THE PUBLIC BODY:

INDIVIDUAL TACTICS AND ACTIVIST INTERVENTIONS ON THE STREET

IN DELHI, INDIA

A Thesis

by

BRIDGET CONLON LIDDELL

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Chair of Committee,	Kirsten Pullen
Committee Members,	Jayson Beaster-Jones
	Rumya Putcha
	Jyotsna Vaid
Head of Department,	Donnalee Dox

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ABSTRACT

After a brutal and widely publicized gang rape in December 2012, women's safety in public spaces has been a significant site of debate and discourse about Delhi as a city and India as a country. My Master's thesis focuses on women's negotiations of public spaces in Delhi, India. I explore how women in general—and activists in particular—shift Delhi's public culture, in order to intervene in dominant discourses on women's agency in India's capital as well as the dismissive, alienating narratives of the city as hopelessly violent. Jagori, a Delhi-based women's rights organization, sponsors "The Safe Delhi Campaign" to address the constraints on and challenges of women's Delhi street experience with a focus on urban design, public transport, and raising public awareness. My project brings a Performance Studies perspective to Jagori's goals, paying close attention to my interlocutors' (university-aged female residents and Jagori activists) voices, bodies, and tactics. Fear and the anticipation of violence shapes when, where, and how female residents move through Delhi: the spatial and temporal safe, cautionary, and forbidden zones, bridged by acceptable forms of transportation, expose how fear fractures the map. I argue that my interlocutors are negotiating their own comfort against social expectations and the potential for violence in public. Female embodiment in rape cultures is marked by the anticipation of violence, where sexual assault indicates a failure to adhere to the preventative regime. That fearful embodiment manifests in the everyday practices of managing the dominant male street culture in Delhi. I explore protests post-Dec-12 as my interlocutors experienced them, arguing that

some protests disrupt the normative Delhi public culture, creating a temporary atmosphere in which women can more freely move and express themselves, where that fear fades or disappears. Hopeful and future-oriented protests call for the women's full access to public spaces without fear. From the everyday self-policing, restrictive tactics of female university students to activists occupying the streets in attention-grabbing protests, how Delhi's women are responding to the threat of violence exposes the everyday lived reality, juxtaposed contradictions, and enduring potential of the capital city.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

On December 16th, 2012, the brutal gang rape of a young woman on a moving bus in Saket, South Delhi (India) sparked intense, violent protests at the heart of the city and across the country. The thousands gathered to protest at India Gate in Central Delhi clashed with the police. The high presence of men at these protests reflected everyday gender ratios on the street, but at the same time, large numbers of women led protests and sat in the streets holding candlelight vigils. The Nirbhaya[1] attack in December 2012 remained a high presence in Indian and international media for many weeks, as protests were held across India; the sustained attention influenced new legislature expanding the definition of rape and increasing punishment for offenders (Criminal Amendment Act (2013)). The culture of violence and fear was there before December 2012; Delhi already had a notorious reputation in India. But the December 2012 assault was particularly brutal, committed by men who did not fit the stereotypical "outsider" profile, and against a university student in the supposedly safer South Delhi region. Delhi's reputation as the "rape capital of India" grew to being the "rape capital of the world" after December 16th, 2012 (commonly referred to as "Dec-12")—it is a watershed moment, where sexual violence, fear, and the city are discussed in terms of pre- and post-Dec-12.

Reviewing articles written on gender and safety in Delhi in the last two years from *The Hindu* and *The Times of India,* I noticed how often the city was characterized

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[1] "Nirbhaya," one of the pseudonyms given to the victim, means "fearless."
[2] See India's National Crime Records Bureau 2013 report for current statistics on violent crimes

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as significantly unsafe, its people as simultaneously chaotically violent and desperately

afraid, and its female residents' bodies as both deeply threatened and (sometimes)

thoroughly responsible for that threat and any materialized assaults. There is fear in the

public body and particular (female) bodies. During the citywide outcry in December

2012, and since, the blame for Delhi's culture of violence[2] and the anti-women everyday

public practices has been directed towards migrant populations, the media, Western

influences, unemployed young men, and more. When Delhi's objects of fear, the

potential sexual offenders, are difficult to distinguish within the city and its educated,

middle class female residents could be gang raped in public, city residents must find

fault somewhere. Some blamed the institutions, some continue to blame the victims, and

some blame Delhi's public culture in general. Delhi's fear is disorganized and pervasive,

seeping throughout the city. Part of Delhi residents' reactions were to intensify the

regulatory regime for young women, which extends to transportation; sticking to "safer"

regions, neighborhoods, and streets; and adhering to curfews—rendering the actual city

space that young women move through into smaller and smaller pieces. The pressure on

women to regulate their embodiment via gesture, facial expressions, physical stance, and

other physical articulations of identity, emotions, and status is also a part of this regime.

     Jagori, a women's rights organization that has been active in both gender-related

legal reform and grassroots activism for thirty years, began The Safe Delhi Campaign in

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[2] See India's National Crime Records Bureau 2013 report for current statistics on violent crimes in general and crimes against women in particular. Delhi has the highest rate of violent crimes (54.4) in general. It did not have the highest reported number of rape cases in the country, despite its reputation—it had the highest rate for the main *cities*. This may account for Delhi's reputation in the country.

2004.[3] The Safe Delhi Campaign has conducted research as well as community-driven safety audits across Delhi, gathering information on the factors shaping Delhi's infrastructure as well as on people's experiences, perceptions, and solutions related to gender issues in public spaces. The Safe Delhi Campaign, under Jagori, attempts to improve Delhi's infrastructure, public awareness, and police and judicial response. My project brings a Performance Studies perspective to Jagori's goals, paying close attention to the young female residents' voices and bodies. I explore how women's bodies discursively and physically enter Delhi's public spaces, defining the embodied praxis of fear from the collective to the individual through interviews with female Delhi residents and Jagori activists, as well as street observation. From how people's behavior produces spatial meaning (de Certeau 1984) to how publics operate (Warner 2005; Ahmed 2004), space and the public frame how individuals internalize social rules and enact embodied tactics, manifesting in people's everyday choices, gestures, and spatial navigations of the public. Fear cycles through discourses on Delhi as a city and the social public body to shape the individual and collective embodied praxis of fear in the everyday. I examine Delhi through the mobility and embodiment of its young female residents, arguing that fear and the anticipation of public violence structures their everyday experiences of the city, juxtaposing that against the post-Dec-12 protests to explore how the dominant public can be reimagined and affected by collective street action.

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[3] In 2009, it joined the "Safer Cities Free from Violence Against Women and Girls Initiative" in collaboration with UN Women, UN Habitat, and the Department of Women and Child Development.

My project focuses on the discursive and embodied means through which protectionist approaches to women's safety are produced. As Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan, and Shilpa Ranade (2011) explain, "protectionism" refers to policies and practices that respond to sexual harassment and unsafe public spaces by restricting female mobility and comportment. Protectionism emphasizes women's fraught bodies as well as the safety of private spaces: "while the idea of the home as a space of violence and danger is still not easily accepted, the public is easily construed as a space of unmitigated danger that women would do well to stay clear of" (Phadke, Khan, and Ranade 2011, 51-2). Phadke, Khan, and Ranade integrate gendered space, restrictive female embodiment, and critical feminism in a critique of safety discourses related to gender in Indian urban spaces. Studying women's limited access to public spaces in Mumbai, Phadke, Khan, and Ranade argue that focusing on women's "safety" engages patronizing and restrictive protection narratives that rotate around middle-class women's respectability; instead, they call for women's right to risk and claim public spaces. By tracing the discursive production of Delhi as unsafe, I do not dismiss the very real, lived experiences of violence in Delhi; instead, I am marking how a climate of fear influences women's daily choices and experiences. By extending Jagori's existing research and insight into deep attention to the gendered, classed body as it operates in public space, I support women's rights activists as they counteract destructive discourses producing violent, exclusive, and oppressive public spaces.

Approaching Delhi's Public and People: Developing the Project

To study how individual and collective tactics work to shift Delhi's dominant public social practices and the role of fear in its reputation, public social body, and residents' gendered everyday experience, I conducted private, semi-structured interviews with Jagori's activists and middle-class young female residents. I met my non-Jagori interlocutors through my local contacts: I spoke with eight students from Delhi University's North Campus and two non-student young women. I also spoke with female activists working at Jagori who have engaged in street-based action or protests countering street sexual harassment and the unsafe conditions of Delhi's public spaces. These interviews were conducted in English and focused primarily on their experiences of everyday public life, Delhi as a city, and how they navigate public spaces. With participant consent, I photographed relevant gestures, body language, and/or clothing in order to have a visual record of how participants communicate nonverbally in public spaces[4]. I have used initials (not necessarily based on their names) instead of pseudonyms for my interviewees, because names carry implications for caste, religion, and region, so the risk of misrepresenting their backgrounds is too high for my level of knowledge. I have decided to leave all interviewees' spoken grammar as is, without adding "[*sic*]," as its inclusion might excessively disrupt the visual flow and the

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[4] Although these photographs were useful as points of discussion during the interviews, they turned out to be less significant than I expected. Also, my interlocutors' rich embodied communication extended far beyond photographic boundaries, as they re-enacted memories, impersonated their harassers, and demonstrated their ideas. I have also not included the photographs in this thesis, as I realized too late that the consent form did not explicitly refer to publishing the photographs.

language is comprehensible despite some usage being technically incorrect. English in Delhi has taken on its own conventions, affected by Hindi, British English, and the perpetuation of linguistic norms by repetition across the community.

Although I had expected to meet with my interlocutors individually, nearly everyone chose to be interviewed with a friend or colleague. The students, in particular, brought their friends to be interviewed, where they would often speak quickly, interrupting and echoing each other. For these transcriptions I've represented voice changes with slashes, as separating their words would be a significant disruption of their flow. Sometimes, their voices are nearly indistinguishable or each speaks a handful of words at a time, so I have represented the student group with initials for the interview location[5] instead of broken down their words separately. This multivocality and dialogue reflects both Delhi's auditory qualities and the intervention I am making with an ethnography that captures how female residents make sense of their experiences and surroundings both individually and collectively.

Due to language barriers and other factors, my interviewees were almost entirely from the middle-class, meaning middle-class morality (and dress) codes significantly inform their choices, actions, and experiences of their bodies. For ethical and practical reasons, I focused on English-speaking middle-class residents, but I am aware of how caste, class, and religious differences affect women's experiences of public Delhi. Some did use Hindi occasionally in our conversations, and the few transcriptions of Hindi below are my own (the grammar is slightly informal). Jagori found that poverty was a

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[5] MC = Miranda College; CCD = Café Coffee Day.

huge factor increasing the lack of safety in public places, especially considering that women working or living on the street would be exposed to men for longer periods of time. These women are also affected by moral restrictions on their bodies and choices, but with less of the preventative social protection that has the potential to block some street harassment. As Phadke, Khan, and Ranade (2011) noted, protectionist approaches to women's access to public spaces are frequently framed with the middle-class woman in mind (viii). Middle-class morality factors into masculine public space, because there is a class-based history of respectable women remaining in the home (Phadke, Khan, and Ranade 2011). So many women must travel through Delhi in their daily lives and middle-class moral codes follow them. Minna Saavala (2010) explains that the new middle-class is understood through social behavior, not economic ability, emphasizing the importance of understanding honor and dignity as determining factors of middle-class meaning. Studying the middle-class exposes the fictitious designations that nominate some people worthy of safe entrance into public places and others subject to implied and literal violence.

Delhi is heterogeneous, street-by-street and neighborhood-by-neighborhood. Compared to American class segregation, there is an overwhelmingly immediate proximity between people of different backgrounds, economic situations, and cultures in Delhi. However, residents refer to the city as five major direction-based areas: North, which includes Delhi University's North Campus; Central, which includes the dense old city cluster and the surrounding British-designed neighborhoods; South, with the highest concentration of wealth and overall the least dense architectural design; West, known for

a series of affluent and middle-class areas, as well as predominately Punjabi neighborhoods; and East, with a high percentage of resettled or migrant populations, many of whom are laborers. I focused on three main regions: the Delhi University North Campus area (GTB Road; Kamla Nagar), Central Delhi (Chandni Chowk, Paharganj, Connaught Place), and South Delhi (Malviya Nagar), based on my interlocutors' movement patterns. The eight university students typically spent most of their time within or traveling to North Campus, commuting to campus from home (as far as an hour and a half). They were primarily only in East or West Delhi if they lived there or had a reason to visit a friend there. If they were traveling outside their home or North Campus, they were most likely going to Central Delhi and South Delhi, to a place close to a metro line (and not too far south).

My research practice incorporates the body as a source of information, negotiation, and intervention; visual and aural observations enriched my understanding of the physical and social spaces in which these women engage. I recorded[6] several hours of soundscapes walking alone in these three major regions in Delhi, focusing on areas named in the interviews. I observed Delhi's street culture by walking the routes detailed in the Safe Delhi Campaign's neighborhood evaluations as well as areas suggested by my research participants. While walking alone, I recorded the street's soundscape so that I could analyze the auditory production of public Delhi. I also

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[6]My recording locations included: South Delhi: Khirki Village (Malviya Nagar), Select Citywalk Mall (Malviya Nagar), Hauz Khas; Central Delhi**:** Chandni Chowk (Old Delhi)**;** Paharganj; Connaught Place; North (Campus) Delhi**:** GTB Nagar**;** Kamla Nagar.

observed these areas at times when I was not recording, and compared this fieldwork to previous experience in all of the North and Central Delhi areas. My clothing style during these street recordings fell into two areas: noticeably Western (dress and tights, scarf wrapped in an American fashion) and partial Indian/Western (*kurta* and jeans, scarf wrapped in an American fashion). The recordings capture the shifts between highly populated and sparsely populated spaces. You can also hear men speak to and about me, with a couple men occasionally following me to engage in conversation (possibly a foreigner-specific issue for Paharganj, which is the primary foreigner backpacker area as well as a site for drug dealing and prostitution). I also noted my own experiences of discomfort, shifts in demographics, and the sorts of surrounding shops that corresponded with those shifts in experience, as purpose is a major defining point in women's street presence.

I received various forms of attention, including a range of stares, largely varying between sexual harassment and smugness from men to critical judgments about my appearance from men and women of all ages. I focus primarily on my interlocutors' descriptions and experiences below, but my soundscape project enabled me to process and contextualize my interlocutors' descriptions. This project is partially autoethnographic, as I experienced street sexual harassment,[7] although the encounters are dominated by the racial and national stereotypes associated with my white body. In Delhi, as a white, female, unmarried person, I am frequently sexually objectified and

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[7] During one notable moment in the temporarily empty Chandni Chowk metro station, a small group of 18-20 year old men kept pace a few feet behind me as I ran up the three or four escalators between the train and the populated main entrance.

treated as immediately sexually available. My focus remains on my Indian interlocutors, but my body's ability to incite harassment has been useful in bringing me a little closer to understanding how navigating Delhi's physical streets is so often connected to navigating its men. My past experiences on the street in Delhi inspired this project: I had noticed that negative encounters with men in public varied in frequency, manner, and affective style depending on location, where sometimes only a street's distance made a significant difference. I have not interviewed men, even the friends and brothers of my students or connections, so as to focus on female-bodied experiences. Safety and danger discourses in Delhi focus on danger to female-bodied people and the ensuing regulatory regime is concerned with female behavior. Delhi's reputation in particular has been based on being specifically unsafe for women.

As I focus on activists, everyday tactics, and Delhi residents' engagement with social issues, I need to engage others ethically across national as well as cultural boundaries. I am approaching this project from the perspective that there are multiple, contextualized feminisms in the world that may have elements that speak to each other, from which we can learn and upon which we can build solidarity.[8] For support in ethically navigating the history as well as tensions in white American feminists working in the global South, my main theoretical guide has been Chandra Talpade Mohanty

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[8] Continuing this perspective on multiple feminisms, Urvashi Butalia's (2002) history of the women's movement in India informs my background on what feminist work precedes Jagori. Butalia, who also wrote opinion articles on gender in Delhi after the December 2012 gang rape case (*The Hindu,* December 25, 2012), notes how people debate feminism's cohesiveness and even its definition. The boundaries and intentions of various women's movements in India, whether homegrown or imported, are complex and nested.

(2003), who took up the issues raised by Gayatri Spivak (1988) on marginalized voices

dominated by feminist theoretical practices in the global North. Productive transnational

solidarity relies on self-reflexivity and careful connection (Mohanty; Amanda Lock

Swarr and Richa Nagar 2010). There are multiple, culturally situated feminisms, opening

up the boundaries of what counts as valid feminist theory in the academy and in activist

practice (Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan 1994). There are also multiple perspectives

on locality, as Kaplan (2010) explains, with diverse spatial and temporal frames on

subjectivity. Critical transnational feminist work depends upon self-awareness and the

recognition of complexity and difference, as well as the intellectual and practical history

framing interactions across the metaphorical global North and South divide.

Delhi's Public Culture: Context

I think Delhi is good in lot of ways, but I think being a girl the rules totally change for you, how Delhi is for a boy and how Delhi is for a girl is like two different worlds. (F)

[Delhi's] such an amalgamation of cultures, it's very accommodating, adjusting as well, but not to the girls, not to the women. Why just only girls? Even middle-aged women are not there on the streets as much. It's also a hub of patriarchy. Patriarchy needs to be tackled in India. (J)

It's everywhere in India, it's not only Delhi, it's better in Delhi, go to Haryana or UP, they're the worst kind of scenarios (L)

Space, the body, and the public intersect in Delhi female residents' gendered, everyday,

embodied experiences. I use the word "public" to refer to Delhi's physical places as well

as the social body organized by gender and behavioral practices; I interrogate how

notions of the public facilitate constructions of the female body as susceptible to assault.

