COMMUNICATING BY CATCALLING:
POWER DYNAMICS AND COMMUNICATIVE MOTIVATIONS IN STREET
HARASSMENT

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By Maria DelGreco

Thesis Committee:

Amy Hubbard, Chair

Jessica Gasiorek

Min-Sun Kim

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Abstract

This study was conducted in order to better understand the motivations behind why men street harass women as well as the relationship between power and street harassment using the framework of dyadic power theory and interaction adaptation theory. I hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between men's reported attitudes about sexual harassment and men's reports of engaging in street harassment behaviors. A critical test was posed about differences in control attempts and counter control attempts depending on perceptions of power. I hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between equal power and women's counter control attempts. Research questions about other possible communicative motivations for street harassment were also posed. One hundred forty nine participants were surveyed and results showed that 88% of men who reported engaging in street harassment behaviors did so with the intent of changing the receiver's behavior. Men most frequently reported affection as their motivation for engaging in street harassment and women most frequently reported pleasure as a motivation for why men would engage in street harassment. Implications are discussed such as identifying that power is related to street harassment and that men and women have different perceptions of street harassment which could be helped by educational training.

Keywords: Power, street harassment, sexual harassment, dyadic power theory, interaction adaptation theory, communicative motivations

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although catcalls while walking down the street are treated as a common and at times trivial annoyance, the growing awareness of street harassment has made it a substantive cultural issue (Stop Street Harassment, 2014). Major news outlets, such as CNN, Huffington Post, The New York Times, and Time Magazine, have drawn attention to the phenomenon. A video showing a woman silently walking through New York City while getting street harassed over one hundred times over the course of ten hours went viral and was viewed over 36 million times in one month, suggesting that people are becoming more interested and aware of street harassment as a phenomenon (Hollaback, 2014).

Street harassment has been characterized as motivated by gender and can involve “unwelcome words and actions by unknown persons in public places. These words or actions are typically directed at women by men and invade a person's physical and emotional space in a disrespectful, insulting, and scary way” (Stop Street Harassment, 2014, About section, What is Street Harassment?). Street harassment can include behaviors such as a stranger telling a woman to “smile,” graphic sexual comments about a woman’s appearance, stalking, groping, and even sexual assault. Street harassment affects at least 65% of women and 25% of men and men are overwhelmingly the harassers of both women and men (Stop Street Harassment, 2014). Women who experience street harassment feel unsafe, have an increased fear of rape or sexual assault, blame themselves and have lower self-esteem, and attempt to cope by restricting their movement or changing neighborhoods (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008).

Many scholars and organizations have argued that street harassment and sexual harassment are ways for men to demonstrate power (Chaudior & Quinn, 2010; Davis, 1993; di

Leonardo, 1981; Hollaback, 2014; Houston, 1988; Tuerkheimer, 1997). What has yet to be studied is how that display of power manifests itself in these interactions, particularly when it comes to expectations and behavioral displays, and whether power is the sole motivating force driving these behaviors. Street harassment falls under the umbrella of sexual harassment, but while sexual harassment has been reasonably researched, street harassment literature is limited (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Stop Street Harassment, 2014; Swim & Hyers, 1999). What little research that has been done has documented how often it happens and how the phenomenon affects women and impacts their daily lives.

This study extends previous research by examining the motivations that underlie street harassment to reach a better understanding of this phenomenon. In order to do this, I will first explain what street harassment is and how it is related to sexual harassment. Then, I will explain how power dynamics are evident in street harassment. Finally, I will follow this analysis with an examination of communicative motivations in street harassment using interaction adaptation theory as a launch pad to understand these motivations.

Street Harassment

Definitional Issues

Although I use the term street harassment, there have been other terms used to refer to this phenomenon such as stranger harassment and public harassment. Additionally, there have been a variety of definitions offered. For example, Bowman (1993) defined stranger harassment as the sexual harassment of women in public places by men who are strangers. Bowman also said that stranger harassment includes “both verbal and nonverbal behavior, such as wolf-whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalls, and street remarks; the remarks are frequently sexual in nature and comment evaluatively on a woman’s physical appearance or on her presence

in public” (Bowman, 1993, p. 523). Wesselmann and Kelly (2010) defined stranger harassment as experiencing unwanted sexual attention from strangers in public contexts. Chaudoir and Quinn (2010) defined catcalls as evaluative and objectifying comments that are made in public and are directed at women as a way to highlight a sexualized part of her body. Di Leonardo (1981) defined street harassment as “through looks, words, or gestures, the man asserts his right to intrude on the women's attention, defining her as a sexual object, and forcing her to interact with him” (p. 52). Hollaback, an organization dedicated to spreading awareness of street harassment by collecting stories, pictures, and videos of street harassment from all over the world and sharing them online, defined street harassment as “a power dynamic that constantly reminds historically subordinated groups of their vulnerability to assault in public spaces. Further, it reinforces the ubiquitous sexual objectification of these groups in everyday life” (2014, About section, What is Street Harassment?). Behaviors considered street harassment can include catcalling, stalking, gesturing, groping, exposing, or any other unwanted behaviors that attempt to sexualize the victim and make him or her feel unsafe or uncomfortable (2014, About section, What is Street Harassment?).

Despite the fact that there is no universally accepted definition of street harassment, there is a lot of consensus among the various definitions that have been put forth. For example, almost all of the definitions involved sexual attention, the aspect of the attention being unwanted, the perpetrator being unknown, and the harassment occurring in a public space. Most of the definitions are also receiver based, where the recipient feels uncomfortable or sexualized. The behaviors included in street harassment vary from definition to definition but generally they can involve whistles, leers, winks, pinches, catcalls, groping, stalking, and gesturing, as well as others.

Some scholars and organizations not only apply a general definition to street harassment but also include possible motivations and effects. For example, Hollaback (2014) claimed that there is a power dynamic between the perpetrator and the victim with the perpetrator having more power and making the victim feel weak and vulnerable. Other feminist scholars have claimed that street harassment is an invasion of privacy and perpetuates rape culture (Thompson, 1994). Motivations of street harassment are not yet known though they are an important element to understanding the phenomenon which is why some scholars and organizations include it in their definitions.

For the purposes of this paper, street harassment is defined as unwanted sexual attention, harassment, or objectification by a stranger in a public space, such as streets, parks, or public transportation that is perceived as negative by the receiver. Behaviors that can be considered street harassment include all of the above behaviors, such as catcalling, as well as any other unwanted behaviors that attempt to sexualize the receiver. A receiver based definition makes sense because people can interpret street harassment behaviors differently. If the receiver feels uncomfortable and sexualized in a public space by a perpetrator using any of those behaviors (e.g., catcalling, gesturing, and groping), then it is street harassment.

Frequency of Street Harassment

Street harassment is an international problem that affects people in places such as Chile, China, Egypt, India, Japan, Pakistan, United Kingdom, and Yemen among many others. In studies of street harassment worldwide, at least 65% but sometimes up to 90% of the people surveyed reported encountering some form of street harassment throughout their lifetime (Bargad, 2005; Centre for Equity and Inclusion, 2009; Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights, 2013; Organization Against Street Harassment, 2014; Osmond, 2013; Shanghi Star, 2002; Stop

Street Harassment, 2014; Yemen Times, 2009). These studies used similar definitions to the ones listed earlier and surveyed or interviewed men and women in a college setting as well as randomly on the street. A nationally representative study of 12,300 people in Canada found that 85% of the women surveyed reported experiencing street harassment while half of the women experienced non-stranger sexual harassment, suggesting that street harassment is a more pervasive problem than non-stranger sexual harassment (Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000). Scholars have argued that although both sexual harassment and street harassment are important and warrant being studied, sexual harassment has been studied much more in depth than street harassment so now it is time to more closely look at street harassment (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000). In 2014, Stop Street Harassment commissioned a 2,000 person nationally representative survey in the United States. They found that of the people surveyed, 65% of women and 25% of men reported being street harassed at least once in their lives, figures that are consistent with other street harassment studies worldwide. As with sexual harassment, these estimates may be much higher given that many people are unwilling to give some behaviors the label of “street harassment” or they do not report it (Stop Street Harassment, 2014). Of the people in the study who said they had been street harassed, the majority of them said that it happened more than once in their lifetime by a variety of people. Women were also more likely than men to say that they experienced street harassment sometimes, often, or daily. In the same study, the majority of both men and women who were street harassed said that men were overwhelmingly the perpetrators of street harassment (Stop Street Harassment, 2014).

Effects of Street Harassment

Street harassment negatively impacts women's lives (Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000; Stop Street Harassment, 2014). Studies have found that women who experience street

harassment feel unsafe, have a higher fear of sexual assault, change their lives, are not likely to actively respond to the perpetrator, experience higher self-objectification, and experience greater negative intergroup emotions towards men (Chaudior & Quinn, 2010; Davis, 1993; Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000; Stop Street Harassment, 2014; Swim & Hyers, 1999).

