the definitions were very simple. For example, one respondent said that masculinity is the "acts, behavior, and appearance that society has gendered male," while someone else said "stereotypes that society gives to men: likes sports, videogames, indifference to fashion, hangs out with most males, etc." Another survey respondent said, "I think, like most people, my notions about masculinity are based on years of cultural experience with the behaviors, clothing, attitudes, speech patterns, hairstyles, grooming, etc., that are generally associated with males." I was particularly amused by one other respondent's definition:

> How 'straight' someone perceives you based on your physical appearances and
> mannerisms, such as: muscular body, un-styled hair, non-fashionable clothing
> (sweats/athlete status gets you points), attractive girlfriend, using the word

'fuck/fuckin' a lot in your sentences, deep voice, chiseled features, talking about one night stands with 'some chick,' and any activities that would fall under the male stereotype. This includes sports (FOOTBALL!!! *grunt*), keggers, blowing shit up, shooting things, other illegal activities like vandalism, and watching man movies, e.g. '300.'

While this definition is humorous, it is also a sort of perfect depiction of hegemonic masculinity and adequately encapsulates so many of the things included in my respondents' definitions. Some of the components of this definition (like talking about one night stands with 'some chick' – presumably to other male friends) speak to Kimmel's notion of homosocial interactions with other men, a theme to which a few of my survey respondents added.

Writing on stopstreetharassment.com's blog, Schwyzer (2011) connects street harassment to this notion of homosociality, which identifies the (essentialized) male need for the affirmation and approval of other men. In the third edition of his text *Manhood in America*, Kimmel (2011) contends, "Masculinity defined through homosocial interaction contains many parts, including the camaraderie, fellowship, and intimacy often celebrated in male culture. It also includes homophobia…Homophobia is the fear of other men – that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, are not real men..." (8). Schwyzer connects homosociality specifically to street harassment in explaining why men harass women on the street. According to him, "…harassment isn't about sexual attraction to women. It's not something women invite. And it's not something usually intended to elicit a positive sexual response from women. It's about one thing: impressing other men. The cat-callers in the car are using

the woman on the sidewalk as a glue for male-bonding, as a way of affirming their masculinity to each other. That masculinity is so fragile that having it validated is, for many young men, better than sex." When the public harassment of men with non-normative sexualities is at the hands of a group of (usually straight) men, I think this explanation – when we combine the thoughts of Kimmel and Schwyzer – applies really well to the possibility of homosocial interaction accounting for the street harassment of perceived gay and bisexual men. As summarized by Benard and Schlaffer (1984), whose work focuses exclusively on women, "Like other forms of sexual violence, harassment has little to do with the individual woman and nothing to do with sex; the issue is power" (396).

According to survey data (see Appendix A, question 7), respondents say that harassment occurs most often and is most threatening when they are alone in public spaces. It also occurs frequently when they are with a male partner or with another non-heterosexual friend, and it is threatening when the stranger is the same sex and different sexual orientation. Since my survey was only open to gay and bisexual men, the strangers responsible for the street harassment experienced by my survey respondents seem to be predominantly male and heterosexual (though, as I have mentioned, this gender/sexual orientation configuration is certainly not the only one represented). In addition, specifically homophobic comments came overwhelmingly from individuals who respondents identified as male and heterosexual. Interview data and other survey results provide some context to these quantifications. In reflecting on one instance of harassment, one white Canadian gay interviewee said, "I really think that if it was just one guy there none of it would have happened. Seemed to be like a 'macho man' show off contest thing.

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Like who could make the funniest joke about the gay kid or who could be the meanest,

you know?" This interviewee viewed his public harassment as possible by the existence

of a group of men who compete with one another to see who is the most "macho man."

Without this element of competition, it is unclear whether, at least in this situation, the

harassment would have occurred. In defining masculinity, survey respondents also

referenced homosocial interaction. One respondent defined masculinity as "Fitting within

the cultural norms associated with 'male-ness' – limited emotional output, not

particularly verbose, finding common ground in sports, and in general having a slight air

of competition tinge almost every interaction with another male." Another respondent

said that masculinity is "Conducting oneself in accordance with the socially accepted

mannerisms and definitions of a 'man' (i.e.: being competitive with other men in various

aspects of life, such as athletic prowess to social dominance and presence, ability to

provide, etc." This competitive aspect came up in several responses and places certain

men as objects that are used in other men's constructions of their own masculinity – an

act that is certainly at play in the street harassment of women as well.

<p align="center">Perceptions of masculinity</p>

While my survey participants generally agreed in their definitions of masculinity, not

all of them perceived their own masculinity in the same way. I asked the following from

them (see Appendix A, question 11): On a scale of 0-10 (with 0 being not at all masculine

and 10 being extremely masculine), please rate how you perceive your own masculinity.

Only 15.2 percent responded in the 0-4 range, while about 65.8 percent responded in the

6-10 range (which means more people rated themselves a 5 than 0-4 combined). In both

groups, about 90 percent said they are sometimes, often, or always harassed or made to

<p align="center">57</p>

feel unwelcome because of their perceived sexual orientation, but the percentage of men in the often and always categories increases for those men who perceive their masculinity to be lower. In the 0-4 range, 38.3 percent of the respondents said they are often or always harassed because of their perceived sexual orientation, compared to 20.2 percent in the 6-10 range. If their own perceptions of masculinity levels translate to public perception, then this result seems to make sense. The less connected one is to notions of traditional masculinity, the easier they may be to harass or intimidate in a public setting – and these perceptions make sense for both anti-gay forms of harassment and for the harassment that occurs between gay and bisexual men. Interestingly, the percentage of men who reported constantly assessing their surroundings in public was actually higher for the men who perceived their masculinity in the 6-10 range (71 percent) than those who rated themselves 0-4 (66 percent). While these figures are relatively close, it is a noticeable departure from what may initially be predicted. It is conceivable that men who perceive their masculinity to be higher are actually hypervigilant of possible stigmatization and therefore are more aware of potential threats to their desired level of masculinity. Men in the 0-4 range may view harassment as inevitable – and have experienced it more frequently – and are thus less concerned with auditing public spaces for potential harassment because they already know how likely it is. At some point for these men, 'constantly assessing their surroundings' loses meaning because for them it is simply living. Lower levels may be reported because, although they are assessing surroundings, they are doing so unconsciously because of the ever-present very real possibility of harassment. For men who perceive higher levels of masculinity, guarding

themselves against public acts of harassment is a more conscious process and thus reported at higher levels.