Michael Warner's (2005) take on the public is useful for thinking about how Delhi's

predominantly masculine street culture functions, as well as how marginalized groups, in this case, female residents operate at the fringes of the dominant culture. To Warner, a public organizes itself around particular discourses: "The peculiar character of *a* public is that it is a space of discourse organized by discourse. It is self-creating and self-organized; and herein lies its power, as well as its elusive strangeness" (Warner 2005, 68, emphasis in the original). Uniting theories on the body, publics, space, and tactical resistance and applying them to embodied practices, this project exposes the operations of everyday Delhi public life and potential alternatives as envisioned by its female residents. By female, I am referring to a particular social category as it is experienced in everyday social life; gender is not essentialized and inherent, nor is it separate from embodiment. In this thesis, I use "women" and "female" to refer to the social group experiencing Delhi in a specifically gendered manner. Using this gendered language (rather than more queer and inclusive language) reflects the dominant linguistic practices in Delhi.

India's colonial history has obscured gender's complexity in Indian cosmology and philosophy, according to Subhadra Mitra Channa (2013), who challenges a Western, colonial, narrative of a gender binary with India's mythical, religious, and philosophical heritage. Nationalist womanhood developed India's postcolonial climate (Partha Chatterjee 1989) where the effort to distance Indian national identity from British colonial contexts fueled the definition of Indian women as the epitome of nationalist expression that is bound by the binaries of colonialist thinking. Following the postcolonial nationalist woman with the concept of the new modern woman (Rupal Oza

2006) after the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s, globalization, class, and nationality intersect to define female identity and subjectivity in India. The "new liberal Indian woman," according to Oza, must be simultaneously thoroughly contemporary and global while not being "too" modern, occupying the tension between tradition and globalization, and thus representing India as thoroughly grounded in itself while extended into the world.

Male use of public infrastructures affects how women experience public spaces, where violence has been normalized and women "are controlled by perceptions of safety and societal norms" (Jagori 2010, 1). Jagori's study (2010) participants said that both secluded and crowded places seemed unsafe, which suggests that the public presence of men operates in multiple ways, from the lone person to the masses. It is also significant that the presence of others does not reduce the likeliness of sexual harassment, and may, in fact, enable it. Where there are sidewalks, they are often broken, funneling people into tighter openings. The chaos of cars, cows, rickshaw drivers, and more means that the rest of the crowd may not see or hear the harassment. Jagori suggests that poor lighting increases women's fear and reduces female mobility at night. The Safe Delhi Campaign suggests that Delhi's failure to offer physical places in good condition produces spaces that exclude marginalized groups:

> Delhi's dearth of basic infrastructure—such as clean and safe public
> toilets for women, well-lit streets, proper pavements—that becomes acute
> in the areas inhabited by the poor, is an important factor contributing to
> the lack of safety and exclusion of the vulnerable groups. (Jagori 1-2)

Jagori's argument is that these spaces are specifically unsafe because they enable some men to harass women with greater ease and less notice than if the streets were fully functional. In Delhi, men have the luxury of lingering in public places, while a woman's pause may draw unwanted attention (this is the challenge facing homeless women in Delhi, who are continuously trapped in exposure). The study addresses factors contributing to low reporting, including lack of trust in police and the legal process. Delhi's physical spaces are unwelcome for women.

Women are constricted, moving in patterns based on avoidance instead of creative engagement. There is no "safe" time of day, no public places that are untouched by male dominance. Jagori's report indicated that women were wary of men engaging in leisurely activities in public. The Safe Delhi Campaign's focus on urban infrastructure is connected to their research on the effect of men's behavior in public places on women's sense of fear. Existing literature on gendered access to public space in general (Paul 2011; Guano 2007; Ranade 2007) and research reports on Delhi specifically (Jagori 2010; Jagori and UN Women 2011) reinforce the idea that women in Delhi primarily move through public spaces, traveling between private places, and negotiate the male-dominated presence through a variety of self-containing tactics, while manufacturing purpose if they need to linger in public. When women move around the physical places of Delhi and face an overwhelming masculine space, they are forced to navigate between and around men, managing encounters with significantly less freedom or ability to produce public space. The significantly higher presence of men and their greater freedom to manifest space often renders women as an "abnormal" presence in public.

I began each interview by asking about Delhi's reputation as a city (and why): almost all immediately described it as not safe, but with multiple qualifiers for locations within the city, outsider versus insider perspectives, and on how things have changed over time. Class was a key piece in every discussion about who the perpetrators of sexual harassment were. Caste[9] and class are significant factors affecting how gender operates in India. While people have different challenges and resources depending on their position in society, violence, danger, and respectability seem to frequently be defined in terms related to class, region, caste, and religion. My interlocutors did not always agree with each other, and most stumbled over how to describe their experiences and interpretations of class as it affected street harassment. They explained Delhi's reputation as unsafe in terms of its population's cultural and regional diversity, particularly the idea that male migrants are suddenly exposed to girls in short clothes compared to covered women back home in the village—the idea that these men can't adjust or don't know any better, and are therefore less at fault than men raised in Delhi or educated men. One of my interviewees explained that "Indian men have been indoctrinated [with] such a rigid image what a good girl is like. Any girl is not as per the standards they have been told, they think that they have a right to abuse her" (J).

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[9] The caste system, as it operates in contemporary times, is situated within particular power dynamics that intersect with multiple modalities of social categorization and exclusion. A.M. Shah (2010) gives an overview of the caste system, with a particularly useful section on the urban caste situation, where caste as a fixed system gives way to caste being significant on an individual level, relating to personal status and community cohesiveness. Caste differences can be defined in terms of purity and untouchability (Nagar, 2006).

My interlocutors compared Delhi to other cities in India, to where they were from, or to rural regions in India. Since everyone I spoke with knew my topic, combined with Delhi's reputation for violence being repeated across media and in interpersonal discussions, it is not surprising that everyone addressed Delhi's negative reputation. Naming the source of difference and anti-women thinking was a difficult subject for everyone as they negotiated how to talk about class and regional difference (and if that mattered in the end) as they articulated Delhi's public culture and issues. Aggression repeatedly emerged in our conversations as both as an instinct of violence in Delhi's general population and a potential tactic for responding to harassment. Some interviewees suggested that Delhi residents are insensitive and judgmental. These qualities they associated with masculine street culture in Delhi are major factors in how they anticipate and respond to male behavior.

Jagori's 2010 Baseline Survey Report found that 93 percent of female respondents say that "being a woman" was the reason for feeling afraid and being unsafe. Eighty-six percent of men reported this as the top criteria for those experiencing harassment. Ann Cahill's (2001) analysis of female bodily comportment explains the process and implications of street sexual harassment for how women relate to their bodies. Street sexual harassment and its surrounding discourse contribute to a primary experience of fear and danger in public and fear of/for the body. When women restrict their mobility, they participate in the distorted ratio of women to men in Delhi's streets, which becomes a key visual and social cue that women are unwelcome. According to Cahill, women restrict themselves and are alienated from their bodies in a rape/fear

culture: "To experience the body as itself *essentially* weak is to necessitate placing it under constant surveillance. Dangers are rife, and the woman attempts to protect her appallingly vulnerable body by restricting its spatial scope" (2001, 154, emphasis in the original). Linking Bartky (1990), Cahill (2001), and Saavala's (2010) discussions of women, self-monitoring, and moral codes clarifies the intersections of class, the body, and discipline in street sexual harassment.

When young women experience these qualities of the masculine dominant public through fear, then fear and the anticipation of violence defines a marginal female public. Sara Ahmed (2004) offers an interpretation of public collective dynamics, examining emotion's circulation in communities as well as how affect becomes the site for community organization and definition. She describes how fear circulates and operates in publics: "fear works through and on the bodies of those who are transformed into its subjects, as well as its objects" (Ahmed 2004, 62). Fear is a deeply embodied experience; it also puts the subjects and objects of that fear in relationship with each other. These young women's public, brief intimacy and proximity with male strangers in Delhi exposes how fear manifests in those interpersonal encounters with men. Public spaces are associated with fear and danger, despite most interpersonal violence taking place in private spaces and with people you know (Phadke, Khan, Ranade 2011; "Crime in India" 2013).

The production of modest and vulnerable female bodies happens in private as well as public, but female entrance into male public space is a key dynamic in female mobility and access to Delhi. Following from Judith Butler's definition of performativity

as the "reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (xii). I suggest that Minna Saavala (2010) describes a performative middle-class morality. My interlocutors cite and reinscribe acceptable modes of middle-class behavior, in turn producing the middle class. Every time that someone enacts behavioral and embodied norms of middle-class morality, they are contributing to the meaning and existence of those moral codes. Theorizing morality as performative explains how the specific actions in my interlocutors' stories reify or resist dominant cultural narratives about feminine bodily comportment in masculine space.

Clothes are a key factor in understanding how individuals communicate morality and location in social meaning (Miller 2009). Female university students, especially if they are originally from outside Delhi, represent a social group where the traditional and modern clash. Western-style clothing is common, but when it comes to modesty, Western styles need to be adapted to acceptable Indian moral conventions. Ultimately, my interviewees are aware that their clothing does not prevent harassment or violence, and that sexual assault primarily happens in private, but we all still use clothing to negotiate comfort and acceptance in public spaces. My interlocutors' clothing choices and other embodied tactics can be both unconscious and intentional: sometimes, these practices are ingrained in them and feel unconscious, while other times they deploy them intentionally.

There are also individual tactics that operate through public exposure and shaming tactics that turn pressure towards the harasser, reclaiming the body as a site of action and subjectivity. I understand tactics through D. Soyini Madison's (2010)

application of Michel de Certeau's (1984) ideas: people without the power of dominant

discourse engage tactics, which are specifically defined by restricted resources for

resistance. Madison explains how the body can shift given power dynamics and

concepts: "Tactical/emergent performances embellish this organic musculature as it can

embellish identity, seizing it in the call to re-perform itself, exaggerated, in heightened

reiterations of itself through the 'magic' of communal dissent" (*Acts* 7). Although

Madison is specifically referring to collective tactical performances here, I apply the

spirit of her ideas to individual tactics that engage in physical communication or

exaggeration. Doing "heightened reiterations of itself" is a means to shift the situation in

moments of street sexual harassment.

Responding collective to harassers can distribute the risk across a group instead

of one or a few women, while the collective presence of women in the street during a

protest or similar event can shift the street culture enough to disrupt the normal sexual

dynamics. "Public performance invokes public discourse by becoming a communicative

instrument where the shared naming and marking of justice can be realized; […] what is

public is open and made common" (Madison *Acts,* 6). When activists use the aggregated

power of a collective presence to expose and shame a harasser, they make something

visible but also able to be condemned. Although Jagori reported that many witnesses are

concerned about getting involved (2011), the collective energy that Madison describes

can be shared, turning the masculine unsafe space towards into a women-driven (or

people-driven) site of social justice and embodied reclaiming. Studying individual and

collective tactics that cite middle-class morality to discourage harassment and actively

pressure harassers through public shaming has clarified the beliefs and practices driving the regulatory regime.

In "City, Space, and the Public: Building a Temporal Ethnomap of Delhi," I build an "ethnomap" of the city, defining safe, cautionary, and forbidden zones as determined by my interlocutors. First, I describe Delhi and the major regions I emphasize, chosen based on my interlocutors' descriptions. I focus on the production of North Campus specifically as an example of how my interlocutors negotiate and social-spatially produce the city, rendering it fractured and disjointed. I also examine the border zones at the city's fringes and in its unpopulated areas. Then, I focus on Old Delhi, the original city within the Central Delhi region, as an intensified version of the general Delhi public culture, where verbal sexual harassment operates as a sonic gauntlet. I compare the open-air markets of Old Delhi to the underground bargain market, Palika Bazaar, ultimately placing these harassment-heavy spaces against privatized public spaces of consumption like the surrounding Connaught Place and the enormous Select Citywalk Mall. Lastly, I examine the temporal dimension of the ethnomap, focusing on how curfews affect the gender ratio in North Campus and time limits in general affect female residents in Delhi, including myself.

In "Fearful Female Bodies: Negotiating the Regulatory Regime," I focus on internalized fear as it operates in female comportment and build a description of the socially produced regulatory regime for Delhi's young female residents through examining media sources on Delhi's reputation as a city. I argue that women are encouraged to feel culpable for sexual violation as well as inherently violable and self-

conscious. Clothing, a key aspect of the regulatory regime, carries political, social, and gendered associations, which manifest as a dichotomy between the "traditional" and the "Western." This dichotomy manifests in perceptions of sexual availability based on clothing styles, as well as carries through into how non-clothing tactics are framed as safer (more modest, feminine, and avoidance-based) or riskier (more modern, masculine, and aggression-based).

In "Protests Post-Nirbhaya: Occupying Space and Dancing the Future," I analyze the shift in Delhi's dominant public culture through significant protests around and since the December-12 attack, incorporating the activists' experiences and practices related to Delhi's public spaces. I focus on the general protest culture pre- and post-Nirbhaya, Take Back the Night (December 31, 2012), Slutwalk (2014), and One Billion Rising (2014). I analyze how the activists develop intentional (or accidental) public street culture as they work to shift dominant social behaviors in Delhi that they perceive to be destructive. First, I argue that the collective affect that spontaneously emerges during street protests temporarily shifts Delhi's public culture, referring to Madison (2010). Then, I examine how a protest affects a participant long after, as well as how protests operate as rehearsals for everyday life, drawing on Ramón Rivera-Servera (2012). Then, I explore how hope and dancing operate as tactics of occupying space and calling upon the ideal version of Delhi. I conclude with a section on how my university-aged interlocutors were inspired by protests and their visions for the ideal city.

CITY, SPACE, AND THE PUBLIC: BUILDING A TEMPORAL ETHNOMAP

OF DELHI

People from significantly different classes, religions, and regions often live in close

proximity in Delhi, so sometimes anyone walking in the city can experience dramatic

shifts in architecture and public practices in a short period of time. People from different

socioeconomic classes often mix at a higher rate than you might find in an American

city. In Delhi, mansions could be down the street from sidewalk tents. For example, to

get to the metro from my (illegally constructed) apartment in South Delhi's Malviya

Nagar, I exited the lower-middle/middle-class apartment building into a courtyard full of

parked cars and an occasional chicken, then turned left at an Internet café onto a dirt

road. I passed cell phone shops, small restaurants, produce carts, and a Hindu temple[10]

before nearing the main road, where to my right were rows of partially destroyed stone

structures in which the poorest and their livestock live across the street from Select

Citywalk Mall (an enormous air-conditioned mall with a Starbucks). The layering of

different populations can vary across neighborhoods and sections of the city, depending

on the history of migration and development that haphazardly increased over 1,000

years.[11] Delhi's population is about 16.79 million (Census of India 2011), with

urbanized spaces expanding dramatically in the past few decades (Dupont 2003). A

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[10] The population in my neighborhood was diverse, including Muslims (the closest mosque was audible if not visible), African immigrants, and a handful of white foreigners.
[11] See Veronique Dupont, Emma Tarlo, and Denis Vidal (2003) for a confirmation of this definition in their overview of Delhi as a place and space, citing its history and nested layers of ruins. William Dalrymple's (2003) take on Delhi's history through storytelling in *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* captures the shifts in Delhi's demographic and physical structures over the years.

dense population funnels into ancient structural neighborhoods or expands out into the surrounding plains.

Jagori argues that a "lack of movement and comfort is a form of social exclusion" (Jagori 4). Cahill (2001) describes the results of dangerous public places on how women experience public space as well as how they relate to their bodies. Women live their bodies through a theme of containment, of making themselves (and their worlds and lifestyles) smaller in an effort to reduce violation and discomfort. The implications of this movement means that women must consider their safety as a primary factor in everyday and long-term choices: from the location of their home, school, and workplace to the timing of their daily lives. Women's perceptions of their safety directly affect their movement choices.

Gendered experiences of public spaces are framed in terms of class, time of day, transportation access, age dynamics, and purpose. Who can remain inside, when, for how long, and on what terms depends on class, economic, religious, regional, and caste status. A woman is limited by the times of day during which she can travel as well as by location (Cahill 2001; Ranade 1997; Phadke, Khan, Ranade 2011; Jagori 2010). In this chapter, I am trying to capture Delhi as my interviewees and I experience(d) it, particularly how fear and the anticipation of violence shaped our movements within and between areas. I describe Delhi as they experience it spatially, architecturally, sonically, and temporally. It is a glimpse into how some young women live and move around in the city, which areas are deemed safe(r) zones, acceptable (if you prepare and act in a certain way), and which are inconceivably off limits. In this chapter, I first describe the

"ethnomap" of Delhi, marking the safe zones and boundaries of the city with my interlocutors. Second, I explore the "worst" spaces in Delhi, according to my interviewees. Lastly, I examine Delhi's temporal dimension, specifically the effect curfew has on Delhi's public culture.

