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“Should I have to learn to live with that?”:
Dynamic research into gender, sexism and feminism with teenagers

Octavia Calder-Dawe

A doctoral thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology, the University of Auckland, 2017.
Abstract

In the past five years, there has been a remarkable surge in the visibility of feminism and gender inequality in a context previously understood as hostile to feminism and analyses of gendered power. As critiques of sexism gain mainstream traction and a host of public figures ‘come out’ as feminist, questions remain regarding the political implications of these phenomena and their imbrication with postfeminist, neoliberal discourses. This thesis investigates how New Zealand teenagers were making sense of gender, feminism, sexism and (in)equality in 2013. Working from a commitment to opening the spaces of ‘what might be’ while researching ‘what is’, the project entailed the development of a novel, dynamic research methodology that could offer participants opportunities to interrogate and diversify savoir concerning gender and power in the course of the research. Drawing insights from Freire, Foucault, feminist scholarship and action research, the empirical research entailed participatory group workshops followed by 20 individual interviews.

Following an introduction in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 presents dynamic sociocultural research as a methodological and ethical response to the challenges of researching gendered inequalities that can be difficult to perceive and name, while Chapter 3 outlines the research methods in detail. Four analytic chapters follow. Chapter 4 explores how interviewees perceived and made sense of everyday sexism and gender stereotyping, examining how their accounts balanced boys’ and men’s experiences against women’s and girls’. Chapter 5 examines interviewees’ detailed descriptions of sexism to develop an account of its choreography: the organising patterns that shape how sexism is enacted and resisted in young people’s everyday interactions. Chapter 6 examines how feminist-identified teenagers navigated entrenched discourses of ‘fair’ versus ‘unreasonable’ feminism in order to normalise and justify a politicised feminist position. Chapter 7 expands the analytic frame to consider how young people’s narratives of being feminist take shape in conjunction with an ideal of personal authenticity, asking what ‘authentic feminism’ might achieve in relation to feminist politics. In Chapter 8, the concluding discussion, I consider how this research advances an understanding of the possibilities for feminist politics within and in relation to a neoliberal and postfeminist cultural context.
To Ami, who climbs mountains;

For Mum, who moves them.

In memory of

Ian Calder, Grandad; Dorothy Calder, Nana;

Bruce Dawe, Papa; Jean Dawe, Granny;

and

Julian Roland Dawe.
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**Chapter 6: Jekyll and Hyde Revisited**


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Chapter 7: Authentic Feminist?

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Chapter 5 (pp.97-117) is a lightly edited version of an article originally published in *new formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics*. The author retains copyright of this article, and it is included in this thesis in accordance with an agreement with the publisher, Lawrence and Wishart. The original source of the content is as follows:


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Part I: Introduction
In June 2010, news broke that a prominent Member of the New Zealand Parliament had habitually used a ministerial credit card to cover the cost of pay-per-view pornography films. While the MP’s exposure provoked a good deal of public interest and tongue-in-cheek commentary (“Shane Jones, Minister of Pornography,” 2010), there was a notable absence of discussion concerning the wider implications of these viewing habits in relation to sexism, gendered power and racism. That mainstream commercial heterosexual pornography frequently features (and arguably eroticises) sexual practices and power relations that would be considered unethical or abusive in ‘real life’ (see Antevska & Gavey, 2015; Boyle, 2010; Bridges, Wosnitzer, Scharrer, Sun, & Liberman, 2010; Mooney, 2008) seemed to disappear from view. Not only did pundits and party leaders decline to comment on the proclivities of their colleague, but few appeared willing to consider the troubling ethics and politics of mainstream pornography more generally or its influence on sexual expectations and behaviours (see, e.g., Sun, Bridges, Johnson, & Ezzell, 2016). Instead, the universal response was one of disengagement via liberal tolerance: as the deputy leader of the Labour party Annette King reportedly remarked, “it's not for me to judge what people do in the privacy of their rooms” (“Shane Jones, Minister of Pornography,” 2010).

In November 2013, another national scandal erupted at the intersections of sexuality, sexism and pornography: New Zealand news media reported that a group of teenage boys who named themselves the ‘Roast Busters’ were choreographing and filming non-consensual sex acts with young women (“Facebook teen sex shaming exposed,” 2013). The Auckland boys publicly described and boasted about their pornified¹ actions online via Facebook and ask.fm, a youth-oriented question-and-answer website (see Gavey, 2013). As Gavey, Sills and colleagues (2016) have pointed out, many of the boys’ alleged activities meet the New Zealand criteria for gang and/or

¹ “Pornified” is a descriptor used to signal the presence of tropes and practices typical of mainstream, heterosexual pornography. Simultaneous oral and vaginal penetrations of a woman (known colloquially as “roasting” or “gang banging”) of the kind the young men boasted about (see Gavey, 2013) are a common feature of such pornography.
statutory rape. The New Zealand police initially denied receiving any complaints, though it later emerged that police had been approached by several young women in 2011 and 2012, although they had not fully investigated the allegations (an Independent Police Conduct Authority report concluded that in their initial response, police had failed the victims; Papatsoumas, 2015). The callousness of the boys’ actions and the police’s apparent inaction united much of the country in outrage and protest, triggering calls for reform of police and judicial processes and sparking a popular feminist push to address sexual violence in New Zealand. Even so, accounts of why the young men acted as they did — and, consequently, what ought to be done — varied. Feminist explanations of the case as a product of a wider rape culture gained landmark coverage and traction; at the same time, other mainstream pundits linked the boys’ behaviour to the corrupting influence of new media technologies on youthful sexualities (Blackett, 2016).

The Minister of Pornography incident and the Roast Busters scandal have clear and important differences. The former involved activities that, while embarrassing, were able to be positioned within the (strikingly gender-neutral) sexual repertoire of a ‘red-blooded’ adult (“Shane Jones, Minister of Pornography,” 2010). The behaviour of the so-called Roast Busters was, in contrast, widely condemned and pathologised: few questioned the cruelty and criminality of the young men involved, and those who did were challenged. In response to the deep misogyny this case exposed, a feminist analysis of rape culture reached mainstream New Zealand — albeit one that still jostled with other, more individualised explanations of events.

Without glossing the particulars of each case, I am interested in how they speak usefully together about the context within which, and for which, my doctoral research project was devised. The ministerial scandal — or, more aptly, the apparent

2 The latter position was reflected in the government’s development of new anti-cyber-bullying legislation, reportedly explained by Minister Judith Collins as “sending a strong message to those who harassed and harmed others online” (Young, 2013).

3 Two well-known radio hosts were forced to apologise after dismissing the behaviour as “mischief” and suggesting that the girls were culpable for the treatment they received and (Gulliver, 2013).
reluctance of commentators to consider the ethical and political dimensions of pornography consumption — provided the kernel of inspiration for a Marsden Fund Council-funded research programme *Pornography in the Public Eye* (11-UOA-166), of which my doctoral research is one part. This multifaceted corpus of scholarship and activism was intended to catalyse and complicate public dialogue concerning the sexual politics of mainstream pornography. Where the programme as a whole placed pornography centre stage, the affiliated project I undertook deliberately widened the lens, interrogating New Zealand teenagers’ encounters with sexism and gendered power in the course of their everyday lives. The project entailed the development of a novel, dynamic methodology that offered participants opportunities to interrogate mainstream understandings of gender, sexism and feminism in the course of the research. The local realities of everyday sexism and misogyny we examined together became painfully visible during the Roast Busters scandal, which unfolded publicly as I was halfway through my empirical research. The case also illustrated a surge in the visibility of feminism and gender inequality in a local context that had previously appeared hostile to feminism and analyses of gendered power (see, e.g., Benton-Greig, Gamage, & Gavey, submitted).

The issues these events raise concerning the visibility of sexism and the speakability of feminist politics cut to the heart of the research I present in this thesis. The Ministerial scandal is part of the origin story of my research: it seeded the wider project and my particular interest in interrogating and challenging the occlusion of sexism under a postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007b). The Roast Busters case vividly illustrates sexism and misogyny — the project’s political raison-d’être — while also evidencing the growing mainstream traction of feminist discourse, a phenomenon this thesis investigates in depth. In short, both events plug into the complex and contradictory dynamics of sexism, gendered power and feminism that my thesis engages. In what follows, I offer an introduction to my doctoral research, building an account of its theoretical, spatial and temporal contexts around these two cases.
Scholarly context: Research on feminism, sexism and postfeminism

**Sexism under postfeminism: Hidden in plain sight**

For over a decade, feminist scholars working from a range of disciplines and locations have drawn attention to a widespread silence about sexism in the Anglophone and European west. While evidence demonstrating the continuance of gendered inequalities in personal life (Baker, 2008; Coy, Thiara, & Kelly, 2011; Hlavka, 2014; Kelan, 2009; Ringrose, Harvey, Gill, & Livingstone, 2013; Towns, 2009), public spaces (Bates, 2013; Evans, 2014) and online (Braithwaite, 2014; Megarry, 2014) continued to mount, there seemed to be very little scope for naming and challenging sexism in mainstream public discourse. At the time my research began, a commonsense representation of sexism as passé, a relic of older times — or confined to other, ‘backwards’ and non-western places — seemed to have wide cultural currency (Scharff, 2013). As a result, practices once recognisable as sexist were no longer visible as such, and were instead being rebranded as pleasurable, ironic, or even ‘hip’ (Donaghue, Kurz, & Whitehead, 2011; Quart, 2012; Williamson, 2003). Indeed, the very idea of sexism in western democracies had, according to some commentators, fallen out of mainstream vocabularies and popular consciousness (Gill, 2011; Williamson, 2003). As a consequence, both subtle and blatant forms of sexism (see Johnson, 2007) could persist virtually unchallenged: hidden in plain sight.

At the time, many feminist critics accounted for the apparent unspeakability of sexism with reference to postfeminism (McRobbie, 2007, 2009), or a postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007b). The term postfeminism itself is variously understood: it can be used to signal historical and epistemological shifts within feminism, or a backlash against it (see Genz & Brabon, 2009). McRobbie’s theoretical work — along with Gill’s and others’ — departs from both these perspectives, suggesting that postfeminism is best understood as a cultural phenomenon, rather than as an analytic approach. Moreover, postfeminism is neither anti-feminist nor feminist: instead, it entails a “double entanglement” (McRobbie, 2009, p. 12) of progressive and retrogressive ideas about gender relations, sexism and feminism. This entanglement often entails a temporal sleight of hand: gendered inequalities, along with the need for feminist politics, are taken into account while being located firmly in the past.
Surveying manifestations of postfeminism in popular culture, Gill (2007b, p. 149) has developed a taxonomy of postfeminism, explaining it as a sensibility comprised of several different elements:

- the notion that femininity is a bodily property;
- the shift from objectification to subjectification;
- the emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and discipline;
- a focus upon individualism, choice and empowerment;
- the dominance of a makeover paradigm;
- a resurgence in ideas of natural sexual difference;
- a marked sexualisation of culture;
- and an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference.

Researchers who work with this understanding of postfeminism have frequently expressed unease about the practices and politics it ushers in. Concerns have often cohered around discourses of personal choice and agency, and their implications for identifying gendered inequalities. In an interview study with young Australian women, for example, Joanne Baker (2008, 2010) demonstrated how a hegemonic postfeminist vocabulary of choice and personal responsibility worked to disguise sexism and the socio-cultural nature of gendered inequalities. Others have advanced similar arguments in relation to beauty practices: accounts of personal desire and choice paper over the complexities of agency and occlude what appears to be a striking lack of alternatives, and/or the social costs of non-participation (Braun, 2009; Braun, Tricklebank, & Clarke, 2013; Gill & Elias, 2014; Stuart & Donaghue, 2012).

A cultural emphasis on personal agency has, according to Gill and Donaghue (Gill, 2011, p. 63; Gill & Donaghue, 2013) and others, rendered ongoing gendered inequalities virtually “unspeakable”. Moreover, an understanding of the self as freely choosing — the architect of its own reality — obscures not only gendered inequalities that affect women as a group, but also removes a political language for naming the racialized, economic and bodily disparities that exist between women.

**Postfeminism and neoliberalism**

With dominant motifs of personal choice, individual agency, discipline and self-empowerment, a postfeminist sensibility ties into a wider ‘neoliberal’ cultural turn. A neoliberal rationality entails not only free-market economic policies and the retrenchment of welfare and social security, but also the imprinting of market thinking into the psychosocial landscape (Brown, 2006; Layton, 2014). As Brown (2006, p.
explains, this dimension of a neoliberal political rationality “figures citizens exhaustively as rational economic actors in every sphere of life”:

neoliberalism [...] entails a host of policies that figure and produce citizens as individual entrepreneurs and consumers whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for ‘self-care’ — their ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions, whether as welfare recipients, medical patients, consumers of pharmaceuticals, university students, or workers in ephemeral occupations.

Through a relentless reification of modern personhood as unfettered, flexible and self-determining, postfeminist and neoliberal logics appear to depoliticise psychic and social life, a move that closes down possibilities for naming inequalities, and for mobilising people to challenge them (Baker, 2010; Rottenberg, 2014b; Scharff, 2011a).

Both neoliberal and postfeminist logics have faced criticism for installing an impoverished ethical sensibility limited to individual rights and freedoms. A (neo)liberal laissez-faire ethics of liberal tolerance calls upon us to excuse and to overlook sexism in the name of respecting individual choices, desires and rights to self-expression. Indeed, liberal tolerance was the overwhelming response to the “Minister of Pornography” incident outlined at the beginning of this Introduction. While the nature of the case was agreed to be embarrassing for the Minister involved, there was, judging by the tenor of media coverage and commentary, little else to discuss. Thorny issues of sexism and gendered power slipped quietly from view. Reflecting on the implications of such ‘turning-away’ from ethics and politics of the personal, Gavey has pointed out that knee-jerk (neo)liberal tolerance of sexism, whether in pornography or elsewhere, works to “squeeze the frame of ethics” in a manner that “undermine[s] [...] the kind of political engagement necessary to sustain progressive social change” (Gavey, 2012, p. 12; see also Antevska & Gavey, 2015).

Who needs feminism?

The ascendancy of postfeminist, neoliberal discourses and the concomitant invisibility of sexism have implications for feminist politics and the politics of being feminist. In a postfeminist context where gender equality is seemingly already achieved, feminist critiques of continuing sexism have appeared unpersuasive, unappealing, or even
unintelligible (McRobbie, 2009; Scharff, 2013). Considering this phenomenon in some detail, McRobbie has suggested that feminism can be paid lip-service in the form of a “Gramscian common sense” (2009, p. 12) while being simultaneously rejected and vilified. Thus, according to McRobbie (2009, p. 12), the “taken-into-accountness” of feminism facilitates an “all the more thorough dismantling of feminist politics and the discrediting of the occasionally voiced need for its renewal”. In this environment, those who put forward feminist arguments are liable to be read in negative terms: as ‘feminist killjoys’ whose accusations index their own flaws, rather than the social problems they claim to have identified. Sara Ahmed has explained the feminist killjoy as a figure who, by identifying sexism and surfacing “bad feeling”, becomes legible as the origin of the trouble she calls attention to (Ahmed, 2010b, p. 581, 2010a). Ahmed’s and McRobbie’s analyses align with a substantial body of research that has accumulated over the past 15 years, which has demonstrated an overwhelming tendency among women (Ashton, 2014; Quinn & Radtke, 2006; Rich, 2005; Scharff, 2013) and men (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Riley, 2001) to repudiate feminism, and/or to qualify and depoliticise their endorsements of it. This has raised troubling questions for feminist scholarship: in a postfeminist cultural context, where feminist critiques appear both out of place and out of touch, what basis remains for feminism?

I began this research project in 2012, at a time when questions about the (in)visibility of feminism and sexism were in high circulation in feminist scholarship. Unbeknownst to me this would also prove to be a period of flux, when feminism was on the cusp of a different cultural existence. Over the past five years, there has been a remarkable surge in the visibility of feminism and gender inequality. Critiques of sexism have gained mainstream traction and a host of public figures have ‘come out’ as feminist. While it is impossible to pinpoint an originary moment for this diffuse phenomenon, there were some indications, some inklings of what was to come around the time my project began. Though feminism was still being routinely dismissed and derided in 2012, some feminist rhetoric and activations were beginning to make incursions into the mainstream. The transnational SlutWalk movement (2011) and the Everyday Sexism Project (2012) are instructive examples of the popularisation of feminist discourse occurring around this time. While different in many respects, both documented and/or protested mundane victim-blaming, harassment and diminishment
directed at women. Both also involved some degree of online foot-printing, which allowed them to spread rapidly across national and cultural borders. The global support and momentum visible in these high-profile activisms demonstrated the continuing force and utility of feminist theorising and feminist solidarity at a time when some were still sounding its death-knell. The success of these initiatives also demonstrated the value of social media as a feminist forum for younger generations (Keller, 2012; Rentschler, 2014; Schuster, 2013) as well as the political possibilities of a so-called ‘fourth wave’ of mediated feminisms that some were dismissing as ‘slacktivism’ (see Munro, 2013; Schuster, 2013). As a consequence of the temporal location of my research in the midst of these shifts, this thesis as a body of work speaks to pressing questions arising from this new context of ‘feministification’ and popular challenges to sexism, particularly regarding the political implications of these phenomena and their imbrication with postfeminist, neoliberal discourses.

Placing the project

*Gender, equality and feminisms in New Zealand*

Before discussing the shape of the project and of this thesis in detail, I will step out of the story of this research in order to place my work and my questions about gender equality, sexism and feminisms within the national context they address.

Aotearoa New Zealand occupies an ambivalent position in relation to gender and sexual inequalities. As a nation, New Zealand is well known for its early move to grant women the right to vote in 1893 and also for its strong ‘second wave’ women’s movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Notable developments across the latter half of the 20th century include the establishment of the Māori Women’s Welfare League in 1951, the feminist activisms associated with the Women’s Liberation Movement from

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4 At the time of writing, the Everyday Sexism Project (see http://everydaysexism.com/) had contributors in 25 countries. SlutWalks have reportedly spread from Canada to over 200 cities in 40 countries including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, India, Singapore and others across Europe and South America (Mendes, 2015).
the 1970s onwards and the establishment of a Ministry of Women’s Affairs in 1984 (Coleman, 2009; Hyman, 2010; Māori Women’s Welfare League, 2016). In the late 1980s, women’s health activists associated with the Women’s Health Movement achieved substantial reforms, including successfully exposing and challenging unethical under-treatment of cervical cancer (Coney & Bunkle, 1987).

More recently, New Zealand elected a female Prime Minister (Helen Clark: 1999-2008). At one point during Clark’s tenure, there was famously a “female clean sweep of the country’s most powerful political and legal positions”: Jenny Shipley as Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Sian Elias as Chief Justice, Dame Silvia Cartwright as Governor-General and Margaret Wilson as Attorney-General (“Silvia Cartwright becomes governor-general 4th April 2001” 2017). Georgina Beyer, the world’s first transsexual MP, held office over the same period (1999 to 2007). New Zealand was also one of the first countries to legalise same-sex marriage (2013), and has been an active player in the international SlutWalk movement since 2011. This record, along with a national rhetoric of bi-culturalism (see Bell, 2006) and a history of nuclear-free and anti-apartheid activism, has bolstered a construction of New Zealand as a progressive, egalitarian country — one where feminism has, by and large, done its work.

There is another story to tell, however, that complicates the egalitarian progress narrative outlined above. New Zealand’s self-styling as a bicultural nation with relatively harmonious relations between indigenous tangata whenua and Pākehā belies past and continuing injustices that contravene the Treaty of Waitangi, including ongoing and unlawful seizures of Māori land under the Public Works Act (Smale, 2017), continuing racist discourses and assimilative and patriarchal practices of colonisation that have been detrimental to Māori wellbeing, language and culture (Barnes, Taiapa, Borell, & McCreanor, 2013; Ka’ai-Mahuta, 2011; Mikaere, 1994).

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5 The term Pākehā is typically used to refer to New Zealanders of European descent. It is likely that the term was originally applied to English-speaking Europeans living in New Zealand. Other translations include ‘English, foreign, European, exotic’ (Māori Dictionary Online, 2017).
From the mid-1980s, the ‘New Zealand Experiment’ with neoliberal economic theory (see Kelsey, 1997) coincided with welfare cuts and a national decline in feminist organising, a decline that appears to have persisted well into the new century (Schuster, 2016). Income inequalities in New Zealand grew rapidly from the early 1980s into the mid-1990s, and by 2015 New Zealand had the 12th highest level of income inequality in the OECD (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). Economic inequalities are known to affect women disproportionately. According to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (2013), gendered income and employment disparities are persisting, and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission estimates that women in New Zealand earn on average $600,000 dollars less than their male counterparts over their working lives (Blue, 2017).

Adding to this picture, local research conducted within the last decade demonstrated that gendered violence and power imbalances were continuing to affect the lives of many women in New Zealand. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (2013) estimated that one in four New Zealand women will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. Other research investigating the prevalence of violence against women in heterosexual relationships suggests that roughly one third of ever-partnered New Zealand women will experience violence from male partners, while one fifth will be subjected to significant violence (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004).

Recent research has also continued to document troubling patterns of sexism, sexual double standards and male sexual dominance in relationships between young women and men in New Zealand. In a report that foreshadowed the detail of the Roast Busters case, Alison Towns (2009) described a mainstream “culture of cool” among young men, wherein peer status was earned through controlling and sexually manipulating young women. Other local research conducted during a similar period highlighted the persistence of sexual double standards in New Zealand teenage peer cultures (Gavey et al., 2010). In the course of an interview project exploring young men’s accounts of

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6 For example, in 2013 women’s median earnings were 10% lower than men’s. During that year, 46.4% of women earned less than $420 NZ per week; 33.1% of men fell into this category. Women were also more likely than men not to be in employment, education or training (NEET).
their engagements with mainstream heterosexual pornography conducted in 2010, Antevska and Gavey (2015, p. 623) found that most participants described male sexual dominance and ‘extreme’ sex acts they encountered in the pornography they viewed as “normal and untroubling”.

Though the suffragist Kate Sheppard adorns the ten-dollar note of our national currency, New Zealand was not immune from the postfeminist repudiation of feminism documented elsewhere in the west, particularly among young women (Rich, 2005; Scharff, 2013). Mirroring international findings, 14 young New Zealand women interviewed by Ashton (2014) tended to endorse feminist ideals while distancing themselves from feminism. At the same time, negative popular representations of feminism and feminists abounded. Such representations could be used to silence and discredit critiques of inequality, misogyny and sexism — as evident in the vituperative backlash against a local feminist challenge to sexist beer advertising in 2012 (see Benton-Greig et al., submitted). Thus, while feminist political organising never ceased to exist in New Zealand, it had become less visible, and the possibilities for speaking feminism publically appeared to be constrained and vigorously policed. Based on her work with local feminist communities in Auckland and Wellington, Schuster (2013, p. 9) has suggested that younger feminists’ online and social media activities, while not absent, were largely “invisible” — not only to the wider public but also to their political peers of older generations”. Thus, despite continuity in local feminist organising, its relegation from the mainstream bolstered an impression that feminism in New Zealand had faded away.

This apparent fading of feminism in mainstream New Zealand discourse makes sense in light of recent theorisations of postfeminism (Gill, 2007b; McRobbie, 2009). The claim that feminism has run its course is what enables its dismissal; it follows, therefore, that those nations that are perceived to have led the charge for women’s rights may be the very same places where continuing inequalities are hardest to articulate. Scharff (2011a) has observed this phenomenon in young British and German women’s talk about feminism, where feminism was constructed as

7 Local examples include, for instance, the activities of the Auckland Women’s Centre (http://awc.org.nz/) and Woman’s Health Action (http://www.womens-health.org.nz/).
unnecessary ‘at home’ in the west, and/but obviously relevant for Other (often Muslim) women oppressed by ‘traditional’ cultural and religious dictates. Reflecting on this dynamic from a local — and personal — perspective, New Zealand-based feminist scholar Nicola Gavey (2005b, p. 3) noted how

… in gaining new understandings of the extreme forms of oppression, poverty and violence that women in many parts of the world experience […] there is a sense in which — even despite our [New Zealand women’s] differences — we collectively seem ‘lucky’. By some standards, we have come a long way; we have gained a lot for women in this country, and we now, rightly, take many of these gains for granted.

Complicating this account, Gavey recalled how, on returning home after an international fellowship addressing gendered violence, she was struck by the rhetorical invisibilisation of men’s violence against women in New Zealand. While the “gender of violence” was being increasingly recognised internationally, Gavey (2005b, p. 4) observed that New Zealand policy discourse appeared to be moving in the opposite direction: embracing gender-neutral rhetoric that cast men as equally affected by women’s violence as women are by men’s. This, Gavey suggested, was “a cultural moment in which it [was] somehow unacceptable to explicitly frame issues like domestic violence as ‘women’s issues’” (p.5). I read Gavey’s double-edged descriptions as indicative of the local reach of the postfeminist logics Scharff (2011a) and others have identified: the gender-neutral sensibility suffusing New Zealand in the early 2000s was silencing feminist vocabularies in a manner that allowed sexism, misogyny and gendered violence to hide in plain sight.

The difficulty of naming the gendered patterning of violence against women in New Zealand in the early 2000s was reflected in media reporting as well as official policy discourses. In the years preceding this research, the New Zealand public was confronted with several high-profile court cases that exposed details of sexism, misogyny and gendered violence against women in New Zealand — and yet, the cases were not widely discussed in gendered terms. One involved a well-known broadcaster, who faced charges related to a series of attacks on his female partner; he pleaded guilty and was convicted (Cook, 2008). Another series of cases involved historical allegations of rape perpetrated by a group of policemen, one of whom was assistant Police Commissioner at the time the charges were laid. Several of the
officers were convicted and more were implicated (“At last, Louise Nicholas gets a guilty verdict - four of them,” 2007). A third case involved the violent murder of a 22-year-old woman in her family home by a former partner (Booker, 2009).

**A renewed feminist visibility?**

The Roast Busters case broke in late 2013. By this time, my research was well underway: I was in the midst of conducting interviews with young people who were part of the peer cohort of the young men involved. Media reception of the case was noticeably different to the pattern outlined above: the incident was frequently discussed with reference to sexism and misogyny, and the concept of rape culture seemed to be gaining traction in mainstream reporting. In short, the feminist arguments that had previously been censured and dismissed appeared to be regaining at least some popular purchase.

I have come to understand the Roast Busters case as emblematic of the complexities of the cultural moment that my research unfolded within: a moment where feminist, postfeminist, anti-feminist and neoliberal discourses had begun to overlap and collide with a new intensity. On one hand, the sexist, misogynist dimensions of the case were widely reported and condemned, and mainstream commentators described the case with reference to feminist critiques of rape culture. Widespread horror at the misogynist violence exposed by the case seemed to be creating new openings for feminist critique in New Zealand, shifting popular understandings of the seriousness and pervasiveness of gendered inequalities as well as galvanising support for protests and reigniting feminist calls for judicial reform. On the other hand, the case illuminated the continuing force of choice and responsibility discourses and their vicious mechanics. On reporting to the police in 2011, two 13-year-old complainants were made to feel culpable for what happened. According to one of the young women, “[the police] said that I didn't have enough evidence to show, because I went out in clothes that was pretty much asking for it” (“Roast Busters victim asked to ‘re-

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8 The young men implicated in the ‘Roast Busters’ case were in their late teens in 2013; interview participants who contributed to my research were aged between 16 and 18 at this time. All were living in Auckland, though no interview participants attended the secondary schools named by media in relation to the case.
enact’ alleged rape,” 2013). Sexist victim-blaming was also broadcast live on talkback radio, as two middle-aged male hosts questioned a friend of the complainants, asking about her own first sexual experiences and questioning the girls’ culpability (Dougan, 2017). Moreover, as Blackett (2016) observed, mainstream coverage of the case frequently fell back onto individualising logics of pathology and personal responsibility.⁹

My research arose within and in response to this context of flux: where the sexist discourses calibrating the expectations and desires of young people were coming under increasing scrutiny, where feminism was on the cusp of a new visibility while still being widely repudiated, and where critiques of pervasive gendered inequalities were gaining traction while remaining difficult to articulate.

Introducing the research

Ontology and epistemology

Assumptions about the nature of reality — ontology — and what it is possible to know — epistemology — scaffold all forms of research, whether or not these supportive structures are considered or revealed by researchers themselves. Working from the disciplinary margins of psychology as a critical feminist social psychologist, I am aware of how my own epistemological assumptions diverge from psychology’s traditional, scientific mainstream — and I am now well used to explaining and advocating for these differences.

I have developed my doctoral research from a series of claims, interests and commitments common to feminist poststructuralist researchers within psychology and beyond it. In general terms, a feminist poststructuralist position (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987) combines a constructionist understanding of the relationship between language/discourse and subjectivity with a critical feminist commitment to crystallising cultural conditions of possibility and making interventions into them.

⁹ The supposition that this was not an isolated, special case of individual pathology is further supported by suggestions that there was at least one other ‘chapter’ of the Roast Busters operating elsewhere in Auckland.
Poststructuralist researchers’ analytic interest in discourse stems from an understanding of language as productive. More than a transparent medium for communicating the truth of our experiences and of the world around us, language and discourse are considered to actively construct experience by providing the tools with which we are able to make sense of ourselves and of the world we inhabit. As it is not possible to position oneself outside language and the interpretative frameworks it provides, poststructuralist feminist researchers do not claim to know or describe an objective reality. Instead, we examine the interconnections of culture, discourse and subjectivity with a feminist eye on how cultural conditions of possibility establish power relations and distribute opportunities, entitlements and expectations unevenly between and within different social groups.

A poststructuralist understanding of the relation between knowledge and power is elegantly expressed in Foucault’s (1978) pouvoir-savoir formulation. The power-knowledge nexus, as it is often known, explains the constitutive action of discourse. The possibility for acting in a certain way or for taking up a particular identity only exists insofar as that action or identity is known and intelligible to us. As I discuss in some detail in Chapter 2, there is political potential here: Foucault’s pouvoir-savoir formulation is not the determinist or politically pessimistic perspective it is often claimed to be (see Heller, 1996). Discourses and culturally available ways of knowing — that is, the savoir component of Foucault’s couplet — are always open to revision, deconstruction and transformation. An understanding of the constitutive and contingent nature of knowledge and discourse marks out these domains as sites for what Gavey (2011, p. 185) has called “a politics of discursive intervention, in which we challenge and transform the cultural imperatives on offer”.

In my analytic work, a feminist poststructuralist position does not wholly preclude an orientation to participants’ accounts and narratives as having some correspondence to ‘real life’. By this, I mean that my interest in cultural conditions of possibility and intelligibility can sit comfortably alongside a desire to credit and think with people’s reported experiences of and in the real world — without assuming that the truths they tell are the only or full story. This approach is not without precedent in feminist scholarship. Gavey has argued for the value of researching with “theoretical impurity” whereby scholars might “work simultaneously with two theoretically contradictory understandings of language — as descriptive on one hand and constitutive on the
other” (Gavey, 2005a, 2011, p. 187). Ramazanoglu and Holland (2000, p. 212) offer a similar reflection:

Most feminists, including us, adopt more or less contradictory positions between these extremes in which they do value their knowledge and experience of social existence and want some means of validating this knowledge, but also acknowledge that any way of telling the truth is socially constituted, discursively organised and legitimated. Donna Haraway usefully likens this to trying to climb a greased pole while holding on to both ends […] Her point seems to be that not only is holding a greasy pole hard, but in order to get any further we need to keep hold of both ends.

I have taken these wonderfully impure and agile articulations of feminist research to heart. They open a way for research that attends to the constitutive power of language/culture/discourse without relinquishing an interest in lived experience and the material world. That is, they offer a position from which to assert that accounts of experience can inform and enrich feminist knowledge production without claiming these accounts as the ‘whole truth’ and without reducing experience to theory. Particularly as I came to analyse teenagers’ descriptions and discussions of everyday sexism, I found myself wanting and needing to “keep hold of both ends” — analysing the discursive forces at play while also hearing young people’s accounts as reasonable (though necessarily partial) descriptions of their ‘real’ brushes with sexism.

**Research aims**

The research I present in this thesis investigates how New Zealand teenagers were making sense of gender, feminism, sexism and (in)equality in 2013. The project was designed in response to a local cultural moment when a feminist vocabulary for naming sexism was still not widely available. In this context, public space for thinking through gendered inequalities was limited, and feminist politics seemed to have little mainstream resonance. Most qualitative research investigating gender equality, sexism and feminism under these conditions has addressed their analytic questions either to women (Budgeon, 2001; Bulbeck, 2001; Quinn & Radtke, 2006; Rich, 2005; Scharff, 2013), or to men (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Riley, 2001). I elected to orient my project towards young people of any gender identity. This choice reflected my chief interest in understanding the form and function of local discourses.
of feminism, sexism and equality, rather than producing analyses that related to young men or young women in particular. I anticipated, however, that more young women than young men would participate.

Emboldened by the creative potential of the ‘impure’ feminist poststructuralist epistemological position outlined above, I designed my research around two different but entangled aims: to open the spaces of ‘what might be’ in relation to gendered power while researching ‘what is’ with teenagers.

Expressed more formally, the aims were:

1. To develop a novel, epistemologically dynamic research methodology that could offer participants opportunities to interrogate and diversify savoir concerning gender and power in the course of the research.

   In addressing this aim, I set out to understand how a dynamic methodology that blended poststructuralist, feminist and participatory principles might facilitate research investigating everyday injustices that are routinely overlooked, underplayed or made invisible.

   2. To produce an in-depth understanding of how young people in New Zealand were making sense of gendered power, sexism and feminism.

   That is, I wanted to understand how research participants might orient to and account for gendered power, sexism and feminism in light of the feminist analytic tools the research would make available. What would be the resonances and dissonances of these tools? How might research participants mobilise them, and to what ends?

**Research contributions**

In response to these research aims, my doctoral research makes three distinct forms of contribution, each to potentially different audiences.

First, corresponding to the first aim detailed above, my research entailed the development of a novel, dynamic research methodology that draws insights from Freire, Foucault, feminist scholarship and participatory action research traditions. The methodological framework informed a research project that combined ‘problem-posing’ group workshops with subsequent individual interviews. The workshops were designed to offer participants opportunities to interrogate and diversify mainstream, common-sense understandings of gender and power. This methodological
contribution, outlined in some detail in Chapter 2, is likely to be of value to researchers who investigate invisible inequalities and those with an interest in expanding the ethical and analytical reach of poststructuralist qualitative research.

Second, my research makes a series of theoretical and empirical contributions to scholarship addressing gendered power, sexism and feminism. Drawn from in-depth interviews I conducted with 20 Auckland teenagers following the group workshops, this thesis presents four separate analyses, each of which offers rich understandings of how participants were making sense of sexism, feminism and feminists. Two analytic chapters address sexism and two further analytic chapters explore participants’ constructions of feminism and feminist identity. Taken together, this corpus of analytic work advances an understanding of the current possibilities for feminist politics under postfeminism for young people and the discursive forces and figures that temper these possibilities. My work also engages broader debate in feminist scholarship concerning the co-existence of apparently contradictory narratives of feminism, gender equality and sexism.

Third, in the course of the project I have taken my commitment to diversifying savoir beyond an academic audience. I have compiled a comprehensive workshop resource (see Calder-Dawe, 2014; see also Appendix A) developed from the workshops I designed for this research project. It includes a full account of all the activities involved in the workshops, as well as guidelines for facilitation and resource materials. The free resource has been enthusiastically received by researchers and community practitioners, both locally and internationally. I have also produced a short video series, Gender, sexism, feminism: New Zealand teenagers talk, scripted from my research interviews. The videos were designed to communicate some of the key findings of my interview research to the local community through the words of the young people I worked with. I have included a USB flash drive containing ‘rough cuts’ of these six short videos with this thesis.

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10 The ‘rough cuts’ contain the sequenced clips as they will appear in the final videos. The post-production team is currently polishing the video editing, finalizing the credit sequences and correcting typographical errors. When complete, the videos will be posted to the Sexual Politics Now website and YouTube channel.
The thesis ahead: A note on structure

This ‘thesis with publications’ is the footprint of the research project I have sketched out above. Following this Introduction, the main body of this thesis consists of six further chapters. Five of these are journal articles, three of which are published (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). Two are currently under review (Chapters 2 and 7). The remaining chapter, Chapter 3, was purpose-written for this thesis. It provides a detailed account of the project methods, offering a narrative of the conduct of the research project as a whole as well as filling in supplementary details that are beyond the scope of a journal article. Given that each publication references the same research project and covers some overlapping thematic and analytic ground, a small degree of repetition across chapters is unavoidable, particularly in the article introductions and methods sections. Another consequence of the ‘with publications’ model is that my thesis does not always follow a strictly chronological order.

Following Part I — this introduction — I have organised the key methodological and empirical contributions of this thesis (Chapters 2 to 7) into three Parts. Part II of the thesis presents the research methodology and methods. The analytic work of the thesis begins in Part III: Chapters 4 and 5 tackle sexism and consider whether and how research participants named, normalised and resisted the forms of sexism they encountered. Part IV contains Chapters 6 and 7, which examine interviewees’ constructions of feminism and feminist identities. Each Part is introduced with a short preface. The prefaces play a key structural role, building a connecting narrative within and between these three Parts of the thesis. I use prefaces to knit the thesis together in this way because five chapters were written as stand-alone pieces that speak to distinct audiences and to the requirements of particular journals. As a consequence, these chapter couplets benefit from the additional contextualising and connecting work the prefaces provide.

Part V begins with Chapter 8, the concluding discussion. In this Chapter, I reflect on the thesis as a whole, bringing its analytical contributions into conversation with an upwelling of recent scholarship that is beginning to respond to the “new cultural life” of sexism and feminism (Gill, 2016a, p. 1) and to debate the political significance of these shifts. A reflexive Postscript charting my own journey through the research draws the thesis to a close. The substantial Appendices to this thesis house a range of supplementary information. Appendix A presents a reformatted version of the
workshop resource I developed. Further Appendices contain key documents related to recruitment and the conduct of the research.
Part II: Methodology and Methods
Preface to Part II

The following two chapters outline the methodology and methods of my doctoral research. I begin, in Chapter 2, with methodology. It is perhaps unorthodox to begin by outlining a methodological contribution without having first walked through the practical detail of research method — so often mobilised as the recognisable beginning of a project. I make this move deliberately, on the basis that the methodological approach laid out in Chapter 2 sets the scene for all the chapters to follow, including the project methods outlined in Chapter 3.

Part of the originating impulse of my research was to formulate a response to the methodological, ethical and political challenges of researching everyday inequalities, such as sexism, that may escape participants’ notice and articulation. Chapter 2 pivots on the question of how, as researchers, we might investigate the operation of gendered power while also affording research participants an opportunity to name and challenge it. In this chapter, I introduce a dynamic sociocultural research approach developed in order to multiply the analytic tools at participants’ disposal to perceive and account for sexism, feminism and gendered inequalities. While the key elements of the methodology were in place from the early stages of my research, the precise, polished framing of this methodological contribution as “dynamic sociocultural research” has developed over time as part of an ongoing process of theorisation and crystallisation. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 were written at different points during this process, and consequently bear the traces of my evolving thinking.¹

In complement to the methodological Chapter preceding it, Chapter 3 offers a focused account of the methods of my doctoral research as a whole, filling in the details of the inception and conduct of the project. In this Chapter, I outline the practical details of the group workshops and individual interviews, my analytic process and the video project. I also describe the formative encounters that have shaped this research along

¹ The methodology is described as “action-oriented” in Chapters 4 and 5, as providing “a dynamic form of engagement” in Chapter 6 and as a “dynamic sociocultural approach” in Chapter 7.
the way, including my experience of participatory action research training at the City University of New York.

Chapter 2 was written as a journal article. It introduces the methodology to colleagues in qualitative psychology, highlights its novel features and offers some reflections on its analytical and ethico-political potential, refracted through the experience of my doctoral research. Chapter 3, in contrast, was written expressly for this thesis. It charts the course of the project as a whole while paying particular attention to dimensions of the project’s methods that are not covered in detail elsewhere. Between them, Chapters 2 and 3 offer a picture of the epistemological and methodological positioning of the research, its ethical and political dimensions as well as a detailed account of the project itself and its various components. Taken together, these two chapters explain and locate the research project, providing an essential contextualising framework for the empirical chapters that follow.
Chapter 2:
Feminism, Foucault and Freire

A dynamic sociocultural approach for researching gendered inequalities with teenagers

Introduction

Qualitative researchers with a critical or sociocultural orientation (Gavey, 2005a; Kirschner & Martin, 2010; Magnussen & Marecek, 2010) tend to approach their research as an ethical and political endeavour as well as an intellectual project. Working from the poststructuralist claim that language, knowledge and power go together, many deliberately mobilise their research to spotlight inequalities and to support social transformation as well as to produce data. This commitment to social justice is a defining feature of our own intellectual home: feminist psychology. Critical feminist psychologists work to expose and interrupt the discursive (re)production of inequalities, often combining discourse theories with an explicitly feminist and political focus on cultural conditions of possibility and intelligibility that shape people’s experiences of and in the real world (Gavey, 1989, 2011; Magnussen & Marecek, 2010).

Over the past two decades, many critical feminist researchers have taken an active interest in the current ascendency of neoliberal and postfeminist ‘common sense’ and its implications for women, feminism and feminist politics. Research in this vein has mapped the restrictive contexts within which purportedly free choices are made, drawing attention to the often punitive and depoliticising effects of choice and responsibility discourses (Baker, 2008, 2010; Duits & van Zoonen, 2006; Fahs, 2012; Gavey, 2005a; Gill, 2007a; Gill & Elias, 2014; Gill, Henwood, & McLean, 2005; Jacques & Radtke, 2012; Li & Braun, 2016; McClelland, 2010; Stuart & Donaghue, 2012). Concerned with the delicate task of interrogating spaces for agency under narrow conditions of possibility (see Gill & Donaghue, 2013), these analyses

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1 This chapter is a lightly edited version of a co-authored article currently under review (submitted January 2017).
generally balance an attention to the disciplining features of a particular context with an optimistic openness to lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), moments of trouble or rupture which offer possibilities for subverting and resisting prevailing accounts, discourses and subject positions.

In 2013, we set out to study young people’s views and experiences of sexism, feminism and gender in a postfeminist context widely acknowledged to be hostile to feminism and to feminist arguments linking gender to power (Gill, 2007b, 2014; McRobbie, 2009). We hoped to find out more about the (un)speakability of gendered power among young people in New Zealand: a nation famous for enfranchising women and later “infamous” for its experimentation with “pure neoliberal economic theory” (Kelsey, 1997, p. x). At that time, research suggested that westerners in general, and young western women in particular, rejected feminism along with the notion that (western) women were meaningfully disadvantaged by sexism or by men (Kelan, 2009; Morrison, Bourke, & Kelley, 2005; Pomerantz, Raby, & Stefanik, 2013; Scharff, 2011a, 2013). As systematic and structural inequalities continued to be documented, feminist scholars argued that gendered inequalities were not gone, but rather were being reproduced in a manner that made them difficult to perceive and problematize (Gill, 2011; McRobbie, 2009; Williamson, 2003). In these conditions sexism and gendered relations of power are not simply invisible, but subject to what Angela McRobbie has called “disarticulation”: “a force which devalues, or negates and makes unthinkable the very basis of coming-together […] on the assumption widely promoted that there is no longer any need for such actions” (McRobbie, 2009, p. 26).

At the time we began to envision the research project, existing participant-based qualitative research into feminism, sexism and gender equality was predominantly interview or focus-group-based (see, for instance, Ashton, 2014; Crossley, 2010; Olson et al., 2008; Pomerantz et al., 2013; Quinn & Radtke, 2006; Riley, 2001; Scharff, 2013). Interviews and focus groups are generally designed to yield a flow of information from participants to interviewer, allowing researchers to build a picture of participants’ meaning-making in relation to a broader discursive landscape. Where such research has a deliberate focus on restrictive-yet-normalised conditions of
possibility, researchers often find themselves interviewing participants who speak in hegemonic and/or oppressive terms (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1997). While interviewers undoubtedly have opportunities to probe for evidence of alternative accounts, counter-discourses and resistant practices, these may not be evident. In such cases, researchers are left with the question of how to analyse depoliticising accounts and how to document ‘silence’: that which goes unsaid and perhaps unimagined (see Rosiek & Heffernan, 2014 for a discussion of how the latter can be done). Many in this position have suggested that access to ‘missing’ epistemological tools that suture personal to political, pouvoir (that is, the capacity for action) to savoir (what is known and knowable), might enable those interviewed to contest regimes of truth that appear to confine and define them (Baker, 2008; Hlavka, 2014). For all the utility and popularity of the conventional interview, it offers no clear avenue for putting such critical tools into circulation as part of a research encounter.

Working from a feminist Foucauldian standpoint, we found ourselves reluctant to conduct a conventional qualitative interview project with young people who, we speculated, might stand to benefit from feminist social constructionist tools — tools that have proved so useful to us both in research and in our everyday lives. With this in mind, we devised a methodology for researching the cultural scaffolding of gendered inequalities in a way that shared critical feminist tools; a methodology that might open up possibilities for movement, challenge and change as well as eliciting data. Our approach would offer participants opportunities to interrogate and diversify savoir concerning gender and power in the course of the research. By researching in a way that made this diversification possible, we hoped to discover how participants’ accounts of feminism, sexism and gender might shape up differently — and, indeed, how participants might know and live differently as a consequence.

**The article ahead**

In what follows, we present our methodological response to the challenges of studying everyday inequalities that can be difficult to perceive and name. This article

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2 A clear exception is research that focuses explicitly on activists and/or those who position themselves outside dominant ‘common sense’ (e.g., Keller, 2012; Kelly, 2015; Marine & Lewis, 2014).
introduces a dynamic sociocultural research methodology that brings Freirean problem-posing into conversation with feminist Foucauldian analytic tools. The article is divided into three sections. In the first, we lay out the theoretical basis of a dynamic sociocultural approach to researching inequalities. We explain how we drew together a feminist position, Foucauldian theory and Freirean principles and we situate our methodology in relation to feminist and sociocultural traditions in psychology. The second section describes how, with insights from Participatory Action Research (PAR), we developed our methodological approach into a two-part research process entailing participatory workshops followed by individual interviews. The purpose of the group workshops was to hold open space for participants to reflect on and “problem-posing” (Freire, 1972) everyday injustices if and as they chose and/or were able to, and to create a shared experiential and epistemological context for the interviews to follow. Individual interviews conducted four to ten weeks later were our primary source of data, allowing us to tap into participants’ (re)orientations to issues of gender, power and sexism in the wake of the workshop (see Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7; see also Calder-Dawe, 2015; Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2017, 2016b, 2016a). Third and finally, we offer some reflections on the analytic and ethico-political potential of a dynamic sociocultural methodology for scholars interested in pursuing a more active form of engagement with research participants, alongside a consideration of some of the sticky issues that might arise along the way.

**Feminism, Foucault and Freire in qualitative psychological research**

Critical or sociocultural qualitative psychologists place questions of context and language at the heart of their efforts to understand how people live their lives. From this perspective, the texture of individual experience and identity develops within a particular social and cultural context, as well as through broader political and historical formations. Much research in this vein has taken up the tools and theories of social constructionism and poststructuralism to make sense of the imbrication of the psychic and the social. For instance, a constitutive theory of language and the interrelations between knowledge, power and subjectivity has proved a useful framework for understanding how social and cultural forces come to shape subjectivity, propelling or disciplining people’s desires, practices, and identities towards certain possibilities and away from others (Gavey, 2005a). An understanding
of the dynamic relationships between knowledge, knowledge production, agency and action also has implications for scholarship: it positions research as an ethical and political undertaking as well as an intellectual activity.

This foregrounding of the politics of knowledge — and the politics of research — is one reason why many feminist psychologists have taken up discursive and sociocultural analytic tools as a “means to feminist ends” (Magnussen & Marecek, 2010, p. 88). Feminist sociocultural psychologists mobilise discourse theories alongside an explicitly feminist and political focus on cultural and interactional conditions of possibility and intelligibility that shape people’s experiences of and in the world (Gavey, 1989, 2011; Gergen, 2001; Magnussen & Marecek, 2010). This is exemplified in research that maps and problematizes dominant discourses of gender and sexuality. A considerable body of feminist scholarship has demonstrated how hegemonic discourses of heterosexuality, for instance, come to be experienced as a second skin, all the while producing men and women who are subject to different expectations and entitlements regarding bodily and sexual autonomy (e.g., Fahs & McClelland, 2016; Gavey, 2005a; Hlavka, 2014; Hollway, 1984; Marcus, 1992; McClelland, 2010; Potts, Grace, Gavey, & Vares, 2004). Alongside critical appraisal, feminist researchers search for alternative forms of knowledge and practice that might fracture oppressive truth claims and “breathe life into positions of social critique” (Fine, 1988, p. 50).

Another pivotal contribution of feminist discursive scholarship in psychology has been to document and challenge the “personalization of the political” (Kitzinger, 1987), identifying it as a key mechanism through which inequalities are perpetuated and legitimised and structural critique “evaporated” (Fine, 2016, p. 352). This process is at work in discourses, repertoires and accounts that emphasise individual choice and personal responsibility while obscuring the constitutive power of contextual and socio-political influences. It is also rampant in the individual-centric and individualising ‘psy’ disciplines many of us work within. Where an individual level of analysis becomes personal and cultural common sense, experiences of injustice and distress tend to be articulated and addressed as (purely) personal troubles, leaving the force of structural inequalities unexamined and removing grounds for collective action that might catalyse meaningful change.
Feminist scholars have been specifically engaging with Foucauldian analytic tools for some time, bending them to feminist agendas as part of a broader engagement with social constructionist approaches to subjectivity and embodiment (e.g., Bartky, 1988; Bordo, 1993; Gavey, 2005a; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1984; Marcus, 1992). Foucault’s (1978) articulation of the power-knowledge nexus, or pouvoir-savoir, has proved useful for feminist researchers seeking to join the dots between the psychic and the socio-cultural. A Spivakian reading of pouvoir-savoir is particularly instructive. Working from the original French, she translates and mobilises the concept as “being able to do something only as you are able to make sense of it” (Spivak, 1993, p. 34; see also Gavey, 2005a). Understood in this sense, pouvoir-savoir is a doubly attractive conceptual tool for activist researchers, for it opens up a mode of analysis that connects discourse and subjectivity while also identifying savoir (that is, culturally available knowledge and ways of making sense) as a site for political intervention. This makes pouvoir-savoir fertile ground for feminist scholars concerned with plugging their research into activism and social change. By working in a way that diversifies savoir, feminist Foucauldian research could allow participants the opportunity to organise experience differently.

But how, in practical terms, to translate a change-oriented feminist Foucauldian standpoint grounded in pouvoir-savoir into a dynamic, knowledge-sharing research methodology? Paulo Freire’s scholarship is one place to turn. Freire’s work has been a touchstone for participatory, liberation and action researchers seeking to engage the ‘studied’ as collaborators in research that not only documents but also challenges the status quo (Fine & Torre, 2004; Fox, 2015; Lykes & Hershberg, 2012; Moane, 2011).

A lifelong scholar-activist, Freire took a political interest in “unspeakable” inequalities (Gill, 2014) and in understanding the mechanisms through which oppression came to be perceived as natural, or else as inevitable and unchallengeable. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire (1972) argued that prevailing norms, discourses and institutions functioned to mystify and perpetuate oppressive social relations. In response, Freire developed a dialogical “problem-posing” method to support conscientização, a concept translated to English as conscientization or critical consciousness-raising.

While the notion of consciousness-raising (whether Freirean or feminist) in an effort to transform ‘false’ consciousness is out of step with our own epistemology and most
contemporary feminist thinking, the problem-posing process Freire outlined is open-ended and more useful to feminist Foucauldian scholars than the terminology might suggest. Problem-posing entails reciprocal questioning that begins in the detail of group members’ lives and social context, led but not controlled by a facilitator familiar with Freire’s principles. Through recursively (re)orienting to experience and social reality not as static facts but as problems to be interrogated, problem-posing dialogue supports praxis, defined by Freire (1972, p. 28) as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it”. While problem-posing is undoubtedly change-oriented, it is not a didactic method. It does not seek to deposit or “bank” knowledge into student-participant-vessels (a monological approach that Freire considered to be a practice of domination), nor is it designed to produce a specific, preordained outcome or output. The problem-posing process is open, epistemologically dynamic and unfinished: the goal is continual interrogation of the social world.

There are clear synergies between pouvoir-savoir (as theory) and problem-posing (as a style of political engagement). Freire’s conceptualisation of problem-posing relies on a constitutive understanding of knowledge, language and culture: struggles over meaning are, to Freire, struggles over power. By inviting people to read the everyday differently, problem-posing makes available a radical reorientation to the normal-invisible-inevitable. Indeed, the process of problem-posing works to precipitate what Clare Hemmings (2012) calls “onto-epistemological gaps”: the spaces between our knowledge of the world and our experience of it. Onto-epistemological gaps (or, perhaps more aptly, blisters) arise where neoliberal, postfeminist discourses of equality and individual agency chafe against experiential realities of structural oppression and inequality of opportunity. The continuing cultural force of traditional sexist discourses adds another dimension of “discursive dissonance” (Gavey, 2005a, p. 142) to this picture. Sexism, for example, may create the sensation of a “gap” where an expansive sense of self comes into contact with inequitable, sexist terms of recognition on one hand, and postfeminist assertions of gender equality on the other. Problem-posing as a mode of engagement invites us to feel out these gaps where dominant knowledge/discourse might fail to ‘stick’ to embodied experience. In doing so, it invites interlocutors to apprehend and tune in to experience differently and makes space for “trying on” new subjectivities (Cahill, 2007b, p. 270).
Problem-posing also complements the resolve of many feminist sociocultural researchers to re-contextualise and re-politicise everyday life. Freire’s principles of engagement offer an avenue for transposing critical feminist commitments to democratising and diversifying savoir into research encounters with participants. Problem-posing invites participants to attend to the specificities of a given socio-cultural context and the conditions of possibility it produces, inviting them to join in “studying [...] reality as history being made and also making us” (Freire, 1985, p. 18). This reflexive ethos makes problem-posing a good methodological fit for research interested in ‘becomings’. Rather than attempting to transform or liberate participants from false consciousness as some critics warn against (Duits & van Zoonen, 2007), problem-posing seeks to engage interlocutors in a dynamic process of questioning with potential to open up new lines of vision and possibility. Our feminist Foucauldian methodology mobilises problem-posing as a mode of engagement that channels the epistemological force of the pouvoir-savoir formulation into a tangible dialogical process; a process that makes room for consideration of ‘what might be’ in the process of studying ‘what is’ and one that might make it possible for participants to join our conversations about gender and sexism differently.

**Designing the project**

Having theorised a dynamic methodological framework, we were faced with the question of how to translate this approach into a tangible research practice. Building time into the research encounter was obviously critical for the dynamic process to take shape. We designed a project in two stages, beginning with small group workshops conducted with young people who self-identified as interested in thinking and talking about gender, sexism and social activism. The workshops would afford participants opportunities to examine and question dominant understandings of gender, power, sexism and feminism. They would be followed by individual interviews conducted several weeks afterwards. While it would be possible – and in some cases desirable – to use the entirety of the process (i.e., workshops and interviews) as “data”, we focussed our formal analysis on participants’ accounts during the interviews. We did make unstructured process notes based on observations during the workshops, but these were used to help inform the ongoing process and the later interviews rather than as data per se. This maintained the workshops as safe (or
“safe enough”; Lykes & Hershberg, 2012, p. 335) experimental spaces that were relatively free from an explicit, formal research gaze and research imperatives. The project was granted approval by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Ref 9249).

**Workshop design**

The problem-posing workshops were designed to put feminist Foucauldian analytic tools in play. We envisaged the workshops as contact zones where participants could encounter and experiment with alternative ways of knowing and reading the world. They would offer an open and non-didactic context for us to circulate alternative analyses, ideas and savoir without mandating or controlling their use. Decisions around content and style were informed by the methodological framework we developed, action research traditions and also critical pedagogy, feminist activisms and arts-based techniques that incorporated a problem-posing ethos, or had something useful to tell us about local gendered conditions of possibility.

We planned workshops of two different lengths: three-day workshops and one-day workshops. Whether three days or one day long, each workshop would include a range of experience-centred activities: from introducing theoretical tools to problem- pose common sense understandings of knowledge and power, to discussion-based exercises and individual reflection, to socio-dramatic activities and culture jamming. The workshops would be loosely structured but porous: we planned to share theoretical tools and to assemble activities, resources and discussion points, while also opening the group’s agenda to participants’ own interests and concerns. While both three-day and one-day formats made room for participants to contribute their own issues, interests and examples to group discussion, the longer workshops offered the most scope for this. The three-day workshops would include skill-shares run by local activists alongside open-ended sessions where participants had space to experiment with and develop ideas for creative activism.

The concept of pouvoir-savoir and a problem-posing ethos guided our facilitation style as well as providing a framework for organising workshop content (see Appendix A; see also Calder-Dawe, 2014). The design of the workshops was also informed by Participatory Action Research (PAR) literatures and Octavia’s participation in a Public Science Project Critical PAR Summer Institute in June of
PAR is a standpoint that places the experiences, questions, concerns and priorities of the ‘studied’ at the heart of research, drawing together academics, activists and community members as co-inquirers (Cahill, 2007b; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Fine, 2009; Fine & Torre, 2004; Lykes & Hershberg, 2012; Lykes & Mallona, 2008). Drawing inspiration from Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals Borda, W. E. B. du Bois, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Gloria Anzaldúa, Frantz Fanon, and Kurt Lewin among others, PAR projects undertake knowledge production for a political purpose: to hone the “capacity to imaginatively link one’s own personal problems and issues to a broader set of social, political and economic forces and pressures — and to work to transform them” (Dimitriadis, 2008, p. iii). To do so, PAR approaches often combine Freirean principles with creative forms of engagement, using theatre, role-play and arts-based methods to represent, analyse and problem-posing experiences both within and outside the research collective. PAR approaches offer a broader view of the problem-posing process as enacted through dialogue but also through embodied activities, experiences or artistic interventions that invite participants to apprehend and tune into themselves differently. From our readings and experience of (C)PAR, we developed techniques for using the body and embodied experience as research tools. We were particularly interested in devising socio-dramatic activities that could use the body as social barometer, a way of “tapping into knowledge” (Fox, 2015, p. 326) and surfacing onto-epistemological gaps.

Drawing from a wide range of problem-posing techniques from PAR, liberation traditions and critical pedagogy along with insights from feminist scholarship and activism, we designed and curated activities, discussions and resources for this project that cohered around key issues with potential to open up alternative fields of vision in relation to gender, sexism and feminism, while also considering their intersections with other axes of power. These issues included everyday sexism and anti-sexist activism, the social construction of gender, sexuality, feminism and feminists, and the politics of choice and free speech. We kept our treatment of these topics open-ended, using examples as starting points for reflection and interrogation, rather than presenting any particular position as incontrovertible “truth”. Instead of putting forward our own definition of sexism, for example, we left the question of what constitutes sexism and who can experience it open, exploring and comparing participants’ answers and tracing their implications. We circulated academic work.
alongside journalism and blog posts. John Scalzi’s (2012) video game-based think-piece “Straight white male: the lowest difficulty setting there is” offered a springboard into intersectional discussion about how bodies plug into multiple systems of power. Feminist scholarship-activism also proved a rich source of material and inspiration. We drew from the body-centred feminist work associated with the New View Campaign (www.newviewcampaign.org). We screened Rachel Liebert and colleagues’ (2011) satirical video “Dr Vajayjay’s! Privatize those Privates!”, designed activities based on Virginia Braun’s (2009) work on choice in relation to female genital cutting and discussed extracts from Breanne Fahs’s (2012) work on gendered body hair boundaries (all described in Calder-Dawe, 2014).

Action research collectives typically begin with groups and issues where there exists some consensus in advance about the nature and significance of the “problem” under investigation. This enables co-researchers to collaborate in all elements of the research project, from crafting the direction of inquiry and formulating research questions to selecting methods, analysing and disseminating findings. Cognisant of the postfeminist context our research was positioned in (and also designed to respond to), we planned to take our questions about gender, power and sexism to a group of young people who had not necessarily independently formulated these issues as pressing or relevant. The decision to structure research around a broad interest chosen in advance (and chosen apart from participants who would not be positioned as formal co-researchers) places our dynamic sociocultural methodology apart from the participatory and action research “family”, though the approach shares many of its epistemological commitments and theoretical influences.

