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Does social media empower women in Brazil?

A case study on sexual harassment and #feminist NGO Think Olga

Master's thesis in Globalization: Politics and Culture

Trondheim, August 2017

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Abstract

The purpose of this master thesis is to examine if Brazilian women feel empowered by using social media networks. Sexual harassment is a part of Brazilian women's everyday lives rooted in the machismo society. An online feminist movement against sexual harassment started to spread in 2015 throughout social media to create awareness. There is not much academic production around the topic at this point. It is a new phenomenon which came when the internet access saw a boom as a result of the spread of smartphones in Brazil. This study is based on one case study, the feminist non-governmental organization (NGO), Think Olga. Think Olga uses social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to mobilize, protest and criticize sexism in Brazil, and is thus creating new opportunities for women to be more visible and have a voice in the society, which might further lead to empowerment.

Throughout this study, both quantitative and qualitative techniques have been applied through an online questionnaire and a social media analysis. The analytical approach within this study is a four-stage model for political movements using social media; (1) triggering event, (2) online media response, (3) viral organization, (4) physical/ offline response. The issue of sexual harassment is introduced as the triggering event; how the Olgas engage on social media through online media response and contribute to awareness-building; and how this is leading to an online community where collective identities and empowerment are created through Think Olga, a viral organization; and further consider how this issue is important also outside social media – through a physical/ offline response.

Social media has the potential to reach millions of people, which is why these tools are vital in empowering women by providing them a voice in a society that expects them to be silent. Yet, social media cannot alone make a change but it does have significant impact on helping shape debate, influencing and creating awareness. To end sexual harassment in Brazil and to promote women's rights issues, a change in perception, attitudes, and mentality is required by all actors in the society.

The findings reveal that social media *does* seem to empower Brazilian women. However, as many of the more marginalized women in the Brazilian society are not present in this study, and considering the low response rate throughout the online questionnaire, no clear conclusion can be made as the participants are not a true representation of the Brazilian population. At this point, it seems like Think Olga is creating empowerment for a *group* of

women in the Brazilian society, which cannot speak for all women in Brazil. Still, what can certainly be concluded is that social media does have the *potential* to empower Brazilian women.

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1 Chapter one: Introduction

The introduction chapter will be an overview of the issue of sexual harassment and machismo, and how women in Brazil started to engage on social media, as well as a presentation of my case study, Think Olga. Firstly, there will be an introduction to sexual harassment and the machismo culture in South America, followed by the situation specifically in Brazil, which is the main thing that Think Olga is fighting for. Secondly, there will be an introduction to the 'Spring of the woman', which took place in Brazil in 2015, where women started to engage online on social media to the fight against sexual harassment. Thirdly, there will be an introduction to the feminist NGO Think Olga, and explain how the organization work and why it is a relevant case study for this thesis.

1.1 Sexual harassment in South America

Sexual harassment is one of the most 'tolerated' human rights violations against women in South America, and acts as a permanent warning to women that their gender makes them vulnerable to harassment and other forms of sexual violence. This sort of violation is a demonstration of power on the part of the harasser aimed at subordinating the victim, thereby violating women's human rights. Sexual harassment is linked to social understandings of sexuality based on gender-based sexual stereotypes in which women are seen as engaging in behavior that 'provokes' harassment or violence, while men who responds to such provocation by harassing women are *excused* because they must 'fulfill their sexual role' (Oré-Aguilar, 1997: 642).

Sexual harassment can be defined in several ways, and can include many things, such as actual or attempted rape or sexual assault, unwanted pressure for sexual favors, unwanted sexual looks or gestures, unwanted deliberate touching, catcalls, unwanted sexual jokes and comments, among many others. These issues are either verbal, non-verbal or physical (UN, Undated).

1.2 Machismo

South American values of *machismo* - which emphasize male power over women, masculine sexuality, and aggression - are shared both by women and men alike. Machismo is becoming less severe, despite the presence of machismo values in Brazil where modernization is taking place from globalization forces (Merkin, 2009: 361). Yet, there are more emic perspectives which present machismo as more in line with the concept of chivalry, physical strength, attractiveness, and virtue generally. Globally, South American masculinity is seen as lauding aggressive, promiscuous, and dominant communication, while South Americans see the machismo culture to be reflecting dignity, respect, and family values. Furthermore, machismo also indicates that women are long suffering and not complaining because they are morally superior to men, whose infidelity and sexual oppression are accepted (Merkin, 2009: 362). Sexual harassment is worse in South American countries compared to North America and Europe as they score high on indicators such as masculinity (Zileli, 2014).

1.3 Sexual harassment in Brazil

Brazil has one of the world's highest rates of sexual harassment, even though there is no national acceptance of its machismo culture. Sadly, the subject is not approached in a serious manner. Furthermore, the perception of sexual harassment also depends on social class and race. Often are young women, poor women or women of color usually more vulnerable to sexual harassment but their perception of their own rights is outdone by the intimidation of speaking up (Zileli, 2014). The absence of clear legal consequences in the face of abusive behavior further complicates the matter and the sexual harassment law in the penal code has proven extremely difficult to implement so far. Furthermore, the cultural atmosphere in the society normalizes and consequently accepts sexual harassment. Examining gender relations and the perception of women in Brazilian society is necessary in understanding such attitudes towards sexual harassment. Within South America, Brazil has the most active women's movement, even though it has not yet succeeded in weakening the patriarchal character of the society. Women are kept in marginalized roles, especially in the domestic sphere. Few Brazilians question traditional gender norms except within small progressive social settings (Zileli, 2014).

1.4 The Spring of the Woman

2015 was the year of *'the Spring of the Woman'* (Khazan, 2015: para. 11); *"Women in 2015 took to online networks to demand rights and ask for the end of sexual harassment and intolerance"* (Matos, 2016: 184). The use of social media has provided girls and women the

opportunity to realize that sexual harassment is a problem Brazilian women are facing all over the country, and the fact that they are not alone but rather stand stronger together. Some women do not even realize that they are being abused or harassed before maybe months or years later. It is seen as a *normal* act in their society because of the gender norms of the machismo culture rooted in the society. *"In the classroom, we see teachers sexually harassing students, and people find it funny. We are not accustomed to recognizing violence as violence"* (Viola, 2016: para. 13).

1.5 Think Olga

Think Olga is a feminist non-governmental organization (NGO) which uses social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to mobilize, protest and criticize sexism in the Brazilian society. Think Olga was created by a journalist from Sâo Paulo, Juliana de Faria (Xavier, 2015). I asked one of Think Olga's staff members about the meaning behind the name, and why they chose 'Think Olga'; *"There is not a specific reason. Juliana, our founder, wanted a name that was strong and because having a woman's name would help us with our speech with the followers, getting closer to them. If we had a more 'corporate' name, it wouldn't fit a women's rights NGO"*, said Karoline Gomes.

Think Olga created an online campaign in 2015 after a specific incident that happened with a 12-year-old reality show contestant, who was bombarded with sexually explicit tweets. The incident shocked the country and forced the society to really consider the problem around sexual harassment that women and girls face in daily life in Brazil. Think Olga launched a Twitter hashtag campaign called *#PrimerioAssèdio* (#FirstHarassment) – where women and girls could use this hashtag to share their experiences. *"Our work is about empowerment through information, because violence against women will not end without women fighting for it"* said Luise Bello, 26, manager of community and content of Think Olga (Viola, 2016: para. 4). The thought behind the campaign was to highlight the misogynistic behavior, which cannot be treated as normal or acceptable. Men needs to start paying more attention to their own actions (Belinky, 2016).