<u>Mapping Delhi</u>

My interlocutors verbally defined the boundaries of safety and comfort in the city. I kept a large paper map of Delhi up on the wall in my apartment, where I traced the boundaries of acceptable areas, darkened the borders of the city (serving as a mark of the liminal border spaces: the surrounding states, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh), crossed out the places I was told never to enter, and traced routes mentioned in interviews and taken during my street observations. My paper map represents layers of diverse experiences, perceptions, and imaginations expressed, but themes emerged. Young female mobility and accessibility is more complex than you can see on the map, as everyone negotiates the distance between their homes and office or schools, but generally their experiences and patterns divide the city into pieces of acceptable zones, often connected to the metro. Although the standard Delhi map as given appears cohesive and comprehensive, gendered experiences turn it into safe, cautionary, and forbidden zones.

Generally, the students I interviewed live or spend large amounts of time in North Campus, the activists largely occupy South Delhi, and everyone visits Central Delhi for the markets. These three main regions include open markets, indoor shops and cafés, and in the case of South Delhi, an enclosed, enormous mall. These areas include a

range of architecture and conformity to building codes, from the chaotic, dense, narrow buildings in Old Delhi with its exposed electrical wiring to the sprawling residential areas in the far South. My neighborhood in Malviya Nagar fell in the middle, as it included illegal construction (residential buildings higher than four floors) and an illegal settlement (as in, not sanctioned by the city) was not far away. Jagori's office is close to the Malviya Nagar main market area, not far from my apartment. Nirbhaya boarded the bus in Saket, which is a neighborhood bordering Malviya Nagar.

Delhi's residents, like those from any inhabited area, produce social-spatial meaning through how they move through and between physical spaces. According to Michel de Certeau (1984), people enact meaning when they engage the physical structure of public places, rearranging aspects of physical places to suit their needs, manifesting the potential that physical places offer. North Campus is a safe zone based on the behavior and habits of the people who inhabit it; these young women are simultaneously producing and responding to a neighborhood culture that makes them feel safe. People engage place by forming connections within it, according to de Certeau (1984), putting locations in relationship with each other as they pass through and between them. The North Campus example captures how my interlocutors produce and experience Delhi spatially.

Every university student named the North Campus area as their most comfortable region in Delhi, both for the high percentage of women their age out in public (at least during the day) and for its accepting public culture. These young women go out more freely here, both in movement and in their relaxed body language, than any other place

in the city. North Campus was a major topic of discussion in every student interview:

defining its boundaries, comparing it to other areas of the city, getting into its specific

details (e.g., some colleges are more conservative or well-known for sexual harassment),

and speculating as to why the public culture there is different from the rest of Delhi.

North Campus is a region that includes both Delhi University's literal campus and the

surrounding neighborhoods in which students live, including a major social and

shopping area called Kamla Nagar. It is rather solidly middle class, which is unusual in

Delhi, where residents live in similarly constructed buildings with few to no extreme

variations. During one of the interviews, taken in a group of four, you can hear the

students verbal identify, debate, and negotiate the boundaries of their primary safe zone:

> North Campus ends near Vijay Nagar, Shakti Nagar / You can't go
> beyond Shakti Nagar / What's that, Model Town? / Yeah / You can't go
> beyond Model Town / […] Roop Nagar / Shakti Nagar, Kamla Nagar,
> Vijay Nagar, Hudson / Hudson / yeah / (pause) […] That's it. / Student
> area. / The campus is big enough where you don't need to go outside. We
> just go to Patel Chest, Vijay / All the resources are here so we don't need
> to go outside. (MC)

In this example, they are defining the North Campus area, naming the neighborhoods

comprising it as well as its boundaries. Still, students do not live or socialize beyond

these borders: they represent the fuzzy edges of the safe zone, the region you ought not

to enter. This vocal, collective identification and negotiation of the North Campus'

borders evokes the everyday individual and collective production of the boundaries and safe zones in Delhi.

Generally, the Delhi's fringes in any direction are most problematic, according to my interviewees: either the border cities in each direction or the isolated forested areas separating neighborhoods or regions within the city. These places are to be avoided or entered only under special circumstances. They were the areas that most frequently came up in stories of heightened experiences of fear: not the everyday sense of anticipation, but being stuck somewhere alone or with a few other young women after dark or in some other difficult circumstance. Isolated stretches of road between areas in Delhi are a major concern: you must know where you are going and must be prepared to jump out if you are traveling by auto (a three-wheeled motorized vehicle open on both sides). The city's edges, including the last few metro stops in almost every direction, seemed fraught with higher risk, possibly due to the more rural layout as urban spaces blend into the countryside and possibly due to the proximity to the border states, which carry particular social associations with rural social thought (read: non-urban and non-modern). They used the word "outside" to refer to the smallest scale, of outside the building or the neighborhood, to outside the Delhi region entirely, to a public and spatial culture two states away. These borderline spaces at the edges of Delhi as a whole and the pockets of "safe zones" across the city expose the relationship between space, fear, and mobility for young female Delhi residents.

Mobility: Transportation and Negotiating the Street

The women's coach is its own discrimination: if you are in the general coach, then why aren't you in the women's coach? That means you want men to look at you and touch you. (T)

We were going back last night, there were no women in the road, there were loads of guys. Everyone was looking at us, two girls were going away alone on a rickshaw. I had to walk for like ten minutes. The road was quite big, like this road [GTB], I was wearing the same attire [as I am now]. 'If she is going so late, why is she wearing such clothes?' (E)

Gender and the anticipation of violence dictate where, how, and when you travel in a neighborhood or between regions in Delhi. Transportation access and experiences framed commuting to and from work or class, or traveling to meet friends or explore a part of the city. Public transportation[12] was a major topic for everyone: how to access it, tactics for negating harassment and molestation from male passengers, the difference between taking the bus and metro, the culture of judgment in metro, the culture of harassment specific to dense public transportation spaces where men were present (either bus or general metro compartment). Some interviewees explained that even if the metro (i.e., women's compartment) was relatively safe, the difficulty of entering and exiting the metro station, and whatever travel was required to reach the station, might limit metro access.

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[12] Infrastructure affects female restriction on entering public spaces: Harvey Molotch (2008) assesses Mumbai's dearth of public bathroom facilities for women and the implications for women's right to occupy public spaces for any length of time. Without access to public facilities, women limit their time outside, which adds to the low presence of women in public spaces.

Women restrict their movement in public spaces as well as seek purpose to justify their presence (Ranade 2007; Phadke, Khan, and Ranade 2011; Guano 2007). Where de Certeau studies social constructions of public spaces in general, Ranade focuses on how gender affects that process. She argues, "space itself is an inherently embodied experience" (Ranade 2007, 1520). She notes how different gendered bodies occupy space on the street, where men move freely and women navigate between the unsafe and the indecent. "While women's access to public space is discrete, marked, and strongly delimited by what they can and cannot do, men have free access to be almost everywhere" (Ranade 2007, 1523). She discovered that women significantly restrict their movement through public space, adjusting their routes to avoid places that would be considered inappropriate for women or where men tend to gather. One student, J, described her commute, which evokes the limitations on her (and other young women's) choices about as well as her tactics for making her way through the city:

> Usually take the main road, the one that goes through the commercial market area, or goes through nice housing areas, with a little more affluent houses, you feel a little more safe. The chances that if you're passing by a big house or a more affluent house, the chances are you are less likely to see men standing outside the houses. If you walk through an area that is not really affluent, more of a slum, probably you will have more men around. [Bridget: Doing the timepass thing?] Yeah, doing the timepass there. / Even in the morning. (F) / Even in the morning. […] We usually prefer the road that's one frequented by girls, or you have people

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coming over there. It's a true fact you don't see much women in street.

Not in afternoons, not in evening. We can say that gender ratio in street is

more skewed than the child sex ratio. If you will look at a general street

chances are you will see like three/four girls and like hundred men. (J)

Her explanation demonstrates the relationship between class and the likeliness that men

will be lingering aimlessly in public spaces, a major source of anxiety, as they are more

available to harass women who pass by. Men are able to linger in public spaces,

according to Craig Jeffrey (2008) and his description of the "timepass" concept in India,

which is the predominantly male practice of lingering in public aimlessly waiting for

something to happen (most often associated with lower class, unemployed men). Just as

Ranade observed, respectable women pass through space, while men are more able to

linger and engage in timepass behavior (Ranade 2007; Phadke, Khan, and Ranade

2011).[13] J chooses to stick close to where there are other women, as well, which is a

definitive marker for people about which spaces feel safe. Ranade also notes that women

had to justify their presence in public with a specific purpose; women's spatial

movement is restricted to "safe" or respectable locations, while men are free to spread

throughout the area. Another student, F, described her commute and tactics for

negotiating the road home:

In the evening, there is no route to take a rickshaw, so I take the bus in the

evening. So it takes a little time. I have to walk. I take a bus for half the

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[13] See Emanuela Guano (2007) for a similar account of women navigating public spaces in
Genoa, Italy.

way, then half the way I walk. So I take the general route where

everybody is going, everybody is rushing like me, no one is looking. […]

But people do look. There are also wine shops and alcohol shops on the

way, people are sitting there, glass strewn all over the road. So you have

to go on the other side of the road. (F)

This interviewee is highly aware of her body and other people's bodies as she decides,

moment to moment, where to walk in the street. Both J and F pay attention to where men

are more likely to be sitting outside, timepassing, as well as how many non-threatening

or possibly supportive people are around.

Choosing transportation involves calculating risk: from the temporal boundaries

on when it is safe to take an auto to the shifting availability of transportation options

across the day. The group of four students spoke about how transportation access affects

their choices about where to go in the city:

But I guess you know metro also makes … /makes it easier/ Makes it

easier, *han*. If you have to go somewhere by metro station, you will

probably go there. You may not go over to a better place just because

there is no metro. / We prefer places where we can meet people our own

age, who are also students like us, so we are restricted to places like

Sarojini Nagar, Connaught Place, Lajpat Nagar, Karol Bagh. / And safety

is a big issue, it's not like…we may know of a place where we can hang

out, but it is not that safe, so we won't go there. (MC)

As the students broadened their discussion of North Campus to include where else they go in Delhi, they clarified how transportation affects their movement choices.

Involuntary Intimacy in Central Delhi

We can't just think, 'ki okay, we're getting —chalo, let's go to Chandni Chowk. Because you actually have to plan when to go. But we can just get up and go to Kamla Nagar. (F)

Public Delhi is a juxtaposition of intimacy and alienation. Chandni Chowk (in the oldest part of the city) concentrates this intensely and explicitly, the loud and immediate answer to where my interlocutors feel the most uncomfortable in Delhi. This was not the most dangerous place in the city, just the most uncomfortable one where interviewees would still go. As a result, they feel the need to take precautions to do so. Even within Old Delhi (the original city, a subset of the Central Delhi region), my university-aged interlocutors thought it was worthwhile to attempt Paharganj or Chandni Chowk for the affordable and vast markets, but for some, Chowri Bazaar and Jamu Masjid were off the table. It depends on the person's capacity for and interest in enduring discomfort in exchange for accessing particular markets. These young women are negotiating their desire to visit the region but also survive the social dynamics of the space with the least amount of negative interactions. Safety determines where, when, and how they move around the city, with the Old Delhi region as a simultaneously fraught and desirable area. The density of physical space in Old Delhi areas does generate a forced intimacy with strangers, but there is an element of public life in Delhi that is defined by being in close quarters with everyone else. Chandni Chowk's intensity exposes the larger social-spatial issues at work in lesser degrees across the city.

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The old city's architecture and use combine to produce a particularly challenging space for young women to navigate without negative attention, unwanted physical contact, and (often aggressive) verbal sexual harassment. The crowd is dense and the buildings are so small that most activity happens out on the street, as Ajay Gandhi (2011) observed in his article on the area: "There, public culture is transacted right on the street, in *chai* stalls and *paan* stands, and there is hardly any possibility for discreet retreat." (208-9). The old city is a highly concentrated form of the public intimacy on the street in most of Delhi, where sidewalks are broken or largely taken over by timepassing men and street vendors. "The Indian street in this respect has long been overwhelmingly male and popular, an exception to the strict 'spatial etiquette' of the city's other public spaces" (Gandhi 2011, 211). When Gandhi refers to the city's "other public spaces," he is referring to the British-designed wide avenues and lawns of the region directly south of the old city in Central Delhi. That wide-open description does not apply to North, West, East, or most of South Delhi, but the Old Delhi part of Central Delhi is distinctly intense due to its density and infrastructure. Regions like Malivya Nagar or the busiest sections in North Campus are less intense versions of the Old Delhi chaos with a "spatial etiquette" that may not be apparent to a strict Western outlook: for example, the pedestrians crossing the main road separating the slums from the Select Citywalk Mall (Malviya Nagar) wait for a critical mass to assemble and then they press into traffic.

Gandhi (2011) notes how the physical proximity engendered by the old city's physical (crumbling) structure invites "involuntary intimacy" and constant negotiation of space where you cannot absent yourself from the immediacy of the moment. Where

Gandhi finds some delight in this intimacy, the area he is describing is one of the most difficult sites for my university-aged interlocutors to access. As the Safe Delhi Campaign (2010) points out, Delhi's current urban design and public culture isolates women within a crowd. E, one of the students I interviewed on a different day described an intense harassment experience in the old city:

> I wore jeans, a t-shirt, and a sweatshirt, jeans were quite low, I didn't realize that. […] It's very congested and there were like no women. We saw two women. And people were *shouting*, they were howling at us from, a rickshaw here, a rickshaw there, and they're like "oh wow, nice" they're like commenting horrible things, like "she's so sexy and it's the right place for her." GB you know is a red light district.[14] […] It's, the road is so congested, it takes thirty minutes, so for an entire thirty minutes I was listening listening listening listening listening. […] We couldn't take action there because it is a very unsafe area. That man can wallop people, they can surround us and no one would say a word. (E)

As E described her experiences, she imitated the voices of the men who called out at her, elongating her vowels and smirking, reproducing the sonic gauntlet she faced as she tried to press through the dense crowd, evoked by her quick, frenetic repetition of the word "listening." She could look away from stares but could not stop hearing their

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[14] The Old Delhi region, including Paharganj (the backpackers ghetto), is known for prostitution. See "Fearful Female Bodies" for how clothing style cues perceived sexual availability.

comments. This moment is an extreme example of how auditory[15] and physical proximity combines with negative intensity to absolutely overwhelm a person (although she manages thirty determined minutes), the existence or potential of these exclusionary practices manifest in everyday experiences of Delhi too.

Although indoor spaces may appear to be more comfortable for women in Delhi, this is not the case: Palika Bazaar, an underground market in Connaught Place, was the second most frequently referenced uncomfortable public space. Connaught Place is about ten minutes by metro south of Chandni Chowk, a major metro station hub as well as two rings of British-style white buildings housing upper-class restaurants and shops. The park within the inner circle of Connaught Place has an enormous Indian flag at its center: this is often referred to as the center of the city itself. Between a Starbucks and an official Manchester United store, Palika Bazaar is a bargain underground all-gender clothes mall consisting of many small, open-faced shops in a slightly confusing maze of hallways. On the street level, vendors sell men's clothing laid out on wooden tables, calling out deals and trying to shout over each other. There is more space to move around the street vendors, whereas the underground mall funnels people through narrower halls. An open-air market around the corner that primarily sells women's

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[15] I followed the route this interviewee described, taking roughly one and a half hours to wander through the old city, passing major historical sites and markets mentioned by other interviewees. There is a brilliant moment captured where you can hear me asking a woman for directions in Hindi and a man insistently giving me directions loudly and repeatedly in English, despite my ignoring him. Through linguistic and vocal tactics, he was insisting on his authority as well as attempting to draw my attention to himself.

clothes is a drastically different, less stressful environment. Some students described the harassment in the underground Palika Bazaar:

> It's so horrible, they'll grab you. Down inside is the problem. They'll use different techniques to call you, 'madam', 'madam gi lelo,' / We've not even explored Palika Bazaar, I just went once to see what it is like. / In the Palika Bazaar. He looked at me up and down, and said, 'snugly it will fit you.[16]' (CCD)

Despite the higher-class surroundings, Palika Bazaar's population and environment produces an especially onerous harassment environment. Bargain clothes (with their lower-class connotations), combined with the dimly lit and densely packed underground space, and the predominantly young male presence produces an environment in which men feel free to verbally and physically harass women.

Select Citywalk Mall and Palika Bazaar are drastically different based on class performance: women able to perform middle or even upper class can legitimately access and linger in Citywalk, while men dominate Palika Bazaar in an enclosed, overwhelming indoor space. Citywalk is air-conditioned and has primarily expensive shops, while its security gate serves as a class policing point. The underground shops have a higher-class status than the open-market tables, but not enough to achieve Select Citywalk Mall levels that would exclude the young men most likely to harass in mixed-gender

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[16] As the students impersonated the men who harassed them, their use of facial expression and vocal pattern was key to differentiating between everyday speech and how they knew it was sexual harassment. In particular, harassing men elongated the vowels of otherwise normal words and phrases, a method of communicating sexual desire and objectification that makes it difficult to prove an offense has occurred.

environments. Phadke, Khan, and Ranade (2011) note the role of privatized "public" spaces that are limited to those who can perform middle or upper-class status, while open markets are accessible to people of all classes.

> It is important at this point to reiterate that new spaces of consumption like coffee shops and malls are not public spaces, but privatized spaces that masquerade as public spaces. Limited access to such private-public spaces creates a veneer of access for women, pre-empting any substantive critique of the lack of actual access to real public space. (Phadke, Khan, and Ranade 2011, 46-7).