Although we created a clear scaffolding for the project in line with our own concern with unspeakable gendered inequalities, the workshops were designed to be malleable and able to move in response to participants’ interests and contributions. For this reason, and because of variations in format, we expected that each workshop would unfold differently within the broad parameters we had established. We did not seek uniformity of content; instead, we designed for process, intending that each workshop experience would offer participants space and tools to problem-pose, to examine onto-epistemological gaps and to experiment with different forms of savoir if and as it made sense to them.
The workshops

Between July and December 2013, we ran four workshops (2 three-day workshops, 2 one-day workshops) during school holidays with a total of 23 participants from five secondary schools in Auckland, New Zealand. We began recruitment by contacting seven central Auckland secondary schools. We received permission from three schools to speak with small groups of senior students in person to explain the workshop opportunity and the research. At the four other schools, we secured permission for an intermediary to distribute leaflets titled “Media Sexism, Ethics and Social Action”, which contained detailed information about workshop content (the power and politics of gender stereotypes, social justice and creative activism) to interested students on our behalf. Although we position our work as feminist (and feminism was one of the focal interests of the project), we did not describe the workshops as feminist for strategic reasons: doing so, we felt, might narrow the range of prospective participants undesirably to those already feminist-identifying. Those interested in participating were asked to email us with their details and a brief explanation of their interest in the project. All those who submitted an application were invited to participate, though not all were able due to other commitments during the holidays. The workshops took place at the University of Auckland city campus. Further details of the workshops and workshop participants are presented in Chapter 3 and full details of the workshop content and design are available in the form of a youth workshop resource presented as Appendix A (see also Calder-Dawe, 2014 and http://www.sexualpoliticsnow.org.nz/projects/media-sexism-action/about/).

The interviews

The second stage of the project entailed individual interviews with workshop participants to elicit material for qualitative analysis. Several weeks after each workshop, we re-contacted all participants to invite them to participate in an individual interview. We had raised the possibility of individual interviews with participants during the workshop consent process, explaining that they would have the opportunity to be interviewed but were under no obligation to participate (for more details, see Chapter 3).

The interviews were designed to explore how participants were making sense of sexism, gender and feminism in the wake of the workshops. We were also interested
in understanding whether, how and why interviewees took up the analytic tools we had examined together. The interviewer (Octavia) worked from a semi-structured interview schedule developed to tap into these domains of analytic interest: participants’ experiences of the workshops, their orientation to feminism and their experiences of gender and sexism in everyday life. We chose to conduct these interviews at least one month post-workshop in order to allow time for the workshop experience to settle. This decision had major implications for the scope of the interviews and the kinds of accounts we could expect to elicit. Rather than asking young people to talk about gender and sexuality more or less off the cuff, we would be conducting interviews several weeks after group workshops that had circulated alternative savoir concerning gender, power, sexism and feminism. By creating breathing space in between the workshop experience and the interviews, we hoped to extend the analytic reach of the interviews as participants continued to reflect on the workshop content in the weeks that followed — and, perhaps, observe their worlds and experiences with new and potentially doubled lenses.

We anticipated that the shared experience of the workshops would inform the feel of the interviews and alter their analytic scope. The fact of having previously worked over discursive terrain related to gender, sexism and feminism, for instance, provided interviewees and interviewer with a common vocabulary. This would allow us to tap into these domains directly with our questions — an advantage not always afforded research inquiring into invisible inequalities where key concepts may be unfamiliar and require explanation (e.g. Pomerantz et al., 2013). The workshop experiences also influenced the design of each interview, insofar as they had provided us with an opportunity to develop an understanding of participants’ interests, ideas and experiences prior to individual interviews. During each workshop, we took process notes that later helped us to tailor the interview in ways that were meaningful for each participant: these notes included, for instance, the elements of the workshop that seemed to strike a chord (or not), the novel content that participants had introduced (for example, sexism in gaming and the ask.fm phenomenon) as well as individual narratives and experiences that we wanted to follow up on. We used these notes and recollections to inform the arc of questioning in each interview. Moreover, with the shared experience of the workshop as a starting point we hoped to elicit reflexive, poly-vocal and layered narratives. Interviewees’ talk could range forward and back in
time in response to our questions about continuity and change in their perspectives, inviting the temporally and epistemologically dynamic accounts we were especially interested in.

On a relational level, the individual interviews also differed from single-encounter methods. The workshops had been designed to be fun and engaging, and provided opportunities for all involved to bond and connect — particularly for those involved in the three-day workshops. Both interviewee and interviewer bore traces of the workshops and most interviews were imbued with the positive affective valence of the workshop experience and of prior relationship-building work, allowing us to move directly into open and comfortable conversation. The workshop experience had also familiarised interviewees with a problem-posing style of engagement that involved complicating and querying one’s own responses. Building on this familiarity, we were able to continue to problem-pose during interviews in a manner that elicited reflexive accounts; this style of engagement might have been disruptive, unproductive or rude without the workshop as a reference point. For example, Thomas initially described himself as unaffected by homophobic bullying he experienced at school, explaining that he could be himself “without caring what people think” (“you can think what you want, I know what I am”). After hearing him reiterate this point several times, Octavia began to delicately pose his response as a question. When and how did he feel that way? Were there any “gaps” between his experience and this position of confident invulnerability? In response, Tim offered another account that reflected on and complicated his previous position:

Octavia: … are there times, sometimes, where you’re like-
Thomas: Just annoyed, you’re like “arrrrhh!”
Octavia: Can you explain that a little bit more?
Thomas: It’s just like you’re constantly harassed, with the question “are you gay are you gay are you gay” and it’s like I’ve answered it like twenty times before

We were also able to pursue lines of questioning that might have remained closed in a regular interview context. Aware of contemporary incitements to narrate the self as confident, capable and untroubled (Baker, 2010; Dobson, 2012; Gill & Elias, 2014),
we had deliberately worked to open out the possibility of competing desires and interests, inconsistencies and struggle during the workshops. Perhaps as a consequence of this experience and the unique relational context of these interviews, many interviewees spoke comfortably and fluently about their frustrations, inconsistencies and vulnerabilities in relation to feminism, sexism and gender, allowing us to probe into these sites of psycho-sociocultural trouble in some detail.

Reflections on dynamic sociocultural research

So far, we have presented the foundations, design and praxis of a dynamic sociocultural methodology in some detail. In this final section, we use our research experience as a basis for some brief reflections on the analytical and ethico-political opportunities this dynamic presents. We also consider how the approach tangles with sticky issues familiar to qualitative researchers: theoretical questions concerning participant voice and the practical demands of adopting a relatively engaged and time-consuming method.

Ethico-political strengths

The crux of our dynamic sociocultural research methodology — to make space for what might be while inquiring into what is — is that it is an ethical and political stance as much as an analytic strategy. Where potentially oppressive practices under investigation appear invisible or inevitable to those affected by them, there is a compelling ethico-political case for research that opens up new possibilities for experience as well as collecting data (McClelland & Fine, 2008). As we hope to have made clear, dynamic sociocultural research is an approach designed to intervene into restrictive cultural conditions of possibility through problem-posing research encounters that diversify available savoir. Through a strategic blending of Freirean principles with feminist and Foucauldian concepts, this methodological approach offers an avenue for materializing the transformative implications of Foucault’s pouvoir-savoir formulation inside qualitative research projects.

While the primary aim of the interviews was to elicit workshop participants’ observations and experiences in relation to gender, sexism and feminism, they also provided an opportunity to gather participants’ reflections on the process of the workshops. As we had imagined it might, the workshop experience appeared to have
connected some participants (but not all) with new analytic tools. Several remarked that they found the workshop experience to be a “trigger” (Paige) for new perceptions, connections and actions that expanded their capacity to interpret, act and connect with others:

… it helped me put into perspective some of the things that happen every day as well, and I’m like, a lot of the time you’re not always aware that it’s sexist when somebody does something that it’s so common. But after like looking at things in more depth you start to kind of see things when you didn’t use to. So I find that really, really useful. (Jade)

I have realised, this was kind of always obviously before but I’ve just like realised the alwaysness of [sexism]. With movies and like TV shows and stuff […] I have realised that in certain jobs there are more guys or there are like more girls. Like at my Maccas [McDonald’s] there is no female manager and all, anyone that’s higher up than like a crew trainer, they’re all guys. So I’ve noticed stuff like that. (Jessie)

You don’t really get taught about that kind of stuff in school […] I think it kind of shapes the person you are going to be and I think before [the workshop] I was just kind of stuck (Mia)

… when I was doing my [school assignment] I showed my teacher the, “If men could menstruate” piece, and she just laughed. But it has opened up new things. I can talk to her and she’s like, I like that you are a bit of a feminist. (Nina)

This ethical and political contribution might be conceptualized as “catalytic validity”, a term Patti Lather (1986, p. 67) explains as a property of research that “re-orient, focusses, and energizes participants”. We articulate our approach in somewhat different and more open-ended terms: the ethical contribution of our approach is not to transform or act upon participants themselves, but rather to invite them to investigate (and perhaps to challenge and change) social reality. In this sense, dynamic sociocultural research has potential to make ethical and political
contributions not only to individuals involved in the research but also, through them, to cultural conditions of possibility more generally.

**Analytic potential**

Rather than presuming to offer an exhaustive account of the analytic possibilities a dynamic sociocultural approach offers, we focus instead on describing some of the analytically generative aspects of the approach for our research on inequalities that are difficult to identify (and where such research is *not* conducted with those identifying as activists who speak of injustices fluently). First, the workshop experience did provide tools for the teenagers we worked with to make sense of their lives, relationship and selves in new and different ways. Many we interviewed described orienting to everyday gendered practices differently as a consequence:

I think I came out of [the workshop] a lot more kind of aware of this kind of inequality […] even though it was right in front of me I wasn’t making connections and like seeing like signs (Paige)

There was kind of things that kind of talked at me, kind of made me uncomfortable, but I didn’t know how to phrase it. It’s learning about feminism, sexism, it’s like I know what it is now (Claudia)

I think after the workshop [I started] noticing all these things that happened. And like, I remembered stuff like [in] the past, like June was the um Model United Nations thing and little things that happened [there] (Ashleigh)

like I knew what it was subconsciously but I didn’t know the word for it […] the workshop definitely helped me like put it into words but that’s kind of like what I’ve had subconsciously in my head (Thomas)

A capacity to ‘tune in’ to everyday gendered power despite its postfeminist camouflage extended the analytic reach of our research into realms of experience that would otherwise have been likely to pass unarticulated. Many participants, for instance, spoke in detail about the mundane forms of sexism they had begun to notice around them. This was, in itself, a novel analytic feature of our research: rather than documenting ‘silence’ and a narrowing of discursive possibility, a dynamic sociocultural approach elicited rich talk about the obscured inequalities we were
interested in. In particular, we were able to report on a participant-generated map of everyday sexism encountered by Auckland teenagers despite the more general invisibility of gendered and sexist norms (see Chapter 4; see also Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016b). Equipping participants with alternative forms of savoir also created openings for new experiences, observations and ways of making sense of the world to become part of the data. With the benefit of several weeks to reflect on the workshop experience and content, several interviewees drew our attention to new issues, ideas and experiences we wouldn’t have known to ask about (for example, the gendered power relations Ashleigh observed at the Model United Nations, or Mia’s reflections on how feminism is discussed on Facebook).

The new forms of savoir circulated in the workshops combined with the time lapse between workshop and interview worked to elicit complex and reflexive accounts of our domains of interest. As participants ‘tuned in’ to sexism around them in the weeks after the workshops, some described experimenting with strategies to resist the sexism unfolding around them. Working with these detailed accounts of interviewees’ (often unsuccessful) efforts to dodge and unravel sexism gave us novel and unanticipated analytic purchase on the interactional dynamics or the “choreography” of sexism: how it circulates on the social stage and how young people work to interrupt its circulation (see Chapter 5; see also Calder-Dawe, 2015). We also discovered that, after the workshops, almost every participant had discussed sexism, feminism and equality with family, friends and peers. This meant that interviews drew not only from reflection on the workshops, but also from an intensive period of discursive ‘fleshing-out’, negotiation and experimentation in the weeks that followed, as participants tried out new identities and arguments with others. As a consequence, the interviews were poly-vocal and layered as interviewees’ accounting shifted between their own changing, dynamic ideas and the perspectives of those around them.

Finally, we noted the particular utility of a dynamic sociocultural methodology for our interest in subjectivity and ‘becomings’. This epistemological openness of dynamic sociocultural research, wherein old commitments are tested and new possibilities for subjectivity are experimented with, is particularly suited to discursive research addressing questions of subjectivity. Where single-encounter methods may offer researchers the opportunity to float new forms of savoir, there is no opportunity to explore what happens next: whether new trajectories are entrained, and where they
might lead. The shape of our project allowed us to discover that many we interviewed were describing themselves as feminist when they had not done so before. Participants' talk about being and becoming feminist offered us a way into understanding how processes of feminist identification unfolded (see Chapter 7; see also Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2017). We anticipate this analytic possibility will appeal to sociocultural researchers who, like us, are less interested in establishing states (i.e., who is feminist) and more interested in understanding how processes of identification unfold and what their consequences might be: in our case, gaining an understanding how being feminist is ‘done’, and what this identification makes possible.

**Sticky issues**

To conclude our reflections, we wish to pose our methodology itself as a problem, and to draw attention to some potential ‘sticky issues’ that merit consideration and clarification. One possible question relates to participant voice, and whether the approach we have outlined is at risk of putting words in participants’ mouths by introducing participants to new forms of *savoir* and perhaps, implicitly or explicitly, encouraging them to relinquish older perspectives. Our response to this is twofold. First, the methodology we have outlined depends on a poststructuralist understanding of language and discourse. From this perspective, there exists no pure essence or true experience at risk of being distorted; instead, subjective experience is mediated by the discursive resources on offer. By circulating new forms of *savoir*, therefore, we set out to widen teenagers’ interpretative possibilities rather than to “ventriloquize” them (see Fine, 1992). Indeed, suggesting the workshop experience could do so perhaps underestimates participants’ agency and status as thinkers and actors with complex motives and experiences that extend well beyond our influence. Second, and on a rather different note, the problem-posing ethos of our methodology is focused on generating questions rather than providing a singular counter-message. We note that interviewees had a range of responses to the workshop material: several spoke ambivalently and two disparaged feminism in interviews (“over the top […] ridiculous”, Hannah; see also Chapter 6 and Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016a) and appeared to have no qualms in doing so.

There are also practical questions to address concerning the implications of the kind of two-encounter design we have outlined, both for researchers and participants. While the project we devised was considerably less demanding than a typical CPAR
project, it remains a far more involved approach than a conventional qualitative interview-based study. Workshops like ours require a substantial amount of content planning, logistical management, resources and energy from researchers. Beyond preparation, recruitment and facilitation, there is a substantial amount of behind-the-scenes work to schedule workshops, organize food, prepare a conducive space, purchase workshop materials and monitor all these things on the day itself to ensure everything runs smoothly. Moreover, a two-stage methodology does involve a degree of uncertainty and there is a risk that workshop participants will decline to be interviewed (though this was not generally our experience). Projects like ours also require significant time and energy from participants. For this reason, recruitment may be more challenging, particularly where the research hopes to connect with people who are heavily burdened with responsibilities and pressures. We add one final caveat: this approach is unlikely to suit those hoping to conduct research with a ‘representative sample’ of a wider group. As with participatory and action research designs more generally, participant self-selection combined with the time commitment involved mean that it will tend to attract those with some prior interest in or openness to the topic under investigation — and who will seldom be a perfect cross-section of a given population.

Conclusion

This paper began with a dilemma facing qualitative sociocultural researchers who study inequalities in order to challenge them. In a cultural climate that foregrounds individual agency and obscures structural constraints, everyday injustices can be normalised, individualised or pass unseen by the people they affect. As a result, scholars may find themselves interacting with participants who speak in punitive, fatalistic or hegemonic terms. As researchers committed to expanding the scope of justice through research, how might we craft research encounters that allow us to do more than document depoliticising discourses, on one hand, and ‘missing’ discourses on the other? How can we answer pressing research questions concerning ‘what is’ while simultaneously researching with participants in a way that opens the spaces of ‘what might be’?
Dynamic sociocultural research is a methodological response to this suite of ethical, political and analytical questions. In this paper, we have introduced the approach and presented the details of a project devised to interrogate sexism, gender and feminism with teenagers. In weaving together feminist research, Freirean principles and Foucauldian analytic tools, we drew methodological inspiration widely; doing so, we hope to have moved in Freirean spirit. Freire himself “urged reinvention […] insisting that the only way to copy him was not to copy him but rather to resituate the practice in the times and places we inhabit” (Mariana Souto-Manning, 2010, p. xiv). Our project entailed the design and facilitation of problem-posing group workshops followed by individual interviews exploring how participants were making sense of sexism, feminism and gendered power. By creating breathing space between the workshops and the interviews, our approach widened the analytic scope of the research to include participants’ continuing reflections on their worlds and experiences in light of the workshop content over the weeks that followed. Interviews yielded layered accounts of gendered power, sexism and feminism and furnished rich and sometimes unexpected answers to our research questions.

In outlining the dynamic sociocultural methodology we have developed and used, we hope to join in strengthening the case for innovations that tamper with the “orthodoxy” of the conventional, single-encounter interview in qualitative research (Gough, 2006, p. 167; for examples of creative, compelling work along these lines, see Vares, Jackson, & Gill, 2011; Ringrose & Renold, 2012; Jackson, Vares, & Gill, 2013; Fahs, 2012; Futch & Fine, 2014; Katsiaficas, Futch, Fine, & Sirin, 2011). More specifically, we hope to have demonstrated the possibilities for researchers who investigate ‘invisible’ inequalities to experiment with and expand the ethical and analytical reach of qualitative research.
Chapter 3: Methods

This Chapter outlines the design and conduct of my doctoral research. Within it, I describe the practical shape of the project and provide further details of my methods. I explain my research planning and recruitment, detail my engagement with participants through workshops and interviews, and present the video project. Chapter 3 is a complement to the preceding Chapter, where questions of methodology, epistemology and ethics claimed centre stage; it also extends the succinct accounts of project methods presented in the publication-based chapters ahead.

Beginnings

_Framing the project: Sexual Politics Now_

My research project began as one element of the _Pornography in the Public Eye_ research programme, which operated chiefly under the name _Sexual Politics Now_. With support from the Marsden Fund (11-UOA-166), this corpus of research was designed to open up a more spacious, complex public dialogue about the gendered, racialised inequalities evident in mainstream commercial pornography and the ethical, political and psychosocial dilemmas this patterning presents. The wider research programme has combined academic research and theoretical scholarship with several activist projects designed to raise questions and catalyse conversation in our local communities. To date, _Sexual Politics Now_ has presented a public art exhibition (“A different view: Artists address pornography”: 2013) and supported “The Porn Project” (2013), an independent fringe campaign that illuminated the streets of central Auckland with exhibitions, performances and events questioning the politics of pornography. _Sexual Politics Now_ has also hosted international scholars to give lectures and share their work, and to participate in a “Gender and Sexual Politics Symposium” (2015). All projects associated with the wider research programme (including mine) are held together on the _Sexual Politics Now_ website, www.sexualpoliticsonow.org.nz, which serves as an archive of the research programme and all associated activities and resources.
My doctoral research, which began in 2012, took these overarching concerns about the (un)speakability of gendered power relations in a different direction. At that time, “sexualisation” (and to a lesser extent pornification) of children and young people was a burning issue in the public domain (see, e.g., American Psychological Association task force on the sexualization of girls, 2007; Papadopoulos, 2010). Mainstream concerns frequently crystallised around the temporal dimensions of young people’s sexual practices — that is, the dangers of young people becoming ‘too sexy too soon’. Far less attention was being paid to the sexism and misogyny evident in many sexualised and pornified practices, images and products (Barker & Duschinsky, 2012). With this in mind, my research set out to widen the lens from a close focus on pornography to a broader view of New Zealand teenagers’ understandings of and encounters with sexism and gendered power in daily life.

At the time, a growing body of scholarship was documenting the pervasiveness of individualising, postfeminist logics, noting that a feminist vocabulary for naming experiences of inequality as sexism seemed to be missing (Baker, 2008, 2010; Gill, 2011; Hlavka, 2014; Tolman, 2012). In light of this evidence, I envisaged a research project that would do more than replicate these findings in a local context. Taking inspiration from the activist ethos of Sexual Politics Now, I began to contemplate a mode of research that would offer a way to circulate what seemed to be ‘missing’: feminist analytical tools with potential to open up alternative understandings of gendered power relations. I envisaged research encounters that would allow me to float these ideas with young people in the first instance, and then, later, to understand whether and how participants were making use of these analytic tools. The project would be open-ended and exploratory. Whatever participants’ responses to the opportunities the research presented were, I believed that a project of this kind would offer an in-depth picture of possibilities and constraints shaping young people’s engagements with sexism and gendered power, and would reveal something of the conditions of possibility for feminist discourses more generally.

**Planning the research project**

The first stage of my research entailed the development of a methodological framework that would suit the specific style of engagement that I was hoping to explore with participants. I spent time examining existing initiatives, resources and programmes of relevance, reading theory, selecting and honing the themes and ideas I
would thread through the workshops and devising potential activities, all the time recursively refining my plans in rhythm with my evolving thinking. I arrived at the final shape of the empirical research — the dynamic, two-staged research project discussed in Chapter 2 — after this intensive period of research development.

As part of the planning and preparation process, I had intended to conduct key informant interviews with Auckland-based sexuality educators (approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on the 22nd of November, 2012; Ref 8703). The purpose of the interviews was to understand current, local approaches to addressing issues of gender, sexism and sexuality with young people and to gain some insight into the sorts of possibilities and issues I might encounter in the course of my research (see Appendices B, C and D for the participant information sheet, consent form and interview schedule). Of the eight initial approaches I made to local organisations I had identified, only four responded. Two declined the invitation to participate and two organisations accepted. As it eventuated, these interviews were not as successful as hoped. While interesting, the organisations’ work focused on safe sex, consent and homophobia. The interviews yielded little information about broaching sexism and feminism with young New Zealanders and therefore did not inform the design of my research as I had anticipated they might.

**Critical PAR Summer Institute**

As briefly discussed in Chapter 2, the design and practice of my empirical research was informed by my experience participating in a week-long Critical PAR Summer Institute in June 2013, run by the Public Science Project at the City University of New York Graduate Center. The annual Summer Institute, which began in 2010, is “designed to introduce the theory, methods, and ethics of critical participatory action

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1 It is difficult to say with certainty why the response rate was so low. It is possible that the burden of work in this relatively under-funded sector left some organisations with little time to participate in research; the two organisations that declined did so because of sector restructuring that affected them both. It is also possible that the focus of my interests on sexism, gender equality and feminism did not resonate with some sexuality educators at that time.
research (CPAR) […] Through seminars, roundtables, and hands-on workshops with experienced researchers, participants gain the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate a critical PAR approach into their scholarship, research, and/or organizing” (The Public Science Project, 2017).

Attending the Summer Institute informed the development of my methodological approach. In terms of theory, the Institute served as an introduction (both literal and metaphorical) to participatory action research, and to a thick body of participatory scholarship and the set of theoretical, ethical and methodological principles it draws upon. Encountering this new bibliography of ideas would shape the development of a dynamic sociocultural methodology and the design of the workshop and interview project I was planning. It also shaped and expanded my sense of the political possibilities of research in the social sciences — particularly participatory and knowledge-sharing approaches where patterns of socio-cultural privilege are made explicit and challenged through the research process itself.

The Summer Institute was a journey into theoretical writings, but also an embodied and physical experience. Participating in a long-form workshop gave me an understanding of how group workshops might unfold and a feel for how to moderate and work with the ebb and flow of energy across the day. One valuable insight gained from the Summer Institute was the value of making opportunities for ‘moving about’ — for instance, group stretching and physical warm-ups — over the course of the day. A new appreciation of the practical and physical elements of workshops, including the qualities of the workshop space and ensuring generous provision of nourishing food, would prove to be instrumental in my own workshop planning.

**A dynamic sociocultural research project**

In early 2013, I prepared an ethics application for the workshop and interview project I hoped to undertake. The proposed project was granted approval by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) on 22nd of April 2013 for a period of three years (Ref 9249). As the duration of the project exceeded the initial approved timeframe, I applied to extend the research project ethics approval until 23rd April 2019 (approved 14th March, 2016; Ref 9249). Over the course of the project, I contacted the Human Participants Ethics Committee in relation to proposed
Workshops

The first stage of the empirical research consisted of four problem-posing group workshops conducted between July and December of 2013. Detailed accounts of the workshop content and process are presented elsewhere in this thesis. The methodological framework the workshops sit within was presented in depth in Chapter 2. Details of the structure and content of the workshops, alongside practical notes on facilitation, are outlined in the workshop resource presented in Appendix A (see also Calder-Dawe, 2014 and http://www.sexualpoliticsnow.org.nz/projects/media-sexism-action/about/). In this section, therefore, I avoid repetition by limiting my discussion to questions of recruitment and informed consent, the practical elements of the workshop and reporting on demographic and survey data.

Workshop recruitment

To recruit participants, I initially contacted four schools in central Auckland between March and April of 2013. Rather than ‘cold-calling’, I began with schools where I had some form of prior contact or relationship. I had personal teacher contacts at two schools (Schools X and Y) and was able to negotiate access to senior students through them. My supervisor Nicola Gavey had a contact at one school (School Z) and the final school (School W) had a history of collaboration with colleagues at the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland. I planned the research with senior students in mind. Accordingly, I explained to all schools and teachers I contacted that I would like to be put in touch with students in Years 11 to 13 (students between 15 and 18 years of age). I spoke with students at three schools (Schools X, Y and W), explaining the workshop opportunity and inviting prospective participants to provide their email addresses to receive more information about the research. The teacher contact at School Z suggested that rather than visiting I could email her information

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2 I had made provisions for securing consent from a parent or guardian should any 15-year-olds wish to participate, but this did not eventuate.
that she would pass on to interested students. I sent her through a handout containing further information and an application form for interested students to return to me. The application asked prospective participants to describe their interest in being part of the workshops and also to indicate their availability and any dietary requirements (see Appendix F).

At the three schools I visited in person, I gave short presentations to students either during class or at a pre-arranged lunchtime meeting. I planned the presentations carefully, with the students’ and teachers’ potential reservations about feminism in mind. I hoped to pitch my presentation as inclusively and appealingly as possible, without cloaking its political dimensions. On one hand, I chose not to frame the workshops as feminist, based on my sense that doing so might narrow the range of prospective participants to those already feminist-identified. At the same time, I considered the presentation an opportunity to make a small feminist intervention, as well as to recruit for the project. I began my spiel by asking if anyone in the room identified as feminist, while raising my own hand (as I had anticipated, no-one else did). I went on to talk very briefly about sexual double standards and gendered stereotypes, before explaining the shape of my research, what participation would entail and what it would offer. Student interest was palpably variable; some groups and classes yielded numerous email addresses, some none whatsoever (an experience I found very demoralising). Teachers’ contributions also altered the pitch of my presentation through their support, or indifference. One well-meaning teacher encouraged her students to participate with reference to how good it would look on students’ CVs, an inducement I was uncomfortable with. After visiting the schools, I subsequently emailed each address I had received with a handout and an application form for interested students to return to me.

Over the next couple of months, completed application forms trickled in and I invited participants to opt into one of two three-day workshops to be conducted in the July school holidays. Where prospective participants were unable to attend either workshop in full because of other commitments, I kept their details and explained that I would recontact them if and when I organised a second round of workshops. In late September, I began a second wave of recruitment for a second pair of workshops I planned to conduct in December. Unlike the first, these workshops would last for a single day only, allowing me to trial the one-day workshop format I had developed.
after the three-day workshops had taken place in July. This time I contacted three central Auckland schools where I had no teacher contacts, explained the research and asked for permission and assistance distributing information flyers I had developed (see Appendix E). The flyers were titled “Media Sexism, Ethics and Social Action” and contained detailed information about workshops and the workshop content (the power and politics of gender stereotypes, social justice and creative activism). This the recruitment process was less successful. One school reluctantly agreed to receive and circulate a flyer to their students, after informing me that they had “already done enough of this sort of thing for the year”. No prospective participants came from this school. Teachers at two further schools were willing to distribute flyers to students, but these efforts elicited just one further participant; other participants for the later workshops were drawn from applications received during the first stage of recruitment.

In total, I received 29 applications: 23 applicants participated in a workshop, while six applicants were unavailable on any of the days I offered.

**Conducting the workshops: Practicalities**

All four workshops took place at the University of Auckland’s city campus. The first two workshops took place in mid-July. By chance, the first workshop coincided with the final week of the University’s inter-semester break. As a result, I was able to secure a light, airy room for the duration of the first workshop, with plenty of space for the activities I had planned. The second workshop fell in the first week of the University’s second semester, and space was much harder to come by. We made do with a small room without permanent furniture. Although it ran well, I felt that the second workshop was affected by the shortcomings of the space we had, which was poky, somewhat uncomfortable and had patchy Internet access. The second two workshops took place in December, a time where there was substantially less demand on University facilities. Both of the later workshops took place in a small and comfortable seminar room — while a larger space was available, these workshops had fewer participants and so a smaller room sufficed.

A colleague, Will Pollard, and I co-facilitated the three-day workshops. Each workshop ran from 9.45am to 4.30pm on non-consecutive days of the same week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday). Workshop 1 began with eight participants, though
only seven participants completed as one participant informed me that they had fallen sick and stopped attending. Workshop 2 followed the same pattern: the nine participants became eight after one advised me that she was ill and withdrew. As part of a more extended focus on activism, each of the three-day workshops included two sessions facilitated by guest presenters who were paid for their time. Rachel Liebert discussed her activism experiences as a member of the New View Campaign, and Ally Palmer ran a skill-share workshop on filmmaking and mockumentary as a mode of social and institutional critique. The one-day workshops ran from 10.30am to 4.30pm; Workshop 3 had two participants and Workshop 4 had four. I facilitated the one-day workshops on my own, and without guest facilitators. Aware that that cost of transport could be a barrier to participation, I offered participants reimbursement for any public transport costs incurred travelling to and from the workshop sessions. Most participants were dropped to the University by parents. Those who took public transport were asked to declare their transport costs and were reimbursed in cash at the workshops.

Each workshop included morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, which I organized in line with participants’ dietary requirements and preferences. A colleague was paid to assist with assembling and tidying away the food at the right junctures of the day. I selected the food with care and often supplemented it with my own baking. It was important to me that the food was offered thoughtfully in this way, as it constituted a form of koha in recognition of the time participants gave to the project. Participants also received folders, pens and a notebook, along with a certificate at the end of the workshop in recognition of their contributions to the research. Participants were not paid to participate.

In the first session of each workshop, I asked participants to fill out several forms. I began by distributing Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms (both of which had been emailed through to participants in advance with the request that they read them over; see Appendices G, H, I and J). I spoke briefly about the research and went through each of the statements on the Consent Form in turn, checking that everyone understood them and inviting any questions or clarifications. All participants gave informed consent for the workshops and interviews at this stage. After the consent process, I distributed an information sheet I had compiled with information about local youth-centred support services that participants could go to
for help and advice, should they feel any need to (this was required by UAHPEC; see Appendix N). At this point, I also asked workshop participants to complete a pre-workshop survey (see Appendix L) that included open-format demographic questions, a series of Likert-style scales where participants could indicate the strength of their (dis)agreement with a range of statements and respond to four short answer questions. I presented the initial pre-workshop paperwork along with named folders, notebooks and pens and the day’s hand-outs organised for each participant. I hoped that this personal touch would show participants that their presence and expertise were valued and, accordingly, would help to sustain their interest through the gauntlet of paperwork. In the final workshop session, participants were asked to complete a post-workshop survey (see Appendix M) that consisted of the same statements with Likert-style scales and six different short answer questions.

With participants’ consent, each workshop session was recorded. The recordings began after the initial paperwork outlined above had been completed. The recordings were made primarily for reference rather than analysis and have not been transcribed.

**Workshop participant demographics**

Demographic information provided by the participants involved in each of the four workshops were as follows:

*Three-day workshops*

Workshop 1 included one male and seven female participants, of whom four were aged 16, two were aged 17 and two were aged 18. The eight participants came from four state-funded Auckland secondary schools: School W (mixed sex), School X (single sex: girls), School Y (mixed sex) and School Z (single sex: girls). Participants described their ethnic identities as one or more of: NZ European (4), Chinese (1) Māori (1) Niuean (1) Armenian (1) Japanese (1) Israeli (1).

Workshop 2 included nine female participants, of whom five were aged 16 and four were aged 17. The nine participants came three state-funded Auckland secondary schools: School X (single sex: girls), School Y (mixed sex) and School Z (single sex: girls). Participants described their ethnic identities as one or more of: NZ European (6), Chinese (1) Māori (1) South African (1) Korean (1).
One-day workshops

Workshop 3 included one male and one female participant, both aged 18 years old, from two state-funded Auckland secondary schools: School W (mixed sex) and School Y (mixed sex). The participants described their ethnic identities as NZ European (1) and Polish (1).

Workshop 4 included two male and two female participants, of whom two were aged 17 and two were aged 18 years old. The four participants came from two state-funded Auckland secondary schools: School V (single sex: boys) and School Y (mixed sex). Participants described their ethnic identities as NZ European (3) and Chinese (1).

Pre-workshop and post-workshop Likert scales

The Likert-style scales were completed as part of surveys administered at the beginning and end of the workshops (see Appendices L and M). The scales were designed to offer an indication of where participants stood in relation to a number of domains relevant to the interests of the research, both before and after the workshops. These domains included feminist identification and participants’ beliefs about gender inequality, gender stereotypes, sexism and racism in New Zealand. Participants were asked to place a mark along the scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 10 (strongly disagree) to indicate the valence and strength of their endorsement of each statement. Responses were coded as follows: strongly agree (1-2.5), agree (2.5-3.5), somewhat agree: (3.5-4.5), neutral (4.5-6.5), somewhat disagree: (6.5-7.5), disagree (7.5-8.5) strongly disagree (8.5-10). I was aware of the very approximate nature of the scales I had constructed, and I did not intend to conduct any form of statistical analysis on participants’ responses. I was open to the possibility of using participants’ responses for more general analytic and contextualising purposes, though the chief aim of the scales was to catalyse reflection on these issues and, in the case of the pre-workshop scales, to provide points of departure for subsequent activities.

As it eventuated, I have used the responses to one statement, “I consider myself a feminist”, in Chapters 4, 6 and 7 to offer a sense the range of positions workshop participants had started from and to contextualise the shifts in feminist identifications that some participants were describing in the interviews. This information is presented in full in Table 1 below.
Table 1. Participant survey responses to the statement “I consider myself a feminist”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-workshop: 23 respondents</th>
<th>Post-workshop: 21 respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
* includes one participant who did not respond to the post-workshop survey

Pre-workshop and post-workshop short answer questions

The four short answer questions that participants were asked to complete at the beginning of the workshops (see Appendix L) were designed to open up a process of reflection. The questions asked participants to articulate their own ideas about and experiences of sexism and gender inequality, as well as their motives for participating in the workshops and the research. These questions were not intended to inform my analysis, but rather to draw participants into reflections that could inform the group discussions that followed.

At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to complete six short answer questions as part of the post-workshop survey (see Appendix M). Once again, these were not intended for my own research analysis — though it was heartening to read that most participants had found the workshops thought-provoking and energising. Instead, the six questions were designed to prompt participants to reflect on the workshop process as whole and whether and how their ideas might have shifted since the workshops began and since the pre-workshop survey. This line of questioning encouraged a reflexive process that I hoped to tap into during follow-up interviews.

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I allowed roughly 15 minutes for participants to complete the pre-workshop and the post-workshop surveys, along with the Likert-style scales outlined above.

**Interviews**

As described elsewhere in this thesis, the second stage of the empirical research entailed individual interviews with workshop participants, which would provide material for analysis. The interviews were designed to elicit rich and detailed accounts of gender, sexism and feminism: phenomena that participants had engaged with intensively over the course of the workshops and had, I wagered, continued to reflect on since. As a consequence, I envisaged that between 20 and 25 individual interviews would provide the analytic breadth I desired.

Recruitment for the interviews was a secondary process, flowing on from the workshops. I knew, based on workshop participation, that I would be interviewing a maximum of 23 young women and men from a range of cultural backgrounds. As part of the initial consent process I had explained that I would recontact participants after the workshops and invite them to be interviewed. I also explained that, while participants consented to participate in an interview as part of the workshop consent protocol, there was no obligation to be interviewed. At least four weeks after each workshop, I began to re-contact workshop participants to arrange interviews. Three participants did not respond to my emails at all. Several replied quickly and were happy to schedule an interview straight away, while others were slow to respond and/or requested that the interview take place later in the year due to the schoolwork pressures they were facing, requests I was happy to accommodate. I interviewed 20 workshop participants in total. Demographic information specific to the 20 teenagers I interviewed (as opposed to information pertaining to the 23 workshop participants outlined above) is presented as part of each of the analytic chapters that follow.

I conducted the 20 interviews between August 2013 and February 2014. The semi-structured interview schedule I used (see Appendix O) was developed and approved as part of my original ethics application. I conducted two initial interviews before scheduling others. I personally transcribed these interviews and met with my supervisor to discuss the interview experience and to review my interviewing style (as I recalled it and as evident in the transcript). We were happy with the interview
schedule and the kinds of conversation it was producing. Nicola observed that I had a tendency to endorse participants’ statements with the word “cool”, and we discussed the implications of this habit and my associated desire to affirm participants. I used this insight to temper my affirmations, although I did not eliminate them entirely as I felt they were, at times, integral to the relational work of the interviews. The rest of the interviews followed from these initial two. As it worked out, the interviews were staggered over a period of several months, which allowed me further time to reflect on and refine my interview approach as I went. For further discussion of my interviewing style, refer to Chapter 2.

Interviews were scheduled at times and locations that were convenient for participants. Generally, interviews took place after school or in the weekend. In my initial email, I suggested a series of possible locations for the interview. Interviewees chose a range of places, including at school (1), at a local café (7), in a public park (1), at a local library (5), at the University of Auckland (2), at the participants’ workplace (1) at participants’ homes (2) or at my own house (1). Two scheduled interviews did not take place as planned (one due to a miscommunication regarding which day we were meeting, one because a participant forgot), but both were successfully rescheduled. Unless the interview was in a library space, I purchased food and drink for participants as part of the interview. At the beginning of each interview, I revisited the terms of consent for participation in the interviews and checked whether interviewees were happy for the interviews to be audio-recorded, transcribed and used for analysis. All participants confirmed their consent.

Analysis

The ontological and epistemological position this research proceeds from, and the research aims and the methodology I take up, have been outlined in the two previous Chapters. In the four analytic chapters to come, I discuss the particulars of the analytic tools and processes I used to formulate each analysis. In this section, therefore, I put aside these matters and focus instead on other elements of my analytic process that are not considered at length elsewhere: transcription, coding and settling on analytic directions.
**Transcription**

All interviews were transcribed for analytic purposes. I transcribed the first two interviews myself; subsequent interviews were transcribed by professional transcribers. Everyone involved in transcription signed a confidentiality agreement before I released any files for transcription. I asked transcribers to type the flow of words as they heard them, using a comma [,) to indicate a pause in speech of roughly two seconds or more and a full stop (.] to indicate the end of a passage of speech. I did not ask the transcriber to note the duration of pauses, to mark tonal changes, or to indicate where in a sentence or word emphasis fell. These instructions reflected my primary interest in analyses of discourses, accounts, subject positions and repertoires. While mapping the intricate details of talk that are fundamental to discursive approaches such as conversation analysis is often desirable, I decided that, for this project, the benefits of doing so would be outweighed by the time and expense it would have entailed.

Because I wanted to retain the details of phrasing, pauses, ‘false starts’ and repetitions in speech for analytic purposes, I did not offer participants the opportunity to review and edit interview transcripts. Instead, I explained that should interviewees recall any sensitive material that they wished to retract from analysis (either during the interview or up until one month after the interview), I would be very happy to accommodate their wishes. No participants expressed a desire to do so.

**Coding**

The next stage of my analytic process entailed coding the transcribed interviews. I began by reading through all the interviews twice, making notes about the patterns and points of interest I noticed. With a feel for these patterns, as well as for the lines of analysis I was interested in pursuing, I coded transcripts manually by cutting and pasting relevant extracts from each transcript into new coding documents. I coded inclusively, so that the same extract could be included in multiple coding categories. I defined eight initial coding categories that captured material that featured prominently across the interview transcripts and that also related to my original research aims and interests in understanding young people’s accounts of sexism, feminism and the workings of gendered power. The categories were as follows: Accounts of Sexism (1), Challenging Sexism (2), Feminism and Being Feminist (3), Identity and Social Justice.
(4), Learning and Doing Gender (5), Masculinity/Homosociality (6), Women’s Bodies (7) and Extras (8). The final category was a repository for material that didn’t fit into one of the other seven categories but which I felt was interesting and was unready to relinquish.

Analytic directions

Immediately after coding, I narrowed my analytic scope to four analytic pieces drawn from four of the coding categories outlined above: one each addressing sexism, feminism, women’s bodies, and masculinity/homosociality. As I began to read through the first two coded categories in order to shape up an analysis, I saw that I had ample material for several analytical pieces on my hands already. The two analyses that were to become Chapters 4 and 6 were along the lines I had imagined in the earliest stages of coding: two discourse analytic pieces examining how interviewees were accounting for sexism and feminism. The second two pieces followed lines of analysis I had not anticipated. Chapter 5 responds directly to the unique analytic possibilities interviewees’ accounts presented, analysing participants’ detailed recollections of challenging sexism in everyday interactions in order to build an account of their choreography. Chapter 7 interrogates a pattern that only became apparent to me after initial coding was complete: the entanglement of participants’ accounts of being feminist with authenticity discourse. Intrigued, I went back and recoded interview transcripts for material relevant to authenticity in order to build a full corpus of extracts with which to pursue this line of analysis.

As this account implies, there is a good deal of ‘unused’ coded material from my interviews. There is potential to develop some of this material into further analyses in the future. At this stage, I am envisaging one analysis addressing participants’ accounts of masculinity and young men’s peer cultures in Auckland high schools and another examining how participants constructed and oriented to girls’ and women’s bodies in relation to prevailing discourses of heterosexuality and to beauty imperatives.
Pseudonyms, ethnicity and confidentiality

I conclude the Analysis section with a note on pseudonyms, ethnicity and their implications for confidentiality. The use of pseudonyms is commonplace in qualitative research. Substituting an alternative name for a participant’s real one offers a way to retain the ‘human feel’ of each quoted participant and to trace their contributions across analyses without compromising their confidentiality — that is, without potentially revealing their identity to others. Assigning pseudonyms is a delicate matter because the choices made have political dimensions; consequently, decisions concerning the use of pseudonyms merit careful thought and scholarly discussion (Lahman et al., 2015). The selection of pseudonyms — along with related decisions about the degree of contextualising information researchers ought to use — requires particular care when research takes place in a small country like New Zealand, where there is greater potential for unusual and distinctive descriptors to enable participants’ identities to be guessed. As Tolich (2001, p. 9) has pointed out, “New Zealand’s smallness makes it relatively easy to identify any institution” and, as a consequence, to identify people who are connected to it.

As I discuss briefly in Chapter 6, I faced a decision regarding whether or not pseudonyms should be culturally matched (i.e., whether or not to choose pseudonyms that evoke the interviewees’ ethnic or cultural background). Cultural matching is often analytically and politically desirable because it keeps open possibilities for intersectional and culturally nuanced analyses that take speakers’ ethnicities into account. The drawback of cultural matching is that it has potential to compromise confidentiality in cases where there are relatively few participants in particular cultural or ethnic categories. In my research, the use of matched names could potentially have identified speakers to their co-participants and to others who knew of their participation in the research project. In such cases, Tolich (2001) has suggested that protecting the anonymity and confidentiality of research participants should override the analytical and political desirability of connecting demographic details — or other unique and distinctive features of their lives — to participants’ pseudonyms. Following this logic, I decided against cultural matching. I do not supply any contextualising information about the ethnic identity of particular speakers I quote, for this same reason.
Where pseudonyms are not culturally matched, a new decision presents itself: which languages and cultural background(s) should one draw names from? I opted for names with an Anglo-European origin. I consulted an official list of the 100 most popular names for girls and boys in New Zealand between 1999 and 2014 (SmartStat Services, 2014), and chose 20 Anglo-European names that featured frequently and that were not (versions of) participants’ real names. As noted in Chapter 6, this choice reflects the Anglo-European names of the majority of participants, as well as the status of English as the dominant language of New Zealand. This strikes me as an imperfect solution and I remain uncomfortable with the figurative ‘White-Anglo-Saxon-washing’ of participants’ cultural diversity through my acts of (re)naming. Of course, names do not map neatly onto cultural background: the majority of interviewees who did not identify as Pākehā or New Zealand European had first names of Anglo-European origin. Even so, the question of pseudonyms continues to trouble me: were I to begin the project again, I would consider asking each participant about their own preferences for a pseudonym as part of the interview, explaining the stakes and lodging the choice with them.

As well as using unmatched pseudonyms, I have worked to maintain participant confidentiality by altering potentially identifying contextual details (for example, the names of friends, schools, teachers, school subjects and extra-curricular activities) that appear in quoted extracts I use in my analyses, substituting similar alternatives in their place. There is a single exception to this: in one analytic Chapter, I discuss a distinctive experience precisely as recounted by a participant, because the details of this anecdote were highly analytically relevant. In order to protect participant confidentiality, I have introduced an additional pseudonym to use only in relation to this distinctive experience. This means that the potentially identifying anecdote (which some other workshop participants had heard about) is not linked by a pseudonym to any quoted interview material used elsewhere in the thesis. In the interests of protecting confidentiality as far as possible, I have chosen not to reveal the pseudonym and Chapter in question here.
Video project

Alongside the academic publications presented in Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7, my research analyses will also be disseminated through a series of short videos (series title “Gender, sexism, feminism: New Zealand teenagers talk”) filmed in 2016. The series consists of six videos, each scripted with extracts from my research interviews. The videos were produced under the auspices of Sexual Politics Now.

The short videos were designed to be a lively and engaging medium for disseminating some of the key findings of my research, in the words of the young people I worked with. In particular, I saw potential for the videos to tell a story about pervasive sexism in the lives of New Zealand teenagers and to highlight the role feminism might play in challenging sexism as well as the gendered expectations that confine young people to a narrow range of normative identities. In this way, the video project is another iteration of the problem-posing ethos of my doctoral research, furthering my interest in using research to provoke new experiences, ways of knowing (savoir) and possibilities for action (pouvoir).

Video production

Video production began with the development of a series of scripts. I initially drafted seven scripts, which were workshopped with video project collaborators Nicola Gavey (co-producer), Paulette Benton-Grieg (co-producer) and Richard Smith (director of photography and co-producer). The seven scripts corresponded to three key domains: gender roles and gendered expectations (3 scripts), sexism (3 scripts) and feminism (1 script). Both the gender roles and sexism scripts contained one long-form version and two shorter ‘snapshots’; there is some overlapping material between these long and short versions. On Richard’s advice, I made some small alterations to the quotes as originally transcribed in order to avoid repetitions and awkward phrasings that might distract viewers from the content of the videos and reduce their impact.

To maintain the anonymity of research participants, we planned to recruit young actors aged 18 to 25 to feature in the videos and read the quoted material. Once the scripts were finalised, I put out a call for actors through the University and personal contacts. We screened all interested actors through an individual audition process, and settled on eight actors in their teens or mid-20s: Alice Bragg, Randell Buenafe,
Magdalena Chauca, Michael Hockey, Albertine Jonas, Perlina Lau, Talia-Rae Mavaega and Benjamin Shand-Clennell. I conducted short workshop-style rehearsals with most of the Auckland-based actors before the filming day itself. I assigned between one and five different “characters” to each actor, asking that they prepared their lines in advance of filming. To allow ourselves flexibility with the final cuts, all scripted material was assigned to at least two actors to prepare and film. Each actor was offered $150 in supermarket vouchers in recognition of their time.

The videos were filmed over a single day at the University of Auckland Television and Media Productions Studio. Richard Smith co-ordinated the technical side of the filming supported by media technician Chris Stevenson. Nicola, Paulette and I were on hand to coach the actors, monitor the filming schedule and make decisions on the ground about what to prioritise as time began to run short.

After filming, I was given the raw footage and I proceeded to log the material we had shot, selecting the best ‘takes’ of each scripted extract from each actor, with close up and wide shot options where possible. From here, I prepared detailed cutting instructions that Richard used to produce the first rough cuts of the videos. Based on the material Richard sent us, we further refined the sequencing of interview extracts in each video, and in one case we combined two short videos into one larger version, yielding six videos in total.

The final videos run between 2.5 and 7 minutes, and are titled as follows:

- **Video 1: Gender roles: thinking outside the boxes** (long-form video)
- **Video 2: Gender role snapshot: what’s it like for guys?** (snapshot video)
- **Video 3: Gender role snapshot: what’s it like for girls?** (snapshot video)
- **Video 4: Sexism: why should we have to live with that?** (long-form video)
- **Video 5: Sexism snapshot: what’s the deal with everyday sexism?** (snapshot video)
- **Video 6: Yeah, I’m a feminist: feminism and stopping sexism** (long-form video)
Preliminary cuts of the videos are presented on the USB flash drive that accompanies this thesis. When finalised, the videos will be hosted on the Sexual Politics Now project website and our associated YouTube channel. I also have plans to apply for funding to build an NCEA Level 1 Health achievement standard around the videos to facilitate their use in schools.

3 The videos are currently with the post-production team: see note on page 20.

4 NCEA, the National Certificates of Educational Achievement, are the national qualifications for senior secondary school students in New Zealand. Certificates are awarded at Level 1 (for students in Year 11 of their schooling), Level 2 (for students in Year 12) and Level 3 (for students in Year 13, the final year). Students are awarded Certificates at each Level for passing a given number of achievement and unit standards across a range of subject areas (see http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/ for more detail).
Part III: Naming, normalising and resisting sexism
Standard modern dictionaries define sexism as sex-based or gender-based prejudice that favours one group over another. This formulation often comes with a proviso: that sexism is “especially” associated with discrimination against women (see, for example, Merriam-Webster, 2017). Feminist activists and scholars have tended to mobilise the concept differently. In our work, sexism denotes a form of gendered oppression that knits together prejudice and patriarchal power. In other words, sexism produces and is the product of ongoing structural inequalities that favour men over women. Working from this definition, men may be subject to gender stereotyping and may suffer from dominant constructions of masculinity, but they are not considered to experience sexism per se. This definition — along with the feminist arguments underpinning it — is contested, particularly by men’s rights activists who claim sexism against men is rampant, particularly in areas such as child custody (for an alternative view on this debate, see Chadwick, Gavey, Elizabeth, & Tolmie, 2014). I adopt the broadly feminist understanding of sexism in my work, though I did not say as much during workshops and interviews with research participants, in the interests of maintaining an open-ended discursive space where speakers could air a range of perspectives.

Sexism is evident in many common-sense assumptions about men and women, and also in the practices and institutions that enact and perpetuate these assumptions. As Jessie noted during an interview, sexism comes in different guises. It can be clear cut (“you either have a pay gap or you don’t have a pay gap”), but it can also manifest in less tangible form, such as a person’s “mindset”, or “the way my guy friends talk about stuff”:

people automatically think you can’t do something because you’re a woman.
Like they automatically just wouldn’t give you a chance.

As discussed in Chapter 1, my doctoral research took place at a moment when feminist efforts to document and critique sexism were about to find a broader audience. With momentum from initiatives such as the Everyday Sexism Project, sexism was on the cusp of a different, wider visibility. My research pre-dated the broader influence of these shifts: at the time the workshops began, local feminist
challenges to sexism were more likely to attract public ridicule than public support (see Benton-Greig et al., submitted). As many feminist critics suggested at the time, a narrowed cultural focus on individual agency and choice, combined with the widespread belief that gendered inequalities were as good as gone, made it difficult to name sexism as sexism. Individualising and postfeminist logics were shrinking political issues of gendered power down into personal troubles, and women and girls who spoke up about sexism were liable to be characterised as “feminist killjoys” (Ahmed, 2010a), cynically or pathetically playing the victim. The difficulty of naming everyday sexism as sexism in this context also posed a challenge for researchers who set out to explore and expose it. In response to this challenge, I developed a project with potential to intervene into the unspeakability of sexism, working from the methodology I outlined in Chapter 2.

Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis were written as stand-alone analytic pieces for two different journals. Though positioned within and speaking to similar literatures, each pulls at a different analytic thread, taking up different analytic tools to do so. Chapter 4 presents “Making sense of everyday sexism: Young people and the gendered contours of sexism”. As its title suggests, this article examines how the teenagers I interviewed were making sense of the everyday sexism they were noticing around them. As well as documenting what was (newly) visible to interviewees as sexism (an undertaking that challenges the claim that such gendered inequalities no longer exist), the article traces how interviewees assigned value and significance to different forms of sexism they described. I discuss what this suggests about the discursive complexities of identifying sexism, particularly for girls and women. Chapter 5 introduces “The choreography of everyday sexism: Reworking sexism in interaction”. This article steps in closer than its companion to the mechanics of everyday inequalities, examining the fine detail of interviewees’ descriptions of ‘coming up against’ sexism. Working with the concept of choreography, I theorise sexism as a form of address that moves or recruits its target into particular lines of feeling and response. My analysis traces how sexism unfolds in interaction, considering the moves interviewees described making in order to disorganise sexism and their varying effects.
While the efflorescence of feminisms in popular culture is rightly a focal point for current scholarship (including my own), it is prudent not to lose sight of an accompanying surge in “popular misogyny” (Banet-Weiser, 2016). In this environment, scholarship that examines the speakability of sexism remains as urgent and topical as ever. Taken together, Chapters 4 and 5 inquire into the current prevalence and visibility of sexism, exploring how everyday sexism was unfolding around teenage interviewees and the complexities of naming and challenging its impact on women and girls. The figure of the feminist killjoy haunts both articles. She presides over conversations where sexism is discussed (Chapter 4) and interactions where sexism occurs (Chapter 5), blocking and dampening interviewees’ efforts to identify and resist it. In both chapters, however, I locate some tentative ground for resistance, for subversion — and for optimism.
Chapter 4: Making sense of everyday sexism

Young people and the gendered contours of sexism

Introduction

In contemporary western societies, women and girls are said to be free to reap the social, sexual and economic rewards of their liberation: to “run the world” (Pomerantz et al., 2013). Over the past decade or so, feminist scholars have traced the discursive effects of this “postfeminist sensibility” (Gill, 2007b) wherein gender equality is taken for granted and the possibility of enduring sexism is firmly rejected, along with any need for feminism (Gill, 1993, 2007b; McRobbie, 2009; Scharff, 2013). The ascendency of postfeminist discourse had, they contended, made sexism hard to identify. Many have shown how sexist practices evade critique through being couched as “retro”, “ironic” or “enlightened” (Benwell, 2008; Douglas, 2010; Williamson, 2003). The hegemonic, common-sense status of postfeminist discourse appeared to leave few openings for naming and challenging sexism, prompting feminist critics to express concern that sexism had become “unspeakable” (Gill, 2011; see also McRobbie, 2009).

This notion of unspeakability animates much recent scholarship on sexism and gender inequality. Joanne Baker (2008) described how the young Australian women she interviewed employed an individualising rhetoric of personal choice and responsibility to make sense of their lives. This punitive narrative framework silences talk about hardships and structural constraints by implying that success is the sum total of one’s ‘good’ and ‘bad’ choices. Others, too, have observed this tendency to under-articulate structural gender inequalities and to resist a characterisation of women as disadvantaged by sexism or by men (Carey, Donaghue, & Broderick, 2011; Kelan, 2009; McRobbie, 2009; Morrison et al., 2005; Pomerantz et al., 2013; Scharff, 2013; Stuart & Donaghue, 2012). There are good reasons why speakers might choose to de-emphasise sexism: those who challenge gender inequalities may be caricatured

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1 This chapter is a lightly edited version of a co-authored article published in *Women’s Studies International Forum* (Vol. 55 Issue 1) in 2016.
as bitter, self-serving feminists (Gough & Peace, 2000; Olson et al., 2008) or as politically correct crusaders dogmatically pursuing trivialities (Mills, 2008). A similar phenomenon is evident in news and social media, where challenges to sexism are directly rebutted as unreasonable complaints (Benton-Greig et al., submitted) or more subtly undermined (Attenborough, 2013).

Faced with these silencing manoeuvres, feminist activists and researchers have continued to document mundane sexism directed at women and girls in public, private and mediated life (Bates, 2013; Braithwaite, 2014; Coy et al., 2011; Evans, 2014; Megarry, 2014; Ringrose, Gill, Livingstone, & Harvey, 2012; Towns, 2009). Over the past few years, feminist concerns about persistent, pervasive sexism seem to be gaining traction in media and popular consciousness. The success of the Everyday Sexism Project (Bates, 2013), a living document of sexism experienced by women built by contributors who email, text or tweet their stories, is one compelling example. The international reach of activist initiatives like the Everyday Sexism Project, SlutWalk and #mencallmethings (see Megarry, 2014) suggests that, in some spaces at least, sexism is becoming increasingly articulable. In a context where feminist discourse on sexism appears to be re-entering the public sphere, what new possibilities might exist for identifying everyday sexism, and accounting for it?

To explore this question, we draw from a New Zealand-based, action-oriented research project that we began within this shifting territory in 2012. The project was designed to explore whether (and how) feminist ideas offered secondary school students an analytical purchase on their everyday experiences of sexism. Here, we examine 20 participants’ talk about sexism: what they observed as sexist around them, and how they made sense of these observations. We explore what counts as sexism for interviewees and we analyse the discursive effects of their meaning-making talk.

**The project: Sexism and social action**

Our analysis draws from data collected as part of a workshop and interview-based research project exploring gender, sexism and social action with secondary school students in New Zealand. The project was action-oriented: beginning from the assumption that young people’s capacity to perceive, describe and challenge sexism depends on the discursive resources available to them, we set out to diversify the
discursive possibilities on offer. The workshops and interviews invited participants to explore feminist ideas and to unpick prevailing ideas about gender, feminism and sexism while providing opportunities for data collection.

**Workshops**

The workshop component of the project was designed to offer participants space to explore feminism and social constructionism, and to respond critically, collectively and creatively to everyday sexism, misogyny and representations of gender. The content, structure and style of the workshops were informed by participatory, liberation and feminist traditions (for a fuller account of the workshop process and content, see Appendix A and Calder-Dawe, 2014; see also Freire, 1972; Moane, 2011; Stoudt, Fox, & Fine, 2012).

To recruit workshop participants, the first author contacted seven secondary schools located in a large New Zealand city in early 2013. She spoke to senior classes and/or distributed promotional leaflets explaining the workshop opportunity and the research project. The workshops were described as an opportunity to unpack mainstream representations of gender and gender relations, to discuss their implications and to explore avenues for creative activism. Despite their feminist tone, the workshops were not presented as feminist. Interested students were asked to fill out a brief application form outlining their interest in the workshops and indicating their availability. All those who returned applications were invited to participate. Participants were offered reimbursement for public transport costs.

A total of 23 students from five secondary schools participated in one of four workshops (2 three-day workshops, 2 single-day) held at the University of Auckland. Participants filled out brief surveys at the beginning and conclusion of the workshops. At the start of the workshops, 13 of 23 participants interviewed identified as feminist (six strongly agree; seven agree). At the end of the workshops, 19 of 21 surveyed identified as feminist (16 strongly agree, three agree).

**Interviews**

At least one month after each workshop, Octavia recontacted participants to invite them to participate in an individual follow-up interview. She explained the interview as an informal conversation about the workshop process and their reflections and experiences since. In late 2013 and early 2014, she interviewed 20 of 23 workshop
participants. These semi-structured interviews explored participants’ experiences of the workshops, their orientation to feminism and their experiences negotiating sexism in everyday life. Each interview was held at a place of participants’ choosing, frequently a local café or library. Most interviews lasted for between one and two hours. All were digitally recorded and transcribed by the first author (2) or a paid transcriber (18).

When quoting, we reproduce interviewees’ speech as transcribed including repetitions. A comma signals a pause in speech. The symbol […] indicates that a passage of speech has been cut. To protect participants’ anonymity, we substitute real names for pseudonyms throughout our analysis and we have slightly altered potentially identifying details. We use pseudonyms that are not culturally matched, so that names reveal nothing of the cultural and social background of the speaker. Although this is undesirable from an analytic point of view, we considered it necessary to safeguard anonymity.

**Interview participants**

At the time of the interviews, all 20 participants were aged between 16 and 19 years old and 16 participants identified as women, four as men. Participants’ ethnic identities included one or more of the following: Chinese (3), Israeli (1), Japanese (1), Korean (1), Māori (2), Niuean (1), Pākehā/New Zealand European (11), Polish (1), Scottish (1) and South African (1). Participants’ self-described sexualities include gay (1), straight (15), straight-ish (1) and female (1); two interviewees did not specify.

The majority of participants were born in Aotearoa New Zealand; others immigrated as children. Most interviewees (13) lived in two parent households; four lived with mothers only, two in composite families and one in a homestay. Most participants had only attended mainstream, state-funded schools. A few participants had some private schooling, two participants had been home-schooled and one participant had enrolled in a Māori language immersion unit (Kura Kaupapa Māori). At the time of the workshops, all 20 interviewees were studying at one of five large, state-funded secondary schools rated 9 (two schools; five students), 8 (two students), 7 (seven students) and 3 (six students) in current decile rankings (Ministry of Education,
Accordingly, those interviewed are drawn from school communities of varying privilege, with the majority attending school alongside economically comfortable or privileged peers. Just over half of interviewees attended single sex schools (13; 12 girls, 1 boy), and just under half attended co-educational schools (10; 7 girls 3 boys).