Women who experience street harassment on a regular basis reported feeling less safe than women who do not experience it (Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000; Stop Street Harassment, 2014). Results of a study that surveyed 12,300 women over the phone indicated that women who experienced street harassment felt on average 20% less safe than women who did not experience street harassment (Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000). In another study that surveyed 2,000 people, 68% of women and 48% of men said they were very concerned about street harassment escalating into something worse such as sexual assault, rape, or a physical attack (Stop Street Harassment, 2014).

Most harassed women reported changing their lives in some way as a result of the experience (Stop Street Harassment, 2014). The most commonly reported changes were constantly assessing their surroundings and going places in a group or with another person instead of going alone. Other more extreme changes that were reported included giving up an outdoor activity, not going to the location where the harassment occurred, quitting a job, and moving to a different neighborhood (Stop Street Harassment, 2014).

Studies have found that although women reported that they would like to actively respond to street harassment such as directly confronting the harasser, they were much more likely to passively respond such as ignoring the situation (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Swim & Hyers, 1999). Swim and Hyers (1999) and Fairchild and Rudman (2008) interpreted that the

lack of active responses was possibly due to normative pressures to not respond, social pressures to be polite, concern about retaliation or escalation, and diffusion of responsibility such as blaming themselves over the harasser. Swim and Hyers (1999) found that when presented with a male confederate making sexist comments in a problem solving group, only 16% of women confronted him actively with direct verbal comments, such as indicating that his remarks were inappropriate or that he should apologize to them. Swim and Hyers (1999) also noted that this low percentage does not indicate a lack of desire. Ninety one percent of the women who did not confront the harasser publicly reported that they had private negative thoughts and feelings about him such as not thinking favorably of the confederate or thinking he was prejudiced when they were interviewed after the initial interaction.

Researchers have found that street harassment is associated with women's self-objectification (Chaudior & Quinn, 2010; Fairchild & Rudman, 2008). Women who self-objectify are concerned about their body's appearance over its function and feel ashamed of their body. Fairchild and Rudman (2008) found that women who were surveyed about their experiences with street harassment and responses to the behavior were more likely to report feeling self-objectified than women who do not experience street harassment. Additionally, they found that women who passively responded to street harassment by ignoring or denying the harassment were more likely to report feeling self-objectified than women who responded actively. Based on this, Fairchild and Rudman (2008) argued that because passive responses are the most common among women who are street harassed, the likelihood of women feeling objectified by street harassment is high.

Studies have shown that women who overhear street harassment experience greater negative intergroup emotions and intergroup motivations towards men than women who

overhear a standard greeting (Chaudior & Quinn, 2010). An ingroup is a group of people who share a common interest or identity such as gender. An outgroup is a group of people that do not belong to the ingroup. From a woman's perspective, other women would be part of her ingroup while men would be part of an outgroup. Intergroup emotions are how an ingroup (e.g. women) feels about an outgroup (e.g. men). Intergroup motivations are the desire to engage in certain behavior (e.g. women move against men by opposing them). Chaudior and Quinn's (2010) study surveyed 114 women on their intergroup emotions and intergroup motivations after showing them a video that either depicted a man catcalling a woman or a man giving a standard greeting to a woman. They found that the women who overheard the street harassment were more likely to think of themselves in terms of their gender group identity than as an individual person and react to the harassment based on their group-level concerns. The women who overheard the street harassment were also more likely to experience anger and fear towards the outgroup of men and move against or away from them (Chaudior & Quinn, 2010).

Legal Aspects of Street Harassment

There are no laws yet that exist to prevent street harassment as a whole. However, there are some laws that exist against specific behaviors that are included under the umbrella of street harassment. For example, in most US states, stalking, groping, unlawful filming, exposing oneself, disorderly conduct, such as fighting or threatening, and soliciting prostitution, such as yelling "How much?," are all illegal acts (Stop Street Harassment, 2014). The issue comes with the fact that most street harassment is caused by one person for a few moments in time and then both the harasser and the victim leave the scene so it is much more difficult to find and arrest the harasser than one person committing sexual harassment repeatedly over time in the same space.

Because it is against the law, most work places and schools have training on sexual harassment and there is a standard protocol on reporting the incidents. However, the law does not prohibit offhand comments, teasing, or incidents that are deemed by the courts as infrequent or not very serious. Harassment must reach a level of severity and frequency that causes a hostile work environment for the victim before it can go anywhere in the court of law. Sexual harassment laws generally only apply to private settings, typically in school or work, but not in public spaces such as where street harassment takes place. Recently, Laniya (2005) argued that sexual harassment is no longer accepted in school or the workplace and is now socially condemned. Additionally, women now have legal recourse. However, street harassment does not yet have the same social or legal recognitions as sexual harassment.

One issue with the way the law is crafted around sexual harassment is that it uses a reasonable person standard for what constitutes a hostile work environment. Consider the situation in which a woman is street harassed every day for one year. Imagine that every day various strangers tell her to smile or make comments on her appearance when she is walking in public. Using the reasonable person standard, someone else might not find a stranger saying “nice legs” as sexual harassment or hostile behavior, but to the woman who has had to deal with it for a year, it is perceived as another instance of street harassment. With street harassment, it is often the offhand comments that create the hostile environment; it is rarely one person harassing another person repeatedly over time. As studies have shown (e.g., Swim & Hyers, 1999; Stop Street Harassment, 2014) most street harassment does not involve severe sexual assault such as rape and groping; most street harassment consists of seemingly smaller aspects such as the sexually charged comments described above. Currently, the law does not address the smaller components that make up the bulk of street harassment.

Sexual Harassment

Given that street harassment is a component of sexual harassment, it is important to look at the definition of sexual harassment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2015) defined sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment literature has been parsed into three main components: sexual coercion, gender harassment, and unwanted sexual attention (Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995). Sexual coercion or quid pro quo is the direct request of sexual acts for job or school-related rewards. Gender harassment involves making offensive jokes about someone based on their gender. Unwanted sexual attention involves objectifying an individual woman or man. Sexual coercion is the rarest form of sexual harassment, which has been reported occurring only 5-10% of the time (Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995; Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000).

Street harassment behaviors likely fall under the gender harassment or unwanted sexual attention categories of sexual harassment. Gender harassment involves making offensive comments about someone based on their gender. Telling a sexist joke to an unknown woman on the street would be considered street harassment as well as gender harassment. Unwanted sexual attention involves objectifying and sexualizing an individual. By definition, all street harassment is not desired and attempts to sexualize the receiver and make her feel uncomfortable. In other words, this is unwanted sexual attention. Because street harassment behavior is a part of sexual harassment behavior, it would follow that men's positive attitudes about sexual harassment will be positively related to reports of engaging in street harassment behaviors.

H1: More positive attitudes about sexual harassment by men will be associated with men's increased reports of engaging in street harassment behaviors.

Power

Power has long been difficult to conceptualize (e.g. Olson & Rabunsky, 1972; Safilios-Rothschild, 1970; Turk & Bell, 1972). Today, there is agreement among scholars that power generally refers to the capacity to produce intended effects, and in particular, the ability to influence the behavior of another person (Bachrach & Lawler, 1981; Berger, 1994; Burgoon, Johnson, & Koch, 1998; Dunbar, 2004; Foa & Foa, 1974; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Rollins & Bahr, 1976).

Many scholars' best guess for why men street harass is power. For example, many of the definitions of street harassment involve objectifying, unwanted sexual attention, and sometimes power dynamics itself (Chaudior & Quinn, 2010; di Leonardo, 1981; Hollaback, 2014). Tuerkheimer (1997) argued that because of the power structure between men and women, women suffer in ways that men do not, so when men say they do not think street harassment is harmful, it comes from a place of power and does not recognize that women are oppressed based on gender while men are not. di Leonardo (1981) contended that men are threatened by a perceived lack of power and status as a result of the feminist movement and women moving into the public sphere so they street harass women as a form of retaliation and to let them know that the public sphere is a male space. Davis (1994) said that street harassment gives men the power to make women hate themselves or their body and causes women to restrict their mobility to avoid it. Davis (1994) also said that women link street harassment with the possibility of being raped, which in itself is a violent act of power. Houston (1988) commented on some general responses by men who are confronted about street harassing women such as "I do not think it harms anybody." Houston (1988) debunked that response by claiming that the reason men do not view street harassment as harmful to them is because of their power and status.

To date, no study has attempted to empirically study the motivations of men who street harass women and the connection to power. The only study that has come close to examining why men street harass is by Quinn (2002). Quinn (2002) argued that a form of street harassment called “girl watching,” where men objectify women with their gaze, is rooted in power because their gaze demonstrates their right as men to sexually evaluate women, reducing her to a sexual object. In Quinn’s (2002) qualitative study, 43 men and women were interviewed about street harassment. Results indicated that men were not consciously motivated by power to street harass women. Street harassment was seen as a game played by men for men and that the woman’s participation or awareness was not important. Many of the men shared stories of seeing an attractive woman and then immediately informing the other men so that they could all look at her together. Quinn (2002) argued that the act of involving other men made street harassment a display of masculinity. The men also stated that they did not like to get “caught” girl watching by the woman such as her asking them “What are you looking at?” because it flusters them. Although the women were possibly aware of the comments made by the men, it was not the goal of the men to interact with the women. Quinn (2002) claimed that they got flustered when caught because the goal is to objectify the woman and if the woman speaks as a subject, she disrupts the idea of her being an object to be commented on. One caution when interpreting the results of this study is that Quinn (2002) used a unique sample of 22 men who worked at a specific company and the street harassment in this setting was not meant to be communicative to the women, just to the other men. In this case, the results of the study may not be as relevant when looking at the communicative function of street harassment by men to women. Thus, the motivations of street harassment seem to be a complex issue but Quinn’s (2002) study does hint at power dynamics being involved in the act.