Representations of racial identities shifts when comparing these two ranges of self-perceived masculinity. The racial makeup of the 0-4 range was 83.8 percent white, 13.5 percent Asian American, 5.4 percent black or African American, and 5.4 percent Hispanic or Latino, but in the 6-10 range, while white and black/African American men retain similar numbers, Asian American men and Hispanic/Latino men switch places. The actual number of men these percentages represent is relatively small, so it is difficult to know whether these figures would be replicated in a larger study. While I think there is probably something to be said about the internalized feminization of the Asian gay male body accounting for Asian men's decreased perceptions of their own masculinity, a more focused study would be needed to fully account for this disparity. There are clearly critical differences in the intersectional experiences of gay and bisexual Asian men compared to gay and bisexual men of other racial and ethnic identity categories, and my research cannot begin to chip away at how these populations uniquely experience street harassment since white men represent a majority of the respondents. It is, however, important to recognize these differences. There are, of course, differences *within* these racial categories as well. A gay or bisexual Asian man living in Little Rock, Arkansas might navigate public spaces much differently than an Asian man living in Los Angeles, or in Hong Kong. And then, even within these smaller demographics, there are many differences, too. Since my research was open to men around the globe, a study that focuses on particular communities would be helpful in learning more about a specific population's unique experiences. A man's perception of his own masculinity might also

depend on disability status, socioeconomic status, age, and a number of other identity

categories and so, while I try to draw very broad conclusions from this question on my

survey, it is ultimately a question that cannot fully be answered without further research.

The black/African American men who took my survey, for example, were

overwhelmingly more likely to report being harassed based on their race and

socioeconomic status. My experiences with street harassment as a gay white man whose

economic status may be perceived as advantaged differ significantly from the experiences

of a gay African American man who is economically disadvantaged. Our understanding

of these experiences – those of someone experiencing harassment uniquely as a

disadvantaged gay black man – would be much better understood with further, more

focused research.

Gender differences

Men in both of these ranges reported incidences of harassment occurring most often

when they are alone and that being alone was also the factor that made harassment most

threatening. Harassment also occurs when they are with another non-heterosexual friend

(though my survey question did not specify the gender of the friends) and when they are

with a male significant other. While I've already identified homosocial male interaction

as a commonality among incidences of street harassment against both women and men

perceived to be gay or bisexual, this latter pairing – that of being with a male significant

other – affects potential harassment in very different ways. For straight women, being in

public with a male significant other seems to decrease the likelihood that street

harassment will occur. Kearl (2010) notes that many men claim to be 'complimenting'

women who they harass on the street, but questions why they tend not to issues these

'compliments' when women are accompanied by men. She later notes that "...heterosexual ciswomen (women who conform to their birth gender, unlike transwomen) may experience a reprieve from male street harassers when they are visibly with a male significant other..." (56). A respondent to Kearl's 2008 survey comments on this as well, noting that "For me, a strange man treating me differently than he would if I were accompanied by a man/older person/etc., i.e. someone he would respect and not view in a sexual way, is street harassment" (101). She views male respect for one another as a more likely outcome when a man encounters a heterosexual couple on the street. In addition, the author of a post on the Stop Street Harassment blog in June 2013 postulates that a male partner also diminishes incidences of street harassment. She says, "Whether it's whispers, someone gawking at me, shouts from across the street or a car or physical contact, it's constant. The only times it doesn't happen is when I walk around with my boyfriend" ("She Told Me...").

While I think that being accompanied by a male significant other becomes murkier when thinking about gay and bisexual men who might be harassed by other gay and bisexual men (though I tend to think it might mitigate it), the predominant, anti-gay form of harassment is very present. As one of my interview participants told me, "my partner is super uncomfortable with public displays of affection, and I think it is partly because he is worried about harassment, so I keep it toned down to keep him happy." This man would like to enjoy the privilege of showing affection in public but masks it to prevent potential harassment. I shared with him that my partner was the same way, and that I tried to be too, though this often feels uncomfortable, even in a city that is generally very accepting of lgbtq people. In a Twitter chat focusing on lgbtq street harassment during

International Anti-Street Harassment Week in 2013, I wrote that "lgbtq couples must negotiate a desire for visibility while recognizing the very real dangers of being out in public" – and this resonated with many people participating in the chat. This negotiation is affected both by geography, by the couple (an interracial couple, for example, might face an additional layer of harassment), and by a host of other factors.

During the same Twitter chat I wrote that street harassment for lgbtq people can be especially damaging when the person is still internally negotiating a non-normative identity but is being harassed because of that identity. This thought was formed by my own experience being harassed as a young boy (being called 'fag,' for example). As I wrote on *Huffington Post*, "I didn't even come out to myself until college, but I was certainly bullied growing up for being gay. I felt social pressures, and I felt uncomfortable. When you're internally reconciling a queer identity and simultaneously being harassed because of the identity that you refuse to accept, life is not easy, and it can stall the coming-out process" (McNeil 2013). This cuts across two related and often overlapping issues, the first being the reconciliation of a gay or bisexual identity while being harassed for that perceived identity, and the second being the resistance to coming out because of anticipated further harassment. Several of my interview participants noted that they waited to come out because of predicted adverse reactions. While some women certainly share these experiences, it is a process that gay and bisexual men endure disproportionately more when comparing these two particular demographics. One of my respondents said he feels hurt at times because his sexuality "hasn't been fully developed," while another recounted waiting to come out until he moved away from his small hometown to attend college. Coming to terms with one's own sexual orientation and then

deciding when to begin telling others is complicated by an understanding that others might not be okay with it. This angle of street harassment makes it especially difficult for gay and bisexual men (and other sexual minorities).