**Analysis**

The purpose of the interviews was to build a picture of whether (and how) interviewees would name and orient to sexism, feminism, gender and gender relations in the wake of the workshops. Our analysis in this article picks up one of these threads, asking what was visible to participants as sexism and how they accounted for sexism more generally.

Our research is informed by a feminist, poststructuralist perspective that attends to the interrelationships between knowledge, power and subjectivity (see Gavey, 1989). Accordingly, we are interested in interviewees’ talk for what it reveals of the discursive landscape they inhabit: the resources and subject positions that shape their orientations to sexism. We explore how participants describe and account for sexism as well as considering the contextual imperatives facing speakers and attending to their positioning work.

We began analysis by coding interview transcripts for explicit talk about sexism (e.g. definitions, anecdotes and evaluations), as well as talk relevant to sexism (e.g. comments about gender inequality). Some of this talk arose in response to specific questions about sexism. Other talk arose more haphazardly as participants reflected on their lives, friends, families and their motivations for participating in the project. An initial sweep yielded 80,000 words of relevant talk. From here, interview extracts

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2 The national decile system ranks all state-funded and state-integrated primary, intermediate and secondary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand according to the socio-economic indicators of the areas from which its students are drawn. The decile scale runs from 1 (the roughly 10% of schools whose student body has the least favourable socio-economic indicators) to 10 (the roughly 10% of schools whose student body has the most favourable socio-economic indicators).
were recoded into two broad categories of interest: 1) participants’ accounts of their experiences and observations of sexism, and 2) participants’ general, definitional talk about what sexism is and who it affects.

We approached participants’ descriptions of sexism (1, above) thematically (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). We began by reading and re-reading the coded extracts looking for patterns in participants’ descriptions. Although those we interviewed did not speak explicitly about typologies of sexism, we found that their examples cohered into three key domains or thematic groupings: sexual harassment, gendered diminishment and gender stereotyping. Almost all interviewees’ accounts of sexism fitted into one of these domains.

In our second analytic section, we examine how interviewees made sense of sexism. Our analysis considers participants’ general rhetorical talk about sexism as well as their evaluations of sexism they had observed or experienced. Analysis began with reading and re-reading participants’ talk, this time with an eye for underlying patterns of meaning, the familiar tropes and assumptions that organise participants’ evaluations of sexism. Participants’ evaluative talk about sexism was patterned by two strikingly different orientations to sexism. We analyse these orientations as interpretative repertoires: well-rehearsed, cohesive and persuasive lines of argument, orientation and evaluation that characterise talk on a given subject (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

**Defining sexism**

During interviews, each participant was asked to offer their own definition of sexism. In part, this question was intended to catalyse talk about sexism, but it also offered useful clarification for the interviewer (it had become apparent during workshop discussions that participants had differing views on its meaning and proper usage). Participants’ off-the-cuff definitions of sexism were remarkably consistent. Overwhelmingly, interviewees defined sexism with reference to gender-based discrimination and stereotyping, or “trying to place false images or false aspirations or false ideals on both sexes” (Leah). This exchange with Max is fairly typical:

Octavia: … how do you define sexism? What is that in your mind when you talk about it?
Max: Um, I feel like in my mind sexism is kind of, in one sense, I don’t know, using gender stereotypes and gender roles to judge somebody and kind of, I don’t know, not accept them based on that […] And I also feel like it’s, I don’t know, just discriminating against someone based on the fact that they may be different from you or a particular gender kind of thing […] trying to sort of impart particular, I don’t know, like stereotypes on them

In accounts like Max’s, sexism is understood to arise from a set of gender-specific “rules” (Jon) and “roles” (Max) imposed on both men and women. Jessie’s definition is fairly similar:

I would say that [sexism is] a generalisation about the whole gender. So kind of like racist, like you just assume something just because they are a specific race. I feel like sexism would be you assume something about a girl or a guy just because they are a girl or a guy.

In striking contrast to feminist definitions of sexism (and racism) that highlight asymmetries in power, almost all interviewees gave a gender-neutral account of sexism. When defined as “discrimination based on sex” (Dylan), the concept of sexism becomes equally applicable to women and men. In taking care to point out that sexism affects women and men (sexism “can definitely be towards everyone”: Mia), interviewees’ definitional talk suggested that women and men are equally affected (it “greatly affects both sexes”: Jade).

One participant defined sexism differently. While acknowledging that men are subject to discrimination and unfair gender-based treatment, Holly used the word sexism to refer to “institutionalised” discrimination against women only:

Like, you can still be like discriminating towards a guy, but I don’t think it’s called sexism. Yeah.

Even so, Holly was quick to manage the implications of her gendered definition of sexism, telling the interviewer “it’s just a word really” and “discrimination [towards men] is just as bad”.

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Seeing sexism

Over the course of the interviews, most young men and women interviewed outlined instances of sexism that they had observed around them. The young women also described personal experiences of sexism; the young men did not. Detailed talk about sexism arose in two ways. The interviewer asked simple, open questions such as “where, if anywhere, does sexism come up in your everyday life?” Participants also gave examples of sexism without explicit prompting as part of general talk about gender and power in their lives. Interviews yielded a great deal of relevant material. Here, we organise the kinds of practices and experiences participants identified as sexist into three key domains of sexism: sexual harassment, gendered diminishment and gender stereotyping. We hope to provide, if not an exhaustive account, an impression of the context within which participants’ rhetorical accounts of sexism grow.

Sexual harassment

None of those interviewed described observing sexual harassment directed at boys or men, nor did any young men describe experiencing it. Participants gave many examples, however, of sexualised harassment of women and girls around them. A few participants had observed physical sexual harassment of female peers and friends: a “slap” on the bottom at school (Nina) or “inappropriate touching” in the workplace (Phoebe). Verbal harassment was experienced and observed much more frequently, often in the form of sexualised commentaries on women’s body shape, size and attractiveness. As Phoebe put it, women’s and girls’ bodies are “constantly being commented on”. Unwanted evaluations came from various quarters: male friends, family members, co-workers and bosses, strangers, a male teacher (in one case) and male peers (in many more). In keeping with evidence from research elsewhere (Clear et al., 2014; Ringrose et al., 2012), a significant proportion of interviewees’ examples of sexual harassment occurred at mixed-sex schools. Max explained that “disrespectful” sexualised commenting on girls was “quite common” among young men at his school:

Typical comments, I think like, a lot of like objectifying girls and things like that, like not considering them as people, just talking about their body parts
Nina, too, described relentless sexist commentaries on girls’ “boobs” and “butts” at her co-educational school:

I have heard people saying things like oh I’d paper bag her, and I’m like “what does that mean?” it’s like “oh I’d have sex with her with a paper bag over her face”. And I’m like mm, crawl into a hole, this is so awful, that shouldn’t even be a term that 15 year olds, 16 year olds should be using, because it’s so awful, it’s like doesn’t matter if she hasn’t got a pretty face, it’s not about her […] It’s like “she’s a person, she has feelings”. They’d be like “yeah but she has really big tits”.

Nina’s example recalls Ann Cahill’s (2011) concept of derivitization, as the young men in question reduce their target’s personhood to a reflection of their purported sexual desires: a sexy body with “big tits”.

Those interviewed also spoke of witnessing sexual harassment of women and girls outside school grounds. Emily described an experience of sexualised heckling from a group of young men that left her feeling intimidated and unsafe:

I didn’t actually end up walking home. I walked around in a big circle so they wouldn’t see where I lived.

Interviewees also reported rape-talk and rape jokes in circulation amongst peers at school and online. These jokes and comments trivialised rape, ridiculed women for being raped or threatened rape by suggesting the speaker’s propensity to rape. At her co-educational school, Jessie described how “the guys” asserted a desire to rape women around them who they consider “hot”. These comments were most frequently aimed at young women peers, but occasionally at women teaching staff, such as Jessie’s technology teacher:

she is like really pretty and all the guys are like “Miss Phillips is hot as”, blah, blah, blah. And then so sometimes when she helps them like go [to the storage cupboard] and get out timber to cut off, they’re like “oh yeah, just go [in there and] rape Miss Phillips” or whatever, like stuff like that. So I’m quite used to them saying that.
Along similar lines, Phoebe recalls a joke told to her by an “old friend”:

He was like [...] “I prevented a rape this morning”. And I said “oh what, how?” He said, “self-control”. And I was like “oh”.

The joke is on Phoebe, who (as intended) imagined that her friend had intervened in an assault. Instead, her friend claimed he prevented a rape through “self-control”, aligning himself with dominant discourses of male sexuality implicated in the cultural scaffolding of rape (see Gavey, 2005a).

**Gendered diminishment**

The second domain of everyday sexism is gendered diminishment. Like examples of sexual harassment, instances of diminishment reported by interviewees are gendered: they target women and girls, but not boys and men. This domain encompasses practices and comments that diminish women and girls by restricting or undermining their capability and “space for action” (see Coy, 2009). Interviewees encountered gendered diminishment in others’ assertions that “men are better than women” (Jade), or that being “like a girl” (Holly) is shameful and undesirable. Thomas saw this routine disparagement of women in “the stuff people say like every day like ‘oh’ like ‘woman driver’”. Many of those interviewed had encountered put-downs that implied women were less capable and competent than men, or as Phoebe put it: “you know, [women] can’t do that, they can’t do this”. Some young women, like Jade, recalled formative experiences of gendered diminishment with clarity:

I didn’t quite understand the concept of sexism, what do you mean men are better than women? So yeah when I was really little I used to get quite upset when people used to say I can’t be a mechanic. Like the boys in my, like in my crèche or kōhanga used to be like “you can’t be a mechanic”. Why not? “Cause you’re a girl”. What do you mean, I don’t understand, I know I’m a girl!

Claudia described an experience of gendered diminishment in similar terms. She “first thought” about how gender calibrated others’ expectations of her when her all-girl team placed third in a mixed-sex science competition. Surprised by their success, an adult official told the team there were “never any girls” at the top.
the person who presented awards, he mentioned something about how there’s never any girls who get the, get in the top three.

Alongside overtly diminishing comments and jokes, participants observed subtler diminishing practices around them too. Sasha recounted how she is sometimes reminded that, as a woman, she is considered less capable than men (“oh yeah, I’m a woman”) when others around her “take over” a task, assuming that she needs help:

there is like a lot of stuff for when my Dad takes over or somebody else takes over for me. Most of the time I am like sure yeah, I am happy, you know. But like it is, like some days it will bring up, oh yeah I’m a woman, I forgot that.

Diminishment was also enacted through exclusion. Dylan observed that women teaching at his all-boys school “wouldn’t really be the leaders of anything”, “never got to go on any [school] trips” and appeared to be “ignored” by some male colleagues. Others like Phoebe noticed patterns of workplace diminishment closer to home. According to Phoebe, her mother “felt tiny” at work despite her senior role because male colleagues exclude her from decision-making.

Like sexual harassment, gendered diminishment could also appear to be light-hearted. Those interviewed recounted commonplace diminishing jokes that imply women belong in the kitchen and ought to stay there: “why did the girl get hit by the car? Because she wasn’t in the kitchen” (Thomas). Alternatively, gendered diminishment could appear as a joking comment or rhetorical question: “why doesn’t your girlfriend go to the kitchen and make you a sandwich instead of like talking to you about stuff?” (Mia). Georgia described hearing these jokes from male friends “all the time” and explained their intent:

it’s got that insinuation that it’s because, you know, because you’re a woman and you belong in the kitchen, yeah.

While most jokes were made by peers, Paige recalled her history teacher making “jokes” along these lines during class to his all-female students, declaring that men are “better” than women, “and that’s why my wife’s at home”.

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Kitchen and sandwich jokes were not restricted to female targets. Thomas explained how these jokes (popular among his friends) could be used against young men who stray into “something feminine”:

if a guy is doing something feminine um my friends can sometimes be like “go make a sandwich”, like associating it as him being a girl so he should make me a sandwich.

This is a double-whammy: under the cover of humour, it diminishes women and femininity in a general way while also disparaging the young man in question for “being a girl” (Thomas).

**Gender stereotyping**

A third cluster of examples concerns gender stereotyping. This domain of sexism aligns with participants’ definitional talk, which frequently referred directly to the ‘sexist’ stereotyping of both women and men. Despite providing the backbone of participants’ definitions of sexism, this domain was a less prominent feature of interviews than the two others. Interviewees gave fewer tangible examples of gender stereotyping and the examples given were generally less elaborated.

Several young women and one young man interviewed described men’s subjection to gender roles as a form of sexism. These interviewees located sexism towards men in the gendered expectations and stereotypes imposed by hegemonic masculinity: or, as Nina puts it, “how the male stereotype tells them that they have to be a certain way”. Mia filled in these “expectations”: a young man is expected to “play sport” and to be “intelligent”. He ought to be a “power guy” who can “do everything”. He should “get all the girls”, and he must “protect his woman”. This talk, while plentiful, was seldom drawn from direct observation. Instead, participants’ speech was either rhetorical (arguing that men do experience sexist stereotyping) or hypothetical (enumerating the ways in which men could theoretically experience sexism related to gender roles).

Talk detailing young women’s experiences of gendered stereotyping unfolded rather differently. Few of the young women we interviewed oriented to expectations associated with normative femininity as a form of sexism. Like Stuart and Donaghue (2012), we found that young women tended to characterise gendered practices like beautification in terms of free choice rather than compulsion or sexism. Those who
did connect normative femininity with unfair sexist pressures illustrated their talk with real-life, rather than hypothetical, examples. Phoebe, for instance, described how her mother “constantly” tells her she is “not feminine enough”:

my sister and I are constantly being told you are too brutish, you are too like, you know, and if we want to argue a point it’s like not okay […] Mum’s like “I don’t want to hear that, it’s too rough, you need to be more gentle and female”.

Ashleigh also explained that “social expectations” of niceness and self-sacrifice shape what women are “expected to do”:

Ashleigh: Um, I just noticed it with my family friends, like um the mother was um, she had her child and then she got a scholarship to go and study again. I’m not sure what it was for. Then the husband just wanted her to stay at home and look after the child instead of furthering her own career.

Octavia: And what happened?

Ashleigh: She stayed at home and looked after the child.

**Accounting for sexism**

So far, we have examined how interviewees defined sexism and we have explored the kinds of practices they identified as sexist. In this section of our analysis, we turn our attention to the discursive resources interviewees took up to make sense of the sexism they observed, experienced and imagined. At first glance, one can see there is some discursive work to be done here. Interviewees’ definitions suggest gender parity in sexism, and yet the real-life instances of sexism participants described were overwhelmingly directed at women and girls. Examining interviewees’ meaning-making talk, we explore how this tension was managed.

We draw from interviewees’ general rhetorical talk about sexism, as well as more specific talk orienting to actual instances of sexism observed or experienced. Two strikingly different interpretative repertoires characterised interviewees’ talk in these domains. When accounting for sexism in an abstract sense, interviewees oriented to
sexism as a serious issue, identifying men and boys as its hidden victims. When accounting for their own experiences and observations of sexism (towards women), participants characterised sexism quite differently: as irritating, a bother, but not a big deal.

“Guys do have it tough”: Men suffer sexism in silence

When offering an account of sexism as an abstract phenomenon, most young women interviewed and one young man drew on a repertoire that positioned boys and men as the unacknowledged victims of sexism. The foundations of this repertoire are evident in participants’ definitions of sexism, almost all of which emphasised that sexism is not exclusive to women and “can go both ways” (Amber). This repertoire develops the claim that, despite gender equivalence in experiences of sexism, there is no equivalence of redress. Men are suffering too, a suffering exacerbated by the lack of recognition and attention afforded them. This repertoire builds on definitional talk about sexism in a more literal sense, too:

Octavia: And what about sexism, how do you define that?

Jade: Sexism is judging someone, like for me, is judging someone based on their sex. Like saying that someone shouldn’t be able to do something because he’s a he or she’s a she. Even kind of discriminating against someone because of their sex, and it relates to males and females. And sexism is a huge thing, a huge thing in today’s society. Like just this morning actually we were talking about um, me and my mum, were talking about how, oh do you notice short men, coz all of the women in our family are real short, do you notice that short men tend to be real macho-ists and kind of like “rrr I’m a man”. And then we started talking about why was that, and it’s kind of like we came to the conclusion that men are judged hugely on the fact that if they’re short they’re not manly enough, you know because they are shorter than all the other men, blah, blah, blah. But it’s fine if you’re a woman and you’re short
Jade’s definition of sexism as “judging someone based on their sex” develops into a more complex rhetorical account that positions sexism as a “huge thing”. This claim is illustrated, not with a gender-neutral example, but with a hypothetical anecdote about the difficulties faced by short men. This spotlighting of men’s struggles continues into the next passage through the contrast Jade sets up between men (“judged hugely”) and women (“it’s fine if you’re a woman and you’re short”).

Others also played on the contrasting experiences of men and women to position men as contemporary sexism’s real victims. The point that sexism against women is wrongly perceived as “more common” (Mia) or “worse” (Claudia) than sexism towards men was a frequent feature of participants’ talk:

like I said I think you pick up more on sexism towards women because it’s more seen as being more common and a lot of people don’t really see things as sexist towards guys. (Mia)

I think sexism does affect men and sometimes, in some situations they affect men worse than women. (Claudia)

if you say something about a man, [it’s] not often you hear people say that’s sexist, but you hear it a lot when people say it about women. (Georgia)

Often, as above, the claim that sexism towards women is “more advertised” (Mia) and more readily recognised stood alone as a self-evident truth. Where elaboration did occur, interviewees turned to hypothetical examples drawn from areas more usually associated with feminist activism: relationship violence and street harassment. Such examples work to emphasise the extent to which women’s experiences have wrongly trumped men’s. Thomas explained that because men are perceived as “strong” and are “viewed as being better than women” people wrongly suppose they “can’t be abused”:

it’s sexist that how they perceive only girls can be the ones abused in a relationship guys can’t be abused when guys can easily be abused

Leah drew on this repertoire in a similar way, suggesting that men are at a disadvantage when it comes to sexism. She observed that “there isn’t exactly a violence against men campaign” because such initiatives are “all geared towards
women”. Taking street harassment as an example, Mia advanced the same argument: despite a mainstream focus on women’s issues, “guys do have it tough”.

it’s made more known that women get more sexism towards them, but it’s not really like known when guys do, do you know what I mean because like say a girl is being harassed at a bus stop or something about like what she was doing, like the way that she looked, then that would be, people would probably cause a bit of an uproar about that, but if a guy was harassed it would be like oh toughen up, why don’t you stand up for yourself

This repertoire of sexism downplays women’s experiences, commanding space for the discussion of sexism towards men. When asked for details, however, interviewees had few real-life examples with which to fill this space:

Octavia: … have you come across in your experience or your friends’ experience any of those kinds of instances of men being limited by their gender role that you’re talking about?

Mia: Um I don’t know, I have to think about that one. I don’t really have many guy friends

We might ask, then, what this repertoire does beyond making space for talk about sexism towards men. What else does it achieve discursively and interactionally? This repertoire of sexism feeds from and into a network of “poor male” and “masculinity in crisis” discourses, which position men as neglected victims of gender relations and reverse sexism (Gough & Peace, 2000, p. 390; Pomerantz et al., 2013; Ringrose, 2007) and feminism (Edley & Wetherell, 2001). At the same time, this repertoire intersects with common-sense discourses that position feminists as unreasonable, selfish and man-hating (Scharff, 2013; Tyler, 2007; see also Chapter 6 and Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016a). In taking up this repertoire, interviewees invoke and reject woman-only accounts of sexism that seemingly exclude and disadvantage men. As Edley and Wetherell (2001, p. 451) observed over a decade ago, equality remains a “rhetorical centrepiece” of meaning-making about gender relations, sexism and feminism. In rejecting an apparent double standard, interviewees position themselves as champions of equality for all, rather than equality for women. Taking up this
repertoire enables speakers to engage in equality talk from an unassailable position: that of the beneficent, fair-minded feminist concerned about men’s difficulties. This subject position may be a particularly important resource for women, who are more susceptible to being positioned as angry or selfish feminists “playing ‘the gender card’” (Donaghue, 2015, p. 163). Certainly, young women made more frequent use of this repertoire than young men.

As feminist scholars, we are interested in the kinds of speech this repertoire authorises for those with feminist concerns and commitments. The argument that, in the interests of equality, it is men’s experiences that ought to be prioritised makes feminist critiques of ongoing sexism towards women more difficult to justify. Within this repertoire, attempts to address sexism directed at women and girls may appear unwarranted: men and boys are the true victims of sexism and it is they who need “a bit of help” (Hannah). In short, this repertoire claims a platform for men and boys while dismantling that platform for girls and women. As a result, attention is funnelled away from the pervasive, everyday sexism towards women our interviewees described.

“Not necessarily a big deal”: Sexism is inconsequential

As we have outlined, participants identified a wide range of sexism towards women and girls around them. They spoke of routine comments and jokes undermining women’s capacity, sexual harassment and the constant surveillance of women and girls’ bodies. Interviewees mobilised a second set of discursive resources to account for these experiences and observations. They drew on a repertoire that acknowledged the existence of sexism towards women and girls while orienting to it as inconsequential. Within this repertoire sexism is ill judged and out-dated, but not harmful; sexism is not a “big deal” (Sasha).

Unsurprisingly, this repertoire of sexism as inconsequential marshals a language of understatement. Indeed, the words big deal are one of its most prominent motifs, appearing again and again as participants explained that peers “don’t seriously say” (Thomas) sexist things. Evaluating instances of sexual harassment or gendered diminishment of women, interviewees dismissed them as simply “unnecessary” or “pointless” behaviour (Sasha) that is “not necessarily a big deal” (Phoebe). Often, participants described an instance of sexism only to add that it “didn’t bother me”
Where sexist behaviour was problematized, it was done in a manner that downplayed any malicious intent. Sexism may be “immature” (Amber), bothersome, “insensitive […] a bit dickish” (Mia), but no harm is intended; it is a sign of “carelessness” (Rose) rather than a practice of power. As Georgia remarked, reflecting on her experiences of being diminished by male friends, they “don’t really mean it”. The seriousness of sexism is similarly undone in Phoebe’s characterisation of peers’ misogyny as “stupid boy remarks”. This repertoire makes sexist practices articulable as playful, perhaps stupid, but not serious enough to merit vigorous challenge or unflinching correction. Here, the legitimate response to sexism is to simply let it pass, as Rose explained:

people just kind of let it go, like you know, like no one’s really got time for it, yeah.

That “no one’s really got time” for sexism implies that sexism is trivial, unimportant and unworthy of attention: something to “let […] go”.

Certainly, this second repertoire is more spacious than the first. It offers a framework within which sexism towards women and girls can be acknowledged and articulated. At the same time, however, this repertoire undoes the seriousness of sexism even as it is spoken about. This manoeuvre eases discursive tension, allowing interviewees to shift smoothly between repertoires as Mia did:

there was that big thing and it was like “you’re a woman” like, “why doesn’t your girlfriend go to the kitchen and make you a sandwich instead of like talking to you about stuff?”, and it’s like “what?” you know. Just kind of dumb things like that I guess you kind of see them from time to time, you just kind of think “what? This is just ridiculous”. Sometimes I see stuff like that and I’m like “is this person serious?” or like “what is happening?”. But it is definitely a daily occurrence, sexism, and you know like I said I think you pick up more on sexism towards women because it’s more seen as being more common and a lot of people don’t really see things sexist towards guys or other genders.

This passage begins with an example of sexism: diminishing jokes being made about women online. Mia described this form of sexism as “stupid”, “dumb” and
“ridiculous” — words that cement sexism’s position as an irritation rather than a
gendered practice of power. As she transitioned into a more general, abstract account
of sexism (marked by her assertion that sexism is a “daily occurrence”), Mia took up a
different set of discursive resources that redirect attention away from women and
towards men’s experiences of sexism that “a lot of people don’t really see”.

As with the first repertoire, we observed that it was mostly young women
interviewees who oriented to sexism as no big deal. Certainly, there is something
attractive in the subject positions this repertoire opens up to young women. Sexism
figures as boyish immaturity that warrants an eye-rolling tolerance on the part of the
savvy (female) observer or target. Indeed, there is something of the benign parent or
mature older sibling in the positioning this repertoire affords young women. By
rejecting sexism as a kind of juvenility best ignored, young women interviewees show
themselves as calm, mature, even superior in their ability to see “stupid boy remarks”
(Phoebe) for what they are (harmless) and meet them with indulgence or “relaxed
intolerance” (Rose). Negating the power of sexism may also allow speakers to
sidestep victimhood, evading positioning as weak and disadvantaged and appearing
instead as resilient and self-determining (see Baker, 2008; Stuart & Donaghue, 2012).
Furthermore, downplaying the seriousness of sexism (“it didn’t bother me”; Nina)
defends young women against charges of selfishly or cynically ‘crying sexism’
(Donaghue, 2015).

A repertoire of sexism as “no big deal” could be seen to draw from (and feed into)
well-rehearsed postfeminist discourse about gender equality, feminism and sexism.
These claims that imply that the ‘battle’ for gender equality has been won, that sexism
towards women and girls is virtually extinct, and that any lingering inequalities are of
little consequence and will take care of themselves (McRobbie, 2009; Scharff, 2013).
McRobbie (2009, p. 26) has argued that post-feminist discourse “disarticulates”
feminism: in denying sexism, it “devalues, or negates and makes unthinkable the very
basis of [feminist] coming-together”. For this reason, the tendency to under-articulate
or understate sexism and gender-based oppression has often been interpreted as a kind
of postfeminist recuperation, insofar as it stifles talk about sexism.

Our interviewees, however, were far from silent about sexism. The young women and
men we spoke to described a great deal of sexism towards women and girls around
them. Furthermore, many examples were labelled as “awful” (Leah, Nina) “horrible”
(Alice) or “unfair” (Phoebe, Amber, Emily), before speakers moved into a discursive account that positioned their examples as no big deal. In the context of our interviews, we wonder whether this repertoire of sexism as not a big deal could signify something in excess of a disavowal of sexism. Certainly, this repertoire draws on logics that can work to erase the seriousness and the unevenness of sexism towards women and girls. Even so, when taking up this repertoire, interviewees oriented to sexism as an unjust, ongoing practice that is not and ought not to be powerful. Perhaps this repertoire harbours a splinter of ambivalence: dismissing sexism need not preclude an understanding of it as a practice of power.

**Conclusion**

The young women and men we interviewed described a climate of sexism around them, where routine derivitization (Cahill, 2011) and diminishment of women and girls permeated school, work, family and digital life. The interpretative resources interviewees drew on to make sense of this normative and pervasive “matrix of sexism” (Sills et al., 2016) worked against the grain of their examples and observations, de-emphasising and even reversing the gendered pattern evident in their talk. One repertoire positioned men and boys as unacknowledged victims of sexist practices, while another emphasised the harmlessness of sexism towards women and girls.

Notably, it was in young women’s talk, rather than young men’s, where both of these repertoires were most frequently and fully elaborated. Joanne Baker (2010) has argued that young Australian women work to “evade victimhood” and, in doing so, maintain their intelligibility as worthy, self-determining subjects. Like Baker’s interviewees, the young women we interviewed were able to refuse positioning as victims and, in our case, locate victimhood elsewhere. Drawing on two different but complementary repertoires, interviewees downplayed the seriousness of contemporary sexism towards women while simultaneously orienting to men and boys as its genuine victims.

The imperative to avoid victimhood intersects, in our analysis, with another imperative more particular to those we interviewed. In rehearsing the hypothetical ways in which boys and men could face sexism, participants are doing ‘equality
work’: that is, they are demonstrating even-handedness and their willingness to take the hurt of boys and men into account. This kind of display may be especially important for young women with proximity to feminism; it pre-emptively uncouples the speaker from punitive characterisations of feminists as selfish and unreasonable man-haters, securing her position as a good feminine subject. When decrying sexism towards men, feminist-identified women have an unassailable right to speak. Ironically, the possibilities for addressing sexism towards women often appear to be dissolved by the positioning work required to achieve it: women and girls secure authority to speak by attending to male victimisation and disadvantage and declining to make a “big deal” of their own. In doing so, opportunities for problematising sexism towards women appear to recede. At the same time, we are hesitant to rule out a more open-ended reading of this discursive work. We see some possibilities for a more feminist political project within this repertoire of sexism as ‘not a big deal’: a more ambivalent re-articulation of sexism that underplays sexism while attempting to refuse — and defuse — its power.

Finally, we note that this research took place during a time of feminist metamorphosis. There were changes afoot in many interviewees’ lives as they grappled with new feminist ideas and perspectives. More broadly, western discourse on feminism and sexism also appeared to be in transition, as unreservedly hostile popular characterisations of feminists and feminism were (and continue to be) increasingly contested. As the visibility and acceptability of feminism continue to grow, the possibilities for accounting for sexism will no doubt take firmer (and, we hope, more feminist) shape. In the meantime, this article conveys the resources and imperatives facing those accounting for everyday sexism on this shifting ground
Introduction

For some time, the successes and freedoms of women, especially young, white, heterosexual and upwardly-mobile women, have been proclaimed and celebrated across the “advanced democracies” of the west (McRobbie, 2007). While evidence documenting the persistence of sexism abounds, a mundane counter-rhetoric suggests otherwise. Sexism is an/Other’s problem; in western democracies, it is commonly supposed that sexism is no longer a serious concern and we ought not to take it seriously (Scharff, 2011a). In this milieu, the gendered constraints western women encounter are considered a matter for personal rather than political management. If structural gendered inequalities are overcome, all that remains is for individual women to “lean in” and grab their dues (Sandberg, 2013). Should a particular practice achieve recognition as sexist (generally instances related to cultural pressure points of sexuality and sexual violence) discussion is compartmentalised and does little to trouble the broad consensus that gender equality is achieved — or close enough.

Sexism thrives in the present because it appears to dwell in the past; it is the apparent extinction of sexism that allows gendered inequalities to thrive. Over the past decade, various feminist scholars have shown how, through repetition, narratives of women’s economic, social and sexual liberation have come to stand in for the real thing, sheltering sexism while appearing to expunge it (see Gill, 2014; McRobbie, 2009). Judith Williamson (2003), for example, has tracked this dynamic through contemporary visual culture, where the persistence of sexism, she argues, is simply “airbrushed away”. As Williamson explains, this disappearing-act is not simply aspirational. It works to secure sexism by eclipsing or downplaying ongoing inequalities: the problem of sexism is hidden in plain sight.

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1 This chapter is a lightly edited version of an article published in new formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics as part of a special issue on sexism (Vol. 86, Issue 1) in 2015, guest edited by Sara Ahmed.
This sleight of hand is the signature move of “postfeminism” (McRobbie, 2009) or a “postfeminist sensibility” (Gill, 2007b). Postfeminism is a contested term, one I use as shorthand for the network of common-sense discourses that claim gender equality has been achieved, that sexism is vanquished and, consequently, that gender no longer has any determining power in women’s lives. The apparent pastness of sexism against women lends it a quasi-nostalgic aesthetic: sexism sounds “almost quaint” (Williamson, 2003), and popular culture invites us to revive and indulge in “ironic”, “hipster” and “retro-sexism” (Bhloshmi, 2013; Quart, 2012; Williamson, 2003). Reformulated as a practice of pleasure rather than power, sexism colonises new spaces while maintaining its purchase in familiar ones (see Bates, 2012; Evans, 2014; Gill, 2011). Following Sara Ahmed (2012), we might understand postfeminism as a non-performative: rather than bringing about the effect it names (as a performative does), postfeminist discourse functions as a non-performative in its repetitive citation of a gender equality that has not come to pass.

When sexism is routinely presented as harmless, its harms become difficult to see and speak of, even as they accumulate around us. Gill (2011, p. 62) has suggested that the postfeminist disavowal of gender inequality has removed an accessible vocabulary for naming and resisting sexism, leaving sexism virtually “unspeakable”. Others have reached similar conclusions: Pomerantz, Raby and Stefanik (2013, p. 200) were struck by the absence of a critical language with which to “name […] sexism as sexism” in their interviews with Canadian girls. Naming sexism matters because language and action go together: sexism is open to challenge only insofar as it is visible and representable (Marcus, 1992). Accordingly, we must continue to think and to write about sexism; most of all, we must find ways to talk about it. The pressing question, then, is how best to expand our capacity to speak of and, then, to contest sexism under these stifling conditions. Sexism is, after all, a problem with a name — how might we put that name to work?

One thing is certain: any efforts along these lines must grapple with more than a missing vocabulary. The act of naming sexism exposes injustices that some might wish to forget. Recognising systems, ideas and practices as sexist disturbs and threatens many of those imbricated within them. At the very least, pointing out sexism is an uneasy business — and the one who points sexism out is the visible source of this discomfort. The mere presence of someone who recalls or signifies injustice may
be enough to dampen or rupture good feeling (Ahmed, 2014a). Within this web of affect, a critique of the collective problem of sexism is easily dismissed as the individual problem of an embittered speaker (Ahmed, 2010c). In short, when speaking about sexism we may find others unwilling to listen; we may find ourselves reluctant to speak out at all. This is part of the discursive-affective machinery that makes naming and resisting sexism difficult. The “unspeakability” of sexism (Gill, 2011, p. 63) is more than an absence of talk: it is a structured silence.

In late 2012, I began a research project exploring gender, sexism and power-knowledge with senior secondary school students in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand that I hoped would help to counter this climate of silence about sexism. From a post-structuralist feminist perspective, articulating a (missing) vocabulary, language or discourse has ethical and political potential insofar as it makes visible alternative possibilities for subjectivity and action. Guided by my personal and professional feminist commitments, I planned to undertake action-oriented group workshops and follow-up interviews that would invite participants to explore feminist discursive resources as well as mapping discourse already in circulation. The collaborative workshops offered participants spacious, open-ended encounters with feminist perspectives on sexism, gender, feminism, activism, power and the politics of knowledge; follow-up interviews explored whether and how participants were making use of feminist perspectives explored during the workshops. This project dwells at the intersection of qualitative feminist research, critical participatory action research and liberation psychology (Fine, 2009; Freire, 1972; Kenway, Willis, Blackmore, & Rennie, 1994; Moane, 2011). The project (in general) and the workshops (in particular) are informed by these traditions, without being a straightforward instance of any one in particular.

In the spirit of feminist and liberation approaches, the workshops were conceived as a space for inquiry, problem-posing and the destabilisation of assumptions, as opposed to an arena for one-way knowledge transmission where predetermined ‘outcomes’ are achieved or the ‘truth’ is revealed. The workshops addressed participants as active, knowledgeable meaning-makers, inviting them to experiment and to explore, if and as they chose, critical and feminist theory and its (potential) resonances and dissonances in their lives. My role within the workshops was to share ideas and ask questions, and to step back as participants did the same. A typical workshop day began with physical
warm-ups and icebreakers, and moved into themed sessions addressing, for instance, power-knowledge, everyday sexism, activism, the politics of choice or free speech. Sessions included a range of discussion-based, reflective and socio-dramatic activities designed to invite a “problem-posing” relation to the issue at hand (and potentially to gender, sexism and sexuality and the social more generally). I present a fuller account of the ethics, theory and content of the workshops in Appendix A (see also Calder-Dawe, 2014).

When re-contacted, 20 of the 23 workshop participants agreed to a follow-up interview six to 10 weeks later. We met and talked wherever participants chose: their homes, my home, cafés, public libraries or on the University of Auckland campus. Of those who volunteered to be interviewed, 16 described themselves as women and four described themselves as men; all were aged between 16 and 18. Self-described sexualities included gay (1), straight (15), straight-ish (1) and female (1); two did not specify. Interviewees identified with a range of ethnicities, including one or more of the following: Chinese (3), Israeli (1), Japanese (1), Korean (1), Māori (2), Niuean (1), Pākehā/New Zealand European (11), Polish (1), Scottish (1) and South African (1). The educational and family histories of participants varied. Many were born in Aotearoa New Zealand, while others had immigrated as children and had consequently undertaken some schooling overseas. One had participated in Māori language immersion schooling (Kura Kaupapa Māori) and two others had been home-schooled. Most interviewees lived in two-parent households (13); four lived with mothers only, two lived in composite families and one lived in a homestay. The socioeconomic profiles of the five large, state-funded secondary schools that participants attended varied, but were weighted towards relative privilege: two were decile nine (privileged), one was decile eight, one decile seven and one decile three (less privileged; see Ministry of Education, 2014). Accordingly, most of the young

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2 The national decile system ranks state-funded and state-integrated schools according to the socio-economic indicators of the school community. The scale runs from decile 1 (roughly the 10% of schools with the lowest socioeconomic indicators) to decile 10 (roughly the 10% of schools with the highest socioeconomic indicators). Privately-funded schools are not decile-ranked.
people whose words I share here come from communities with socioeconomic indicators above the national average.

**Tuning in to sexism**

In conducting interviews with workshop participants, I hoped to build a sense of what — if anything — participants were doing with the critical analysis of gender and power explored in the workshops. Which ideas gelled? What, if anything, had changed? And, most germane to this essay, what were participants’ experiences of coming up against sexism before and after the workshop? What moves did they make to dodge sexism, and to what effect? Those I interviewed appeared eager to mull over whether and how sexism figured in their lives, and to share their reflections on the workshop experience and their strategies for negotiating a sexist world. Roughly half had identified as feminist at the start of the workshops; most described themselves as feminist during follow-up interviews. Almost all had a great deal to say about feminism, sexism and sexuality, as well as the rewards and frustrations of having a critical analysis of gender and power.

The workshops offered participants the tools and the opportunity to tune in to sexism around them. During workshops, we discussed a range of potential sites and instances of sexism: gendered inequalities in income, in the workplace, in sport and media sports coverage, as well as broader talk about how masculinity and femininity intersect with power. Our discussions touched on street harassment, violence, gendered models of intimacy and embodied experiences of gender. These examples were offered as starting points for reflection rather than as a laundry list of bona fide sexisms. Sexism went undefined, and precisely what sexism was, and who could experience it, remained an open question (see also Chapter 4 and Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016b).

Many interviewees transposed a language of sexism into salient contexts that workshop discussions had not attended to: everyday experiences in school, at home and with friends. For many, workshop participation brought the white noise of everyday sexism in these familiar spaces into sharper focus. Describing this
experience of attunement, Paige spoke of a capacity to “mak[e] connections” and “see [...] signs” that were invisible to her before:

I think I came out of it a lot more kind of aware of this kind of inequality that I didn’t really know of this before even though it was right in front of me I wasn’t making connections and like seeing like signs

Tuning in to sexism meant participants heard the everyday differently: familiar and normalised practices and attitudes took on a different character. Many interviewees described the weeks since the workshop as a period of reappraisal. Participants began to connect “niggly feelings” (Claudia), “things [...] that I just kind of accepted” (Holly), and “general pressures that you wouldn’t have noticed” (Nina) to a wider matrix of sexism (see Sills et al., 2016) that they were able to trace through their everyday lives. Reflecting on her experiences since the workshop, Claudia explained:

there was kind of things that kind of talked at me, kind of made me uncomfortable, but I didn’t know how to phrase it. It’s learning about feminism, sexism, it’s like I know what it is now somehow.

Thomas echoed Claudia almost exactly: “I’ve like viewed everything in a different light [...] I know what [sexism] is now”. Through tuning in to sexism around them, participants became more aware of their own brushes with sexism, more sensitised to its pressure and texture. For many I interviewed, sexism had become especially visible — and especially jarring — in the fabric of everyday interactions: “things that people say” or “things that people do” (Jade). For Jessie, the extent of mundane sexism, its “alwaysness”, was a “big shock”:

I have realised, this was kind of always obviously before but I’ve just like realised the alwaysness of it

Where I quote directly from interviews, I substitute pseudonyms for participants’ real names to protect the anonymity of the speaker. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of the politics of pseudonym use.
Interviewees’ sensitivity to sexism vied with postfeminist, common-sense perspectives on gender relations. Speaking in the abstract, those I interviewed often hedged and qualified the impact of sexism on women and girls, suggesting that, today, sexism was not a “big deal” (Phoebe; see also Chapter 4). When recalling everyday experiences of stifling sexism or sexist diminishment in detail, however, a gender-neutral approach to sexism often appeared thin and insufficient. Georgia’s recollection of mundane sexist jokes spurred her to envision a thicker gender equality: one that reaches beyond “get[ting] everything the same” towards sexist practices that need to “stop”:

it’s not just equality in the sense of like we’ll get everything the same, it’s more like, I don’t know. It’s kind of like you want, I don’t know, for me what I want to stop is like women in the kitchen jokes and stuff like that

Recalling feminist and Freirean consciousness-raising, Sara Ahmed (2014b) explains how this sensation of pressure or of ‘coming up against’ is integral to feminist politics: it is only through consciousness of an obstacle that we begin to perceive the possibility and necessity of pushing against it. So it seemed to be for those I interviewed. The moments where participants described the pressure of normalised sexism on their lives were often moments of resistance, moments where they affirmed their determination to push back. Rather than following others’ advice to “learn to live” with street harassment, Holly, along with other interviewees, was more interested in finding ways to live without it:

it’s accepted and it’s just like “oh that’s going to happen to you, you’re going to have to learn to live with that” and it’s like should I have to learn to live with that? It’s actually not good.

Jade, too, described her “will” to challenge “how sexist things are”:

I’ll just realise how sexist, how sexist things are, and it has really created a real will for me to want to change those things, really want it to be different to how it is.
Those energised like Jade by this transformative impulse faced the challenge of putting it to work against the plastic, slippery sexisms they saw around them.

**Plausible deniability and sexism**

This brings us to my chief interest in this article: how young people set about disorganising sexism. Everyday, face-to-face interactions were by far the most common context in which interviewees described experiencing and resisting sexism; consequently, they are my focus. As interviews piled up, I was struck by the patterning of these rich accounts of interactional sexism. Others’ performances of sexism — along with interviewees’ attempts to derail them — appeared to be structured around a kind of plausible deniability. Frequently, those doing sexism deployed manoeuvres securing that deniability: maintaining their capacity to do sexism while plausibly denying that anything genuinely sexist had taken place. This is what Judith Williamson (2003) has called sexism with an “alibi”: sexist actions and comments retain their power without appearing to have any.

One such manoeuvre individualises and depoliticises sexism by positioning it as a personal opinion that one has a right to express: Paige’s history teacher assured his class that he wasn’t “anti-women”, he “just thought men were better”. As many I interviewed discovered, attempts to challenge this brand of ‘personal opinion’ sexism become tangled up in hegemonic discourses that champion individual self-expression. If I am simply ‘being me’, then my right to express sexist opinions becomes a matter of freedom of speech — and any attempts to curtail me look like oppressive censorship. Holly’s description of her classmates’ victim-blaming illustrates this dynamic:

> these girls’ view was that it was okay, like […] okay for the girl to be raped when she was drunk and then they stood by that. And then they were kind of like “oh these crazy feminists, like is angry at me because I stated my opinion”

In another move, the diminishing effects of sexism are erased when others underplay their sexist behaviour as “just a compliment” (Holly) or “just joking” (Claudia). Claudia’s brother puts this strategy to work, protecting himself from critique by framing his sexist comments as light-hearted and therefore harmless:
when you confront him or take that, make a serious comment about why that’s sexism, he will say something like “I was just joking” or “it’s just having fun”

In protesting these forms of sexist speech, critics of sexism are seen to be overreacting: “crazy feminists” making a “big deal” (Rose) out of something harmless and inconsequential. Attempts to name and problematise sexism fail so long as the sexism in question can hide behind sacrosanct self-expression on one hand, and playful, complimentary or harmless joshing on the other.

As I read and re-read interviewees’ evaluations, observations and experiences of interactional sexism, their accounts evoked a sense of parry, of patterned back-and-forwards movement. It struck me that these instances had the hallmarks of choreography: recurring patterns of orientation, action and response that seemed to organise sexism in interaction. Moving within it, those I interviewed found little space to offer a challenge to sexism that would not be swiftly counteracted. As they came up against sexism time and time again, interviewees described developing a feel for this sequence of moves and countermoves and began to anticipate where certain lines of response would lead. Holly plots the steps in this way:

> you turn around and get angry, “oh it was just a compliment”, you keep walking, they keep doing it. It’s like there’s no winning, you know

The plausible deniability of sexism sustains an interactional choreography wherein challenges to sexism are easily deflected, rendering challenges to sexism unspeakable (Gill, 2011, p. 63) — or, perhaps more precisely, unintelligible. Plausible deniability scaffolds a structure of interaction wherein critics of sexism are always-already in the wrong: oppressive or unreasonable, a source of bad feeling and interactional trouble (Ahmed, 2010b).

**Thinking sexism choreographically**

Choreography can be a helpful metaphor for understanding the moves and counter moves of interactional sexism: how it circulates on the social stage and how this circulation might be interrupted. An analysis of the choreography of a social practice examines its embodied, interactional achievement, the reciprocal flows of arguments
and affects that enable and secure it. Thinking about sexism in this way attunes us to the interplay between instigator(s) and target(s) of sexism. Both have moves to make. In initiating the choreography of sexism, the instigator attempts to draw others into a pattern of interaction that diminishes the target’s power and shores up his or her own. The success or failure of sexism as an interactional practice of power depends, too, on others’ susceptibility to recruitment, and on the counter-moves available. By investigating the choreography of sexism, we attend to the force of sexism in interaction without losing sight of its openness to reformulation. My discussion does not extend to more static, structural forms of sexism less likely to be amenable to the choreographic lens I propose. Consequently, from here I shall use the term “sexism” in this limited sense, as shorthand for “sexism in interaction”.

Choreography encompasses what is said, but also what is done, felt and registered. Thinking choreographically alerts us to the spaciousness of an encounter, the range of movement that appears possible within it. Choreography highlights the embodied, relational and routinised elements of interactional sexism. These elements are fundamental to the doing — and the undoing — of sexism, and they merit a little elaboration.

Direct encounters with sexism register in bodies and on their surfaces: we know sexism through the effects that some bodies can elicit in others. Think, for example, of the exclamation “nice tits!” This instance of sexism is rendered rather ineffectual if considered as words alone. The texture of the encounter, its success and intelligibility as sexism, is evidenced in bodily, affective responses: anger (eyes narrow, muscles tight), shame (face burns, eyes down), fear (hands sweat, pulse runs, pace quickens) or indifference (bodily and affective stasis). A choreographic analysis of sexism makes room for what is spoken and what is felt as part of the same movement, the same practice of power.

Sexism is also routinised. Like other social practices, it becomes meaningful (and powerful) through rehearsal, through particular chains of association that have come together over time. Likening the ‘doing’ of sexism to choreography helps us to conceptualise why sexism can be easy to critique in one’s head, and yet difficult to challenge in the intensity of the moment. As we encounter sexism we learn its flow, its moves and counter-moves. We get a feel for the choreography and our place within
it. In time this familiarity settles into a kind of muscle-memory, pulling us towards particular lines of embodied response (Ahmed, 2004).

Finally, conceptualising sexism as a choreography makes room for the relational nature of sexism, particularly sexism in face-to-face interactions. Like any social practice, sexism depends on recognition in order to function. Attempts at sexism break down if an intended target is not affected in the desired way, or fails to recognise the choreography and move accordingly. Thus, the efficacy of sexism is never secured in advance, leaving space for improvisation and redirection.

In what follows I examine interview participants’ accounts of coming up against sexism with my eye on the choreography of these encounters. What possible steps do participants see for countering sexism? And how do their interactional movements play with (and into) the choreography of sexism? I attend in particular to interviewees’ efforts to make resistance to sexism possible and palatable, considering the potential their manoeuvres hold for unravelling the choreography of sexism — and their contradictory effects.

**Gentle challenge, calm critique**

Surveying interviewees’ accounts of challenging sexism, I observed two prevailing counter-choreographies, two preferred avenues for critique that work to protect participants from others’ censure and dismissal. One favoured avenue was to raise sexism as an issue — but to do so gently, calmly and without losing one’s cool. Many young women, but none of the young men, described taking this approach. They explained in detail how to frame up a gentle challenge, how to question someone’s actions without appearing aggressive, forceful or reproachful. Rather than challenging a sexist claim directly, Rose talked of delicately implying her disagreement by offering “another opinion”. Mia, too, described formulating her challenges to sexism carefully and casually as an invitation to “check […] out” another perspective:

> I don’t want to force it on anybody else. Like I might be like “oh you should check this out” or something but I won’t be like “this is what you should think”.

So long as they appeared emotionally unaffected by sexism — and emotionally uninvested in challenging it — the young women I interviewed could not be accused
of responding inappropriately: being too angry or taking things too seriously. This strategy opened up some opportunities for countering sexism, though the nonchalance required was not always easy to enact. Many of the young women I interviewed spoke about the difficulties of staying calm when faced with “frustrating” (Paige) or “humiliating […] embarrassing” (Holly) sexist treatment from others. Maintaining the appearance of calm and composure in these conditions required considerable emotional labour — a capacity which young women actively cultivated. Phoebe’s description of her increasingly unflappable demeanour suggested a kind of an affective progress narrative. She used to “react to [sexism], blow up and make a big deal out of it”; back then, Phoebe “just hadn’t learnt enough to have a more educated response”. Now, self-disciplined, she knows better.

A gentle approach to sexism allows participants to avoid the negativity that sticks to those who are seen to force opinions onto others. Keeping calm also shores up a positioning that interviewees desire: that of a rational and reasonable speaker who ought to be listened to. Outlining the advantages of this strategy, Georgia explained that approaching sexism gently gave her “a chance to explain” her position to others — a chance not guaranteed should she take a more direct approach:

   it sort of gets through to them more. When they feel like it’s being shoved down their throat or sort of you know, if they can’t get a word in maybe they feel less inclined to accept it or at least pay attention

One wonders, of course, what exactly it is that “gets through” — and what is left behind. In advancing the mildest of critiques, interviewees demand nothing from those they address. They can mention sexism once, perhaps twice, so long as their manner is unthreatening, but they are cut off from insisting on its presence or persisting in argument. To do so would be to open themselves to the censure this strategy works to avoid. The limitation of this approach to challenging sexism, then, is that interviewees are out of moves should others choose to ignore — or indeed fail to notice — their sensitively-presented critique. Paige described getting “stuck” in this way:

   you’re kind of stuck, you hit a kind of wall where you’re like okay if I say any more I’m just going to have to disagree with you
The injunction to agree — and to remain agreeable — that accompanies this strategy sharply curtails participants’ capacity to challenge sexism. Any discursive middle ground for assertive action against sexism collapses, leaving a dichotomy between the reasonable, gentle passivity of this strategy and a forceful, unreasonable aggression many interviewees found “awful” (Rose) and unimaginable. Instead of insisting on a fair hearing, young women using this strategy were relying on others to be persuaded by their polite critiques. Persuasion is seldom an efficient tool for effecting cultural and political change; were this the sole avenue open to us for ending sexism, we would likely have a considerable wait ahead of us. Of even greater concern, however, is the way that this strategy schools the young women who adopt it into responding to sexist treatment with “polite feminine speech” (Marcus, 1992, p. 389). In doing so, this strategy plays into a construction of passive, acquiescent femininity that feminist scholars have strenuously opposed for decades as being clearly implicated in the cultural scaffolding of rape and sexist oppression (Gavey, 2005a).

**Laughing sexism off**

Those I interviewed also used humour to evade and undo sexism in interaction. Responding to sexism with joking rebuttal rather than overt remonstration allowed some interviewees to reject sexism without appearing to take it too seriously. As a strategy, making fun of sexism offers the same positioning advantages as delivering a gentle challenge: one cannot be accused of an aggressive overreaction, or, in this case, of failing to get the joke. A playful approach to critique hijacks the plausible deniability of sexism: feminists, too, can claim to be ‘only joking’, turning the tables on anyone who objects to their talk.

Interviewees described using humour to counter to the flood of sexist jokes around them — jokes that diminished women or trivialised violence against women. Particularly common among those I interviewed were “sandwich” jokes, in which a girl or woman is dismissively instructed to “go make me a sandwich”, the implication being that women belong in the kitchen and ought to stay there. At home, Georgia’s brother “always talks about, you know, women are in the kitchen where they belong”. Her male friends, too, “joke about it all the time”:
like my guy friends. They come into my house and I’m like I’ll make some lunch, and then they’ll ask, like I’ll make some lunch and then they’ll be like “woman [get] in the kitchen”

Interviewees anticipated dismissal as humourless or uptight if they made a direct, serious challenge to sexist jokes such as these. Joking back, in contrast, was described as an effective way to counteract sexism. Thomas gleefully recalled a friend’s joking riposte to her boyfriend’s incessant sandwich jokes: “I’ll make you a sandwich — if you make me a table”. Here, this young woman dodges the manoeuvre the joke attempts to achieve (pushing her into place as a servile sandwich-maker) without leaving her vulnerable to accusations of humourlessness or reactivity. Claudia described this advantage too. Using humour allowed her to resist her brother’s sexist comments without appearing to confront him with a “serious comment about why that’s sexism”:

It is sexism but I don’t want to make it sound like I’m kind of confronting him. So I guess I will phrase it as a joke

When phrased as jokes, Claudia’s critiques of sexism pass unchallenged because others “accept the humour” regardless of whether they perceive and accept her message:

I think some people are more comfortable with it when they, it’s not so serious, or when they are not expected to agree with it.

Others may laugh, but they are “not expected to agree”. Once again, those I interviewed were under pressure to act in ways that would be “comfortable” for others, so as to avoid positioning as aggressive, or as the oversensitive one who takes things too seriously. While a well-crafted joke may spoil some sexist manoeuvres, it leaves no room to articulate the kind of wholesale challenge to sexist joking Phoebe imagined:

there are plenty of other things that you can laugh about instead of inequality or women not being able to do something
Instead, by “taking it lightly” and avoiding getting “too worked up” (Claudia), those who adopt this strategy are drawn into a choreography that ultimately lets sexist jokers off the hook.

**Killjoys, critique and co-optation**

Over the course of workshops and interviews, it was young women who described approaching sexist interactions with care and forethought. Perhaps this is because it is young women who have the most at stake. In challenging sexism, young women risk appearing as the wrong kind of woman: humourless, ball-breaking, unfeminine, feminist.

The figure Sara Ahmed names the “feminist killjoy” is a container for an array of pejorative caricatures and about women and feminists (Ahmed, 2010c). The feminist killjoy ruins things. She finds fault. She is oversensitive, PC, and bitter. She is irrationally, inappropriately angry. Her body is abject, her manner unfeminine. In short, the killjoy dwells at the intersection of a range of punitive discourses that address women. Women speakers are not simply ignored when they talk about sexism; they are heard loud and clear as feminist killjoys, as abominable (un)feminine subjects. The killjoy does not threaten all women equally. The pressures of heteronormative femininity and the punishments associated with deviation fall unevenly along lines of classed privileged and ‘respectability’ (Skeggs, 1997). It is those with least privilege who have the most to prove and the most to lose in appearing unfeminine (Fahs, 2012).

The figure of the feminist killjoy fleshes out the claim that feminism and feminists hurt men. In appearing to threaten men, this figure protects male privilege by making women’s challenges to sexism appear vindictive and unfounded. This funnels attention away from sexism and gendered power and towards sites of masculine injury and the harms allegedly inflicted by feminism and anti-sexist organising (see Gough & Peace, 2000; Kenway, Willis, Blackmore, & Rennie, 1997). The feminist killjoy is also despicable in the light of individualising, meritocratic discourses associated with neoliberalism (see Baker, 2008). If gender equality has been achieved, and we are indeed the unfettered authors of our own successes and failures, then women who complain about sexism are simply looking for someone else to blame for their failure.
and discontent. Thus, the shamefulness of claiming disadvantage sticks to the feminist killjoy and to those she attaches to (for the concept of a “sticky sign”, see Ahmed, 2004). She is not simply a harbinger of nightmarish PC-ism, but also rather pathetic in her transparent attempts to pin her woes onto other people. Just as the figure of the killjoy is gendered, the shame of speaking about hurt, injury and disadvantage attracts a gendered dimension.

The feminist killjoy haunts my interviews with young women, constricting their capacity to name and problematise sexism. I see her shadow in their desire not to be a “buzz-kill” (Jade) or get “too worked up” and “confirm their stereotypes” (Claudia); I detect her presence as the young women I interviewed worked to distance themselves from those who “think that sexism is more prominent towards women” (Paige) and who “only care about female people” (Emily). The feminist killjoy not only haunts interactions, she is brought to life within them. Paige described how peers interpret her critiques of sexism as evidence, not of sexism, but of her dogmatic tendency to “react as a feminist”:

[they say] there’s no kind of logic to your choice […] because you agree with all feminist ideas obviously because that’s what you are. You’re a feminist, you’re not a person, you’re a feminist.

Thomas, too, explained how boys at his school use the accusation of being feminist to “attack” and silence young women: “[guys] could easily just like attack a female with feminism and she couldn’t really respond”. The feminist killjoy is “that person” (Georgia), that “over-reacting moody woman” (Holly), who no one wants to be. When calling out sexism in interaction, women and girls are easily positioned as oversensitive, humourless and/or misandrist — as many I interviewed found out.

The very real interactional and social costs of being named a feminist (killjoy) can hold critique of sexism in check. Furthermore, the killjoy brings the choreography of sexism into conversation with another set of ingrained moves, affects and attachments: the conventions of polite, nurturing femininity many young women acquire (and some resist) over a lifetime’s worth of interactions. Proximity to the killjoy jeopardises women’s niceness; overt resistance to sexism is at odds with conventional femininity. In this regard, too, the figure of the feminist killjoy plays a lead role in the interactional choreography of sexism. She is part of a heteronormative
structure that discourages women from feminist feelings and from articulating the effects of sexist oppression. She is part of what holds sexism in place.

Young women’s defensive, strategic approaches to challenging sexism take shape in response to the figure of the feminist killjoy. Calm critique and laughing it off could be usefully understood as attempts to short-circuit the choreography of sexism by ensuring the speaker cannot be positioned as a killjoy, or in a way that undermines their critique. These strategies made sexism tentatively articulable for interviewees, opening (limited) space for resisting sexism without making others feel under attack. Inevitably, however, confining challenge to strategies that will sit comfortably with others has its costs. Both gentle and joking approaches function discursively to secure sexism as not a real problem: an irritation, perhaps, but not a practice of power. By investing in strategies that underplay the seriousness of sexism, participants give oxygen to postfeminist claims that real sexism is extinguished — even as they come up against it.

What’s more, to enact these strategies successfully, interviewees must embody the very arguments and affects that sustain the choreography of sexism: that sexism is not serious (laugh it off!), that sexism does not warrant a forceful response (keep calm, speak gently!). I wonder about the broader consequences of this strategic rehearsal, particularly for young women who opt to approach sexism gently. Downplaying sexism dulls feminist feeling; it counteracts the processes of attunement that made sexism stand out. Those I interviewed often prefaced their talk about sexism with qualifiers or minimising flourishes: examples of sexism were “little things” (Phoebe) and sexist treatment was “careless” (Rose) rather than intentional. Over time, these strategic rehearsals may outgrow their status as strategy to become a kind of default manoeuvre — one that undercut forceful resistance to sexism when such responses may be vital. Recounting a serious instance of sexual harassment, Emily wondered aloud why she was “so polite […] when I should have just been like you fucking creep, what the hell is wrong with you”:

I just like brushed it off and moved on, cause I sort of felt like when you’re presented with, I guess at the time I felt like when you’re, I felt like I was obliged to be polite for some stupid strange reason. Like super polite.
The threat of misrecognition as a feminist killjoy appears to be part of what binds young women to the choreography of sexism and to lines of response that are “super polite”. Certainly, the killjoy holds a prominent place in interactional sexism, asserting her force through the strategies participants devise to dodge her. Without altogether disregarding their potential to trouble sexism in interaction, these strategies held those I interviewed into a pattern of response that, on the whole, let sexism flow. Here, it seems, the killjoy does not represent feminism’s ‘murderous’ intent, but rather the death (or at least, the dampening) of feminist feeling.

**Feminist feeling**

So far, I have examined how gentle and joking forms of resistance to sexism tend to reaffirm the interactional choreography they set out to destabilise. In this final section, I explore an alternative approach to unsettling sexism. Thinking choreographically reminds us that interactional sexism works by drawing its target into a relation of power. However concrete it feels, the capacity to move others into subordinate positions is an effect of discourse; mutual recognition precedes and enables such recruitment.

How then, might we grow and sustain feminist feeling in ways that impinge on the practice of sexism? One way forward is to relinquish approaches that revolve around the feelings of sexist others, as gentle and joking ripostes do. As we have seen, these strategies dull the feelings that most imperil the choreography of sexism: a felt entitlement to freedom from sexism and the will to resist it. In their place, we might substitute structures of feeling that refuse to be contained by the feminist killjoy or to be bound by pressures of politeness or femininity.