When asked to envision themselves as women in this “game,” the same men indicated that girl watching was something offensive that they would not want to be a part of as women and that they would use different tactics to avoid it (Quinn, 2002). This admission by men that they are aware that women do not like being street harassed, suggests that the issue of raising awareness is more complicated than asking men how they would feel in a woman’s place. There is also anecdotal evidence that supports the idea that men are aware that women do not enjoy street harassment but men continue to engage in it. For example, Cosmopolitan recently created a video that showed men watching a video of their girlfriends getting street harassed (2015). The men were upset and indicated that street harassment was wrong and insulting which suggests that men may care more about the issue when it affects someone that they know and care about instead of women in general. One possible explanation for this contradicting behavior in Quinn’s (2002) study and the Cosmopolitan (2015) video are that men view unknown women as a part of an outgroup and thus have different goals (e.g. obtain more power) for interacting with them than with women they feel are part of their ingroup. Another explanation is that men may view their own street harassment behavior as positive but view other men’s behavior as negative.

Men and Power

One possible reason why men make up the bulk of street harassers is that men are more likely than women to use communication as a way to obtain power and status in their lives (Tannen, 1990). This desire for more power manifests itself into street harassing behavior. Proponents of difference theory claimed that gender differences affect how men and women communicate with each other (Tannen, 1990). Tannen (1990) argued that because children are often segregated by sex from an early age, the male and female genders are essentially two different cultures with different values. She argued that men communicate hierarchically and

women communicate in a more egalitarian way. For example, Tannen (1990) claimed that men see language as a means of asserting dominance and building status while women see it as a network of connections and a way of confirming or supporting ideas. As a result, men are more likely to want to have more power than women. Other gender differences aside from status and support include independence and intimacy, advice and understanding, information and feelings, orders and proposals, and conflict and compromise. Given the propositions of the theory, it would follow that men are more likely than women to street harass as a communicative function to obtain power which is consistent with previous research and definitions of street harassment.

Dyadic Power Theory

Because most scholars and organizations agree that street harassment is rooted in power, dyadic power theory (Dunbar, 2004) is a useful framework to understand the communicative motives behind the act. Dyadic power theory involves dyads interacting and negotiating power between the receiver and initiator. This type of interaction applies to the context of street harassment because of the dyadic component and the idea that power is present.

Dyadic power theory was originally called “theory of power in marital relationships” and was created by Rollins and Bahr (1976) to explain relative power dynamics specifically within a marriage context. Dunbar (2004) expanded on the original theory by Rollins and Bahr (1976) by including other relationships besides marriage such as parents and children, siblings, and friendships. Dunbar (2004) also noted that the theory could apply to any other relationship where interactants have an established history, are dependent on one another for outcomes, and expect to have continued interaction in the future.

Although dyadic power theory currently only applies to established relationships, the propositions should still apply in non-intact relationships because there is still power in the

interaction and there is a repeated nature to street harassment. Dunbar (2004) might argue that it is impossible to assess power dynamics in public spaces but feminist scholars would disagree and say that power is always present when men and women interact.

According to dyadic power theory, power is an ability and like other abilities, it is not always exercised (Dunbar, 2004). Even when power is exercised, it is not always successful. If people do exercise their ability by attempting to change the behavior of a partner, it is called a control attempt (Dunbar, 2004; Rollins & Bahr, 1976). If the initiator is perceived by the receiver as having lower relative power, then a counter control attempt will be likely to be made by the receiver, which would reduce the effectiveness of the original control attempt by lessening the probability of the initiator succeeding in gaining control. A counter control attempt is an attempt made by the receiver of the control attempt to gain control of the situation that is not consistent with the control attempt of the initiator.

The more authority and resources people have, the more power they will have compared to the other person. Authority refers to norms regarding who “ought to” control different situations (Dunbar, 2004). For example, in some traditional marriages, the husband is usually the one to make financial decisions; therefore, he would have more authority than his wife in deciding how much money they can spend on a house. Resources are anything that one partner may make available to the other partner to help the other partner satisfy their own needs or attain goals. A resource could be anything from having expert ability in a specific task to having access to relevant information. For example, if a wife is a car mechanic and has more knowledge of how to fix cars as well as access to the necessary tools, she would have more resources than her husband who does not know anything about cars and needs to fix his car so he can get to work.

Power, authority, and resources are all relative, meaning that they are perceptions of one's own capacity in relation to another person; they are not absolute (Dunbar, 2004; Rollins & Bahr, 1976). Dunbar (2004) acknowledged that power incorporates the perspectives of both individuals in the interaction. Relative power, relative authority, and relative resources do not exist independently of the perceptions that a person has of themselves in comparison to others. For example, a wife may believe that she has higher relative power than her husband because she has higher relative authority and relative resources than him. However, when the wife is interacting with her supervisor, she may believe that she has lower relative power because the supervisor has higher relative authority and relative resources than her.

Dunbar (2004) explained that the relationship between perceived power and control attempts is curvilinear such that partners who perceive their power as extremely high or low compared to their partner will make fewer control attempts and partners who perceive their power as more equal will make more control attempts. For example, a CEO might have high relative power, relative authority, and relative resources compared to an employee because of the CEO's job position. The CEO may not have to make any control attempts on the employee because the employees are aware of the CEO's relative power so they act accordingly for fear of negative repercussions. In the case of street harassment, a man who feels powerful may not need to street harass women as a way to obtain power because he already has it. However, if a man feels that he is equal in power to a woman on the street and would like to obtain more power, he would be more likely to street harass.

When a person has relatively high or equal power to their partner, the more control attempts that they make, the more likely it is that there will be an increase in the amount of control which is the behavior outcome of compliance with the control attempt. Most of the

literature supports Dunbar's (2004) claim about relatively equal power partners but empirical evidence does not support the idea that people who are relatively high in power are less likely to make control attempts. Dunbar and colleagues (Dunbar & Abra, 2010; Dunbar, Bippus, & Young, 2008; Dunbar & Johnson, 2015) found that individuals who were perceived as equal in relative power compared to their partners displayed more dominance, or behavioral expressions of relative power, than partners who had lower relative power, followed by individuals that were higher in relative power. In contrast, Dunbar and Burgoon (2005) used married couples as participants and found that the relationship between power and dominance is largely linear, but they speculated that it could actually be curvilinear if the study included more data such as couples who report more extreme inequalities in power (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005).

Power Hypotheses

Studies of street harassment have shed light on how frequently this problem occurs and the negative effects it has on women, but what has yet to be uncovered is why men street harass women at all. Many scholars and organizations have argued that power dynamics are at the root of street harassment (di Leonardo, 1981; Davis, 1993; Laniya, 2005; Thompson, 1994). Because street harassment involves an unknown man giving a woman unwanted sexual attention and causes women to alter their behavior or feel unsafe and uncomfortable, it would make sense that power dynamics are at play. In these situations, men would have higher relative power because of their size, strength, aggressive behavior, and status in society while women would have lower relative power because they fear escalation and embody societal norms of being polite (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Swim & Hyers, 1999). According to difference theory (Tannen, 1990), men are more likely to use communication to gain power and status than women so they would be more likely than women to use street harassment as a control attempt to ascertain power.

Street harassment is a form of a control attempt if the purpose is to alter the behavior of the receiver. Even if the initiator does not consciously realize that power is involved, if he wants the receiver to change her behavior in any way as a result of the street harassment, then the act of street harassment is a control attempt. If the initiator does not intend for the receiver to change her behavior in any way, then the street harassment would not be considered a control attempt. Thus the following research question is posed.

RQ1: To what extent do men report using street harassment as a control attempt?

If there is no counter control attempt, he would then have gained higher relative power. Again following the principles of dyadic power theory, if the man felt that he had extremely high or low relative power compared to the woman, he would be unlikely to use a control attempt because either his high power status speaks for itself or his power status is too low for a control attempt to make a difference (Dunbar, 2004). However, feminist scholars have argued that men believe they have more power than women and that is why they street harass (di Leonardo, 1981; Davis, 1993; Laniya, 2005; Thompson, 1994). The empirical evidence currently does not strongly support the idea that people who have extremely high relative power do not use control attempts but it does indicate that people who are relatively equal in power are most likely to use control attempts. A critical test of the relationships between power and control attempts could show the relationship between power and control attempts and answer the question if the relationship is curvilinear as Dunbar (2004) predicts or linear as feminist scholars and Rollins and Bahr (1976) predict.