When the street harassment of gay/bisexual men is enacted by other gay/bisexual men, the power dynamic involved becomes murky in relation to the harassment of women by men, or the harassment of gay/bisexual men by straight men (and of course other power dynamics may be involved, such as those defined by race). There may be an age difference that makes some of these encounters so threatening, as in the case of one of my interviewees (mentioned earlier) who said he felt "violated" by older men who made obscene gestures or thoroughly checked him out. In response to a blog post by Anna Minard titled "Why Street Harassment Matters," one commenter expressed the following:

> "As a reasonably good looking gay guy, I definitely get my share of remarks from other passing mo's on the Hill (funniest one ever was a guy in a car who yelled let's swap pubes!). Weirdly, it doesn't bother me a bit, and even though I never respond I do get some satisfaction out of it. That probably makes me incredibly vain, I know. Anyway, I guess that since the relative power (is that the word?) between the gawkee and gawker is roughly the same, it doesn't really compare to what the author is talking about, so I'll shut up now."

This commenter's experiences are obviously very different than those of my interviewee, but I think his conclusion that the power involved is roughly equal is interesting, and not a consideration when discussing gender-based street harassment. Gender-based street harassment is most often described exclusively as men harassing women, with little discussion of intra-gender harassment. My research has helped me to conceptualize street

harassment of gay/bisexual men as both inter- and intra-gender, and these dynamics are very different. Men harass women, and they may harass other men who they feel are too *similar to* women (and some women are harassed for being too similar to men). But they (read: other gay/bisexual men in particular) also harass men because they are *not* women, and because they are perceived to be gay/bisexual. These sexual comments, whistles, and other unwanted attention mirror experiences of women who are targeted because they are women by men who view them as sexual objects rather than as people. The difference here seems to be that we conceptualize only straight men (though probably also bisexual men) as harassing women (and gay men who mask themselves as straight to hide their sexual orientation) while all men harass gay/bisexual men. Men who harass women are both sexually objectifying them *and* policing their gender, whereas for gay/bisexual men, straight men harass them to police their gender and other gay/bisexual men harass them to sexually objectify them. This is obviously too concrete and an over-simplified way of describing all incidences of street harassment, but it is certainly a difference worth discussing.

<center>Age</center>

As noted before, the men who participated in my survey were fairly young. The largest age group was 18-20, which comprised 38.6 percent of the sample, followed by 21-24 (34.7 percent), 25-29 (11.6 percent), 30-34 (7.1 percent), 34-39 (2.9 percent), 40-49 (4.5 percent), and 50-59 (0.6 percent) – none of the respondents identified as 60-69 or 70 plus (likely the result of my exclusively online recruitment techniques). Age intersected with perceptions of masculinity in an interesting way. More than 84 percent of the men who rated themselves in the 0-4 range were 18-24 years old (62.2 percent

were18-20, 22.2 percent were 21-24). In contrast, 69.3 percent of the men who rated themselves in the 6-10 range were 18-24 (only 29.8 percent were 18-20 and 39.5 percent were 21-24). While the age of my participants was young in general and unsurprisingly represents the majority in both of these groups, the difference here is noticeable.

There is also an age difference in how often men reported feeling unwelcome in public spaces. Participants who were 18-20 said they sometimes, often, or always feel unwelcome 91.6 percent of the time, a figure that was at 93.5 percent for the 21-24 age range, 83.3 percent for the 25-29 age range, 86.4 percent for the 30-34 age range, and 88 percent for everyone 35 and older. This fact broadly shows somewhat of a curve in levels of comfort, one that starts high between the ages of 18-24, decreases in the later twenties, and then slightly increases again. What this broad statistic masks is the fact that no one in the latter three age groups (25-29, 30-34, and 35+) said they *always* feel unwelcome in public, though the often category, following the same curve, increases with age. In the 25-29 range, 11.1 percent of the men say they often feel unwelcome in public spaces, a figure that was 13.6 percent for men in the 30-34 range and 24 percent for 35 and over. In looking at the percent of respondents who constantly assess their surroundings when navigating public spaces, this curve dips slightly later. For men in the 18-20 age range, 73 percent constantly assess their surroundings, while it's 75.5 percent in the 21-24 group, 63.9 percent in the 25-29 group, 42.9 percent in the 30-34 group, and 78.3 percent for those 35 and over. Here, we see the lowest level of constant assessment in the 30-34 age range and the highest for men 35 and older, slightly higher than men in the two youngest groups. Interestingly, and perhaps connected, this oldest age group also had the highest percentage of gay-identified men (96 percent) compared to bisexual-identified men (4

percent). While I certainly cannot link these statistics in any conclusive way, it is indeed interesting to note that men who are 35 and older who took my survey were most likely to identify as gay, most likely to report constantly assessing their surroundings, and second most likely (behind 18-20 year olds) to report *often* feeling unwelcome in public spaces. In the study conducted in Edinburgh cited before, the authors noted a similar age-related finding, saying "The oldest and youngest age groups of participating gay men were the most worried about being victims of violence. The violent crimes reported in the survey also indicate that most are committed by strangers, mainly near known gay venues or in the street late at night" (5).