The use of social media is providing women and girls the opportunity to stand up for their rights and give them a voice (Viola, 2016). *"Social media can play an important role in opening up spaces for women – particularly those who've been marginalized"* (Bennett, 2014: para. 12).

1.6 Research Questions: "Does social media empower women in Brazil?"

This thesis has the main objective to investigate empowerment within Think Olga's social media followers, the 'Olgas'. I want to look at *if* and *how* the Olgas feel empowered by social media, and find out who the Olgas are, and see if they represent a *true* representation of women in Brazil. I also want to look at what kind of engagement the Olgas preform on social media, and thus investigate *if* Think Olga is leading to empowerment. The debate around online Brazilian feminism and the *Woman's Spring* started in 2015, which indicates that there is not much academic production around the topic at this point. This is a new phenomenon considering that the internet access has seen a boom after the spread and popularization of smartphones in Brazil. Additionally, I will also consider if Olgas are active also offline as well online for women's rights issues. My research will answer these questions: (1) Who are the Olgas on social media (Facebook and Twitter)? (2) Do Olgas feel empowered by using social media? If so, in what ways do Olgas feel empowered? (3) Are Olgas also actively involved outside social media - in the offline space?

1.6.1 Objectives

- To identify Olgas on social media (in terms of age, sex, ethnicity, education level, and living area)
- To establish if the Olgas feel empowered by using social media
- To analyze in what way the Olgas feel empowered
- To investigate if the Olgas are actively involved with women's rights issues offline outside social media

1.7 Thesis structure

Throughout this thesis, I will discuss and investigate my research questions mentioned above. I began this thesis by introducing the issue of sexual harassment and machismo culture in South America and Brazil, as well as an introduction to the Woman's Spring, and my case study, Think Olga. I will be referring to Think Olga's social media followers as 'Olgas' throughout this thesis, which is what they are called by the organization itself. Chapter 2 is a further introduction to my case study and the issue of the sexual harassment and online feminism in Brazil through applying my analytical approach. Further, I will talk about ethnicity in Brazil, which is relevant when investigating if the Olgas are a true representation of Brazilian women. I will also consider the term *empowerment,* and discuss the different meanings of the concept to establish how the term will be used throughout this thesis, which is vital as the concept can be defined in many different ways. At the end of chapter 2, I will

introduce my analytical approach, 'a four-stage model for political movements using social media', and discuss how it relates to my research questions. Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter, where I elaborate on how I did my research and analysis. I used quantitative methods and analyzed the data qualitatively through a *Survey Monkey* online questionnaire. I also performed a social media data analysis by using a social media monitoring tool called *Simply Measured*. Within the methodology chapter, I will go into details with the methods I chose to use, and why it is relevant for my research questions, and discuss factors like case study, sampling population, sampling size, sampling errors, validity and reliability, ethics, and problems with the research. Chapter 4 is an introduction to *social media*; Twitter and Facebook. I will specifically look into Brazil's social media users, and consider some relevant factors for my study, such as internet access, mobile phone networks and its distribution. From here, I discuss how Think Olga is leading to *online activism* and if this further can lead to activism also *offline* through a physical response. Chapter 5 contains my research results of the online questionnaire in *part I*, and the social media analysis in *part II*. In part I, I collect all the respondents' answers and provide an analysis based on the results in Survey Monkey, as well as discussing the findings. In part II, I will consider the results of the social media analysis by looking at the data and the reports generated of Think Olga's Twitter and Facebook page. Lastly, chapter 6 is the ending chapter where I summaries the thesis and discuss my findings related to my analytical approach, and research questions and objectives. At the end, there will be some final concluding remarks to finalize my thesis.

1.8 Chapter summary

The introduction chapter have introduced the main issues of this thesis; sexual harassment, social media engagement, as well as my case study, Think Olga. Sexual harassment is a problem spread throughout South America, especially because of the dominating machismo culture rooted in many of these societies. Women in Brazil started to engage online through social media by using hashtags and creating a community where they have a voice. Think Olga is a relevant case study to this thesis as it is fighting for women's rights and the fight towards sexual harassment by using social media tools. The NGO is providing women the opportunity to share their stories, which is an opportunity they would not have without social media.

The next chapter will be a further introduction to the issue of sexual harassment in Brazil, and a deeper understanding of the way Think Olga is creating online activism by applying my analytical approach. Further, there will be a section about ethnicity in Brazil, as well as a

section about how we define empowerment as the term can be used in several ways. At the end of the second chapter, there will be an explanation of my analytical approach discussing how it is relevant to my research questions and this thesis.

2 Chapter two: Sexual harassment and online #feminism in Brazil

The following chapter will look into specific movements and campaigns created by Think Olga by applying my analytical approach, including these four-stages; (1) triggering event, (2) online media response, (3) viral organization, (4) physical/ offline response, which will show how Think Olga and its campaigns fit into this model. Further, ethnicity in Brazil is relevant to find out if the Olgas are a true representation of the female Brazilian population. Additionally, empowerment will be defined and discussed in what way the term will be used throughout this thesis as the concept can mean different things to different people. At the end of this chapter, my analytical approach; a four-stage model for political movements using social media, will be further discussed in what way it is relevant for my study.

2.1 Triggering event: Sexual harassment

As already mentioned, the online feminism movement in Brazil started specifically after the incident where a 12-year-old reality show contestant received many sexually explicit tweets in 2015. This shocked the country and forced the society to understand the vital issue around sexual harassment women and girls face every day in Brazil. Accordingly, Think Olga conducted an online survey with 8,000 women and girls, and found out that 98 percent had suffered from sexual harassment (Xavier, 2015). As a response to the findings, Think Olga decided to start an online campaign to educate the population on the issue of sexual harassment and how it impacts women's day-to-day lives.

2.2 Online media response: Online #campaigns

Since 2015, feminist groups have been resorted broadly to Facebook and Twitter to protest, criticize and mobilize sexism in Brazil. Think Olga launched the campaign #*PrimeiroAssedio: voce nao esta mais so* (#FirstHarassment: you are not alone anymore). The hashtag was mentioned 82,000 times within four days. The main thought behind the campaign was to provide women who had been harassed as a child to have a voice. This was a revolutionary moment in Brazilian history as various groups of women took to Twitter to talk about their concerns and experiences. The hashtag was retweeted over 100,000 times, reaching over 11 million searches and being the highlight on Google in 2015 in Brazil (Matos, 2016: 186).

Several government sites on social media also posted about the campaign, as well as news outlets, both nationally and internationally, encouraging people to report both online and offline about harassment. The movement also reached audience internationally, and women around the world were sharing their stories using the hashtag #FirstHarrasment (Martini, 2016: 19). This proves that women come together as they have something in common, and social media have the ability to reach different groups of women all over the world. Social media is looking beyond borders, as well as through the differences within Brazil, and are creating a collective identity and community online accordingly.

Thus, a significant link was made between the existence of the social ill of sexual harassment and the high numbers of rape and violence against women. The #PrimeiroAssedio campaign continued to be popular also after 2015, including international attention, mainly through tweets.

Conversations about feminism has increased by over 300 percent on Twitter over the past two years and tracking the feminist hashtag of the moment has become a virtual sport.