It is startling how much quieter the Select Citywalk Mall is, by comparison. In open-air markets, you can hear the traffic, while in Palika Bazaar, the men produce a sonic gauntlet (including possible physical contact). In the end, the vendors, architectural design (including age of buildings), and location in the city determine the safety status of any particular market.

Curfews and the Failure of Protectionism

After Nirbhaya, even my curfew time at home was reduced from eight to seven. Before Nirbhaya, I could go home by eight. Post-Nirbhaya, 'you come by seven, it's not safe, she was raped at eight, you come at seven.' (J)

[After Nirbhaya, my parents] strictly told me not to go out after seven, and to be in your PG[17] before your curfew time. (I)

Delhi means time limit, binds you in the North Campus. (E)

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[17] "Paying Guest" accommodation, where a matron or other adult typically supervises the students.

The ethnomap is incomplete without a temporal dimension, as every choice is influenced by the time of day. Curfews are a key influence on my interlocutors' experiences of public spaces, as they still need to return from wherever else they might be in the city by a certain time if they must adhere to a curfew. As one of the above quotes demonstrate, curfews were also moved earlier and parents were more afraid, according to some, after the December 2012 gang rape. E explained, "Darkness threatens us" and "Women are everywhere, in the afternoon, they are everywhere. If you see Delhi in the daytime, if you see Delhi in the nighttime, there is heaven and hell difference" (E). She associated time and safety status directly with Delhi's identity as a city. Suspecting that I was misunderstanding the application of time-identifying words, I asked what evening means during the one of the student group interviews. The answer was "After seven is night. […] [Evening is] four to seven. […] Daytime is from, what, six o'clock to four, maybe. Daytime is six to twelve, twelve to four is the afternoon" (L). The window for moving through public spaces is quite limited, which directly diminishes women's access to the city. Protectionist policies like curfews that focus on restricting female movement makes the night much more threatening for women trying to move through the city—curfews intensify the already low presence of women in public spaces.

Curfews for the students, whether they were living at home or in North Campus, could be as early as seven or as late as ten p.m., but they also self-regulated their

departure and arrival times to avoid the city in the evening and night.[18] Transportation was a key element in this choice. Some of their parents' influence and concerns could cross the distance between the city and the village. One student said, "my curfew time is eight-thirty, so if we want to take an extension or night out, we can. If we inform them. In Kamla Nagar, you can go out til ten-thirty p.m., but I've never been because my parents don't allow me to go" (I). "You also have to see where you are going in the evening. Maybe if I was going back to […] I could have stayed til eight-thirty or nine. Now I am going to Faridabad, Even 7 is too dangerous. […] To arrive there. (F) / It is safe to be [in North Campus] til late, but it is not safe to go back to our place" (J). Even if the metro is safe due to the women's compartment, traveling to and from the station can be fraught. Another student said, **"**it depends on the mode of transportation, my dad will be coming to pick me up in the metro station. As long as I am in the metro station, he thinks it's fine. So it's usually nine/nine-thirty p.m." (L). My interlocutors combine the spatial definitions of Delhi and access to transportation directly with the time of day to determine how they will move around the city.

Time was a constant factor affecting my interviews. I had to meet with people after their daytime commitments but early enough so that we could all travel home within a comfortable time range. One group interview took place across two days, as we had to end so that we could travel home in time to meet curfew or feel safe. At one point,

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[18] Nightlife in Delhi does exist, including bars and clubs, but anyone who mentioned it said it was best to reach those places by private transport or taxi. I was told that if you are wearing a short dress, you should cover yourself with a stole on the way to the club.

I asked, "it is 7:08 p.m., the sun is beginning to set. If you were to walk back to GTB metro station now, where would you walk?" E said that she would only walk on the sidewalk. T said she would take a (cycle) rickshaw. "I would be in a hurry to leave from there (T)." E disagreed, explaining how "this time is quite ok, it is not until nine-thirty and ten o'clock, the *tikkas*[19] are still open." Some are more comfortable than others or have different curfew requirements, and made their choices accordingly, but all noted the significantly lower presence of women as the evening turned into the night. The temporal restrictions affect access to or moving through public spaces just as much as the social-spatial aspects of any region in Delhi.

The gender and age demographics in North Campus' public spaces shift dramatically at curfew (beginning at seven-thirty p.m.). Miranda College (girls only) is a walled community, a pocket of free space in North Campus. My university-aged interlocutors explained that they felt comfortable during day in North Campus or that they did not feel comfortable anywhere in public at any time. In general, their most comfortable places were home, work, or a friend's place, if not Miranda College itself. By comparison, I felt much more comfortable passing through my own neighborhood later in the evening compared to being out in North Campus, for example, I counted twelve women in the GTB area (which has restaurants and cafes popular with the student crowd) at roughly ten p.m. on one occasion, compared to hundreds of men. In my neighborhood, there were still women coming home from work late into the night. In the evenings, there was even a cluster of older women who relaxed together in the courtyard

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[19] Roadside food stalls.

below my building; whenever I could hear their voices as I neared home, I began to relax and transition into a "safe zone" feeling. Curfew, meant to protect the young women, ended up turning North Campus into a cautionary or forbidden zone in the evening, where it could have been a vibrant example of young women occupying public space during the night.[20]

Gathering data for this thesis invoked the time-based restrictions on female movement in the city. After a long discussion about female mobility in Delhi during my interview with K, we had a self-aware moment when I pointed out that I had to start heading back on the metro if I was to reach home "on time." My friends in the city endeavored to keep an eye on me and offer a safe haven, either to meet me at the metro station (and therefore intervene in the most hazardous moment of travel—getting from the metro to your door) or offering a place to sleep if I couldn't finish interviews in North Campus in time to safely cross the city. I frightened my neighbor by taking interviews until nine-thirty p.m. in North Campus: she was preparing to send a male friend to meet me at the metro station near our building to guide me home. After one interview (and dinner) with a friend of mine, we decided it was safer for her father to give me a lift home on the back of his motorbike, without wearing a helmet (a normal practice in Delhi), than it was for me to risk the auto drivers taking me five minutes down the road to my five minute walk home. These are the kinds of decisions made every day, where discomfort, inconvenience, or other risks are leveraged against potential male threats.

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[20] See "Protests Post-Nirbhaya" for how evening protests shift this public culture.

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FEARFUL FEMALE BODIES: NEGOTIATING THE REGULATORY REGIME

Morality, class, and gender determine embodied spatial-social practices and manifest in everyday discussions on safety, violence, and fear in Delhi. At the time of my interviews, December 2012 was nearly a year and a half in the past, but the memory and its implications for Delhi as a city, society, and organizing point for India's (or the world's) fears still reverberate through the words and bodies of its people. Mainstream media sources, with a strong dose of the opinion section, accuse Delhi of being the rape capital, suggesting that intact female survival is impossible. Everyone I spoke with articulated their experiences of Delhi's public spaces in terms of pre- and post-December 2012, as well as occasionally other instances of violence witnessed or heard about through media or other people. In a "Letters" section (under Opinion), four out of five contributors from South India describe Delhi as "the rape capital of the world" (*The Hindu,* April 22, 2013). Delhi, in this opinion column, is a site of great violence, a physical and social void. These kinds of statements reiterate women's marginality in public and mark a pervasive sense of fear. Some of my interlocutors used or referenced the idea that Delhi is the "rape capital of the world," even when I did not introduce it into the conversation, though this idea had been present as early as July 2012, when I last visited Delhi.

The regulatory regime operates through fear and power relations. Sara Ahmed (2004) explains how fear operates through a threat of violence, describing "fear as an 'affective politics'" (64), where the community regulates the objects of violence as well as the threats. Fear defines Delhi's affective climate, which courses through the populace

and infects the very bodies of its women even before any violation occurs. "A Myth Called Safety" captures this sentiment: "Safety is an illusion for women. Irrespective of the city, place or time, the devil can strike anywhere. And it's not pessimism, for the facts speak for themselves. As the nation discusses and debates the brutal gang-rape of a young woman in a moving bus in Delhi, we ask, 'Where are our women safe?'" (*The Hindu,* December 2012). When a person experiences the world as potential sites of violence, that threat inundates her life and informs her embodiment.

The fear of public violence against women has led many of Delhi's residents to advocate for and reinforce a regulatory appearance-based and behavioral regime for Delhi's women. Delhi as a physical place interacts with Delhi as a society to produce a space that is inhospitable to women: entering public spaces involves risking her safety, dignity, and reputation—and violence prevention falls upon the young women, who must adhere to the regime or be blamed for inviting sexual violation. The threat of sexual violation and the ensuing regulatory regime operates as a Foucauldian power dynamic: a power relation is a "mode of action that does not act directly or immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions" (Foucault 2001, 340). Along with physically navigating public spaces, and the men dominating them, my interlocutors are negotiating their identities and comfort in relation to social expectations and the regulatory regime. As I mentioned in the Introduction, sexual violence primarily happens in private spaces, where the offender is most likely to be known to the survivor. Despite this, these regulatory fictions about clothing, comportment, and class offer young women ways to

negotiate harassment and, more importantly, culpability for unwanted, sexualized attention on Delhi's streets.

My research participants offered a series of tactics for negotiating public spaces that related to restricting mobility and bodily comportment. They reflect the newspaper articles reinforcing restrictive female comportment as a means of preventing violence, evidence of a protectionist approach that is dominant in the conversation on safety in Delhi. Ultimately, no matter what they are wearing, their habitus in the city is framed by fear and the anticipation of violence in public spaces. "Habitus" is an embodied set of actions, behaviors, or habits that people accumulate according to their social environment, which establishes a connection between socialization and embodied everyday acts (Bourdieu 1977). Some tactics are intentional and conscious, particularly as part of that intense self-awareness in public, but often they have internalized the regime to the point of unconscious practice.[21] My interlocutors framed non-clothing tactics in terms of anticipating and avoiding attention, or performing confidence and being assertive: the former fits the traditional "decent" girl stereotype and the latter a more "modern," Western girl stereotype. These stereotypical categories carry personality implications as well as risks, including that men may judge your sexual availability based on your clothing choices.

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[21] Adjustments to your habitus can set in quickly. When I am in Delhi, I take on more modest clothing practices as a means of mitigating my discomfort in public places, which includes draping a scarf across my chest. I did not realize how quickly I had internalized this until I put on a *dupatta* to speak over Skype with one of my advisors.

You earn respectability by successfully adhering to the regulatory regime. These regulatory behaviors make both the public and the individuals feel safer, even when, as many of my interlocutors pointed out, the regime does not prevent harassment. Ultimately, you must be respectable in order to deserve protection (Phadke, Khan, Ranade 2011), while you will be blamed for the failure to follow the "preventative" regime if you are sexually violated (Cahill 2001). The boundaries and manifestations of socioeconomic class are shifting in response to a changing economic structure: Minna Saavala (2010) defines the new middle-class through social behavior, rather than economic ability, emphasizing the importance of understanding honor and dignity as determining factors of middle-class meaning. Not only are my interlocutors in the middle-class, being able to perform their class status requires adhering to the regulatory regime sufficiently. This middle-class definition corresponds to the older generations' ideas: as I discuss below in more detail, appearing too traditional, particularly in clothing style, makes you "unsexy" and "uncool." Negotiating contemporary class status involves balancing appearing respectable with appearing sexually desirable to your peers.

Since my university students primarily experience public Delhi in terms of potential and actual experiences of street harassment, they tend to explain their tactics and the regulatory regime in relation to men who would give them unwanted, sexual attention on the street, but their tactics speak to the wider protectionist discourse on preventing public sexual violence (Phadke, Khan, and Ranade 2011). Since sexual harassment participates in the production of a rape culture, focusing on sexual harassment specifically is an access point into the generally unsafe atmosphere of public

spaces in Delhi. For example, my interlocutors spoke about judgmental stares from men

and women of all generations when they are dressed "immodestly" in public spaces.

These actions, although not sexual harassment, also enforce the regulatory regime.

Sexual harassment is a psychological violence that implies the promise of physical

violence as its ultimate expression (Cahill 2001).

The following list of questions was the foundation for the interviews, but the

conversation flowed organically. Some questions became irrelevant to the conversation.

- How would you describe the experience of being out in public in Delhi? Which areas are you typically in, and how are they similar and different?
- Can you give me a general idea of how you prepare to be in public spaces? To what extent do you pay attention to your dress and comportment?
- Can you describe your typical route to work, school, or the market? For example: who is around, what are they doing, is there a difference in your experience depending on the time of day, and has anything ever made you change your route? What are you typically thinking about as you are walking or making your way on your commute?
- Do you take any special precautions when you are traveling in certain parts of the city?
- What advice would you give to a woman visiting Delhi? What would you tell her about being out in public? Is there anywhere in the city that she should avoid? Any particular time of day or year?
- In a hypothetical context, if you overheard young men saying something about your or your friend in a public context, how would you respond? Is there a situation that you can imagine in which you would feel comfortable directly engaging with people who are objectifying you?
- Where in Delhi do you feel completely comfortable?
- How do you think public spaces in Delhi can be transformed to make women feel more comfortable?
- Does being inside, in a mall for example, feel safer than being outdoors in a bazaar? Why do you think that is or is not the case?
- If you were going to arrange to meet a friend in public, where would you go? Does it matter if they are male or female, or how

many friends that you are meeting?
- What language do harassers typically use when they speak to women? What language do women use if they respond?
- Have you ever been advised on how to dress or behave in public? Who advised you, and what have they recommended?
- Is there anything that I need to understand about Delhi as a city that we haven't covered yet?

Regulate Yourselves: Fear and the Instructional Climate of Delhi

Dress is the most important [tactic], but I wouldn't say that it's for sure that if you have dressed as per the conceived notions you won't be harassed. I personally have had experience of being covered from head to toe and still being harassed. (J)

In the newspaper articles that I read, modest clothing was the top of the regulatory regime's list, and wearing revealing (non-traditional, a.k.a. Western) clothing was the first thing people cited when blaming young women for experiencing Delhi as unsafe. When someone blames the victim of sexual harassment or sexual violence, they frequently cite inappropriate (i.e., nontraditional) clothing as the cause for inviting violence. A newspaper article on March 23, 2014, by Somahukla Walunjkar, detailed safety advice for women that reinforces restricted mobility, censorship, and implied moral practices: "While you don't have cover yourself from head to toe so that no one leches at you, dress sensibly" (*The Times of India,* March 23, 2014). In an article on *Thomson Reuters*, my only article diverging from the two major newspapers, there are a series of brief interviews with people on the street in Delhi in early September 2013. They repeatedly echo deeply entrenched fear that has escalated since the December 2012 attack, with scattered blame on women for dressing inappropriately. Fear seems to have seeped into the very bones of those interviewed for articles on gendered violence in

Delhi's public spaces since December 2012. These disjointed stories combine a chaotic sense of violence as well as desperate efforts to blame the survivors so that if they just don't do what they did, they'll be ok. Delhi in the last two years knells fear—constant, hopeless, pervasive fear. Many of my interviewees referred to these social ideas in an abstract manner, but this kind of media discourse demonstrates the circulation of the regime discourse in Delhi.

Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan, and Shilpa Ranade's (2011) argue that the general reaction to media coverage and discourses on how the public is dangerous for women tend to inspire the general public to restrict female access to public spaces:

> However, parallel to this visibility of the 'modern' Indian woman is an increasing neo-traditionalism that locates women back in the private space of the home. This is buttressed by the increased reportage about public violence against women, which furthers the narrative that women are not safe in public spaces, sanctioning even greater restrictions on their movements. (Phadke, Khan, and Ranade 2011, 10)

Phadke, Khan, and Ranade (2011) argue that these kinds of messages about women's danger in public spaces increase fearful and spatially restrictive responses: "the manner in which stories of violence are told and hierarchies of 'danger' are constructed magnifies the perception of the threat to women in public" (Phadke, Khan, and Ranade 2011, 50). This leads to restricting women's access to public spaces.

Sexual violation starts sounding like an expected consequence of living in Delhi (Jagori 2010). Meena Menon builds a forlorn picture of Delhi, women, and violence:

"For too long the capital has had a notorious reputation and every woman on the street in Delhi or in the bus has a reason to fear. There is a prevailing atmosphere of insecurity and the gang rape of a young woman in a bus had sent shock waves of terror, confirming everyone's worst fears" ((*The Hindu,* April 22, 2013). It is as if Delhi's reputation has been both fulfilled and expanded by Dec-12, where the affective climate of fear has been justified by a brutal attack by strangers in a public place. In another newspaper article on the myths of the regime, the quoted interviewee, Sonali Tripathi, tells a story about being sexually harassed despite her "modest" clothing: "I wear leggings and use a stole to cover my sleeves and neck, keeping in mind the preachy 'don't-wear-clothes-that-attract-attention' nonsense. But in a city like ours, that doesn't help. As soon as you're on the roads, you're public property no matter what you're wearing" (Aanchal Tuli, *The Times of India,* December 19, 2012). It is almost as if the blame can easily lie in Delhi's culture—"in a city like ours"—where the dominant public culture is so pervasive and powerful that all efforts at prevention are meaningless in the face of its indifference and violence. These perceptions of Delhi's reputation circulate in the mass media as well as in interpersonal conversations, which participate in the production of Delhi as a thoroughly, hopelessly dangerous space for women.