<div align="center">Perceptions of legibility</div>

Unlike self-perceptions of masculinity where there was a 50 percent difference between those who rated themselves 0-4 (15.2 percent) and 6-10 (65.8 percent), my research participants' perceptions of how legible their sexual orientation is was much closer (see Appendix A, question 13) – with 36.9 percent rating themselves in the 0-4 range and 46.6 percent in the 6-10 range – less than a ten 10 percent difference. This is somewhat surprising given how connected many definitions of masculinity were to what my participants felt were physical indicators of their sexual orientation. Though 65.8 percent of the men rated their masculinity in the 6-10 range, that figure drops to just 35.4 percent when looking at how many men rated both their masculinity and legibility in that range. In contrast, the 15.2 percent of men who rated their masculinity in the 0-4 range drops down to 10.1 percent when looking at masculinity and legibility ratings combined. While a larger number of men rated themselves 6-10 for both, a larger percentage of men retained the 0-4 rating for both – that is to say, men who perceive their masculinity to be

at a lower level also view their sexual orientation to be a more legible part of their identity. I explicitly asked my survey participants to use this ranking system because I thought that, after rating their masculinity on an intuitive 0-10 scale, they would be more comfortable rating their physical indicators of sexual orientation on a scale that read similarly. I realized afterward that the logic behind my system was well-intended but perhaps not intuitive. The exact question I asked was "On a scale of 0-10, to what degree do you think strangers can perceive that you are homosexual or bisexual? (where 0 means they can always tell and 10 means they can never tell)." While I think this question is stated clearly I am not sure that it makes the most sense, so I am proceeding with my analysis, somewhat briefly, understanding that my results for this particular question could be somewhat flawed.

The same percentage of men (89.7 percent) in both the 0-4 and 6-10 ranges for legibility said they are sometimes, often, or always made to feel unwelcome because of their perceived sexual orientation, though the often and always categories were both slightly higher in the 0-4 range than the 6-10 range (and, perhaps interestingly, this figure is 94.3 percent for men who rated themselves 5, with higher often and always numbers than the 0-4 range). Both ranges were virtually identical when reporting that other gay men most often harass them when the harassment takes the form of whistling or touching/grabbing them in a sexual way. This seems to indicate that, despite perceiving physical indicators of their sexual orientation to be more or less salient, men in both groups are targeted by gay men at similar rates. Figures are again very similar for the percentage of men in both ranges who report constantly assessing their surroundings in public. Men in both ranges identified their sexual orientation in almost identical splits

between gay and bisexual, and men in the 0-4 range were younger (77.2 percent were 18-24, compared to 72.9 percent in the 6-10 range – and this figure drops to 66.1 percent for men who rated themselves 5).

<div align="center">Responses & reactions to street harassment</div>

Men who took my survey responded to harassment in a variety of ways (see Appendix A, question 5). Of the men who reported experiencing homophobic or biphobic comments, 40.8 percent ignored the harasser, 11.8 percent said stop it, 11.3 percent glared, 10.1 percent yelled, and 9.7 hurried away. When asked how this made them feel, 67.5 percent felt angry, 58.6 percent felt insulted, 49.8 percent felt annoyed, 25.3 percent felt scared, and 19.4 percent felt ashamed or guilty. Of the men who reported being leered at or excessively stared at, 46 percent ignored the harasser, 18.6 percent hurried away, and 17.2 percent glared. When asked how this made them feel, 57.4 percent felt annoyed, 26.3 percent felt scared, 14.8 percent felt angry, and 13.9 percent felt insulted. Interestingly, nearly one in five men (18.2 percent) reported feeling flattered by the excessive staring. This could be the result of a variety of factors, such as the setting of the staring or the particular dynamics between the individuals involved. It could have to do with a personal history of feeling rejected because of one's appearance or sexual orientation and finding something satisfying in the stares of others, whatever the intention. I will not criticize this reaction because everyone digests these experiences uniquely and because 'excessive staring' may have been read in ways that I had not necessarily intended.

I asked my interviewees to share any advice they have for responding to strangers when being harassed in public spaces. Here are some of their responses:

- Answering back has, in my limited experience, helped. But only in a one-to-one confrontation. They either expect fear or outrage. Being diplomatic helps - asking what they want - helps. They usually thrive on feeling better than someone else; the power-rush of seeing fear. Or they're looking for a fight. Give them neither. (identity unknown)

- If someone is being aggressive/abusive in public, seek solace in those around you, if none are available, call a friend to alert them to your predicament, and if you feel threatened, call the police immediately. If alone, and it is a negative interaction with a stranger, do your best to carry on as you were, and try to get away from the situation without causing more friction or reason for them to follow/pursue or attack you. (white, gay, 25, London)

- If you can ignore it, then I think that's the best advice, especially if you feel in danger. If you get angry or whatnot it could escalate the issue. This is more of an option when with other people. If you're alone or they are physically in your path, that's pretty frightening and I would say would be more a case by case basis. (white, bisexual, 28, Iowa City, Iowa)

- I would probably gauge how dangerous a situation it is - it's the difference between a monstrous man in a dark alleyway making sexual comments about your appearance and a mildly annoying group of kids in a crowded shopping mall. If you find yourself in a dangerous situation - leave. Otherwise, your options are to ignore them, to leave or to confront them, though that may cause more conflict. (white, gay, 20, Charlotte, NC)

- The easiest way to deal with strangers is just to ignore them and keep walking. (Black, gay, 23, Pittsburgh, PA)

- People who are out to harass those that are different than them are just ignorant and usually fearful of the things that make us different. People in fear can be very dangerous. I feel it is best to just ignore them and if they don't stop report them to the nearest appropriate authority. If all else fails, leave. It's not fair and it's not right, but your own personal safety has to come first. (white, gay, 37, Dallas, TX)

- The best way to deal with a stranger is to be proactive. You can't predict what a person will do or how they will react, but you can know your surroundings and have a plan. I don't mean to sound paranoid, but I always have a plan and try to stay ahead of the game. Maybe that comes from training to be an air traffic controller, where you HAVE to be 5 steps ahead of everything, but it usually pays off. I do my best to stay vigilant when I find myself in a new situation. I usually have my phone on me, and I never leave home without it almost fully charged. (white, gay, 26, Texas)