> They manage to take issues frequently confined to small circles – feminist circles – and bring them to the masses. What is interesting is how these issues are going mainstream. It's not feminists, or even activist, talking about rape, or domestic violence, or abortion rights, anymore. It's just people.

> Bennett (2014: para.13).

2.3 Viral organization: Think Olga

Think Olga has managed to engage in a creative manner through Twitter and Facebook. Over 2000 women have reported sexual harassment or sexual violence through Think Olga, with victims as young as 9 years old. Think Olga has over 169k likes on their Facebook page, and

over 103k followers on Twitter. A mass reaction was created, which started to build an online community, and further led to a movement that developed a collective identity through giving names to problems, as well as by building a discourse and a consistent message.

Think Olga is an example of a viral organization, as it is helping creating a collective identity between the Olgas, where everyone is welcome to join the discussion with a free flow of information as Think Olga's social media content are raising awareness among the Olgas, as well as to *their* friends and followers accordingly, as long as they are actively sharing Think Olga's content.

As a result of Think Olga's campaigns, a *harassment map* (see figure 1) was created where women could pinpoint locations all around the country where they had been harassed. In cooperation with the *Public Defender Office of Sâo Paulo state*, the map was also issued all over the city's public transportation system (Xavier, 2015).
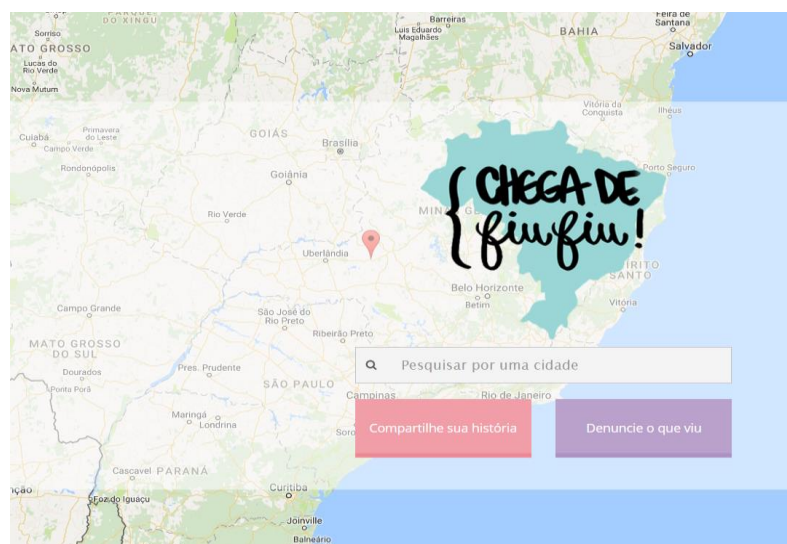
1. Figure: Harassment map 'Chega De Fiu Fiu'. Source: ThinkOlga (Undated b).

Figure 1 show the harassment map, 'Chega De Fiu Fiu'. In the search section, Olgas are able to '*search for a city*' to see incidents and stories reported from other women. Olgas are also able to '*share your story*' or '*report something you have witnessed*'. Incidents of sexual harassment are happing at work, at clubs, on the streets, and proves that women are constantly limited to how they move within public spaces because of it. Anyone can add their experience to the map, and the categories available include racism, homophobia and transphobia (Schwartz, 2014: para. 7). It is important that women report their stories so that they know they are not alone, as well as to encourage a collective identity and mobilization. Further, if

there is a witness to an incident of any kind of sexual harassment, it is important to report it as it could help catching the harasser.

Our idea to register problematic places in Brazil related to violence against women is not to identify even more public and private spaces that victims should not frequent. Our lens, in reality, is one of transformation. Upon identifying these critical points, we can understand the motivation that makes things this way… With these facts in our hand, we can also pressure governmental institutions to look more attentively at violence against women.

Schwartz (2014: para. 6)

2. Figure: Example on pinpointed area in harassment map. Source: ThinkOlga (Undated b).

The map (figure 2) show all results after searching for the city 'Rio de Janeiro'. These are all pinpointed stories from women being harassed at different places in Rio de Janeiro.
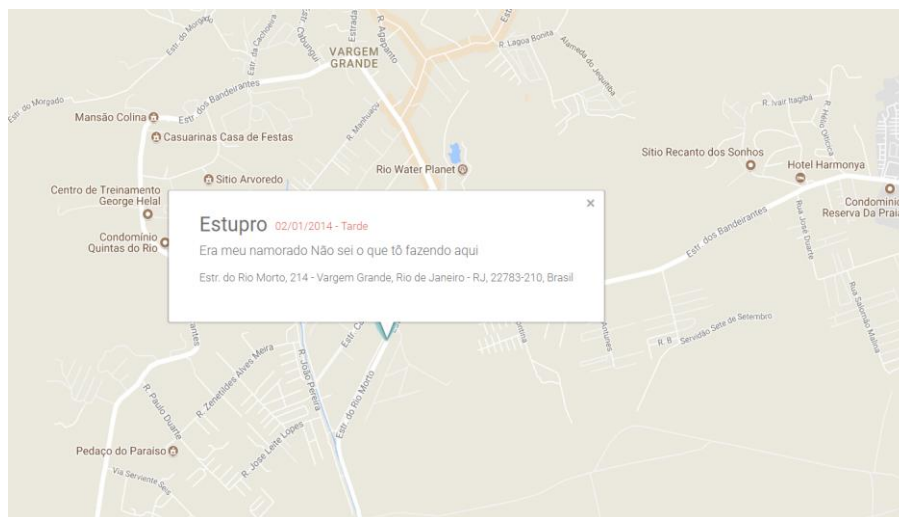
3.Figure: Example on one pinpointed incident from the harassment map. Source: ThinkOlga (Undated b).

When 'clicking' on one of the pinpointed pins, you will see the details about the reported incident at this particular place, as seen in figure 3. This particular incident says that the person was raped at this address, as well as the date it happened. The meaning of *'Chega De Fiu Fiu'* is 'whistling on the street', as in catcalling and street harassment, which is the most

common way of being sexually harassed in Brazil. The map serves not just as a community where women can support each other, but is also documentary evidence that harassment is real, and that it is a serious problem - instead of something women should be expected to take as a 'compliment' (Daily-Life, 2015). *"It's going to take some time until we change this behavior for good. But street harassment is not being seen as an assault – and that's the beginning of real change"* said creator of Think Olga, Juliana, according to an article in Daily Life (2015: para. 6).

Most of the people engaging online are women, which is not a bad thing. Women's power on social media continues to grow as they dominate all the main social media platforms. *"Women don't just dominate social media, they drive traffic. That's a massive game changer"* (Bennett, 2014: para. 14). In other words, they do not only have a voice, but they are forcing institutions to listen.

However, the #PrimerioAssèdio campaign has also received negative responses from some men in Brazil, who have suggested that women should only talk about their experiences to their harassers and confront them directly in a private manner, and not make it a public one (Belinky, 2016). *"It's not that men are horrible. But sexism is socialized in the man from the time that he's a young person"* (Khazan, 2015: para. 9). Many Brazilian women believe that Brazilian men cannot be feminists. They hear the men say things like, *"a feminist is a woman who doesn't want to be married"* (Khazan, 2015: para. 20), which makes some women fear that men will *dominate* feminism if they are invited to participate.