Like many of the young women I interviewed, Charlotte recalled several experiences of sexual harassment. On one occasion, she was walking home from school and found herself passing a group of young men. An exchange began with a question shouted at Charlotte as she approached: “Are you a virgin?” Charlotte, a vegan, misheard. She thought he was “just saying vegan funny”:

> I thought they said “are you a vegan?”, so I was excited, I was like “yes!”

For a moment, the speakers’ efforts to recruit Charlotte into a sexualised relation of power fell flat. This interactional trouble is significant. It alerts us to the potential of
mishearings and affective misalignments to create a hesitation in the choreography of sexism: to open up an awkward, self-conscious pause that is felt, not by the target of sexism, but by whoever is trying to enact it (this pause recalls the ‘almost but not quite’ of Bhabha’s mimicry; see Bhabha, 1984). Here, sexism becomes recognisable for what it is: a process, a choreography, not an inevitable relation. One imagines, with some relish, the harasser’s uncertainty, even panic, as he finds himself wrong-footed and wonders which move to make next.

Lines of response that inject this kind of pause into the performance of sexism are, of course, not guaranteed to stop sexism in its tracks. In Charlotte’s case, the choreographic fracture was recuperated when the harassers repeated themselves and, this time, Charlotte heard. Just as the effects of sexist speech can never be fully determined by a speaker, we cannot fully determine how others’ sexism strikes us. Part of sexism’s power resides in how readily it gets under the skin. The encounter Charlotte described was certainly an uncomfortable and painful one: she hadn’t told anyone else “exactly what he said” and described feeling “a tad shameful” about it. It may be that (temporarily) destructive enthusiasm like Charlotte’s is only possible as a consequence of genuine mishearing. Nevertheless, Charlotte’s anecdote suggests that there is something inherently disruptive about feminist feelings and attunements insofar as they make interactional sexism feel different and provoke us to feel sexism differently. Whether mistaken or intentional, misalignments and interpretative hesitations can make sexist speech and acts flounder because they fail to smoothly entrain the expected embodied responses. They make the performance of sexism a little more self-conscious. What’s more, they have the potential to rebound the vulnerability of experiencing sexism back onto the sexist actor.

We might think usefully, then, about expanding our capacity to feel sexism in ways that create these interactional hesitations. Rather than trying to talk others out of their attachments to sexism (or relying purely on serendipitous mishearings), we might focus instead on tuning into feminist feelings that exceed and undo what sexism is designed to secure. In this regard, we have more to learn from Charlotte. In the shared space of the interview, she made her experience into something more than “shameful” and silenced. What was previously unspeakable passed into speech, repurposed as advice for her twelve-year-old self to “show” others, not tell them:
I ended up just walking away, which I, and really politely […] I would tell my twelve-year-old self to show people like that that they can’t just do that to people.

Charlotte’s talk is at once past- present- and future-oriented. Re-imagining the past, she kindles feminist feelings in the present and lays the affective foundations for future feminist footwork. Others, like Claudia, described similar affective rehearsals, similar body-pedagogies with potential to wrong-foot sexism:

it’s sometimes okay to put your like, my feeling over others, like when I feel uncomfortable but I don’t want to say it because I feel like I would make the other person feel angry or something, I would say [to myself] like sometimes that’s okay, sometimes you can speak up, “I don’t like this”, yeah

**Feminist footwork**

Understanding everyday, interactional sexism as choreography orients us to sexism as a process hinging on what is done and what is felt, a process open to transformation. To fight sexism, we might tune in to feminist feelings that give sexism pause and, in doing so, we might uncramp ourselves from footwork that does not serve us. Where such moves are rehearsed and enacted they wrong-foot sexist others, making sexist practices more precarious. Feminist feelings flourish in feminist spaces, and the feeling of feminist spaces can remain with us even after we have moved on, as the feeling of the workshops stayed with Max:

I just feel like, if at any time that I do get kind of, sort of, I don’t know, uncomfortable with sharing that [anti-sexist] view, I always can kind of harp back to that [workshop] and remember

I wager it is when we find shared space to feel and move with others that our manoeuvres against sexism are most potent, most disruptive — and most fun. This is something to remember as we rehearse our own feminist footwork personally and professionally: a truly disruptive act is to share feminist feelings with others. I conclude, then, with a gift.
Olivia A. Cole (@RantingOwl) tweeted this story of her morning commute in New York.⁴

… This dude was aggressively hitting on this woman, who was about my age. She was ignoring him. Everyone else was too.

He kept after her. I could hear him saying, “Come on. I want your number. You’re so pretty. You don't want my number?”

She finally says, loudly, “NO, I don't want your number!” And what happened next was amazing.

This young woman a few seats away, looks up and she says, also loudly, “AND NO, I DON’T WANNA GIVE YOU MINE.”

And there was this awkward silence. Like, at first people just stared at her, myself include [sic]. But then I realized, and slowly so did others.

The second woman’s friend started laughing and she said (not as loud, but still audible) “NO, I DON’T WANNA MEET YOU NO WHERE.”

And together they sang, really loudly (and off key) “NO, I DON’T WANT NONE OF YOUR TIIIIIME”

The dude trying to get the first woman’s number just stared at them, and the woman he was harassing was just LAUGHING. He was done.

Those, like me, immersed in the pop music of the late 1990s will recognise (with some delight) this sequence of sentences as the chorus of girl-band TLC’s (1999) “No Scrubs”.⁵ One imagines the atmosphere in the train shifting as the choreography of sexism is seized and bent into something else before commuters’ eyes: something joyful and defiant.

⁴ See: https://storify.com/alantrotter/commuter-Harrassment

⁵ The official music video of ‘No Scrubs’ is available through YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrLequ6dUdM
Part IV: Constructing feminism and feminist identities
Preface to Part IV

… feminism is not one set of struggles: it has mobilised different women in different times and places, who are all seeking transformations, but who are not necessarily seeking the same thing, nor even necessarily responding to the same situation. (Ahmed, Kilby, Lury, McNeil, & Skeggs, 2000, p. 11)

What does it mean to be a feminist researcher researching feminism?

Taking up this position requires, I suggest, two different lines of clarification. First, an explanation of the researcher’s feminist position: what sort of feminist is she? What feminist struggles and hopes for transformation animate her work? Second, taking up this position requires a clarification of the researcher’s orientation to feminism as an object of study. Earlier, I outlined the poststructuralist feminist position I work from and my concern with circulating feminist knowledge and vocabularies (savoir) in order to widen the array of possibilities for interpretation and action (pouvoir). By feminist knowledge and vocabularies, I refer to political feminist discourses that offer a framework for naming women’s and girls’ experiences and placing them in a socio-political context. I proceed below with an account of how I orient to feminism as a topic of study.

Within feminist scholarship, shifts in feminism’s popular momentum are often narrated through a metaphor of sequential waves: the first wave at the turn of the 20th century, followed by a second, a third and now a mooted fourth wave (see Retallack, Ringrose, & Lawrence, 2016). As those with a historiographical sensibility have pointed out, however, the wave metaphor may obscure more than it reveals. Wave thinking caricatures feminism as a series of sequential zeitgeists that, in turn, invite us to tell the story of feminism as a “relentless march of progress or loss” (Hemmings, 2005, p. 115). And yet, as the leading quote suggests, feminism and the relationship between feminisms present and feminisms past is not so simple. Following McRobbie (2015, p. 16), I suggest that feminism might be better understood as an unruly “discursive explosion” that resists a singular narrative: one that lives through “a whole world of texts, theories, events, books, films, art works, activities, interventions, campaigns, writings, slogans, ‘postings’, as well as in policies and changes to
legislation and so on”. From this perspective, it is not enough to know whether feminism is everywhere or nowhere, cool or abject. The task facing feminist researchers is to move beyond a ‘waves’ framework of mourning feminism’s death and/or celebrating its reanimation, and to pay attention instead to continuities and changes in the “discursive explosion” of feminism.

At the time I began this research, and for some years beforehand, western feminism had been widely (though not exclusively) portrayed as unnecessary, unattractive and out-of-date in the public domain. One of the effects of this pejorative postfeminist representation was to make it less likely that women and girls would recognise themselves in feminism and align themselves with it. One of the young women I interviewed made this point precisely: in a past conversation with her mother about feminism, Leah recalled “I said no, I said no. I was like I’m not a feminist. I wasn’t quite sure what a feminist was but I didn’t think I was one.” Since this time, popular representations of feminism have begun to shift, to the point where feminism is being mobilised in some quarters as ‘chic’ and a form of identity capital (Gill, 2016b). As feminist scholarship grapples with the meaning of these shifts, what matters is not (only) whether feminism is a popular identity or not, but the nature and implications of this popularity: what political possibilities and social effects are contemporary feminist identifications able to entrain?

The two Chapters that follow present detailed discourse analyses that examine young people’s constructions of feminism and feminist identities with this purpose in mind. These analyses were made possible by the particular methodological features of my research, wherein the workshops presented participants with opportunities to think through feminism differently. In the time between workshops and interviews, participants had breathing space to reflect on their orientations to feminism, to have conversations about feminism with friends and family, and, for some, to try out being feminist in a range of different contexts. Once again, both Chapters were formulated as journal articles and each addresses a particular readership. This is most evident in Chapter 6: “Jekyll and Hyde revisited” takes its name from an article published in *Feminism & Psychology* 15 years earlier (Edley & Wetherell, 2001) and shares some elements of its namesake’s analytic interests.

Chapter 6 examines whether and how doubled constructions of feminism as benign/monstrous and warranted/unjustified identified by Edley and Wetherell (2001)
endure, and how these constructions were navigated by feminist-identifying interviewees. My analysis pays particular attention to the quality of reasonableness, tracing how this quality was mobilised by interviewees to support their feminist identities and arguments in a context where feminism was still being generally characterised as unreasonable. Chapter 7 develops this analytic interest in representations of feminists in another direction. “Authentic feminist?: Authenticity and feminist identity in teenage feminists’ talk” explores the presence of authenticity discourse in participants’ talk about being and becoming feminist. Given that authenticity is usually understood as part and parcel of postfeminist, individualising discourses antithetical to feminism, its presence in participants’ accounts of being feminist was intriguing. The coming-together of feminism and authenticity I analyse in this Chapter speaks to questions concerning how contemporary feminisms operate in relation to a broader neoliberal rationality (McRobbie, 2015; Rottenberg, 2016).

Chapters 6 and 7 share a concern with the question of feminist character and the politics of being feminist. As well as examining the discursive strategies participants took up to normalise and justify feminist identification, the Chapters reflect on the limits of these practices: which faces of feminism are acceptable, and which are not. Taken together, both analytic pieces offer an intersectional way of theorising the conditions of possibility for being feminist. The Chapters offer some analytic purchase on why feminism can be claimed as natural by some and not others and, in doing so, they help to make sense of the contradictions that riddle analyses of popular feminism — a thread I take up in more detail in Chapter 8 to follow.
Chapter 6: Jekyll and Hyde revisited

Young people’s constructions of feminism, feminists and the practice of “reasonable feminism”

Introduction

It is a decade and a half since Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherell’s (2001) “Jekyll and Hyde: Men’s constructions of feminism and feminists” appeared in the pages of Feminism & Psychology. The authors examined the talk of small groups of men living in 1990s Britain: one sample comprised white middle-class schoolboys aged 17-18, a second included working-aged men from varied class, occupational and ethnic backgrounds. Their analysis illuminated a discursive splitting of feminism into good and monstrous feminist figures. Ms Jekyll represented feminism’s friendly face: a reasonable, common sense feminism aligned with the obvious good of gender equality. Ms Hyde stood for the nightmarish other side of feminism: militant, man-hating and alarmingly unfeminine. While division over the nature of feminism and feminists was not a new phenomenon, Edley and Wetherell’s analysis broke fresh ground by calling attention to how these men worked such apparently conflicting accounts together, expressing support for “reasonable” equality-seeking feminism while simultaneously pitting themselves against “extreme” feminists. In doing so, speakers were able to position themselves flexibly as progressive, feminist-aligned men without conceding ground to the more radical potential of feminism.

Appearing in an earlier issue of Feminism & Psychology, Sarah Riley’s (2001) “Maintaining power: Male constructions of ‘feminists’ and ‘feminist values’” examined a kindred feature of men’s talk about feminism. Working from vignette-based interviews with Scottish men employed in prestigious, male-dominated professions, Riley’s analysis demonstrated a practice of differentiation in their talk that decoupled (good) feminism from (bad) feminists. Riley argued that this practice

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1 This chapter is a lightly edited version of a co-authored article published in Feminism & Psychology (Vol. 26 Issue 4) in 2016.
enabled the men she interviewed to claim feminist values while redefining them in gender-neutral terms that delegitimised feminist calls for social change.

Although Riley (2001) and Edley and Wetherell (2001) examine men’s talk, both articles are touchstones for researchers interested in how women claim and repudiate feminism, and how such (dis)identifications intersect with a broader feminist politics. For example, Quinn and Radtke (2006) interviewed pairs of Canadian women college students, examining the interactional and ideological effects of their talk about feminism. A feminist subject position appeared to be untenable and yet impossible to reject for the women they interviewed. Paralleling Edley and Wetherell’s, Quinn and Radtke’s participants co-deployed affirmative and dismissive accounts of feminism, avoiding a wholesale rejection of feminism (and gender equality) without endorsing feminism unreservedly. Some women took up a position of “lifestyle feminism” that constructed the speaker as incidentally feminist (as an unintended consequence of her lifestyle choices). As Quinn and Radtke noted, this apparently feminist position is premised on individual choice and devoid of political commitments.

More recently, Christina Scharff (2013) investigated how affirmative and dismissive accounts of feminism appear together in young British and German women’s talk. Most of Scharff’s interviewees endorsed gender equality while distancing themselves from feminism and feminist identification (see also Ashton, 2014; Rich, 2005). In her analysis, Scharff identified one interpretative repertoire that framed equality-focused feminism as obvious but out-dated in the west, and another that rejected contemporary feminists as extreme, man-hating and unfeminine. Both, she argued, can render feminist identification unappealing for women. As part of the same study, Scharff (2011b) explored her participants’ repudiations of feminism as performances of heteronormative femininity. These performances had racialised and classed dimensions: appearing unfeminine posed particular difficulties for women who were not middle-class, for instance (see also Fahs, 2012). Along with Quinn and Radtke’s, Scharff’s findings raise questions about the potentially different investments men and women may have in claiming or rejecting feminism. Women who align themselves with feminism risk positioning as a “feminist killjoy” (Ahmed, 2010c); men are not so easily positioned and may have more rhetorical flexibility as a result.

Despite their different interests, these four studies share an argument about the discursive formulation of feminism. Each suggests that a binary construction of
feminism as extreme and as common sense appears to curtail possibilities for feminist identification, politics or activism. In Scharff’s (2013) and Riley’s (2001) analyses, participants routinely claimed feminist values while repudiating feminists and feminist identification. In Edley and Wetherell’s (2001) and Quinn and Radtke’s (2006) work, affirmative and derogatory representations were worked together, allowing speakers to construct feminism and feminists as obvious/fair and unnecessary/extreme. This doubled and slippery discursive formulation of feminism is a constituent part of “postfeminism” (McRobbie, 2009) or a “postfeminist sensibility” (Gill, 2007b). Used as shorthand for a matrix of discourses that proclaim gender equality and unzip gender from power, postfeminism co-operates and silences a politicised feminist vocabulary — particularly for young women (Pomerantz et al., 2013). Angela McRobbie (2009, p. 12) has explained how feminist politics are “undone” through a postfeminist “double entanglement” wherein feminism is simultaneously assumed, accepted and relegated to the past. According to McRobbie, it is the “taken into accountness” of feminism that enables a “thorough dismantling of feminist politics” (p.12): by positioning gender equality as already achieved, postfeminist rhetoric dulls and demonises feminist calls for further social transformation. The logics of postfeminism are at work, therefore, in talk that splits reasonable feminism from extreme feminism (or reasonable feminist values from extreme feminist identifications). These divisions appear to leave little room for feminist politics and activism and, as Edley and Wetherell (2001, p. 453) observe, “little room for optimism”.

**Situating the research**

In 2012, we began a research project in New Zealand exploring how young people were making sense of sexism, feminism and (in)equality. At this time, common-sense stories about feminism in New Zealand appeared to align closely with the discursive patterns outlined so far: a taken-for-granted affirmation of gender equality mixed with repudiations of feminism (see Benton-Greig et al., submitted). Indeed, we opted not to describe the project as feminist during recruitment, anticipating that the label might discourage participation. In a follow-up interview, one participant explained that she had perceived it as feminist regardless, finding the association off-putting at first:
when I first applied […] I think there was a little bit, little thing inside me, I have to confess that, [I] was like I don’t want to be associated with like um bra-burning extreme feminist kind of thing. (Claudia)

In the few years since we started the project, there has been a surge in the visibility of feminist activism and feminist organising, particularly via social media (Bates, 2012; Megarry, 2014; Rentschler & Thrift, 2015). While anti-feminist sentiment undoubtedly persists, critiques of sexism and rape culture are also attracting widespread coverage: feminism is even finding its way into school curricula (Jacks, 2015; McTague, 2016). Over a similar period, scholars note a ‘feministification’ of some high-profile celebrities with large youth followings like Beyoncé, Tavi Gevinson, Lorde and Emma Watson (see Hamad & Taylor, 2015; Keller, 2015). Unlike the unfeminine, man-hating Ms Hyde, these women are rich, cool and beautiful, the luminous subjects of heterofeminine success. They can make feminism sparkle, quite literally: Beyoncé’s performance at the 2014 Video Music Awards featured the word “feminist” emblazoned in skyscraping white capitals and “the shimmering figure of Beyoncé sliding straight out in front of the word, all lit up” (Traister, 2014). Our empirical research took place between July 2013 and January 2014, in the midst of these shifts.

In this article, we explore how teenage participants oriented to feminism. We examine two competing discourses patterning their talk: ‘unreasonable feminism’ damns and dismisses feminism, while ‘fair feminism’ affirms it as common sense, aligning it with equality. Where previous research (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Quinn & Radtke, 2006; Riley, 2001; Scharff, 2013) has shown how pejorative and affirming accounts of feminism are worked together in ways that appear to dilute or depoliticise feminism, our analysis explores how teenagers who explicitly adopt a feminist identity drew on these discourses to normalise and justify a more politicised feminist position. For many, this entailed a practice of ‘reasonable feminism’: as they navigated a path through affirmative and dismissive discourses, participants worked to embody feminist reasonableness through their manner and rhetorical devices.
The project

Data and methods

Our data come from interviews conducted within a two-part project designed to provide a dynamic form of engagement with research participants. The interviews followed in-depth workshops in which we introduced young people to feminist social constructionist analyses of gender and power and invited participants to explore these ideas through the prism of their everyday experiences, reflecting on their resonances and dissonances. The workshop design and facilitation were guided by a Freirean “problem-posing” approach (Freire, 1972), as well as participatory action research and critical feminist traditions. The workshops included a range of discussion-based, reflective and socio-dramatic activities as well as creative strategies for social critique (for details of the workshop philosophy, style and content, see Appendix A; see also Calder-Dawe, 2014).

We developed this two-part design in response to the challenges of studying young people’s views and experiences of gendered power and sexism; phenomena that are not always easy to perceive, name and problematize. Problem-posing is a valuable approach for sociocultural researchers in these circumstances because of its potential to open up alternative fields of vision and compelling interpretations of the everyday that are not always on public show. Drawing substance from participants’ and researchers’ own experiences, observations and interests, the problem-posing workshops we facilitated were conceived as non-didactic and open-ended spaces within which we could share alternative analyses, ideas and interpretations of gender and sex, equality and choice, feminism and sexism without insisting on or controlling their use (for further discussion of our approach, see Chapter 2; see also Calder-Dawe & Gavey, submitted).

To recruit workshop participants, we contacted seven Auckland secondary schools and obtained permission to speak to small groups of senior students or distribute leaflets via teaching staff explaining the research and the workshop opportunity. The leaflets were titled “Media Sexism, Ethics and Social Action” and contained detailed information about workshop design and our focus on the power and politics of gender stereotypes, social justice and creative activism. As previously noted, we did not use the word feminist or feminism in promotional material. This was a strategic omission
on our part. Hoping to encourage a wide range of students to participate, we thought that an explicitly feminist project might narrow the field of interested students. Prospective participants emailed us with a brief statement of interest. All applicants were invited to participate, though not all were able to do so due to other commitments. Between July and December, we ran four workshops (2 three-day, 2 one-day) with a total of 23 participants from five secondary schools. The workshops were held during school holidays at the University of Auckland and participants were offered reimbursement for public transport costs. This study received ethics approval from the University of Auckland ethics committee and all participants gave written informed consent. Participants were all aged over 16, so guardian consent was not required.

Octavia conducted individual interviews with 20 of the 23 workshop participants six to 10 weeks after each workshop. Interviewees selected an interview venue, frequently a local café or public library. Interviews typically lasted between one and two hours. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The interviews were semi-structured, enabling us to work from a loose map of questions while retaining scope to pursue issues in depth as they arose. Our interview questions explored three key domains: participants’ experiences of the workshops, their orientation to feminism and their ideas about and experiences of gender and sexism more generally.

Interviewees continued to think and talk about feminism after the workshops. By the time of the interview, most had accumulated a substantial body of observations, recollections and experiences to draw from. Most, though not all, reported that the workshop experience sensitised them to sexism and to the workings of gendered power around them. Some also described shifting their orientation to feminism between the start of the workshops (13 of 23 participants identified as feminist in a pre-workshop survey) and the time of interview (18 of 20 interviewees identified as feminist). Many of the 18 feminist interviewees had discussed feminism recently with friends, family and peers, recounting in detail the conversations and collisions that had ensued. We build our analysis from this rich and multilayered talk.
Participants

Of the 20 participants we interviewed, 16 described themselves as women and four as men. Interviewees were aged 16 years (7), 17 years (9) and 18 years old (4) at the time of the workshop. They identified their ethnicity in one or more of the following ways: Chinese (3), Israeli (1), Japanese (1), Korean (1), Māori (2), Niuean (1), Pākehā/New Zealand European (11), Polish (1), Scottish (1) and South African (1). They described their sexualities as gay (1), straight (15), straight-ish (1) and female (1); two did not specify.

During interviews, many participants referred to their families and life histories. Most (13) were born in New Zealand; others described immigrating as children (6). Over half (13) lived in two parent households, another four lived with mothers only, two in composite families and one in a homestay. At the time of the workshops all 20 interviewees were studying at one of five large, state-funded secondary schools, though a few had prior experience of private schooling, home schooling or Māori language immersion schooling (Kura Kaupapa Māori). Few interviewees referred to their family’s economic situation. The secondary schools they attended were ranked within the Ministry of Education’s (2014) decile system as 3, 7, 8, 9 and 9 on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 denotes communities of the greatest socio-economic privilege and 1 denotes those with the least. This indicates that most lived in economically comfortable or privileged neighbourhoods.

Analytic process

In this article, we take a discourse analytic approach to participants’ talk about feminism. We understand interviews as slices of social interaction co-constructed by interlocutors who are themselves constructed through discourse. We assume that the discursive resources at play in conversations with research participants are customised for the interactional context while also having wider resonance, revealing something of a broader sociocultural milieu. In keeping with this position (see Wetherell, 1998), our analysis focuses on dominant discourses of feminism within our data and the feminist/non-feminist subject positions these discourses make available, while also examining the more immediate, context-sensitive positioning work our participants’ accounts achieved.
Our analytic interest lay in identifying the main patterns of meaning that participants
drew on to talk about feminism and feminists and to establish their own positioning. Accordingly, we drew together all broadly relevant extracts from interview transcripts
and then read and re-read these passages looking for broad accounts of feminism, feminists and associated themes, tropes and claims. After a recursive process of
refining patterns and revisiting extracts, we identified two dominant and contrasting
discourses structuring interviewees’ talk. The first, a discourse of ‘unreasonable feminism’, presented feminism and feminists as illegitimate, out of date, man-hating
or extreme. The second discourse, ‘fair feminism’, aligned feminism with the pursuit
of gender equality for both women and men, constructing it as reasonable and
desirable. We also analysed the extracts with an eye for participants’ interactional and
positioning work. We were particularly interested in understanding how being
feminist was ‘done’ — that is, how feminist-identified speakers drew from dismissive
and affirmative discourses to account for being feminist. In their negotiations of these
discourses, many participants adopted a practice of ‘reasonable feminism’:
embodying and evidencing feminist reasonableness through their use of rhetorical and
performative devices.

To protect participants’ anonymity, we use pseudonyms throughout our analysis.
Although undesirable from an analytic and political perspective, we have selected
pseudonyms of Anglo-European origin so that names do not indicate the speaker’s
cultural or social background (matched names could potentially identify speakers to
co-participants and others who knew about their participation in the research). The
use of anglicised pseudonyms reflects the dominant Anglophone linguistic context of
New Zealand and fits with most interviewees’ real names (14 interviewees had
anglicised names; we note, too, that within our sample possessing an anglicised name
did not correspond neatly with Pākehā/New Zealand European ethnic identification).
For similar reasons of anonymity, we do not offer contextualising information about
quoted speakers, which, we regret, limits our capacity to produce intersectional
analyses that take speakers’ ethnicities into account. A comma indicates a pause in
speech. The symbol […] indicates that a passage of speech has been cut or [inserted].
Analysis

*A discourse of ‘unreasonable feminism’*

The young people we interviewed appeared well aware of feminism’s “negative connotations” (Jessie). Based on their experiences with friends, peers and family members, all agreed that feminism was generally “frowned upon” (Paige) and considered “negative” (Dylan), something that “people don’t like” (Georgia). These observations and sentiments form part of what we identified as a discourse of “unreasonable feminism’. This discourse combines two distinct types of talk. The 18 participants who positioned themselves as feminist tended to speak as informers on this discourse: they offered detailed descriptions of other people’s pejorative accounts of feminism without endorsing them. Hannah and Dylan, the two participants who consistently positioned themselves as not feminist, took up this discourse to articulate and justify their non-feminism.

The discourse of unreasonable feminism consists of four interlocking elements. Two ideological arguments position feminism as incompatible with true gender equality; two character-based arguments undermine the authority and appeal of feminism by presenting feminists as extremists and, to a lesser extent, unfeminine.

*Fraudulent feminism*

The first and most frequently elaborated element of the unreasonable feminism discourse positioned feminism as ideologically flawed and fraudulent. Linked to a perception of feminism as selfishly women-focused (Tyler, 2007), this element depicts feminism as inherently inegalitarian. Feminists are alleged to use equality rhetoric as a smokescreen for their true agenda: to privilege women at men’s expense. As a consequence, Max suggested, “a lot of people” perceive feminism as a “women should be above men kind of thing”. Paige’s description of her father’s rejection of feminism shows this logic at play:

> he’s like “oh they just want to be better than men don’t they. They’ve got equal rights but somehow they just want to keep taking more, oh they probably should just have a salary now.”
The juxtaposition of the claim that gender equality is achieved (“they’ve got equal rights”) with the claim that feminists “just want to keep taking more” highlights and heightens an implied contradiction between feminists’ egalitarian talk and putatively inequitable actions. Paige’s father connected feminists’ desire to “be better than men” with what he suggested was their pursuit of greedy and unfair privileges. This makes feminism “contradictory” according to Amber’s friend, who argued that true advocates for gender equality would call themselves “equalists” not feminists:

he said he didn’t agree with the whole feminist thing and that it like favoured females over males and that that goes against the whole equality thing they’re aiming for and it’s contradictory.

By positioning feminism as at odds with a genuine concern with gender equality, this element builds a case for feminism’s unreasonableness while enabling a neat dismissal of feminist politics.

Feminist fossils

Another element of this discourse dismisses feminism on related ideological grounds: the assumption that gender equality has been achieved and, accordingly, that feminism has done its work. Drawing on common sense claims that women and girls have drawn level with (and are perhaps surpassing) men and boys (McRobbie, 2007; Ringrose, 2007), this element of the ‘unreasonable feminism’ discourse positions feminism as worthy but obsolete. Historicising language formed the backbone of many depictions of feminism’s irrelevance. Feminism is positively associated with past gains: to the “suffragette movement” (Holly) to “equal law” (Leah) and the expansion of education and property rights. In the present, however, feminism’s work is done, prompting some to wonder why feminists don’t “go extinct”, according to Paige:

a lot of people think like when women are equal, why do feminists still exist, why are they not like an extinct species?

Feminists are troublesome because they refuse to know their place (as fossils) in this progress narrative of gender equality in the developed west. They have lost their raison d’être — “they got the vote, let them like leave now” (Paige) — and yet they
do not see that it is time to move on. As a friend told Georgia, feminists need to stop “going on” about “boring” feminism:

I was in the car with someone on the way to training and she was just like, “oh don’t you get so annoyed when our school just keeps going on about feminism, it’s just so boring”.

Invoking the boringness and irrelevance of feminism makes feminist causes appear trivial and unimportant. Phoebe’s friend, for instance, chided her for pursuing feminism over “bigger things”:

she was like “I don’t understand why you think it’s necessary to be all sort of like feminist and stuff.” She was like “feminism is not an issue, we are past all that”.

The tone of impatience evident here contrasts with the more vituperative tenor of claims concerning feminism’s fraudulence outlined above. Even so, both elements are animated by the claim that gender equality is already achieved, and both worked — rhetorically and interactionally — to silence participants’ feminist critiques.

Feminist fanatics

Interwoven with ideological claims about feminism are more personalised, ‘ad-feminem’ accounts that make detailed and unflattering assertions about how feminists look, behave and feel. Such claims stigmatise a feminist identity and feminism more generally. We organise these claims into two further elements of the ‘unreasonable feminism’ discourse.

The first links feminism with fanaticism by representing feminists’ behaviour as “extreme” (Claudia) and “really radical” (Leah). Feminist organising is tainted through association with the self-righteous, rabid protestor — a figure who attracts considerable censure and hostility in conservative and pro-status quo discourse as extreme, unreasonable, and even dangerous. Paige’s peers, for instance, associate feminism with “becoming like a protestor”:

[people think] if I listen to your ideas and I have to go […] rally and like burn some houses down probably.
Along similar lines, Thomas explained that his friend “associates the word feminist with Feminazis”, that well-worn figurative device connecting feminists with fascism and, by extension, with intolerance and persecution (e.g. Barnard, 2009).

Accounts of feminism and feminists as fanatical also surfaced in negative descriptions of feminists’ dispositions: feminists are “over the top” (Hannah), “aggressive” (Jon) even “crazy” (Phoebe). Feminists take their activism and their feelings “too far” (Rose), particularly their alleged hatred for men. The notion that feminists despise men was a cultural commonplace in our interviewees’ social circles; as Jade pointed out: “it’s like you can’t be a feminist and still like men”. This assumption underlies Holly’s mother’s “confused” reaction to her daughter’s interest in feminism: “‘you’re not anti-men, what?’”

An unreasonable fixation on trivial issues was also claimed as a hallmark of the fanatical feminist disposition. Claudia, for instance, described the stereotype of the pedantic feminist who insists on calling policemen policepeople. Hannah, one of two participants to reject feminist identification, invoked this figure herself:

like women who get really angry at men who stop to let them go through the door first or like open their car door for them and they go “oh” like, “I can do it myself” and stuff. And I just think that’s kind of like ridiculous because that’s just like manners.

This passage achieves several things at once. A woman’s resistance (“I can do it myself”) to a man’s “manners” is positioned as unreasonable; she is “ridiculous” and so, by extension, more general resistance to sexism in the guise of chivalry appears absurd and unjustified too. Through her criticisms of “women just being like crazy”, Hannah cements her position as a reasonable, non-feminist, feminine subject (Scharff, 2013): a young woman appropriately receptive to masculine “manners”.

Unfeminine feminists

A fourth element of the dismissive discourse sets up an antagonism between feminism and femininity. The kind of femininity invoked here is akin to Connell’s notion of “emphasised femininity” (Connell, 1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005); it indexes a socially idealised heterosexual feminine subject marked by beautifying body work and heterosexual desirability. Good heterofeminine subjects are beautiful, feminine
and receptive to men. Feminists, in contrast, are portrayed as “butch” (Max), “hairy” (Jade) and “anti-men” (Rose). Our interviewees reported a widespread perception that becoming feminist would require one to renounce allegedly feminine interests in clothes, make-up, attractiveness and, implicitly, heterosexual men. One of two non-feminist interviewees, Hannah cited these requirements in her own talk about not being feminist:

I feel like if I were like more feminist then maybe I would like cover up more or something, like not consider what guys might like as much.

Hannah’s remark renders feminism incompatible with normative heterofemininity because of feminists’ alleged rejection of feminine body-work that caters to “what guys might like”. Here, the unreasonableness of feminism resides in the demands it is purported to make of women: that they renounce the stereotypical trappings of femininity along with any (sexual) interest in men.

Like Hannah, Jade also linked feminism with an unfeminine body and an unfeminine disregard for men, though she does so sarcastically:

if I’m a feminist then I’m obviously like [a] really hairy kind of bra-burning man-hating person.

The “bra-burning feminist” Jade references is a familiar shorthand for the splitting of feminism and femininity. Bra-burning symbolises a rejection of the taken for granted body labour of femininity. It is also a rejection of the male gaze and suggests a rejection of men more generally, sometimes through associations with lesbianism (Scharff, 2013). This element of the ‘unreasonable feminism’ discourse invokes and affirms a very clichéd representation of heterosexual femininity, placing feminists in direct opposition to it.

‘Unreasonable feminism’: Discussion

Together, these four interrelated elements constitute a discourse that dismisses feminism as unwarranted, constructing feminists as unreasonable and unappealing in the process. Our analysis points to a striking degree of continuity in dismissive accounts of feminism. Many of the claims and representations that populate our
discourse of ‘unreasonable feminism’ are familiar from elsewhere (Barnard, 2009; Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Quinn & Radtke, 2006; Riley, 2001; Scharff, 2013).

Our analysis does, however, suggest some differences, particularly concerning the discursive connection between feminism and unfemininity. While still present, this element tended to be less salient and less elaborated than the three others. Notable, too, was the virtual absence of an association between lesbianism and feminism (raised by only one participant). This is in striking contrast to research where the unfemininity (and lesbianism) of feminists is a rhetorical centrepiece (Crossley, 2010; Scharff, 2013). This might speak to the diversification and feminisation of representations of lesbianism in Anglophone popular media in recent years (e.g. Chisholm, 2010; “The L Word,” 2004), as well as a mainstreaming of lesbianism evident in young people’s responses to social changes such as the recent successful campaign for marriage equality in New Zealand. It also, we suspect, reveals something of the unacceptability of homophobic comments among the peer circles of our participants. For some young New Zealanders, the country’s recent record on equality may be source of pride and identity. Although distancing herself from feminism, Hannah recalled how she and her friends reacted against a visitor’s opposition to marriage equality:

he kind of just like put his foot in it with us […] we were all kind of shocked because we were all just like, it’s kind of not cool to say that you are against [marriage equality] in New Zealand, like it’s not really okay.

Unfemininity aside, our analysis suggests that other pejorative tropes had wide currency in our participants’ everyday circles. Many interviewees described these sorts of punitive rebuttals of feminism and feminists as the dominant, or in many cases the only, response from family, friends and peers. Although mainstream coverage of feminism had started to grow and shift in New Zealand by 2014 (e.g., Kamm, 2013; McCracken & Leask, 2013), our feminist-identified participants found themselves in a cultural context where being feminist was unlikely to be considered natural or admirable, but rather a sign of greed, illogical thinking, extremism and, to a lesser extent, unfemininity. In this context, positioning oneself as feminist needed to be carefully managed and accounted for.
A discourse of ‘fair feminism’

Aside from Hannah and Dylan, the participants expressed strong personal support for feminism. Drawing from the accounts of these 18 feminist-identified young people, we outline an opposing discourse that positions feminism as fair and warranted. This affirmative discourse takes shape in direct response to the elements examined above, working to destabilise each. Where the dismissive discourse placed feminism and feminists at odds with real equality, ‘fair feminism’ does the opposite. By constructing feminism as fundamentally concerned with tackling gendered inequalities facing both men and women, this discourse refutes claims that feminism is deceptive, out-of-date, extreme and man-hating.

The ‘fair feminism’ discourse affirms and elaborates on connections between feminism, equality and reasonableness. According to Max, equality between men and women “in all respects” was the “main […] aim of feminism”. Ashleigh spoke similarly, claiming that feminism meant “just wanting equality”. Claudia also defined feminism as “women and men being treated equally”. Through its proximity to the principle of equality, feminism acquired a kind of obviousness in these accounts. For Phoebe, “feminism and equality” were obviously connected and both “just felt normal” and “very natural” to her. Holly, too, explained that feminism was “just common sense”.

We analyse the ‘fair feminism’ discourse below, identifying two constitutive elements. Both elements develop the connection between feminism and equality, but in subtly different directions. The first builds the authority of feminism by claiming that it seeks equality for women and men. This “domesticating” talk (Dean, 2010) emphasises the obviousness and harmlessness of feminism in a manner reminiscent of Edley and Wetherell’s (2001) analysis. The second element of ‘fair feminism’ discourse is more politically challenging: it names ongoing inequalities and claims feminism as a reasonable and necessary response.

Feminism: “equal for everyone”.

Many feminist-identified interviewees described feminism as a movement “for everyone” (Phoebe). This rhetorical move engages and refutes claims that feminists advocate only for women and hate men. To emphasise the reasonableness and even-handedness of feminism, many participants talked about feminism and gender
equality in gender-neutral terms. Thomas, for example, argued that feminism “means that male and female have equal rights”, “are paid the same” and that “they should not have stereotypes”. Max’s definition operated similarly:

   [feminism means] encouraging the equality of men and women basically in all respects, so socially, economically, that kind of thing, that’s what I feel like feminism is in my mind. That’s what I believe in.

In both these accounts, the direction of gender inequality remains unspecified: Max and Thomas tell us nothing about who is currently privileged and how. Instead, interviewees consistently presented feminism as a movement for women and men, intent on securing positive changes for both. Implicitly attending to claims that feminists privilege women unfairly, Jade also constructed a feminism for both genders:

   it’s not bringing males down or taking women higher it’s just about us all being able to have the same rights as each other.

Several others used this pattern of invocation and rebuttal, emphasising that feminism is “not just siding for women” but is “equal for everyone” (Phoebe). Ashleigh described coming to appreciate that she was a feminist in these terms:

   I didn’t [identify as feminist] before the workshop and like even probably a couple of weeks after the workshop I was like I don’t know, but then I realised that I kind of am, like just wanting equality, like a feminist yeah.

Insisting that feminism and a desire for gender equality are the same thing while emphasising feminism’s man-friendliness dramatically extends the scope of feminist identification to all those who claim to support gender equality. As Jade pointed out, “all it preaches is equality between the sexes, like how could you not want that?” At the same time, by constructing feminism in such unchallenging terms, this formulation appears to close down possibilities for a feminist politics that might disrupt the status quo.
Feminism: Tackling inequality

Alongside this relatively safe articulation of feminism as an abstracted desire for gender equality, ‘fair feminism’ discourse also branched in a different and more politically challenging direction. Many participants described feminism as a direct response to the tangible inequalities they saw around them. Several recounted their own experiences and observations of inequity in some detail, linking this talk to their own feminist position. In addition to the “pay gap” and “the heckling thing” (both discussed during the workshop), Jessie described becoming aware of sexism as a “mindset kind of thing” and reflected that she had “realised it more in social media […] and] the way my guy friends talk about stuff”. Jessie explicitly connected her awareness of these inequalities to her endorsement of feminism:

so I never really had the need to call myself a feminist before because I wasn’t aware […] But now I would probably.

Ashleigh spoke in a similar way, describing how she “realised that it’s normal, it’s like everyday things that can be like classed as discrimination and [that’s] why the feminists are willing to like fight for equality”. Mia also described being feminist with reference to seeing “what feminism is trying to deal with” around her every day:

[sexism is] such a prominent issue, like it’s pretty much everywhere, so it’s hard sometimes not to think about it.

Through reference to the inequalities they perceived themselves, this element of the ‘fair feminism’ discourse made room for articulations of a socially transformative feminism: one whose reach extended beyond an affirmation of equal rights and towards resisting practices that perpetuate gender inequality.

‘Fair feminism’: Discussion

The ‘fair feminism’ discourse contains two elements: one constructed feminism in general terms as equality for all, another linked feminism to tackling gendered inequalities affecting women and girls. Both directly rebut claims that feminism is unjustified, unfair, extreme and man-hating. While both elements affirmed the relationship between feminism and equality, they differed in emphasis and tone. Arguing that feminism is “just wanting equality” increases its obviousness, authority and appeal — at the price of ignoring the unevenness of gendered inequalities. This
recalls prior research and attracts the same critiques: that feminism’s potential for unmasking and transforming gendered injustice disappears when it is parcelled with depoliticised equality-and-choice rhetoric (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; see also Quinn & Radtke, 2006; Rottenberg, 2014b).

The second element of this discourse is less familiar and it operates differently. By linking feminism to named gendered inequalities, participants built a rationale for being feminist and for taking transformative feminist action: both appear reasonable and necessary. Even so, those we interviewed spoke about gender inequality with care. Many left the direction of gendered power imbalances strongly implied but unspecified. A few positioned women explicitly as justified beneficiaries of activism as Amber did: “it’s women that do need that kind of focus”. Others advanced this argument with hedging (“I do think right now men have more powers slightly than women do”; Paige), or else blended together riskier inequality talk with safer affirmations of equality for all, as in Georgia’s comments below:

feminism, I think, oh this is such a hard one, I don’t know, it’s about gender equality, but I don’t know, it’s not just equality in the sense of like we’ll get everything the same, it’s more like, I don’t know. It’s kind of like you want, I don’t know, for me what I want to stop is like women in the kitchen jokes and stuff like that.

Here, feminism begins with endorsing equality but extends into something more specific and political: naming and extinguishing sexist practices. Moving back and forward between safe and challenging accounts of feminism, some interviewees were able to link feminist identification to a project of social transformation and to make ongoing inequalities tentatively articulable. The delicacy evinced in these accounts (and speakers’ reliance on equality-for-all rhetoric) may reflect the timing of our research at the cusp of an expansion of popular interest in feminism. Today, it is possible that participants would not find such careful handling of feminist identification and activism as necessary.

More generally, our finding that equality was the lynchpin of participants’ affirmative accounts of feminism is no surprise. Equality is frequently a “rhetorical centrepiece” of discourse about feminism and feminists (Edley & Wetherell, 2001, p. 451). Moreover, there are local reasons why being on the right side of equality discourse
could be especially salient for those we interviewed. The principle of equality is deeply embedded in New Zealand cultural common sense as part of a white/Pākehā national identity story that mythologises New Zealand as an egalitarian, even classless society (Fairburn, 1989) that proudly pioneered women’s suffrage.

_A practice of ‘reasonable feminism’_

As we have analysed it, an affirmative discourse of ‘fair feminism’ engages and refutes ‘unreasonable feminism’ discourse chiefly on ideological grounds: claiming that feminism is fair and justified rather than unfair, and egalitarian rather than woman-focused. As well as making these claims verbally, participants challenged elements of ‘unreasonable feminism’ discourse by embodying the qualities of reasonableness that they claimed for feminism.

As we have seen, dismissive gendered claims about feminists tend to index the feminist body and behaviour: she is unfeminine, irrational and hostile (see also Edley & Wetherell, 2001). The comportment of a feminist woman speaker is thus of particular interactional significance in conversation about feminism: she herself is a site where pejorative claims about feminists may be either disproved or borne out. Participants managed this dimension of doing feminism with a range of interactional techniques that we call a ‘practice of reasonable feminism’. Our analysis of this practice draws on two different types of data: participants’ own explanations of their strategies for talking about feminism and also instances where participants enacted reasonable feminism in conversation with us.

Those interviewees who spoke explicitly about their interactional strategies stressed the importance of being reasoned when speaking as a feminist: marshalling well thought-out arguments in a calm and persuasive manner. Phoebe, for instance, noted the importance of having “back-up information” when talking about sexism and feminism to “justify why you are using those words”:

_I think it is quite good to be a little bit educated, you know, read up on it and know its relevance in sort of today’s society or whatever, so you are able to justify why you are using those words […] I know that the words are quite powerful, you know, they confront people. I am quite careful about how I use them._
Like Phoebe, Georgia spoke about the importance of being able to “specify why we needed feminism”. When presented clearly with examples of “stuff they could relate to”, she found that her male friends “sort of understood it more”. Holly explained that her capacity to appear calm and reasonable is part of what enables her to “open people’s eyes” about feminism:

I have been able to like change a lot of opinions, well not change but open some people’s eyes to what, like if I say “I’m feminist” they say “what?”, cause a lot of people kind of realise that I am a quite a clear-thinking person, you know, and just seeing a stable person and seeing me as a feminist is like oh they’re not angry men-haters, okay what, this is interesting.

Drawing on a self-reported reputation as “clear-thinking” and “stable”, Holly offered herself as proof of feminism’s reasonableness.

Less explicit enactments of reasonableness were also evident during our interviews. Consider the claim that feminism is “for everyone” that formed part of the ‘fair feminism’ discourse. In showing themselves concerned about men as well as women, interviewees defended against accusations that feminists are unreasonable, woman-focused and man-hating (see also Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016b). Moreover, participants’ accounts were often structured in a manner that highlighted the unreasonableness of anti-feminist others. Rose’s description of her family’s extreme and anti-feminist views throws her own rational and measured assessment into sharp relief:

I think um with [my Dad and brother’s] definition of feminism kind of comes like anti-men. Like if you’re a feminist then you can’t possibly support men in any way and that men should have no rights and that kind of thing, yeah. So, which obviously is wrong.

Rose’s family’s understanding of feminism is “obviously” wrong; indeed, it is absurd. A similar absurdity marked Jessie’s observation that feminism “automatically meant to some people that women are going to rule the world and kill all men or something”, an extreme case formulation that positions anti-feminism as nonsensical.
Previous research has explored how adult speakers align with ‘reasonable’ feminist arguments and in doing so adopt watery feminist positions that are seemingly depoliticised or individualised (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Quinn & Radtke, 2006). Here, the practice of reasonable feminism we identify operates differently. The teenage feminists we interviewed mobilised reasonableness as an ideological and embodied scaffold for their (pre-existing) feminist identifications and to support feminist calls for social change. That such manoeuvres were possible and put into practice is intriguing — and surely encouraging. At the same time, our analysis speaks to the burden of embodying debates about feminism and the interactional work required to do so. Participants confirmed their reasonableness (and disproved pejorative claims about feminism) by emphasising their calm and rational responses to others’ vitriol. Enacting reasonable feminism confines the speaker to a narrow interactional choreography of unruffled calm that demands considerable emotional labour. Moreover, should the feminist speaker lose her cool, she herself becomes proof of anti-feminist arguments (see Chapter 5; see also Calder-Dawe, 2015).

**Reasonableness and power**

We conclude with some reflections on reasonableness, power and positioning. It appeared that interviewees’ capacity to embody a reasonable, appealing and man-friendly feminism enhanced their authority to challenge gender inequality, albeit in circumscribed ways: recall Holly’s account of how her reputation as “clear-thinking” enabled her to “open people’s eyes” about feminism. At times, interviewees’ anecdotes suggested that the capacity to speak about feminism successfully — that is, to be heard as reasonable — intersected with other forms of authority. Consider Holly’s description of Rachel, who talked successfully about feminism at school:

she’s quite popular and she’s really well-known and everyone likes her. And so I think [feminism] is cool if you are a certain type of person because she’s very charismatic, and she’s very open and she’s loud and she’s fun and she’s cool, yeah.

According to Holly, feminism can be cool — if you’re “a certain type of person”. Another peer, Meg, got far less traction on feminist issues than Rachel:

Octavia: what makes it different for Meg?

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Holly: I’m not sure. I think it’s because, Meg, it’s just a high school thing of the labels that they put on you like Meg’s not as cool as Rachel and she’s passionate about her issue, but people see it as oh you’re attacking me, you’re just attacking me because you want to attack me […] she fits the mould of a kind of angry feminist a lot more.

Rachel is “cool” and “charismatic”; Meg is not, and, as a consequence, she is more vulnerable to positioning as an unreasonable “feminist killjoy” (Ahmed, 2010c). If a lack of cool makes one more susceptible to such labelling, it follows that feminist identification may be most easily pulled off by those “popular” young women who benefit from considerable social capital. Although within our data attention was not drawn to how ‘coolness’ might intersect with (and be stratified by) ethnicity and class, we suspect that social power interacts with these elements of identity, as well as with physical appearance and conventional attractiveness (see Carey et al., 2011 for a brief discussion of the latter).

We observed a similar dynamic in the accounts of two young men feminists we interviewed. Max and Thomas described receiving very different treatment from male peers. Whereas Max was sometimes praised as “skux” (implying heterosexual experience with women), Thomas’ sexuality was constantly being debated:

[I am] constantly harassed, with the question “are you gay are you gay are you gay” and it’s like I’ve answered it like twenty times before for you do I have to answer it again really?

Thomas also described his unwillingness to talk about feminism with peers he did not know well because “they’d […] somehow twist it in a negative way”:

they could judge my sexuality they could judge um, just me as a person depending on my views they could think I’m a bad person or something I don’t know um they might they might view me as weak, yeah just like they might view me as a girl.
Max recounted a very different experience. He had spoken openly about feminist issues and hadn’t suffered socially as a result, though others seldom seemed interested in his talk:

they won’t really engage […] they start talking about something else, just move on, they are not really kind of responding or acknowledging what you are trying to say.

These young men’s ability to speak about feminism depended on more than an abstracted capacity to sound reasonable. Thomas and Max’s freedom to share feminist ideas appeared to relate to their proximity to an idealised heteronormative masculinity and the respect (or censure) they drew from peers as a consequence.

Just as intersecting axes of privilege and oppression appear to influence whether and how women identify as feminist (Aronson, 2003; Scharff, 2011b), so too gendered, classed and racial politics of reasonableness (Skeggs, 1997; Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001) seem to mediate how being feminist is ‘done’. Though racial and classed dynamics of privilege were not so evident in this data, heterosexual capital in the form of ‘coolness’ did appear to influence who appeared reasonable, respectable and worth listening to — and who was able to inhabit feminism successfully.

**Conclusion**

In this article, we have identified two contradictory discourses of feminism and unpalied the constituent elements of each. A discourse of ‘unreasonable feminism’ grounded in four interrelated elements undermined feminism as fraudulent, out of date, extreme and unfeminine. This depiction aligns closely with previous research (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Quinn & Radtke, 2006; Riley, 2001; Scharff, 2013). Our 18 feminist-identified interviewees also drew on a discourse of ‘fair feminism’ that constructed it as pro-equality and therefore both reasonable and justified. One element of this discourse domesticated feminism by positioning it as advocating equally for men and women, while a second element cast feminism as a response to gendered inequalities that predominantly affect women. Where previous research has examined how feminism is accounted for and oriented to by a range of men and women, we have focused more specifically on the talk of teenagers who had chosen to identify as
feminist. Our analysis shows how teenage feminists drew on familiar, binary accounts of feminism in order to justify their feminist view and identifications.

The ‘unreasonable feminism’ discourse we identified relies on character-based claims as well as ideological ones. Presenting feminism and feminists as extreme and fanatical is a powerful mode of repudiation: it undermines feminist activism, constructing it as the undesirable by-product of individual feminists’ extreme and prickly dispositions (Ahmed, 2010c). We have shown how participants’ recuperative claims about the fairness of feminism depended on the interactional accomplishment of ‘reasonable feminism’. This practice helped to carve out (limited) space for feminist speech, although our analysis also suggests that enactments of reasonable feminism might be licensed — or not — by the speaker’s hetero-coolness and popularity.

This is a pertinent finding in a cultural moment marked by ‘feministification’ of celebrity culture (Hamad & Taylor, 2015) and it points to some of its contradictory effects. A rapprochement of feminism with ‘cool’ heteronormative femininity and masculinity risks dulling the potential of feminist critiques of heterosexuality, gender binaries and inequality in favour of a hollowed-out feminism that is predominantly “white, middle-class and ‘hip’” (Keller, 2015, p. 274). And yet, can feminism be so neatly contained? We think not. Our analysis has demonstrated how teenage feminists put familiar discourses to different use: to assert a reasonable feminism that names inequalities and makes some room, however contested, for a transformative feminist politics.
Chapter 7: Authentic feminist?

Authenticity and feminist identity in teenage feminists’ talk

Introduction

Ideals of authenticity, individuality and confidence tend to be located within a discursive apparatus that short-circuits questions of politics and power (Baker, 2008; Layton, 2014; Rottenberg, 2014b). Individualising logics are often associated with a “postfeminist” disengagement with feminist politics (McRobbie, 2009) and a repudiation of feminism more generally (Scharff, 2013). In this article, we explore how young people’s accounts of being and becoming feminist take shape in conjunction with an ideal of personal authenticity: to know and to express the ‘real me’. The teenage feminists we interviewed articulated their attachments to feminism through a discourse of authenticity, describing feminism as integral to an inner self they had uncovered and sought to express. In what follows, we explore this coming-together of authenticity and feminism, mapping its anatomy and asking what it might achieve in relation to a transformative feminist politics. To set the scene, we offer a brief account of scholarship addressing authenticity and the individualised self, bringing this work into conversation with research on contemporary conditions of possibility for feminism and being feminist.

Authenticity, self-discovery … and feminism?

For some time now, cultural theorists and sociologists have noted the rise of an authenticity ideal as part of an individualising, subjective turn in modern western culture. One such is Charles Taylor (1994), whose writing examined authenticity as a governing logic of the late modern self. According to Taylor, a growing emphasis on interiority, individual uniqueness and personal authenticity around the close of the 18th century produced a new and decidedly modern suite of aspirations: to find one’s unique inner compass and to live authentically in accordance with it.

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1 This chapter is the submitted version of a co-authored article now published (2017: online first) in the British Journal of Social Psychology.
Aspirations to living well through personal authenticity seem, today, to be part of a structuring cultural common sense that percolates through many westernised countries and beyond into territories touched by their influence. From cereal boxes and reality television to psychotherapy and life-coaching, we are surrounded with affirmations of and incitements to authenticity: to find, know, express, be and ‘do’ oneself (Cronin, 2000). Recent empirical research from Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom has illustrated how entangled logics of authenticity, non-conformity and expressive individualism punctuate many different people’s accounts of themselves (Clarke & Smith, 2015; Clarke & Spence, 2013; Currie, Kelly, & Pomerantz, 2006; Dobson, 2012; Gill et al., 2005; Riley & Cahill, 2005; Scully, 2015; Walkerdine et al., 2001).

Indeed, authenticity is so much part of cultural common sense that it appears to be at once assumed and imperative: everyone has a right — and a duty — to live ‘authentically’ (though, of course, this is easiest to do when one’s authentic self is consonant with dominant social values).

We cannot write of authenticity without mention of neoliberal incitements to self-work, for the two overlap and frequently go together. Alongside the capacity (and responsibility) be one’s true self sits another structuring imperative: to be one’s best self. Many cultural theorists argue that the advent of a neoliberal mode of political, economic and moral governance has led to an “extension of market rationality into social life”, calling a new kind of self into being (Brown, 2006; Layton, 2014, p. 163). Neoliberal discourse encases the self in a language of self-improvement, capacity and strategy. We are invited to shoulder responsibility for (re)fashioning our lives, and our social position evidences our success in doing so. The authentic self and the neoliberal subject grow from the same individualising logic. While both are oriented towards personal rather than social transformation, at least one difference in emphasis is worth noting. Authenticity discourse propels us towards the course of action that is authentic and ‘right’ for us, however unlikely or difficult; our moral probity hinges on self-knowledge and self-expression (Vannini & Franzese, 2008). Neoliberal discourse, in contrast, prioritises an entrepreneurial self who acts strategically to minimise costs and maximise personal benefits and wellbeing (Brown, 2006).

Feminist scholars have tended to see an antagonism between the political project of feminism, on one hand, and individualising logics on the other (Baker, 2010; McRobbie, 2009; Scharff, 2013). By making selves articulable on purely individual
terms and obscuring structural factors, these discourses of self disarticulate feminism by “mak[ing] unthinkable the very basis of coming together” (McRobbie, 2009, p. 26). Building from this observation, McRobbie and others have suggested that individualising, neoliberal logics produce a postfeminist disengagement with feminist politics and a repudiation of feminism as unfounded and unfeminine (Gill, 2007b; McRobbie, 2009; Scharff, 2013). Women in positions of power have tended to distance themselves from feminism (Hall & Donaghue, 2013; Sorrentino & Augoustinos, 2016) and those who draw attention to gendered inequalities are easily dismissed as seeking unfair advantages by “playing ’the gender card’” (Donaghue, 2015, p. 163).

Relatedly, inward-looking ideals of authenticity and entrepreneurial self-work emphasise personal choice while removing a politicised vocabulary for articulating social pressures (Baker, 2008; Gill, 2007a, 2014; Stuart & Donaghue, 2012). Working in concert with a thin postfeminist rhetoric of agency and empowerment, these ideals appear to recruit women and girls into self-discipline while making them personally, psychically culpable for their own experiences of oppression and distress (Baker, 2010; Gill & Elias, 2014). Responsibility lies with individual women to avoid failure and victimhood by transforming themselves, rather than by transforming sexist practices. Taken together, these critiques paint a bleak picture for contemporary feminist politics: the dominance of individualised regimes of truth appears to render feminism unintelligible and unpalatable.

**A new feminism?**

In the past five years, however, this picture has been complicated by evidence for a shift in the way feminism figures in popular imagination — and, we suggest, in its discursive relationship to individualising discourses of the self. While research continues to document punitive stereotypes of feminists as irrational, man-hating, unfeminine and fanatical (see Chapter 6; see also Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016a), scholarship is also tracking a surge of mainstream interest in feminism. Feminism is increasingly entangled with pop culture: notable is the increasing ‘feministification’ of mainstream celebrity culture and the rise of feminist chic, as performed by Beyoncé, Emma Watson, Tavi Gevinson and Lorde among others (see Keller, 2015). This research also documents the activities of those engaged in grassroots feminist activism, drawing particular attention to the efforts of young people who are more
typically considered apolitical (Ringrose & Renold, 2012; Sills et al., 2016). Transnational feminist campaigns challenging rape culture (the SlutWalk movement) and sexual harassment (The Everyday Sexism Project) have attracted considerable support, and ad hoc feminist communities are proliferating online.

The more high-profile contemporary flashpoints for feminist protest and identification often have an individualising register. Issues that draw strong popular support and media attention tend to invoke authenticity and freedom: a woman’s right to look how she wants, wear what she wants, feel beautiful in whatever way she wants, have sex (or not) whenever she wants, to work where she wants, without her desires being infringed upon (violently or implicitly) by others. Feminist demands for self-determination, and feminist politics more generally, seem to gain traction when attached to liberal common sense wherein individuals ought to be free to live their lives without interference and external constraints. While the momentum generated by this coming-together of feminism and individualised liberal selfhood is generating optimism in some quarters, others are far less optimistic, pointing to the politically destructive potential of “neoliberal” and “individualised” feminisms (Budgeon, 2015; Fraser, 2013; Rottenberg, 2014b).

Our analysis steers away from typological approaches that categorise feminism as ‘good/collective’ or ‘bad/individualised’. Instead, we move towards a more open-ended consideration of the feedback loops that circulate between feminism and authenticity discourse. To begin, we explore how an authenticity ideal figured generally in participants’ descriptions of themselves and their lives. We then examine the coming-together or hybridisation of authenticity and feminism in participants’ accounts. On one hand, interviewees mobilised authentic feminism as proof of their commitment to authentic self-expression. At the same time, the position of authentic feminist appeared to authorise risky feminist identifications and to justify counter-normative feelings, desires and actions. We conclude with an exploration of the affective dimensions of ‘authentic feminist’ identities and consider what they might achieve in relation to feminist politics. To do so, we turn our attention towards the feelings that might animate and sustain attachments to feminism (see Hemmings, 2012), charting the affective trajectories that criss-crossed interviewees’ accounts of being feminist.
Dynamic sociocultural research with teenagers

Data and methods

Our research took shape within and in response to a postfeminist cultural context (see McRobbie, 2009) wherein sexism tended to pass unseen, or else was dismissed as unproblematic or inevitable. We developed a dynamic sociocultural methodology (see Chapter 2; see also Calder-Dawe & Gavey, submitted) and a two-staged research project to meet the challenge of researching young Aucklanders’ ideas about and experiences of gendered inequalities under these conditions. Our approach was designed to map how participants were making sense of feminism, sexism and gendered inequalities while also providing opportunities for participants to explore and experiment with critical feminist perspectives on gender, sexism and power-knowledge in the course of the research. First, we designed and facilitated group workshops with Auckland teenagers. Roughly six weeks later we conducted individual follow-up interviews with 20 workshop participants. The extracts we analyse come from these interviews.