- Don't back down. Yell back. Show that they might have more to fear from you than you have of them. (identity unknown)

- My advice is to ignore them if it's not physical and distance yourself from that person. If it is physical, immediately contact the authorities. (African American, gay, 20, Milton, DE)

- My advice would be to remove yourself from the situation, or inform an authority. I'd strongly urge someone not to contront the harasser, since that could lead to violence and stronger harassment. (identity unknown)

I think it can generally be agreed upon that responding to harassment varies from one individual incident to the next, which some of my interviewees said explicitly. As my survey shows, ignoring the harasser is the most common response, at least to homophobic/biphobic comments and leering. Some men have a more confrontational approach, such as the respondent who said "Don't back down. Yell back." Others suggest removing oneself from the situation and reporting to authorities. This variety of responses underscores the real threat of street harassment: it may be impossible to prepare for it. Even though I have read many resources suggesting ways to respond to harassers, and even though I wish to shout back and shame a harasser the way he has tried to shame me, that reaction is not always feasible. There is not always time. It is not always safe. There is much work to be done to alleviate this social problem, though the aim of this paper is not to make policy recommendations for this admittedly difficult issue to legislate.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Future Research

Gay and bisexual men certainly do experience street harassment, as this research makes clear. Ninety percent of my survey respondents reported sometimes, often, or always feeling unwelcome in public because of their sexual orientation, and 71.3 percent said they constantly assess their surroundings when navigating public spaces. This is not the case for everyone, though. Some men don't report these feelings because they may view victimization as inconsistent with their male identity, or they may just not experience it at all.

Perhaps my most interesting finding was that the percentage of men who reported constantly assessing their surroundings in public was actually larger for the men who perceived their masculinity in the higher range (71 percent) than those who rated themselves in the lower range (66 percent). As I noted, it's possible that men who perceive their masculinity to be higher are actually hypervigilant of possible stigmatization and therefore are more aware of potential threats to their desired level of masculinity. Men who perceive their masculinity level to be lower might see harassment as an inevitable part of their lives – and have probably experienced more of it – and are thus less concerned with auditing public spaces for potential harassment because they already know how likely it is. Their constant assessment may at times be an unconscious process since they are familiar with the ever-present possibility of harassment. For men who perceive higher levels of masculinity, guarding themselves against public acts of harassment is a more conscious process and thus reported at higher levels.

I also found possible differences between some instances of street harassment of gay/bisexual men versus street harassment of women (these categories, to be sure, are problematically too broad – but that's why research on this topic continues to be necessary). Two points that I think are important to highlight here are these: when gay/bisexual men are accompanied by a male significant other, they may face additional challenges that are likely not present when a (straight) woman is accompanied by her significant other. In addition, street harassment for gay and bisexual men (and for many others) can be especially damaging when the person being harassed is still internally negotiating a non-normative identity but is being harassed because of that very identity. In these ways, street harassment can at times be particularly difficult for gay and bisexual men (and other sexual minorities), though male privilege does safeguard them against other forms of public harassment uniquely faced by women.

Age differences among my survey participants also resulted in some interesting findings. In looking at the percent of respondents who constantly assess their surroundings when navigating public spaces, for example, the lowest level of constant assessment was in the 30-34 age range and the highest for men 35 and older – slightly higher than men in the two youngest groups. Interestingly, and perhaps connected, this oldest age group also had the highest percentage of gay-identified men (96 percent) compared to bisexual-identified men (4 percent). It is indeed noteworthy that men who are 35 and older who took my survey were most likely to identify as gay, most likely to report constantly assessing their surroundings, and second most likely (behind 18-20 year olds) to report *often* feeling unwelcome in public spaces. In the study conducted in Edinburgh cited before, the authors

noted a similar age-related finding, saying "The oldest and youngest age groups of participating gay men were the most worried about being victims of violence" (5).

And finally, looking forward: responding to and combatting street harassment is, frankly, difficult and varies from one individual incident to the next – which some of my interviewees said explicitly. According to my survey, ignoring the harasser is the most common response, at least to homophobic and biphobic comments and leering. Some men have a more confrontational approach, while others suggest removing oneself from the situation and reporting it to authorities. This variety of responses underscores the real threat of street harassment: it may be impossible to prepare for it. There is, of course, much work to be done to alleviate (and eventually) eliminate something as difficult to legislate as street harassment. My final section outlines areas of future research that focus on some of the same and additional identity categories as areas where more exploration may be extremely helpful to the broader street harassment conversation.

<div align="center">Future research</div>

My research sought to, very generally, discuss whether and how gay and bisexual men experience street harassment - those acts that happen in public spaces and are committed by strangers targeting individuals with specific identities *because of* those identities. Whether they experience this type of harassment is evident, but more research is needed to explore identities that are underrepresented in my study. The voices of gay and bisexual men of color - and of bisexual men in general - were critically missing from my pool of research participants. Since 82.2 percent of my survey respondents identified as white, and since 91.1 percent identified as gay, the perspectives of men outside of those categories should be the focus of future research efforts. The men who took my survey

were also very young - nearly three-quarters were age 18-24. But I also saw some possibly very interesting results in relation to older men who participated, and research that focuses on them - and asks questions about harassment over the course of one's lifetime - would greatly enhance our understanding of it. Moreover, paying more attention to geography might be helpful as well. The ways men experience harassment in a city and how they experience harassment in a rural community are, according to some of my research participants, vastly different. And for men who have spent significant amounts of time living in both - or other environments - their perspectives are critical. Finally, though my research focused on sexual orientation as an organizing identity category, more work is needed on individuals who identity as transgender, genderqueer, genderfluid, and all other non-binary identities to better understand their unique experiences of harassment.