H2a: Men who perceive themselves to be relatively equal in power to women will use street harassment as a control attempt on women more than men who perceive themselves to have higher or lower relative power compared to women.

H2b: Men who perceive themselves to have higher relative power compared to women will use street harassment as a control attempt on women more than men who perceive themselves to have relatively equal or lower relative power compared to women.

Support for H2a would mean support for Dunbar's (2004) propositions and support for H2b would mean support for Rollins and Bahr (1976) and feminist scholar theory.

Dunbar (2004) also claimed that when the receiver of a control attempt perceives the initiator as relatively equal or lower in power to themselves, the receiver would likely make a counter control attempt against the initiator, which would reduce the effect of the original control attempt. However, it is not currently known if a person who believes that they have high relative power would make a counter control attempt since their power may speak for themselves. The literature more consistently supports the proposition about people with relatively equal power making more counter control attempts than people with relatively low power. A counter control attempt would be any behavior that directly goes in opposition of the control attempt such as being told to smile and scowling instead. In the same context where a man and woman do not know each other and encounter each other in a public setting, if the woman perceives herself as having relatively equal power to the man, she would be more likely to make a counter control attempt. Thus the following is predicted.

H3: If a woman perceives that a man uses street harassment as a control attempt on her, but she believes that they have relatively equal power, the woman will report making more counter control attempts than if she believes she has lower relative power.

Communicative Motivations

Power is a possible motivation for street harassment but there may be other possibilities. People communicate with one another for a number of reasons including pleasure (e.g., it's fun), affection (e.g., to help others), inclusion (e.g., to feel less lonely), escape (e.g., there is nothing better to do), relaxation (e.g., to feel less tense), and control (e.g., to get someone to do something) (Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988). Whenever people interact with one another, there are motivations and expectations that color the interaction. With the exception of one study, scholars have previously only offered conjecture on why they believe men would street harass women and have not empirically investigated the cause. Even when men are asked about why they engage in street harassment behaviors, results indicate that the motivations are more complex than generally thought (Quinn, 2002). Currently, it is not known how power or other motivations manifests itself into the specific street harassment behaviors.

Interaction Adaptation Theory

Because the communicative motivations of street harassment are currently unknown, interaction adaptation theory is a useful framework to address possible motivations. The basic premise of the theory is that people enter an interaction with an idea of how the interaction will go and what they need out of it, but their interaction partner's actual behavior may be different from what people want or anticipate (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). The contribution of this theory is that it looks at initiating behavior and what determines that behavior. This is useful when attempting to understand the communicative motivations of street harassment.

The first three key concepts of the theory are the required, expected, and desired level of any set of interaction behaviors. (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). The required level is influenced by biological factors and includes basic human needs and drives such as survival,

safety, and comfort. The expected level is influenced by social factors and involves what is anticipated based on social norms or individuated knowledge of the other person's behavior. The desired level is based on person-specific factors and involves personal goals, likes, and dislikes. The required, expected, and desired level of behaviors are all interdependent and help form the interactional position. The last two key concepts are the interactional position and actual performed behavior. The interactional position is an assessment of what is needed, anticipated, and preferred as the interaction pattern in a situation. The actual performed behavior is what the interaction partner does in the situation.

The main proposition of interaction adaptation theory is that if the interactional position and the actual performed behavior are on a behavioral continuum from negatively valenced behavior to positively valenced behavior, whichever of the two is more positively valenced will dictate the response (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). If the interactional position is more positively valenced than the actual performed behavior, then behavior would diverge from the interaction partner. If the actual performed behavior is more positively valenced than the interactional position, then behavior would diverge from the interaction partner. Convergent behavior is behavior that changes to become more similar to the interaction partner. Divergent behavior is behavior that changes to become more different than the interaction partner.

In a study of 96 pairs of strangers who were induced to expect the stranger to like them or dislike them and to desire that the stranger like them or dislike them, participants matched behaviors that were congruent with the interactional position (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). The participants enacted liking nonverbal behaviors when they expected the stranger to like them and disliking nonverbal behaviors when they expected the stranger to dislike them. Le Poire and Yoshimura (1999) also found that when participants expected pleasant behavior, their behavior

would converge and be pleasant as well while unpleasant behavior was met with reciprocated nonverbal behavior. Additionally, White and Burgoon (2001) found that deceivers were less involved than truth tellers early on in discussions because they were more concerned about self-presentation, but they were able to adapt their behaviors throughout the discussion to better match the truth tellers.

Communicative Motivations Hypotheses

In the case of street harassment, the man might street harass the woman as a way to let the woman know that he appreciates and approves of her physical appearance. If he believes that he is doing something nice or complimenting her, then the expectation would be that she would graciously accept the compliment. Another possible intention could be for the man to show the woman that she is an object for him to admire and he gets to give her his approval or not in which case the expectation would be for the woman not to react in any way so as to not ruin the illusion of her being an object. For example, Quinn (2002) found that men are more likely to street harass in groups of other men suggesting that street harassment is a display of masculinity to the other men and does not concern the woman involved. Other men that street harass could do it because they require attention from women. In this case, being ignored by the woman would be an undesired reaction. Although some feminist scholars have claimed that power is the driving motivation, there could be others. It is important to understand the communicative motives such as what the initiator needs out of the interaction, what he wants, and what he expects in order to understand why men street harass women at all. Thus the following research question is posed.

RQ2: What are various communicative motivations that street harassers report?

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Procedure

Two surveys were used for the study that included a separate male survey and female survey. Each survey had slightly different scales to get at both male and female perspectives of street harassment. Possible participants signed up for the survey through an online system. Both surveys first had a consent form that gave the project description, explained the benefits and risks, explained the confidentiality and privacy of the information, and gave the contact information of the researcher (see Appendix A and Appendix B). If the possible participants agreed to participate, the survey began on the following page by asking for demographic information (see Appendix C), followed by a section on street harassment behaviors, a section about control attempts and counter control attempts, a section about power and gender, a section on communicative motives, and a section on social desirability. On the male survey only, there was an additional section that measured sexual harassment attitudes. Participants had the option to opt out at any point during the survey. Two participants elected to opt out part way through the survey, both after the section on control attempts. When the participants completed or opted out of the survey, they were shown a debriefing speech (see Appendix D). Participants were instructed to click on a link to another survey, where they entered their name to receive credit for taking the survey. This was done to ensure anonymity on the main survey because of the sensitive information that may be shared. Both surveys took an average of 13.58 minutes to complete ($SD = 11.20$, range = 3 – 92 minutes), excluding five outliers who each took 113, 208, 228, 371, and 641 minutes respectively. The outliers were excluded from calculating the average amount of time only, they were still included in the main analysis.

Participants

One hundred forty nine undergraduate students at a large research university participated in the study. Of those, 14 were deleted because they did not answer any of the items and 2 were deleted because they filled out the survey for the opposite gender. Therefore, total number of participants who were included in the results was 133, with 45 males (34%) and 88 females (66%). Participants received course credit or extra credit for their involvement.

The average age for male participants was 22.25 years ($SD = 5.47$, range = 18-43) and for female participants was 19.96 years ($SD = 1.73$, range = 18-25). Participants identified as Asian (males: $f = 31$, 70%, females: $f = 50$, 57%), Caucasian (males: $f = 9$, 20%, females: $f = 18$, 21%), Hispanic (males: $f = 3$, 7%, females: $f = 6$, 7%), African American (males: $f = 1$, 2%, females: $f = 0$, 0%), Pacific Islander (males: $f = 1$, 2%, females: $f = 7$, 8%), and other (males: $f = 0$, 0%, females: $f = 7$, 8%).

Measures

Frequency and desirability of street harassment. Frequency of street harassment behaviors or experiencing street harassment was measured by using a list of 28 possible street harassing behaviors modified from Sullivan (2011) who developed the scale from Lord (2009) and anecdotal data (see Appendix E). The scale was designed to represent a broad range of experiences that could be categorized as positive (e.g., complimentary, benign), negative (e.g., hostile, abusive), or either positive or negative. Fourteen items were considered by Sullivan (2011) to be positive, eight were considered negative, and six could be considered positive or negative depending on the participant. On the female survey, one item was mistakenly left off resulting in 27 behaviors being on the female survey and 28 on the male survey. Participants were instructed to think about the past year and think only about women/men they have never

met before out in public. Male participants indicated which of the behaviors they engaged in and how often using seven-point scales (0 - *Never*, 1 - *Once in the past year*, 2 - *A few times in the past year*, 3 - *About once a month*, 4 - *A few times a month*, 5 - *Almost every day*, 6 - *Multiple times a day*). Sample items from the male survey include “How often have you whistled, yelled, or honked at a woman from your car while she was walking/waiting for the bus/riding a bike?” “How often have you blown kisses or made other romantic gestures to a woman on the street?” and “How often have you told a woman to smile?”