A “problem-posing” ethos (see Freire, 1972) guided workshop design and facilitation, though our approach was also informed by a variety of research traditions, including poststructuralist research, critical participatory action research and feminist pedagogy (Fine, 2009; Kenway et al., 1994; Moane, 2011). The workshops were designed to offer participants and facilitators an open-ended, non-didactic space to interrogate and reimagine cultural conditions of possibility using our own experiences, observations and desires as a starting point. We used a range of activities to draw critical feminist analyses of gender and power-knowledge into conversation with patterns the group observed in the social and digital worlds around us. Our purpose was not to fix participants into any particular relation to feminism. Instead, we hoped to foster a dynamic engagement that would allow us insight into the resonances and dissonances of feminist theory for participants. Workshop activities included group discussions, brainstorming, socio-dramatic activities and skill-sharing sessions (for further details of our approach, see Chapters 2 and 3; see also Calder-Dawe, 2014; Calder-Dawe & Gavey, submitted).

To recruit participants, we approached seven secondary schools early in 2013 and received permission to speak to small groups of senior students (three schools) or to
distribute flyers via teaching staff (four schools). We explained the workshops as an opportunity to think critically about mainstream representations of gender, to discuss inequalities and to learn about creative activism. We did not name the workshops as feminist, as we suspected that doing so would narrow the field of prospective participants to those already feminist-identifying. Interested students were invited to submit a short written application; all those who applied were accepted, though not all were able to participate on the dates we offered. We ran two three-day workshops in July and two one-day workshops in December 2013, involving 23 students in total. Octavia and a colleague in his mid-twenties jointly facilitated the longer workshops; Octavia facilitated the single-day workshops alone. At the beginning and end of each workshop, we asked participants to fill out brief Likert-style surveys. Pre-workshop, 13 of 23 participants identified as feminist (six strongly agree; seven agree). Post-workshop, 19 of 21 surveyed identified as feminist (16 strongly agree, three agree).

Follow-up interviews offered us an opportunity to retrospectively explore participants’ shifting relationships to feminism and, more generally, to continue the conversations we had begun at the workshops several weeks earlier. We recontacted workshop participants and invited them to an individual interview, which we described as an informal conversation about their reflections on the workshop process and content. We interviewed 20 of 23 workshop participants, taking a flexible semi-structured approach. Our questions concerned interviewees’ experiences of the workshops and their perceptions of feminism, sexism and gender equality. Participants chose the interview location, often a local library or café. Most interviews lasted for between 1 and 2 hours. All interviews were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed by the first author (2) or a professional transcriber (18).

Where we quote interviewees, we reproduce speech as transcribed including repetitions. A comma denotes a pause in speech and […] indicates omitted speech. We refer to our interviewees using pseudonyms that do not reveal the speaker’s cultural and social background and we have also altered some potentially identifying details. Although undesirable from an analytic perspective, we felt these steps were necessary to protect anonymity (see also Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016a).
Participants

At the time of the interviews, participants were aged between 16 and 19 years old. Of the 20 we interviewed, 16 identified as women, four as men. Most participants were born in Aotearoa New Zealand, though some had immigrated as children. Participants identified with one or more of the following ethnic identities: Chinese (3), Israeli (1), Japanese (1), Korean (1), Māori (2), Niuean (1), Pākehā/New Zealand European (11), Polish (1), Scottish (1) and South African (1). Interviewees self-described their sexuality as gay (1), straight (15), straight-ish (1) and female (1); two interviewees did not specify. All 20 interviewees attended one of five state-funded secondary schools. Three of these schools have a predominantly affluent, upper-middle class student base; the other two schools draw more widely across the socioeconomic spectrum (we base this on school decile rankings produced by the Ministry of Education; see Ministry of Education, 2014). Of the 20 teenagers we interviewed, 18 described themselves as feminist during interview; two did not. Because our analytic interest here concerns young people’s talk about being feminist, our analysis draws from interviews with these 18 feminist-identified participants.

Analytic process

We take a feminist, poststructuralist approach to interview data that attends to the interrelationships between discourse and subjectivity (see Gavey, 1989). We do not assume the existence of an essential, fixed self; rather, we view subjectivity as a process through which people come to narrate and experience themselves in particular ways. Accordingly, we do not approach participants’ accounts of being feminist as straightforward reflections of their internal processes or their ‘true experience’. Instead, we are interested in understanding how participants construct feminism, the discursive resources they mobilise and the kind of feminist selves they create, inhabit and resist. This in turn reveals something of the local conditions of possibility for feminism: what being feminist meant and made possible for the young people we interviewed.

Authenticity was pivotal to participants’ accounts of being feminist. It was not, however, a concept that we anticipated working with in advance of interviews — or even, in fact, in advance of coding the interview transcripts. As we read and re-read extracts we had coded for another analytic purpose, we were struck by the prominence
of ‘authenticity talk’ in our participants’ accounts of becoming and being feminist. Intrigued, and with a desire to make sense of how this talk tied to an emerging scholarly debate about individualised and neoliberal feminisms, we set about re-coding the transcripts inclusively for talk relating to authenticity and individuality (accounts of being true to the ‘real me’ and standing apart from the crowd were recurring motifs). Frequently, though not always, this authenticity talk was entangled with talk about being feminist. After reading and re-reading coded extracts, we organised them into three categories, which correspond to the three sections of our analysis below. In the first analytic section, we explore how an authenticity ideal figured generally in participants’ accounts of themselves and their lives. In the second, we look more closely at how discourses of authenticity and feminism came together in participants’ accounts, paying particular attention to the position of ‘authentic feminist’ interviewees took up. In the third and final section, we explore what the position of ‘authentic feminist’ achieves in relation to feminist politics with a particular focus on the affective trajectories it appeared to entrain in the young feminists we interviewed.

**Authentic feminism**

**Authenticity: Finding the “real me”**

Without exception, the teenagers we interviewed spoke of the importance of working to uncover their inner, authentic ‘me’. Their constructions of this search for authenticity often had a temporal, developmental inflection (see also Currie, Kelly, and Pomerantz 2006). Discovering one’s authentic self — who you really are — was routinely described as a “teenage thing” (Amber), a rite of passage tied to the teenage years when, as Amber explained, “you’re kind of at that stage where you’re trying to find yourself”. Interviewees described adolescence as a period when they expected (and were expected by others) to solidify an adult self: to “find who you are” (Holly), to “discover myself and create a clearer sense of being” (Jade) and to “grow as a person” (Mia). At once a moral imperative and a developmental milestone, finding one’s true self was constructed as a central preoccupation of teenage-hood: an obvious good that required little explanation or justification.
Several interviewees described the process of crystallising “my own sense of me” (Jade) in some detail as a challenging, morally inflected journey requiring effort and attention. Recalling Charles Taylor (1994), interviewees framed authenticity as a process of introspection or “contemplating within” (Max) that each individual must undertake for her or himself. Authenticity discourse establishes a conflict between a true, internal self and the external constraints and pressures that threaten to distort and obscure the ‘real me’. Participants frequently referenced this split between good, authentic practices that reflect a person’s true self on one hand, and bad, inauthentic practices on the other that conformed to external requirements or courted others’ approval. The capacity to differentiate between these opposing forces, to act “for myself rather than as a social expectation” (Leah), appeared to serve as a marker of personal authenticity. Interviewees’ narratives were peppered with indications of their capacity to differentiate between inner voice and external pressure; or, as Holly put it, to distinguish “what you’re actually thinking” from “someone else’s view that has been forced on you”. Ashleigh, for example, described how she came to separate her own sense of self from her friends’:

I kind of went through a phase of […] you know doing all the stuff that they did and then […] I kind of just like, yeah, I kind of just went like this isn’t really who I am.

Like Ashleigh, many we interviewed described flashbulb moments of self-differentiation and self-acceptance: the realisation that “hey, I am actually this person and that’s actually totally fine” (Phoebe). Personal authenticity was frequently parcelled together in this way with the capacity to accept and express one’s difference from others. Jade stressed that “it’s okay to be different and have different opinions” while Thomas affirmed that “the only thing that matters is how you view yourself”. Moments of confident differentiation from others often served as a turning point in participants’ accounts of themselves, punctuating their transition from conformity to a more favoured position of authentic individuality:

when I moved out of that [friendship] group I developed my own sense of me whereas before I was kind of just mimicking what other people were like or you know […] trying to fit in (Jade)
I think you just need to get to the point where you’re confident enough in yourself that, you know, you can be like oh well I might not be fitting the stereotype or what everyone else thinks I should be but I’m still like happy doing the things that I enjoy (Max)

In the passages above, both Jade and Max position themselves as authentic and confident subjects, marking their distance from inauthentic, crowd-pleasing others. Indeed, those we interviewed often spoke in ways that highlighted and secured their own distance and difference from others who “accept things for what they are” (Sasha), “just parrot what they’ve heard” (Georgia) and whose “insecurity”, according to Rose, led them to fear that “friends won’t like them as much if they don’t agree”. Being on the right side of this binary was not always constructed as smooth and straightforward. Mia described how her progress towards confident authenticity was hampered by having had a “distorted” sense of self in the past:

it takes a long time to just become like comfortable with yourself and who you are, especially if you’ve gone through a stage that distorted that in a really big way. Yeah so I think it does take a lot of time and [I’m] still trying to acknowledge that, you know, it is okay to be you.

Though struggle and inauthenticity make a brief appearance in Mia’s account, her narrative still exhibits culturally favoured momentum: she is moving towards a state of authenticity and feeling “comfortable” with who she is inside.

Authenticity and feminism: Finding the feminist within

Interviewees’ accounts of being and becoming feminist were interwoven with claims to authenticity and the concomitant values of confidence and individuality outlined above. Each of the 18 young feminists we interviewed constructed feminism as part of their inner essence: a “part of who I am” (Phoebe) or simply “what I am” (Holly).

Following the contours of authenticity discourse, most interviewees described becoming feminist as a consequence of inner exploration; they spoke of excavating a feminist self who was always present but not known. Thomas was one of those who described participation in the workshop as the flashbulb experience that brought latent “feminist traits” to the surface: “the workshop definitely helped me like put it into words but that’s kind of like what I’ve had subconsciously in my head”. Several
others we interviewed pulled together authenticity and feminism in their talk, describing an internal feminist self who had lain dormant inside them. Georgia, for example, remarked that “I think I’ve always felt [feminist …] but I’ve never really consciously expressed an opinion about it”. Phoebe too spoke of an inner feminist self she had “always” had in the back of her consciousness:

I always kind of knew there was always that sort of like [voice] in the back thing going “what the hell are you doing Phoebe, this is so not you, you don’t, you know, you shouldn’t be caring about [your looks]”.

This account establishes a conflict between Phoebe’s authentic, feminist inner voice — readily legible as her true self — and externally imposed appearance-cares and pressures. Feminism is constructed as instrumental in Phoebe’s capacity to parse out destructive external influences, directing her focus back to her own authentic values and proclivities. Indeed, it is Phoebe’s inner feminist voice that keeps her on the path to authenticity by reminding her that such anxieties are out of step with who she is: “so not you”.

The authentic feminist selves participants described were imbued with what we might call a feminist ethical sensibility. This sensibility combined the personal conviction that “men and women should be equal” with a keenly felt desire to “fight” sexism (Jon) and to challenge oppressive ideas about sex, gender roles and sexuality. Yet, this feminist desire for social transformation was expressed through an individualised language of authenticity. Interviewees emphasised the personal, individual underpinnings of their feminist opposition to sexism, frequently referencing a sense of personal infringement or personal responsibility. In the passage below, it is Jon’s own frustration with gendered ideals and power relations (“it appears wrong to me”) that fuels his desire to “fight” the status quo:

I really wanted to fight what was going on and I still do, because I don’t agree with it at all and it appears wrong to me and that’s all I can really stand up for, what I believe.

Along similar lines, Amber described feeling “a kind of responsibility” to combat sexism. Challenging the status quo was entangled with the expression of her own priorities and a desire for progress and to “mak[e] something” of her life:
... because if I’m aware of [sexism] I should make something out of it [...] I haven’t given up on like how horrible the world is, just making something out of my life, yeah everybody has like things they want to do, work towards or like things they think are important to them and this is one of mine I guess

In Amber’s and Jon’s accounts, feminism appears as a primarily personal rather than a collective project: individual beliefs and personal responsibility are the framework through which a feminist ethical sensibility is legitimised. While previous research has illustrated how individualising logics close down space for critique and resistance (Baker, 2008, 2010), here personal feminist convictions seemed to propel some interviewees like Jade into a territory of political intervention:

mainly the things that people say or the things that people do and I’ll just realise how sexist, how sexist things are, and it has really created a real will for me to want to change those things, [I] really want it to be different to how it is.

The different facets of this coming-together of personal authenticity, inner feminism and feminist politics are visible in Claudia’s reflections about becoming feminist. Claudia connected learning about feminism with a nascent capacity to understand and express her inner self. She explained that feminism offered her a new and useful vocabulary with which to express “uncomfortable” feelings that she had registered inside but struggled to articulate. Feminism also prompted her to resist elements of mainstream culture that “talked at” her in ways she did not like.

there was kind of things that kind of talked at me, kind of made me uncomfortable, but I didn’t know how to phrase it. It’s learning about feminism, sexism, it’s like I know what it is now somehow [...] sometimes I feel uncomfortable, but I don’t quite know why that is. It’s really hard to, you know, criticise it or make objections. It’s good to have a way to express why I think why it makes me uncomfortable, why I don’t like it

This account works in at least two directions. On one hand, Claudia articulated feminism as an integral part of a larger project of self-discovery and personal authenticity. Feminism is positioned as a force that has helped Claudia to know
herself better, offering her tools for authentic, transparent self-expression. On the other hand, Claudia’s authentic feminism seems to take shape against an implicitly oppressive and problematic social context; in Claudia’s account, it was finding feminism that gave her a language to name this context and, perhaps, to challenge it.

**Authenticity and feminism: Feminist non-conformity**

Assertions of confident non-conformity are something of a cultural commonplace and a regular feature of people’s talk about themselves (Clarke & Smith, 2015; Gill et al., 2005). The imbrication of feminism and authenticity enabled participants to articulate being feminist as just such a form of positive difference and non-conformity. The feminist teenagers we interviewed explained that feminism set them apart from friends, peers and family, few of whom were described as feminist-friendly. Most talked of school and home environments where feminism was derided; being feminist was unintelligible at best and evidence of man-hating irrationality at worst (Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016a). In this context where being feminist was widely understood as a counter-normative identity, participants’ feminism functioned as evidence of their non-conformity and independence. Being feminist served as an “identifier” (Phoebe) for participants: a marker of difference that signalled their authenticity and willingness to stand apart from others.

Interviewees’ descriptions of being feminist were often articulated in these terms. Ashleigh explained that she had avoided telling her “really conservative” parents about the workshop content because of their religiosity and her perception that “Dad believes in gender roles”. Even so, she described her determination to be feminist “whether they approve or not”:

Octavia: … would your parents be happy with you identifying as a feminist do you think?

Ashleigh: I’m not too sure. We haven’t really discussed that issue. I am like willing to, whether they approve or not, it’s my beliefs.

Thomas described how he chose to seek out information about feminism for himself — in contrast to his friends who have “taken someone’s word for it and not actually discovered what [feminism] is for themselves”. Paige explained that learning about feminism differentiated her from peers who accept things the way they are; being
feminist “felt good […] I’m not this little puppet anymore”. In this way, feminism was mobilised as a source of identity capital for participants, insofar as it presented an opportunity to develop their own ideas and achieve positive differentiation from others. Several interviewees explained their participation in our research in these terms, referencing the opportunities they believed it would offer them to clarify their views, enrich their sense of self and more generally to make “progress”.

Of course, claims to non-conformity can be mobilised to account for any number of highly normative practices and attachments. Rather ironically, narratives of authentic non-conformity saturate contemporary advertising discourse and brand culture (Banet-Weiser, 2012; Gill & Elias, 2014). In our interviews with teenage feminists, however, non-conformity was frequently invoked as an explanatory frame for desires and actions that subverted the status quo. Holly, for instance, explained that learning more about feminism in the workshop had cemented her capacity for non-conformity, helping her to feel “less afraid” about asserting her oppositional self:

[the workshop] actually gave me a lot of confidence to kind of be like “yes, I’m feminist okay, it’s what I am. That’s my opinion, my views and I will challenge you if you make those kinds of [sexist] remarks”, you know

In Holly’s account above, it is her inner feminist self (“what I am”) that explains and authorises her feminist intent (“I will challenge you”). In this way, the confluence of feminism and authenticity discourse appeared to be a powerful discursive device insofar as it framed participants’ feminism as intelligible and warranted. Following the principles of authenticity, the teenagers we interviewed had a right (and perhaps a moral duty) to be true to their feminist selves. We suggest, then, that authentic non-conformity may facilitate a feminist political agenda insofar as it affirms counter-normativity and defends space for troublesome selves who subvert normative gendered expectations. Below we work through this claim, drawing on three extracts from our interview with Thomas.

Thomas came to the workshop with little formal knowledge of feminism and sexism. In our interview, he told us that he identified as feminist, something he explained as a mark of distinction just as Phoebe and Paige had:
Not everyone can accept themselves for who they are like they can’t accept their like little feminist traits that other people might view as being gay, yeah

This talk sits comfortably with the first analytic lens we proposed: that feminism might serve as a resource for proving one’s capacity to stand apart from the crowd. Thomas appeared to offer the potential riskiness of feminist identification for young men (both feminism and the label “gay” seemed to signify failed heteronormative masculinity among Thomas’ peers) as proof of his capacity for both self-acceptance and self-expression. Thomas’s account works to authorise his “little feminist traits”, placing them within a discourse of individuality while distorting himself from a label (being “gay”) that he resisted.

Intrigued by this account, we asked Thomas to elaborate on his capacity to accept parts of himself that “not everyone can”. He explained:

Um for me it’s just that I’ve just given up on what, given up on what people think of me, yeah I don’t really care anymore it’s just like you can think what you want I know that, I’ve I’ve got friends who know who accept me for my weirdness you don’t have to accept me for my weirdness, you don’t have to be my friend

Despite his upbeat delivery and his assertion of indifference to the good opinion of others, Thomas’s words orient implicitly to injury and hurt (“I’ve just given up […] you don’t have to be my friend”). He went on to describe being “constantly harassed” by his peers, who ceaselessly asked him “’are you gay?’ ‘are you gay?’ ‘are you gay?’”. These snippets give us some clues about the difficulties Thomas faced as a result of deviating from the hegemonic masculine norm, difficulties that pre-dated his identification as feminist. Returning to Thomas’s talk about accepting himself and his “little feminist traits”, we suggest that feminism is doing something more for Thomas than simply marking his (already evident) distinctiveness. Feminism denaturalises hegemonic masculinity, homophobia and heterosexism, moves that may offer Thomas a different, and potentially more liveable, position vis-a-vis traditional masculinity. Indeed, Thomas himself hinted at this possibility in his definition of what feminism meant to him:
To me feminism means that like male and female have equal rights [...] they should be able to be themselves without being judged because they should be equal. Anyone should be themselves without having to be judged on their gender, yeah.

Thomas imagines feminism as a space where the desire to be oneself “without having to be judged on their gender”, and where the desire to be a different kind of self, might be recognised and realisable. Thomas’ call for feminist transformation grows from an individualised claim to authenticity, as well as from his own experiences of being a self that his peers were unwilling to accommodate. Even so, the transformation Thomas called for was not articulated in purely personal terms: “anyone” has the right to be their authentic self and to embrace their difference and distance from hegemonic gendered practices and ideals.

**Authentic feminism: Overview**

The teenage feminists we interviewed spoke of their attachments to feminism through a discourse of authenticity, describing feminism as integral to an inner self they had uncovered and sought to express. The coming-together of feminism and authenticity discourse appeared to extend the scope of both, moving interviewees in multiple directions. On one hand, authenticity discourse lent feminism a degree of obviousness and naturalness it would not otherwise have enjoyed. In a context where feminism was generally invoked in resoundingly negative terms (see Chapter 6; see also Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016a), authenticity discourse seemed to offer feminism a more intelligible and liveable framing, aligning it with a normalised and normalising canon of personal qualities: self-knowledge, confidence and non-conformity. The position of ‘authentic feminist’ is a potentially persuasive counter to punishing mainstream representations of feminism that make a feminist identity difficult to inhabit. Indeed, being a confident, independent feminist has further appeal in a cultural context where admissions of inauthenticity, low confidence, vulnerability and conformity attract shame and censure (Bay-Cheng, 2015; Dobson, 2015; Layton, 2014).

At the same time, feminist identification served as evidence of interviewees’ capacity for non-conformity and their more general commitment to personal authenticity. More than simply an inwards-looking project of the self, however, authenticity offered a warrant for interviewees’ counter-normative feelings, desires and actions. The
position of authentic feminist provided participants with a politicised framework to make sense of the difference and distance between their experiences of self, on the one hand, and the cultural conditions of recognition they faced, on the other. Taking up this position, participants found avenues to articulate and justify their opposition to the constraints and cruelties of conventional gender relations. In other words, authenticity appeared to offer participants an alternative mode of visibility as feminist and an alternative mode of visibility as different from (and in opposition to) the gendered status quo. The finding that authenticity logic lent support to participants’ politicised feminist identifications complicates an understanding of individualising sensibilities, which more typically appear to disarticulate feminism and remove space within which politicised feminist identities might be asserted and claimed (Gill, 2007b, 2014; McRobbie, 2009; Scharff, 2013).

**Authenticity and feminist feeling**

Our analysis so far has skirted around the question of feeling and the affective trajectories authentic feminism appeared to entrain in the young feminists we interviewed. Feeling is, however, fundamental to understanding attachments to feminism, as well as the ‘click’ and ‘stick’ of political attachments more generally (Ahmed, 2010c; Berlant, 2006; Hemmings, 2012). In what follows we examine the feelings interviewees described as they felt their way through authentic feminism in their everyday lives. Mapping the lines of anger, desire and frustration that flowed from a sense that “something is amiss in how one is recognised” (Hemmings, 2012, p. 150), we consider participants’ feelings of dissonance as a foundation for transformative feminist politics.

**Dissonance and desire**

Outside the research spaces, participants’ articulations and enactments of feminism were frequently contested. Many participants described encountering others who were “closed off” (Jade) to feminism or who curtailed participants’ feminist self-expression by dismissing them as “crazy feminists” (Holly; see also Chapter 6 and Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016a). Interviewees described repeated experiences of silencing: being told to shut up about feminism, to get over sexism, to calm down about gendered
inequalities that troubled them. Paige, for example, described her father’s resistance when she started a conversation with him about straight white male privilege:

he was kind of just like, “stop sounding like a feminist. You need to go like you know, go back to school […] let them teach you the, you know equalities. Let them teach you that. Don’t go back to this workshop. This isn’t good. This isn’t working for you”.

Phoebe shared a similar anecdote: a friend’s response to Phoebe’s suggestion that sexism remained “an issue” in New Zealand. Her friend contested this analysis of sexism and the legitimacy of Phoebe’s position as feminist:

[my friend said] “I don’t understand why you think it’s necessary to be sort of all like feminist and stuff”. She was like “feminism is not an issue, we are past all that”.

Most feminist interviewees described moments like these: moments of misrecognition where feminism and interviewees’ positioning as feminist were closed down and disallowed. Talk of obstruction, of frustrated expression, reverberated through the interviews in these moments:

at times it’s frustrating (Max)

it’s frustrating (Ashleigh)

it just got me like really frustrated (Thomas)

it’s hugely frustrating for me (Jade)

very frustrating (Paige)

it’s just frustrating (Holly)

The frustration evident here recalls Clare Hemmings’ work on affective dissonance. Hemmings describes affective dissonance as a register of injustice, arising from the perception of what she calls “onto-epistemological gaps” (2012, p. 150) between one’s lived experience (of the self and the world) and terms of recognition the social world imposes. As one’s embodied, experiential knowledge of oneself collides with social and structural forces that restrict and disallow that self, a politicised desire to
resolve this contradiction and to transform narrow conditions of possibility can, and
sometimes does, take shape. For Hemmings, this pattern of dissonance and desire is a
powerful affective engine for feminist politics.

Certainly, affective dissonance laced participants’ talk about the inequalities and
injustices they had experienced and observed. Interviewees presented themselves as
“reasonable” feminists committed to ending gender equality (see Chapter 6; see also
Calder-Dawe & Gavey, 2016a), and yet they faced frequent misrecognition as man-
hating, irrational fanatics. As these experiences accumulated, many described
experiencing a fundamental shift in their ‘feel’ for the kind of game the social world
engaged them in and a desire to transform it. Recall Jade’s observation that perceiving
“how sexist things are [...] has really created a real will for me to want to change
those things, [I] really want it to be different to how it is”.

We also observed another source of trouble in participants’ accounts, one that
interacted with and amplified the feminist dissonance described above. Interviewees’
conviction that they were entitled to be their authentic feminist selves — and their
perception that they were seldom given such space — seemed to produce powerful
feelings of dissonance and frustration. Anger and disillusionment at others’ lack of
respect for feminist authenticity and self-expression looped through participants’
accounts of being feminist. This affective circuitry seemed to intensify participants’
subjective experiences of injustice, strengthening a desire for resistance and change.
Mia, for example, expressed her outrage that feminists got “so much shit” from peers
who “don’t accept” feminism. The dissonance Mia expressed is amplified by ideals of
authenticity and freedom of expression. Why should a feminist be silent about a
passion she “feels so strongly [...] that it’s a piece of her”?

there’s this one girl who is a year above me, she’s really cool, and she’s like
really into feminism and she always posts on Facebook stuff about feminism
which I think is really cool, but people give her so much shit for it, yeah. And
then they like, they [comment] “don’t care about this so much”, or “just let it
go, it’s not a big deal” and stuff like that when really, like you find it a big
deal [...] she’s so passionate about it [but] people are just like “well why do
you feel this way, like just let it go”. But you can’t really say that because it’s
something she’s so passionate about and feels so strongly about it that it’s a
piece of her, and people are trying to tell her like, “why do you care, like you shouldn’t just, just leave it”

The amplifying loops of frustration and dissonance we trace in interviews with young feminists recall Sara Ahmed’s (2012, 2014b) analysis of coming up against social and structural barriers. Ahmed (2014b) likens this experience to the sensation of moving alone against a flow of people: “you have to push to be when your being is not accommodated”. Through repeated encounters with entrenched anti-feminism and determined sexism, those we interviewed seemed to grow more sensitive to, and more frustrated by, the “barrier” (Paige) they faced, its dimensions, contours and discursive supports. The grinding necessity of this sort of ‘pushing’ led several to (re)interpret pervasive claims of equality and free speech for all, bringing them into focus as “non-performatives”: assertions that cite a reality that has not materialised (Ahmed, 2012). In Jade’s circles, for instance, feminist opinions were considered “not okay”. As a result, being herself was “really difficult”:

It’s really difficult for you to be able to have opinions that are different from other people. I have views that are different from other people, it’s like it’s not okay for me to have those views and it’s hugely frustrating

Along similar lines, the difficulties of expressing feminist perspectives seem to have prompted Georgia and Thomas to question what it means to “really get a say” — and under what conditions this might (and might not) be possible.

I think [I wouldn’t express feminist opinions] if I was outnumbered by men or boys, like a lot, which is kind of why it’s interesting in politics, how men outnumber women so much. Like I wonder if they really get a say. (Georgia)

… with feminism like in the early stages […] they’d like get together and use their voice to express their opinion against like the government for like equality of between genders and I I can now like resonate with that because when I’m talking to my friends about it I’m expressing my opinion but they’re just oppressing me like they oppress feminism, so I’m not really having my say. (Thomas)
For Ahmed (2012, 2014b), the frustration of pushing to be heard, of struggling just to be, can be politicising because it tends to produce new understandings of what it is one is coming up against. The experience of being ‘authentic feminists’ seemed to move participants in precisely this way. To a greater or lesser extent, the frustrations of being feminist crystallised new perceptions of the social world in all those we interviewed, kindling a desire for social transformation. For some, like Jade, Thomas and Georgia, this frustration leveraged space to articulate themselves as other than a self of pure capacity, invulnerability and responsibility — and, perhaps, to sidestep part of the responsibilising thrust of individualising discourses. The passages above also offer a glimpse of how loops of feminist feeling, of frustration, dissonance and desire, might produce “affective solidarity” (Hemmings, 2012). Georgia’s questions reached beyond her own experience, connecting her to others who might not “really get a say”. Similarly, although Thomas lacked support from friends, he spoke himself into a feminist history of collective opposition, “get[ting] together” and social critique. We read these flows of feeling as a form of solidarity that brings feminists together and feminist politics to life.

**Conclusion**

Our analysis has examined how teenagers’ accounts of being and becoming feminist took shape through an authenticity imperative: to know and to express the “real me”. Those we interviewed described feminism as integral to an inner self they had uncovered and were bound to express. This entanglement of feminism and authenticity appeared to work in several directions at once: authenticity justified and normalised feminism, while a feminist identity could be mobilised as a positive form of individuality. More than this, however, authenticity seemed to offer the teenage feminists we interviewed a framework for valuing counter-normative feelings, desires and actions. Our analysis has paid particular attention to the question of feeling, untangling the lines of affect authentic feminism appeared to entrain in the young feminists we interviewed. Mapping the loops of anger, desire and dissonance that patterned participants’ accounts of being feminist in their everyday lives, we have suggested that an authentic feminist identity opens up a transformative and politicising affective trajectory, one that propelled many we interviewed towards new understandings of the social world and their space for action within it.
More generally, we have sought throughout this article to produce an open-ended consideration of the coming-together of feminism and authenticity discourse; to explore the feedback loops that circulate between the two in all their ambivalence. Insofar as we fulfil this intent, we hope to offer a new account of how individualising discourses and feminism might come together and the current conditions of possibility for feminist politics. Authentic feminism could certainly fall within the “neoliberal” and “choice” feminisms that are attracting critique for their hollow and depoliticising celebration of agency (Baker, 2008; Budgeon, 2015; Quinn & Radtke, 2006; Stuart & Donaghue, 2012). And yet, our analysis illuminates how a coming-together of feminism and authenticity discourse can, in some circumstances at least, take more a politicised, transformative shape. Without overlooking the manifestly depoliticising potential of individualising logics, we show that authentic feminism created openings for young feminists to move outside a (neo)liberal rationality, entraining a process whereby the limits of individualised and neoliberal logics were made visible and deemed worthy of challenge.
Part V: Conclusions
Chapter 8: Concluding discussion

Change, continuities and contradictions

For the contemporary feminist analyst, the current moment — by which I mean variously, this year, this month, and right now — must rank as one of the most bewildering in the history of sexual politics. The more one looks, listens, and learns, the more complicated it seems. (Gill, 2016b, p. 613)

As I read my own analyses together with the flurry of recent scholarship on sexism and feminism, I am inclined to agree with Gill. Over the course of my doctoral research from 2012 to early 2017, what had been widely recognised as a postfeminist cultural moment of feminist disarticulation has morphed into a puzzling new shape. Sexism (of some kinds) and feminism (of some kinds) are now discernible as legitimate and worthy talking points in mainstream media; they are entering popular culture and, seemingly, public consciousness. These developments, alongside the rise of social media feminisms as part of a so-called digital “fourth wave” (Munro, 2013, p. 22), have been a cause for optimism in feminist circles (e.g. Rentschler & Thrift, 2015; Retallack et al., 2016; Traister, 2014). But, as Gill (2016a) has pointed out, new discursive resources and concomitant cultural trends do not seamlessly supersede the older ones; rather, new and old jostle and entangle with each other. Indeed, this is the crux of McRobbie’s (2009) argument in relation to the double entanglement of feminism with postfeminism. The task facing critical feminist scholars, therefore, is not simply to welcome the new/renewed visibility of sexism and feminism. We need to interrogate the nature of this visibility and consider its entanglements; we need to ask how emergent feminisms are operating and to examine the sorts of practices and subjectivities they bring into being.

These considerations animate the four empirical articles this thesis has presented in Chapters 4 to 7. In Chapter 4, I examined what interviewees observed around them as sexism, and how they made sense of their observations and of sexism more generally. My analysis outlined a contradictory pattern: while interviewees described noticing a great deal of ‘everyday’ sexism directed towards women and girls, their abstract
arguments about sexism were weighted towards the (generally hypothetical) harms and difficulties afflicting boys and men. Thus, it appeared that even though everyday sexism towards women and girls was visible and articulable, claims regarding the significance of these experiences were somehow less intelligible, or perhaps less desirable to make. In Chapter 5, I looked more closely at the interactional difficulties of challenging sexism, exploring how interviewees’ capacity to move against others’ sexism was constrained by a choreography that would easily wrong-foot them, presided over by the figure of the feminist killjoy. Like Chapter 4, this Chapter complicates claims that the increasing cultural visibility of everyday sexism will, ipso facto, make it easier for people to resist it in the course of everyday life. Chapter 6 took an analysis of the feminist killjoy in another direction, demonstrating how this figure travels from accounts of sexism into discourses of feminism. In claiming and affirming feminism, interviewees spoke and acted in ways that demonstrated the reasonableness of feminism — showcasing their own and feminism’s distance from the unreasonable, man-hating stereotype. This Chapter also drew tentative links between the capacity to embody feminist reasonableness and axes of power and privilege. This raised important intersectional questions about the accessibility of feminist identities. How do other forms of status and privilege calibrate a person’s visibility as the ‘right’ kind of feminist? Who can be feminist with ease — and who cannot? In Chapter 7, I took the postfeminist entanglement of feminist and individualising discourses as my direct object of analysis, exploring how interviewees constructed an ‘authentic feminist’ identity and teasing out some of its political implications.

To draw my thesis to a close, I want to bring these analytic contributions into conversation with a burst of recent scholarship that is beginning to respond to the “new cultural life” of sexism and feminism (Gill, 2016a, p. 1), and to consider the political significance of these shifts. If feminist discourse and feminist identities are ‘going viral’ in a manner that was unimaginable a decade ago, why and how is this happening — and how might we most usefully make sense of it? After formulating a response to this question drawn from the analytic Chapters outlined above, I conclude with some reflections on the broader significance of this thesis and on the contributions of my research as a body of work to the concerns and interests of feminist psychology.
Perhaps the liveliest source of debate at present concerns how to understand the relationship between the current efflorescence of feminisms and feminists, on the one hand, and a postfeminist cultural sensibility on the other. Part of the complexity of the matter stems from the variety of phenomena under investigation. The emergent feminisms in question might include examples as diverse as the transnational SlutWalk movement, Hollaback! and the Everyday Sexism Project; the wide circulation of feminist critiques of rape culture as visible in response to the Roast Busters case, which I examined in the Chapter 1 (see also Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2015; Rentschler, 2014); the explosion of feminism and feminist activism on and through social media platforms (Keller et al., 2015; Rentschler, 2014; Rentschler & Thrift, 2015; Sills et al., 2016); teenage-feminist activism (Blackett, 2016; Keller, 2016; Retallack et al., 2016); female and male celebrity feminisms (Cobb, 2015; Fairclough-Isaacs, 2016; Hamad & Taylor, 2015; Weidhase, 2015); ‘feminist’ issues of mainstream magazines such as Elle UK and the Evening Standard (Cobb, 2015; Gill, 2016b); corporate, neoliberal and “choice” feminisms (Budgeon, 2015; Rottenberg, 2014b, 2016), and the international marketisation of female confidence and ‘feminist’ empowerment, which exhorts girls and women to “lean in” (e.g. Sandberg, 2013), to love themselves and to realise their potential (Banet-Weiser, 2015; Gill & Elias, 2014; Koffman, Orgad, & Gill, 2015).

Feminist researchers have responded differently to the range and ambiguity of the processes and issues at stake, illuminating different patterns within the picture described above. Some, particularly those whose attention is focused on digital feminist activism and young feminists, have analysed these developments as part of an alleged ‘fourth wave’ of feminism that represents a fundamental challenge to theories of postfeminism (Blackett, 2016; Retallack et al., 2016). In these analyses, postfeminism is subject to two chief lines of critique. The first is that postfeminism may no longer be the best way to describe present cultural conditions. Where a postfeminist sensibility relegates sexism and the possibility of feminism to the past, feminism now appears to be ‘trending’ — a development that entails a new positioning of feminism as germane to the present moment and to contemporary gender relations. Second, theories of postfeminism, particularly the theoretical work of McRobbie, attract critique from some for its alleged failure to attend to the “resistant capacities of political subjects”, including “girls’ capacities to challenge and
reshape normative gender” (Blackett, 2016, p. 42). The proliferation of feminisms, particularly among young people often imagined as passive, uncritical or apolitical, is thus offered as evidence that feminist research and theorising needs to attend more carefully to questions of activism and agency in understanding the present cultural moment (see also Harris, 2010).¹

Others are less convinced that these changes in the cultural scene represent a break from the past, or mark the redundancy of postfeminism as an analytic term. Gill, a key figure associated with theorising postfeminism, has written recently in defence of the term, making a case for its continuing utility to critical feminist scholars (Gill, 2016a, 2016b). Gill stresses an understanding of postfeminism as an analytic category, one that attends to complexities and entanglements running between feminism, postfeminism and neoliberalism. Rather than simply a way to denote the absence or impossibility of feminism, then, a postfeminist cultural context is one where feminist politics and discourses are variously taken up, repudiated and bent into new shapes. For this reason alone, the term would still seem to have something to offer feminist scholars, given that an upwelling of popular feminism and feminist activisms, along with the ‘feministification’ of the mainstream and celebrity culture, appear to be intensifying and further complicating these interrelations. To illustrate her case for the enduring cultural force of postfeminism, Gill offers an analysis of the shift in popular figuration of feminist identity from unfashionable and undesirable (Scharff, 2013) to “stylish, successful and youthfully hip” (Gill, 2016b, p. 610; see also Keller, 2015). Her analysis demonstrates how this figurative ‘makeover’ makes visible a particular and seemingly content-free feminism and feminist identity that sits comfortably with postfeminist logics of individual success, confidence and self-love. Other, less glamorous and more politically challenging feminisms — and feminists — remain

¹ Such calls have recently been analysed by Gill and Donaghue (2013, p. 240) as part of an intensifying “turn to agency” within some strands of feminist scholarship. The authors point out that, in cases where a strategic or celebratory focus on individual agency forecloses analysis of the social context ‘agents’ are operating within, this trend produces a “curiously asocial and acultural image of the female subject” (Gill & Donaghue, 2013, p. 248), one that appears to reinscribe the individualising effects of postfeminism.
hidden from view. This is not to say that the political potential of popular feminisms ought to be entirely discounted, but rather, as Gill suggests, that there is value in balancing an optimistic interest in the ‘new’ with a more circumspect attention to the structures and processes that resist transformation.

McRobbie, whose monograph *The Aftermath of Feminism* (2009) is often cited as a key reference for theories of postfeminism, has also contributed to recent discussion concerning how to make sense of the renewed visibility and popularity of feminism and its relationship to postfeminist, neoliberal logics. Like Gill, McRobbie (2015) appears sceptical that the current cultural moment of mainstream ‘feministification’ represents a move against postfeminism and/or a return to collectivist feminist politics. Instead, she understands feminism’s “comeback” as a sign of the recuperation of the possibility of popular feminism into a form that is compatible with — and, indeed, supports — competitive individualism and “the equating of female success with the illusion of control, with the idea of ‘the perfect’” (McRobbie, 2015, p. 4). McRobbie uses “the perfect” as a shorthand for relentless forms of self-directed monitoring, regulation and discipline currently on offer to women in order to achieve proximity to the ‘good life’. Activities associated with the perfect might include monitoring weight, food intake, exercise, relationship quality, child-care practices, work productivity, life balance, mood and self-confidence, sexiness, grooming and the tidiness and cleanliness of one’s home. McRobbie suggests that the perfect, as a “horizon of expectation”, is compatible with an individualised feminism premised on personal success and competition and which “discards the older, welfarist and collectivist feminism of the past, in favour of individualistic striving” (McRobbie,

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2 I recall, in relation to this point, the criticism and trolling directed at the Cambridge historian Mary Beard, who dared not only to be feminist on television (in the manner of Emma Watson, Neelam Gill and other ‘fresh faces’ of feminism), but did so without being young and beautified. This prompted *Sunday Times* writer AA Gill to remark that “she was less fit for a history programme than for ‘The Undateables’, a British reality show for the lovelorn, disabled or disfigured” (Schneier, 2016). According to the same report, Beard’s refusal to accept misogynist bullying — and her smart and funny ripostes — have made her “something of a folk hero”.
Rottenberg had made similar arguments about the intensifying entanglements of postfeminist, neoliberal and feminist discourses in the United States. In her examinations of an emergent brand of “lean in” corporate feminism typified by Sheryl Sandberg and Anne-Marie Slaughter, she notes how these individualised and (white) privileged articulations of feminism function to “bolster oppressive hierarchies as well as neo-liberal and neo-conservative politics” (Rottenberg, 2014b, 2014a, 2016, p. 1).

Like McRobbie and Gill, I am convinced that postfeminism remains a vital analytic tool for understanding and problematizing the re-entry of feminism into the mainstream. They and others have pointed out how closely new representations of feminism and feminists can align with a postfeminist sensibility that emphasises individual rights, autonomy and self-improvement, and with a neoliberal feminine subjectivity and neoliberal politics more generally. As these authors would likely acknowledge, however, the picture remains one of complex entanglement, rather than the wholesale capture and co-optation of feminism. For, as I have suggested, feminism is not so easily contained. My own work with teenagers has offered evidence that points to the continuity of postfeminist logics as well as their porosity and openness to unanticipated mobilisations. In light of this evidence, remaining attentive to the political potential of some elements of ‘feministification’ is surely an important analytical and political task. Moreover, it is a task that can be done without adopting a purely celebratory register that is deaf to the continuing cultural force of postfeminism, individualisation and neoliberalism.

With this purpose in mind, I use the remainder of this concluding Chapter to pull together and interrogate threads of political possibility from the analyses presented in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. My interest lies in how the more fine-grained patterns I have mapped across my analyses might usefully flesh out, temper, nuance, affirm and also subvert the broader claims in scholarly circulation concerning the possibilities for feminist politics within and in relation to a neoliberal and postfeminist cultural context. I focus my discussion on two elements of my analytic work. First, I examine the three feminist figures who populate my analyses. Where previous chapters have held these figures apart, here I bring them together, reflecting on how they move with and against each other, the lines of feeling each opens up and the kind of feminist politics they bring into being. Second, I speak directly to the problem of collective
politics in individualising times. To do so, I work with the ‘authentic feminist’ subject position discussed in Chapter 7, tracing the effects of dissonance and the perception of “onto-epistemological gaps” (Hemmings, 2012) in participants’ accounts of challenging sexism and being feminist.

**Figuring feminists: killjoys, reasonableness and feminist authenticity**

Discussion about feminism and feminists almost inevitably has a dispositional dimension. That is, arguments about what feminism is, and what it is that feminists *really* want, tend to hinge on assertions about feminists’ character: their feelings, motives and comportment. In previous chapters of this thesis, we have met the feminist killjoy (Ahmed, 2010b), whose aliases include “Ms Hyde” (Edley & Wetherell, 2001) the “selfish feminist” (Tyler, 2007) and the “Feminazi” (Cohen, 2015). She is, as I have explained already, a figurative, personified vessel for a repertoire of dismissive and damning claims about feminism and feminists. In my analyses, I have suggested that, in her present form, she pulls together two culturally salient lines of repudiation. On one hand, she is angry, unfeminine, and unreasonable; bitterly man-hating, selfish, humourless and oversensitive. This series of claims about feminists is familiar and culturally enduring. On the other hand, the killjoy is also mobilised to represent a bundle of pejorative claims more particular to the present moment: claims pertaining to agency, self-improvement and happiness. The feminist killjoy is an unhappy figure. As Sara Ahmed’s use of the term suggests, the killjoy also *spreads her unhappiness around*, attributing her own troubles to other people and, in doing so, pushing her bad feeling onto them. This runs against the moral grain of neoliberal selfhood, wherein subjects are increasingly interpellated as agents who must eschew vulnerability, take personal responsibility for their circumstances and work individually to transform them. The killjoy attempts no such situational or psychic makeover. Instead, she blames others — men in particular — for her woes. Thus, the figure of the feminist killjoy, as I analyse her, is an affect outlaw (Ahmed, 2010b). Considering affect and emotion with a language of movement,3 we could say

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3 As Ahmed (2004) points out, the word emotion comes from the Latin *emovere* meaning *to move* or *to move out.*
that the feminist killjoy is moved in the wrong way: she is angry, hurt or offended without reasonable grounds. She also moves others wrongly, by blaming, accusing and otherwise disrupting good feeling. She is thus a double symbol of “wrong feeling”: her feelings are wrong (she is mistaken) and she acts wrongly (by taking her personal problems out on others in a despicable way).

I considered the feminist killjoy in some detail in Chapters 4 and 5, suggesting that her figurative presence made it difficult for the young women I interviewed to challenge sexism and even to speak about inequalities affecting women and girls. To avoid being positioned as a killjoy, interviewees spoke carefully about sexism, raising examples gently, jokingly, often taking care to emphasise a personal awareness that sexism goes “both ways” (Amber) and to orient to the gendered difficulties facing men and boys. In Chapter 5 particularly, I drew out this line of argument and considered its implications for what I have called ‘feminist feeling’: by repeatedly orienting to and responding to sexist treatment of women and girls as if it was inconsequential, interviewees rehearsed an affective-discursive choreography that potentially dulls politicising feelings of outrage and discontent — feelings that fuel feminist politics.

In Chapter 6, I discussed another feminist figure at some length: the reasonable feminist. In accounting for their feminist identifications, interviewees explained feminism as a reasonable and justified political position. They also worked to embody and enact the qualities they claimed for feminism by appearing calm and logical. Like the gentle and jocular responses to sexism analysed in Chapter 5, reasonable feminism — and the reasonable feminist — take shape in response to the figure of the feminist killjoy. On one hand, this appears a promising development. The figure of the reasonable feminist made space for at least some forms of feminist speech and offered some participants a liveable, even attractive position from which to claim feminism. On the other hand, reasonable feminism is subject to the critiques outlined above: by disciplining one’s embodied and interactional responses to sexism so as to appear ‘reasonable’, one engages in emotional labour that also works to downplay and disconnect with the injustices that feminism sets out to challenge. Finally, reasonable feminism relies on and references the feminist killjoy; this figure is the constitutive outside against which ‘reasonable’ articulations of feminism are intelligible. Considered in relation to the broader discursive field, therefore, the figure of the
reasonable feminist poses little challenge to the feminist killjoy or the patriarchal interests the latter represents and defends.

Examining the figures of the feminist killjoy and the reasonable feminist together in this way helps to illuminate how power and privilege intersect with feminist speech. Reasonableness and unreasonableness are not neutral attributes that adhere equally to everyone. First, and perhaps most obviously, the feminist killjoy is a figure who weighs on women, rather than men. This is an effect of entrenched sexism, whereby men have come to appear rational and reasonable far more readily than women, who are instead associated with irrationality, emotionality and hysteria. While the young men I spoke with certainly tangled with issues around heteromasculine capital and being ‘unmanned’ through proximity to feminism as described in Chapter 6, they did not appear to risk legibility as killjoys in the way young women did. Other forms of privilege and social capital may also be engaged in arguments about feminism. For example, it is clear that the quality of (un)reasonableness intersects with axes of privilege such as class, sexuality, ethnicity and age. In Chapter 6, I analysed Holly’s talk about two feminist young women at her school, one confident and popular, the other less so. Diffuse qualities of ‘coolness’ and charisma, which are themselves intimately entangled with privilege and social capital, helped one young woman to carry off a feminist identity. The other, “not as cool”, was dismissed as an “angry feminist” whose anger was legible as personal and dispositional rather than political (“attacking […] because you want to attack”; Holly).

From this perspective, then, it becomes clear that when contention over feminism revolves around feminist character and disposition, these conversations are likely to engage privilege in its various forms. This is something to keep in mind, particularly given the coming-together of feminism and heterofeminine privilege evident in current celebrity and corporate feminisms (Gill, 2016b; Keller, 2015; Rottenberg, 2014b). The feminist subjectivities enacted by Beyoncé, Emma Watson and Sheryl Sandberg are unlikely to ‘trickle down’ in a straightforward way to women and girls with less access to feminine and neoliberal ideals. Moreover, the fact that these women can speak about feminism with ease does not necessarily temper the riskiness of feminist speech for others who do not and cannot approximate “the perfect” (McRobbie, 2015).
These questions of feminist speech and the politics of speaking as a feminist bring me to my final feminist figure: the authentic feminist. Laid out in detail in Chapter 7, the authentic feminist pulls together feminism and authenticity discourse, opening the way for interviewees to claim a feminist identity as a form of authentic selfhood and individuality. This figure is significant for several reasons. First, it lies outside the gravitational pull of un/reasonableness as I have outlined it above. Second, the authentic feminist is not a decisively gendered figure as the feminist killjoy and the reasonable feminist are; as a consequence, it offers a position for both male and female feminists, and was taken up by both young women and young men I interviewed. Third, where reasonable feminism and the feminist killjoy depend on silencing or sublimating bad feeling, an authentic feminist position is premised on open self-expression. This brings me to the fourth, and most crucial dimension of this figure: it brings with it a novel set of expectations concerning others’ responsibilities. Where reasonable feminism and the feminist killjoy are both entangled with how well or poorly others’ impressions and feelings are managed, authentic feminism takes shape quite differently, as a form of self-expression that deserves respect and tolerance. This has substantial implications for how accounts identifying sexism and identifying as feminist can unfold: for ‘authentic’ feminists, the moral burden is shifted away from the qualities and character of the feminist herself (is she reasonable? Is she nice?) and towards those around her, who are, in light of hegemonic discourses of authenticity, morally bound to respect feminist self-expression.

With the authentic feminist, therefore, it seems we have something new: a position that breaks from the more familiar patterning of discourses of feminism and feminists discussed in Chapter 6. Perhaps, on first acquaintance, the authentic feminist recalls the ‘can-do’ feminist figure described by Gill and McRobbie, for whom feminism is less a matter of collective politics and more an accessory to (and justification for) personal success. As Chapter 7 made clear, however, authentic feminism is a far more dynamic and ambiguous position than this reading allows for. The ‘obvious good’ of

4 The feminist killjoy and the reasonable feminist recall Edley and Wetherell’s (2001) analysis of Ms. Jekyll (nice feminism) and Ms. Hyde (nasty feminism). The authentic feminist has no similar genealogy.
personal authenticity offered a powerful discursive justification for being feminist. Moreover, this position offered an affective-discursive foundation for resisting and challenging others’ silencing of feminist feeling. Where the killjoy and the reasonable feminist seem to work together to dampen and recuperate politicising affects, the authentic feminist position enables a turn towards dissonant experiences and towards the affects that, as Hemmings (2012, p. 150) has it, “give[] feminism its life”. I tease out the implications of this move in the section below.

Dissonance, gaps and feminist feelings in postfeminist times

Writing of herself as a teenager, and like many of the teenagers I interviewed, the philosopher Clare Hemmings noted that she had not yet had cause to perceive “gaps” between her understanding of the world as a fair and equitable place for women and her experience in it. She goes on to explain:

… as time went on I discovered rather profound differences between my sense of self and the social expectations I occupied with respect to gender and sexuality, and the reflections on my experience of these differences also, I believe, helped me gain some feel for other onto-epistemological gaps with respect to e.g. race, ethnicity, disability or class. My outrage found another object — social and cultural inequalities and the knowledge systems that naturalise these — and I attached to feminism which now offered a way both of preserving a coherent sense of self (still equal to any boy or man) and of bringing ontology and epistemology closer together again (through politicised intervention). (Hemmings, 2012, p. 150)

In Chapter 7, I analysed a pattern resonant with Hemmings’s, whereby interviewees’ desire and sense of entitlement to be authentic feminists exposed onto-epistemological gaps around them that had previously been hidden. Mia, for instance, spoke of her anger that feminism was not considered a legitimate passion in her peer circles:

… they would take offence if I was like “why do you care so much about Manchester United? Just leave it.” […] but because it’s feminism people get so up in arms about it and they just think that it’s not worth caring about when
really for me I find feminism a bit of a bigger, like a bit of a bigger inspiration or issue that’s worthy of being taught than you know, the soccer score

Initially, Mia constructed feminism as a depoliticised hobby equivalent to an interest in the Manchester United football team: a legitimate personal interest on par with any other. Mia’s (perhaps unexpected) discovery that feminism was dismissed as “not worth caring about” appears to have prompted her to reflect on, and problematize, the lack of social space she saw for feminism and being feminist. In a sociocultural climate that fetishizes personal choice and expression, feminism was an identity that Mia — along with several others I interviewed — was not permitted to choose. This, as I have suggested, creates a great deal of interpretative pressure as a ‘common sense’ that insists on free choice chafes against Mia’s visceral experience of not having such freedom. Moving beyond a language of individual choice and preference, Mia engaged a broader ethics which places feminist concerns as a more legitimate, and yet less obvious, source of “inspiration” that is “worthy of being taught”. Moreover, as I explained in the section above, it is others’ feelings (and the broader cultural common sense that scaffolds them) that Mia described wanting to change, rather than her own feelings, or herself. Her feminism is not the problem.

As feminist scholarship continues to demonstrate, postfeminist and neoliberal discourses are full of “onto-epistemological gaps” (Hemmings, 2012): spaces where ontological and epistemological possibilities do not quite line up. Certainly, there is a veritable chasm between postfeminist discourses of gender equality, unfettered agency and self-expression and the experiential realities of sexism, misogyny and inequality of opportunity facing many of us. Much of the power of neoliberal and postfeminist discourses depends on their capacity to mask or else divert attention away from the gaps between social reality as it is claimed, and social reality as it is experienced. Part of the political potential of feminism lies in its capacity to illuminate these gaps: to speak about dissonance, to spark discontent and energise efforts to ‘close the gaps’ through political action. It is no coincidence, therefore, that
the political movements for liberation, including feminism and the work of Freire, have mined the experiential as a source of collective political consciousness. Following this line of argument, I contend that dissonance is not only a product of being feminist as outlined above, but that it may also be part of what drew some participants to feminism — and to my research — in the first place. Several participants I interviewed described a niggling feeling, an embodied knowledge of something they had not yet fully articulated. As Claudia put it, there were “things that kind of talked at me, kind of made me uncomfortable, but I didn’t know how to phrase it”. Several other interviewees described experiencing this kind of interpretative pressure, often when they had found themselves coming up against sexist practices in the past. Max, for instance, explained that he moved away from many of his male friends early in high school because he found their sexism unbearable:

I found that like usually my friend group would be like a mix of boys and girls because I found that being with like a group of all males was kind of, I don’t know, repulsing for me, but I couldn’t handle when they would be like really sexist and say disgusting things about girls. I just wasn’t really comfortable with that […] I thought that was really disrespectful. Like I found that I had a sort of sense of being moral, so I couldn’t push myself to adhere to that and put on that kind of façade, so yeah.

The gap Max described resembles Hemmings’s: it lies between his sense of himself and the gendered practices he is called on to witness and participate in. Phoebe

5 Feminist consciousness-raising and Freirean conscientization both set out to ‘politicise’ people through excavating the latent politics of their everyday experiences.

6 In referring to a sense of ‘self’, Hemmings is not, in my reading, imagining an essentialist self who dwells outside culture and language. Rather, and with reference to the early work of Probyn (1993), she describes this self as an artifact of living and lived experience. Experience, in turn, is understood as socially constructed but not fully determined or determining: as “anything but a given or natural category […] but rather one that can be a starting point for thinking through both feminist process and the process of becoming a feminist” (Hemmings, 2012, p. 149).
described a dissonance of a different kind: a dissonance within herself that mirrored the contradictory appearance-related imperatives for women that mark a postfeminist cultural sensibility. On one hand, Phoebe described endorsing the message of “love your body” discourses (Gill & Elias, 2014): “one of my speeches I did in year 12 was on how damaging media and advertising was”. At the same time, she described struggling to accept her own body, a situation she assessed as “just really ironic”:

one of my friends, um pretty much, you know, within the months that I was doing that, she had an eating disorder and wasn’t eating. And I would be thinking damn, I just wish I could not eat so I could look a little bit more like that.

The onto-epistemological blistering evident in Max and Phoebe’s accounts above — and in others’ — is not inherently radical or politicising. It does, however, suggest something important about the political possibilities that exist inside a sexist and apparently depoliticising cultural context. As McRobbie (2009, 2015), Gill (2007b, 2016b) and others have made clear, postfeminism entails entanglement: it is a sensibility that disarticulates feminist politics but is nevertheless inflected with feminist discourse. As a partial consequence of this inflection, postfeminist logic is suffused with “gaps” between what is claimed and what is: gaps with potential to trigger dissonance and to create space for new interpretative strategies.

**Concluding thoughts**

Having stepped in to examine the fine-grained patterns of my analyses, I want to conclude by taking several steps backwards to achieve a wider view of this thesis and its positioning within the field of critical feminist scholarship it engages. Over the past five years, there has been a remarkable surge in the visibility of feminism and gender inequality in a context that had appeared hostile to feminism and analyses of gendered power. This shift has ushered in a new suite of questions for feminist scholars. What sorts of feminism and sexism are becoming visible and articulable? How might they challenge, or reinforce, a persistent, and perhaps intensifying, climate of sexism and “popular misogyny” (Banet-Weiser, 2016)? How do they work with or against postfeminist logics? These questions intersect with the two analytical themes my
discussion has drawn out above: first, the issue of feminist-postfeminist entanglement, and second, the politics of visibility in relation to feminism, feminists and sexism.

First, I shall speak to the question of entanglement. Critics who seek to characterise the overarching cultural trend of ‘feministification’ have tended to suggest that the new feminisms visible inside the popular mainstream are postfeminist in nature. Accordingly, feminism is understood to achieve a new visibility only insofar as it divests itself of questions of power, equity and redistribution that might trouble the patriarchal capitalist status quo. The neoliberal and postfeminist feminisms on show in the mainstream work to support the individual advancement of the privileged few, and are thought to offer few meaningful possibilities for collective feminist politics and social transformation (Budgeon, 2015; Gill, 2016b; McRobbie, 2015; Rottenberg, 2014b). This argument ties into and extends established feminist critiques that illuminate how postfeminist and neoliberal discourses individualise and depoliticise everyday experiences of structural injustices, requiring that “individual biographies [are] narrated as if they were the outcome of deliberative action and choice” (Gill & Donaghue, 2013, p. 254; see also Baker, 2008; Hlavka, 2014; Kelan, 2007). In short, this position suggests that the feminist-postfeminist entanglement is continuing much as it has over the past decade: the fact that (some) ‘can-do’ feminisms are gaining cultural traction does little to mitigate the depoliticising effects of this entanglement more generally.

There is some support for this position to be found within the pages of this thesis. In my analyses of teenagers’ talk, sexism and feminism do appear to be most readily perceptible and articulable in terms of the personal and the particular. When couched in a normative language of personal experience, individual opinion or authenticity, potentially explosive claims about sexism and feminism readily attach to postfeminist and neoliberal ‘individual rights’ discourse, and may be rendered intelligible (only) through this proximity. Being reasonable (Chapter 6), keeping cool (Chapter 5) and

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7 The SlutWalk movement is an interesting case to consider in light of this argument. As an example of feminist activism with considerable popular traction, it is instructive to note how these protests were often framed in media as championing the individual rights and freedoms of women to dress as they please, despite also incorporating a critique of rape culture.
being authentic (Chapter 7) are all modes of personalising feminism and feminist speech, mobilising culturally favoured individual qualities in order to lend interviewees authority. As my analysis of the killjoy and the reasonable feminist suggested, an emphasis on the personal to the exclusion of the structural can, at least in some cases, close down possibilities for effective critique of sexism, just as McRobbie and others suggest.

And yet, this is not the whole story: there is more to say about feminist-postfeminist discursive entanglements and the productive ambivalence of (some) postfeminist logics. An attention to feminist figures, feminist feelings and the complex affective circuitries at play in young feminists’ talk both complicates and nuances critiques of individualised feminisms. Using the example of authentic feminism, this thesis illustrates how a position that is clearly entangled with individualising logics may also foster dissonance, pushing these same logics to fracturing point. This serves as a reminder that pervasive and often punishing postfeminist logics also contain footholds for of ambivalence — and are, perhaps, more fragile than they may seem. It also suggests something important about the flexibility of individualising and personalising discourses. While they certainly can be (and indeed are being) mobilised in decidedly oppressive ways, discourses of the personal are not inherently devoid of political potential: recalling the role of the personal, the biographical and the experiential in the history of feminist theory and activism reminds us of this. With this reminder in hand, we are better positioned to avoid totalising arguments that freeze new feminisms into place as wholly ‘bad’ or individualised. The choice-and-autonomy rhetoric that animates postfeminist discourse has a history and a force of its own that exceeds any singular use. And, as this thesis attests, choice, freedom and authenticity are ideals that hold at least some potential to animate contemporary feminist politics, as well as to deflate them.