During my writing process, a man tweeted me asking "may I dm you regarding your research and Oct '12 Feministe post? Working on my own re male vics of street harassment." He was asking if he could direct message me on Twitter regarding something he was writing about male victims (of street harassment) because he had read a blog post I wrote for the feminist blog *Feministe*. I gave him my email address (because direct messages on Twitter are limited to 140 characters each) and our conversation began. In his first message to me, he wrote "I am particularly interested if there is anything out there on male-on-male street harassment and its relationship to LGBTQ issues. My most recent experience of male-on-male harassment came with overt homophobic language which made me very fearful for my own safety, much as the experiences you relate at the start of your blog piece on Feministe." I responded to his

message, confirming to him the dearth of research on the topic and asked him who he was writing it for and whether he wanted my help. When he responded, I was surprised to learn that he identifies as a "mostly-straight man" - that he does not think he comes off as particularly effeminate but that, because the harassment he experienced involved gay slurs, he figured he was being targeted because he was perceived that way. He says:

> What sparked this originally was being on the receiving end of a catcall from some women in a car as I finished my morning run. It prompted some self-reflection about how I felt about it and what it meant for people to do that. I don't personally engage in that when I see other people on the street, and it got me wondering what prompted it. As I started reading up on it, I recalled several instances in the past where I was harassed and verbally assaulted with homophobic slurs. Most recently, it involved a situation about a year ago when I was away on business in another city, and I was verbally assaulted by a group of young men. I was very fearful, even though I was with two other people at the time.

I knew that in my research, by only accepting responses from gay/bisexual men, I was excluding a sample of men who identify as straight - or as mostly-straight - and still experience street harassment because of the way they might be perceived by others. Straight men should be included in future research because, as this man demonstrates, a portion of that demographic experiences public harassment because of a perceived orientation - though I'm sure the internalization process is very different. These and other comparisons are left unstudied in my research.

This man's other experience - being harassed by women - is something else not focused on in my research, and not something I want to spend much time on because of its relative obscurity in relation to other configurations of harassment. Speaking to this, a man named Jay Williams posted an opinion piece in the *Portland Mercury* ("Street Harassment: The Other Side of the Coin") about his experiences with street harassment - but he prefaced it with a very important message:

> I'm a 6'6" 406 lb male that spends the majority of my free time in a private powelifters gym lifting things up and putting them back down. So my experience is going to be vastly different and the power dynamic is not the same. I've never felt the least bit afraid for my safety or that anyone was trying to exert power or control over me. I fully acknowledge that is a sole luxury of my experiences in that I've never feared that I would be overpowered, followed home, etc.

Without using the word privilege, Williams recognizes that his experiences, while valid and unacceptable, are very different than the experiences of others. Williams says that "The person I remember the clearest and made me feel the most angry was a woman from a few months ago. I had my one arm filled with 250 copies of the paper and my other arm was trying to crack open a newspaper box. Very confidently she approached me, offered her name, placed one hand on my shoulder and the other extended for a handshake. She immediately mentioned I looked very big and strong and began rubbing my shoulder." He says that, given the proper context, he may have talked to her, but because she touched/rubbed him so immediately, he was mostly disturbed ("she was creepy, she was not invited, and if I had done to her what she did to me I'd of [*sic*] gone to jail"). While this experience may seem minimally scary for this particular man, it is still unwanted

attention in public by a stranger - and still an experience that I think should be taken seriously. Again, the power dynamic involved is very different, and this form of harassment seems to happen much less frequently than other forms, but research in the future that specifically addresses this dynamic may be important in understanding all forms of public harassment.

Williams also describes incidences of harassment from men (who the reader assumes are gay), as he describes one man who walked up to him on the sidewalk, stared down, and mumbled something like "it's beautiful, just look at it, oh my, look at that." The man got on his knees and tried to reach for his body. Williams had to jump back to avoid being touched. Another time, a group of men saw Williams bent over and said "look at that, boys - let's go get us some" and began pretending to grab his ass. He labeled these men as being gross for the sake of being gross. Both of these experiences are perfect examples of the type of unacceptable sexualized harassment that women and some men experience too often. This man's account shows that, while the power dynamics involved here are vastly different - a difference he is very aware of - this harassment is still deeply troubling. Straight men should be included in the future since it is clear they experience harassment from women, from men who perceive them to be gay/bisexual, and from gay men who objectify them in the way Williams describes here.

Methodologically, online recruitment and data collection methods might be the most effective in this type of research because of the nature of the experiences being discussed. As was the case in my research, however, these methods may have led to the absence of older men - no one who is 60 or older participated in my research, and only 0.6 percent of the participants were 50-59. As discussed earlier, these methods also excluded

individuals who do not have Internet access and therefore cannot complete online surveys and/or interviews. Future research, then, should likely include an off-line component that targets these two groups in particular. Online efforts must continue, though, and recruitment methods should stretch across a wide swath of social media to reach as many people as possible. My recruitment was centered on Twitter, with a secondary focus on Facebook. While in my case this worked in garnering a large number of responses, the responses were, quite clearly, not diverse. Future efforts should focus on targeting online groups comprised of traditionally under-represented demographics. Additionally, research like mine that targeted gay and bisexual men in particular should be better about asking more questions that specifically address the harassment that comes from other gay and bisexual men. While some men addressed it while sharing stories during the interview portion of the study, the survey should have probably split up these separate forms of harassment since they are fundamentally different (while gay men may always be harassed for being gay, the motivations are very different depending on the harasser).

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Appendices

Appendix A (survey questions)

Street Harassment Survey

If you are 18 years or older, you are invited to take part in a research study under the supervision of Dr. Cynthia Deitch of The George Washington University's Women's Studies Program in Washington, DC. This research is being conducted by Patrick McNeil for his MA thesis. You are being asked if you want to take part in this study if you identify as male and either gay or bisexual. Please read this form and ask any questions that will help you decide if you want to be in the study. Participating in this study is completely voluntary and, even if you decide you want to, you can quit at any time.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether and how gay and bisexual men experience street harassment.