Each behavior was considered separately. An indication of engaging in each behavior was given a score of one (regardless of how often they actually engaged in the behavior over the course of a year), resulting in a possible overall street harassment behavior score of 0-28 points total.

Female participants indicated how many of the possible street harassment behaviors they have experienced using the same seven-point scales. Female participants also indicated which behaviors were wanted or unwanted by the receiver. Sample items from the female survey include “A man whistled, yelled, or honked at you from his car while you were walking/waiting for the bus/riding a bike” “A man blew kisses or made other romantic gestures to you on the street” and “A man told you to smile.” This measure was used as a check to determine if the street harassment behavior list was indeed composed of behaviors that were unwanted by women (a definitional requirement for street harassment). Female participants indicated that most of the 28 behaviors were unwanted except for “A man whistled, yelled, or honked at you from his car while you were walking/waiting for the bus/riding a bike” ($f = 1, 1\%$), “A man told you to smile” ($f = 3, 3\%$), “A man complimented your appearance (e.g., “you have beautiful eyes,” “nice legs,” or “you’re beautiful”))” ($f = 4, 5\%$), and “A man walked past you and commented on your weight,

saying that he approves of your size” ($f = 1, 1\%$). Only a small number of women indicated that they would want any of the street harassment behaviors and the few that were selected as wanted were in the positive or complimentary category.

Control attempts and counter control attempts. Control attempts and counter control attempts were measured as dichotomous variables by assessing participants’ responses to a list of 18 possible responses to street harassment that the researcher determined, based on past studies and anecdotal evidence (see Appendix F). Sample items include “completely ignore,” “smile,” and “insulting gesture.” Male participants were asked to indicate which behaviors were desired by the initiators, themselves, as a response to any of the street harassment behaviors. Any behavioral selection other than “no change in behavior” indicated a control attempt because it is not a control attempt if the initiator did not want a change in the receiver’s behavior. Female participants were asked to think about the most recent time they were street harassed and indicate which behaviors they think the harasser wanted them to do and which behavior they actually did. Any behavioral selection by the female participant other than the behavior that the harasser wanted indicated a counter control attempt (see Table 1).

Power. Power was measured using a modified version of Dunbar and Abra’s (2010) scale (see Appendix G). The scale was modified to pertain to general interactions between men and women instead of a specific relationship and only included three out of the four original items because they were most relevant to this study.

Participants were asked to assess which gender-based communication partner generally has more power. For example, instead of, “Who influenced the decisions of the other person more”, the item was modified to read, “Who influences the other gender more?” These items were rated on a three-point scale, for male participants the scale was 1 – *Women* 2 – *Both equally*

3 – *My gender* and for female participants the scale was 1 – *Men* 2 – *Both equally* 3 – *My gender*. Male and female participants who selected their own gender for two out of three of the questions were classified as higher relative power as long as the third question did not differ substantially from the other two. For example, if a participant selected their own gender for two out of three questions but selected “Both equally” for the third question it would be counted because the third question did not differ substantially. However, if the participant selected their own gender for two out of three questions but selected the other gender for the third question it would not be counted. Male and female participants who selected the other gender for 2 out of the 3 questions were classified as lower relative power as long as the third question did not differ substantially from the other two. Those participants that selected “Both equally” for 2 out of the 3 questions were classified as relatively equal power as long as the third question did not differ substantially from the first two. Male participants that were included ($n = 34$) indicated that they believed they had equal power compared to women most frequently ($f = 21, 62\%$) followed by higher power compared to women ($f = 12, 35\%$) and lower power compared to women ($f = 1, 3\%$). Female participants that were included ($n = 73$) indicated that they believed they had equal power compared to men most frequently ($f = 46, 63\%$), followed by higher power compared to men ($f = 16, 22\%$), and lower power compared to men ($f = 11, 15\%$). Reliability for males was reported .37 and for females was .58.

Communication motivation. Communication motives were measured using the interpersonal communication motives scale (Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988) (see Appendix H). This measure assessed why people communicate with one another. The scale includes a list of 28 possible reasons in six categories for why people would talk to each other. The six categories are pleasure (e.g. Because it’s fun), affection (e.g. To help others), inclusion (e.g. Because it

makes me feel less lonely), escape (e.g. Because I have nothing better to do), relaxation (e.g. Because it makes me feel less tense), and control (e.g. Because I want someone to do something for me). Male participants were asked to indicate the extent to which each motivation best expresses their own reasons for talking to women who they do not know in public spaces using seven-point scales from 1- *Completely disagree* to 7 - *Completely agree*. Female participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with the statements about the reasons why men would communicate with women who they do not know in public spaces using the same seven-point scales. The mean was calculated across the items within each category and higher scores indicated more of that particular reason or motivation (see Table 2). The reliability estimates for each category of motivation ranged from .87 to .96 (see Table 2).

Social desirability. Although it was not a key variable of interest, social desirability was measured using a modified 10 item version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972) to assess possible social desirability response bias due to the sensitive nature of the topics covered in the survey (see Appendix I). Participants read the items in this measure and indicated if that item is true or false. Sample items included “I like to gossip at times (False)” and “I never resent being asked to return a favor (True).” Some items were considered an indication of social desirability if marked true and would get a score of 1 if marked true and 0 if marked false. Other were considered an indication of social desirability if marked false and would get a score of 1 if marked false and 0 if marked true. Scores were calculated by assigning one point to each item so results were between 0 and 10 points. Higher points indicated more social desirability bias. The male sample had an average mean score of 3.87 ($SD=1.66$) and the female sample had an average mean score of 4.01 ($SD=1.77$). Reliability was .38 for males and .46 for females.

Sexual harassment attitudes. Attitudes about sexual harassment were measured using Mazer and Percival's (1989) scale (see Appendix J). There are 19 items in this measure such as "Most women who are sexually insulted by a man provoke his behavior by the way they talk, act, or dress" and "It is only natural for a woman to use her sexuality as a way of getting ahead in school or at work." Participants were asked about the extent to which they agree with each item using seven-point scales from 1 - *Completely disagree* to 7 - *Completely agree*. Means were calculated and higher scores indicated more acceptance and tolerance of sexual harassment and less agreement with contemporary feminist understandings of its causes. In general, the men neither endorsed nor did not endorse sexual harassment attitudes ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.96$). Reliability of this measure was .89.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Sexual harassment attitudes

H1 predicted a positive relationship between men's reported attitudes about sexual harassment and men's reports of engaging in street harassment behaviors. In order to test this hypothesis, a Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted. The results showed there was no significant association between reported attitudes about sexual harassment and street harassment behavior for men, $r(43) = .03, p = .90$. No support was found for H1.

Control attempts

RQ1 asked how often men reported using street harassment as a way to control others' behavior. In order to answer this research question, descriptive frequencies were run. Results indicated that 95% ($n = 42$) of the men surveyed reported engaging in street harassment behaviors (see Table 1). Of those, 88% ($n = 38$) did so with the intent of changing the recipient's behavior in some way. Only 5 men (12%) indicated that they would like no change in behavior to be the response to street harassment. The majority of men indicated that they would like women to respond to street harassment in a more pleasant way such as smiling, waving, and starting a conversation (see Table 2).

Table 1.

Frequency of Males Engaging in Street Harassment Behaviors

Street Harassment Behaviors	Males <i>f</i> (percentage)
Asked a woman for her name	38 (85%)
Complimented a woman's appearance	38 (84%)
Asked a woman for her phone number	32 (71%)
Asked a woman if she has a boyfriend or is married	28 (62%)
Stared at a woman in a sexual way as you walked past her on the street	27 (60%)
Told a woman to smile	23 (51%)

Slowed down your car so that you can drive beside a woman as she walked and either watched her or spoke to her	12 (27%)
Whistled, yelled, or honked at a woman from your car while she was walking/waiting for the bus/riding a bike	11 (24%)
Commented on a woman's weight saying that she is either too fat or too skinny	11 (24%)
Made gestures and calls for a woman to come over to where you are standing	10 (22%)
Made negative comments about a woman's appearance as she walked by	9 (20%)
Blown kisses or made other romantic gestures to a woman on the street	9 (20%)
Yelled things like "hey sexy!" or "you're fine!" from a car while driving past a woman as she was walking or waiting for someone	7 (16%)
Walked past a woman and commented on her weight, saying that you approve of her size	7 (16%)
Walked past and directed sounds at a woman	6 (13%)
Yelled compliments to a woman about her appearance as she walked past your work site	6 (13%)
Touched women as she walked past you	5 (11%)
Called a woman insulting names as she walked past you	5 (11%)
Approached the male person a woman was walking or sitting with and complimented him on her appearance or on his successful conquest of her	5 (11%)
Yelled comments about a woman's appearance at her while she was jogging	5 (11%)
Called for a woman's attention and when she ignored you begun shouting insults at her	3 (6.7%)
You showed a woman your penis on the street	3 (6.7%)
Aggressively touched a woman as she walked past you	3 (6.7%)
Made sexually explicit gestures to a woman as she walked	2 (4%)
Pulled your car over as a woman was walking and asked her to do sexually explicit things with you	2 (4%)
Made sexual comments to a woman and then followed her as she walked	2 (5%)
Told a woman how pretty or attractive she is as she walked down the street and then repeated these comments louder, trying to get her attention	2 (5%)
Offered a woman money for sex when she is either walking or standing and waiting for someone	2 (5%)

Note. Frequency percentages greater than .25 are shown in boldface.