Fear affects how women in Delhi experience their bodies and have embodied experiences of public spaces. Media discourses reinforce the idea that young female residents' bodies are especially violable, and that their physical appearance and comportment is essential to preventing sexual violation. Cahill (2001) points to the body as the source of danger in these discourses: "What is significant about these analyses is

that they stress the degree to which woman experiences her own individual body as culpable for producing all these dangers" (157). Cahill argues that rape operates as a threat fulfilled, "such that even bodies of women who have not been raped are likely to carry themselves in such a way as to express the truths and values of a rape culture" (2001, 143). Discourses around female bodies suggest that they are violable: female embodiment in rape culture is defined by their potential to be violated as well as their weakness and threat to the female person. Violence is seen as a gap in her constant self-monitoring, or even a mistake, but it is still framed within a woman's obligation to monitor her bodily comportment as the primary task of feminine existence (Cahill 2001). These discursive ideas circulating throughout Delhi and in the media about Delhi affect how my interlocutors understand and experience public spaces.

The idea that wearing proper clothes will shield you from harassment and violence is a fiction. I have come to think that clothing can reduce certain kinds of attention, primarily judgments from men and women of all ages that are separate from sexual harassment, but at most "correct" clothing buys you respectability and possibly public support before, during, and after any negative encounters. In a reactionary article published the week after the December 2012 gang rape, Aanchal Tuli rips apart myths about what women should do to remain safe in Delhi, all in relation to the December 2012 gang rape: "They never forget to tell us that Delhi is not safe" (*The Times of India,* December 19, 2012). She lists a series of "myths" and follows each with a quote from someone in the city: go out in groups, crowded areas are safe, don't go out late, have a male friend accompany you, and dress conservatively. "So, we are always cautious. We

have grown up with warnings, lessons, and guidelines to surviving the city" (*The Times of India,* December 19, 2012). These instructions coming from family, educators, peers, the news, and popular media comprise the regulatory regime that defines young female behavior in public Delhi.

At the same time as my interlocutors know that clothing does not protect women in public spaces, they frequently still take it into consideration every day as they prepare to exit their homes (as did I). Clothing choices were a site and a means for my interlocutors to explain what it takes to make it down the street in as much comfort and ease of mind as possible, as well as a point to crack open the fictions of protectionism. Clothes are a key factor in understanding how people communicate morality and social status, but they are also contingent upon context. My interlocutors' clothing choices depended upon the event, location (see "City, Space, and the Public"), and their companions. In the end, even choosing modest clothing does not necessarily decrease harassment, as one of my interlocutors explained:

> I was harassed more when I was more dressed up, covered from head to toe. Maybe because it gives up an image of a more demure girl, a more, you know […] So it's not like… people have this judgment in their head: the less you cover, the more you will be harassed. But it's quite other way around as well, like I have personally seen when I am properly covered from head to toe, when I have a cloth wrapped around my head, when it's in winters, and I am not showing off anything but people do pass comments. (J)

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My interviewees did not fully believe that these choices and actions could prevent violence itself, but they were caught between the respectability that taking every precaution offers and their personal preferences that could easily not fit the regime. In the end, the potential that their facial expressions, clothing, gestures, and other embodied communication could make harassers back down is a strong incentive for following the regime.

Being Self-Conscious in Delhi

I am a girl and I want to be a girl, I want to be a free girl—not occupied with all the thoughts that if I raise my finger, then I'll be pointed [at], if I raise my eye, then I'll be asked, if I raise my step out of my wall, then also I'll be punished! (T)

You are being made conscious that you are a woman every second of your life in Delhi. (J)

Being in Delhi on the street at any time of the day is stressful. (K)

Young female habitus in Delhi includes feeling intensely self-conscious and hyper-aware of the surroundings, which is reinforced by experiences of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, the most common negative experience of men in public, reinforces this self-conscious awareness, and with it, a sense of not freely belonging in public, in a concentrated, fraught encounter. In my experience, most harassing men do not wait for my response, and there does not seem to be an expectation of sex actually happening.[22] When a group of men call out to a woman on the street, they are not expecting her to

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[22] The times that men on the street (typically in or near Paharganj and the New Delhi Railway Station) have been disappointed, shocked, or offended by my refusal to have sex with them demonstrate how my race and nationality shape perceptions of my sexual availability.

join them on a collective date. She describes how sexual harassment operates: "But I must be made to know that I am a 'nice piece of ass': I must be made to see myself as they see me. There is an element of compulsion in this encounter, in this being-made-to-be-aware of one's own flesh" (*Femininity* 27). Sandra Bartky (1990) argues that harassers communicate to the woman that her body and sexuality exists for men, whether or not she agrees to the encounter. She is reduced to a sexual function, or to only those body parts are key to a sexual function. This makes her presence primarily sexual and subservient to male needs. Bartky argues that sexual objectification, to take a person's part as constituting their whole, is a way to dominate another. In the moment of sexual harassment, a person is hailed into a particular social definition (Althusser 2012). We are not isolated beings; we experience the world with and through others as well as through ourselves.

My interlocutors experience the sense of unsafe spaces directly through street harassment, which indicates a wider experience of being unwelcome in public spaces in Delhi. Sexual harassment behavior includes "passing comments,"[23] singing pieces of lewd songs, following you, groping, or staring. They understood sexual harassment as a sign of masculinity or looking cool to other males; humiliating, stressful, exhausting; and/or being about putting women down, asserting superiority, with the potential result of becoming offended, aggressive, and/or violent if challenged or rejected. The effectiveness of regulatory practices might be related to harassers buying into the regime

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[23] Their harassers almost exclusively use Hindi, and my interlocutors generally respond in the same.

as well. Interlocutors believed the harassers would interpret them as being vulnerable to harassment (more traditional looking) or sexually available (more Western looking). Street sexual harassment reinforces the idea that female bodies are weak, violable, dangerous, and guilty.

Men feel free to display their sexuality, because they are framed in discourse as the active gender. P explained how she understands street harassment and Delhi's public culture through differences in permitted sexual expression: "women are supposed to suppress their sexuality when they hit puberty. On the other hand, men and boys, there is no separation there, they can be open about it. Catcalling a woman is a way to prove that you are masculine; there is a pressure on them" (P). Cahill notes how male embodiment demonstrates that men can inhabit their bodies as sexual beings without fear, whereas women must shut down all physical attention through body language: "The men's sex is expressed freely, almost defiantly, while the women cover theirs, for fear of its being stolen, violated, consumed" (Cahill 2001).[24] Since women must hide their sexuality, they reinforce that it can be activated against their will. They cannot feel sensual without an intense self-awareness. They must choose between denying that sexuality, since their primary sexual embodiment in public occurs as the inert sex objects of male observers/harassers, or enduring the negative attention. "Women's individual restrictions of their bodily movements reflect an attempt to deny unwanted sexual access.

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[24] In this language, "stolen, violated, consumed," Cahill echoes the objectified argument set up in Sandra Bartky's (1990) take on sexual objectification. Cahill's language frames female sexual organs, the vagina and its surrounding unnamable complexity, as objects that can be taken. As if women, as whole beings, are not violated, something they *have* is violated.

Paradoxically, this denial serves to highlight their persistent vulnerability" (Cahill 2001, 159). Women are trapped between surviving fear-based rape culture and participation in the limitation of their comportment.

K explained, "I have started to feel that I do not deserve this anymore. When I was a kid, I would try to do something, run away from that situation. I feel irritated with the comments and stares I receive from the people. It is extremely humiliating, *na*?" To be sexual is not humiliating—it is humiliating to be denied participation in that sexuality, to be turned into the object of another's desire without a co-creative role, where your subjectivity is not a celebrated factor in your sexuality. Sexual objectification divides a woman against herself; she must labor to regain a sense of wholeness and participation the discursive production of her physical, social, human self. They must exert emotional and intellectual energy to reassert themselves as full subjects.

Along with acute self-awareness, several of the interviewees pointed out that they are highly aware of their surroundings when they are out in public, paying specific attention to men. K described this hyper-awareness of her surroundings as she reflected on her experiences of public spaces in Delhi:

> I try to get to know who is standing next me, even that slightest movement, what is that person intending to do. It could be that someone is taking their bag out, or relocate himself so he might be comfortable, or bringing his hand down from the bar to hold with another hand. In the slightest of movements, I feel if that person accidentally touches me, I get

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into an alert mode and try to make sure I am keeping an eye on that

person. If there is a person behind me, I will try to see if he is parallel to

me, or if he is trying to rub his crotch on me. I will try to find a safe

corner. There might be a bunch of losers who are stinking drunk. Other

times, I am much more freer, if there are not too many people on the bus I

travel with a free mind, read a book, look at the scenery.

[Bridget:] Are you as hyperaware of women on the bus? If a woman

moves, will you have the same reaction?

Oh, no. (K)

Although there are times during which she can be less focused on the people around her,

K articulates how much effort it takes to feel comfortable in public. That intuition and

hyper-awareness can help navigate a frightening situation, as K demonstrated:

One thing is for sure, the moment I step out of the house I have to be

extremely aware, very, very cautious […] I was in an auto, at a red light,

there was a car waiting at the red light right next to the auto. And I could

just sense that there was something happening, that they were passing

some comments on me, staring at me, and I thought that they might

follow me. And they did, they followed me almost all the way to my

[home]. (K)

K's constant vigilance enabled her to engage a series of tactics: stopping in the market,

calling her mother to let her know she was being followed, and going to her uncle's

house for his support as well as to hide her actual apartment. Her everyday experiences

of being hunted by men reinforce the useful side of the regulatory regime, from reaching

out to trusted male relatives or staying in crowded spaces where there are other women.

Clothing Style and Perceived Sexual Availability: the "Traditional"

v. "Western" Spectrum

Sometimes you don't have [a dupatta], and people just keep on staring here (indicates chest). (J)

They keep on staring because they think that "she is not wearing a dupatta so obviously she wants me to see it." (F)

Do you remember, —ma'am last year who said, "It is so hot I wish everyone could come to college wearing a bikini." But of course it's Delhi, so we cracked the windows (All laugh). (F)

Discourses on gendered national identity manifest materially in clothing choices and the

everyday lives of Indian citizens, articulated along class, gender, and urban lines. The

tension between Indian and Western clothing styles has a long history in India, at its

most explicit peak during the independence movement (Tarlo 1996), [25] but this tension

lingers as a medium for protectionist discourse and reinforcing female victim blaming.

"Western" in this context refers to any styles associated with Europe and the United

States, but could include any style that is not considered Indian. Globalization[26] is a

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[25] The political implications of clothing for Indian national identity have historical roots in the colonial and postcolonial times. Emma Tarlo (1996) traces the political history of clothing in India's national identity development from pre- to post-1947, pointing out that clothing can also become a marker of cosmopolitan identity where "traditional" clothing is reworked in a cosmopolitan fashion identity in the eye of an imagined globalized world.

[26] Aditya Nigam (2012) examines how globalization manifested in discourses on bringing India into the 21st century, spearheaded by Rajiv Gandhi in the mid 80s, to be competitive with world

temporal and spatial shift through increased contact (or imagined contact) with other national entities and the rapidly increasing circulation of information, expressive cultures, and people around the world. Minna Saavala (2010) points out that the term "Westernization" implies a cohesive, unidirectional influence while the reality is far more complex: "The idea of Westernization was a direct outcome of the realization of the economic hegemony and the Euro-American countries yielded in the world system after the decay and collapse of colonialism" (15). How traditional or Western your clothes are affects how people perceive your culpability or vulnerability for unwanted public sexual attention, which is a major aspect of the regulatory regime and a point of everyday choices that my interlocutors have to make. P explained this idea:

> For example here, in this place, South Delhi, haven't been such a big trouble, but in West Delhi, it was very common. No matter what you are wearing, every time you walk out of your house, someone is going to say something to you. Personally I think it doesn't make a difference, but there's this popular idea that if you're wearing Western clothes or revealing clothes, you are inviting it. (P)

Clothes are markers of social class and are directly connected to access to public and private spaces in Delhi, as well as being related to the level of comfort my interviewees might feel. But to be contemporary, they need to go outside the boundaries of respectability, and therefore open themselves up to victim blaming. While wearing more

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powers; he emphasizes the temporal and spatial changes in the Indian economy as a result of globalization. Rajiv Gandhi's imagined future of global contact and consumerism, according to Nigam, remains the focus for the contemporary Indian middle class.

traditional clothing incorporates women into the home-oriented discourses on gender in India, it may place them outside the aspirational contemporary discourses on India as a "modern" country. Fitting into urban spaces requires these negotiations between respectability and modernity.

Modesty manifests literally on the surface of the body in clothing choices, based on the "appropriate" areas of the body that a woman must cover. The "Indian" style includes the sari and the *salwar kameez* (or "suit"). The "Western" style is anything else, but often includes wearing jeans. It all requires wearing things properly. Based on my observations and discussions with my interlocutors, the *salwar kameez* is modest because it includes a scarf (*duppata)* draped across the chest and a tunic that reaches the middle-top portion of the thigh, as well as fully covered legs (the leggings can be tight and the slits in the long tunic runs up to the sides of the hips so that the person can sit cross-legged). Another sign of modesty in female clothing is to drape a *duppata* (long scarf) over your chest[27]. The *duppata* can be see-through, which suggests that its symbolism matters more than its ability to obscure a woman's breasts. For example, the sari could expose a woman's belly if she does not drape it formally (the degree of exposure does affect your respectability, depending on the style). The way in which you drape the *dupatta* is full of meaning for class, religion, region, conservatism, employment, etc. During one of the group interviews, there was a lengthy discussion of the sari within traditional cultural terms, Bollywood sexualized styles, and restricted

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[27] In *Midnight's Children,* Salman Rushdie describes the *dupatta*, the long scarf accompanying a *salwar kameez* that would be draped across her chest, as a woman's "honor."

physical movement, as well as significant differences between labor class sari and middle or upper class sari.[28] Whenever my interlocutors discussed clothing tactics during the interviews, covering the breasts was a key strategy, whereas covering the face and hair was considered much less relevant to countering street harassment or discouraging male attention. There are also opportunities for integrating styles. Although many Western clothing styles cannot meet key modesty rules, such as uncovered legs with a one-piece dress, some styles can easily be adapted to meet Indian modesty standards. For example, some of my interlocutors matched jeans with a *kurta* or another long top, which meets "modern" status performance needs while remaining modest.

Delhi, as an urban space, becomes a site for asserting contemporary Indian identity in the face of an imagined global audience—clothes that made sense in an ashram or temple (spaces tied to "traditional" India) are out of place in the classroom and street of urban Delhi, particularly on the body of someone associated with India's "forward-thinking" future (Oza 2006).[29] Young women who are a part of these discourses on contemporary Indian womanhood mark their presence in a globalized India with their clothing choices. By wearing clothing that is discursively marked as Western, they participate in a globalized consumption-based economy, purchasing diverse styles that go beyond the standard Indian-style *kurta* (tunic that extends to the

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[28] Linda Lynton (2002) offers some background in the sari, describing its history as well as geographical differences in fabric, style, and pattern as well as how class and caste are manifested in the kind of sari a woman wears.

[29] Rupal Oza (2006) also looks at how discourses of fear and control came up in relation to this new Indian woman and sexuality, controlled by re-association of women with the home in a new consumer context.

mid-thigh or knee, slits up to the hip on both sides) and *pajama* (leggings). One student, T, evoked the conflict between the traditional and the modern in her clothing and adornment choices as she moves between her extended family's village and Delhi:

> There is some contradiction as well. Delhi as a city: what I have in comfort here, I won't fear here what I am wearing. […] In my place, I can't wear these [large, brightly colored earrings]. In my [family's village], I have to be traditional girl, I have to wear my *kurta*, *pajama*. I cannot wear any of these funky jewelries. […] [You would be considered] not civilized: you are eye catching, not of this society. […] Whenever I go to a marriage in my community, I have to go in a suit, a *salwar* suit. […] I don't think as much [in Delhi], there is not the taboo here. No taboo comes to mind. The only restriction here is the safety. […] Only the boys matter, here the ladies who are looking at me, they don't bother me, because I can give a look back to them. But boys, after a sort of violence… if I am a girl and not able to protect myself—I don't know self-defense. I am afraid of that part only, otherwise I would wear anything I want. (T)

Delhi is an urban space: her anonymity in the city compared to her family's village grants her a form of freedom that must be negotiated in relation to potential danger from male attention in public. T had explained how wearing what she wore in Delhi back home in her village, especially if she went in a one-piece (Western dress), her family and she would be "taboo'ed like anything!" It is only in Delhi, where she does not feel that

same sense of taboo on her clothing choices, that she must consider the precarity of public safety. Note how she uses the word "civilized" to describe the modest, appropriate, more traditional clothing style (albeit even the suit is a modernization compared to a generation or two ago, depending on your religion, caste, class, region, etc.[30]). Other interviewees used words like "nice" and "decent" to refer to appropriately modest and traditional clothing. These words indicate the social judgments associated with traditional clothing. T's primary concern in Delhi is the threat from men and boys, so the practical modesty that Indian clothes offer become more important than appearing traditional. The existing literature on Delhi's global status as manifested in its female resident's clothing and consumption choices can explain the tensions between navigating more traditional spaces versus the more Western clothing codes of urban spaces, but fear and the anticipation of violence in urban public spaces can trump social status.

