

ONLINE SOLIDARITY: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON FEMALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

An Abstract of the Thesis By
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Sexual assault and harassment are incidences that have been experienced by many women irrespective of socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation. Yet despite this knowledge, victim blaming has become the status quo as an instinctual response from law enforcement and society, which leads to underreporting. However; with the rise social media platforms, there has been more awareness raised surrounding this topic, which is unifying survivors in solidarity. The initial #MeToo hashtag was first Tweeted October, 2017, and there has been a palpable shift in dialogue (Zacharek, Docktermna, & Sweetland Edwards, 2017). This thesis seeks to: investigate how social media platforms have affected female survivors of sexual assault; to determine if the #MeToo movement has become a space of empowerment and awareness raising; and to explore how the public has perceived and adapted to the change in discourse. The research will be conducted through a systemic literature review, in conjunction with an instrumental case study analysis.