This thesis also speaks to pressing, intersectional questions of visibility: how some forms of sexism, and some representations of feminists, are more visible than others. Through close analyses of feminist figures and the choreography of sexist interactions, my work shows how the capacity to ‘be’ feminist intersects with diffuse elements of identity and privilege that shape how successfully feminism can be inhabited with reasonableness and confidence, rather than bitterness and anger. Feminism is most comfortably taken up by those women and girls who are least
vulnerable to positioning as a feminist killjoy. Most often, these are highly successful, youthful and attractive feminists who are generously endowed with privilege of various kinds. The experiences of SPARK, a multigenerational activist collective in the United States, is telling in this regard. According to SPARK members, the group’s collective efforts to persuade Seventeen magazine to stop photo-shopping models were deliberately reframed by journalists as the remarkable achievement of one white, able-bodied and conventionally attractive fourteen-year-old named Julia, who was “elevated as a singular, independent girl crusader” (Edell, Mikel Brown, & Montano, 2016, p. 699). These observations about the patterning of feminist visibility offer a vital counterpoint to the cautiously optimistic argument I have advanced above. While feminist scholarship will benefit from remaining open to the possibilities for effective, transformative feminist politics in individualizing contexts, we must continue to ask questions about how (un)evenly these possibilities are distributed.

Taking up this argument about visibility more broadly, my analysis of feminist figures also speaks to the wider conditions of possibility shaping contemporary subjectivities. In Chapter 7, I demonstrated how authenticity discourse served as an important discursive tool for legitimising feminist identifications. Authenticity appears to have a broader cultural life, too, as one element in a bundle of liberal discourses that are breaking some new ground in terms of gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual and trans* rights. In this context, I suggest, it may matter somewhat less precisely which identity one claims, and matter more how one is able to claim it and make it visible: more specifically, whether a given identity can be articulated as a mode of self-expression, authenticity and individuality. That feminism can be relatively easily mobilised by some as a marker of confidence (as in, ‘daring’ to be feminist) and self-knowledge certainly contributes to its recent uptake by mainstream media and advertisers. In this sense, new and popular mediated feminisms could be read as part of a larger contemporary articulation of ideal femininity that calls on women to repudiate low confidence, conformity and vulnerability and pathologises those who do not appear able or willing to do so (see Dobson, 2015; Gill & Elias, 2014).

8 The widespread support for gay marriage in New Zealand, particularly among young people, could be read in these terms of individual recognition, authenticity and self-expression; see also Chapter 6.
As a body of work, this thesis demonstrates how a focus on entanglement and visibility helps us account for the intensifying contradictions of the present postfeminist moment, wherein popular feminism jostles with sexism and popular misogyny (Banet-Weiser, 2016). In this context, postfeminist rhetorics of freedom, free speech, authenticity and liberal tolerance collide with mundane sexism in kaleidoscopic — and sometimes politicising — ways. These collisions have potential to produce dissonance: an awareness of the onto-epistemological gaps in postfeminist common sense and a desire to suture those gaps through political action and social transformation. And, as new articulations of feminism and new forms of misogyny are becoming hyper-visible through social media, such collisions may well become more and more frequent. This complex affective circuitry opens out a way to understand and hold in tension the contradictory, even baffling character of the present cultural moment: a moment that moved several young men to declare themselves ‘Roast Busters’ and to crow about their sexual assaults on young women — and a moment that moved many, many thousands more to air their fury and to call for the end of rape culture in New Zealand.

**On minding the gaps**

This thesis began with a gap: one exposed during the “Minister of Pornography” scandal between the troubling elements of mainstream heterosexual pornography and what people were prepared to see and say about it (which turned out to be very little indeed). *Sexual Politics Now*, the programme of feminist research of which this thesis is one part, was formed in order to intervene in this gap: to create conversations about gendered inequalities and sexual ethics where there had been a vacuum.

‘Minding the gaps’ is also a useful way to characterise the political and analytical strategy that has animated my own research programme, and to express its methodological and empirical contributions. I devised the project with two distinct aims in mind. The first was to investigate how teenagers were making sense of feminism, sexism and gender equality in a postfeminist context riddled with contradictions, non-performatives (Ahmed, 2012; see also Chapter 5) and onto-epistemological gaps. In other words, the project was about watching for and attending to gaps, and undertaking the feminist work of drawing attention to the spaces and experiences that ‘common sense’ overlooks. Working from a feminist
position, however, I wanted my research to do more than identify gaps and pinpoint ‘missing’ discursive resources. My second aim was to develop a methodology that would create opportunities for diversifying participants’ savoir regarding feminism, sexism and gendered inequalities in the course of the research, by sharing feminist analytical tools not in wide circulation at the time the research began. In Chapter 2, I presented in some detail the dynamic sociocultural approach I developed for this purpose, employing problem-posing as a strategy for precipitating gaps between one’s knowledge of the world, or savoir, and one’s experiences in it. For some participants, the workshop experience seemed to offer a framework for making sense of feelings and perceptions they had not previously been able to name: as Mia remarked, “you don’t really get taught about that kind of stuff in school”.

The four empirical chapters of this thesis have reached into the spaces between postfeminist discourses of gender equality and the continuance of everyday sexism. I have explored how interviewees made sense of sexism and how they sought to move against it; how they constructed feminism and feminists, and how they sought to make feminist identities articulable. My broader argument concerning the entanglements of feminism, sexism and postfeminism and the political possibilities of the current cultural moment has hinged on the perception of onto-epistemological gaps and the feeling positions these gaps do, or do not open up.

This thesis has also contributed to the project of precipitating gaps and diversifying savoir in ways that extend beyond its pages, and beyond the scope of a conventional thesis. Alongside empirical and methodological contributions, my doctoral research programme has included public scholarship: the production of a comprehensive gender and sexism workshop resource for working with young people (see Calder-Dawe, 2014; see also Appendix A) and more recently a series of short videos scripted from research interviews that share interviewees’ perspectives on gender, sexism and feminism. Both are tools, albeit of different kinds, for making sexism visible, for illuminating ‘gaps’ and non-performatives that name a state of equality that has not come to pass. The videos, included in preliminary ‘rough cut’ form as part of this thesis, are intended for use in schools to spark discussion and reflection. The workshop resource was designed for researchers and community practitioners interested in creative and participatory approaches to issues of gendered power. The resource has attracted interest locally and internationally, and original exercises I
designed have been adapted for use in the *Mates and Dates* programme, part of a national sexual violence prevention initiative by the Accident Compensation Corporation to support young people to build healthy relationships (see http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/at-school/mates-dates/index.htm for more information).

Taken as a whole, this thesis is the footprint of a multifaceted feminist research project that began, and now ends, with a feminist commitment to ‘minding the gaps’ between neoliberal, postfeminist discourses and the experiences and possibilities that contour everyday life. It is clearer than ever to me now that these gaps are sites in the social fabric where there is potential to know differently, sites where dissonance builds and injustices may come to be felt, owned and resisted. As a feminist researcher working in these decidedly unequal and porous times, I intend to continue to follow these cracks and fissures, to think and research in a manner that minds the gaps, and exposes them.
Postscript

As I sit and contemplate my experience of being in and with this research project — almost a five-year relationship now — and the story the thesis tells of it, I feel the crowding pressure of what I have not told, of what has not been conveyed. Of course, one can never give the ‘whole story’ of research — any account is necessarily constructed and partial — but there are a few avenues, as yet unexplored, that I would like to venture into with the help of this Postscript. Below, I offer three vignettes that dip into some of the personal dimensions of my relationship with this research.

**Vignette 1: On finding feminism**

I remember walking with a friend up a narrow, spiralling staircase inside the Victoria Street car parking building, a few paces behind her mother. We were 12 or 13, suburban and thrilled to be out in the city in the early evening. Somehow or other, I made a passing reference to feminism — and my friend grimaced in distaste at the word. I knew very little about feminism at the time; less, clearly, than my worldlier companion. I do remember noting my friend’s reaction: this, I thought, was something I should remember for the future. Next time someone mentioned feminism, I would try out a knowing grimace of my own.

This ‘lesson’ about feminism took me a long time to un-learn. It took hold, in part, because feminism was not a word that I had heard circulated in school or in my family. Looking back, I am surprised at the latter: my mother, maternal grandmother and aunts are funny, unconventional women who make no attempts to cloak their intelligence or their amused disregard for make-up, laundry, house-cleaning and cooking.

Late in my undergraduate studies, I enrolled in Nicola Gavey’s course “Gender and Psychology” — someone had recommended it, and though I wasn’t sure if it would be ‘my thing’, it didn’t seem too far from the mainstream political and social psychology that I was interested in at the time. Nicola’s course challenged me to reposition myself in relation to feminism. Re-evaluating feminism/myself/the social world was a
visceral experience. During the course, memories and old habits started to take on a new patterning and significance. I had a way to make sense of my extreme discomfort at the photo-shop man who told me I was “blossoming” (I never went back), my years of wearing baggy clothes (Dad’s navy Apple sweatshirt was a particular favourite) and the sick feeling I got around some men’s way of looking at women and girls. Though I had not formulated it in this way at the time, I came to see that I had always noticed and hated being reduced to another person’s gendered perception of me, and that I had done what I could to avoid the experience. From my early relationships with friends and family, I grew accustomed to being addressed as a mind, a personality; as a result, I was highly sensitive to derivitizing treatment I had not been taught to expect.¹

The feminism I encountered through Nicola at University offered me a critical understanding of this gap between expectation and experience, and of other gaps too. This was the pouvoir-savoir formulation at work — and I was hooked. This Vignette is part of how I make sense of why and how I came to this research project — and why working with young people to prise open onto-epistemological gaps was so profoundly appealing and important to me.

Vignette 2: On women talking about themselves

I had met with Dominic in a local café to conduct an interview, one of my last. While he seemed happy enough to talk, I sensed with a touch of disappointment that he wasn’t as gripped by our discussion as some other interviewees had been. During the interview, Dominic took me by surprise, dismissing feminists because they “tend to base their opinions on emotions”. I knew he didn’t relate to feminism, but I had not expected him to frame his position in what were, to me, such clearly sexist terms. I prickled, but tried not to let it show; he certainly didn’t seem to notice. A minute or so later, he observed that he and his friends disliked people with left-wing politics, particularly “liberal white girls talking about themselves”.

¹ Cahill (2011) explains derivitization as the reduction of a person to another’s needs and desires.
I still don’t know whether or not Dominic intended to address this comment to me. Regardless, I felt implicated in his description, and it was intensely uncomfortable. Just as described in Chapter 5, I felt I had been “shut down”. Moreover, I felt shamed by the reflection of myself that Dominic seemed to be offering. Despite the fact that the power dynamics of the interview were stacked in my favour (I was some years older and in a “researcher” role) I felt moved to manage and defeat the impression of feminism and feminists — the impression of me — that he had invoked. I wanted to prove myself to be a dispassionate researcher, not simply an emotional feminist who let her feelings get the better of her. I tried to let it go.

I have thought a great deal since then about what passed between us in that moment and why it moved me in the way it did. As I see it, this was my own brush with the figure of the feminist killjoy, one exquisitely tailored to my sensitivities. Dominic’s comment neatly encapsulated everything I wanted not to do with my research — which, of course, was precisely what feared I was doing. Was I just a self-obsessed white woman, a “selfish feminist” (Tyler, 2007)? Was my thesis just an unconscious front for my privileged navel-gazing? As a middle-class, white, able-bodied woman, what right did I have to suggest that feminism and gendered equality mattered, to assume that the axis of identity that was most salient to me would have any relevance to others who were differently positioned?

I have stared these questions in eye and tried to make my peace with them, reminding myself of the intersectional ethos of the workshops and the problem-posing rather than didactic motives of the research project as a whole. I also continue to remind myself that sexism animates these questions and gives them part of their power. Even so, they still, on occasion, make me flinch; the affective charge of this encounter has sat in the back of my mind as I have written about the intensity of sexism and the physicality of its choreography.

**Vignette 3: On feminist research**

“So, what are you doing again?”

Early on in my doctorate, a friend remarked to my partner that “Tavi [Octavia] is going to be one those people whose research you read about and you’re like ‘what? That got funded?’” Though he didn’t know it, his words had already come true. The
wider research programme my work was positioned within, *Pornography in the Public Eye*, had attracted sceptical attention from media, along with some fairly tired jokes about researchers “being paid to watch porn”.

While less than the salacious interest taken in research on pornography, my own research focus on feminism, gender and sexism has attracted its fair share of raised eyebrows: my project was clearly not what was expected from a doctoral student in psychology. Within my department, most positivist peers were gently nonplussed; some lobbed an occasional critique my way (“I wouldn’t usually comment on research of this kind … but can I ask how this is science?”). My feeling, however, was that it was not the qualitative, interpretative style of my research, so much as its content that was unsettling colleagues, friends and some family — my pursuit of feminist research seemed to be difficult for them to make sense of.

How times have changed! As I approach the end of my doctoral research, the project is unexpectedly, newly intelligible. While I admit that my descriptions of my research have undoubtedly improved with practice (and as it has become clearer to me what my research ‘is’), there is something else in play here too. Hitched to the changing fortunes of feminism, my research has become as hip as feminist identification appears to be; people I meet have started to tell me my work is “cool”. While this shift eases my social and scholarly passage to some extent, I cannot help but feel ambivalent about it. It wasn’t coolness or uncanny foresight for a future trend that pulled me to feminist research. As a consequence, having my work described by others in these terms feels curiously like a misrecognition. A misrepresentation. I wonder if I am embroiled here in another variation of “double entanglement” (McRobbie, 2009, p. 12), wherein feminism is spoken and seen as cool, but not really heard?

**Endings**

Each workshop began with the same exercise. I gave out colourful felt tip pens and big sheets of paper and asked participants to write or draw a story of how they came to be there, with me and everyone else, in the room. Some took the question literally and depicted their physical route to the University that day. Others opted for a more
expansive narrative, presenting a whole lifetime of interests and experiences that had shaped their interest in the research.

In writing this Postscript, I sought to close this thesis on a similarly reflexive note. My research has been an academic endeavour but also a profoundly personal one. Through these three brief snapshots, I hope to have conveyed a sense of this entanglement: one that extends and complements the primary narrative this thesis tells of how and why the research came to be, and what it means.
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Appendix A: Youth Workshop Resource

Gender, Sexism and Social Activism

A Youth Workshop Resource

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A full published version is available at
http://www.sexualpoliticsnow.org.nz/projects/media-sexism-action/about/

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1 Please note that this is an abridged and reformatted version of the published resource: I have removed a small amount of text containing information given elsewhere in the thesis to avoid unnecessary repetition. In its published form, the workshop resource contained material produced by others, reproduced with their consent. As permission was not obtained for this material to be included in this thesis, I have provided links to the original material as an alternative.
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Preface

This resource was produced in the context of my doctoral research in the School of Psychology at The University of Auckland. As part of my PhD, I facilitated collaborative workshops with secondary school students where we explored ‘everyday sexism’ and analysed gendered relations of power in media and in our daily lives. These workshops included a variety of activities and materials that I designed and/or collated.

This resource is a map of my workshop content: which activities I did, for what purpose, in what order and to what effect. To illustrate the versatility of the activities and materials outlined in this resource, I have produced three discrete workshop formats for the reader: a three-day workshop, a one-day workshop and a 90-minute workshop. I myself have facilitated the three-day and one-day workshops in the course of my research.

I have made this resource publically available in the hope that the workshops might prove useful to others: teachers, community educators, researchers and even health and support workers who are interested in alternative ways to elicit and explore personal narratives in their social context. Whatever your orientation to this material, I recommend reading through my introduction in full. Doing so will equip you with a map of the territory to follow and help you plot your journey through the workshops judiciously.

Finally, I would love to hear about how this material informs or intersects with your work. Please do get in touch. My email address is octavia.calder-dawe@auckland.ac.nz. Unless otherwise attributed, the content of this resource is my original work and should be referenced accordingly. Please cite this resource as:

Introducing the Resource

Background to the Workshops

… many of the things that are not taught, that are evaded, avoided and denied…contribute to a school climate that is inequitable and counterproductive not only for girls and young women but for boys and young men as well. (Bailey, 1993, p. 328)

Young people in the contemporary west are growing up under (and into) a postfeminist ‘common sense’ that teaches that gender equality has been achieved and, accordingly, that charges of sexism are unfounded and unfair. This representation of gender relations maintains what Deborah Tolman (2012) terms a “missing discourse of gender inequity”: sexism is a “dirty word” (Gill, 2011, p. 62), and gender inequalities are hard to see, hard to speak about, and hard to challenge.

Of course, structural inequalities do not disappear simply because we lack the opportunity and the tools to pinpoint them. As well as the pervasive objectification or “derivitization” (Cahill, 2011) of women’s bodies in popular media, rape, street harassment and ‘slut-shaming’ are mundane experiences for many women and girls (Gavey, 2005; Holland & Cortina, 2013; McRobbie, 2004; The Everyday Sexism Project, 2014). A primary prevention approach to any of these issues must work to problematise common-sense sexism and to catalyse conversations about how our personal investments, identities and practices intersect with gendered inequalities (see, for example, Coy, Thiara, & Kelly, 2011). Unless we forge opportunities for critical conversation, gendered inequalities will remain part of the “evaded curriculum” of everyday life (Bailey, 1993).

My doctoral research responds to this call. Given the persistence of sexism in popular culture and everyday life, I hoped to create sorely needed opportunities to analyse how common-sense ideas about gender contour our identities, emotions and experiences. In the course of my PhD, I designed and facilitated collaborative workshops with secondary school students in which we explored everyday sexism and analysed gendered relations of power in media and in our daily lives. The workshops I created arose in conversation with feminist analyses of gender and power, as well as critical pedagogy and action research scholarship. This resource documents my effort to design a workshop process that offers participants the space, the tools and the impetus to name everyday sexism in their lives – and invites them to explore its consequences.
While these workshops are undoubtedly change-oriented, they are neither didactic nor are they guaranteed to secure particular ‘objectives’ or ‘learning outcomes’. Instead, the workshops and activities detailed here are designed to pose potentially transformative questions and to invite participants to address them. In creating opportunities for critical dialogue, reflection and social action, the workshop process invites participants to see and ‘do’ gender differently.

**Theoretical Underpinnings**

The design and facilitation of these workshops springs from a particular philosophy of language, knowledge and pedagogy (the art of teaching). My approach here is broadly social constructionist. I work from the premise that language and knowledge are not neutral, transparent descriptors; rather, they constitute or build social reality. Through this process, reality is socially constructed in a manner which makes certain ideas, practices and identities seem natural and appealing, and others unappealing – or even unthinkable (see Foucault, 1978; Tuffin, 2005). Thus, knowledge has transformative potential: new knowledge may offer fresh interpretations of the world, and fresh ways of acting in it. Many activities in this resource invite participants to explore how social knowledge confers power by prioritising certain ways of ‘doing’ gender over others. Other activities challenge participants “problem-pose” dominant ways of understanding the world (Calder-Dawe & Gavey, submitted).

The pedagogical theory I employ draws from feminist and critical pedagogy, most particularly the work of Paulo Freire (1972, 1989). While not strictly social constructionist, Freire’s approach emphasises the enmeshment of reflection and action in a manner reminiscent of Foucault’s (1978) pouvoir-savoir or power knowledge formulation.² Both epistemologies articulate the workshops’ fundamental premise: in finding new ways of seeing and talking about our experiences of the world, we open up new possibilities for being and doing: for action and transformation.

² Foucault’s pouvoir-savoir formulation can be variously interpreted. Following Gavey (2005), I draw on Spivak’s (1993) reading wherein the French pouvoir is doubly translated: as power and as the capacity to act. Thus, pouvoir-savoir suggests that one’s capacity to act is tied to one’s capacity to know or make sense of that act.
As well as Freirean critical pedagogy, the workshops build on activist scholarship and action research, particularly Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR). To theorise my own change-oriented workshop praxis, I have distilled these rich bodies of scholarship into seven guiding principles. The content and contours of the workshops were designed with these principles in mind.

A useful, participatory and social justice-oriented workshop:

- Creates an interactional space in which participants are safe, supported and encouraged to interrogate the ethics of ‘common-sense’ arguments and positions.
- Employs a problem-posing approach to interrogate participants’ social worlds.
- Invites participants to reflect on their own relationships, experiences and behaviours in light of a critical analysis of power relations, without insisting on it.
- Works directly with the experiences and knowledge of participants to define and explore issues that resonate with them.
- Attends explicitly to our investments in the status quo and explores the barriers to individual and collective change without minimising the potential for transformation.
- Includes diverse catalysts for reflection and action, including discussions, embodied exercises, individual reflection time, practical skill acquisition and opportunities for creative expression.
- Attends to the affective weighting of the workshops by including playful and hopeful activities alongside serious or painful ones.

In what follows, I expand on these principles by outlining my ideas about design, content and facilitation style in more detail. I preface this with some general reflections on how this resource might be used, and a more in-depth account of my own experience with the workshops.

In providing this detailed and contextualised account, I hope to equip the reader with practical and theoretical tools to make creative use of the outlines and activities that follow. Far from advocating a blueprint approach, I have endeavoured to structure this resource in a manner that invites bricolage. To travel well into your own teaching, activism and research, some twisting and tweaking of my work will likely be required.

Good luck!
Resource Structure

A Freirean approach to group work is necessarily an open-ended one. Freire himself studiously resisted providing close descriptions of his work to discourage others from freezing his methods into one definitive configuration (see Souto-Manning, 2010). Thus, it goes against the philosophical spirit of the workshops I have designed to provide a rigid template for running them. Instead, I invite the reader to enter into conversation with the pedagogical approach and tools I present here. I hope this resource spurs others to re-imagine and reconfigure the workshops, tailoring them for different purposes and different contexts.

This resource contains outlines for three workshop formats: a three-day format, a one-day format and a 90-minute format. Each outline contains several discrete sessions, which are each organised around a particular theme. For each session, I have provided a brief description of its purpose, along with a list of activities that make up the session. The details of the activities and their associated resources are located in the Activity section (p.261) and Resource section (p.295) respectively.

I have structured and formatted this resource so that you can approach it as you choose. You might decide to read it cover to cover; alternatively, you might focus in on a couple of sessions or simply browse this Introduction or the Activity Outlines. Accordingly, I have attempted to make the resource equally coherent whether approached as a whole or in a piecemeal fashion. The price for this decision is a degree of duplication. Where a session appears in both the three-day and the one-day outlines (such as the Gender and Choice sessions), the “Purpose” description for that session reads very similarly. For those readers making their way through both the three-day and one-day outlines, please forgive me my repetition.

Using Workshops, Session and Activities

Approaching Content

The content and sequencing of the three-day and one-day workshops are laid out here as I planned them for my own workshop praxis. In a Freirean spirit, consider this content (outlines, sessions and activities) as a loose template rather than a rigid blueprint. Many factors will influence your use of the material in this resource: your interests, the time you have available and the size of the group you are working with (see Notes on Group Work p.212 for a discussion of this). Depending on energy levels and the vibrancy of discussion, you may find yourself reworking your schedule on your feet in order to move with the
group’s interests. I have lingered over/run out of time for activities myself for this reason. Each session contains a list of activities presented in a sequence I find logical and productive. Decide for yourself whether to follow the sequencing I suggest, and which activities you will prioritise. For those interested in my opinion on the most fundamental material, refer to the 90-minute format. This outline gives an idea of those activities I consider most useful and most fundamental to the workshop aims, based on my experience of running the three-day and one-day workshops.

A final note about content: I have used an asterisk [*] to indicate activities that do not explicitly address gendered power relations. Readers working in other contexts can lift out asterisked activities directly. Non-asterisked activities will require a little more tweaking to work in other contexts.

Workshops for Whom?

This resource was designed with senior high school students in mind: young people between 15 and 19 years old. While some activities in this resource could certainly be run with any school-age children (e.g. Activity 9: Gender ≠ Genitals), the content and pitch of activities will need to be adjusted with care. While my interest was to work with 15 to 19 year olds, this material has no upper age limit. I anticipate this material working well with adults, though you might like to update the popular culture references (for instance Activity 14: Sexism in the Streets and Activity 32: Choosing Against Feminism) with examples that resonate with your participants. When running these activities with older participants, do not shy away from the creative and embodied exercises. No matter who you are working with, these are integral to the workshop process.

Activities for What?

The sessions and activities outlined in this resource were designed as part of an extra-curricular, voluntary gender and sexism workshop. Nevertheless, I can envisage its broader utility both within and beyond the classroom. For instance, the sessions and activities I have devised could inform school curriculum development and might also be useful in classroom teaching across a range of subjects and age groups. The resource may also be of use in University-level teaching, particularly for tutorial design. Elements of the workshops could inform externally delivered school-based, workplace and/or community educational work, particularly anti-discrimination programmes.
Thinking beyond pedagogical contexts, I hope other researchers find my use of these workshops of value. It may hold particular interest for those researchers who, like myself, are interested in creative methodologies that weave together an academic project with social justice work. Some activities may be of use for researchers (or, indeed, for health and support workers) who are looking for alternative routes to elicit and explore the political in personal narratives. As I suggest in the preface, I recommend reading through my introduction in full to guide your passage through this resource whatever your interest may be.

**My Workshops**

As indicated in the preface, I designed these workshops as part of my doctoral thesis. Naturally, this has shaped the workshop design, and my experience of running them. Without the expanse of a thesis, I doubt I would have imagined my initial workshop process: three days of group discussion, reflection and action. After running two three-day workshops, I condensed much of the material from the three-day workshop into a less demanding one-day format.

My researcher position has been significant for recruiting participants. Whereas teachers or community workers may design and facilitate workshops with young people they already have contact with, I was unknown to the participants I recruited. This meant I relied on volunteers, rather than having a ‘ready-made’ (though potentially unenthused) participant pool. To find participants, I visited and/or contacted seven central Auckland state-funded high schools to provide information about the workshops and invite participation. From this initial wave of contact, I connected with enough participants to run two three-day workshops (in July, 2013) and two one-day workshops (in December, 2013). Workshop participants were all aged between 16 and 18, and I deliberately secured participants from different schools for each workshop.

**My Facilitation**

I facilitated these workshops as a mid-twenties Pākehā woman with no prior relationship with any of my participants. I ran the workshops at the University of Auckland, an unfamiliar space for high school students. All these elements contributed to the flavour of my workshops. Because of the workshop location and my particular position (an unfamiliar, relatively junior researcher), I was able to differentiate the workshops from a school space, to minimise my ‘expert’ position and to establish a dialogical tone relatively easily (see Notes
on Setting Up p.213 for a discussion of participant-facilitator familiarity and running workshops in institutional settings).

It is worth noting that my success with these workshops must be in part due to the participants who elected to participate in them: high school students with a sense that gender matters. Had I been working with a captive audience, activities may have run rather differently – particularly those activities that require multiple willing interlocutors for critical dialogue and problem-posing inquiry. That said, I am very optimistic about the power of participatory approaches to draw group members, be they eager or disaffected, into a compelling collective examination of the evaded curricula in their own lives. Addressing participants with respect and engaging in reciprocal questioning with curiosity and care prepares the way.

**Notes on Group Work**

Collective experiential sharing has a long history in critical pedagogy and social justice activism. Critical dialogue in small groups can re-politicise individual experience, surfacing the social patterns underlying apparently individual accounts. Accordingly, the workshops were designed for small groups to harness the practical and pedagogical possibilities this format offers.

*Why Small Groups?*

Small groups are an ideal format for these workshops because they are especially conducive to critical reflection. They hit the pedagogical ‘sweet spot’ by diffusing the conversational and reflective work among just enough people to ease the compulsory or confessional qualities of one-on-one conversation without significantly reducing scope for participation and engagement. In small groups, people can step in and out of conversation as they choose. This, in turn, frees participants to experiment with ideas, tell stories and share difficult emotions. For these reasons, small group contexts may be more comfortable and more generative than one-on-one encounters, particularly when addressing embarrassing, personal or stigmatised issues (McClelland & Fine, 2008).

Small group work is also a strong format for these workshops because they can accommodate embodied and creative elements. A great deal of scholarship attests to the power of these techniques in catalysing critical reflection and illuminating the “evaded curriculum” (Bailey, 1993; see also Boal, 1979; Fox, 2007; Greene, 1995; McClelland & Fine, 2008). Including a range of activities provides different ways to experience and communicate ideas, and also
caters to diverse skills within the group. Incorporating opportunities for drawing, writing and performance democratises the workshop process by playing to different participants’ strengths.

*What Group Size Should I Use?*

There is no absolute answer to this question. For the purposes of this resource, I consider a small group to be between 4 and 20 people. The ideal number of participants in these activities depends on the length of time you have available to work with participants. If you are considering running workshops similar to those outlined in this resource, the less time you have available, the smaller the ideal group size would be. A three-day workshop benefits from at least 6 participants, and could accommodate as many as 20. If you have a large group, I recommend substituting whole group discussions with smaller groups to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak. A one-day workshop, in contrast, is at its best with between 2 and 6 participants, as this gives everyone a larger share in conversation and allows you to get through activities more quickly. Attending to group size in this manner will create fertile ground for problem-posing discussion.

That said, these are simply rough guidelines and you can run activities, sessions and/or workshops in any way you see fit. There is certainly still value in this approach when a more in-depth small group engagement is not possible. For instance, I have successfully incorporated activities from this resource into a 30-minute participatory presentation to 200 school students.

*Notes on Setting Up*

The physical space you choose for the workshops will shape the interactional space that springs from it. The success of the workshop hinges on setting an open, democratic and collaborative tone wherein participants pay close attention to others and are closely attended to in turn. The set-up of the space you work in should reflect and support this interactional register. This could mean, for instance, finding a seating arrangement where everyone can make eye contact to ensure that everyone in the group can be personally ‘addressed’ by whoever is speaking. Particularly if you are working with people from the same institutional context (e.g. a school, a workplace), it’s important to establish the *difference* of the workshop space from the outset. The rationale here is to attempt to destabilise (or at least de-emphasise) institutional roles and existing relational patterns within the group by setting new, dialogical and egalitarian norms of interaction.
This poses a particular challenge when facilitator and participants are from the same institutional context – for instance, a teacher facilitating workshops with students. Where templates of teacher-student interaction are already established, it is unrealistic to expect to be able to generate a workshop space untouched by this relational history. This is especially so where teachers are directly responsible for disciplining, judging and punishing students. Nevertheless, there are a variety of ways to work with this situation. You may choose to find a non-classroom space for the activity, or to facilitate workshops with a class other than your own. In some instances, you may already be practicing a problem-posing pedagogy, in which case pre-established interactional templates (between you and your students and between students themselves) can be carried into the workshop.

Whatever your relation to participants happens to be, if the workshops are held in a space familiar to participants, you might consider bringing in cushions to sit on, changing the arrangement of furniture in the room or playing music softly to establish a fresh mood. Beginning the workshops with creative activities is also integral to setting a warm, informal and inviting tone.

There are also a few practical considerations regarding the workshop space. Because the workshops involve some drama-based activities, you will need to run the workshop in a space large enough for participants to move around freely. For the longer format workshops, you will need to make time for/ provide refreshments. Never underestimate the reviving effect of afternoon tea.

**Notes on Facilitation**

*An Freirean Approach*

These workshops adopt Paulo Freire’s (1972) “problem-posing” approach to critical pedagogy. This dialogue-based method grows from the premise that we carry the seeds for transformative reflection within us: we are experts on the social rules, assumptions and practices that contour our lives. The purpose of critical pedagogy, therefore, is not to deposit a critical social analysis into people, but to provide useful tools and a facilitating context for people to begin to excavate and critique dominant social knowledge themselves. Effective critical pedagogy invites participant-learners to tease out and interrogate their feelings and experiences using their own language and symbols. Instead of presenting content in a didactic manner, workshop facilitation should support participants’ encounters with ideas, their exploration and reflection. This is done through problem-posing dialogue. For the facilitator,
this means continually querying and re-presenting participants’ statements about the social world, posing common-sense assumptions, meaning categories and explanations of the world not as ‘truth’ but as problems to be investigated. This creates space for participants to encounter and analyse the “thought-language” they use to interpret the world, catalysing a process of transformative reflection and action (Freire, 1972).

This mode of facilitation unsettles expert-learner power relations by positioning participants and facilitator as fellow travellers through social discourse, each learning from opinions and dilemmas of others. Thus, the facilitator’s experiences and social knowledge is part of the group’s collective resource. Accordingly, facilitators will contribute ideas, participate in exercises and engage in reciprocal questioning alongside participants (while taking care not to monopolise the conversation either literally or figuratively). Problem-posing facilitators invite participants to take the lead in introducing new material and posing their own questions to the group. Maintaining these openings for participants to take the lead helps to ensure the workshops are addressing meaningful issues in a useful manner.

What is Problem-posing?

Freire is deliberately (and delightfully!) open-ended in his writings, and he provides no blueprint for problem-posing. To do so would be to go against his commitment to pedagogy in motion, wherein facilitators re-imagine and reconstitute pedagogical practice in response to local context. With this in mind, I have distilled a set of guiding principles for problem-posing facilitation, below. This is not a laundry list, and it does no more than sketch the outlines of problem-posing. I recommend reading Freire’s (1972) work for a richer account.

- Be mindful of your positioning in relation to participants and work to minimise the impact of your power/expertise on the group. Answering questions, addressing participants with interest and respect, and displaying uncertainty are all ways to build reciprocity and ‘turn down the volume’ of your own voice. Retaining a degree of authority over the group is essential, however, for purposeful and care-taking facilitation.³

³ In order to keep the group space safe for all present, you must be in a position to challenge aggressive and hostile behaviour. You will also want to be able to effectively challenge discriminatory discourses, should they surface.
• Be mindful of participants’ positioning in relation to each other, and encourage them to be mindful too. This could mean, for instance, discussing the dimensions of difference and/or privilege within the group (you could use Activity 5: Living Likert Scale* p.266 for this purpose) and reflecting together on how this might shape group dynamics (who speaks most frequently, for instance, or who might more comfortably offer a critique of a particular topic). One way into this could be to use Activity 36: Thinking about Privilege* as a springboard into a group discussion of intersectionality (the notion that multiple axes of privilege and dispossession intersect in individual lives, and that critical analyses ought to take this complexity into account).

• Problem-posing means querying statements and the assumptions which undergird them. This process is done gently, with curiosity and respect. Through this process of problem-posing dialogue, participants are supported to pull out and examine the social knowledge and logic they use to think with.

• Pose all participants’ opinions as ‘problems’ regardless of content. This helps participants to adjust quickly to the problem-posing approach and it also ensures no one appears to be singled out.

• Take particular care to resist group consensus by posing group assertions as problems to be interrogated. This keeps participants thinking and maintains conversational flow.

• Facilitate and role-model reflexive self-interrogation. Acknowledging your own uncertainties and dilemmas will help others to do the same. Contradictions and inconsistencies are ripe material for problem-posing.

• When you’re not running an exercise, participate in it.

• Handle dissent and disagreement sensitively. Where possible, you might consider posing the disagreement to the people involved as a problem: what assumptions and beliefs are underlying the disagreement?

• Ensure each person has time to speak and be listened to. When conversation runs between some participants and not others, work to draw the quieter people in by inviting them to contribute their expertise, opinion or insights.

• Don’t be afraid of silence, and try not to fill it yourself. Sometimes people need time to reflect before speaking, especially with new, complex and/or politicised ideas.

Finally, I want to highlight that many activities in this resource offer scope to discuss personal experiences with gender and sexism. Facilitators must be mindful that this process of sharing and problem-posing could be disturbing or distressing for participants. An invitation to re-see our lives, beliefs and behaviours can be unwelcome or disorienting. It is
important to discuss these possibilities at the outset with participants, as well as requesting (and role-modelling) a gentle problem-posing approach.

**Notes on Content**

The three workshop outlines offered in this resource vary considerably, largely because of their difference in scope: the depth and range of material analysed over three days of group work cannot be matched in a 90-minute format. Nevertheless, all three workshops are structured around growing a critical social analysis and providing participants with critical and practical building blocks to ‘speak back’ to dominant cultural assumptions which trouble them. The design and sequencing of activities in each workshop is intended to facilitate participants’ exploration of the four questions below:

- What have we learned from our social environment about gender, gender relations and sexuality?
- What are the personal, ethical and political consequences of sexism and prescriptive gender roles?
- What prevents individuals and groups from challenging injustice?
- How might we ‘speak back’ to cultural images and ideas we find troubling?

These four questions can be further reduced into two key workshop aims: to explore critical social theory in local context, and to explore possibilities for action. Workshop activities and discussions invite participants to trace connections between their mundane gendered experiences (often accepted as ‘just the way things are’) and broader social power relations. Rather than speaking and talking in the abstract, the workshops are an opportunity for participants to fold critical theory into their lives, experiences and identities. Accordingly, the activities I have designed and/or collated in this resource have a deliberate focus on the local, the everyday and the personal.

The particular issues and topics covered were selected because of their intersections with everyday sexism, either in media or in daily life. I have chosen to focus on rape jokes, political correctness, choice and feminism because I believe a critical analysis of these issues will equip participants with the analytic tools to resist and challenge sexism in their own

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4 I use the term ‘critical theory’ to refer to theoretical approaches which build on poststructuralist or social constructionist ontology.
lives, should they choose to. Workshop activities also invite participants to reflect on their own responses to sexism and feminism, and to share experiences of the social policing of gender. The examples of activism discussed in the workshops were chosen because they explicitly address gendered power relations in different ways, from large-scale campaigns to small acts that inspire, amuse and prod.

Finally, note that I do not explicitly fold formalised written reflection time into any of my workshops. This can be a very useful tool, however (see Cahill, 2007a), and I would recommend interspersing the longer workshops with time for individual writing and reflection as you see fit.
**Recommended Reading**

The Introduction section provided a brief overview of three academic literatures which have informed the development of this document: critical and feminist pedagogies; activism and activist research/pedagogy; and critical analysis of feminism and postfeminism. Below are a few key texts from each of these three domains to guide your further reading.

**Critical and Feminist Pedagogies**

Copp and Kleinman (2008)
Fahs (2011)
Freire (1972)
Giroux (2000)
Greene (1995b)
Kleinman, Copp & Sandstrom (2006)
Parrotta and Rusche (2011)
Souto-Manning (2010)

**Activisms and Activist Research**

Appadurai (2006)
Boal (1979)
Cahill (2007a, 2007b)
Fine and Torre (2004)
Fox (2007)
Stoudt, Fox and Fine (2012)

**Critical Analysis of Feminism and Postfeminism**

Ahmed (2010b, 2010a)
Baker (2010)
Coy and Horvath (2011)
McRobbie (2004, 2009)
Three-Day Workshop

Outline

Purpose Statement

As outlined in the Introduction to this resource, the bulk of the activities and resources were designed with a three-day workshop format in mind. This version of the workshop runs for approximately 7 hours per day across three days: a total of 21 hours. When I ran these workshops, I spaced them out over one week on non-consecutive days: Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Spacing the contact days apart in this way allows time for facilitator and participants to sit with new material, reflect on its intersections with everyday experiences and reflect on the workshop process to date. To make the most of the in-between days, I suggest setting an online forum for participants to connect with each other between meetings. The forum also allowed us to continue our conversations after the workshop itself has ended.

The generous three-day format has considerable scope for open, problem-posing discussion and ample space for participants to bring their own ideas, interests and concerns to the group. The activities detailed here have been carefully sequenced to provide progressive opportunities for participants to critically interrogate and grow their knowledge and skill bases. As well as these opportunities, participants learn about creative activism from local experts and have time to plan an original social intervention which ‘speaks back’ to dominant cultural assumptions they want to challenge.
Day 1 Workshop Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.45-11.15</td>
<td>Welcome and Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15-11.30</td>
<td>Morning Tea Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30-1.00</td>
<td>Critical Social Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-1.30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30-3.00</td>
<td>Everyday Sexism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00-3.15</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15-4.15</td>
<td>Activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15-4.30</td>
<td>Wrap-Up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session-By-Session Guide: Day 1

Welcome and Orientation

approx. 90 minutes

The first session of Day 1 welcomes participants to the workshop, builds rapport and community and establishes an open, reciprocal dialogical space (see Freire, 1972; Souto-Manning, 2010). Setting a collaborative, inquiring tone from the outset is fundamental to the workshop’s success. All five activities in this section help to achieve this.

It is a good idea to begin by pointing out important features of the workspace you’re in, if participants are not familiar with it: where to find the toilets and drinking water, for example. You may also wish to run through the contours of the three days in brief, or give participants a printed outline. Depending on the requirements of your project, you may want to use this time to provide some background on the sessions/workshops and complete any necessary administrative tasks (questionnaires, consent forms, demographic information etc.). You may also want to unpack the ‘problem-posing’ philosophy of the workshops by explaining that discussions are a forum for sharing the group’s diverse expertise and working together to inquire into everyday experiences (see Notes on Facilitation for more detail).

Any group discussion of issues relating to sexism, gender and sexuality has the potential to raise sensitive issues for group members, lead to a serious personal disclosure and/or generate discomfort. As a facilitator, you must be prepared for these eventualities. Providing detailed information about local, accessible support services and identifying a procedure for participants to leave the discussion space, should they need to, is an essential part of care-taking facilitation. I recommend covering these points early in the first session.

Activity List:

Activity 1: Blind Assassins/ Wink Murder* p.264
Activity 2: Name-and-Role Memory Game p.264
Activity 3: Ground Rules* p.265
Activity 4: Identity Mapping* p.266
Activity 5: Living Likert Scale* p.266
Critical Social Analysis

approx. 90 minutes

After welcoming participants to the workshop and establishing a collaborative interactive space in the first session of the day, the second session introduces the fundamental theoretical foundation of the workshops: a critical social analysis. The activities in this session are designed and sequenced to present critical theory in an accessible, meaningful and lively manner. First, the facilitator takes the lead, talking through the relationship between power and knowledge (see Foucault, 1978) in an interactive, seminar-style presentation. This is one of the only occasions during workshop process where the facilitator takes up a ‘teacherly’ role. Even so, it is possible to do this in an open manner, offering rather than mandating the critical social analysis you present. You may like to emphasise that the workshops are about holding theory and experience side by side and analysing points of connection and contradiction. As a facilitator, keep in mind that an uncritical use of theory to re-narrate experience is antithetical to the workshop process and purpose. You can also provide opportunities for participants to contribute ideas and expertise within the presentation in order to moderate the monological format of this activity (for a sample presentation see Resource 4, p. 299). Take time to build this scaffold clearly, as participants will draw on it throughout the rest of the workshop process.

Moving forward, Activity 7 takes an embodied approach to critical social analysis and Activity 8 introduces a critical ‘deconstruction’ approach which will reappear across the workshop.

Activity List

Activity 6: Power / Knowledge Presentation* p.267
Activity 7: Master and Servant* p.268
Activity 8: The Social Iceberg* p.269
Everyday Sexism

approx. 90 minutes

The third session of the day moves from the generalised critical social analysis introduced in the second session to the workshop’s particular focus: gender and sexism in popular media and everyday life. Accordingly, many of the activities from this session onwards explicitly address these interests. The session includes a mixture of role play, small group work and whole group discussion to maintain momentum. These diverse activities also offer multiple avenues for participants to explore connections between a feminist social analysis and their own everyday experiences of gender and gendered power relations.

Activity List:
Activity 9: Gender ≠ Genitals p.270
Activity 10: Men-Ups p.270
Activity 11: Sexism Quick-Association p.271
Activity 12: Media Men and Women on the Wall p.271
Activity 13: Intimate Relationships p.272
Activity 14: Sexism in the Streets p.273
Activism

approx. 60 minutes

The fourth session of the day introduces social activism, a focus which we will revisit across the workshop process. This session provides an opportunity to discuss the range of possibilities open to us to challenge common-sense ideas we find troubling. This shift in focus from analysing social relations in previous sessions to exploring ways to transforming them in this session provides an infusion of positive, mood-lightening energy after 6 hours of intense group work examining weighty social issues.

The session moves from a general discussion of activism in Activity 15 into an examination of specific examples of feminist activism in Activities 16 and 17 which ‘speak back’ to problematic social assumptions.

Activity List:

Activity 15: Activism Brainstorm* p.273
Activity 16: Feminist Social Activism p.274
Activity 17: If Men Could Menstruate p.274
Wrap-Up

approx. 15 minutes

Begin the final 15 minutes of the day with group reflection on the day’s activities. Group stretching, Activity 18, is an excellent technique for reconnecting with the body, and reconnecting the group as a whole. Activities 19 and 20 assume that you are using an online forum. Omit or modify these activities if you are not using one.

After running through Activities 18, and 19, move into the final activity of the day, Activity 20, which introduces the online forum and outlines the ‘homework’ task. Finish the session by inviting participants to feed back any questions and comments they have about the day: what they liked best, what kinds of things they would like to focus on more in coming sessions. This is a good chance to find out if anyone would like more information on something touched on. As participants leave, remind them about the support available from organisations and, if you are willing to be contacted with questions or comments, provide your contact details.

Activity List:

Activity 18: Group Stretching* p.275
Activity 19: Introducing the Online Forum* p.275
Activity 20: Sexism Scan 1 p.276
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.45-11.15</td>
<td>Welcome and Catching Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15-11.30</td>
<td>Morning Tea Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30-1.00</td>
<td>Gender and Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-1.30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30-3.00</td>
<td>Activism Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00-3.15</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15-4.15</td>
<td>Obscuring Sexism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15-4.30</td>
<td>Wrap-Up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session-By-Session Guide: Day 2

Welcome and Catching Up

approx. 90 minutes

The first session of Day 2 welcomes participants back to the group and re-establishes the dialogical space set up on Day 1. It is a relaxed and open start to the day that provides an opportunity for participants to steer conversation and critical analysis towards their own concerns and interests.

Activities 21 and 22 playfully reconnect the group, and Activity 21 also introduces a central theme of the day: critical analysis of ‘choice’ rhetoric. Activity 23 opens up group space to share any ideas and experiences participants have had since the last meeting. Activity 24 connects this discussion with the take-home exercise from Day 1 (Sexism Scan 1) and provides participants with a chance to analyse and ‘repair’ the material they brought along.

Activity List:

Activity 21: Name and Role Refresher* p.276
Activity 22: Quick Association Game* p.276
Activity 23: Open Discussion p.277
Activity 24: Sexism Scan 2 & Repair the Resource p.277
Gender and Choice

approx. 105 minutes

The activities in this session are designed to open up critical perspectives on ‘choice’ and choice-based rhetoric. Theorising choice is an important scaffold for negotiating the “postfeminist sensibility” which characterises popular media, advertising and idealised western femininities (see Gill, 2007b), as well as opening up a critical window on neoliberal subjectivities more generally. This session includes both embodied and dialogical approaches to maintain energy and stimulate critical reflection.

These activities shift between a consideration of choice and choosing in the abstract (Activities 25, 26, 28) and opportunities to contextualise choices in relation to gendered bodily practices (Activities 27, 29 and 30). If time allows, finish the session with a problem-posing discussion about the politics of personal choices: why do we choose to present ourselves in gendered ways? What are the personal, social and political consequences of these choices?

Activity List:

Activity 25: Defining Choice* p.278
Activity 26: What Can We Choose?* p.279
Activity 27: Close-Up: Female Genital Cutting p.280
Activity 28: Conscience Alley p.281
Activity 29: Choice in Context: Sushi for Lunch* p.282
Activity 30: Choice and Body Hair p.282
Activity 31: Reflection / Discussion Statements p.283

Subjectivity is a poststructuralist term used to refer to a person’s sense of self. Unlike the essentialist term ‘identity’, subjectivity suggests fluidity and instability. Neoliberal subjectivity refers to the ways of understanding and narrating the self that proliferate under neoliberalism.
Activism Skills

approx. 90 minutes

The purpose of this session is to provide participants with a forum to learn practical skills they can utilise for the social action planning element of the workshops – and, potentially, beyond the workshop. The session should focus on techniques or skills which are relatively simple and which are a powerful vector for ‘speaking back’ to dominant assumptions and stereotypes. Be sure to choose something that makes use of materials and technology all participants have access to. Depending on the expertise available to you, this could cover the basics of amateur film production, photography, graphic design and poster-making, or any other relevant creative skill.

Unless you have particular skills in one of these areas, you will need to find someone outside the group to facilitate this session. Where possible, ask the presenter to draw on material which connects to the workshop’s focus (i.e. social justice activism, sexism). A template Guest Presenter Brief for film-making skills is included in the Resources section (see Resource 20 p.311).

As well as introducing practical skills, this session is about providing participants with some time to begin to think about a focus for the social action plan they will be developing during Day 3. Either you or your guest presenter will need to facilitate this flow from skill-acquisition seminar to idea development.
Obscuring Sexism

approx. 60 minutes

The fourth session of the day builds on the complex theorisation of choice the group worked up in session two. This session connects a critical analysis of choice to sexism and feminism, focussing particularly on the choice to see sexism, and the choice to challenge it.

Activities 32 and 35 invite participants to discuss the complexities of these choices and to consider these choices in their own lives. Activities 33 and 34 focus particularly on feminism and direct participants’ analysis towards the affective loading of a ‘feminist’ identity. These activities create an occasion for participants to reassess negative social assumptions they may have about feminism, if they choose to. The session ends with Activity 36, which introduces an intersectional analysis of privilege in an accessible manner. You may wish to round off the session with a group discussion about the implication of privilege for someone’s choices and responsibilities.

Activity List:
Activity 32: Choosing Against Feminism p.283
Activity 33: Straw Feminists p.284
Activity 34: Seeing & Challenging Sexism p.285
Activity 36: Thinking about Privilege* p.286
Wrap Up

approx. 15 minutes

Day 2 ends with an open discussion about the day: what participants have found useful and what they might like to know more about. If you are using an online forum to keep the group connected between sessions, you can use it as a platform for supplying any additional information participants ask for. Run through Activities 18 and 37.

Activity 37 introduces a focus for reflection and for online forum activity between now and your next meeting. It also introduces a theme of Day 3: humour and social justice. Before participants leave, you may wish to remind them that Day 3 hinges on the planning and presentation of an original idea for social action. Invite participants to use the online forum to plan and discuss possibilities with each other if they choose.

Activity List:

Activity 18: Group Stretching* p.275

Activity 37: Humour Hunt 1 p.287
**Day 3 Workshop Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.45-11.15</td>
<td>Welcome and Catching Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15-11.30</td>
<td><em>Morning Tea Break</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30-1.00</td>
<td>Humour and Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-1.30</td>
<td><em>Lunch</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30-3.00</td>
<td>Guest Presentation &amp; Social Activism Idea Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00-3.15</td>
<td><em>Afternoon Tea</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15-4.15</td>
<td>Presentation of Social Action Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15-4.30</td>
<td>Wrap-Up and Farewell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Session-By-Session Guide: Day 3**

*Welcome and Catching Up*

approx. 90 minutes

Begin Day 3 by welcoming participants back to the group and re-establishing the dialogical space created across the previous two workshop days. This session follows a similar trajectory to the Welcome and Catching Up session in Day 2.

Activities 21 and 38 playfully reconnect the group and rebuild a collaborative interactional space. Activity 23 turns over the agenda to participants, opening up group space to share any ideas and experiences participants have had since the last meeting. Activity 39 asks the group to look over material gathered since last session, before moving into participants’ social activism planning (Activities 40 and 41).

Activity List:

Activity 21: Name and Role Refresher* p.276

Activity 38: Web of Connections Warm-Up* p.287

Activity 23: Open Discussion p.277

Activity 39: Humour Hunt 2 p.288

Activity 40: Social Activism Issues p.288

Activity 41: Social Activism Planning* p.288
Humour and Social Justice

approx. 90 minutes

This is the final content-based workshop session. The overall aim of the session is to explore humour as a tool for communicating ideas. Humour can subtly and persuasively communicate protest and social critique but it can also be used to enact sexism, racism, hostility and aggression. A critical analysis of sexist humour and the arguments typically used to defend and legitimise these jokes may inform participants’ social activism planning, and will also equip participants with the skills to identify and challenge hostile humour in everyday life if they choose.

The session begins with a close analysis of sexist jokes (Activities 42 and 43) before moving into a discussion of how rhetorics of political correctness and of freedom of speech are employed to attack and defend hostile humour (Activity 44). The session closes with a general discussion of the social function of humour. Activity 46 provides participants with an opportunity to write a ‘note-to-self’ for the future.

Activity List:

Activity 42: Repair the Resource p.289
Activity 43: Dissecting Rape Jokes p.290
Activity 45: Just a Joke?* p.292
Activity 46: Note to Self* p.292
Guest Presentation & Social Activism Idea Development

approx. 90 minutes

Similarly to Day 2, this session combines a guest presentation with time for participants to develop their social activism plans. The session is intended to introduce participants to the tangible practice of social justice activism. Ideally, you will have access to a guest presenter with experience in facilitating community social activism. Where this is not the case, I suggest presenting a case study of social activism relevant to the workshop to the group yourself. The New View Campaign’s work challenging female genital cosmetic surgery in the United States is an excellent example of this kind of work (see http://www.newviewcampaign.org/). Whether or not you have a guest speaker, this ‘activism in action’ presentation should last for about 20 minutes, allowing an extra 10 minutes for questions.

Participants will spend the remaining 60 minutes in small groups developing and finalising their social activism plans. By the end of this session, groups should be ready to present to the whole group. If you have a guest speaker, invite them to stay on for the 60 minutes and circulate with you between groups, offering ideas and asking questions.
Presentation of Social Activism Plans

approx. 60 minutes

The final session of the workshop is devoted to discussing and celebrating participants’ original proposals for social action. As a whole, the session should offer a diverse picture of how social activism can move us towards a better and more just social environment. Participants have an opportunity to share ideas they are passionate about with the whole group, ending the workshops on a positive note.

Activity List:
Activity 47: Social Activism Presentations* p.293

Wrap-Up and Farewell

approx. 15 minutes

Use the last 15 minutes the group has together to reflect on the entire workshop process. Encourage participants to carry any ideas they have found useful onwards and outwards, and encourage them to find ways to stay in touch with each other. If you have used an online forum and are planning to keep it alive, remind participants that this is an excellent platform for continuing critical conversations and keeping connected. You may wish to offer participants a way to reach you in the future if they want to get in touch about anything, and/or you may want to offer them support in pursuing their social activism plans.

Before presenting certificates to participants and ending the session, you may want to outline what this process has meant for you as a facilitator. Thank participants for their participation and for the ideas and experiences they have shared with the group. Remind everyone present to treat material shared respectfully and to maintain each others’ privacy, if this was a group rule.

Activity List:
Activity 18: Group Stretching* p.275
Activity 48: Certificates* p.293
Process Notes

Running workshops is a rather different experience from planning them, or indeed reading about them. Below are some process notes about the three-day workshops, based on my experience of co-facilitating them (for a description of my workshops, including participant demographics, refer to the Using Workshops, Session and Activities section p.209).

- While I was hesitant about the workshop’s reliance on discussion, conversation flowed freely and enthusiastically – so much so that moving into individual tasks and written reflection proved difficult. With one group, I abandoned written reflection altogether as participants weren’t able to do it without bursting into conversation.
- The activities flowed well. After the first three-day workshop, I added in Activity 40: Social Activism Issues to guide the social activism planning. This was an effective addition, providing a bit more guidance about which direction(s) to pursue for subsequent participants.
- As I had hoped, participants took up opportunities to share and ‘problem-pose’ everyday experiences of gender and sexism, often referring back to childhood.
- The Name and Role Memory Game (see Activities 2 and 21) was very successful – participants enjoyed playing their roles and, when asked by a guest speaker to introduce themselves, some participants spontaneously added their discussion role to their biography!
- Group stretching and the other dynamic activities which got people up and moving around made a tangible difference to the energy levels in the room. Do not skip over these exercises.
- Participants used the online forum I created to share ideas and material with each other in between the workshop days. Combined with the ‘take-home’ activities, this encouraged participants to start conversations about their own concerns and interests. Sexism in video games was a key concern for several participants, and not something I had built into the workshop content at all. Creating these opportunities for participant input into content broadens the scope and utility of the workshops.
- Finding a balance between keeping conversation ‘on track’ and leaving participants to explore was difficult. I tended to redirect participants to the activity at hand only when conversation strayed away from the activity altogether. This did not happen frequently, and it also varied considerably – some days and some groups were more ‘jumpy’ than others.
Testimonials

As part of the three-day workshops, I asked participants to complete surveys on their experiences of the workshop process. Below are survey extracts which set out in participants’ own words what the workshop process meant for them.

Has the workshop been what you expected, going into it? How has / hasn’t it?

I didn’t know much about what was going to be happening – but it went very well – I had a lot of fun and learned a great deal too. [Workshop 1: Participant 4]

I enjoyed it more than I expected. It was more informal and open-ended but also more thought-provoking. [Workshop 1: Participant 5]

I don’t really know what I expected to be honest but I think it was an incredibly fun and informative experience. The mood was a lot more relaxed than I expected actually which made me more comfortable to speak my mind and know I wouldn’t be judged about it. [Workshop: Participant 2]

It has in the way I’ve learnt a lot more about sexism, feminism etc (a LOT of things) and I am beginning to form more complex conclusions in the way I feel [Workshop 2: Participant 4]

This workshop has exceeded my expectations (already quite high) and provided me with a lot of new information about society and issues in relation to sexual ethics as well as information about myself. It has helped me grasp a better knowledge of what views I hold and of social issues I was previously unaware of. [Workshop 2: Participant 8]

Has participating in the workshop changed the way you think about (a) your own life (b) your family and friends’ lives (c) popular media (d) being a social justice activist? If so, how?

I feel confident to identify as a feminist now! Mainly because I feel like I now know what it means! I feel really motivated to take some action – even just challenging people in conversation about their own views on sexism! [Workshop 1: Participant 3]

It made me think about the ‘harmless’ things that people say or comment on every day that reinforce ideas in the collective mind of a group of people, the fact that such
things are so commonly said (i.e. “that’s gay”, “she’s PMSing”) and accepted, suggests that the ideas behind such phrases are in essence accepted. It also reminded me of how not accepting those things that people say makes you a “buzz kill” or a “nagging feminist”. [Workshop 2: Participant 1]

I feel like I’m more prepared to speak up in the next sexist situation I face and I feel safer knowing lots of people are anti-sexism, those in the workshop at least. I feel like my friends & family all have varying views and they’ll have to put up with me lecturing them if they ever say anything sexist. Now I feel more careful about which media stuff I will watch, e.g. I won’t be listening to blurred lines anymore! I feel great to be a social justice activist. [Workshop 2: Participant 3]

I think about my own life in a way, slightly differently now and how men treat me – others treat me and how I want to feel respected and equal, of course I feel the same about my friends and how they are treated / treat others. I see the media differently as I look for more hidden sexist references & realised how common they are.

[Workshop 2: Participant 6]

List emotions you associate with your participation in the workshop, and explain why and when you felt each one:

Intrigued: by the PhD itself, by the other participants’ opinions, by what I was learning. Disturbed: by the blatant exploitation of gender roles etc, and by the everyday ‘normalcy’ of sexism in society. Determined: to try to expose some of the misconceptions about feminism and spread awareness about sexism in the world.

[Workshop 1: Participant 2]

Shock – e.g. seeing some magazines, adverts etc (like the Aston Martin one!) was really horrifying! Everything’s so sexualised. Inspired – listening to [guest speaker] talk about her activism. Enlightenment – the term ‘vulva’ was new to me. Also the ‘social knowledge’ discussion was really informative. Respect – Everyone shared really cool opinions, thoughts, feelings – lots to think about & learn from. Such an awesome group! FUN! – the whole thing was really great!

[Workshop 1: Participant 3]
Concerned (actively) in a good way, happy, content, enlightened, scared (about society) excited (what I might be able to do), thoughtful. [Workshop 1: Participant 7]

Empowered – when looking at those websites of activists and when planning our own activism plans. It made me feel like it wouldn’t be so hard to make a difference. [Workshop 2: Participant 1]

Nervous – at first I was afraid my opinions might be seen as wrong and I haven’t really been exposed to some of these ideas before. Excited – I was also very excited to attend the workshop as it would provide me with new information, people and ideas. Fun – I found the workshops very fun and the tasks and activities we were given weren’t boring. Informative: I have come out of the workshop knowing a lot more than I did before the workshop about both myself and society. Comfortable – I found the workshop a place where it was easy to be comfortable and express my ideas in an open-minded environment. [Workshop 2: Participant 8]
One-Day Workshop

Outline

Purpose Statement:

I developed the one-day workshop after the three-day workshop as a less taxing alternative format. Running three-day workshops requires a great deal of time and energy from facilitator and participants, making it a rich but not particularly practical approach. I was eager to experiment with condensing my material down into a one-day format, and I felt certain that it would be possible to retain the problem-posing ethos of the workshops while running them in a more compact manner.

To make this possible, I made several significant alterations to the three-day workshops. Firstly, participants do not plan their own original social activism project, nor do they have guest seminars on creative activism and skills (though examining creative activism is still a key part of the workshop). Secondly, less time and fewer activities are devoted to open discussion. The online forum has been removed, as have the take-home activities, for obvious reasons. In order to get through more activities and provide participants with a greater share in conversation, I recommend running one-day workshops with fewer participants (see Notes on Group Work p.212 for more detail).