The research will be conducted via this online survey, which will be open to individuals around the globe. If you choose to take part in this study, you will answer self-reflective questions about your identity and experience with street harassment. The total amount of time you will spend in connection with this study is approximately 15-20 minutes. There will be an opportunity to participate in a follow-up interview. If you choose to participate in this portion of the research, you will spend more time in connection with this study.

There are no physical risks associated with this study. Neither the survey provider (Survey Monkey) nor the survey itself requires you disclose any personal information. There is, however, some small risk of loss of confidentiality. Some of the questions asked in this study may make you feel uncomfortable. You may decline to answer any of the questions and you may take a break at any time during this study. You may end your participation in this study at any time.

Taking part in this research will not benefit you directly, however, benefits to society are possible by increasing awareness and knowledge. We hope to garner insight into the phenomena of street harassment against gay and bisexual men.

You will not be paid for participating in this study.

If results of this research are later reported in publications and research presentations, the people who participated in this study will not be named or identified.

Talk to the research team if you have questions, concerns, complaints, or think you have been harmed. If you do think you have been harmed in this study, please report this to the Principal Investigator. You can also contact Patrick McNeil at pmcneil@gwmail.gwu.edu or at (610) 507-1711 for further information regarding this research. For questions regarding your rights as a participant in human research call the GWU Office of Human Research at 202-994-2715.

Your records for the study may be reviewed by departments of the University responsible for overseeing research safety and compliance.

To ensure anonymity, your signature is not required. Your willingness to participate in this research study is implied if you proceed with completing the survey.

Please keep a copy of this page in case you want to read it again later.

1. How do you define street harassment?

2. Have you ever been harassed or felt unwelcome in public because of your:

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Race/ethnicity/nationality	◯	◯	◯	◯
Sexual orientation	◯	◯	◯	◯
Economic/class status	◯	◯	◯	◯
Age	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ability/Disability	◯	◯	◯	◯
Appearance (e.g. height, weight)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Gender	◯	◯	◯	◯

3. Please indicate how often any stranger has interacted with you in public in each of these ways in the past year:

	Never	Once	A few times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Smiled at you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Said hello	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Held a door open for you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Offered to help you with a heavy bag	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Offered/gave up their seat on bus/subway	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Made small talk with you (e.g. about weather)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Whistled at you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Called you a pet name (e.g. sweetie, honey)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Honked at you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Tried to get your number/a date/your attention	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Made a comment about your appearance	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Made kissing noises at you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Leered at you/stared excessively	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Made a sexist comment about you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Made a racist comment about you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Made a homophobic/biphobic comment about you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Swore at you or flipped you off	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Made a vulgar gesture	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Made a sexually explicit comment to you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Flashed or mooned you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Masturbated in front of you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Followed you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Purposely blocked your path	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Touched or grabbed you in a sexual way	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Assaulted you	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

4. Based on your answers in #3, how do these interactions initiated by any stranger in public generally make you feel? (You can mark more than one emotion. Please note that if you answered "Never" above, then answer "N/A" here)

	N/A	Flattered	Grateful	Happy	Neutral	Annoyed	Ashamed/guilty	Insulted	Scared	Angry
Smiled at you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Said hello	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Held a door open for you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Offered to help you with a heavy bag	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Offered/gave up their seat on bus/subway	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made small talk with you (e.g. about weather)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whistled at you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Called you a pet name (e.g. sweetie, honey)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Honked at you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tried to get your number/a date/your attention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a comment about your appearance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made kissing noises at you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leered at you/stared excessively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a sexist comment about you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a racist comment about you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a homophobic/biphobic comment about you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Swore at you or flipped you off	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a vulgar gesture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a sexually explicit comment to you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Flashed or mooned you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Masturbated in front of you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Followed you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purposely blocked your path	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Touched or grabbed you in a sexual way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assaulted you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Which has been your most typical response to these interactions with a stranger in public? Choose one.

	N/A	Smiled	Laughed	Waved	Gave my #	Agreed to date	Ignored them	Hurried away	Yelled	Flipped them off	Glared	Said stop it	Reported them	Attacked them
Whistled at you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Called you a pet name (e.g. sweetie, honey)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Honked at you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Tried to get your number/a date/your attention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made a comment about your appearance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made kissing noises at you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Leered at you/stared excessively	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made a sexist comment about you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made a racist comment about you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made a homophobic/biphobic comment about you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Swore at you or flipped you off	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made a vulgar gesture	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made a sexually explicit comment to you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Flashed or mooned you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Masturbated in front of you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Followed you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Purposely blocked your path	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Touched or grabbed you in a sexual way	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Assaulted you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

6. How old were you when the types of interactions in #5 first happened?

[▼]

7. Please indicate on a scale of 0-10 (0=least and 10=most) when the interactions from #5 typically occur from least to most:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
When I am alone	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with female friend/s	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with male friend/s	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with female & male friend/s	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with my female significant other	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with my male significant other	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with my transgender significant other	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with another non-heterosexual friend	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with my parents	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with my siblings	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with my children/grandchildren	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am with coworkers/clients	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. Please indicate on a scale of 1-10 (0=least threatening and 10=most threatening) what factors make those interactions with strangers from #5 nonthreatening to threatening:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
I'm alone	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I'm with several friends	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I'm with my significant other	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I'm in an unfamiliar area	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
In in a familiar area	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is of the opposite sex	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is of the same sex	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is presumably of a different sexual orientation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is presumably of the same sexual orientation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It's daylight out	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It's dark out	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is larger than me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is my size or smaller	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is older than me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is younger than me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The stranger is in a car and I'm not	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I'm in a populated area	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I'm in a deserted area	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

9. Do these interactions typically occur with a male or female? Heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual? (please choose one sex and one sexual orientation).