Clothing choices define your sexual availability to the Delhi dominant public. During one of the interviews, two of my interlocutors explained how they represent opposite ends of the traditional "decent" girl and the Western-style "slut." E explained how her clothing choices affect how people treat her:

> If I am wearing a *kurta* and looking actually very traditional and very
> beautiful, they're like admiration stares. When I am wearing [shorts],
> 'why is she wearing such short clothes?' Third one, if I am wearing shorts

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[30] See Amin and Govinden (2012), who examine the role of the sari in negotiating Indian womanhood, working through fragmentary memories of the sari; their writing style itself reflects the unfinished and incompleteness of discourses around proper national female Indian identity as manifested in clothing.

and spaghetti top[31], 'she's so sexy.' If I am wearing something else,

"she's so easy to sleep with," if I am drinking, if I have alcohol in my

hand.... (E)

As a university student, part of performing middle-class status includes wearing a certain

amount of Western clothes; but if you are too revealing, then you face judgment. Oza

(2006) argues that concepts of the traditional and the modern are the means through

which this negotiation of Indian national identity happens, where discourses on women's

connection to the home and heteronormative family structures resolve the tension by

connecting the new modern Indian woman to conventional modes of appropriate female

behavior and interests. This results in a call for sexual modesty while also requiring

status-asserting social performance via Western clothes. R followed E's comments with

a story about asking her friend of she looked sexy in her *kurta-pajama* set:

> (R) 'You look beautiful and you look very cute. I can't see you as being
>
> sexy, I could never portray you as being sexy.' I said, 'why?' 'Because
>
> you are perfect wife material.'
>
> (E) I've been denied that.

These young women are held up against the norms and judged for their adherence,

which has made them feel that their clothing choices circumscribe how people interpret

their personalities, goals, and interests. Part of this speaks to a tension as India faces

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[31] "Inappropriate" Western clothes are sold in the street and markets of Old Delhi that are so threatening and uncomfortable for my interlocutors (See "City, Space, and the Public"). The tensions between modern capitalist interests and modesty judgments could be an interesting point of inquiry.

influence from outsiders, which becomes visible in how the Western-clothing style is defined and connected to female sexuality. The new modern, urban Indian woman must balance between an inherently Indian "traditional" past[32] and an Indian future that must be modern but not too modern (Oza 2006). During this conversation, R explained how she is told not to wear *kurta-pajama* before she is twenty-five years old (she does anyway, because it is comfortable), to enjoy wearing Western clothes before she is married and must wear more traditional clothing. Finding this tension between the wife and whore in clothing choices is not surprising: the regulatory regime is rooted in controlling female sexuality. They continued:

> (E) I have always been [told] there [is] beauty of two types: one satanic, one is divine. Everyone calls me, 'you are satanic.' [R] is divine.
>
> (R) I am the divine.
>
> (E) […] She has a huge pressure on her to be good all the time.
>
> (R) I think the same way. I think I am so good, and I am so good, even before taking 1 step, I think a thousand times, will it affect me, will it affect my parents, will it affect my image of being so good […] It breaks your heart that you cannot do what you want. You are watched by every person.

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[32] Partha Chatterjee (1989) traces the evolution of womanhood as a symbol of the nation in the transition from British colonized India to postcolonial independence. He argues that gender and sexuality were significant sites for asserting Indian independence and moral value, where "Mother India" translated into the ideal Indian woman representing the core of what it means to be Indian.

Clothes make you sexy and cheap or wife material with a high pressure to be "good." A few minutes later in the conversation, E described a male friend that told her she was the "extramarital package, you are not the marital package, you are an extramarital package. You know, if I get married, I won't really be loyal to my wife, so the type of woman I would sleep with then, is your type of woman" (E). Just as R is judged for not being cool or modern enough, E is judged for being too sexually explicit by revealing her legs with shorts and going without a *dupatta*.

Young women have to forgo comfort for modesty in the summer heat. These interviews were taking place during a particularly hot August: the monsoon was delayed, so day after day was hazy and baking after months of heat, without the expected relief of rain. Shorts came up frequently in our discussions of clothing: it turns out that, according to some of my interlocutors, showing your legs is more risqué than showing your back. Men do not typically wear shorts either, especially older men, as they are generally considered improper (children wear them) in semi-public areas. Shorts have a class connotation for men, as well, as they could be associated with middle-class men. For women, shorts have a more "Western" association, as well as a sensual connotation. "Comfortable," for women, takes on two meanings: the respite of shorts as our monsoon-less August wore on or the psychological comfort that more modest clothes might offer when entering public spaces (Chandni Chowk, for example; see "City, Space, and the Public"). K spoke to this, evoking how so often being female in Delhi means being uncomfortable no matter what you do:

I usually do not even wear shorts when I am in Delhi. I think that shorts

would probably be the most comfortable outfit, especially in the

scorching heat of Delhi. Even if I am dying of heat, I would not wear it, I

cannot take that there are people looking at me, they have all sorts of

pictures forming in their heads the moment they look at me, they pass a

few comments. […] Whenever I try out something that is a little bold,

considered in the kinds of situations we go through on a daily basis. Only

when I go out with my friends, when I know someone is picking me up at

my place, and that person will be dropping me and getting out and

walking me to the stairs. Even then I will carry a stole to cover the upper

part of my body. Even for parties, or a night out, I prefer not to wear

shorts. Anything might invite anything to happen on any point. (K)

K did explain elsewhere during her interview that she was aware of how clothes

ultimately do not prevent violence, and she advocates for women's right to freely access

public space (see "Protests Post-Nirbhaya"). But the day-to-day demands of living in

Delhi require her to follow the regulatory regime just to make it through the city safely.

Balancing modernity and tradition is a part of negotiating the street: if your

destination requires a particular look, but your route another, you must find a means of

integrating both. K manages this by controlling her transportation if she wants to fit into

a club or party by wearing a one-piece (a Western-style dress), although she still takes

care in getting from the door to the private car. Some of my interlocutors explained that

you can only enter a club if you are in Western-style clothing, so "fitting in" can mean

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access. Dressing more Western grants you a higher-class status, and thus becomes a means of negotiating access to privatized public spaces. For example, if you are dressed lower class (cheaper fabrics like polyester and/or more worn material) or otherwise appear lower class, you would likely not be allowed into the Select Citywalk Mall, a major space in which I observed women in their 20s and 30s wearing dresses and entirely Western-style outfits.[33] Even if all women able to access the mall are rarely, if ever, harassed inside, I noticed that the most freely dressed women were arriving by private car (which are driven nearly to the door). Rejecting the regulatory clothing regime requires flexibility and socioeconomic privilege, and ultimately still requires practices that control your presence, movement, and behavior in truly public spaces.

Tactics: Anticipating and Avoiding Attention or Performing Confidence and Using Aggression

(J:) It's an evolutionary thing in Indian women now. Because of these incidents of sexual harassment, we can tell who is looking at us from back without turning back.
(F:) It's a sixth sense!

(J:) You have to be really tough, I mean, I'm not tough at all, like that, but even if I'm asking for a ticket I'll be "bhaiya, ticket daan hain" (aggressive tone).
(F:) You have to give off a scary vibe.

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[33] I was granted automatic class access to the Mall. The security point serves as a threshold, as I am out of sight of the main road by the time I turn to enter it. After passing through security, I would switch my scarf from a more modest style (my habitus is complicated and my scarf choices are sometimes tactical) into an entirely Western style, to feel like I belonged in the mall (even when my whiteness automatically includes me there, my internal orientation has not caught up).

Avoidance-based tactics fall into three categories: movement through public spaces and self-regulation at the level of the body (i.e., facial expressions, gestures, overall physicality), resulting in either bizarrely tense or neutral physical expressions and ultimately failing to mitigate harassment. These examples illustrate their general experience of being in public spaces, including preparing for public spaces, as they were self-conscious as soon as they left their homes, though that self-consciousness varied depending on location and context. My interviewees' advice for reducing or intervening in harassment was lengthy[34]. These instructions demonstrate the careful techniques that

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[34] I have compiled a list summarizing many of the tactics they described for navigating public space and handling harassment:
1) Aggression, showing indifference
2) Making eye contact with men shows that you are fierce
3) Covering the breasts was key topic, covering the face and hair was considered much less important
4) Giving a stern or angry look, either as a general expression to have when you are in public spaces or as a directed response to harassment
5) Don't look weak
6) Possibly hitting someone: jabbing with elbows, slaps, beating with objects (story about a friend beating a man with a purse). Using pepper spray
7) Avoiding confrontation. Walking around, crossing to the other side of the street
8) Walking straight, quickly, without stopping
9) Ignoring what is happening around you
10) Taking down the number plate of autos, sharing that number with two friends or your father, making sure the driver knows that you've shared his auto number
11) Do not smile or laugh
12) Do not wink or raise your eyebrows (unless you are using that to criticize someone)
13) Often, taking a cycle rickshaw is safer (and later in the evening, most women in public in north campus will be in rickshaws passing through)
14) If you have downcast eyes, people will think they can harass you without consequences
15) Keep your head up straight and look straight out, not to sides, and ignore everything
16) Choosing routes through nice housing areas because men are less likely to be out on the street passing time in front of buildings, also routes with higher numbers of people, best if women are there
17) You could keep headphones in without music to discourage interactions while remaining aware of your surroundings
18) Never ask a man for directions. Never look like you're lost.

come with navigating Delhi, as well as the constant attention my interviewees paid to their bodies and spaces. The safest and most acceptable tactics (as in, corresponding to the regulatory regime) operate through avoidance and deflection, behaviors more likely to be associated with a "traditional" or "decent" girl. Not confronting or giving attention to harassing men requires less emotional and mental energy than directly and assertively responding. The tactics for avoiding men are elaborate and almost constantly in play when women are in public spaces. They include a level of physical control over your body that is thorough and rigorous.

My interviewees' interpretations of navigating public spaces varied depending on personality and experience, but the general themes were that "giving a chance" (i.e., inviting men to harass you) could include wearing revealing clothing, smiling, coughing, demure behavior, and overtly sensual behavior. Avoiding these kinds of behaviors would reduce or prevent harassment. Here is how a group of my interlocutors described navigating the street:

> You have to walk straight / You have to reach [your destination] fast / You can't walk like you walk in your neighborhood garden, putting earphones in, and you, la la la, you can't walk like this on the street! / If you are walking you can't look side-to-side / yeah/ No sightseeing. […] Have a very stern look [on] your face. You should be walking without giving attention to the guys around, even if they call you, you don't have to listen to them. / You can have boys pumping up their bikes when you

pass/ (*Two imitate a motorcycle revving*) / Even if you look at them, look

[like] 'what are you doing?' just give them a look like / They are a burden

on the earth, get lost. / (*laughter*) / That's how you react. You don't let

what you are feeling come on your face. You may be scared, but don't let

it come on your face. (MC)

Towards the end of this description, she suggests giving the men a judgmental look, but

in that is the extent of confrontation if you are following an avoidance tactic style. The

idea is that giving attention to men could potentially encourage their harassment. The

group continued:

Don't let others know that you don't know the way. / Neveeer / You

should never ask men [for help or directions]. / […] Plus there's also this

code of, don't walk by vacant cars that have just one, that has few men in.

/ I swear that when I walk by a car: literally, I walk walk walk. Car, I run,

then I walk walk again. (*laughter*) You never know when they will open

the car and put you in. / Especially if you there a few men in the car and it

is standing there by the road, it's like bypassing it. You are walking this

way, walk like this (*Gestures going around the car*) (MC)

This level of avoidance literally involved running past men. When men timepass in the

street, women avoid them.

All of the interviews took place in spaces where we felt safe and undisturbed: a

popular café in North Campus, within the protected walls of Miranda College (DU), or

in someone's home where we were undisturbed. This meant that my interlocutors moved

and expressed themselves freely, demonstrating their diverse, vibrant embodied

practices. Some gestured expansively as they spoke; others were quieter but no less

energized. Everyone smiled and laughed. So when they demonstrated their tactical facial

expressions and body language, tightening their muscles, dropping their faces into a

serious look, and pulling themselves physically in to occupy less space in their chairs,

the difference was shocking. Phadke, Khan, and Ranade (2011) note this tension in

female comportment: "The containment of a woman's body is demonstrated by the very

tightness with which she holds herself and moves" (32). My interlocutors would recreate

how their harassers, friends, or they had moved and spoken to communicate their ideas

and observations, but in general that tightness was not present in the conversations until

one of them was demonstrating an avoidance tactic or how they physically felt when

afraid. The idea of embodied memory is a key aspect of understanding my interlocutors'

experiences, as I paid attention to how my interviewees physically reenacted and relived

their experiences and tactics as they narrate them (Pollock 1999). The diversity of their

physicality collapsed into a narrower frame of physical expression that I associate with

the regulatory regime and the internalized, fear-based existence that Delhi's public

culture so frequently evokes in its female residents.

　　　　We discussed if, how, and when to confront harassers. Whether or not they

would feel safe confronting a harasser depended on confront if the harasser is alone,

sometimes only if there are familiar and supportive people around such as your own

friends or if it was happening within the student neighborhood (North Campus). My

interviewees might also avoid confrontation if it is a dark, isolated area. Calling out a

harasser carries the risk of retaliation, including acid attacks. The group of students at Miranda College addressed the risks that might come with challenging an offender:

> There are certain behaviors that you can't do in public. You can't smile at a gang of boys. / (All): Never / Never ever. / And if they make an advance at you and you retaliate, you should also not do that. / Never slap. / Never slap. / [Bridget: but we do this all the time, don't we though?!] / We do it only when the guy's alone. / If you say something that would hurt his ego […] / We might think that embarrassing the guy in front of his guy friends, that the guy takes it at his ego. / […] He's being such a macho / and you hurt his ego/ He might come the next day / and throw acid on your face the next day. / [...] It is also ok if we are in such a place where we can expect some help. […] If it is some isolated place, there is bad light, there are not so many people around, and some guy passes a comment, I may not slap or I may not push him, I may just ignore. / Ignore / The person may tear down your clothes, he may hit you at a wrong place. (MC)

At the same time, my interlocutors suggested that engaging in avoidance tactics could potentially open you up to or increase harassment, since you could be giving the harassers an indication that you are vulnerable and unlikely to make a scene. Being caught between the seeming safety of non-response and the potential risk that not responding can bring captures the ultimate frustration and failure of the system.

Working within existing social systems can mitigate potential retaliatory threats while avoiding negative associations with being indecent, aggressive, or too modern. I asked P about how she might respond if she overheard harassment, and her response involves how to confront harassers directly and indirectly through a series of tactics that involve engaging social and legal institutions in an effort to reframe her interaction with the harasser:

> I confront them. I would do. When it happens to me and my friends, I actually go and ask them what they are doing, why are you doing this? […] "*Kya dekh raha bhaiya?"* It's like that yeah. […] Yeah, I call him *bhaiya*. If it's someone older, I'll say "*uncleji, kya ho rahe hai*?" (P)

Bhaiya means "brother" (non-related), and the addition of *ji* to "uncle" is a respectful mode of address (think "sir"). By using respectful grammar when she asks the harasser what they are doing, she is cuing a wider social system of respect. She continued:

> Yes, it depends on where I am, because if, for example, I am in a bus, I would say that, because that would make him conscious, because other people are there so maybe he will stop doing it. But if I am really alone, I would avoid. […] I don't look, pretend that I haven't heard anything and I don't see them. Most of the times, I feel the need to do something. Once I in fact made a phone call to the police in front of them. (P)

By engaging in existing systems, such as the social respect that is supposed to come by engaging in the *bhaiya* and uncle language or calling the police in an effort to demonstrate potential consequences, P seems to be working to interrupt the harassment

dynamic by shifting the encounter into a more positive social encounter or into a legal frame. At this moment, she cited her mother's concern about the danger and advice to avoid the harassers, and explains that she does also avoid the men if she is entirely alone. Part of her tactic involves tapping into witnesses, specifically inducing embarrassment in the harasser by demonstrating his breaking social rules. By otherwise following the recommended avoidance tactics while framing confrontation through others' power (the police, or, as K has done, referencing male relatives) or tapping into an existing social system, she can more safely engage the harasser.

While many of the university students' individual tactics were restrictive, pulling into the body or putting energy into deflecting attention, some of the tactics called for expanding out into public space: physically claiming your personal space, giving dirty looks or otherwise asserting yourself. A significant tactic mentioned was based on aggression, showing indifference, making eye contact with men shows that you are fierce. These expansive tactics seemed to feel more inspiring compared to the restrictive tactics, which sounded like they carried some sense of shame. I suspect that tactics that seem to be more masculine, aggressive behaviors feel more honorable than tactics like avoidance and self-containment that would be associated with feminine vulnerability. Engaging in assertive tactics can be a defensive mechanism, an effort to deflect negative attention and prevent further trouble from men, or they could be efforts that spring from a frustration with the everyday experiences of unwanted, sexual attention and living with pervasive fear. My interlocutors' self-judgment operated along a binary-based spectrum

of the masculine-assertive and feminine-submissive, as they negotiated their relationship
to the regulatory regime and evaluated Delhi's social culture.