Despite the more modest scope, the one-day workshop offers ample opportunity for encounters with ideas, exploration and reflection. Much of the theoretical content is retained, and the activities remain carefully choreographed to provide progressive opportunities for critical reflection and analysis. Like the three-day workshops, this format is still structured around growing a critical social analysis and providing participants with theoretical and practical tools to ‘speak back’ to everyday cultural assumptions which scaffold gender inequality.

After an orientation to the workshop, the first session introduces a critical social analysis. As with the three-day workshop, this session provides the theoretical backbone for the rest of your time together. Next, an exploration of everyday sexism is paired with a session on critical and creative activism. After lunch, the content moves through a critical analysis of ‘choice’ into a discussion of the conditions shaping the choice to oppose or to enact both sexism and feminism. The workshop ends with a critical analysis of the function of humour.
# One-Day Workshop Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.30-11.00</td>
<td>Welcome and Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00-11.30</td>
<td>Critical Social Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30-12.15</td>
<td>Everyday Sexism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15-1.00</td>
<td>Activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-1.30</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30-2.30</td>
<td>Gender and Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30-3.15</td>
<td>Obscuring Sexism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15-3.20</td>
<td><strong>Afternoon Tea</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.20-4.20</td>
<td>Humour and Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20-4.30</td>
<td>Wrap-Up and Farewell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session-By-Session Guide

Welcome and Orientation

approx. 30 minutes

The first session of the day welcomes participants to the workshop, builds rapport and community and establishes an open, reciprocal dialogical space (see Freire, 1972; Souto-Manning, 2010). Setting a collaborative, inquiring tone from the outset is fundamental to the workshop’s success. All three activities included here work towards establishing this kind of interactional space.

It is a good idea to begin by pointing out important features of the workspace you’re in, if participants are not familiar with it: where to find the toilets and drinking water, for example. You may also wish to run through the day’s schedule, or give participants a printed outline. Depending on the requirements of your project, you may want to use this time to provide some background on the sessions/workshops and complete any necessary administrative tasks (questionnaires, consent forms, demographic information etc.). You may also want to unpack the ‘problem-posing’ philosophy of the workshops by explaining that discussions are a forum for sharing the group’s diverse expertise and working together to inquire into everyday experiences (see Notes on Facilitation p.214 for more detail).

Any group discussion of issues relating to sexism, gender and sexuality has the potential to raise sensitive issues for group members, lead to a serious personal disclosure and/or generate discomfort. As a facilitator, you must be prepared for these eventualities. Providing detailed information about local, accessible support services and identifying a procedure for participants to leave the discussion space should they need to are essential parts of care-taking facilitation. I recommend covering these points early in the first session.

Activity List:

Activity 3: Ground Rules* p.265
Activity 4: Identity Mapping* p.266
Activity 5: Living Likert Scale* p.266
**Critical Social Analysis**

approx. 30 minutes

After welcoming participants to the workshop and establishing a collaborative interactive space in the first session of the day, the second session introduces the fundamental theoretical foundation of the workshops: a critical social analysis. The activities in this session are designed and sequenced to present critical theory in an accessible, meaningful and lively manner. First, the facilitator takes the lead, talking through the relationship between power and knowledge (see Foucault, 1978) in an interactive, seminar-style presentation. This is one of the only occasions during workshop process where the facilitator takes up a ‘teacherly’ role. Even so, it is possible to do this in an open manner, offering rather than mandating the critical social analysis you present. You may like to emphasise that the workshop is about holding theory and experience side by side and analysing points of connection and contradiction. As a facilitator, keep in mind that an uncritical use of theory to re-narrate experience is antithetical to the workshop process and purpose. You can also provide opportunities for participants to contribute ideas and expertise within the presentation in order to moderate the monological format of this activity (for a sample presentation see Resource 4, p. 299). Take time to build this scaffold clearly, as participants will draw on it throughout the rest of the workshop process.

Activity List:

Activity 6: Power / Knowledge Presentation* p.267
Everyday Sexism

approx. 45 minutes

The third session of the day moves from the generalised critical social analysis introduced in the second session to the workshop’s particular focus: gender and sexism in popular media and everyday life. Accordingly, many of the activities from this session onwards explicitly address these interests. The session includes a mixture of role-play, small group work and whole group discussion to maintain momentum. These diverse activities also offer multiple avenues for participants to explore connections between feminist social theory and their own everyday experiences of gender and gendered power relations.

Activity List:

Activity 9: Gender ≠ Genitals p.270
Activity 10: Men-Ups p.270
Activity 49: Defining Sexism p.293
Activity 50: Men and Women on the Wall p.294
Activity 14: Sexism in the Streets p.273
Activism

approx. 45 minutes

The fourth session of the day introduces social activism, a focus that we will revisit across the workshop process. This session provides an opportunity to discuss the range of possibilities open to us to challenge common-sense ideas we find troubling. This shift in focus from analysing social relations in previous sessions to exploring ways to transform them in this session provides an infusion of positive, mood-lightening energy after a period of intense group work examining weighty social issues.

Activities 16 and 17 explore examples of feminist activism that ‘speak back’ to problematic social assumptions.

Activity List:

Activity 16: Feminist Social Activism p.274
Activity 17: If Men Could Menstruate p.274
Gender and Choice

approx. 60 minutes

The activities in this session are designed to open up critical perspectives on ‘choice’ and choice-based rhetoric. Theorising choice is an important scaffold for negotiating the “postfeminist sensibility” which characterises popular media, advertising and idealised western femininities (see Gill, 2007b), as well as opening up a critical window on neoliberal subjectivities more generally. This session includes both embodied and dialogical approaches to maintain energy and stimulate critical reflection.

These activities shift between a consideration of ‘choice’ and ‘choosing’ in the abstract (Activities 25 and 26) and opportunities to contextualise choices in relation to gendered bodily practices (Activities 29 and 30). If time allows, finish the session with a problem-posing discussion about the politics of personal choices: why do we choose to present ourselves in gendered ways? What are the personal, social and political consequences of these choices?

Activity List:

Activity 25: Defining Choice* p.278
Activity 26: What Can We Choose?* p.279
Activity 29: Choice in Context: Sushi for Lunch* p.282
Activity 30: Choice and Body Hair p.282
Obscuring Sexism

approx. 45 minutes

The fourth session of the day builds on the complex theorisation of choice the group has already explored. This session connects a critical analysis of choice to sexism and feminism, focussing particularly on the choice to see sexism, and the choice to challenge it.

Activity 32 invites participants to discuss the complexities of these choices, and to consider these choices in their own lives. Activities 33 and 34 focus particularly on feminism and direct participants’ analysis towards the affective loading of a ‘feminist’ identity. These activities create an occasion for participants to reassess negative social assumptions they may have about feminism, if they choose to. The session ends with Activity 36, which introduces an intersectional analysis of privilege in an accessible manner. You may wish to round off the session with a group discussion about the implication of privilege for someone’s choices and responsibilities.

Activity List:

Activity 32: Choosing Against Feminism p.283
Activity 33: Straw Feminists p.284
Activity 34: Seeing & Challenging Sexism p.285
Activity 36: Thinking about Privilege* p.286
Humour and Social Justice

approx. 60 minutes

This is the final content-based workshop session. The overall aim of the session is to explore humour as a tool for communicating ideas. Humour can subtly and persuasively communicate protest and social critique but it can also be used to enact sexism, racism, hostility and aggression. A critical analysis of sexist humour and the arguments typically used to defend and legitimise these jokes may inform participants’ social activism planning, and will also equip participants with the skills to identify and challenge hostile humour in everyday life if they choose.

The session begins with a close analysis of sexist jokes (Activities 42 and 43) before moving into a discussion of how rhetorics of political correctness and of freedom of speech are employed to attack and defend hostile humour (Activity 44). The session closes with a general discussion of the social function of humour. Activity 46 provides participants with an opportunity to write a ‘note-to-self’ for the future.

Activity List:

Activity 42: Repair the Resource p.289
Activity 43: Dissecting Rape Jokes p.290
Activity 46: Note to Self* p.292
Wrap-Up and Farewell

approx. 10 minutes

Use the last 10 minutes the group has together to reflect on the entire workshop process. Encourage participants to carry any ideas they have found useful onwards and outwards. You may wish to offer participants a way to reach you in the future if they want to get in touch with you.

Before presenting certificates to participants and ending the session, you may want to outline what this process has meant for you as a facilitator. Thank participants for their participation and for the ideas and experiences they have shared with the group. Remind everyone present to treat material shared respectfully and to maintain each others’ confidentiality, if this was a group rule.

Activity List

Activity 48: Certificates* p.293
Process Notes

The one-day workshop format was adapted and condensed down from the original three-day workshop template. Having run the three-day workshops successfully, I had some idea of what to expect, though I anticipated that the lack of activism planning would change the process considerably.

Below are some process notes about the one-day workshop, based on my experience of facilitating the (see Introduction for details on my workshops). Where observations from the one-day format are in line with observations from the three-day workshops, I have not repeated them. Anything novel or contradictory is listed below.

- I was interested to see how a workshop would flow with three participants, and as it eventuated I ran a workshop with two participants. I was nervous about it, but the day flowed well. I found that with only three of us, I adapted the content as I went to include fewer embodied activities – these felt awkward in such a small group.
- Depending on the number of participants you have, the number of activities you get through will vary. Unsurprisingly, the workshop I ran with two people was shorter than with four.
- Critical conversations and experiential sharing went well for both workshops, despite having less time to establish the collaborative, problem-posing tone within the group. I was concerned that the two-person workshop might be too intimate a setting for critical discussion, but this was not the case. Indeed, one participant noted she particularly appreciated the conversational space which came with having just the three of us present.
- With less time for unstructured conversation, participants’ conversation did not stray off course. This flipside of this was that there were fewer opportunities for participants to bring in their own ideas and materials.

Overall, the one-day format is an effective practical alternative to the three-day workshops. It offers a more streamlined experience, which nevertheless supports participants’ inquiry into the gendered contours of everyday life.
Testimonials

As part of the one-day workshops, I asked participants to complete brief surveys on their experiences of the workshop process. Below are extracts which set out in participants own words what the workshop process meant for them.

List emotions you associate with your participation in the workshop, and explain why and when you felt each one:

Knowledgeable – learned more about gender problems, where they are from.
Empowered – to do something about these problems and let others know about them.
Included – because of the small group able to voice my opinion and have a lot of say.
Interested – was a topic I know about I was able to draw on previous knowledge and understand more. [Workshop 3: Participant 2]

Anger – about hearing some of the examples of sexism and injustice. Pride – in being able to challenge people’s ideas. Curiosity – I want to hear more about the issues discussed. Confused – some of the issues were tricky to try and understand at first.

Yay! I felt happy that I came. [Workshop 4: Participant 2]

Interesting – it’s interesting in general to hear what other people think. Confused – when you think about things you hadn’t considered before. Shocked – some examples of harassment etc were shocking. Challenged – to question by beliefs. Excited – to be able to share my opinion. [Workshop 4: Participant 3]

Joy – discussion and voicing opinions is quite good – it lets me express things usually unexpressed. Challenge – when opinions have challenged my preset opinions. I’ve felt excited to do specific things that enable me to have exposure to different points of view. Shock at some of the information shown. Touched by some of the videos etc shown. [Workshop 4: Participant 4]

Has participating in the workshop changed the way you think about (a) your own life (b) your family and friends’ lives (c) popular media (d) being a social justice activist? How?

My opinion of feminism is positive now. Opinions on advertising: I’ll be more critical in my evaluation, ‘what stereotypes does this support’? Awareness of the social change which needs to occur. [Workshop 3: Participant 1]
Yes, I feel like I know more about this/these problems, I got to hear and see different sides and things that I didn’t know about. I felt like there are more people passionate about this and I felt like I can be more open I talking about it and talk about more information with people (inform more than I could have).

[Workshop 3: Participant 2]

I definitely feel more comfortable with conveying my own feminist views to those around me and openly. It is also encouraging that others possess similar views and wish to take action. [Workshop 4: Participant 1]

Changed how I think about political correctness and racism.

[Workshop 4: Participant 2]

It has really made me realise how much of what I do and believe is influenced by social constructs. I hope that I can see through this more in future and not get so caught up in things like body image and needing to be super feminine.

[Workshop 4: Participant 3]
90-Minute Workshop

Outline

Purpose Statement

This 90-minute workshop outline introduces a critical social analysis and invites participants to collaboratively explore it. As with the transition from a three-day to a one-day format, condensing the one-day workshop into a 90-minute format involved reframing the scope of the workshops and dramatically reducing content. I have tried to do this in a manner which retains the integrity of the workshop, and fulfils its essential purpose: providing participants with the forum and the tools to share and interrogate their own observations and experiences, connect dominant knowledge and social practices to power relations and begin to imagine how things might be otherwise. Despite offering fewer opportunities for participation, this 90-minute format still offers opportunities for problem-posing discussion and runs in an open and collaborative manner.

The content retained was chosen because of its suitability to brief delivery and its potential utility for participants – I judged this primarily on the applicability of ideas to understanding and challenging sexism, either in media or in everyday experience. The topics and activities retained here are intended to offer participants fresh ideas and diverse analytic tools to help resist and challenge sexism in their own lives, if they choose.

This 90-minute workshop could relatively easily be adjusted into a ‘seminar-style’ presentation deliverable to very large groups by either removing or altering the participatory activities. For example, one could invite participants to complete the ‘Gender ≠ Genitals’ exercise while seated in an auditorium, or ask for volunteers to share examples rather than attempting to hear from everybody present. I recommend using the workshop format where possible, however, because it offers greater scope for participation and critical catalysis.
Session Guide

Introduction

approx. 10 minutes

Use the first ten minutes of your time to introduce the content of the workshop and explain the purpose of the workshop: to provide theoretical tools for participants to take up and explore if they choose to. Run Activity 3 and 5 in a manner that sets a collaborative, dialogical tone for the workshop.

It is a good idea to begin by pointing out important features of the workspace you’re in, if participants are not familiar with it: where to find the toilets and drinking water, for example. Depending on the requirements of your project, you may want to use this time to provide some background on the workshop and complete any necessary administrative tasks (questionnaires, consent forms, demographic information etc.). You may also want to unpack the ‘problem-posing’ philosophy of the workshop by explaining that discussions are a forum for sharing the group’s diverse expertise and working together to inquire into everyday experiences.

Any group discussion of issues relating to sexism, gender and sexuality has the potential to raise sensitive issues for group members, lead to a serious personal disclosure and/or generate discomfort. As a facilitator, you must be prepared for these eventualities. Providing detailed information about local, accessible support services and identifying a procedure for participants to leave the discussion space, should they need to, is an essential part of care-taking facilitation. I recommend covering these points early in the session.

Activity List:

Activity 3: Ground Rules* p.265

Activity 5: Living Likert Scale* p.266
Feminist Social Analysis

approx. 30 minutes

After welcoming participants to the workshop and establishing a collaborative mood, move into the fundamental theoretical foundation of the workshop: a critical social analysis. The activities in this session are designed and sequenced to present critical theory in an accessible, meaningful and lively manner. First, give a brief, interactive presentation on the relationship between power and knowledge (see Foucault, 1978). To make the most of the time available, keep the presentation anchored in examples relating to gender. You can provide opportunities for participants to contribute ideas and expertise within the presentation in order to moderate the monological format of this activity (for a sample presentation see Resource 4, p. 299). Try to build this scaffold clearly, as participants will draw on it throughout the rest of the workshop.

After the presentation, use Activities 9 and 17 to provide an alternative way into a feminist social analysis – through embodied experience in Activity 9 and through a humorous thought experiment in Activity 17.

Activity List:

Activity 6: Power / Knowledge Presentation* p.267

Activity 9: Gender ≠ Genitals p.270

Activity 17: If Men Could Menstruate p.274
The activities in this section are designed to open up critical perspectives on ‘choice’ and choice-based rhetoric. Theorising choice is an important scaffold for negotiating the “postfeminist sensibility” which characterises popular media, advertising and idealised western femininities (see Gill, 2007b), as well as opening up a critical window on neoliberal subjectivities more generally.

Discussion shifts from an abstract consideration of choice in Activity 25 to a contextualised analysis of choice in relation to gendered body hair removal practices in Activity 30. If time allows, finish the session with a problem-posing discussion about the politics of personal choices: why do we choose to present ourselves in gendered ways? What are the personal social and political consequences of these choices?

Activity List:
Activity 25: Defining Choice* p.278
Activity 30: Choice and Body Hair p.282
Humour and Sexism

approx. 25 minutes

The last section of the workshop is an exploration of humour as a tool for communicating ideas. Humour can subtly and persuasively communicate protest and social critique but it can also be used to enact sexism, racism, hostility and aggression. A critical analysis of sexist humour and the arguments typically used to defend and legitimise these jokes will equip participants with the skills to identify and challenge hostile humour in everyday life if they choose.

The session begins with a close analysis of rape jokes in Activity 43, and then uses Rion Sabean’s Men-Ups (see Resource 5 p.300) to explore a very different use of humour. If time permits, move into a general discussion of the social functions of humour and an open discussion of the kinds of gender-based humour participants encounter in their day-to-day lives.

End the session with a consideration of the Men-Ups as an example of creative social activism. If you have time, ask the group to brainstorm all the activities which could constitute ‘activism’, and draw attention to the power of everyday actions (conversations, jokes, comments online) to challenge – or reinforce – sexism.

Activity List:

Activity 43: Dissecting Rape Jokes p.290

Activity 10: Men-Ups p.270
Wrap-Up

approx. 5 minutes

End the workshop with Activity 46, which provides participants with an opportunity to write a ‘note-to-self’ to be posted back to them in a few weeks’ time. In the remaining minutes, summarise what you hope the utility of the material covered might be, and encourage participants to carry any ideas they have found useful onwards and outwards. Thank participants for their participation and for the ideas and experiences they have shared with the group (if appropriate). Remind everyone present to treat material shared respectfully and to maintain each others’ confidentiality.

Activity List:

Activity 46: Note to Self* p. 292
Activities

This section of the resource contains an index of all the activities referred to in the earlier workshop outlines. The index is followed by an Activity Outline section which runs through the activities in numerical order. Each outline contains details about the purpose of the activity, estimated duration, group configuration and a description of the activity process. Where supplementary materials and/or resources are required, this is indicated and a page number will direct you to the appropriate resources in the following section. Note that the ‘purpose’ specified for each activity is brief and utilitarian. Refer to the session descriptions contained in the three-day, one-day or 90-minute workshop outlines for an account of the role each activity can play within a workshop session. When running activities, be aware that activity duration varies depending on group size and the interactional styles within the group (refer to Using Workshops, Session and Activities p.209 and Notes on Group Work p.212 for further guidance).

An asterisk (*) is used to denote activities which do not explicitly address gender and sexism. These could be transposed into a differently-themed workshop with no significant alteration.
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Activity Outlines

Activity 1: Blind Assassins/ Wink Murder*

Purpose: A ‘warm-up’ in both senses, this activity gets people up and moving about and also is an effective ice-breaker.

Duration: 2-5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Up to 15 people per circle.

Blind Assassins or Wink Murder is a group warm up exercise commonly used in drama, theatre sports and other kinds of group work. Assemble the group in a large circle(s), and ask everyone to then lower their heads so they’re looking at their toes, keeping their eyes open. Explain that on the count of three, everyone will raise their heads and look directly at the eyes of someone else in the circle. Any pair who make eye contact are ‘murdered’ and must fall to the ground, acting out as dramatic a death as they can muster. Everyone lowers their heads for a second time, and the process repeats. The game continues until one player remains, or until players have devised a strategy to avoid making eye contact.

Activity 2: Name-and-Role Memory Game*

Resource 1: Discussion Role Cards p.296

Purpose: To learn names and to distribute ‘discussion roles’. Encouraging participants to take on a ‘discussion role’ is a good way to diffuse responsibility for guiding and facilitating group discussion among participants, encouraging a more participatory process (see Moane, 2011 for a description of the utility of discussion roles)

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This activity combines a name-learning challenge with the distribution of ‘discussion roles’ among the group. To prepare, ensure that you have enough discussion role cards for everyone present. Have one ‘Facilitator’ role card for each facilitator, and make up the rest of the cards from the five other role options (motivator, vibe watcher, mediator, reality tester, balance keeper).
Each card has a role name on one side, and a role description on the other. Lay discussion role cards out in front of the group, with the role name side of the card facing up. The facilitators pick up the facilitator card/s and invite each participant to choose a card. The role each person chooses outlines their particular responsibilities for guiding group work. Once everyone has chosen and has had time to read the description of the role, the name game begins. Starting with a volunteer, go around the group introducing everyone present like this: I am A, and I’m a balance keeper. The next person begins ‘this is A, she is a balance keeper. I am B, and I am a mediator.’ The chain continues, and grows progressively longer so that the last person has to repeat the full chain of names and roles before stating their own. This is intended to be an amusing task which requires concentration and encourages group cohesion – mistakes are part of the process and what counts is that the group completes the full chain together.

**Activity 3: Ground Rules***

Purpose: To collectively establish rules which clarify group expectations, boundaries and responsibilities. This is very important when a group will be working together on sensitive issues and/or sharing personal experiences.

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

As one large group, ask participants to contribute to a brainstorm of rules they agree to abide by for the workshop. The aim of the rules is to help things run smoothly and to clarify group expectations, boundaries and responsibilities. Invite participants to offer suggestions, to second rules they like and to challenge rules they don’t think are practical. Once you have a range of ideas, decide as a group on a list of ground rules which everyone is satisfied with. As a facilitator you are part of the group, and you may want to contribute your own ideas. Explicitly addressing confidentiality is particularly important to include in group work where people will be working together on sensitive issues and/or sharing personal experiences. Be sure to ask participants to elaborate on what confidentiality or privacy means to them, and how they would like their comments and stories to be treated. Ideally, there will be a consensus around what can be told (general features of discussion, for instance) and what remains untold (personal anecdotes or identifying details). While the group is free to decide
against having any restrictions of this kind, remind participants that this decision may influence what everyone present feels comfortable disclosing. Place the finalised list somewhere visible in the room.

Activity 4: Identity Mapping*

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for participants to share biographical stories and to highlight commonalities and diversity across the group.

Materials: Pens and scrap paper.

Duration: 15 minutes or more, depending on group size.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This mapping activity is inspired by my own experience of participatory mapping at the Public Science Project’s annual Summer Institute (see http://publicscienceproject.org/critical-par-institutes/). This is an open format exercise, which allows room for creativity without mandating it. Everyone in the group, including the facilitator, draws a map of their ‘route’ to the session today. Participants can take this instruction as literally or as metaphorically as they choose; it could be a physical map, or the map of a life course. Allow about five minutes for everyone to draw their maps, and then go around the group, taking it in turns to display maps and explain the journey illustrated.

Activity 5: Living Likert Scale*

Resource 2: Strongly Agree/Always and Strongly Disagree/Never signs p.297

Resource 3: Living Likert List, p.298

Purpose: To give everyone an opportunity to see the diversity of identity, experience and opinion in the room. This activity disrupts assumptions of sameness and builds tolerance. It also provides a useful snapshot of opinions for participants to reflect back on at the end of the workshop process.

Materials: Masking tape/Chalk

Duration: 15 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.
This activity is called the ‘Living Likert Scale’ in reference to the eponymous social science tool. It builds on continuum-based socio-dramatic techniques (for example, the Line Up and the Power Shuffle; see Souto-Manning, 2010). As the facilitator reads aloud a list of statements (see Resource 3, p. 296), participants position and reposition themselves on a real-life spectrum created with masking tape or chalk on the floor, with ‘Strongly Agree/Always’ and ‘Strongly Disagree/Never’ signs positioned at either end of the line. The statements can include a mixture of personal items e.g. ‘I challenge people who I disagree with’, experiential items e.g. ‘I have been sexually harassed in the street’ and opinion-based items ‘I believe gender equality has been achieved in this country’. Offer participants the opportunity to contribute additional items to your list.

This exercise allows participants and facilitators to enact and observe the group’s patterning of experience, identity and opinion, and it can provide a foundation to explore different dimensions of privilege within the group.

Activity 6: Power / Knowledge Presentation*

Resource 4: Power / Knowledge Presentation; see template on p.299

Purpose: To introduce the key ideas and key terminologies associated with a critical social analysis, introducing general principles and drawing on diverse examples.

Materials: Projector (optional)

Duration: Variable.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This is an open-ended activity. Exactly how you decide to present a critical social analysis and the kinds of examples and case-studies you include will vary greatly depending on your particular interests and requirements. This session could be as short as ten minutes, or as long as an hour. Whatever the format of your presentation, it needs to communicate two fundamental tenets of ‘critical’ (by which I mean broadly social constructionist) social theory. Firstly, that knowledge has social and cultural dimensions; secondly, that knowledge about social groups has implications for power relations between groups. This can be done relatively straightforwardly by illustrating how cultural ‘common sense’ varies over time and space, and by tracing the connections between social knowledge and a range of tangible effects (work and educational opportunities, surveillance and imprisonment, self-
determination) and intangible effects (beliefs, emotions, feelings of entitlement and possibility, hopes, expectations).

In my own facilitation, I use a range of historical and contemporary examples to illustrate how the logics of domination and subordination are similarly patterned over time and space (for instance, that colonised peoples, women or the mentally ‘ill’ are vulnerable and unfit for independence, and therefore that control over them ought to be given to more capable, benevolent others). I then move into a more complex account of gendered power relations. Refer to Resource 4 p.297 for a more detailed template.

**Activity 7: Master and Servant**

Purpose: To facilitate embodied experience of the dynamics of domination and subordination discussed in Activity 6.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Pairs.

This pair-based role-play activity is a variation on a socio-dramatic technique known as Columbian Hypnosis (Souto-Manning, 2011). Ask participants to pair up. The person with the next birthday will play master and the other will play servant. Participants will then mime a scenario where the servant helps the master to dress, responding to specific prompts from the facilitator (for example, searching for socks, presenting a choice of hats, helping the master into shoes, etc.). Then ask half of the pairs to sit down. Those still standing are to run through the situation again with the same actions and the same roles, but the pairs must try to exaggerate the power distance between the master and servant. Once this is done, ask the seated pairs to stand and repeat the scenario, but this time the pairs must role-play the servant and master as relative equals, and/or have the servant covertly resist the master’s power (i.e. tricking him, being disrespectful behind his back). Finish by inviting participants to discuss their experience of the exercise. How did it feel to embody different levels of power? Where do you see these dynamics of domination and subordination in your life?
Activity 8: The Social Iceberg*

Purpose: To practise applying a critical social analysis to a local example of inequitable resource distribution and to explore the power of ‘common-sense’ explanations of social phenomena.

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard

Duration: 20 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group; pairs.

This exercise uses local data that documents inequitable resource distribution as springboard into a critical analysis of social attributions and their links to wider social knowledge. This exercise demonstrates the power of ‘common-sense’ social knowledge to present inequitable outcomes as unjust, or as deserved.

While your context and the workshop context will determine which data you use, official statistics are a useful departure point. In my facilitation, I use freely available data from Statistics New Zealand. For example, in the June 2013 quarter, New Zealanders’ median hourly earnings from wage or salary jobs showed disparities by gender – men: $22.59; women: $20.30 – and ethnic group – Pākehā: $22.50; Māori: $18.82; Pasifika: $18.00 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Choose your data and ask participants to work in pairs to generate three possible explanations for the disparity (for example, explanations for why men/Pākehā people earn more than women/ Māori/Pasifika people). Pairs should produce at least one explanation which legitimises the disparity and one explanation which challenges the disparity.

These explanations become the basis for the ‘social iceberg’ exercise. The purpose of this exercise’s metaphor is to illustrate that beneath common-sense, apparently straightforward, social attributions (i.e. what we see above water) lies a mass of unseen social knowledge and implicit judgements. For example: the explanation that women are paid less because they are suited to less skilled jobs is tied to assumptions about women’s competence and the gendered dimensions of ‘skilled’ work. Ask the pairs to report back their explanations to the group. Using a whiteboard or flip-chart, draw an iceberg with the tip floating above sea level. Working through each group’s example, place the explanation as the ‘tip’ above water and work as a group to make visible the assumptions and implicit judgements which lie beneath the surface of your ‘simple’ statements. Some assumptions or ‘icebergs’ may appear
unconnected above water but may in fact be connected underwater to the same mass of assumptions.

*Activity 9: Gender ≠ Genitals*

Purpose: To differentiate gender from sex, to generate embodied experience of gender as ‘performative’ and to re-energise the group.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

As well as livening up the group and generating humour, this activity encapsulates the idea of gender as *performance* (see Butler, 1990), drawing attention to the way we ‘do’ and recognise gender in everyday life. Ask participants to space themselves out across the room. They will individually mime activities as you read them out loud, first in a ‘feminine’ way, then in a ‘masculine’ way. Have a list of familiar scenarios prepared: standing; sitting; greeting a friend; walking home late at night; eating a huge piece of pizza.

Once you have gone through several scenarios for each gender, come together for a group discussion about the difference between gender and sex. To stimulate discussion, ask participants how they felt during the mime, what kinds of things they did to ‘mark’ gender and whether they do this in real life. You might also like to ask participants whether they felt any similarities between this exercise and Activity 7. Discuss people’s responses.

*Activity 10: Men-Ups*

Resource 5: Men-Ups by Rion Sabean, p.300

Purpose: To draw attention to gendered conventions in photography and their connection to power relations.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This activity is based around Rion Sabean’s Men-Up Photographs. Use a projector to share the photos with participants. Use the images to catalyse a critical discussion of gendered photographic conventions, and gendered body language more generally. Why is it unremarkable and somewhat sexual for a female body to be posed in a submissive manner,
but laughable and non-sexual for male bodies to be presented in this way? What do these images suggest about the differences between male and female bodies? What are the consequences of this ‘difference’ for power relations between men and women in everyday life?

**Activity 11: Sexism Quick-Association**

Purpose: To generate a high-speed brainstorm about sexism and to gauge the group’s existing knowledge.

Materials: A ‘hot potato’ object to pass around (e.g. a soft toy or a small ball), Flipchart/Whiteboard

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Using the object you brought along, play a hot-potato quick association game. Whoever is holding the object contributes a (new) word to the sexism brainstorm before passing the object on. Write down all contributions. Participants have three seconds to contribute a new word before they are eliminated from the game.

Once most participants are eliminated and you have generated a good number of words, stop the game and take a closer look at the brainstormed words. Begin a group discussion which springboards from the associations the group has provided. For example: Who experiences sexism? What are the criteria for something being sexist or not? Can sexism be fun(ny)? Is sexism the same as misogyny? Who cares about sexism? How do you know when sexism has happened?

*n.b. you may like to keep a record of the group’s key ideas about sexism to revisit during Activity 33.*

**Activity 12: Media Men and Women on the Wall**

Purpose: To introduce media as a tool for sharing and policing ideas about gender, and to examine the features of culturally dominant constructions of masculinity and femininity.

Materials: Magazines, pens, 2x A3 printed human outlines (draw one yourself or use an online template)
Duration: 20 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group discussion, split group exercise.

Begin this activity by briefly discussing the role of the media as a tool for sharing, reinforcing and policing social ideas about masculinity and femininity. What do participants think about the media’s ‘power’? How do the claims the media make about men and women influence people? And how do you think the media might affect you personally?

To examine dominant media messages about gender more concretely, ask the group to divide into two, and give one A3-size human outline to each group, along with pens and magazines. Ask one group to focus on masculinity, and the other group to focus on femininity. Using magazines and their own accumulated knowledge, ask participants to fill their human outlines with ideas and information the media presents us with about the ideal, typical man or woman. This could include expectations of appearance and behaviour, likes and dislikes, shoulds and shouldn’ts, strengths and weaknesses.

After 10 minutes, each group presents their ‘media man’ or ‘media woman’ and discusses his or her features. After a closer look at some of these ideas, ask the group whether their ideas about the media’s influence have shifted, and how so. You may like to pin the media man and media woman onto the wall of the room once the exercise is finished.

Activity 13: Intimate Relationships

Resource 6: Hollway's Dominant Discourses of Heterosexuality p.300

Purpose: To explore how dominant media representations of masculinity and femininity shape gender relations and heterosexual relationships.

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard

Duration: 20 minutes.

Group Configuration: Split groups.

In the same groups as Activity 11, ask participants to produce a list of financial, sexual and emotional expectations for men (one group) or women (the other group) in heterosexual relationships.

After a few minutes, ask each group to write their list of expectations on one side of the whiteboard or flipchart. Discuss the differences. How do those stereotypes fit into opposite-
sex and same-sex relationships they have observed? What are the power implications? To augment this discussion, you may wish to introduce Hollway’s critical analysis of dominant discourses of heterosexuality to participants, and explore their responses to her ideas.

*Activity 14: Sexism in the Streets*

Resource 7: Sexism in the Streets Presentation p.301

Purpose: To discuss connections between social representations of gender, gendered power imbalances and sexism using applied examples.

Duration: 20 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

The final part of this session is called ‘Sexism in the Streets’, and covers everyday sexism. To prepare for this activity, you will need to pick applied examples. In my facilitation, I use examples which cover sexism in the workplace (Nicki Minaj video clip), sexism in media/women’s sport (Marion Bartoli wins Wimbledon) and street heckling (Everyday Sexism Project).

Share your examples with participants and then facilitate a group discussion about what you’ve seen. What are these incidents? How do you explain what’s going on in each one? Are they ‘real’ issues? What do they suggest about gendered power relations? Linking back to the social iceberg metaphor from Activity 8, ask participants to unpick some of the statements and explanations they have offered. What ideas lie beneath our own reactions and attributions? You may wish to finish the activity by inviting participants to share any of their own experiences of everyday sexism.

*Activity 15: Activism Brainstorm*

Purpose: To stimulate creative thinking about what ‘activism’ entails and to draw attention to the activist possibilities of ‘small acts’ (Moane, 2006).

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.
As a group, ask participants to brainstorm their ideas about activism. What counts as activism? What ways can we take action or ‘speak back’ to ideas and practices that trouble us? Encourage participants to think broadly and to consider small, everyday actions as well as more ambitious kinds. You may want to save the list and/or display it in the room.

**Activity 16: Feminist Social Activism**

Resource 8: Feminist Social Activism Resource Packet p.302

Purpose: To introduce and critically discuss examples of feminist social activism.

Duration: 15 minutes.

Group Configuration: Small groups.

Prepare a feminist social activism resource packet for this exercise. The packet should contain information about three examples of feminist activism you have selected, plus a question sheet for each group (see Resource 8 p.300 for an example). In my facilitation, I use Guerrilla Girls, the New View Campaign and the Who Needs Feminism? Campaign.

Ask participants to divide into three groups and invite each group to take information about one of the activism campaigns along with a question sheet. Each group has 10 minutes to read through the information in the resource packet and use it to answer the questions on their question sheet. The questions are designed to mimic the social iceberg deconstruction process, asking about the problem the group identifies, their activism, and how the activism connects to the group’s attributions about the cause of the problem. After 10 minutes have elapsed, bring everyone back together and ask the groups to take it in turns to explain their example of activism and to share their answers to the questions posed.

**Activity 17: If Men Could Menstruate**


Resource 10: Feminist Activism Reference List, p.304

Purpose: To explore a powerful and unconventional example of feminist social activism

Duration: 10 minutes.
Display or distribute extracts from Gloria Steinem’s essay ‘If Men Could Menstruate’. Take it in turns to read sentences out loud, travelling around the group. Once it’s finished, discuss participants’ responses to it. What was effective about it? Does it qualify as ‘activism’? To end the exercise, you may wish to offer participants a reference list for feminist activism to explore in their own time.

Activity 18: Group Stretching*

Purpose: To reconnect with our bodies and increase energy levels.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Ask everyone to stand together in a large circle. Take turns suggesting stretches for the group to do – whoever suggests the stretch models it, and others follow on. Continue for about 5 minutes, or until the group is stretched out.

Activity 19: Introducing the Online Forum*

Resource 11: Online Forum p.306

Purpose: To provide and explain an online forum for sharing ideas and responses to the workshop and to a critical/feminist social analysis more generally.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This activity requires you to establish an online forum which participants can access in between workshop days. I use a WordPress blog, but there are a variety of suitable platforms available. Make sure you choose something which all participants will be able to access.

Begin by talking participants through the forum you have set up. Outline its purpose – to provide a place for discussion outside the workshop, enabling participants to stay connected with each other and to share resources. Be sure to explain how to access and use the forum, and provide participants with an opportunity to ask questions.
**Activity 20: Sexism Scan 1**

Purpose: To facilitate participant contribution to workshop content and to encourage use of the online platform.

Duration: 2 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

In preparation for the next workshop session, invite participants to do a ‘sexism scan’ of the media they encounter between now and then. Ask each participant to bring along two media items to the next workshop: one item they find problematic, one item they like. Invite participants to post their items onto the online forum where possible. Participants should come to the next workshop prepared to briefly discuss their items and why they chose them.

**Activity 21: Name and Role Refresher***

Purpose: To re-establish the group dynamic and remind people of names and discussion roles.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Take a moment for participants to recall their discussion role from Day 1. As for Activity 2, ask a volunteer to begin a name and discussion roles chain by stating their name and their role. Continue along the chain with each person adding their name and role until you reach the last person, who recites the names and roles of all the previous group members (with assistance if necessary) before adding their own.

**Activity 22: Quick Association Game***

Resource 12: Quick Association Words p.306

Purpose: To warm up the group and introduce some of the day’s themes

Materials: A ‘hot potato’ object

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.
Ask participants to stand in a circle. Drawing from your list of quick association words relevant to the day’s activities, choose a word and ask participants to contribute a related word, passing the ‘hot potato’ object around as they do so. Continue for at least one circuit of the group, then substitute in a new word, and repeat the process. Use between 5 and 10 different quick association words.

**Activity 23: Open Discussion**

Purpose: To provide an open discussion space for participants to share and analyse material of their choosing (which connects to the workshop themes in some way).

Duration: Open-ended.

Group Configuration: Up to 10 participants per discussion group.

Explain to participants that this activity is an open forum for them to discuss ideas and issues related to the last session and/or to share related experiences. You may like to use prompting questions: Has anyone had any interesting thoughts, conversations or experiences since we last met that they would like to share? How do friends and family respond when you tell them about what you’re doing? Facilitators may well have related ideas and anecdotes to contribute to the group themselves. The duration of this session is open. I would recommend continuing with it for as long as you perceive that the conversation is flowing fruitfully.

**Activity 24: Sexism Scan 2 & Repair the Resource**

Resource 13: Sexism Scan Materials (including facilitator contribution) p.306

Purpose: To discuss the items participants collected for Sexism Scan 1 and to identify and ‘repair’ problematic social assumptions embedded in them.

Duration: 30 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group discussion, pair work.

Review together the items participants have identified as part of Activity 19 (Sexism Scan 1). Ideally, participants will have either brought along printed material or have posted the item onto the online forum. In the latter case, you may want to print examples or else share them with the group using a laptop and projector. It is also a good idea to bring along your own
supplementary examples. Ask participants to explain their choice of items: what they liked or didn’t like about them.

Next, ask participants to get into pairs and to choose an item they find sexist or problematic from those discussed. Their task is to ‘repair’ the resource so that it no longer affirms problematic social assumptions. To do this, it may be useful to remind participants of the social iceberg (Activity 8): suggest that each pair traces the social assumptions about gender underlying their item. From here, the pairs can reformulate the item’s message in a way which challenges oppressive or problematic messages they see in it. This ‘repair’ job can be done in whatever way the pair chooses – retouching it, through graffiti, through a satirical re-working. In the final five minutes of the session, invite pairs to share their item and the repair job they have designed.

This activity is arguably a form of social activism: you may want to point this out to participants, reminding them that this kind of process could be relevant to their own social action planning later in the workshop.

*Activity 25: Defining Choice*

Resource 14: Absolutely free choice and Absolutely forced choice signs p.307

Purpose: To catalyse critical thinking about the concept of choice and what it means to choose.

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard, Masking tape or chalk

Duration: 20 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Begin the session with a general group discussion of choice. How do participants define choice? How is it possible to distinguish between free and unfree/forced choices?

Next, ask participants to make a list of everything they have chosen to do today, and also anything they have had to do/felt forced to do today. Encourage participants to be creative – our lives are full of small choices and imperatives. After a few minutes, go around the group in a circle and invite people to share a few examples. Divide your whiteboard or flipchart into two and label the halves ‘free’ and ‘forced’. Write participants’ examples under the heading each participant assigned them to. Looking at the examples, ask participants to discuss the categorisations. Where is there consensus? Are there any contradictions? Is there anything
you think should be swapped around? Note that there is likely to be some disagreement between participants here – and that’s a good thing!

Next, introduce an alternative model of choice using a ‘Living Likert Scale’ (see Activity 5). Create an axis along the floor with the masking tape or chalk and place the free and forced choice signs at opposite ends. Remind participants to position and reposition themselves along the spectrum as you read out different examples. Read out a range of free and forced choice examples from the whiteboard discussion. You may want to supplement these examples with a few additional items (I add, for example, shaving your legs). Offer participants the opportunity to contribute additional items too.

Finally, bring the group back together and begin a discussion about the two exercises. Do participants prefer a category or a spectrum based exercise? Why? If participants positioned themselves differently for certain items, ask the group how they might explain these differences.

Activity 26: What Can We Choose?*


Purpose: To stimulate critical thinking about the limits on choice

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group, pairs.

If you are using a springboard scenario to illustrate the limits of choice, begin by sharing it with participants. I use the “Dish of the Day” passage from Douglas Adams’ (2002) book The Restaurant at the End of the Universe. Ask one participant to read the scenario aloud.

Next, ask participants to get into pairs and discuss the following questions (with your scenario as a starting point, if you are using one):

- Is it still a choice if we’re choosing to do something inconvenient? Or painful? Or harmful?
- How can we distinguish between a free choice and a forced choice?
- Are there some things we should not be allowed to ‘choose’?

Remind participants that these questions could occupy a lifetime’s worth of thought, and encourage them to come up with responses rather than answers. End the pair-based
discussion in enough time to allow the whole group to come together for a shared discussion of the questions. Invite each pair to outline their responses and explore the range of opinion across the group.

Activity 27: Close-Up: Female Genital Cutting

Purpose: To explore the cultural complexities of choice with a concrete example: traditional versus cosmetic Female Genital Cutting (FGC).

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard, presentation/handout about FGC (see p.306 for an example).

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

For this activity, the facilitator must have a short presentation or handout prepared about Female Genital Cutting (FGC; see Braun, 2009). The presentation should present the similarities and differences between ‘traditional’ and ‘cosmetic’ FGC, with a particular emphasis on how the language of choice is deployed across both examples (western women ‘freely choose’ cosmetic FGC, whereas African, Asian and Middle-Eastern women are ‘coerced’ into traditional FGC).

To begin the session, ask participants what they know about FGC, and record any responses on the board (they may be familiar with the term ‘female genital mutilation’, which used to describe some traditional FGC. Next, run through your prepared handout or presentation on FGC covering both cosmetic and traditional forms. Ask participants to discuss the differences and similarities between the two ‘kinds’: when is FGC acceptable and when is it unacceptable? When is a choice to have FGC procedures ‘really’ a choice? How do assumptions about Western versus ‘other’ women relate to cultural stereotypes and global power relations?
Activity 28: Conscience Alley

Resource 17: Conscience Alley Character Descriptions p.309

Purpose: To provide an embodied exploration of how social pressures shape individuals’ choices, using traditional and cosmetic FGC as examples.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Conscience Alley is a theatre technique associated with Theatre of the Oppressed (Augusto Boal, 1979). This activity asks participants to voice and experience the conflicting desires and social pressures ‘speaking’ to a chosen character by creating a physical dilemma corridor for each participant to walk through.

First, introduce two ‘characters’: two women who are considering undergoing FGC, one for traditional reasons, one for cosmetic reasons. Ask participants to arrange themselves in two lines, facing one another, raising their hands towards the person opposite so that a living tunnel is created.

Begin with a practice, asking participants in the corridor to begin to speak out loud the thoughts, feelings and pressures they imagine are influencing the first woman’s decision. Participants should speak non-stop repeating one or more key phrases and statements and talking over the top of each other. Once the group has the hang of it, explain to participants that they will be taking turns to peel off the corridor and walk through it, listening to the words others are speaking. Begin at one end of the tunnel, and alternate sides. Each participant takes their turn to peel off and walk through the corridor on their own, listening and then joining the tunnel at the opposite end. Once a participant has re-joined the tunnel, the next one can peel off. Once everyone has walked through, run the exercise again, but this time the group speaks the social pressures and thoughts surrounding the second woman’s decision. To finish the exercise, come back together and discuss the experience – when done properly, this is a powerful exercise that generates strong responses.
Activity 29: Choice in Context: Sushi for Lunch*

Resource 18: Choice in Context: Sushi for Lunch p.309

Purpose: To explore the role of context in choice

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This exercise is a light springboard into a discussion of the role of context in choice. Ask three members of the group to reading out one of the three ‘sushi for lunch’ scenarios (or prepare your own version) in turn. Each scenario features the same choice but with different contextual elements influencing that choice. Discuss the three scenarios as a group. What is it about them which ‘feels’ different? Which is the most ‘free”? Would you feel equally free across the three scenarios? How do feelings of freedom relate to contextual constraints?

Activity 30: Choice and Body Hair

Resource 19: Body Hair Quotes from Fahs (2011) p.310

Purpose: To relate the complex understanding of choice built up across the session to the practice of body hair removal and to explore the relationships between body hair, gender and gendered relations of power.

Duration: 15 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Begin with an open discussion of body hair removal. Ask who in the group removes some kind of body hair (remembering this can encompass a wide range of practices, including men’s facial hair, plucking eyebrows, etc.). Ask participants to pick one kind of body hair removal (it doesn’t need to be something they do), and consider what it would be like if they stopped doing it/ started doing it. How would they feel, and how would others respond?

Next, briefly describe the Breanna Fahs study and distribute handouts with quotes from her participants. Go around the group, taking turns to read out the quotes. Discuss the quotes as a group. Which ones stood out to you, and why? Can you imagine having similar experiences? Why, why not? How do men and women’s accounts play into or resist dominant masculinities and femininities? If time allows, move into a more general discussion about the gendered behaviours we (i.e. both participants and facilitator) choose for ourselves. Why do
we choose them? Are they in line with gendered expectations? What are the costs and benefits? What are the consequences for how we feel, and are treated?

Activity 31: Reflection / Discussion Statements

Purpose: To make space for reflection and discussion about the social impact of individual choices.

Materials: Reflection/Discussion Statements; Flipchart/Whiteboard or projector to display statements.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Individual reflection, whole group discussion.

Prepare for this activity by finding or formulating a few statements which encourage reflection on the social impact of individual choices – how the decisions we make affect others (or not). This activity (and one of the statements) is borrowed from Kleinman, Copp and Sandstrom (2006) I use these three statements:

- It doesn’t matter what you choose: being a housewife, a scientist or a model. What matters is having that choice to make.
- “The content of each choice matters – for reproducing or challenging inequality” (Kleinman et al., 2006 p.127)
- Every individual choice shapes the landscape in which others’ choices are made. Thus, one individual who chooses ‘against the crowd’ can enhance others’ freedom to choose.

Give participants five minutes to reflect individually on the quotes below, before coming together for a group discussion. Which statement(s) do you agree with?

Activity 32: Choosing Against Feminism

Resource 21: Sample Choosing Against Feminism Quotes p.312

Purpose: To take critical thinking about choice in general to focus specifically on the choice to not identify as feminist/to not name sexism.

Duration: 10 minutes

Group Configuration: Whole group.
To prepare for this activity, assemble quotes which discuss or demonstrate the choice to *not* identify as feminist and/or to *not* name sexism. I use a mixture of quotes (sourced online) from famous women distancing themselves from feminism (see Resource 21, p. 309).

Share your prepared quotes with participants and use them to catalyse a discussion about the individual consequences of choosing to be a feminist or articulating a feminist analysis. Next, use the social iceberg approach to dissect the quotes. What assumptions about what feminism is and who feminists are underlie these statements? And whose interests do these characterisations serve?

**Activity 33: Straw Feminists**

Purpose: To critically examine the group’s social knowledge about feminists and feminism.

Materials: 3x A3-size printed human outlines (draw one yourself or use an online template), pens, *Women, Know Your Limits!* YouTube video (see below; optional), projector (for optional video)

Duration: 15 minutes.

Group Configuration: Split the group into 3 (or more if you choose – just be sure to print more outlines).

Split participants into as many groups as you have printed human figure outlines, and ask each group to work together to fill in the outlines with their social knowledge about feminists – they can write words and/or use the outline to draw a feminist’s body. After 5 minutes, come back together and ask each group to present their ‘straw feminist’. Discuss the caricatures the groups have generated. Is it true? Is it fair? Whose interests does it serve? Does it make you want to be feminist? If time allows, you may want to show the ‘Women, Know Your Limits’ skit video, which playfully makes connections between sexism and the vilification of feminists, among other things. The video can be found at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LS37SNYjg8w
**Activity 34: Seeing & Challenging Sexism**

Purpose: To revisit the group’s thinking about sexism and to generate reflection and discussion about possibilities for seeing and challenging sexism in participants’ own lives.

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard.

Duration: 15 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group discussion, pair-based work.

Begin by reminding participants about the sexism discussion (Activity 11) from the last workshop. If you made notes, read them out to the group. Invite participants to reassess the ideas. Do you still agree with what you said before? Does it capture the elements you feel are important now? How would you define sexism in a sentence or two?

Next, discuss how the group’s definition fits with the following statements:

- It can’t be sexism if it wasn’t intended to offend / didn’t offend anyone
- Things men and women enjoy can’t be sexist

After the discussion has run its course, ask the participants to split into pairs and to discuss why they think people they know a) don’t see sexism and b) don’t challenge sexism. Both individual and interpersonal reasons are relevant. Are there particular people who are more or less likely to talk about sexism? Are there particular contexts which make it harder or easier to do so? After 5 minutes ask pairs to feedback key ideas to the group, and continue into a group discussion of dominant patterns and differences in responses. You may like to end the discussion by broadening it out to consider other social issues. Are there similar constraints to seeing and naming racism or homophobia? Why / why not?

**Activity 35: Street Harassment: Sexism?**

Purpose: To examine the issue of ‘intent’ in relation to everyday sexism and the assumptions underlying street harassment.

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.
Prepare a relatable scenario describing mundane street harassment. I use the scenario of a man shouting a sexual comment at a female pedestrian from his car. Working from this basic description, present the group with two different elaborations of your scenario. In the first, the man and woman disagree about the incident: he says it was a flattering compliment, she says it was sexist harassment. In the second, both agree that it was a flattering compliment.

As a group, discuss whether each scenario is an example of sexism. What makes something sexist, intention or effect? Finish off the activity with a social iceberg deconstruction of the social ideas and assumptions underlying ‘cat-calling’. What messages does cat-calling give us about men and women: what they’re like, what their roles are, what they expect from each other. How does this shape gendered power relations?

Activity 36: Thinking about Privilege*

Resource 22: Privilege Handout: “Straight While Male: Lowest Difficulty Setting There Is” by John Scalzi, see p.312

Purpose: To introduce a critical, intersectional understanding of ‘privilege’ and generate discussion about responsibility.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This activity is based around reading and discussing an article written by John Scalzi about understanding privilege. You may wish to use the same article, or find / write another. Distribute copies of your handout to participants, and allow them time to read it through. Once participants have finished, discuss the article’s messages about privilege, particularly unwanted privilege. If you haven’t asked to be privileged, what responsibilities (if any) do you have to less privileged people? This is a particularly useful resource for emphasising an intersectional approach to privilege, touching on gender but also pointing to the role of wealth, ethnicity, class and sexuality.
Activity 37: Humour Hunt 1

Purpose: To encourage use of the online forum and to facilitate participant input into Day 3 of the workshop.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This activity is a variation on the Sexism Scan activity given to participants at the end of Day 1 of the workshop. Introduce humour as a key theme of the next session, and invite participants to prepare for next time by thinking about the relationship between sexism and humour. Ask participants to find an example of something gender-related which they think is funny to share in the next session. Participants can bring along a clipping or a photo, or post an image or video onto the online forum.

Activity 38: Web of Connections Warm-Up*

Purpose: To reconnect the group.

Materials: A long piece of string or rope.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This activity requires you to have prepared a question to ask the group. The question can be anything you choose. To keep the activity light, I use ‘Who was the first band or artist you loved?’

Ask participants to stand in a close circle. State the question for everyone to answer, and begin by answering it yourself while holding the string or rope. Next, throw the string or rope to someone else in the group, while still holding on to one end yourself. This person answers the question and then passes on the string or rope, keeping hold of part of it. The game continues until everyone has answered the question, by which time everyone should be connected by the string or rope and the circle will be crisscrossed with it (make sure you have enough length to connect everyone comfortably). Then, without using verbal instructions, you must find a way to unravel yourselves into a straight line, without anyone letting go of the string.
Activity 39: Humour Hunt 2

Purpose: To discuss and analyse the materials participants collected for the Humour Hunt activity.

Materials: Collated Humour Hunt Material (with your own contribution).

Duration: 20 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Review together the items participants have chosen as part of Activity 36 (Humour Hunt 1). Ideally, participants will have either brought along printed material or have posted the item to the online forum. In the latter case, you may want to print examples or else share them with the group using a laptop and projector. It is also a good idea to bring along your own supplementary examples. Ask participants to describe why they chose their examples. What did you like about them? Where does the humour come from? Who might not find this funny? Conversation could also touch on the different styles of humour present – what kinds of humour do participants enjoy? Why?

Activity 40: Social Activism Issues

Purpose: To generate a list of potential foci for participants’ social activism planning.

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard

Duration: 10 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

As a whole group, quickly brainstorm as many social issues as you can which relate to gender, sexism or feminism in some way. Ideas can include material covered in the workshop, and other ideas too. Once you have at least 12 ideas recorded, work as a group to cut the list down to 6 pressing issues suited to social activism. These issues will form the basis for the next activity: social activism planning.

Activity 41: Social Activism Planning*

Resource 23: Social Activism Planning Sheet p.313

Purpose: To facilitate participants’ social activism planning.
Materials: Scrap paper, pens,
Duration: 30 minutes.
Group Configuration: Small groups.
Give participants a few minutes to organise themselves into small groups of 2-4 people and to decide on one of the issues identified in the previous activity to tackle. Groups can choose the same issue.

Next, distribute a Social Activism Planning Sheet to participants. This sheet contains guiding questions to structure participants’ planning, and to structure the social activism presentations each group delivers at the end of the day. Participants will need to explain the issue and why they chose it, identify a cause, explain how their proposed action addresses this cause, and discuss the practicalities of undertaking the project. Remind participants that the social iceberg activities they have done across the workshops are excellent preparation for this way of thinking: paring back an issue to underlying assumptions, and tackling those assumptions in a generative way.

Answer any questions and then let participants begin work. You may want to circulate between groups during this brainstorming stage and contribute to participants’ thinking.

Activity 42: Repair the Resource

Purpose: To examine the function of humour in advertising and to hone participants’ critical analysis skills.
Duration: 30 minutes.
Group Configuration: Whole group; pairs.

This activity requires prepared sexism and humour resource packets, which should include a mixture of humorous advertisements which relate to gender in some way. Ideally, you will pull together 5 or 6 examples of humour which range from certainly sexist to certainly not sexist.

Begin discussion by asking participants to share any experiences they have had with hostile joking: where someone has made a ‘joke’ which felt uncomfortable / hurtful / aggressive. Next, move into the Repair the Resource activity. Remind participants of the principles:
everyone gets into pairs and the pairs work collaboratively to ‘repair’ one or more of the resources. It may be useful to remind participants of the social iceberg (Activity 8): suggest that each pair traces the social assumptions about gender underlying their item. From here, the pairs can reformulate the item’s message in a way which challenges oppressive or problematic messages they see in it. This ‘repair’ job can be done in whatever way the pair chooses – retouching it, through graffiti, through a satirical re-working.

After about 20 minutes, bring everyone back together for a group discussion of the resources which needed repairing and those which didn’t. Does everyone agree? For those resources which needed to be repaired, how did people go about it? Remind participants that this process may help them with their social action planning.

**Activity 43: Dissecting Rape Jokes**

Resource 25: “Humour Against Rape” Exemplars p.314

Resource 26: “How to Make a Rape Joke by Lindy West, p.314

Purpose: To bring a critical analysis of humour to bear on a common form of gendered humour: rape jokes.

Duration: 20 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This activity examines rape jokes and considers the use of social justice-oriented humour to address the topic of rape. I recommend preparing a few examples of humour to share with the group, as well as distributing copies of Lindy West’s article “How to Make a Rape Joke” which is an excellent example of the use of humour for social justice combined with a critical analysis of rape jokes. The article contains swearing, so you may prefer to find/write an alternative.

Begin with a general discussion of rape jokes. Ask participants how they would define a rape joke, and whether/where they come across rape jokes. What do people think about them? Share a few rape joke and/or “Humour Against Rape” exemplars with the group, and discuss them – are all rape jokes problematic? Why, or why not?

From here, I distribute the “How to Make a Rape Joke” article or your chosen alternative. Give participants time to read through it, and discuss your responses together. What do you
agree with, and what do you disagree with? What do you think about West’s argument about free speech and the censorship of humour?

Activity 44: Close-Up: Political Correctness and Freedom of Speech*

Purpose: To critically analyse the use of freedom of speech and political correctness arguments in relation to sexism and hate-speech.

Materials: Flipchart/Whiteboard, Stewart Lee’s Political Correctness Gone Mad (see below)

Duration: 15 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Begin with a brainstorm about the phrase ‘political correctness’. What does it mean, and what contexts does it appear in? What are some examples of practices or people who might be called ‘PC’? Next, run a similar brainstorm about freedom of speech. What is it, and what contexts do you hear it in? Who supports it, and who complains about it? After gauging participants’ responses, use these quotes from an interview with Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner Julian Boal (Emert & Friedland, 2011 p.179) to stimulate further discussion:

- “Ok, we have a person here who hates Jews, and we have a person here who is a Jew, so it’s good for us to hear both opinions”
- “Jean Luc Godard said that if objectivity is to give equal time in your movie to the perspective of Jews and the perspective of the Nazis, then he is against objectivity”

Explore participants’ responses to these statements – which one they are they attracted to? This could lead into a more general discussion of the relationship between freedom of speech, political correctness and social justice depending on the group’s interests.

Finish the segment by showing a short YouTube video, Stewart Lee’s ‘Political Correctness Gone Mad’. Lee uses humour to point out the hostility underlying attacks on political correctness. You can access the video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmsV1TuESrc. You may wish to pull out a couple of Lee’s quote from the video for discussion afterwards, e.g.:

- “What is political correctness? It’s an often clumsy negotiation towards a more formally inclusive language, and there are all sorts of problems with it but it’s better than what we had before.”
Activity 45: Just a Joke?*

Purpose: To provide a forum for participants to think through the function and significance of jokes.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

This activity is an open-ended opportunity to think through jokes together, drawing on the humour-based material covered previously. What do jokes mean, and what do they do? Does it make a difference what we as individuals joke about and laugh at? Why, and why not? Is a joke ever ‘just a joke’? As a group, puzzle through these questions.

Activity 46: Note to Self*

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for reflection and for participants to identify a thought, idea or experience they would like to carry forward.

Materials: envelopes, loose paper, pens

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Individual

For this activity, distribute loose paper and an envelope to each participant. Invite participants to reflect on the workshops so far and to write down a ‘note to self’: a personal resolution, an idea or experience they want to remember. If they wish, participants can put their notes into the envelope you provided and self-address it. Collect any addressed envelopes and post them out to participants a week or two after the workshops.
Activity 47: Social Activism Presentations*

Purpose: To share, discuss and celebrate participants’ original proposals for social action

Duration: 60 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Invite the small groups to take turns to present their social activism plans to the rest of the group. Depending on how many participants there are, presentations should run for about 10 minutes, with 5 minutes of questions to follow.

In any spare time at the end of the presentations, ask everyone about their experiences of the whole process – is it what you expected? Has it offered you anything useful? What changes would you suggest? What did you think about the focus on sexism? What other social issues would you like to look at? If you are evaluating the workshop, this is a good time to distribute surveys.

Activity 48: Certificates*

Resource 27: Certificate Template p.315

Purpose: To provide official acknowledgement and congratulations to participants for completing the workshop series.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

Present each participant in turn with a certificate, clapping for each person.

Activity 49: Defining Sexism

Purpose: To generate a collective definition of sexism

Materials: none

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group Configuration: Whole group.

In one group, ask participants to take turns describing what sexism means to them. You may like to use prompting questions: What kinds of connotations does sexism have? Who does it
affect? How can you tell if something is sexist or not? When and where does sexism most often crop up in your lives? Encourage participants to reflect critically on the similarities and differences in their responses. What are the points of contention, if there are any?

**Activity 50: Men and Women on the Wall**


Purpose: To explore how social knowledge about masculinity and femininity shape intimate relationships.

Materials: pens, 2x A3-size printed human outlines (draw one yourself or use an online template)

Duration: 20 minutes.