	N/A	Male	Female	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Bisexual
Whistled at you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Called you a pet name (e.g. sweetie, honey)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Honked at you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tried to get your number/a date/your attention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a comment about your appearance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made kissing noises at you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leered at you/stared excessively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a sexist comment about you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a racist comment about you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a homophobic/biphobic comment about you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Swore at you or flipped you off	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a vulgar gesture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made a sexually explicit comment to you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Flashed or mooned you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Masturbated in front of you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Followed you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purposely blocked your path	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Touched or grabbed you in a sexual way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assaulted you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Have you/do you do any of the following because of actual or feared interactions with strangers in public? (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Avoid being out at night/after dark
- ☐ Avoid being alone
- ☐ Avoid specific neighborhoods or areas
- ☐ Purposely wear clothes you think will attract less attention
- ☐ Exercise in a gym instead of outside
- ☐ Take a dog with you
- ☐ Wear an iPod/headphones
- ☐ Talk on a cell phone
- ☐ Pretend to have a significant other
- ☐ Take self defense
- ☐ Constantly assess your surroundings
- ☐ Scowl
- ☐ Avoid making eye contact
- ☐ Cross the street or take another route
- ☐ Carry a weapon (nonlethal)
- ☐ Carry a weapon (lethal)
- ☐ Carry a whistle
- ☐ Gain weight
- ☐ Move to another neighborhood
- ☐ Change jobs because of harassers in the area or on the commute

11. On a scale of 0-10 (with 0 being not at all masculine and 10 being extremely masculine), please rate how you perceive your own masculinity.

[▼]

12. How do you define masculinity?

[   ]

13. On a scale of 0-10, to what degree do you think strangers can perceive that you are homosexual or bisexual? (where 0 means they can always tell and 10 means they can never tell)

[▼]

14. What are the physical indicators signaling that you may be either gay or bisexual? What physical indicators do you imagine other gay and bisexual men may report? (e.g. your clothing, the way you walk)

[   ]

15. Gender

[▼]

Other (please specify)

[   ]

16. Sexual orientation

[▼]

Other (please specify)

[   ]

17. Age

[▼]

18. The race/s and/or nationality with which you most closely identify. Please check all that apply or write in another option. If you are outside the U.S., please indicate your nationality:

- ☐ Asian American
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Native American or Alaska Native
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White or Anglo American

Other (please specify)

[   ]

19. Geographic location (city, state, and/or country)

[   ]

20. If you are willing to be contacted for a possible (brief) follow up interview (conducted via email), please send an email to streetharassmentthesis@gmail.com indicating your interest. You are free to decline the interview if you change your mind later.

- ◯ I will participate in a follow up interview and email the above address.
- ◯ I do not wish to participate in a follow up interview.
- ◯ I am not sure, but will email the above address if I decide to do so.

Thank you for completing my survey and helping me with my thesis research! Your time is much appreciated.

Again, if you would like to take part in a possible follow up interview, please email streetharassmentthesis@gmail.com and I will send you more information. You will be free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Appendix B (interview questions)

1. Did this survey alter the way you think about street harassment? Would you change your definition?
2. Feel free to share a personal story or stories illustrating a time when you felt unsafe or unwelcome in public.
3. Where do you think the line is between acceptable and unacceptable stranger interactions in public?
4. Do you have any advice about how we might make public spaces more welcoming and safe?
5. Please share any advice you have for dealing with a stranger when you are being harassed in public.

I also gathered brief demographic information because these interviews were not connected to the survey responses in any way.

Gender
Sexual orientation
Age
Race and/or nationality
Geographic location

I then engaged in follow-up questions with participants if I had anything specific I wanted to ask or if there was something I needed for them to clarify. I intended for this portion to be fairly brief, especially with concerns of losing confidentiality, though some men engaged in a lengthy conversation with me.

Appendix C (interview consent form)

If you are 18 years or older, you are invited to take part in a research study under the supervision of Dr. Cynthia Deitch of The George Washington University's Women's Studies Program in Washington, DC. This research is being conducted by Patrick McNeil for his MA thesis. You are being asked if you want to take part in this study if you identify as male and either gay or bisexual. Please read this form and ask any questions that will help you decide if you want to be in the study. Participating in this study is completely voluntary and, even if you decide you want to, you can quit at any time.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether and how gay and bisexual men experience street harassment.

The research is being conducted via the online survey that you have already completed, which was open to individuals around the globe. This portion of the research will be conducted via an email-based interview, which will take different amounts of time depending on how detailed you are in your responses. You are free to answer or not answer any questions you wish.

There are no physical risks associated with this study. There is, however, some small risk of loss of confidentiality. Some of the questions asked in this study may make you feel uncomfortable. You may decline to answer any of the questions and you may take a break at any time during the interview. You may end your participation in this study at any time.

Taking part in this research will not benefit you directly, however, benefits to society are possible by increasing awareness and knowledge. We hope to garner insight into the phenomena of street harassment against gay and bisexual men.

You will not be paid for participating in this study.

If results of this research are later reported in publications and research presentations, the people who participated in this study will not be named or identified.

Talk to the research team if you have questions, concerns, complaints, or think you have been harmed. If you do think you have been harmed in this study, please report this to the Principal Investigator (deitch@gwu.edu). You can also contact Patrick McNeil at pmcneil@gwmail.gwu.edu or at (610) 507-1711 for further information regarding this research. For questions regarding your rights as a participant in human research call the GWU Office of Human Research at 202-994-2715 or email at ohrirb@gwu.edu.

Your records for the study may be reviewed by departments of the University responsible for overseeing research safety and compliance.

To ensure anonymity, your signature is not required. Your willingness to participate in this research study is implied if you proceed with completing the interview questions.

Please keep a copy of this document in case you want to read it again.