2.4 Physical response: Offline activism
The campaign also reached offline response, reaching government institutions and media outlets. Women were also encouraged to come on TV shows to tell their stories. Yet, the most vital offline response was the number of phone calls and reports - for reporting physical, sexual and psychological violence against women - which received a 40 percent increase (Viola, 2016). Think Olga believes that Brazilian women's movement is at a critical stage in its growth, and believe that feminist discussions and debates through online networks such as Twitter and Facebook will continue to grow (Viola, 2016). The hashtag campaign #PrimerioAssèdio were essential in spreading awareness in 2015.

> Usually, when a woman talks about harassment, it's questioned – 'But what clothes were you wearing?' or 'Why were you alone in that place?' Our campaign showed that these were stories of children, so no one could insinuate that the catcalling and harassment was caused by them.

<div align="right">Viola (2016: para. 10).</div>

Another thing to keep in mind is that especially the older generation of women believe that sexual harassment is *normal* and a naturalization of the practice in the society;

The first time I was harassed I was 11 years old. I was returning from the bakery, and a car passed next to me and started to swear loudly. I did not understand it and I started to cry. An old woman stopped me in the street and said: Do not be silly, accept it as a form of praise, *said Think Olga's founder, Juliana.*

<div align="right">Matos (2016: 186).</div>

Furthermore, during the 2015 campaigns, a famous actress in the Brazilian society stated that she did not feel harassed or violated by catcalls or by men's whistling but rather felt empowered by these acts. She believed that women should stop assuming the role of victims and not blame the man. However, after some serious critics and by going through a process of sincere reflection led the actress to the publication of another article where she apologized and recognized her position;

> As a privileged, white upper-class woman who had not been subject to any form of constraint during her upbringing and life, further acknowledging that, by this, she had ignored the experiences and suffering of millions of women who correctly needed to make use of collective struggle in order to push for change and to advance their rights.

<div align="right">Matos (2016: 188).</div>

This is further an example of the lack of information, misconceptions, and stereotyping within Brazil regarding feminism and women's issues. *"It is, at worst, excessively timid, fragmented, and heavily infused still with certain traditional values and commonsense assumptions about the role of Brazilian men and women in both public and private life"* (Matos, 2016: 188).

A problem such as sexual harassment, which is rooted in the machismo Brazilian society, should be considered as a widespread and serious issue – in the offline space with a physical response as well as online. Social media is essential for creating awareness, although it should not be necessary for women to 'hide' behind the screen. The society – both women and men, as well as institutions, organizations and the government – should start recognizing this issue as vital for their society's future development. The underrepresentation of women threatens

the very vitality and decision-making capacity of democratic societies, especially in emerging and weak democracies like Brazil (Matos, 2016: 3).

2.5 Ethnicity in Brazil

According to Think Olga, black women suffer from more harassment than white women, and one of the issues in the Brazilian society is the fact that institutions, public or private, are still being run by white men in high positions of power, which is something that, regrettably, places the women at the bottom of the list of priorities (ThinkOlga, Undated a).

> Brazilian society is composed of different ethnic and racial groups that characterize, in cultural terms, as one of the richest in the world. However, its history is marked by inequality and discrimination, specifically against Blacks and Indigenous Peoples, impeding their full economic, political and social development.
>
> UNESCO (Undated: para. 1).

According to an article in *The Guardian,* the results from the 2010 census in Brazil showed that 50.7% of the population now define themselves as 'black' or 'mixed race', compared to 47.7% who label themselves as 'white'. This is the first time since records began that black and mixed race people 'form' the Brazilian majority. *"Among the hypotheses to explain this trend, one could highlight the valorization of identity among Afro-descendants"* (Phillips, 2011: para. 5), said Brazil's census board, IBGE. 7.6% said they were black compared to 6.2% in 2000, while 43.1% said they were mixed race compared to 38.5%. The 2010 census found that in major cities, white people were earning about 2.4 times more than the black population. *"It is a vicious circle",* said Marcelo Paixão, an economist from Rio's UFRJ University. *"Poor salaries lead to worse education, which is a barrier to getting a good job. We need more public policies"* (Phillips, 2011: para. 15). A parallel study that was done by the Data Popular Institute, showed that the wealthiest group of Brazilians included 82.3% white people and only 17.7 African-Brazilians. In the lowest class, on the other hand, there were only 23.7% white and 76.3% African-Brazilians. *"In Brazil every black person is going to be a victim of racism, prejudice [and] discrimination, whatever your position. Our prejudice is disguised and hypocritical"*, said Ivone Caetano, a prominent African-Brazilian judge (Phillips, 2011: para. 20).

2.6 Empowerment

There are many different definitions on 'empowerment'. Below is a definition provided by the United Nations Evaluation Group:

> Empowerment implies people – both women and men – taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills (or having their own skills and knowledge recognized), increasing self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance. It is both a process and an outcome. Empowerment implies an expansion in women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.
>
> UNEG (2014: xii).

Empowerment appears to differ significantly depending on the level the concept is used*;*

> International organizations focus on rights-based approach, through national-level government agencies and women's organizations often constrained by the translation of 'power' as an overtly political endeavor, down to the provincial or local level, where the concept of empowerment seems to be more 'reflective' of local cultures and values, and where people often explain empowerment as a household or community process.
>
> Lund, Doneys, and Resurrección (2015: 5).

Some of the definitions on empowerment focus on *power* as something that *"is located in decision-making processes, conflict, and force, and could be described as 'zero-sum': the more power one person has, the less the other has"* (Rowlands, 1995: 101). The context to understanding power do not mention how power is distributed in a society, and there is no consideration of the power dynamics of factors like gender, ethnicity or class. Power is then defined as having 'power over' someone else, as some people are seen to have control or influence over others. 'Power over' is seen as either; men over other men; men over women; or dominant social, political, economic, or cultural groups over those who are marginalized. In this sense, power is seen as an instrument of domination in, for instance, people's personal lives, their close relationships, or their communities. People who are systematically denied power and influence in the dominant society adopt the messages they receive about what they are supposed to be like, and as this might be the only reality they know – they will believe it as *true* (Rowlands, 1995: 102). It can be argued that this is the case with women in Brazil, who have grown up in a male-dominated society to believe that the marginalization women face every day is *normal*. Unless women in Brazil become aware of the domination and neglection in the society, they might not know that there is something they can do about it.

Raising their voice and standing up for their rights is not an option unless they are actually *aware* of the option.

Empowerment might also be referring to *'power to'*, which is achieved by increasing one's ability to resist and challenge *'power over'*. Empowerment can then be seen as 'the user's interpretation of power'. The key of empowerment is about *including* people who are outside the decision-making process. It is important to recognize the processes by which people become aware of their own interests and how those relate to those of others, to be able to participate from a position of greater strength in decision-making and be able to influence such decisions. Feminists' understanding of power is incorporated with the idea of 'the personal as political'. 'Power over' requires the understanding of the processes of oppression and internalized oppression, which affects the ability of marginalized groups to participate in formal and informal decision-making. Further, it affects the way that individuals or groups see themselves and their ability to act and influence the world around them. Empowerment is thus more than just letting the marginalized be a part of decision-making; it is also about making these people believe in themselves as able and entitled to do it. This factor of empowerment can be seen to have three dimensions: 1) *Personal* - where empowerment is about developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression; 2) *Close relationships* - where empowerment is about developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of the relationship and decisions made within it; 3) *Collective* - where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone. This includes involvement in political structures, but might also cover collective action based on cooperation rather than competition. Collective action may be locally or institutionally focused (Rowlands, 1995: 103). In this regard, it can be argued that Think Olga is creating empowerment in all three dimensions. Firstly, at a *personal level* by spreading awareness about the issue of domination and marginalization through social media, and to make these women believe in themselves to act and make a change. Secondly, Think Olga might empower Olgas to renegotiate their *close relationships* – like a boyfriend or a family member – to be aware of the difference between a healthy and equal relationship compared to a dominating or abusive relationship. Thirdly, Think Olga is creating empowerment at a *collective* level by making Olgas aware of the fact that they are not alone, and to help them create a safe space where they can share stories on social media and perhaps by using the harassment map to report a sexual harassment incident. Acting collectively is beneficial as empowerment happens both on a *small scale*, in bringing people

together in similar situations through self-help, education, support, or social action groups and network building; or on a *large scale*, through community organization, campaigning, social planning, and policy development (Rowlands, 1995: 103), which can further led to social protest *offline*.