Tactics are framed by gender and sexuality. For example, one student, F,[35]
described her preparations before and tactics to navigate taking the bus home from class,
which revolve around aggression and desexualization:

> I even take off my earrings, can you believe that? I take them off. Even I
> will wipe off the kajal, I will tie my hair in a bun, if I have a stole I will
> carry that, I will carry by bag in the front like this. [...] / So that you can
> also use your elbows. (J) / […] When I get out of the metro, I am like
> this (*sticks out elbows to her sides, demonstrates jabbing people left and
> right with sound effects*). […] I don't even care if people are falling,
> because the men will even feel "oh my god, she touched me! She touched
> me!" / It's like an armor! (J). / It is like armor. / You can enter into a
> crowd wearing [the bag] oooo like this (J). / And you have to keep on
> shifting it also. If I am in the bus, if I'm walking towards a crowd, I'll
> walk like this (*holds bag in front of chest*). If I am standing, I'll put it in
> the back, because people are pressing into your body from the back. You
> have to keep it in the back. And I have to keep my hands like this (*arms
> covering chest*). You have to hold the rails. I even walk like this. / It's
> like a mission to enter into the bus and to get out with everything intact

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[35] I have included a few interjections from J, as the two often spoke in tandem.

(J). / Even if the music is not playing, the headphones are always plugged

on. […] I actually have to punch people some times. (F)

When I asked her to interpret her photograph, another girl called her a future army

officer. Part of preparing herself to engage in "battle" on the bus involves removing

anything that might identify her as a feminine person interested in the male gaze:

stripping away jewelry and makeup. She talks about actively making space for herself to

occupy without being touched by men through sticking her elbows out. Her tactics in

this example involve demonstrating sonic ignorance and inaccessibility through wearing

headphones, but she doesn't listen to music so that she remains aware of her

surroundings. She even points out that she becomes assertive to the point of punching

people. All of this combines into a method of negotiating the cramped, male-dominated

bus environment through engaging in "masculine" behaviors. These tactics are

particularly masculine (by conventional definitions), as they involve stripping away

anything specifically feminine and engaging in outright aggressive behaviors as an

intentional practice.

PROTESTS POST-NIRBHAYA: OCCUPYING SPACE AND DANCING

THE FUTURE

In Delhi, gendered access to public spaces and expressions of collective emotion collide in public demonstrations protesting sexual violence. As one of my activist interviewees argued, "if [an event is] outside you are actually appropriating that space, you are actually taking over—we exist, and it means we have equal right to that space and to the city" (G). While the women's safety debate struggles between restricting female behavior and campaigning for unfettered access to Delhi, the symbolic action of female protesters sweeping in and occupying public spaces serves as a primary theme in public activist events. The Jagori activists (and one of my other interviewees) described three major demonstrations held in Delhi since December 2012: Take Back the Night, Slutwalk, and One Billion Rising. In this chapter, I will explore how these practices frame, disrupt, and occupy Delhi's public spaces and public culture, applying D. Soyini Madison (2010) and Ramón Rivera-Servera's (2012) interpretations of collective public action in terms of tactics, embodiment, collective affect, and hopeful orientations toward the future.

During a protest, social dynamics on the street can be momentarily shifted, potentially producing an affective climate of connection and public unity (whether on the scale of a small but dedicated group to the city as a whole). The gender ratio on the street in Delhi can also radically change during a public demonstration, compared to male presence being visibly, and significantly, higher on a normal day. Depending on the atmosphere and context, female participants and observers can relax the everyday

tension and self-consciousness as they feel merged into a collective presence. Some activists expressed feeling that if they were to be sexually harassed while taking part in a public event, they would feel confident knowing that the people around them would support their reactions—a marked change from the everyday expectation of public indifference or blame. During these protests, the potential for an invested, supportive community replaces the everyday expectation of an indifferent or antagonistic crowd, however temporarily. Tactical, symbolic demonstrations and affect mobilize emergent performances of communal public trust and a more balanced female presence in the street, replacing the fear and isolation restricting female access to public spaces.

Madison (2010) explicitly defines the tactical, emergent performance processes at work in public protests, while Ramón Rivera-Servera (2012) offers a detailed look at activist performances of collective communal identity and future-oriented hope. By integrating and applying these ideas to my interviewees' descriptions of the three Delhi protest events, I hope to expose and understand the affective process, however temporary, at work in Delhi's public culture during these moments. How might these protests disrupt Delhi's general culture of fear, anger, and restricted female access to public spaces?

The Jagori activists implicitly and explicitly marked a difference between pre- and post-December 16, 2012, the date a young woman ("Nirbhaya") was gang raped on a moving bus in South Delhi, sparking nationwide and international attention on violence against women in Delhi. I have focused on two Jagori activists and one non-Jagori Delhi resident who mentioned or participated in these three events. My

interviewees mentioned many public events as examples, but the three I have chosen were especially significant to the person, mentioned by several, or paradigmatic of the others named.

I understand the demonstrations and protests that my interviewees referenced and described as tactical, public, embodied, collective performances. Madison borrows "tactics" from Michel de Certeau's 1984 *The Practices of Everyday Life*. Strategies are enacted by those in power to maintain their power, while tactics are practices of the subjugated undertaken to destabilize the powerful (Madison 2010, 2). De Certeau argues that those who must use tactics "make do" with what is available to them, which is an idea that Madison directly takes up to understand how activist practices operate from a subjugated position (2010, 2). Madison writes about emergence as the surging up of a collective response to dominant power: "These tactical performances often come into being through a communal yearning, an inventive spontaneity, and through improvisational meanings that evolve and emerge" (2010, 2). The potential resistance of activist interventions operating in public initiates from the potential for anyone in the community to witness it: the very public (in every sense) that produces the threat also enables a collective reckoning with the issues.

The Shift in Delhi's Protest Culture

The protests and general outrage during and following December 2012 shifted the conversation about sexual violence dramatically and, it seems, permanently. The very audience that would have been, or had been, largely indifferent, or at least inert, about

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responding to rape beyond everyday conversation before December 16, 2012, rose in protest in unprecedented numbers, expressing collective outrage and shifting what was previously marginalized discourse into a newly dominant Delhi public. By applying Michael Warner's (2005) public and counterpublic to the processes by which attention shifted from indifference to panicked action may expose where the general public stands in relation to gender and privilege in public space.

The protestors defined themselves in opposition to the institutions they perceived as failures. This demonstrates a rejection of the dominant discourse of Delhi's indifference as well as responsibility for participating in the production of a social climate contributing to the attack. Residents quoted by the media also blamed an "Other" population, whether migrants, castes, religious groups, etc., within their ranks that attacks women, as well as accused Delhi's institutions of failure. Men still comprised the physical majority at the protests immediately following December 16th, 2012, perpetuating the everyday dominance of men on the street that affects women's ability to enter public spaces without fear. These protests generated an alternative space within Delhi's dominant patterns of public life, disrupting general indifference to sexual violence, while simultaneously placing blame outside the general population's participation in public social practices that contribute to the very climate of violence they reject. In the end, these protests strove toward transforming a Delhi counterpublic into the public, succeeding in increasing attention to violence against women, while perpetuating the circumstances limiting female access to public space.

These three initiatives are, not coincidentally, part of larger international feminist initiatives, albeit reimagined and adapted depending on the location in which they are acted out. Since their origin in 2011, Slutwalks are loosely organized through social media but not associated with a central organization, and focuses on ending victim blaming. Take Back the Night is similar to Slutwalk, as it is a protest theme that has circulated internationally, but it has been in existence for thirty years[36]. Albeit initially focused on the right to access public spaces at any time without fear, it can have broader themes related to sexual violence. Dedicated to ending violence against women in general, One Billion Rising (OBR) is both an annual event and the name of the organization that organizes it, but Delhi's OBR events have local inflections that belong to the activists and citizens on the ground. Jagori is a longstanding activist organization in Delhi with many past, current, and future projects. If they take up or add to existing international or American projects, along with other local and national organizations, these projects retain a localized immediacy through actions, locations, and involved organizations that connect the protests directly to Delhi's issues.

All three protests rely on the "body out of place" (Madison 2010), engaging in tactical actions that do not match regular public comportment, and thus stands out (in Madison's example: expressing public dissent by sitting down in the street and refusing to move). Other symbolic actions have been used all over the world to mark bodies out of place and to emphasize the Otherness of that protest-bound behavior and time. "The

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[36] There is also an organization by the same name focused on organizing such protests, but not all events are directly connected to it.

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protesting body becomes an intrusion that trespasses upon a space where it does not

belong, yet, in the moment of protest, claims, takes over, and occupies that very space."

(Madison 2010, 185). When female-bodied Delhi residents enter public spaces,

especially with active efforts to draw attention to their right to be there (including

dancing, performing street theatre, or chanting) they are bodies out of place compared to

conventional Delhi public street culture. Instead of passing through as quickly and

unobtrusively as possible while displaying a purpose for their presence, they linger, sit,

march, and dance in a critical mass that dramatically shifts the public gender ratio: their

very presence is a protest tactic.

Emergence and Affect: Take Back the Night, Dec 31, 2012

Delhi's post-Nirbhaya protests were emergent, collective performances of outrage and

demands for change. One activist that I interviewed at Jagori was established and

experienced, probably in her 40s. She had explained the limits on a protest's location

(contained to a single street called Jantar Mantar unless you have a permit for elsewhere)

and content (adhering to political acceptability for approval of that permit). But she

captured the post-Nirbhaya protest atmosphere when she spoke about Take Back the

Night:

>People just gathered in this place, you know Saket, where the girl was
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>picked up in the bus? [...] So they walked from there to uh, somewhere
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>else. And no permissions were taken. And whoever—and this was New
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>Year's Eve, so whoever was out on the street, parties, others, also joined it,

so it became bigger and bigger and bigger. And, um, I think—We all had

candles and things and we were singing songs, and *big* banners. I think the

police came on their own to protect the group. Usually if you protest

outside Jantar Mantar you either give permission or you get it stamped, so

the police are aware that you are doing something, and they come and

cordon the area of it. (N)

Despite it not being a legally protected protest, the police protected it instead of breaking

it up or confronting the protesters—a noticeable shift in police response that indicates

either a broader cultural change in the city or a temporary change meant to appease the

crowds. Robert Mackey covered the event: "As my colleague Struthi Gottipati reports,

thousands of protesters marched on Monday in New Delhi, pledging to 'take back the

night,' as India remained in mourning for the 23-year-old victim of a gang rape who died

on Saturday" (*The Lede: the New York Times Blog,* December 31, 2012). His article is

interspersed with video clips of massive numbers of people taking to the streets with

candles and banners to protest sexual violence in Delhi. According to Mackey, many

New Year's Eve celebrations were replaced with demonstrations that year, which

indicates the pervasive and intense emotional force driving Delhi's response during that

time.

Emergent performances could be spontaneous or planned in advance, but are

marked by a collective affective experience spurring action forward (Madison 2010).

Take Back the Night on December 31, 2012 emerged as a widespread, surging response

to a specific offense (Nirbhaya) and the associated frustrations with Delhi's political and

social culture's responses to sexual violence. A collective affect is shared and felt physically and emotionally, driving the emergent performance and producing expressive actions: "In these instances, feelings and emotions inspired by a shared cause—body to body and soul to soul—become palpable, viscerally pressing forth toward collective, symbolic, and enlivened (e)motions" (Madison 2010, 5). New Year's Eve is a symbolic night to reflect on the past year and set intentions for the new one. The number of revelers joining in the march that night demonstrates the power of the emotional response to Nirbhaya and reveals "the crucial role of affect as a precondition for mobilization" (Rivera-Servera 2012, 95). An affective atmosphere shared by a community or the history producing their emotions drives people into action (Rivera-Servera 2012); in Delhi on 12/31/12, public manifestations of those feelings and beliefs manifested as a rejection of holiday celebrations for a serious march and candlelight vigil—bodies out of place.

During that Take Back the Night march, what normally threatens women in everyday contexts (darkness, drinking, carousing in the streets) meant that people were out in public and available to join in the protest. The power and rarity of feeling secure and passionate entering public spaces on a night like this in Delhi cannot be overestimated. While Rivera-Servera marks hope as the affective driving force in his examples, so many Nirbhaya protests immediately following the attack were driven by negative emotions: outrage, shock, disgust. Yet, they were markedly different than any gender-related protests thus far, in scope as well as by how many people joined that previously would never have considered it. N, a Jagori activist, had attended an event the

day before the December-12 assault. It was a street theatre event near Saket on December 15th, 2012, she explained, with short scenes on sexual harassment against minorities, including trans men and gender-nonconforming women. She described how a crowd of men gathered, heckling them and shouting sexist and vulgar remarks, including a plainclothes policeman who did not help matters—yet someone saw the same men at the Nirbhaya protests the following day. The activist suggested that after December (16th) 2012, "there were so many protests about sexual violence that it entered the discourse" (N). Many of these protests or public comments operated in conservative terms of female restriction and reified Delhi's aggressive tone; but discussions about sexual violence in Delhi increased in urgency and frequency, from what seems like indifference and hopelessness to outrage and determination across a broader percentage of the city's population.

Remembering and What Comes After: Slutwalk, Spring 2014

One of my interviewees, K, a woman in her late 20s who was not involved in Jagori, described how participating in the Slutwalk march dramatically affected her everyday practices. She explained that it gave her courage to stand up for herself on the street and in her home, shifting from avoidance to action. It took courage to get to the protest in the first place.

> There was this huge movement that happened all across the world, if I am
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> right. […] The Slutwalk […] So I was a part of that protest when it
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> happened in Delhi. I actually had to go against my family to take part in

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that protest. I was strictly asked to come back home and not be a part of

it. I still went over there to take part of that whole procession. (K)

To her, Slutwalk is not just about freedom, although we all need it, it was about

changing everyone's thought processes. I asked her if she felt the same intense

awareness of the men around her during the Slutwalk protest:

Yes. Yes. There were a lot of people who just had come there, for the,

obviously because they—because it was such a *big* movement, and it was

promoted a lot by Facebook. So actually, I'm sure a lot people might just

have come to have fun. People might have come just to check out the

women there, quite a possibility. (K)

Where the activists felt relieved from the critical or sexual male gaze during protests, K

still felt its presence, but the power of participating ultimately superseded it. I asked her

if actually *walking* in the protest mattered, she was emphatic in asserting that taking part

was essential to truly realizing that the fight was for equality, not just safety. Just as

Madison (2010) and Rivera-Servera (2012) explore the embodied practice of sharing in

that collective affective moment and knowing what it feels to have full access to a space,

she pointed out that "sitting home and reading about it would not have changed

anything. You really have to get out there and speak up for yourself" (K).

Protests, or any activist gathering in public, operate in literal and symbolic terms,

claiming space and imagining or living in an ideal world. Both Madison (2010) and

Rivera-Servera (2012) explore the potential that may come from a politics of and events

driven by hope. Describing a march in Ghana, Madison explains that "the promise of a

performance of possibility" has several qualities, one being that "it enacts and imagines the vast possibilities of collective hopes and dreams coming into fruition, of actually being lived" (2010, 166). Delhi's protests manifest this idea, because for anyone to take to the streets, calling for change or dancing their right to presence, they are enacting the right to enter public space even as they call for as an everyday quality of life in the city.

One question I asked the activists was whether they experienced public spaces differently during a protest or event, compared to their typical commute or other casual experiences of public space. The majority strongly felt that their experiences improved during a protest as long as the threat of male negative response was not felt; some suggested that being part of the organization or the collective made it less about attention on themselves as individuals, while any attention goes to the group or the cause. The protest itself enacts the ideal version of reality (with Slutwalk, that would be free access to public spaces and the end of victim-blaming), but demanding that ideal on your own in the everyday carries risks: "Occupying public space together in the practice of performance constitutes an effort that requires both an investment in the possible, what might become of the exchange promised by the event, and a realization that pursuing that possibility entails as many pleasures as it invokes risks" (Rivera-Servera 2012, 5-6). Although protest participants must return to negotiating fraught public spaces alone after everyone disperses, experiencing that collective power also has the potential to have lasting positive effects.

I understand K's experience in terms of taking part in a revitalizing shift in public culture, even temporarily, with others who share a common experience and drive;

like Madison, her memory is enough to drive contemporary choices. Describing her experience of participating in a march, Madison marks the public and collective dimensions of its impact: "We remember how this communion felt for us and for each other, together. It was made even more powerfully human because it was publicly performed" (2010, 166). K's experience serves as "embodied epistemology," developing knowledge through lived experience, physicality, and embodied action. The idea that the body learns through doing, and that to take over a public space, even if temporarily, is to rehearse[37] and feel the right to be a part of that space is key to understanding the significance of protests in Delhi (Madison 2010, 7). K needed to have an embodied, public experience to reach the level of impact that Slutwalk produced in her, even if the everyday challenges of moving through Delhi remain arduous and stressful.

Without the security of the collective female-bodied presence unified under the drive for safe access to public spaces, K might not have been able to enter those spaces in the same way, even if it wasn't a consistent comfort, or to be able to feel or sense the collective, emerging affective atmosphere that inspired such a strong realization of what ought to be, and her right to have it. Just as Madison works with de Certeau's (1984) theory on strategies and tactics, Rivera-Servera cites his concept of socially produced space to understand how the occupation of public space or the rehearsal of the best future can be understood as performance (2012, 30). "But the occupation of space in and

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[37] See Boal (1985) for theatre or street performance as a rehearsal for active change, especially p. 141.

through Latina/o queer performance also introduced another way of being in the city and allowed other queer Latinas/os to rehearse these new routes within the relative safety of the group protest," in effect practicing "how to move assertively through what might be otherwise perceived as unwelcoming public space" (Rivera-Servera 2012, 132). Queer Latinas/os were practicing what it felt to be fully present in public space. This is a rehearsal of potential routes of movement and what it feels like to have a public presence generally, which, as Rivera-Servera notes, depends upon a collective supportive presence. Placing protests in terms of rehearsing potential actions and routes, beyond the mental imagination into physical exploration, manifests the urgency of shifting Delhi's public culture and allows people experiences, however temporary, of what the city could be like for them.