Group Configuration: Two groups.

This activity condenses Activities 13 and 14 into one. First, ask participants to split into two groups, and give each group a human outline. One group will use their outline to illustrate the financial, physical, sexual and emotional expectations for men in intimate relationships, and the other group will do the same for women in intimate relationships. After 10 minutes, each group presents their ‘man’ or ‘woman’. Discuss the differences as a group. How do those stereotypes fit into heterosexual and homosexual relationships they have observed? What are the power implications? To augment this discussion, introduce Hollway’s critical analysis of dominant discourses of heterosexuality to participants, and explore their responses to her ideas.
Resources

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**Resource Materials**

**Resource 1: Discussion Role Cards**

Below is a template for discussion role cards. Print them out, cut along the horizontal lines and fold in half and stick together to create cards with the role name on one side and the role description on the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>The facilitators are in charge of structuring and organising the sessions, bringing in material to discuss and posing questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivator</td>
<td>The motivators are in charge of keeping energy levels high, and helping the group focus on the tasks at hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibe Watcher</td>
<td>The vibe watchers are in charge of monitoring feelings in the group. They try to ensure everyone feels supported and included in the group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediator</td>
<td>Mediators take the lead when there are conflicting opinions across the group. They try to ensure all voices are heard and that conversation remains open and respectful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality Tester</td>
<td>Reality testers keep things practical. They are in charge of connecting abstract ideas to the real world and they keep the group grounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Keeper</td>
<td>Balance keepers make sure everyone in the group has a chance to contribute. They balance the amount of speaking different group members do and encourage participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resource 2: Strongly Agree/Always and Strongly Disagree/Never signs

Write or print out the words Strongly Agree/Always and Strongly Disagree/Never on two separate pieces of A4 paper, large enough so that they can be read at a distance, e.g.:

STRONGLY AGREE / ALWAYS

STRONGLY DISAGREE / NEVER
Resource 3: Living Likert List

Below is a sample list of statements for use in Activity 5: Living Likert Scale* (p.265). You may wish to make alterations, but ensure that your final list includes a range of identity and opinion-based statements.

1. I support the legalisation of gay marriage
2. Abortions should be illegal
3. I have been sexually harassed in the street
4. The welfare system is an essential support for the needy
5. New Zealand is a sexist country
6. New Zealand is a racist country
7. I find it hard to challenge people I disagree with
8. I’m happy with the way I look
9. Animals have equal rights with humans
10. All New Zealand citizens ought to receive full, free medical care
11. New Zealand should accept more refugees
12. I fit in with my family
13. Smokers ought to have the right to smoke in public places
14. I think that the way you speak affects the way people treat you
15. I have masculine and feminine traits
16. Cosmetic surgery should be R21
Resource 4: Power / Knowledge Presentation

Below are suggestions for presentation content and structure taken from the Power / Knowledge presentation I designed for these workshops.

- Knowledge about ourselves and the world changes over time and space: knowledge is ‘socially constructed’ (for further reading, see Tuffin, 2005). Rather than being ‘the truth’ knowledge is contextual – it arises in a particular time and place. What is common sense in one time and place may not be common sense in another.
  - Example: extract from the department store publication *Ladies’ Home Journal* (as cited in Paoletti, 2012, p. 85)
    
    The generally accepted rule is pink for the boy and blue for the girl. The reason is that pink being a more decided and stronger colour is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl.

- Knowledge about human nature, social groups and group differences is NOT neutral: it makes arguments about how the world is, what different groups are like and what is normal or natural.

- These claims have implications for social power relations: knowledge relates to power.

- Historically, it is the experiences, perspectives and interests of the powerful which become legitimised as knowledge, which in turn justifies inequality and reinforces the status quo.

- The logic goes like this: Group A is superior to Group B, therefore Group A gets to be in charge of Group B
  - Group A: colonisers, men, heterosexuals, upper class/caste, able-bodied, mentally ‘healthy’, rich, white
  - Group B: colonised peoples, women, LGBTQI people, lower class/caste, not able-bodied, mentally ‘ill’, poor, people of colour

- The subordinate group is defined by the dominant group as inferior and incapable, often due to biology (e.g. they are naturally submissive or less intelligent). Subordinate status is thus the best thing for subordinates, who need direction and/or protection by rational, intelligent dominants.

- Knowledge can shape identities, actions, emotions, aspirations
  - Example: the social-psychological phenomenon of ‘stereotype threat’ (Steele & Aronson, 1995).
Example: social knowledge shape’s individual’s sense of entitlement, satisfaction and desire (see S. I. McClelland, 2010 for a feminist analysis of sexual satisfaction).

**Resource 5: Men-Ups**

‘Men-Ups’ is a Rion Sabean photography project which disrupts gendered photographic conventions by styling masculine bodies and practices in ways normally reserved for female bodies. For copyright reasons his Men-Ups cannot be reproduced in this resource. His series of photographs and further details about the project can be found at [http://www.rionsabean.com/men-ups](http://www.rionsabean.com/men-ups).

**Resource 6: Hollway's Dominant Discourses of Heterosexuality**

Wendy Hollway theorised three dominant ‘discourses’ or clusters of assumptions about men and women’s sexuality which, she argues, scaffold heterosexual relations (Hollway, 1984, 1989).

The **Male Sex Drive Discourse** encompasses the social knowledge we have about male sexuality: that men have an innate, powerful sex drive and that normal men pursue and need sex. According to this discourse, men’s rational capacities can be overwhelmed by sexual urges, making men ‘liable to be trapped into a relationship by their ‘drive’ for sex’ (Hollway, 1984, p.66).

The **Have and Hold Discourse** encompasses the social knowledge we have about female sexuality: women do not share the same sex drive as men and are instead motivated by a need for relationships and commitment. Women accommodate or ‘give’ sex in order to maintain relationships with men.

The **Permissive Discourse** challenges monogamy by representing both men and women as able and entitled to pursue sex for pleasure (see also Hare-Mustin, 1994). This argument intersects differentially with the discourses outlined above, and so in practice, the Permissive Discourse has different consequences for men and women. For men, permissiveness removes social and moral constraints on the male sex drive discourse, allowing men to pursue sex outside committed relationships. For women, the permissive discourse may contribute to
sexual coercion by removing a rationale for refraining from sex with a man who ‘needs’ it, and by positioning women who do so as frigid or selfish.

Together, these three discourses suggest a template for undertaking and understanding heterosexual intimate relationships. Men want sex and may use relationships to get it; women want relationships and may use sex to get them. As well as having implications for gendered relations of power (women are positioned as attempting to control men, and men are positioned as without a need for relationships), these discourses work together to provide a cultural scaffolding for rape (Gavey, 2005).

Resource 7: Sexism in the Streets Presentation

In my facilitation, I choose material for this presentation which illustrates potential connections between social representations of gender, gendered power imbalances and ‘everyday’ sexism. You may like to use these examples, or you may prefer to find your own (ideally the examples would be recent or topical).

1. Sexism in the Workplace

I chose a video clip of Nicki Minaj, a well-known rap/pop artist, where she discusses sexual double standards in the entertainment industry. Nicki says: “When I am assertive, I’m a bitch. When a man is assertive, he’s a boss… No negative connotations behind being a boss; lots of negative connotations behind being a bitch.” It’s an unconventional video and it contains swearing, making it potentially unsuitable for some purposes and audiences. Nevertheless, it is a powerful gendered critique conveyed by a famous and admired woman. The video can be found at: http://tinyurl.com/n83wx9h http://tinyurl.com/n83wx9h

2. Sexism in Media / Women’s Sport

To examine sexism in media, I chose a topical example: media commentary on Marion Bartoli’s Wimbledon tennis victory. This focus also allowed an examination of sexism in women’s sport. I used a clip from Media Watch (a Radio New Zealand National programme) which critically analyses international and local media coverage of Bartoli’s win and sexism in sports commentary more generally. The link for this programme is: http://tinyurl.com/ks7akw7 cued from 1.41.

I also showed participants some of the twitter commentary on Bartoli during the Wimbledon final, including tweets such as:
Bartoli looks like she’s a cross between man and ape #notawimbledonbabe

Feeling for the trophy presenter who had to exchange kisses with the fat ugly sweaty pig Bartoli

Someone as ugly and unattractive as Bartoli doesn’t deserve to win

I want Lisicki to win because she is really fit. Bartoli wouldn’t even get raped let alone fucked

Some of these tweets are visible through a screenshot tweeted by The Everyday Sexism Project, and can be accessed at: https://twitter.com/EverydaySexism/status/353537169
354276865/photo/1

3. Everyday Sexism

To explore mundane encounters with sexism, such as street heckling, I showed participants The Everyday Sexism Project, a UK-based online forum where women document and share their experiences of everyday sexism. I use a laptop/projector set up to show participants the website and explore some comments posted – the volume is telling: http://www.everydaysexism.com/

We then looked at a local version of this website, established for Wellington women to share and protest street harassment: http://www.ihollaback.org/?s=wellington

Resource 8: Feminist Social Activism Resource Packet

The resource packet I assembled for Activity 16 includes three different examples of feminist social activism and a guiding question sheet. Explore their websites for relevant examples and materials to share with participants, or find your own alternatives if you choose. My resource packets included images, articles and information about each group.

Example 1: Guerrilla Girls:

Guerrilla Girls describe themselves as ‘masked avengers in the tradition of anonymous do-gooders like Robin Hood, Wonder Woman and Batman’ who challenge sexism, racism and injustice in the art world with ‘facts, humour and outrageous visuals’ (Guerrilla Girls, 2013). http://guerrillagirls.com/

Example 2: New View Campaign: Challenging the Medicalization of Sex
The New View Campaign, established in 2000, sets out to challenge the “distorted and oversimplified messages about sexuality that the pharmaceutical industry relies on to sell its new drugs” (New View Campaign, 2013). As well as producing educational resources, starting petitions, attending conferences and raising public awareness through activist art and street protest, the New View campaign have created a satirical video about female genital cosmetic surgery “Dr Vajayjay: Privatise those Privates!”:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9kCw0Lmaa0
http://www.newviewcampaign.org/

Example 3: Who Needs Feminism? Campaign

This popular and successful campaign began at Duke University with a bunch of students determined to challenge the perception that feminism is no longer necessary. The campaign, which has now spread internationally, involves submitting statements, often handwritten and then photographed, which challenge stereotypes of feminists and feminism and make personalised arguments for feminism’s continuing importance and relevance.

http://www.whoneedsfeminism.com/index.html

Below is a question template to distribute to participants as part of Activity 16. These questions are intended to guide participants through the resource packets you have prepared.

Social Activism Resource Packet Questions

Theoretical Analysis

1. What or who is the problem or issue identified by your organisation?
2. Who or what is presented as being responsible for the problem or issue?
3. What is the response or solution to the problem? And how does that solution fit with the organisation’s explanation of the problem, as outlined above?

Overall Impressions

1. What do you like about the project – the way it is presented, the proposed action, the chosen issue?
2. What might you change about this organisation’s work?
3. Is there anything you think isn’t covered, or anything which is misrepresented?
Group Questions

Come up with two questions for the other groups to answer about your organisation’s work.

1.
2.

Resource 9: “If Men Could Menstruate”

Gloria Steinem’s “If Men Could Menstruate” appeared in Ms Magazine in 1978. It is a humorous thought experiment which imagines how the meanings and practices associated with menstruation might change if it was men rather than women who had periods. The essay can be found online and in various published essay collections.

Resource 10: Feminist Activism Reference List

You may wish to distribute a reference list for feminist activism for participants to explore in their own time. Here is the template I used – you may want to update it with your own examples.

Feminist Activism Reference List: 2013

Activist Groups and Projects

- The Everyday Sexism Project http://www.everydaysexism.com/
- I Will End Sexual Violence tumblr http://iwillsesv.tumblr.com/
- Holla Back project: http://www.ihollaback.org/
- Who needs feminism? Tumblr http://whoneedsfeminism.tumblr.com/
- Guerrila Girls, protesting sexism in the art world http://www.guerrillagirls.com/
- Fed Up Honeys, challenging stereotypes of women of colour http://www.fed-up-honeys.org/
- SPARK movement website http://www.sparksummit.com/category/take-action/
- Ilona Granet, street sign activism http://ilonagranet.blogspot.co.nz/p/street-signs.html
- Fuck yeah feminists tumblr http://fuckyeahfeminists.com/
- The New View Campaign challenging the medicalisation of women’s sexuality http://www.newviewcampaign.org/default.asp
• Courage To Be Real Campaign http://beautyisinside.com/2012/03/courage-to-be-real-campaign/
• Slutwalk http://jezebel.com/tag/slutwalk
• Men Against Pornography http://www.antipornmen.org/
• Pinterest boards
  o http://pinterest.com/safercampus/social-justice/
  o http://pinterest.com/laragactyl/social-justice/
• The Pink and Blue Project http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2009/12/11/pink-and-blue-project/
• Anti-racism posters http://racismstillexists.tumblr.com/

Videos
• Dr Vajayjay parody video from the New View Campaign (2013) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9kCw0Lmaa0
• Parody of ‘Dove Real Beauty Campaign’: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpWkZiZaQ8A
• TED talks about gender justice and inequality http://www.ted.com/talks/tags/women
• Spoken word poetry activism:
  o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOv47njeLHQ
  o http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBl6x-16iYc
• Ali G on feminism: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFA-x7ayvGM
• Documentary about UK feminism http://ukfeminista.org.uk/about/the-documentary/
• ‘Dirty Girls’ documentary: http://tinyurl.com/mz7q3oo

Articles
• The Onion – satirical news website, e.g.
  o Women now empowered by everything a woman does: http://tinyurl.com/2aze8pl
  o Woman rushed into cosmetic surgery with 8 glaring imperfections: http://tinyurl.com/leej66c
• 11 Qualities of the perfect woman? http://tinyurl.com/klqkwy4
• Sexism Fatigue: When Seth McFarlane is as ass and you don’t even notice: http://tinyurl.com/klurx5
• Derailing for Dummies: An ironic guide to being sexist/racist/oppressive: http://tinyurl.com/2bmgean
Resource 11: Online Forum

As part of the three-day workshop, I recommend establishing an online forum for participants to connect and share information between the workshop sessions. The forum becomes a living record of the workshop process and provides a way for participants to keep connected after the workshops come to an end. There are a variety of online platforms you could use. I created a private Wordpress blog, only visible to people with a Wordpress account:

http://mediasexismandsocialaction.wordpress.com/

Resource 12: Quick Association Words

To prepare for Activity 22, you will need to come up with a list of words which reference key themes of the upcoming session. The quick association words I used were:

- Sexism
- Pubic Hair
- Graffiti
- Camera
- Student
- Feminism
- Pornography
- Decision
- Make-up
- Scary
- School
- Funny

Resource 13: Sexism Scan Materials

To prepare for Activity 24, collate print-outs of any material participants have posted to the online forum, and bring along a couple of your own examples. Ideally, you will be able to find examples of campaigns and images which are featured locally. I used a range of online images advertising Aston Martin used cars, sperm donation, Burger King and potato chips.
ABSOLUTELY FREE CHOICE

ABSOLUTELY FORCED CHOICE

Resource 15: Choice Scenario: Dish of the Day

For the choice scenario, I used an extract from Douglas Adam’s (2002) book *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. This quote is taken from the point in the narrative where the main characters arrive at a restaurant. To their horror, they are invited to ‘greet’ the dish of the day, an animal bred with the desire to be eaten. These extracts raise questions about the limits of choice and what it is (and ought to be) possible to choose:

‘Good evening’, it lowed and sat back heavily on its haunches, ‘I am the main Dish of the Day. May I interest you in parts of my body?’ It harrumphed and gurgled a bit, wriggled its hind quarters into a more comfortable position and gazed peacefully at them. […] Something off the shoulder perhaps? […] May I urge you to consider my liver?’ asked the animal, ‘It must be very rich and tender by now, I’ve been force feeding myself for months.’ (p.284-5)

The use of this extract follows Annabelle Mooney’s (2008) discussion of it, which was the inspiration for this activity.
Female Genital Cutting (FGC) is the practice of removing female genital tissue for non-medical reasons (see Braun, 2009). Motivations may be cultural, social and/or psychological, and the practice is generally intended to secure what is perceived to be normal genitalia and normal female sexuality. The practice of FGC is tied up in cultural beliefs about women’s genitals being ugly, dirty or undesirable.

I have made the table below to summarise key information about traditional and cosmetic FGC, drawing from Braun (2009). For a more in-depth account, refer to Braun’s original article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional FGC</th>
<th>Cosmetic FGC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Done to maintain cultural tradition.</td>
<td>• Done to fix a non-medical ‘problem’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Associated with Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia</td>
<td>• Associated with Western countries, particularly the USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is perceived as a forced choice</td>
<td>• Is perceived as a free choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is a normative practice in some regions</td>
<td>• Is a marginal practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be performed without consent</td>
<td>• Always requires consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is performed on women and young girls</td>
<td>• Is only performed on adult women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seen as a form of violence against women</td>
<td>• Marketed as ‘empowering’ for women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resource 17: Conscience Alley Character Descriptions

The following are the two character descriptions I used for Activity 28.

Keisha, 18

- Is deciding whether to have a traditional FGC procedure to mark her transition to womanhood, and as a marker of her cultural identity.
- Her family expect her to have the procedure.
- She is concerned about the pain.
- She wants to please her family and friends, and ‘fit in’ with social expectations of a marriageable woman.

Tanya, 18

- Is deciding whether to have a cosmetic FGC procedure she has found out about on the internet to ‘fix’ her genitals which she thinks are ugly and embarrassing.
- Her sister suggested she have the procedure.
- She is concerned about the pain.
- She wants to have perfect genitals which will please current and future sexual partners and make her feel sexually confident.

Resource 18: Choice in Context: Sushi for Lunch

Below are the three ‘Sushi for Lunch’ scenarios I use to stimulate critical discussion about the role of context in shaping choice as part of Activity 29. Ask the group who likes sushi, and use one volunteer’s name for the exercise.

Sushi for Lunch – Take #1

______ is hungry.

She goes to the cafeteria to get something for lunch.

She looks around at all the options on display. She scratches her head, tossing up between a sandwich, a pie, a salad, sushi, chocolate bars, or a scone.

She chooses sushi, pays for it and heads off to eat her lunch.
Sushi for Lunch – Take #2

______ is hungry.

She goes to the cafeteria to get something for lunch.

She looks around at all the options on display. ________ knows that eating sushi for lunch is very desirable. Men find it attractive; parents hope their daughters will do it. In fact, NOT choosing sushi is seen as quite a radical social statement.

______ scratches her head, tossing up between a sandwich, a pie, a salad, sushi, chocolate bars or a scone.

She chooses sushi, pays for it and heads off to eat her lunch.

Sushi for Lunch – Take #3

______ is hungry.

She goes to the cafeteria to get something for lunch.

She looks around and sees that there is only sushi on display.

______ chooses sushi, pays for it and heads off to eat her lunch.

Resource 19: Body Hair Quotes

This activity uses quotes from a published article by Breanne Fahs (2011) ‘Breaking body hair boundaries: Classroom exercises for challenging social constructions of the body and sexuality’. The quotes can be found in the original article. In my facilitation, I divided the quotes into two sections: experiences of not shaving (from participants who routinely shaved) and experience of shaving (from participants unaccustomed to shaving).

Guest Presenter Brief: Film Skills

Thanks for offering to help out with this workshop series, 'Gender, Sexism and Social Activism: A Creative Workshop for Future Social Justice Leaders'.

The workshops are focussed around reflection and discussion of sexism in popular media and in daily life. Alongside talk and activities which address these questions, the workshops will include time for participants to learn about creative forms of social critique (culture jamming, film-making, poster-making) and to use these new skills to design an original creative intervention into a social justice issue of their choosing. This is where your skills come in!

You are invited to steer a 1.5-hour session which is intended to equip students with the basic skills and knowledge they need to make short films or skits, and take photographs. Topics covered could include:

- Framing an image: good filming and photography
- Coming up with an idea
- The basics of script-writing
- What you need to film (camera, lights, sound) and where to get them*
- The editing process, software you need and where to find it*
- Ethical film-making
- The interview project / documentary: when to use it and helpful tips
- The mockumentary: when to use it and some helpful tips
- A case study: either your own work, or if you don’t have anything relevant, you could talk through this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9kCw0Lmaa0

* If there are open source programmes available, then mention these – otherwise you could cover the facilities and programmes available in Universities and schools / for cheap hire.

Where possible, it would be great if you could use examples which connect with the theme of the workshops (i.e. social justice, sexism).

A suggested time frame would be 30 minutes presenting on the first 6 bullet points and 30 minutes for discussion of a case study and questions from the group. The last 30 minutes of the session is reserve time – if discussion is still flowing or you need more time, this is a cushion so there’s no need to rush. If the session finishes on time or early, then participants
will use the last half hour to get into small groups and begin planning their social intervention. If you have time, you could stay for this and circulate among the groups, helping students to develop their ideas. If you need any materials (a camera to demonstrate with, for example), please let me know a few days in advance.

Thank you and good luck!

Resource 21: Sample Choosing Against Feminism Quotes

I used the following quotes in my facilitation. They, along with others, can be accessed here: http://www.salon.com/2013/04/06/im_not_a_feminist_but/

- Beyoncé:
  “That word [feminist] can be very extreme…I guess I am a modern-day feminist. I do believe in equality”

- Taylor Swift:
  “I don’t think about things as guys versus girls. I never have. I was raised by parents who brought me up to think if you work as hard as guys, you can go far in life.”

- Bjork:
  “I don’t identify as a feminist because I think it would isolate me”

Resource 22: Privilege Handout

I use an online article by John Scalzi (2012) ‘Straight White Male: The Lowest Difficulty Setting There Is’ in my workshop facilitation to explore privilege. This article can be found online at http://whatever.scalzi.com/2012/05/15/straight-white-male-the-lowest-difficulty-setting-there-is/ and reference details are as follows:

Resource 23: Social Activism Planning Sheet

Social Activism Planning

The Brief:
To design and present a plan for an ‘intervention’ or action to solve, improve or raise awareness about a social justice issue you care about. You could choose an example from the media (for instance, a particular advertisement you don’t like), it could be a broad social justice issue (e.g. unequal pay), or it could be something that happens in everyday life which you would like to change (e.g. street harassment). You are welcome to address sexism or to tackle something which connects to another ‘ism’ – the choice is yours! Be as creative as you like – there are so many ways to take action, you can go in any direction you want to.

As well as thinking big, think realistic. If you plan something that is actually possible (with time and the right support), then we might be able to work together to make it actually happen. Your posters, films, petitions, plays, artwork, website could get out there and start making a difference!

The Presentation:
At the end of the day, your group needs to present your plan in detail to everyone else. Hopefully you will have something to talk about which is personal, playful and powerful – but it doesn’t have to be perfect!

Your presentation back to the rest of the group needs to cover these central questions:

1. What is the issue / example / situation you have chosen?
2. Why did you choose this in particular? What about it felt important, or personal?
3. What is the cause of the issue, in your opinion?
4. What are you planning to do to tackle the issue, and how does it address the cause you’ve identified?
5. How will you make sure your idea catches people’s interest?
6. What practical support will you need? What materials, how much time, how many people, how much money, what kinds of permissions?
As well as these things, come up with a couple of questions to ask the group at the end of your presentation – things you would like feedback on, anything you’re unsure about or would like to know.

Resource 24: Sexism and Humour Resource Packet

This activity requires prepared sexism and humour resource packets, which should include a mixture of humorous advertisements which relate to gender in some way. Ideally, you will pull together 5 or 6 examples of humour which could range from certainly sexist to certainly not sexist. I used a range of advertising campaigns and images which are or have been featured locally. These included advertisements for beer, used cars, house insurance, tampons and satellite TV. Look online and in newspapers for current examples – you won’t be short of options!

Resource 25: “Humour Against Rape” Exemplars

Rape jokes routinely surface online and offline. Nevertheless, discussion of sexual violence and humour must be done sensitively. You may or may not choose to present an example of a hostile rape joke to the group for critical analysis. Regardless, I recommend sharing what might be termed ‘humour against rape’: examples that combine humour with a critical social analysis of rape. The “10 Top Tips to End Rape” poster produced by Rape Crisis Scotland is a useful example of ‘critical’ or social justice-oriented humour addressing the topic of rape. They crafted the poster as part of a wider campaign critiquing the tendency of rape prevention campaigns to responsibilise women for sexual assault prevention. An online version of the poster can be found here: http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/campaigns/10-top-tips-to-end-rape/

Resource 26: “How to Make a Rape Joke”

Lindy West’s (2012) article “How to Make a Rape Joke” is a humorous and incisive comment on rape humour combined with a critical analysis of the use of freedom of speech and political correctness arguments to stifle critique of hostile humour. The article contains swearing and may not be suitable for all audiences. The article can be found online here: http://jezebel.com/5925186/how-to-make-a-rape-joke
Resource 27: Certificate Template

Each participant in a one-day or three-day workshop receives a certificate of completion. Please email me at octavia.calder-dawe@auckland.ac.nz for the A4 printing template.
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: Interview Participants

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Faculty of Science
Nicola Gavey, PhD
Associate Professor

Project title: Critical Dialogue and Social Action
Researchers: Octavia Calder-Dawe, Associate Professor Nicola Gavey

My name is Octavia Calder-Dawe, and I am a PhD student in psychology at The University of Auckland. Together with my supervisor, Associate Professor Nicola Gavey, I am interested in understanding how contemporary media messages about gender, sexuality and bodies inform young people’s experiences, and how to support critical thinking about elements of popular culture in work with youth. Over the past decade, cultural commentators from the UK and the US have documented a ‘sexualisation’ of culture, and debated the impact of sexualised media on young people. Particular concern has centred around the highly stereotypical and prejudicial representations of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and sex in mainstream media - such stereotypes are often presented as natural, desirable and inevitable in popular men’s and women’s magazines and mainstream pornography, for instance.

We are interested in how these debates intersect with young New Zealanders’ negotiation of sexualised popular culture. We are particularly interested in how ideas about gender, bodies and sexuality can work to combat and/or support discrimination and sexualised violence among young people. As a whole, our research programme explores the ways in which young men and women make sense of sexualised media, and how discussion, education and action can create new possibilities for interpretation and action. As part of the first phase of research, we will be talking to a range of people with different involvements in and perspectives on mainstream youth sexual culture and youth work, including youth workers, allied youth and researchers. Interviews will be with individuals, or in some cases with small groups of friends or colleagues. These interviews will inform the second phase of our research programme: a series of critical workshops where we hope to supportively challenge young Aucklanders to interrogate ‘common sense’ assumptions about gender and sexuality found in mainstream media and popular culture.

You are invited to participate in this research because we would like to hear your views and ideas about youth-directed social action in general, and your analysis of young people’s engagement with...
gender and sexuality in particular. Participation is entirely voluntary. Interviews will vary in length between approximately 1 and 2 hours, depending on how much time you have to contribute, how much you have to say, and whether you are being interviewed on your own or with others. Both short and lengthy discussions will be of value to us. We also will ask you to complete a short (approximately 5 minutes) questionnaire during the interview for collecting demographic details and other information to enable us to describe participants and provide more context in presenting their views. We will do the interview in a place that is comfortable for you – this might be your workplace, a community venue, a room at the University, or a public setting such as a café.

We hope that taking part in this research will be enjoyable, and interesting. It may also be challenging in some ways. As well as asking general questions about cultural characterisations of gender and sexuality, among youth, our research is also concerned with questions related to the position of particular groups (i.e. women and men) in our society. Our questions, therefore, might ask you to think about things that you hadn’t thought about before, or to explain things that seem obvious and natural to you. Our own understanding of this issue is likely to involve critical social analysis. We want to emphasise, however, that any critique is not concerned with individuals, but rather with cultural pressures and narratives we view as potentially problematic. Another reason that participation in the research could be challenging for some people is that, although we won’t be asking in-depth personal questions, some of the things we discuss might raise issues that are sensitive for you. Please be assured that you don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to, or discuss anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. You are also within your rights to withdraw from the interview at any point, and/or to have your contribution withdrawn from our database at any point, up to one month after the interview. (Please note that if you are interviewed with other people it might be difficult to do this for practical reasons; however, we will do our best, and will be careful to ensure that any particular comments that you might wish to withdraw are cut from our record.)

With your permission, we would like to audio record the interview, which would then be transcribed into a written record. Audio files and the written transcripts will be stored without your name on them, in a secure place, and treated as confidential documents. Members of a wider research team may have access to the data, for the purposes of research analysis, but only Octavia and Nicola will know your identity and which interview you participated in. Interviews may be transcribed by a person who is employed to do this job, and who is not otherwise a member of the research team. All research team members as well as the person who transcribes the audio files will sign a confidentiality agreement. The audio files and the transcripts will be used as data for our research, and will be kept until such time as we are no longer working in this general field of research.

Quotes or descriptions from some of our interviews will be used in reports on the research within the public domain (publications, conference presentations, talks, and so on). We will do everything we can to maintain participants’ anonymity and confidentiality. We will never identify participants by name unless we are specifically requested to by a participant and we are confident that in naming one person we are not risking the anonymity of other participants. Although it is unlikely, however, there is always the chance that a participant’s identity might be guessed by people who know them or know of them. For this reason, we would ask you to carefully consider what you feel comfortable talking about; and let us know if there is anything you would not want us to report in public. We are also asking your permission to re-contact you in the future so that we can check with you if we are concerned that any details we would like to report might compromise your anonymity (in practice, we very rarely have to do this, as we usually only use short quotes that don’t include enough detail to make this a strong possibility).

One final issue to consider, is that when we interview more than one person at a time, we ask people to respect each other’s privacy and confidentiality – that is, to not tell other people about who else was being interviewed, or what they said. However, we cannot guarantee that people will always stick to this, so please also take this into account in deciding what you might tell us in an interview. We are inviting all interview participants to add their names to a wider distribution list for receiving news arising from this and related projects. If you choose to be added to this this, please be aware that
this list would not be anonymous (while will not intentionally disclose email addresses or names, this could occur due to inadvertent technical errors). Whether or not you choose to be added to such a list, you are invited to contact us at any time for information on the research programme. This research has funding support from the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society of New Zealand and a University of Auckland Doctoral Scholarship.

Thank you for your time.

If you would like to know more about this study please contact:
Octavia Calder-Dawe, Department of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 021 1691040, Email ocal004@aucklanduni.ac.nz
Dr Nicola Gavey, Department of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 373 7599 ext. 86877, Email: n.gavey@auckland.ac.nz;
or the Head of Department, Associate Professor Doug Elliffe, Department of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 373 7599 ext. 85262, Email: d.elliffe@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761.
APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 2nd November 2012 for (3) years, Reference Number 8703.
CONSENT FORM: Interview Participants

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Critical Dialogue and Social Action
Name of Researchers: Associate Professor Nicola Gavey and Octavia Calder-Dawe

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, have understood the nature of the research and why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research, involving an interview of between 1 and 2 hours.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time, and to request withdraw any data traceable to me up to one month after our interview.
- I understand that am I free to choose whether to be interviewed individually or with colleagues (where possible).
- I agree / do not agree for the interview to be audiotaped.
- I understand that parts of what I say may be quoted (anonymously) in research publications and presentations.
- I agree / do not agree to be contacted by the researchers some time after the interview if they would like to clarify details of what I’ve said.
- If other people are being interviewed at the same time as me, I agree to not disclose their identity or anything discussed by them.
- I understand that the audio file record of this interview may be transcribed by a third party and that the transcript of the interview may be seen by other researchers working on this project. All involved have signed a confidentiality agreement.
- I understand that I will not be able to review audio recordings or transcripts of the interview.
I understand that data will be kept until such time as the researcher is no longer working in this general area of research, after which time they will be destroyed.

I understand that all electronic and hard-copy data will be stored securely and anonymously by the researchers.

I **would / would not** like my name to be added to an email distribution list for receiving notification of any reports arising from the study and/or related research. This list will include a wide range of people interested in the research and membership of the list will not be confidential.

I understand that I am welcome to contact the researchers at any time for an update on the research.

Name _________________________________________

Contact details (not required) ______________________________________________

Signature ___________________________ Date _________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 2nd November 2012 for (3) years, Reference Number 8703.
Appendix D: Key Informant Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Organisational Praxis and Mission
   a. Can you talk me through your organisation – who you are, what you do?
      i. How would you frame the ‘problem(s)’ that your work addresses (origins)?
      ii. Is this the same account you provide young people with?
      iii. How do you measure / assess the kind of change you want to achieve?
   b. How do you / your organisation go about effecting change?
      i. What or who are you targeting, and why? (e.g. individuals, peer groups, discourse/wider society).
      ii. How do you balance the individual and the social in your work? Why?
         1. i.e. To what extent do you and the people you work with understand inequalities as individual versus social problems?
      iii. How do you balance attention to thinking versus attention to behaviour? Why?
   c. What is your philosophy of engagement with young people?
      i. What is the role of the facilitator / youth worker (teacher, equal)?
      ii. How do young people respond?
      iii. How does what you do vary across groups and contexts (i.e. different schools, different mixes of gender and ethnicity)?
   d. What kind of change would you like to see in response to your work?
   e. What kind of change do you see?
      i. How do you account for this difference, and how would you propose combating it?
   f. What kind of external and internal constraints do you face, and how does this shape the work you do?
      i. E.g. funding, social / parental disapproval, resource allocation, dissent among colleagues, youth disengagement
   g. In an ideal world, how would you choose to carry out the work you do?
      i. How much time spent, with whom, doing what?

2. Social change
   a. How and when do you think social-change oriented youth work ‘succeeds’?
i. What is success?

ii. What assists it and what obstructs it?

b. What do you see as the benefits and costs of working broadly to develop a new ethical framework with youth versus zeroing in on a particular tangible issue?

c. How does the peer environment work for / against shifts in thinking and behavioural change?

3. Gender, Sexuality and Young People

a. Do you see gender and/or sexuality as relevant to the work you do?

i. If so, how, and does it feature in your practical work?

1. What sort of response does this elicit from young people?

2. Which topics seem attractive/unattractive to youth?

b. How do you view the contemporary power balance between young men and women?

c. Do you think there is much discussion and debate about sexualisation, gender and sexuality a) within youth-based organisations b) in the public sphere?

i. How would you characterise the discussion/debate?

d. Do popular media (for instance, advertising or pornography) and / or discussion of sexualisation feature in your work with young people? How so?

e. Does feminism or sexism ever feature in your discussions with young people? How so?

i. Introduce ‘false consciousness’ versus empowerment debates if relevant, also our ideas that sexism is somehow ‘unspeakable’.

f. Does homophobia / discussion of LGBTQ rights ever feature in your discussions with young people? How so?

g. In your view, what are some of the dominant ideas circulating among young people about gender, sex and sexuality?

i. Is there anything that concerns you, or that you feel good about?

h. From your work, do you have any insights into the sexual scripts and ethical sensibilities of young men and women?

i. Does this differ according to gender and/or sexual orientation or any other identity markers?

i. What do you see as the central challenges facing young people today in relation to:
i. Sexual and romantic relationships?
ii. Body image?
iii. General wellbeing?

4. New Zealand and Social Justice
   a. How would you characterise the public mood towards the youth/social justice issues that you deal with?
   b. Do you see the work you do as ‘political’? Why/why not?
   c. How does your approach to education and ethics differ from what kids get in schools or from parents? How do you account for this?

5. Is there anything else relevant to our discussion that you would like to add?
Appendix E: Workshop Recruitment Flyer

Media Sexism, Ethics and Social Action:

A Workshop on Gender, Pop Culture & the Psychology of Injustice for Social Justice Leaders

A team of researchers from the University of Auckland are coordinating a three-day workshop for secondary school students interested in thinking about these questions and learning about social justice leadership.

What does culture teach us about gender, gender relations and sexuality?

What are the personal, ethical and political consequences of stereotyping?

What supports individuals and groups to challenge injustice?

Intrigued? We'd love to hear from YOU!
Please email octavia.calder-dawe@auckland.ac.nz for more information.
Appendix F: Workshop Information Sheet and Application Form

Media Sexism, Ethics and Social Action:
A Creative Workshop on Gender, Popular Culture and the Psychology of Injustice for Future Social Justice Leaders

We are delighted to invite senior secondary school students to attend a workshop series we are offering during the July school holidays. The workshops are part of Octavia Calder-Dawe’s doctoral thesis research. Octavia is interested in working with young people to discuss gender, popular culture and social justice. More than just talking, the workshops are a chance for students to learn about creative social justice activism and to take action on social issues which concern them.

The workshops will challenge you to think about:

- What culture teaches us about gender and gender relations
- The personal, ethical and political consequences of gender stereotypes
- What stops individuals and groups from challenging injustice
- How to ‘speak back’ to cultural images and ideas we find troubling

Who are we?

We are a team of researchers from the University of Auckland, working in collaboration with local and international activists and scholars. Together, we are running a variety of linked research projects, with funding support from a Marsden grant. This workshop project is spearheaded and co-ordinated by Octavia Calder-Dawe, a PhD student in the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland. Octavia’s thesis is supervised by Associate Professor Nicola Gavey, and Associate Professor Virginia Braun.

Who are we looking for?

We are seeking applicants who love thinking about new ideas, who are open-minded and who share our interest in ethical thinking, social justice and promoting gender equality (enthusiasm is more important than expertise!) A willingness to think and work outside the box is a must, as is an interest in learning about creative ways to stimulate debate – part of the workshop involves learning about making posters and short films. To get the most out of
this experience, you need to be willing to speak up and share your ideas with others, and also
to listen to other people with respect and attention. If this sounds like fun to you, we’d love
to hear from you!

*What should you expect to get out of participating in the workshop?*

The workshop is designed to be a rewarding experience. It offers you the opportunity to
develop both theoretical and practical skills with the support of Auckland University
researchers. Attending the workshop will develop your leadership and citizenship skills. With
our particular focus on gender, human rights and social justice, participation will be of
particular value to students who are interested in future study or work in these and related
areas.

It will provide participants with the chance to:

- Interpret and critically analyse research, images, arguments and opinion statements.
- Debate gender issues of personal and social significance in a supportive and challenging
  environment.
- Build relationships with other young Aucklanders and with Auckland University researchers.
- Learn practical techniques for stimulating public debate (e.g. film making, poster making)
  from experts.
- Identify a social/sexual justice issue and develop a research or action plan to address it with
  the support of peers and University researchers.
- Become part of an enduring network of researchers and social/sexual justice advocates (we
  might have follow-up get-togethers, and we encourage participants to maintain connections
  with each other).

*What about the red tape?*

Because this is a University research project, we ask that participants:

- Read a participant information sheet before attending the workshop
- Sign a consent form (parental consent is also required from all participants under 16)
- Fill out short questionnaires at the beginning and end of the workshops
- Are willing to participate in individual follow-up interviews (this is open to negotiation)
- Are willing for some of the workshop to be digitally recorded for research purposes
The first three-day workshops will run on July 15th, 17th and 19th (Workshop 1) and July 22nd, 24th and 26th (Workshop 2). They will probably be held at the University of Auckland City Campus. We are looking for applicants who are available on all three days between 9.45am and 4.30pm. Participation is free, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea are provided, along with any materials you may need. We are also able to reimburse you for money spent on public transport to and from the workshops. If you would like clarification on any of these points, please email Octavia (see below for my email address 📧).

We will be running similar workshops later in the year, so you are welcome to apply for a later workshop if you are interested in participating but unable to attend this one. Please make it clear on your application whether you are applying for the upcoming workshop, or registering your interest for a workshop later in the year.

If you are interested in applying, you can either apply by email (recommended), or if you prefer you can complete a hard copy application form and return it by post. If you would like to apply by email, email Octavia and she will send you a word document which you can fill out and email straight back. Please post or fax hard copies to the address on the application form.

I’m very happy to answer any questions about the workshops. My email address is octavia.calder-dawe@auckland.ac.nz.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Octavia
Application Form: Workshops

Name:  
Age*:  
High School:  
Year:  
Email address/contact details:  

I am applying for (circle one): 
July 15\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th}/19\textsuperscript{th} Workshop  
July 22\textsuperscript{nd}/24\textsuperscript{th}/26\textsuperscript{th} Workshop  
Future Workshop  

Dietary requirements (for catering purposes):

*Please note that parental consent will be required for all applicants under the age of 16

In the box below (continuing over the page if necessary), please write a 1-2 paragraph description of why the workshop interests you, and what makes you a good candidate. This might include details of your personal interests, school and extracurricular activities, values or personal attributes.

Please email your application to octavia.calder-dawe@auckland.ac.nz OR fax Attn: Octavia Calder-Dawe to 09 373 7450; OR post a hard copy addressed to Octavia Calder-Dawe, School of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
Appendix G: Workshop and Interview Participant Information Sheet (three-day version)

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Faculty of Science
Nicola Gavey, PhD
Associate Professor

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: Workshop/Interview Participants

Project title: Critical Dialogue and Social Action
Researchers: Octavia Calder-Dawe, Associate Professor Nicola Gavey

My name is Octavia Calder-Dawe, and I am a PhD student in psychology at The University of Auckland. Together with my supervisor, Associate Professor Nicola Gavey, I am exploring how young New Zealanders make sense of contemporary media messages about gender, sexuality and bodies. Over the past decade, cultural commentators have debated the impact of the ‘sexualisation’ of culture and sexualised media on young people – particularly the widespread stereotyping of gender in mainstream media. We are interested in what young New Zealanders have to say about these debates: how these stereotypes about gender, bodies and sexuality can work to support discrimination and sexualised violence, and also how these stereotypes might be challenged by young people.

As part of Octavia’s doctoral research, she will be running a series of workshops with secondary school students over three separate days, outside of school time. These workshops will challenge participants to think critically about how media stereotypes shape their social environment, and what the personal and collective consequences of these representations might be. As part of the workshops, participants will also be invited to explore creative techniques for stimulating public debate (e.g. poster-making, short film). Participants will have the chance to use these new skills to plan an original intervention which ‘speaks back’ to a social justice issue of their choice.

You are invited to participate in this research on the strength of your application. Participation is entirely voluntary. The workshops run for three days [insert dates here] from 9.45am to 4.30pm at the University of Auckland City Campus, or a similar venue. We will refund any public transport costs to and from workshops. We ask that participants are punctual and attend all three days (a total of 20 hours of your time). We will ask you to complete two questionnaires, one at the start of day 1 and one at the end of day 3. In addition to the time involved in the workshop, we hope to conduct follow-up interviews with participants where possible. This will involve an additional 30 to 90 minutes of your
time. The follow-up interviews will be in a place that is comfortable for you – this might be at home, at a community venue, a room at the University, or a public setting such as a café.

The workshops are designed to be fun, rewarding and useful. Our workshops offer students opportunity to develop both theoretical and practical skills alongside Auckland University researchers. With our particular focus on gender, human rights and social justice, participation will be particularly valuable for those interested in future study or work in these and related areas.

Participation may also be challenging in some ways. Our workshops are designed to generate questions. As a result of our discussions, you may leave the workshop with answered questions about your social world and you may feel less content with the status quo. Another reason that participation in the research could be challenging for some people is that, although we won’t be asking in-depth personal questions, some of the things we discuss might raise issues that are sensitive for you. Please remember that you don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to, or discuss anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Should you require further support, we encourage you to contact Octavia, Nicola (a registered clinical psychologist) or Youthline (free call: 0800 376633; free text: 234; email: talk@youthline.co.nz). You can choose to withdraw from the workshop and/or interview at any point. You are also entitled to have your contribution withdrawn from our database up to one month after the interview. (Please note that because of the group setting it may be difficult to remove one person’s data from transcripts for practical reasons; however, we will do our best, and will be careful to ensure that any particular comments that you might wish to withdraw are cut from our record.) Finally, our research about the workshop process is likely to involve critical social analysis. We want to emphasise that any critique we make is not about individuals, but rather about the shared cultural pressures and narratives we view as problematic.

With your permission, we would like to audio record parts of the workshop and the whole follow-up interview. Even if you consent to recording you may choose to have the recording turned off at any time. We would also like to transcribe these recordings. Audio files and the written transcripts will be stored without your name on them, in a secure place, and treated as confidential documents. Members of our research team may have access to the data, but only Octavia and Nicola will know your identity and which workshop / interview you participated in. Interviews may be transcribed by an external transcriber. All research team members and transcribers will sign a confidentiality agreement. The audio files and the transcripts will be used as data for our research, and will be kept until such time as we are no longer working in this general field of research.

Quotes or descriptions from workshops and interviews may be used in public reports on the research (publications, conference presentations, talks, and so on). We will never identify participants by name, and we will do everything we can to maintain participants’ confidentiality. Although unlikely, it is possible that a participant’s identity might be guessed by people who know them or know of them. For this reason, we ask you to carefully consider what you feel comfortable talking about during workshops and interviews, and to let us know if there is anything you would not want us to report in public. We are also asking your permission to re-contact you in the future so that we can check with you if we are concerned that any details we would like to report might compromise your anonymity.

We are also asking permission to photograph you and your work during the project. Your participation in this is entirely voluntary and unrelated to your participation in the workshop as a whole. After the workshop, we may ask you for permission to use an image featuring you and/or your work on our website, or in research publications. Including your image on our website could compromise your anonymity, so it is something you will want to consider carefully before agreeing. If you choose to be involved, you can decide at a later point to withdraw your image(s) by emailing Octavia (see email address below). This is not something you need to decide now – we’ll ask you about it at the end of the workshop series, and you can decide what you want to do at that point.
One final issue to consider is that the workshops are group environments. We ask participants to respect each other's privacy and confidentiality – that is, to not tell other people about who else was present, or what they said. However, we cannot guarantee that people will always stick to this, so please also take this into account during the workshop.

This research has funding support from The Marsden Fund.

Thank you for your time.

If you would like to know more about this study please contact:
Octavia Calder-Dawe, School of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 021 1691040, Email octavia.calder-dawe@auckland.ac.nz
Dr Nicola Gavey, School of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 373 7599 ext. 86877, Email: n.gavey@auckland.ac.nz;
or the Head of Department, Associate Professor Doug Elliffe, School of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 373 7599 ext. 85262, Email: d.elliffe@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761.
APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 22nd APRIL, 2013 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2013/9294
Appendix H: Workshop and Interview Consent Form (three-day version)

CONSENT FORM: Workshop/Interview Participants
THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Critical Dialogue and Social Action
Name of Researchers: Associate Professor Nicola Gavey and Octavia Calder-Dawe

I have read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS), I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand participation is voluntary.

• I agree to take part in this research, involving three days of workshops running from 9.45am to 4.30pm (approx. 20 hours total), and a follow-up interview which will take between 30 and 90 minutes.
• I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to one month after our interview.
• I understand that Octavia will be making notes about the workshop process during the sessions.
• I agree / do not agree for the workshop discussion and the interview to be audiotaped.
• I understand that parts of what I say may be quoted (anonymously) in research publications and presentations.
• I agree / do not agree to be contacted by the researchers some time after the interview if they would like to clarify details of what I’ve said.
• I agree to not disclose the identity of other workshop participants or anything discussed by them.
• I understand that the audio file record of this interview may be transcribed by a third party and that the transcript of the interview may be seen by other researchers working on this project. All involved have signed a confidentiality agreement.
• I **agree / do not agree** to be photographed and/or have my work photographed during the workshop.

• I **agree / do not agree** to be asked for permission to use any images once the workshops are over, and I understand that I have the right to refuse such permission even if I agreed to be photographed.

• I understand the benefits and possible risks associated with participation, as outlined in the PIS.

• I understand that data will be kept until such time as the researcher is no longer working in this general area of research, after which time they will be destroyed.

• I **would / would not** like my name to be added to an email distribution list for receiving notification of any reports arising from the study and/or related research. This list will include a wide range of people interested in the research and membership of the list will not be confidential.

• I understand that I am welcome to contact the researchers at any time for an update on the research.

Name _________________________________________

Email address ______________________________________________

Signature __________________ Date _________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 22nd APRIL, 2013 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2013/9294
Appendix I: Workshop and Interview Participant Information Sheet (one-day version)

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Faculty of Science
Nicola Gavey, PhD
Associate Professor

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: Condensed Workshop/Interview Participants

Project title: Critical Dialogue and Social Action
Researchers: Octavia Calder-Dawe, Associate Professor Nicola Gavey

My name is Octavia Calder-Dawe, and I am a PhD student in psychology at The University of Auckland. Together with my supervisor, Associate Professor Nicola Gavey, I am exploring how young New Zealanders make sense of contemporary media messages about gender, sexuality and bodies. Over the past decade, researchers have debated the impact of the ‘sexualisation’ of culture and sexualised media on young people – particularly the widespread stereotyping of gender in mainstream media. We are interested in what young New Zealanders have to say about these debates: how these stereotypes about gender, bodies and sexuality can work to support discrimination and sexualised violence, and also how these stereotypes might be challenged by young people.

As part of Octavia’s doctoral research, she is running one-day workshops with secondary school students, outside of school time. These workshops will challenge participants to think critically about how media stereotypes shape their social environment, and what the personal and collective consequences of these representations might be. As part of the workshops, participants will learn about creative techniques for stimulating public debate.

You are invited to participate in this research. Participation is entirely voluntary. The workshops run for one day [insert dates here] from 10.30am to 3.30pm at the University of Auckland City Campus. We will refund any public transport costs to and from workshops. We ask that participants are punctual and attend the whole day (5 hours of your time). We will ask you to complete two questionnaires, one at the start and one at the end of the day. In addition to the time involved in the workshop, we hope to conduct follow-up interviews with participants where possible. This will involve an additional 30 to 90 minutes of your time. The follow-up interviews will be in a place that is comfortable for you.
The workshops are designed to be fun, rewarding and useful. Our workshops offer students opportunity to develop both theoretical and practical skills alongside Auckland University researchers. With our particular focus on gender, human rights and social justice, participation will be particularly valuable for those interested in future study or work in these and related areas.

Participation may be challenging in some ways. You may leave the workshop with answered questions about your social world and you may feel less content with the status quo. Another reason that participation in the research could be challenging is that, although we won’t be asking in-depth personal questions, some of the things we discuss might raise issues that are sensitive for you. Please remember that you don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to, or discuss anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Should you require further support, we encourage you to contact Octavia, Nicola (a registered clinical psychologist) or Youthline (free call: 0800 376633; free text: 234; email: talk@youthline.co.nz).

You can choose to withdraw from the workshop and/or interview at any point. You are also entitled to have your contribution withdrawn from our database up to one month after the interview. (Please note that because of the group setting it may be difficult to remove one person’s data from transcripts for practical reasons; however, we will do our best, and will be careful to ensure that any particular comments that you might wish to withdraw are cut from our record.) Finally, our research about the workshop process is likely to involve critical social analysis. We want to emphasise that any critique we make is not about individuals, but rather about the shared cultural pressures and narratives we view as problematic.

With your permission, we would like to audio record parts of the workshop and the whole follow-up interview. Even if you consent to recording you may choose to have the recording turned off at any time. We would also like to transcribe these recordings. Audio files and the written transcripts will be stored without your name on them, in a secure place, and treated as confidential documents. Members of our research team may have access to the data, but only Octavia and Nicola will know your identity and which workshop / interview you participated in. Interviews may be transcribed by an external transcriber. All research team members and transcribers will sign a confidentiality agreement. The audio files and the transcripts will be used as data for our research, and will be kept until such time as we are no longer working in this general field of research.

Quotes or descriptions from workshops and interviews may be used in public reports on the research (publications, conference presentations, talks, and so on). We will never identify participants by name, and we will do everything we can to maintain participants’ confidentiality. Although unlikely, it is possible that a participant’s identity might be guessed by people who know them or know of them. For this reason, we ask you to carefully consider what you feel comfortable talking about during workshops and interviews, and to let us know if there is anything you would not want us to report in public. We are also asking your permission to re-contact you in the future so that we can check with you if we are concerned that any details we would like to report might compromise your anonymity.

One final issue to consider is that the workshops are group environments. We ask participants to respect each other’s privacy and confidentiality – that is, to not tell other people about who else was present, or what they said. However, we cannot guarantee that people will always stick to this, so please also take this into account during the workshop.

This research has funding support from The Marsden Fund.

Thank you for your time.

If you would like to know more about this study please contact:
Octavia Calder-Dawe, School of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 021 1691040, Email octavia.calder-dawe@auckland.ac.nz
Dr Nicola Gavey, School of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 373 7599 ext. 86877, Email: n.gavey@auckland.ac.nz;
or the Head of Department, Associate Professor Doug Elliffe, School of Psychology, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Ph: 373 7599 ext. 85262, Email: d.elliffe@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761.
APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 22nd APRIL, 2013 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2013/9294
Appendix J: Workshop and Interview Consent Form (one-day version)

CONSENT FORM: Condensed Workshop/Interview Participants
THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Critical Dialogue and Social Action
Name of Researchers: Associate Professor Nicola Gavey and Octavia Calder-Dawe

I have read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS). I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand participation is voluntary.

• I agree to take part in this research, involving a one day workshop running from 10.30am to 3.30pm (5 hours total), and a follow-up interview which will take between 30 and 90 minutes.
• I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to one month after our interview.
• I understand that Octavia will be making notes about the workshop process during the sessions.
• I agree / do not agree for the workshop discussion and the interview to be audiotaped.
• I understand that parts of what I say may be quoted (anonymously) in research publications and presentations.
• I agree / do not agree to be contacted by the researchers some time after the interview if they would like to clarify details of what I’ve said.
• I agree to not disclose the identity of other workshop participants or anything discussed by them.
• I understand that the audio file record of this interview may be transcribed by a third party and that the transcript of the interview may be seen by other researchers working on this project. All involved have signed a confidentiality agreement.
• I understand the benefits and possible risks associated with participation, as outlined in the PIS.
• I understand that data will be kept until such time as the researcher is no longer working in this general area of research, after which time they will be destroyed.
• I would / would not like my name to be added to an email distribution list for receiving notification of any reports arising from the study and/or related research. This list will include a wide range of people interested in the research and membership of the list will not be confidential.

• I understand that I am welcome to contact the researchers at any time for an update on the research.

Name _________________________________________

Email address ______________________________________________

Signature ___________________________ Date _________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 22nd APRIL, 2013 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2013/9294
Appendix K: Ethics Approvals and Amendments for Workshops and Interviews

22nd of April 2013

The workshop and interview project was first granted approval by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) for a period of three years (Ref 9249).

27th of May 2013

Approval granted to proposed amendments:

I. enabling me to ask participants for permission to photograph the workshops and use these photographs for research purposes
II. to seek permission to recontact participants to invite them to contribute further to the research project should opportunities arise

23rd of September 2013

Approval granted to proposed amendments:

I. the use of information flyers for distribution to schools and community organisations to recruit for the research (see Appendix E)

14th of October 2013

Approval granted to proposed amendments:

I. to translate the three-day workshops into a condensed, one-day format with small groups of teenagers

14th March, 2016

Approval granted to extend the research project ethics approval until 23rd April 2019. At this time, I also advised UAHPEC of the short video project. The Committee advised that no further action was required on our part, as the videos maintained participants’ confidentiality and this use of their words was within the purview of our initial ethics application.
Appendix L: Pre-workshop Survey

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE: Pre-Workshop

A. Personal Details

We would like to be able to give some detail about participants in public reports on this research without sacrificing anonymity. Please answer the following questions, if you are comfortable doing so.

Age: _______ Gender: ______________ Ethnicit(ies): ____________________________

Sexual Identity /Orientation: ____________________________

B. Identity Scales

Please mark the lines below with a ‘x’ to represent where you position yourself in response to the following statements.

I consider myself a feminist

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I believe that gender inequality is no longer a problem in New Zealand

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I believe that racism is no longer a problem in New Zealand

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I voice my opinions about social issues, whether others agree with me or not

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I believe I am affected by gender stereotypes in popular media

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Most people don’t care about social issues

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Men and women are equally affected by sexism

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I am committed to working for gender equality

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C. Short Answer Questions

What made you want to participate in this workshop, and what do you hope to get out of it?
What do you think about the concern about gender inequality and the sexualisation of women and girls in popular media? Are worries about sexism relevant to you? Why/why not?

Have you ever felt discriminated against or aware of being judged or treated in a stereotyped way that you did not like? How do you explain what happened? What did you feel and do?

Does sexism come up much in your day to day life? How? (i.e. have you ever talked about sexism with other people? With who, and how did the conversation start)
Appendix M: Post-workshop Survey

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE: Post-Workshop

A. Personal Details

We would like to be able to give some detail about participants in public reports on this research without sacrificing anonymity. Please answer the following questions, if you are comfortable doing so.

Age: ________ Gender: ______________ Ethnicity(ies): ____________________________

Sexual Identity/Orientation: __________________________

B. Identity Scales

Please mark the lines below with a ‘x’ to represent where you position yourself in response to the following statements.

I consider myself a feminist

Strongly Agree Neutrally Strongly Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I believe that gender inequality is no longer a problem in New Zealand

Strongly Agree Neutrally Strongly Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I believe that racism is no longer a problem in New Zealand

Strongly Agree Neutrally Strongly Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I voice my opinions about social issues, whether others agree with me or not

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I believe I am affected by gender stereotypes in popular media

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Most people don’t care about social issues

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I am committed to working for gender equality

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C. Short Answer Questions

Has the workshop been what you expected, going into it? How has / hasn’t it?

List five emotions you associate with your participation in the workshop, and explain why and when you felt each one:

What do you think now about the concern about gender inequality and the sexualisation of women and girls in popular media? Are worries about sexism justified? Why/ why not?
How has participating in the workshop changed the way you think about (a) your own life (b) your family and friends’ lives (c) popular media (d) being a social justice activist?

Since the start of the workshops, have you had any conversations outside of our meetings about sexism, feminism, gender or social justice? With who, and how did they start?

Thinking back to the first questionnaire, if you gave an example of experiencing discrimination or being stereotyped, think about it again. What is your analysis of the situation(s) now? Has anything changed? And if it happened again tomorrow, would you act differently? Why/how?
Appendix N: Support Services Information

Support organisations
Appendix O: Workshop Participant Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Key Starters: recording, seeking clarification

Contextualising Workshop Participation

1. Can you tell me a bit about the story of how you came to be at the workshop back in July?
   a. Take it broadly
   b. What attracted?
   c. Come along with thinking about issues – y/n? Explain interest, experiences?

2. Did you tell your family about w/s? Reaction?
   a. Family’s ideas about sexism, gender relations, sim or diff to you [don’t push]
   b. Friends reactions / ideas?

3. Feminism, sexism, key terms:
   a. how do YOU define them now?
      i. Feel comfortable with terms? Using? Why? E.g.? Identify as F?
   b. Same or diff to family? Friends? Give examples?

4. Tell me about feeling/ideas about sexism and feminism in past (1 year)
   a. Where thoughts and feeling from?
   b. Change since? Why/how?

Negotiating a Sexist World

1. Some left w/s NZ having less gender equality – how does that fit with your experience?

2. What noticing around gender & sexism lately?
   a. [incident] how did you respond
      i. Has this changed (feelings, actions)? Since when?

3. Any sexist beliefs or assumptions that have affected or affect you/ people you know?
   E.g.?

4. [heightened perception]: what’s that like? Good, difficult things?
   a. Influence feelings with friends/peers, family, other places: school, home, church, sport

5. w/s talk – sexism/being f is uncool – what’s response a few weeks on?
   a. Experiences which relate? [e.g.] explain action/decision?
b. Situations most comfy talking about sexism / F Why? E.g.?
c. Contexts avoid talking about sexism / F Why? E.g.?
d. Generally, express your ideas, of find it difficult? Why? E.g.?

6. Feel more sensitive/aware about gender sexism F? If so, what are effects?
   a. On you
   b. On others

Theory Questions

1. What opportunities are there to talk about s, f and g?
   a. What do those opportunities offer (w/s, school). Important? E.g.?

2. 12 y/o self 1 or 2 things, teen dealing with jumble: ideas and pressures, bodies, gender sexuality – what would they be? Why? [elicit narrative if possible]

3. How do you see women presented in commercial culture? Desires, needs, aspirations?
   a. How does that register with you?

4. Contradictions/dilemmas: think critically, still affected. Times of dilemma or contradiction know/feel?
   a. What happened? [elicit narrative]

5. Any e.g. of things we talked about coming alive – in your life?

Evaluation of Workshop

1. Some ppl – new info or perspective. How does experience fit with that?
   a. Examples? Useful – context e.g.?

2. Related: tools I hoped useful (media, relationships, family etc). Useful?
   a. E.g. of how it has been useful?

3. Some wanted clarity/answers – you get that, didn’t get that? E.g. of nagging issues/resolved issues?

4. Suggestions: more useful, things you’d like more or less of?

Conclusion

1. Anything else you’d like to add about workshop, or ideas, or anything you’d like to ask me about?
References


Blue, J. (2017, February 17). We’re launching a new campaign.


Carew, N. (2011). *Dr Vajayjay’s! Privatize those privates!* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9kCw0Lmaa0


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Paoletti, J. B. (2012). *Pink and blue: Telling the boys from the girls in America.* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.


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