Empowerment and development are often perceived as the same thing, which means that power happens automatically through economic development. This might be the case in some situations but not always, and it depends on factors like gender, class, and culture. Economic activities do not alone create empowerment but a combination of confidence and self-esteem, information, the ability to identify and tap into available resources, and political and social influence, is essential. Brazil has seen an increase in economic growth in recent years, and not all women in Brazil is poor - far from it. Marginalization of women has always been present in the Brazilian society because of the machismo influenced culture, which has not been affected by the country's economic development (Rowlands, 1995: 102).

The respondents of this study could define *empowerment* with their own words in text boxes in my online questionnaire, which I will discuss more in the next chapter. A vital point to keep in mind is that the outside professional, *the researcher*, cannot expect to control the outcomes of 'true' empowerment as true power cannot be given because it comes from within. Any interpretation of empowerment given by one group or another hides an attempt to keep control, and thus the idea of gradual empowerment becomes questionable. *True* empowerment on the other hand, might show some unexpected results. It is important to remember the fact that most of the literature about empowerment originates from work in developed countries, which means the neglection and marginalization they face in developing countries might be experienced differently than what the researcher believe and expect. Empowerment cannot be imposed by outsiders, yet it could still help speed up the process. Thus, it makes it vital to respect and have confidence in the people being studied. This requires the social agents to be empowered and to believe in their own empowerment, and it requires the researcher to be conscious and sustained about the efforts to do so (Rowlands, 1995: 105).

Before collecting my survey analysis, I already had expectations on how the answers would turn out. In the beginning, I started setting up the questions about *empowerment* with options instead of text boxes (see questionnaire in appendix section), but by doing so, the options would then be influenced by my already expected assumptions, which is why I chose to create

text boxes instead. In this way, the respondents could write their own opinions, and not be influenced by my assumptions and options.

2.7 Analytical Approach

This thesis analysis was done by using a model based on a framework that help to better understand the relationships between social media, social protest, and online mobilization, a model developed by Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia (2014). It is a four-stage model to help understand the different levels of maturity and the development cycle of protests using social media technologies. These four stages are: (1) Triggering event, (2) media response, (3) viral organization, and (4) physical response. These dimensions are complementary, and they follow each other in a non-predictable cycle (see figure 4). A circular flow model is proposed because collective action is continuously adapting to new contexts or technologies (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014: 369).
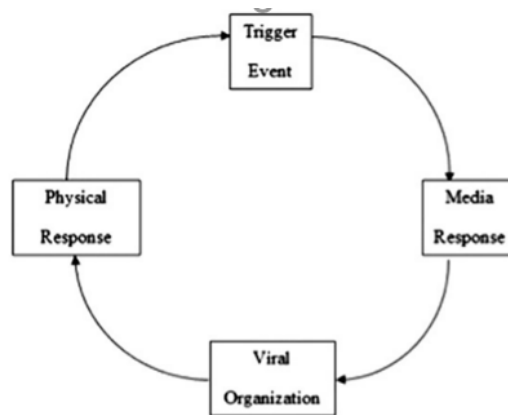
4. Figure: Model for political movements using social media. Source: Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia (2014: 370).

(1) *Triggering event* is the cause that started the movement. It is based on the political opportunity concept and the construct of common interest by a collective group. The problem and naturalization of sexual harassment within the Brazilian society is the triggering event in this thesis. It is an event that promoted a social reaction to it. (2) *Online media response* component is based on the idea that social media is expanded and complemented with online media channels and the concept of information force and activists' devotion. It is the response women show through social media and online activism, through creating a collective community online where they come together and share their stories. This is how online feminism in Brazil was created, and further how Think Olga was created. The triggering factor creates an instant response and is part of the communication model. The use of social media expands the channels for and pace of the message, and creates a different space to share

ideas about the message. This virtual space of interaction enables people to share, collaborate, and cooperate using social media technologies with no information costs and a common technology basis. There are three essential reasons that allow online protests to happen and are present at this stage: ubiquity, time and anonymity (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014: 369). Think Olga is *available* to everyone (who have internet access and uses social media tools), it is a safe space where the Olgas can be *anonymous* behind the screen, and it takes no *time* before the information reaches the audience as it happens instantly. (3) *Viral organization* might be considered as a direct effect from the use of social media technology in political mobilizations; the regular use of social media allows people to communicate, share, and organize using these tools and become part of a decentralized online movement. It is when a group create a mass reaction and starts building an online community. The movement starts developing a collective identity by giving names to problems and building a discourse and a consistent message. Some of the characteristics for a viral organization are free access, no leadership, free information flow, and online discussion. Social media networks and Think Olga has created a collective identity for Olgas to come together and discuss women's rights issues online with a free flow of information. (4) *Physical response* is in many cases a result of the online movement; a traditional social protest. It is the way the Olgas respond to the awareness-building created by Think Olga, and if they are active offline as well as online. The purpose of this component is to place the movement in the physical world, which shows the power and strength of the social protest. An important advantage of online response is the spread of information on the internet, which will be many times higher than the coverage and speed of the mainstream media. Social media is needed to raise awareness about the issue to reach as many as possible. It is creating a space for women to connect and collaborate to a new social phenomenon, which would not have been possible otherwise. Yet, a problem such as sexual harassment - which is rooted in the machismo Brazilian society – should also be considered offline out in the physical world.

2.8 Chapter summary

Throughout this chapter, I have considered the issue of sexual harassment and online feminism in Brazil through applying my analytical approach and the four-stage model introduced above. The issue of sexual harassment is introduced as the triggering event; how the Olgas engage on social media through online media response and contribute to awareness-building; and how this is leading to an online community where collective identities are created through Think Olga, a viral organization; and further consider how this

issue is important also outside social media – through a physical/ offline response. Secondly, I elaborated around ethnicity in Brazil, and discussed the meaning of the concept empowerment to see in what way it can be defined to fit the purpose of my research questions, which is to establish if the Olgas are empowered by social media, and in what way they feel empowered.

Next chapter is the methodology chapter where I explain my methodology techniques, and why these techniques are relevant. I discuss the relevancy of using a case study, and consider relevant factors within this thesis' research, such as sampling population, sampling error, reliability and validity, ethics, as well as weaknesses with the study.

3 Chapter three: Methodology

This chapter is about methodology techniques used throughout the research in this thesis. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques have been applied throughout an online questionnaire and a social media analysis. Relevant factors such as case study, sampling population, margin of error/ level of confidence, reliability and validity, ethical issues and problems with the study will be considered.