To provide additional insight into this research question, women were also asked to think about the most recent time they were street harassed and indicate which behaviors they think the harasser wanted them to do. Results indicated that women generally reported higher frequencies than men for each of the behaviors that they believed men wanted them to do, including the more unpleasant responses such as looking angry and making an insulting gesture (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Reported Frequencies of Desired or Believed to be Desired Responses to Street Harassment Between Men and Women

Response	Males f (percentage)	Females f (percentage)
Smile	23 (55%)	73 (83%)
Start a conversation	20 (48%)	73 (83%)
Pleasant gesture	12 (29%)	59 (67%)
Move closer	11 (26%)	70 (80%)
Wave	11 (26%)	58 (66%)
Make eye contact	10 (24%)	66 (75%)
Laugh	9 (21%)	41 (47%)
Completely ignore	6 (14%)	7 (8%)
No change in behavior	5 (12%)	10 (11%)
Say they do like it	5 (12%)	72 (82%)
Say they do not like it	4 (10%)	18 (21%)
Look visibly upset	3 (7%)	21 (24%)
Look angry/glare	3 (7%)	18 (21%)
Leave the vicinity	2 (5%)	15 (17%)
Move farther away	2 (5%)	10 (11%)
Shout something pleasant	1 (2%)	60 (68%)
Insulting gesture	1 (2%)	31 (35%)
Shout something insulting	0 (0%)	29 (33%)

Note. Frequency percentages greater than .25 are shown in boldface.

Power

H2a and H2b were designed as a critical test and predicted differences in control attempts depending on perceptions of relative power. H2a predicted that men who believe they are relatively equal in power to women will use street harassment as a control attempt more than men who believe they have higher or lower relative power compared to women. H2b predicted that men who believe they have higher relative power compared to women will use street harassment as a control attempt more than men who believe they have relatively equal or low power compared to women. In order to test these hypotheses, a univariate analysis of variance was conducted. Because only one participant indicated that he believed he has lower power than

women, only a comparison between higher and equal power conditions could be analyzed. Men's reports of believing they had higher power than women ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 2.27$) did not differ significantly in their reported use of control attempts compared to men who reported they believed they had equal power compared to women ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 2.25$), $F(1, 31) = .22$, $p = .80$, $\eta^2 = .02$. In other words, there was no support for h2a or h2b.

Counter control attempts

H3 predicted that a woman will use counter control attempts on men if she believes she has relatively equal power compared to men than if she believes she has lower relative power. In order to test this hypothesis, a univariate analysis of variance was run. Women's reports of believing they had equal power compared to men ($M = 13.87$, $SD = 4.37$) did not differ significantly in their reported use of counter control attempts compared to women who reported that they believed they had lower power than men ($M = 15.09$, $SD = 4.28$), $F(2, 69) = .41$, $p = .66$, $\eta^2 = .01$. In other words, the results showed no support for H3.

Communicative motivations

RQ2 asked about the various communicative motivations that street harassers report. In order to answer this research question, descriptive frequencies were run. Results showed that of the male participants who reported engaging in street harassment behaviors ($n = 42$), the most frequent motivation reported was affection, followed by pleasure, inclusion, escape, control, and relaxation (see Table 2). The direct way of answering this question is to look at it from the male perspective but another way is to look at it from the female perspective. Female participants were asked to think about most recent time they were street harassed and to indicate which motivations they believe men to have when engaging in street harassment. The most frequent

motivation reported by female participants was pleasure, control, escape, inclusion, relaxation, and affection (see Table 3).

Post-hoc analyses indicated that the communication motivations identified by the men and women did not significantly differ from each other, except for two categories of motivations. That is, men's reports of affection ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.35$) as a reason to engage in street harassment behaviors was significantly higher than women's reports of affection ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.70$), $t(129) = 5.53$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$ and men's reports of control ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.38$) as a reason to engage in street harassment behaviors was significantly lower than women's reports of control ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.62$), $t(129) = -2.36$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Table 3.

Communicative Motivations Reported for Street Harassment

Communicative Motivations	Male		Female		<i>t</i> -test
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Reliability	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Reliability	
Pleasure	4.28 (1.34)	.94	4.52 (1.40)	.93	-0.98
Affection	4.78 (1.35)	.87	3.16 (1.70)	.96	5.53***
Inclusion	3.89 (1.52)	.91	3.38 (1.47)	.91	1.85
Escape	3.41 (1.40)	.90	3.69 (1.56)	.90	-1.03
Relaxation	3.39 (1.42)	.92	3.29 (1.45)	.94	0.38
Control	3.04 (1.38)	.81	3.70 (1.62)	.85	-2.36*

Note. * $p < .05$, one-tailed. *** $p < .001$, one-tailed.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in order to better understand the relationship between power and street harassment using the framework of dyadic power theory (Dunbar, 2004) as well as to examine other possible motivations using the framework of interaction adaptation theory (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). I hypothesized that there would be differences in control attempts and counter control attempts depending on perceptions of power and that there would be a positive relationship between men's reported attitudes about sexual harassment and men's reports of engaging in street harassment behaviors. Research questions about other possible communicative motivations for street harassment were also posed.

Results indicated that there was no significant relationship between men's reported attitudes about sexual harassment and men's reports of engaging in street harassment behaviors. This result suggests that although street harassment has qualities that could be categorized definitionally as sexual harassment, such as being gender-based, it appears that they could also be very different phenomenon. One possible reason for these differences is that sexual harassment tends to occur in academic or work place settings by someone the recipient knows while street harassment occurs in public spaces typically by strangers, therefore it is possible that the motivations for engaging in these behaviors may be quite different. Another reason is that it is possible that not everyone who street harasses also sexually harasses, but that people who sexually harass may be more okay with street harassment. Participants may have also been more willing to see street harassment as a good behavior because many of their reported motivations were positive such as pleasure or affection.

The relationship between control attempts and power could not be fully tested because there were not enough men who reported that they had lower power than women. Only one participant indicated that he had lower power than women but the participant also indicated that he used street harassment as a control attempt more than the mean of participants who reported they were equal or higher power compared to women. Perhaps if there was a larger sample size that included more participants in the lower power condition, results would show that men use street harassment as a control attempt more when they feel they have lower power than women. However, the vast majority of men surveyed reported that they wanted the recipient's behavior to change as a result of their street harassment behaviors so only a partial test of the hypothesis could be conducted. A comparison between men who believe they have higher power than women and men who believe they have equal power to women was made but there were no significant differences in the use of control attempts.

Similar to the results from the men, there were no significant differences in counter control attempts for women who believed they either had higher, lower, or equal power compared to men. One possible explanation for this result is that because women indicated a wider variety of responses to street harassment as desirable to men than men did for themselves, that college women were not always sure of what men want from them when they street harass. Perhaps if women knew what men wanted their reactions to be, it would be easier to know if the women were using counter control attempts or not. These results suggest that the relationship between power and control attempts is not curvilinear as Dunbar (2004) suggests.

Implications and Contributions

The fact that the vast majority of men surveyed reported that they wanted the recipient's behavior to change as a result of their street harassment behaviors suggests that power is related

in some way to street harassment, even if it does not follow the curvilinear relationship outlined in dyadic power theory (Dunbar, 2004). Power is defined as the capacity to produce intended effects and control attempts are the attempt to change the behavior of another person (Dunbar, 2004). Therefore if the street harasser has the ability to change the behavior of the recipient, it is considered a control attempt which is a fundamental aspect of power. The lack of support for the theory indicates either that dyadic power theory cannot be applied in a stranger context or that the relationship between power and control attempts is not always curvilinear.

The results of the research questions also showed interesting discrepancies between how men and women view street harassment. Although the majority of men reported that they used street harassment as a way to change the recipient's behavior, they reported other motivations for engaging in street harassment as well. Results indicated that the most frequent motivation for street harassment as reported by men was affection and the least frequent reported was relaxation while women most frequently reported pleasure and least frequently reported affection as motivations for why they believe men street harass women. Post-hoc analyses indicated that the communication motivations identified by the men and women did not significantly differ from each other, except for two categories of motivations. Men's reports of affection as a reason to engage in street harassment behaviors was significantly higher than women's reports of affection and women's reports of control as a reason to engage in street harassment behaviors was significantly higher than men's reports of control.