Hope and Futurity: One Billion Rising, February 14, 2014

> *But I think post-December 16th, we did a lot of dance flash mobs in public to kind of take up space. A lot of people thought this One Billion campaigning was kind of frivolous, but for us it was not. It was healing, empowering, it was also taking up public space, being free with your body, being able to dance in public spaces.* (N)

> *There were huge numbers of men and women. I think they said there were about three or four thousand people who came, because it happened to be Valentine's Day, so all of the young couples were coming into that area, you know, so. It was an awesome, awesome event. It was really awesome. […] The event was cultural, so there were songs and dances and things, and that, you know, it was very nonthreatening, non-critical.* (G)

One Billion Rising (OBR) is an international initiative focused on ending violence against women, organizing events every February 14 around the world. Delhi's primary

event[38] in 2014 mobilized the positive, optimistic, and hopeful to manifest the ideal city and negotiate the political climate. Two Jagori activists attended the city's main event, held in central Delhi: the park at the center of Connaught Place (a shopping and business complex) beneath an enormous Indian flag, arguably the center of the city, where dance emerged as a physical and hopeful expression of the right to be in (and a hopeful future of being in) public spaces.

While most of Delhi's protests since December 2012 have been defined through and driven by mourning, despair, fear, anger, outrage, and frustration, the OBR campaign echoes Rivera-Servera's (2012) example of "a community in pleasure" as an organizing point of an activist demonstration (3). By highlighting positive cultural qualities without losing the anti-violence message, Delhi's OBR approaches protest as a performance of the ideal, or at least in terms of the positive. Just like the Take Back the Night and Slutwalk, OBR tactics involve occupying public spaces and having female-bodied people's presence dramatically balancing the normally stilted gender ratio, but this one had a strongly hopeful and optimistic tone unusual to post-December 2012 protests.

Why did they choose such optimistic tactics, especially dance? While the activists pointed towards passing through the political restrictions by employing artistic performance practices (theatre, dance, music, etc.), an OBR website post by the Delhi

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[38] This was not the only event that day, according to the One Billion Rising website: "New Delhi has planned an auto-rickshaw and female taxi driver rally, flash mobs outside city malls and parks, protest marches in front of the secretariat, street plays in various areas, and a mega cultural event in the centre of the city in the evening, with famous musicians and theatre activists" ("Rising").

Rising Collective has a perspective on including it: "We believe that Dance and Music are powerful modes of self-expression, mass mobilizers of creating the necessary thresholds of participation and engagement to highlight the muted aspects of sexual discrimination and violence" ("Why Dance" 2014). While I typically consider dance a physical expression of overwhelming positive emotions, dance here, both to my Jagori activist interviewees and the Collective, operates as a tactical organizing point and activity attractive to outsiders to the movement. Dance serves as a means to shift away from "violent and aggressive norms" in Delhi towards an ideal city culture where women have unrestricted access to public space and complete control over their bodies.

The OBR dance campaign in Delhi employed cultural events to frame the anti-violence protest within existing nationalist or city-positive terms, which was a key political move considering Delhi's politicians and police anxiety about Delhi's reputation for sexual violence. These issues linger despite how much the climate has changed regarding violence against women, partly because Delhi's reputation is at stake on a national and global scale. Rivera-Servera describes a San Antonio queer arts organization's struggle to regain public funding after conservative politicians cut the budget. One method was to tap into traditional Mexican spirituality images and rituals with a queer purpose in a public context, reframing the organization's purpose within existing values of historical arts without losing its queer identity. The OBR campaign reflects this strategy, aligning the radical with the traditional to bring free female mobility into normative public social culture.

The OBR dance protest was an intentional application of hope in a city that cannot forget its violence. Rather, the dancing is a way to demand and claim the right to fully and freely be present in public spaces. Sakshi Bhalla, a development worker at Delhi Rising, explained how dancing in OBR is an occupational tactic using (hopefully) fear-free embodied expression: "We dance to express freedom of our body mind and soul…we dance to reclaim public spaces…to reclaim our bodies and our rights…we dance to celebrate love equality and justice…we dance to challenge violent and aggressive norms that exist in our society…we dance in unity to reiterate our power and strength!" ("Why Dance" 2014). Rivera-Servera uses language like "fierce hope" to describe the Esperanza activists or "hopeful anger" for the Victoria character in a street performance. Citing José Muñoz, Rivera-Servera explains that Muñoz "proposes an understanding of hope—an affect oriented toward the future—that maintains critical connection to hopelessness—an affect that critiques past and present inequities" (116). These terms seem hinged upon rallying for political or social change instead of giving up (Rivera-Servera 2012, 128). This language might accurately describe the OBR campaign, as it is not a hopeful outlook that dismisses the present, but instead calls for change in a fearful city climate by applying hope as an affective tactic. We can understand the OBR protest in terms of its call for future-oriented change through living that reality, however temporarily, in the center of and across the city on that day.

Take Back the Night, Slutwalk, and One Billion Rising produce a sense of hope, presence, and community in the face of fear, chaos, violence, and aggression. Delhi, a city rigorously divided along cultural, religious, ethnic, regional, language, caste, class,

racial, and gendered differences, seemed to surge up in collective disgust in December

2012. The protests continue, tapping into the new atmosphere supporting protests against

sexual violence and incorporating more subtle performance practices like dance to

intervene in the destructive, restrictive aspects of Delhi's culture.

Looking Forward: Hope and the Ideal City

> *I have broken my chains here, I feel free here. That's why I feel Delhi*
> *might be unsafe, might be there, but there are some uprisings here that*
> *make you feel that, yes, here you can make an initiative. Here there are*
> *people who are shouting with you, the people who will actually hear you,*
> *who have to hear you. No one is going to stop you.* (T)

> *We are shouting on people, but this city is letting us shout also.* (E)

Protests and public discussions about sexual violence and female access to public spaces

in Delhi have a direct effect on residents' perceptions of free expression, safety, and

social culture in the city. The students quoted above noticed the protests happening

across the city after December-12 and expressed a sense of feeling heard and supported.

Most of my interviewees love Delhi for various reasons, arguing positively for its charm

and diversity. Many believed that Delhi seems unsafe or has a higher rate of rapes

because such offenses are more likely to be reported here than anywhere else. The

activists especially noted the possible increase in safety post-Nirbhaya due to more

policing, public support, and the likelihood of change. Is Delhi's high rate of reported

rapes a sign of confidence in the system or that the city is significantly more dangerous

than other places in India? Can it be both, and what might that mean?

Sometimes working with Delhi's reputation and culture offers contradictions, where the restrictive forces generating the climate of fear mix with the improvements already in place and potential for what could come. One student in particular, R, spoke at length about the relationship between her experiences of Delhi and her desires for its future:

> Even in Delhi, if I haven't explored that much, I feel Delhi is mine. […] It is kind of a contradicting thing to say now, that I feel so free in Delhi. […] Even if you are different, you will find such people. I think that Delhi is definitely hypocritical in nature, but I see a hope and life at the other end, which other cities don't have to offer or provide. Delhi offers you that hope, even if it is faking it at some level. […] At least I think there is hope, even if it is a fake hope, because that keeps me alive. […] I feel safe here, because my sense of identity is a bit protected here. Delhi is controversial to talk about, because even when it is accommodating it is not really accommodating. But there is a hope. Like she said, transgenders are accepted.[39] Like she said, there is a hell lot of difference between day and night. Even if I had to face the night, I am at least accepted during the day. Even if I am criticized during night, there is always a day for me. (R)

As R explores the contradictions at the heart of her experiences in and attachment to Delhi, she expresses a struggle that other interviewees repeated: making sense of the

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[39] The Indian Supreme Court has recently recognized transgendered and third-gendered people (Dhananjay Mahapatra, *The Times of India*, April 15, 2014).

relative freedom that Delhi offers mixed with the everyday challenges of navigating the streets and public spaces. The capacity for public demonstrations and dissent, however limited, carries the potential for change and the promise of being heard and understood. R is aware that that hope could be "fake" and recognizes that even when Delhi feels like an accommodating space, its promises can be contradictory. Her commitment to hope and change helps her survive the challenges and fears that come with everyday life in the city, but also echo the hope and future-oriented approach driving protests like One Billion Rising.

Toward the end of every interview session with non-activists, I asked about what my interviewees would do and where they would go if there were no restrictions on their movement in Delhi, at any time of day or night. They almost always stumbled over the question (perhaps it was my wording) or initially limited themselves based on the everyday practices they use to feel comfortable navigating the city. But once I made my question clear, I witnessed them open up: the tension easing from their bodies as they began to explore the possibilities of imagining unlimited movement in their city. K wished to watch the sun rise over the ruins in Hauz Khas. One of the university students wanted to be on the lawns of India Gate; another wanted to see the city's lights at night as she wandered wherever she liked. These ideas reveal the temporal and spatial restrictions on their movement, but also move beyond protection-based, prevention-based ways of thinking about life in the city.

The students' visions for Delhi's future flip and expand beyond the social, spatial, temporal, and embodied limitations they had described earlier in the interviews

(see "City, Space, and the Public" and "Fearful Female Bodies"), pushing far beyond what we could imagine might change in Delhi tomorrow or next year. For example, the majority of the university students I spoke with attended Miranda College. They compared the relaxed and free (with qualifications and restrictions, of course) atmosphere within their women's college's solid, stone walls to life outside. To clarify my "ideal city" question, I asked them what they would think if their college's culture extended beyond those walls into the city as a whole. Everyone laughed, cheered, and shouted "yes!" After a few moments of glee, the surge of delight faded into a sense of wistful longing as reality seeped back in. No one believed that this could happen easily or quickly (possibly never), but that hopeful grasp on the ideal offered beautiful visions for what Delhi *could* be and set goals for the women's safety movement that extend beyond basic (and restrictive) protection. When activists fill up the streets, dancing, chanting, or marching, they are calling for the right to move freely, without fear and self-policing, at any time of night, in any part of the city. Emotions like outrage and desires like wanting full access to public spaces drive protests that then open up more space for expressing and manifesting an invested public and a hopeful future in a fearful city.

EPILOGUE: SOME CONCLUSIONS

The women-only Miranda College is a walled-in oasis, the ultimate safe zone. Crossing that threshold into the small campus of residential buildings and classrooms was a blissful release from that pervasive tension I felt being in public. A couple of students during that day's group interview laughed about being startled when they see a man on their campus, but it really is easy to grow accustomed over an afternoon to being surrounded by predominantly women—lounging on the lawns in shorts, clustered at picnic tables chatting, or bustling by to class. Sitting with the interview group in that public-like private space, I felt the absence of that self-consciousness and careful awareness I might feel elsewhere in the city. But even the explicitly feminist Miranda College is not perfect: one student (A) shared a story of being taken aside by a matron and advised to dress more modestly. But still, when my interlocutors joyously contemplated Delhi as a whole being like Miranda College, I think they meant that relaxed embodiment and being able to linger in public, with the ability to just *be* without anticipating negative interactions with men or the potential for violence.

The December 2012 gang rape of Nirbhaya has been permanently fixed in the conversation on gender and violence in Delhi, India. Fear and the anticipation of violence manifest in the everyday lives of Delhi's female residents; in how, when, where, and why they move around the city and move in their bodies. My focus ultimately became how tactics are meaningful within the regulatory regimes of morality, and respectability, and how they interact with Delhi's spatial and temporal dynamics. I approach this issue spatially, in the negotiation of Delhi's regions, borders, and streets,

as well as through the embodied experience of Delhi that frequently made my young female interlocutors self-conscious and hyper-aware. The collectively produced spatial dynamics of safe, cautionary, and forbidden zones for female Delhi residents call for particular modes of embodiment and clothing. This is Delhi as my interlocutors and I experienced it. This project is about getting into the everyday life of Delhi, paying attention to the unmarked borders within the city made by young female residents negotiating men in public, the fear-driven socially-created regulatory regime suffused in the everyday (in gestures, facial expressions, clothing styles, movements, as well as what, when, how, and where to move around the city), and the protests that disrupt it all, swelling up through collectively felt affect (e.g., outrage, disgust, frustration) to call for change and dance out hope for a city free from fear.

This project is rooted in those already working and writing to reject protectionism, or the call for restricting female mobility and comportment as a solution for sexual violence in public spaces. Protectionist discourses circulate in the media and in everyday interpersonal encounters post-Dec 12, which reinforces a regulatory regime for young female residents. Both my interlocutors and I lived with contradiction in this project. For them, they struggled to articulate their own tactics and to understand why Delhi in particular seems so anti-woman. For me, I had to tackle how to write such a sensorially rich, intellectually stimulating, and fully embodied experience. Although the regulatory regime practices may seem similar to American female tactics for negotiating negative male attention in public spaces, Indian cultural and social meanings resonate throughout the regime.

Why Delhi? Taking up this topic is not to suggest that violence only happens in the far away "Other" locations. Delhi is a particularly significant case, since it seems to be defined by fear as a whole, both in its reputation and everyday public culture. By recognizing its specificity, down to the street by street shifts in its neighborhoods, and the social context that makes it all meaningful, I hope to have intervened a bit in both narratives about the city that seem to give up, abandoning its residents to uncontrollable fear and unstoppable public violence. Delhi has a reputation within India, as well, where it is compared to Mumbai, Kolkata, and other major urban centers, and dubbed more violent and less welcoming for women. Studying Delhi's particular iterations of social spatial dynamics, street culture, and embodied female experiences of the public fits within a wider conversation on how and why Delhi stands out among other urban spaces in India. Although I needed to focus specifically on Delhi to fit the scope of a Master's thesis, these questions are key for unpacking how urban Indian cultures unfold in contemporary practices. Challenging Delhi's reputation, or at least pushing beyond a basic dismissal of Delhi without asking more in-depth questions about underlying causes driving its inhospitable public spaces, will be a part of the larger women's safety movement and urban studies. The intersection of general violence, gender-specific violence, and anti-woman public street culture varies across neighborhoods in the city, just as much as it varies by region in the country. Just as Phadke, Khan, and Ranade (2011) are not satisfied with Mumbai's superior reputation for women's safety compared to the rest of India. They interrogate protectionism and the operation of gender in Mumbai anyway, calling for women's full access to public spaces. Delhi's apparent

position as having the lowest quality of life for middle-class women (who want to access public spaces) needs to be studied from a similarly wide critical perspective.

Part of this project was taking advantage of my outsider position to get the details of the how and what of the regime into the open. In narrowing down my focus for the written document, I followed the patterns in the interviews, aiming to honor the theoretical work my interlocutors were doing to explore and contextualize their experiences. This is, in a sense, an elaboration on the theoretical and practical deliberation they were working out during the interviews. The resulting written work is focused less on their specific embodied actions and more on the thematic patterns that emerged from discussing tactics. My interlocutors did not need an outsider's opinion. They were already informed on feminist and social issues, aware of their city's problems, and conscious of how the regulatory regime frequently carries empty protection promises. But my outsider position means that my interlocutors had to explain and describe points and practices that we did not have in common, which exposes the operation of the regulatory, protectionist regime and brings attention to seemingly unconscious everyday practices.

The interviews themselves seemed to already be an intervention in the troubling discourses about Delhi as a city and women's everyday lived experiences, since they became spaces for grappling with and debating the underlying causes as well as the means through which public gendered violence plays out in the everyday. This does not lead to fixed, simple answers, and not only because not everyone agreed on how and why things are happening in Delhi. Even in one-on-one interviews, the answers were

clearly not direct or complete. In the end, it feels most like moving toward some sense of how things work, rather than making some ultimate claims about reality. Holding spaces like these, particularly for my non-activist interlocutors, seemed like a powerful opportunity to convene a space to discuss these issues at length, where the interviewees in groups (being friends, classmates, and/or colleagues) could potentially continue these conversations beyond the boundaries of the interview session. During her (solo) interview, K mentioned that she had never spoken for so long on the topic, even though she had strong and developed opinions about it, as there had never been such a space for her to bring that material out in the open quite so thoroughly.

Performance can be a means of approaching the "how" of socially constructed realities, which includes explicitly incorporating the body, embodied experiences, and embodied ways of knowing into interpreting and understanding society and cultural narratives. Speaking with my interlocutors through performativity cracks open the regulatory regime and reveals it as a social construction, taking away its power over truth and claims to inherent reality. This does not dismiss its material effects. Rather, it destabilizes the fixity of the regime, opening up space for new realities and possibilities. During the August 2014 trip to Delhi, I spoke and facilitated some group sessions on gender and sexuality, separately from this research project. It is one way in which I try to give back to the community with whom I work. These conversations do not have to explicitly cite performance to be working from a Performance Studies perspective: using language to frame reality as socially constructed and bringing attention to the means through which that happens works from the principles and theories of the field. Bringing

a Performance Studies perspective, as I understand it, to the post-Dec-12 Delhi situation means holding a critical space for examining the vernacular, embodied productions of collective social experience and meaning, while highlighting how interventions occur both individually and collectively. In the end, this project brings perspectives on collective action to understanding how individual experiences operate, while placing collectively driven protests in conversation with the everyday, to work out an understanding of how female residents experience and understand Delhi's reputation and its public culture.

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