3.1 Methodology introduction

Throughout this study, I am applying a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative methods. I have analyzed my survey results qualitatively, even though the survey itself is a quantitative tool. I do this based on one case study considering that I want to analyze one specific organization on social media; Think Olga. *Quantitative research* is based on the measurement of quantity or amount, while *qualitative research* is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, such is an issue relating to or involving quality or kind. As my *response rate -* which is the proportion of people in the sample who complete the questionnaire (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46) - turned out to be very small, with only 17 respondents, this cannot be defined as a quantitative study. Thus, I am using a qualitative approach to analyze the questionnaire results because of the small response rate by analyzing the answers individually. Some of the questions also had text boxes where I apply a qualitative approach by analyzing the individual replies as 'interviews'.

> Many university students and researchers in human geography as well as other disciplines use surveys (questionnaires and interviews to collect both quantitative and qualitative information) to address their research questions of diverse nature, context, and geography.

> Kitchin and Thrift (2009: 1).

The social media analysis on the other hand, is a quantitative analysis where I look at the data and numbers of engagement on Think Olga's Facebook and Twitter page. The *sampling frame* is an enumeration of all members of a population from which a sample can be selected (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46), which is the numbers of Think Olga's followers, which is 169k for Facebook and 103k for Twitter, and their engagement and activity level within a time frame of six months.

3.1.1 Case Study

Using a case study approach is beneficial when one intends to research a subject in depth, going into detail by choosing to focus on one specific case, which provides a chance for the researcher to go into detail and discover complexities of a given situation. Using the case study as a research procedure also calls for a mixed method approach. A case study proves to be the most relevant when you desire to discover why or how some social phenomenon works. Case studies can be done by using both qualitative or quantitative evidence. As a research strategy*, "the distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it attempts to examine: (a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"* (Yin, 1981: 59). I chose Think Olga as a case study because it represents women's rights issues and the fight against sexual harassment in Brazil using social media, which makes it an interesting case to study *empowerment,* to investigate *if,* and *how* these women feel empowered by using these platforms.

3.1.2 Online questionnaire survey

Mainly useful for descriptive research, surveys provide broad coverage of populations enabling us to explore the extent and nature of spatial and social variations in people's attributes, attitudes, and actions. Generally, the aim is to obtain information suitable for statistical analysis.

Kitchin and Thrift (2009: 46).

To answer my *research questions*, I created a questionnaire to ask the Olgas questions to find out who they are, as well as to find out how they define empowerment and if they do feel empowered by Think Olga and by using social media platforms. I used the online survey tool called *Survey Monkey*. Survey Monkey automatically provides the survey results by creating summaries and graphs of all questions, which makes it easy to analyze and collect the results (see figures in chapter 5, part I).

The survey was conducted online as my audience are the followers of Think Olga on Twitter and Facebook. To reach out to the Olgas, I contacted the organization, Think Olga, and they

agreed to publish my survey on their Twitter page, as well as on a Think Olga *group* on Facebook with Olga discussions. Unfortunately, they did not agree to publish my survey on their official Facebook page*,* which might have affected the low respondents rate, something I will discuss further later.

3.1.3 Survey creation

As previously mentioned, I used the tool Survey Monkey and created 14 questions for the Olgas to answer. It would take the respondents about 8-10 minutes to finish. All questions were related to my research questions. All questions were translated into Portuguese because the audience and participants were Brazilian, and many people in Brazil do not speak English. All participants remained anonymous from the survey collection. *Anonymity* is when the researcher is unable to associate responses with specific respondents (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46).

3.1.4 Research Questions: Online survey questions

To answer my first research question regarding who the Olgas are, I developed a questionnaire, (which can be found in the appendix section), in the original language of distribution (Portuguese). In the questionnaire analysis section of this thesis in part I of chapter 5, I elaborate on the questions in the same order as in the questionnaire. The questions to determine the identity of the social actors, the Olgas, were related to factors such as age, gender, education, ethnicity, and the area they live in. Secondly, for the questions to determine their opinions regarding *empowerment,* I created text boxes for the participants to freely explain their relationship to empowerment – how they define it; why they believe it is important; and if they do feel empowered by Think Olga and using social media tools. Thirdly, regarding my last research question about *offline activism*, I ask the Olgas one question; if they are or want to be active outside social media fighting for women's rights issues.

When analyzing the questionnaire, I used both qualitative and quantitative methodology techniques. Quantitative analysis was used throughout the analysis regarding the questions on identity, where the Olgas were analyzed numerically. I categorized the questions in the survey asking the respondents about factors around identity where the options were categorized in a way they could easily be collected and analyzed by percentage (see figures in chapter 5).

Further, regarding the questions about empowerment, I used a qualitative approach as they were asked to respond to these questions through text boxes. Thus, the respondents could

write their answers freely, like in an interview (see figure 5) through *open-ended questions* - where any response is valid (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46).

5.Figure: Text boxes in questionnaire. Source: Survey Monkey.

3.1.5 Sampling the population

The sampling process is important because it is rarely the case that the researcher have time and resources to conduct research on all the individuals who could be included in the study. The researcher need a sample that is representative of the target population, which in this study is Think Olga's followers on Facebook and/or Twitter.

The 'population' of Olgas on Facebook (169k) and Twitter (103k) are very high and it would be impossible to interview all these individuals, which is why I had to collect a sample to represent the Olgas. I am using a mixed sampling approach of both *random/ probability* sample and *purposive* sample. A probability sample address quantitative research questions, while a purposive sample address qualitative research questions (InterAction, Undated). My research questions are both qualitative and quantitative, and I am using both of these approaches within my research, which is also why I am using a mixed sample method.

Simple random sampling is a scheme in which each unit has the same chance of being selected, and a combination of units in the frame has the same chance of making up the sample. Samples with this quality are often known as equal probability of selection method (EPSEM).

Kitchin and Thrift (2009: 3).

A *purposive* sample *"size is determined judgmental and where time and resources permit researchers in continuing to sample more cases until no new information is being obtained"* (InterAction, Undated: para. 7). Since I only had 17 respondents to analyze, each case was seen has high information content. The problem with non-response draws attention to the fact that a well-crafted sample can be jeopardized by the failure of individuals to participate. Thus, there might be an issue that the respondents and non-respondents differ from each other in certain areas, which means that the respondents may not represent the *true* population (Bryman & Cramer, 2011: 126), the true Olgas.

3.1.6 Sampling error: Margin of error and confidence level

Sample surveys indicates the study of a small portion of the population or a group, and as such there would naturally be certain amount of inaccuracy in the information collected. This inaccuracy is called *sampling error*. Sampling errors are the error that rise on the account of sampling, and they generally occur to be random variations in the sample estimates around the true population values.

As a rule of thumb, the larger the population, and the greater the variability in the population, the larger the sample needed when one is concerned with data reliability and expected accuracy of results. How well the sample represents the population is gauged by two statistics: margin of error and confidence interval.

Kitchin and Thrift (2009: 8).

Margin of error is the degree of 'fuzziness' the researcher can 'except' within the study. A sample survey provides an approximation of the true response. How precise this estimation is, depends on the margin of error. In other words, the larger the margin, the less precise is the estimate. As sample size decreases, margin of error increases (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 8).

Level of confidence indicates the reliability of the findings. A 95% level of confidence means that if the survey were conducted 100 times with different samples, in 95 times, the results obtained would be similar to the results obtained with another sample. Alternatively, it also means that if one would have collected responses from the whole population, there is a 5% chance that the findings would vary from the survey results (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 8).