After answering the question of why men street harass, men were then asked what response they desired from women. The majority of men indicated that they would like women to respond to street harassment in a more pleasant way such as smiling, waving, and starting a conversation. Women indicated more often than men that they thought men wanted more

unpleasant reactions such as looking angry and making an insulting gesture as well as pleasant reactions. This suggests that college men may view street harassment as a pleasant experience for women and are likely not expecting women to give an angry or unpleasant reaction to being street harassed. These results go in opposition with feminist scholars that have argued that men are aware that women do not like to be street harassed but they do it anyway as a way to demonstrate their power. College men were also significantly more likely to report affection, meaning they express care or liking, as the motivation for street harassment than women which again suggests that men genuinely believe that street harassment is a pleasant experience. Women, on the other hand, most frequently reported pleasure, meaning it is fun and makes them happy, followed by control, meaning they want something from the other person, as why they believe men street harass women. This suggests that women believe that men enjoy street harassment but they also believe they do it for control reasons such as to feel more powerful or cause the recipient to change their behavior. These results show that men do use street harassment as a way to change the recipient's behavior but they do not believe it is a negative experience and do not expect negative reactions from women.

Based off of these results, more awareness and education for men of how women view and are affected by street harassment is necessary and could potentially reduce how often women are street harassed and in turn, the negative effects it has on women. Additionally, the implications of these gender differences go beyond the scope of street harassment. Men and women often view behaviors such as flirting, domestic violence, and even sexual assault very differently (Henningson, 2004; Shotland & Craig, 1988). Given that women are disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of these behaviors, it would serve that more

education for men about women's feelings and experiences related to these interactions could significantly reduce miscommunication, confusion, fear, and violence between genders.

Limitations and Future Directions

Like all studies, this project is not without its limitations. First, with the way power was conceptualized it could be argued that all communication is a control attempt or display of power because it is designed to illicit a response or behavior change. For example, when we say hello to someone we typically want the person to say hello back. Additionally, there was low reliability for the power scale. Future studies should take into account other conceptualizations of power and involve different ways of learning how much power a participant feels they have, perhaps by using field observation or lab experiments to further understand various aspects of street harassment. For example, researchers could use confederates coded by independent coders for different power levels. The confederates could go out in the street and a researcher could code how often they are street harassed and the various types. However, it will be difficult to know what men's motivations are and how they feel without asking them directly. Because of this, an open-ended interview may be able to be used to understand the complexities of their motivations. Second, the application of dyadic power theory (Dunbar, 2004) may not be the best approach to understanding street harassment given it was not designed for a stranger context therefore future studies should include the use of different theoretical frameworks such as social identity theory and self-categorization theory to better understand the gender group motivations. For example, men may street harass as a way to enhance the status of their group by putting down an outgroup such as women. Third, if street harassment and sexual harassment are indeed different from each other, then the sexual harassment literature may not apply to studying street harassment and researchers should treat street harassment as a different phenomenon with

different characteristics. Fourth, the scales used were created by and for Americans and may not do the best job at capturing cultural differences. Future studies should use scales that can be applied to broader cultural contexts and will thus produce more culturally inclusive results. Lastly, this study was limited to a college population which may not be generalizable to other populations. Future directions for research should include a broader sample size. A sample that includes participants of all ages and education level would be useful to see which types of people are more likely to street harass or have positive attitudes about sexual harassment.

Overall, this study contributed meaningfully to the understanding of why men street harass women and the relationship between power and street harassment. It is the first of its kind to attempt to understand men's perceptions of street harassment in comparison to women's and to test the long-held view that men street harass because of power. Although the cause of street harassment as a phenomenon is still not known, this study is a helpful start to understanding and, hopefully, eradicating a pervasive problem that affects thousands of men and women.

Appendix A

University of Hawai‘i

Consent to Participate in Research

Communicating with Strangers in Public Places

My name is Maria DelGreco, and I am a graduate student in the Communicology department at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) conducting a research project looking at why men would communicate with women they do not know in public places. To be involved in this study you must be at least 18 years old and male.

Project Description – Activities and Time Commitment: If you decide to take part in this project, you will be asked to fill out a survey at one time. This project attempts to understand why men communicate with women they do not know in public spaces and how men and women respond to each other. You may be asked for information such as if you have ever catcalled, complimented, or insulted a woman on the street. Completion of the study will take 30-45 minutes. Approximately 100 people will take part in this project. You will receive extra credit or research credit for your participation.

Benefits and Risks: There are no direct benefits for completing this study. The questions asked during the study may cause you moderate levels of stress. If you feel uncomfortable during the study, you may exit the study at any time with no penalty. You may also contact the Crisis Call Center 24 hours a day at 800 273 8255.

Confidentiality and Privacy: All information you give in the survey will be confidential. Any identifying information you give, such as your name to receive credit, will be separated from your response to the items in the survey. All information will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, you can contact the main researcher, Maria DelGreco, at delgreco@hawaii.edu. You can also contact the faculty member helping with this study, Dr. Amy Hubbard, at aebesu@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808 956 5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu.

To Begin the Survey: Please continue to the next page (click next) to start the survey. Submission of the survey will be considered as your consent to be involved in this study. Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

Appendix B

University of Hawai‘i

Consent to Participate in Research

Communicating with Strangers in Public Places

My name is Maria DelGreco, and I am a graduate student in the Communicology department at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) conducting a research project looking at why men would communicate with women they do not know in public places. To be involved in this study you must be at least 18 years old and female.

Project Description – Activities and Time Commitment: If you decide to take part in this project, you will be asked to fill out a survey at one time. This project attempts to understand why men communicate with women they do not know in public spaces and how men and women respond to each other. You may be asked for information such as if a man has ever catcalled, complimented, or insulted you on the street. Completion of the study will take 30-45 minutes. Approximately 100 people will take part in this project. You will receive extra credit or research credit for your participation.

Benefits and Risks: There are no direct benefits for completing this study. The questions asked during the study may cause you moderate levels of stress and may trigger upsetting memories. If you feel uncomfortable during the study, you may exit the study at any time with no penalty. You may also contact the Crisis Call Center 24 hours a day at 800 273 8255.

Confidentiality and Privacy: All information you give in the survey will be confidential. Any personally identifying information you give, such as your name to receive credit, will be separated from your response to the questions in the survey. All information will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, you can contact the main researcher, Maria DelGreco, at delgreco@hawaii.edu. You can also contact the faculty member helping with this study, Dr. Amy Hubbard, at aebesu@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808 956 5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu.

To Begin the Survey: Please continue to the next page (click next) to start the survey. Submission of the survey will be considered as your consent to be involved in this study. Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

Appendix C

Demographic Information

Please provide some background information about yourself.

1. What is your age (in years)?

2. How do you self-identify?

a. Male

b. Female

c. Other

3. Please select the race/ethnicity you most identify with.

a. Asian

b. Hispanic

c. Caucasian (non Hispanic)

d. African American

e. Pacific Islander

k. Other: _____

Appendix D

Debriefing Speech

Thank you for your participation!

If you feel discomfort from your participation during this study, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may also contact the Crisis Call Center 24 hours a day at 800 273 8255. Contact the researcher at delgreco@hawaii.edu if you have any questions.

Appendix E

Frequency and Desirability of Street Harassment

Male instructions: Think about the past year when you were **by yourself** in public (e.g., **street, park, or public transportation**). Think only about the **first** thing you did or said to women in public that you have **never met before**. There are no right or wrong answers and all answers are anonymous. For each question, select the number that corresponds to how often you have completed the behavior according to the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	Once in	A few times	About once	A few times	Almost	Multiple
	the past year	in the past year	a month	a month	every day	times a day

When you are in public (e.g., street, park, or public transportation):

1. How often have you whistled, yelled, or honked at a woman from your car while she was walking/waiting for the bus/riding a bike? +
2. How often have you blown kisses or made other romantic gestures to a woman on the street? +
3. How often have you told a woman to smile? +
4. How often have you made negative comments about a woman's appearance as she walked by (e.g., "keep the legs, lose the face")? -
5. How often have you offered a woman money for sex when she is either walking or standing and waiting for someone? -
6. How often have you asked a woman for her name? +
7. How often have you told a woman how pretty or attractive she is as she walked down the street and then repeated these comments louder, trying to get her attention? +

8. How often have you slowed down your car so that you can drive beside a woman as she walked and either watched her or spoke to her? +
9. How often have you made sexually explicit gestures to a woman as she walked (e.g., pantomiming a blow job, grabbing your crotch)? +/-
10. How often have you complimented a woman's appearance (e.g., "you have beautiful eyes," "nice legs," or "you're beautiful")? +
11. How often have you asked a woman if she has a boyfriend or is married? +
12. How often have you commented on a woman's weight saying that she is either too fat or too skinny? -
13. How often have you made sexual comments to a woman and then followed her as she walked? -
14. How often have you asked a woman for her phone number? +
15. How often have you yelled things like "hey sexy!" or "you're fine!" from a car while driving past a woman as she was walking or waiting for someone? +
16. How often have you walked past a woman and commented on her weight, saying that you approve of her size? +/-
17. How often have you touched women as they walked past you (e.g., touching her waist, brushing a hand against her breast, grabbing her hand, etc.)? +/-
18. How often have you called a woman insulting names as she walked past you (e.g., "whore" or "bitch")? -
19. How often have you approached the male person a woman was walking or sitting with and complimented him on her appearance or on his successful conquest of her? +

20. How often have you yelled comments about a woman's appearance at her while she was jogging? +/-
21. How often have you walked past and directed sounds at a woman (cat calls, wolf whistles, etc.)? +
22. How often have you stared at a woman in a sexual way as you walked past her on the street (e.g., leering or eyeing her up and down)? +
23. How often have you yelled compliments to a woman about her appearance as she walked past your work site? +/-
24. How often have you made gestures and calls for a woman to come over to where you are standing? +
25. How often have you pulled your car over as a woman was walking and asked her to do sexually explicit things with you? -
26. How often have you called for a woman's attention and when she ignored you begun shouting insults at her? +/-
27. How often have you showed a woman your penis on the street? -
28. How often have you aggressively touched a woman as she walked past you (e.g. slapping her buttocks, punching her, tripping her, or poking her)? -

Female instructions: Think about the past year when you were approached by **a single man you did not know in public (e.g., street, park, or public transportation)**. Think only about **the first thing** that a single man you have **never met before did or said to you in public**. There are no right or wrong answers and all answers are anonymous.