	Confidence level = 95%			Confidence level = 99%		
	Margin of error			Margin of error		
Population size	5%	2,5%	1%	5%	2,5%	1%
100	80	94	99	87	96	99
500	217	377	475	285	421	485
1.000	278	606	906	399	727	943
10.000	370	1.332	4.899	622	2.098	6.239
100.000	383	1.513	8.762	659	2.585	14.227
500.000	384	1.532	9.423	663	2.640	16.055
1.000.000	384	1.534	9.512	663	2.647	16.317

6.Figure: Level of confidence and margin of error. Source: CheckMarket (Undated: para. 9).

According to the table above, the sufficient sample size for my study, with a population size of 169k, should be around 383 respondents, with a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error, to be able to make it a satisfactory, reliable and valid study. However, according to the website CheckMarket and its *Margin of error calculator* tool*,* considering my study were able to only collect 17 respondents, the margin of error is 23.77% when the confidence level is 95% (CheckMarket, Undated: para. 8).

For reasons of reliability, no samples should be smaller than 25, even though this is common and acceptable in practice, especially with qualitative studies. In statistics, 30 observations or less constitutes a small sample (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 8). An inappropriate, insufficient, or disproportionate sample size have an influence on the quality and accuracy of the research. Survey research usually has a common goal to collect data representative of a 'population'. The researcher uses information collected from the survey to generalize findings from a drawn sample back to the studied population, within the limits of random error. However, *"two of the most consistent flaws include (1) disregard for sampling error when determining sample size, and (2) disregard for response and nonresponse bias"* (Barlett, Kotrlik, & Higgins, 2001: 43). Determining sample size and dealing with nonresponse bias is important within a quantitative survey. *"One of the real advantages of quantitative methods is their ability to use smaller groups of people to make inferences about larger groups that would be prohibitively expensive to study"* (Barlett et al., 2001: 43).

3.1.7 Social media analysis

Next to the online survey, I performed a social media analysis of Think Olga's Facebook and Twitter page using a social media monitoring tool called '*Simply Measured'*. Simply Measured generates social media reports for Facebook and Twitter accounts, which allowed me to get insight and be able to analyze Think Olga's followers and their engagement on these two platforms. The tool allowed me to go back six months – with a date range from 12

December 2016 until 12 May 2017 - to look at its data collections. Simply Measured is an analytical tool that facilitates quantitative analysis of digital metrics measuring the digital presence on social media profiles.

Through the social media analysis, I wanted to establish if the Olgas were actively involved on Twitter and Facebook, and what kind of engagement they performed. It is relevant to my research questions because it is useful to see *if* the Olgas are actively involved in Think Olga's content on social media or not, as it might affect the value of the research and the relevance of the other research questions. The generated reports provided me with data to analyze its followers, engagement level, engagement activity, as well as *possible* reach and impressions. The latter is useful to establish how far social media can reach and how many people can see Think Olga's content if Olgas are engaging actively by sharing, tweeting, commenting, liking, and so on, which is further how awareness-building is created and dispersed.

3.1.8 Reliability and validity

Reliability describes whether the same information would be obtained by drawing repeated samples from the same population, while *validity* refers to the correspondence between the questions and the concepts in which the researcher is interested (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46). Reliability and validity are ways of guaranteeing the quality of social science research, especially within qualitative research. The two concepts reflect on how and if the research can be identified with reality (Ahlqvist, 2009: 320).

Validity is connected to the results of a study, and in an empirical setting it refers to the degree to which gathered information actually measures the phenomena of interest. In other words, achieving validity obviously comes down to the skills of the investigator to come up with a proper research design and draw reasonable conclusions. Further, this is related to the instrument the researcher uses to collect the data, that captures information in a consistent manner to be able to get reliable data. *Reliability* thus refers to the stability and consistency of the research instrument over repeated applications. Accuracy refers to the more general idea of validity that addresses how close measurements are to the 'true' value, and of the two separate components of accuracy, precision would most closely relate to the term reliability. However, it is always difficult to know the true value. Furthermore, when discussing reliability and validity, Baxter and Eyles suggest considering the following terms: *Credibility* of the account; *transferability* of the material; *dependability* of the interpretation, and *confirmability* of the study (Crang & Cook, 2007: 126). The *credibility* refers to the validity

of the study and its ability to represent the real-life experiences of the subjects that are studied. The *dependability* refers to the minimizing of personal ideas, perceptions, and beliefs of the data material interpreted. To do this, it is vital to assess the critical reflexivity. This may be linked to reliability, as it reduces the subjective interpretations and increases the probability for the same results to be found when repeating the research. Linked to this is the concept of *confirmability*, which means that bias and personal interests should not influence the data collection and analysis. Thus, confirmability refers to the objectivity of the study (Crang & Cook, 2007: 126).

In order to protect the quality of this research, I reflected upon the concepts of reliability and validity, and credibility, confirmability and dependability. *Is my study reliable?* Because of the limited time that I had to conduct my research, I did not have time to do another study with repeated samples from the same population. Further, because of the small response rate, my study cannot be seen as very reliable as the chances of errors are high (23.77% margin of error to be precise) as *"an adequate response rate is important to ensuring the reliability of the survey"* (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 50). If the same study would have been conducted with repeated samples from the same population, would the same information occur? Probably not. Yet, when focusing on the key question within this study – 'Does social media empower women in Brazil?', and by looking at what the respondents replied to the questions about empowerment, there are an overall 'agreement' with similar responses on how they define empowerment, why it is important, and that they believe Think Olga (everyone except for one respondent) is leading to empowerment. This indicates that if I conducted the study with repeated samples from the same population again, the chances could still be that the responses would be somewhat similar to the ones I got the first time. Further, regarding my *quantitative social media analysis*, I would say that the numbers are reliable because the tool is looking at the data collection from a six-month period, which is a large data collection. If I conducted the same analysis again for the exact same time-period, I would get the same results as the tool would provide me with the same data collection. However, if I conducted the social media analysis again but for a different six-month period – would it show the same results? It may show similar results but that it difficult to predict because it depends on the activity of the Olgas. Are they more active now, compared to what they were one year ago? Will they be more active one year from now? These are questions that could be considered for future research.

Is my study valid? There is a correspondence between the questions and the concepts connected to my research questions. The answers were satisfying according to the way the respondents interpreted the questions. Throughout the questionnaire and when collecting the analysis afterwards, I have made sure to include the 'reality' of these women's opinions. I also made sure not to ask leading questions, which I did by providing open-ended text boxes where they were able to write their own opinions in their own words - how they define empowerment and why they believe it is important. Even though *"open-ended questions should be avoided for self-administered questionnaires. They are more appropriate for face-to-face and telephone interviews that allow the interviewer to explain, prompt, and probe for answers"* (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 48). This was a self-administered questionnaire, however, for this particular study, I believe the text boxes was the best option when the point was for the respondents to say what empowerment meant to them as there were no 'wrong' answers. It was rather about their personal opinions, which are further related to my research questions.

Each type of question has its strengths and weaknesses. For example, closed-ended questions are more reliable than open-ended questions whereas open-ended questions have greater validity than closed-ended questions. The research questions and existing knowledge of the research topic are the two main considerations when deciding question structure.

Kitchin and Thrift (2009: 49).