For each behavior, select the number that corresponds to how often you have experienced the behavior according to the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	Once in	A few times	About once	A few times	Almost	Multiple
	the past year	in the past year	a month	a month	every day	times a day

Please also indicate if each behavior is wanted.

1. A man whistled, yelled, or honked at you from his car while you were walking/waiting for the bus/riding a bike +
2. A man blew you kisses or made other romantic gestures to you on the street+
3. A man told you to smile +
4. A man made negative comments about your appearance as you walked by (e.g., “keep the legs, lose the face”) -
5. A man offered you money for sex when you were either walking or standing and waiting for someone -
6. A man asked you for your name +
7. A man told you how pretty or attractive you were as you walked down the street and then repeated these comments louder, trying to get your attention +
8. A man slowed down his car so that he could drive beside you as you walked and either watched you or spoke to you +
9. A man made sexually explicit gestures to you as you walked (e.g., pantomiming a blow job or grabbing his crotch) +/-
10. A man complimented your appearance (e.g., “you have beautiful eyes,” “nice legs,” or “you’re beautiful”) +
11. A man asked if you have a boyfriend or are married +
12. A man commented on your weight saying that you are either too fat or too skinny -

13. A man made sexual comments to you and then followed you as you walked -
14. A man asked you for your phone number +
15. A man yelled things like “hey sexy!” or “you’re fine!” from a car while driving past you as you were walking or waiting for someone +
16. A man walked past you and commented on your weight, saying that he approves of your size +/-
17. A man touched you as you walked past them (e.g., touching your waist, brushing a hand against your breast, or grabbing your hand) +/-
18. A man called you insulting names as you walked past (e.g., “whore” or “bitch”) -
19. A man approached the male person you were walking or sitting with and complimented him on your appearance or on his successful conquest of you +
20. A man yelled comments about your appearance at you while you were jogging +/-
21. A man walked past and directed non-verbal sounds at you (cat calls, wolf whistles, etc.) +
22. A man stared at you in a sexual way as they walked past you on the street (e.g. leering or eyeing you up and down) +
23. Construction workers yelled compliments to you about your appearance as you walked past their work site +/-
24. A man made gestures and calls for you to come over to where he was standing +
25. A man pulled his car over as you were walking and asked you to do sexually explicit things with him -
26. A man called for your attention and when you ignored him begun shouting insults at you +/-
27. A man showed you his penis on the street -

A man aggressively touched you as you walked past him (e.g. slapping your buttocks, punching you, tripping you, or poking you) –

Notes. + categorized as complimentary/benign. +/- categorized as either complimentary/benign or hostile/threatening. - categorized as hostile/threatening.

Appendix F

Control Attempts and Counter Control Attempts

Male instructions: If you indicated that you did **any of the behaviors previously listed** then please indicate what you would want the response of the woman to be to any of those behaviors.

Female instructions: If you indicated that you experienced **any of the behaviors previously listed** then please think about the most recent time you experienced one of those behaviors and indicate which behaviors you think the man wanted you to do and which behaviors you actually did.

1. No change in behavior
2. Laugh at
3. Completely ignore
4. Make eye contact
5. Smile
6. Insulting gesture
7. Pleasant gesture
8. Look angry/glare
9. Wave
10. Look visibly upset
11. Shout something insulting
12. Shout something pleasant
13. Start a conversation
14. Leave the vicinity
15. Move closer

16. Move farther away
17. Say they don't like it
18. Say they do like it

Appendix G

Power

Male instructions: Think about when you generally interact with women. Using the following scale, indicate which best reflects your beliefs: 1 – Women 2 – Both equally 3 – My gender

1. Who influences the decisions of the other gender more?
2. Who could more easily persuade the other gender to change their mind?
3. Who has more power?

Female instructions: If you indicated that you experienced **any of the behaviors previously listed** then please think about the most recent time you experienced one of those behaviors and answer the questions with that in mind. Using the following scale, indicate which best reflects your beliefs: 1 – Men 2 – Both equally 3 – My gender

1. Who influences the decisions of the other gender more?
2. Who could more easily persuade the other gender to change their mind?
3. Who had more power?

Appendix H

Communication Motives

Male instructions: Here are several reasons people gave for why someone would initiate communication with **women they do not know in public**. For each statement, please select how much you agree with each reason for why you would initiate communication with women you do not know in public.

1 – Completely Disagree 2 – Mostly Disagree 3 – Somewhat Disagree 4 – Neither Agree nor Disagree 5 – Somewhat Agree 6 – Mostly Agree 7 – Completely Agree

Female instructions: Here are several reasons people gave for why someone would initiate communication with **women they do not know in public**. For each statement, please select how much you agree with each reason for why men would initiate communication with women they do not know in public.

1 – Completely Disagree 2 – Mostly Disagree 3 – Somewhat Disagree 4 – Neither Agree nor Disagree 5 – Somewhat Agree 6 – Mostly Agree 7 – Completely Agree

Pleasure

1. Because it's fun
2. Because it's exciting
3. To have a good time
4. Because it's thrilling
5. Because it's stimulating
6. Because it's entertaining
7. Because I enjoy it
8. Because it peps me up

Affection

- 9. To help others
- 10. To let others know I care about their feelings
- 11. To thank them
- 12. To show others encouragement
- 13. Because I'm concerned with them

Inclusion

- 14. Because I need someone to talk to or be with
- 15. Because I just need to talk about my problems sometimes
- 16. Because it makes me feel less lonely
- 17. Because it's reassuring to know someone is there

Escape

- 18. To put off something I should be doing
- 19. To get away from what I am doing
- 20. Because I have nothing better to do
- 21. To get away from pressures and responsibilities

Relaxation

- 22. Because it relaxes me
- 23. Because it allows me to unwind
- 24. Because it's a pleasant rest
- 25. Because it makes me feel less tense

Control

- 26. Because I want someone to do something for me

27. To tell others what to do

28. To get something I don't have

Appendix I

Social Desirability

Instructions: Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits.

Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it **pertains to you personally**.

1. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. (T)
2. I always try to practice what I preach. (T)
3. I never resent being asked to return a favor. (T)
4. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own. (T)
5. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. (T)
6. I like to gossip at times. (F)
7. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. (F)
8. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget. (F)
9. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way. (F)
10. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things. (F)

If a participant's response to the questions above matches with the given response (T for True or F for False), the participant is more likely to display social desirability bias.

Appendix J

Sexual Harassment Attitudes

Male instructions: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

1 – Completely Disagree 2 – Mostly Disagree 3 – Somewhat Disagree 4 – Neither Agree nor Disagree 5 – Somewhat Agree 6 – Mostly Agree 7 – Completely Agree

1. An attractive woman has to expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.
2. Most men are sexually teased by many of the women with whom they interact on the job or at school.
3. Most women who are sexually insulted by a man provoke his behavior by the way they talk, act, or dress.
4. A man must learn to understand that a woman's "no" to his sexual advances really means "no."*
5. It is only natural for a woman to use her sexuality as a way of getting ahead in school or at work.
6. An attractive man has to expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.
7. I believe that sexual intimidation is a serious social problem.*
8. It is only natural for a man to make sexual advances to a woman he finds attractive.
9. Innocent flirtations make the workday or school day interesting.
10. Encouraging a professor's or a supervisor's sexual interest is frequently used by women to get better grades or to improve their work situations.
11. One of the problems with sexual harassment is that some women can't take a joke.
12. The notion that what a professor does in class may be sexual harassment is taking the idea of sexual harassment too far.

13. Many charges of sexual harassment are frivolous and vindictive.
14. A lot of what people call sexual harassment is just normal flirtation between men and women.
15. Sexual assault and sexual harassment are two completely different things.
16. Sexual harassment refers to those incidents of unwanted sexual attention that aren't too serious.
17. Sexual harassment has little to do with power.
18. Sexism and sexual harassment are two completely different things.
19. All this concern about sexual harassment makes it harder for men and women to have normal relationships.

** Items should be reverse coded*

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