I also made sure to put up options like "do not want to answer" or "other" to make sure that the respondents could reply something if they were not sure what to pick instead of risking that they would not do the survey at all, considering that all my questions were mandatory. I tried to ask clear questions to prevent misunderstandings, which is also why I asked my Brazilian friends to take a pretest of the questionnaire to make sure that the survey was ready and fit for the Brazilian audience. One example that one of them informed me, was regarding my question about 'living area', where one of the options I did set up in the beginning was *favela,* which she told me was a sensitive term to use in a social setting in Brazil. She further suggested to use the option 'community within an urban area' instead. Lastly, I did not exclude any important findings from my research, even though all participants were collected anonymously.

Regarding my social media analysis, I would say it is valid for the purpose of looking into engagement level of the Olgas, to see how active they are and in what way they do get involved on social media. I also use the social media analysis to look at potential reach to argue how social media can spread awareness. In other words, it is valid for having a basis in

specific numbers and a data collection to 'back-up' my survey analysis findings, and to make a more valid argument within my thesis.

To avoid *dependability* and *confirmability*, I made sure to spend time reflecting on the questions before publishing the survey to minimize bias and influences on my research. I focused on asking the questions as straightforward and easy to understand as possible. Regarding the question about sexual harassment, I included a definition so that the respondents interpreted sexual harassment in similar ways. They could tell their stories about what happened to them, but it was not mandatory to do so.

Another thing to consider is the fact that the research findings within this study may also be valid outside the specific situation which it is studied. For instance, in my research, I hope that my findings may be useful for other women's rights/ feminist NGOs or groups of interest on social media, and that the findings I retrieved from my case, may also be found in similar feminist organizations on social media as well. However, I acknowledge that the goal of my research is not to generalize, but rather explaining a case study - specifically related to Think Olga – as this organization is an example on a NGO working for women's rights and sexual harassment, and again, taken into consideration the high margin of error.

Regardless of the appearance of objectivity that is often associated with numerical data, information from questionnaire surveys is interpreted by the researcher. Common practices for presenting findings based on information from questionnaire surveys help the reader estimate the researcher's interpretations (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 51).

3.1.9 Ethics

When doing research, it is important to assess ethical considerations because the findings represent human conditions and the necessity of avoiding causing harm in the field, which further means to minimize physical, emotional, economic and environmental harms and discomfort. Ethics in research concern the researcher's responsibilities and obligations to the parties that are involved in the research. As the research is based on people's private experiences of a certain phenomenon, it is vital to acknowledge the ethical aspect (Hay, Clifford, & Valentine, 2003: 36-38).

Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to guarantee integrity and quality. It is important to inform all research participants about the purpose of the study, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks (if any), are involved. The confidentiality of information provided by research subjects

and the anonymity of respondents should be respected. The research participants must also participate voluntary. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be clear (Crang & Cook, 2007: 34).

In my Think Olga survey, I included a cover page before starting the questionnaire with information (see figure 7) about me, the researcher; the reason why I am collecting this research; and how the research will be used. I also informed the participants that all respondents would remain anonymous, which is very important in my study when considering the topic and when asking questions about sexual harassment. If I did not include this information, the respondents might have been *afraid* to do the survey as they might not want to answer such sensitive issue. All respondents participated voluntarily through social media. In the end, I also included my contact information, in case the participants had questions about the research.

Think Olga Survey

My name is Camilla, and I am a Norwegian Graduate student studying Globalization, Politics and Culture at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. I am doing my research on 'Women and Social Media', and are using Think Olga as a case study for my Master Thesis. I would be very grateful for your participation!

The survey has 14 questions, and it will take you about 8-10 minutes to answer the questions. All participants will remain anonymous, and will only be used for academic production.

Thank you all very much!

7. *Figure: Introduction information to Think Olga survey. Source: Survey Monkey.*

3.1.10 Problems and weaknesses with the study

A survey can only be truly valuable when it is reliable and representative of the population of study. The number of respondents who took part in the questionnaire were only 17, which is very low considering the *reach* of the online survey. As mentioned earlier, the survey was posted on Think Olga's Twitter, which has about 103k followers and on Think Olga's Facebook group, which have 5k members. Think Olga did, sadly, not agree on publishing my survey on their official Facebook page. I was informed that the NGO was not able to do it as they receive many similar requests from students doing research. I believe the response rate would have been higher as people in general use Facebook more than Twitter. Further, because of its format and its tools, Facebook is more prone to participation because it is a

network for connecting people, as opposed to Twitter which serves the function of a microblog.

Another reason to consider is the fact that most of the Olgas connect to social media through their phone, and it is not favorable to answer a questionnaire on a mobile phone, especially when it comes to responding and writing in text boxes. I believe more Olgas would have participated in the survey if there were no text box questions, which would make it easier to do the survey on their smartphones. However, without the text boxes, the questions about empowerment would be *leading* the respondents in one direction by already having expectations beforehand, as previously mentioned. It is important that the respondents were able to state whatever that was on their mind without being 'pushed' in any direction. Further, something I was not aware of before after I collected the survey responses, is that most of the mobile network companies in Brazil offers free access to social media networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, but when they click on an external link, it will bring additional costs to the customer, according to a staff member of Think Olga, Karoline Gomes, which is something that might have affected the response rate.

In general, response rates for surveys are declining. Many factors contribute to the decline, including the increased pace of people's lives, and growing suspicion about requests for information from strangers, and the number of survey requests that takes place. In response, many researchers are investigating the best ways to calculate response rates, techniques for improving response rates, and the calculation of weights to compensate for low response rates from specific groups in the sample. The increasing unwillingness of people to participate in questionnaire surveys highlights the importance of all aspects of survey design that may help to engage reluctant respondents.

<div align="right">Kitchin and Thrift (2009: 51-52).</div>

Perhaps one way of increasing the response rate might be by providing the respondents a chance to win a lottery prize. More people participate in surveys when there is a possibility to win a prize. However, as this is a study on women's rights issues and empowerment, I did not see it as appropriate to have a prize for this survey. I wanted to collect the 'true' active social media users and the active Olgas who would see their participation alone as 'rewarding'. In other words, the low participation rate might further be connected to a *possibility* that this small response rate might not then represent the true population of Olgas, but rather represent a small group of women who are more eager and active than the *actual* Olga majority.

To attain a good response rate, one starts with a good questionnaire design that ensures professionalism, elicits interests from potential respondents, and is manageable. One also needs to publicize the survey, and promote its usefulness with advance notices, reminder notices, and rewards if necessary.

<div align="right">Kitchin and Thrift (2009: 10).</div>

For future research, more time is needed to collect a higher response rate. Because of the limited time-frame for this thesis, I was not able to publish the survey multiple times to collect more respondents, something that is sufficient for future research.

3.2 Chapter summary

This chapter has explained the relevancy of choosing the right methodology techniques for research within a master thesis. A mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative techniques is used within this research to investigate my research questions where I used a mixed sampling approach of both random and purposive sample. The margin of error is high, at a 23.77%, because of the low response rate, which is affecting the reliability of the study as it might not be a true representation of the Olgas. Yet, the validity of the respondents was high, as there was a clear correspondence between the questions and the concepts connected to my research questions. Ethical issues were considered when conducting the online survey to the Brazilian audience. Lastly, there are several weaknesses to this research that might have been affecting the low response rate, such as additional cost for entering the survey by phone, and difficulties of doing the survey with text box options on the phone, as well as not being able to publish my survey on Think Olga's Facebook page. These are factors that should be considered in further research.

Next chapter is an introduction to social media and relevant factors specifically in Brazil, such as social media users, mobile phone distribution, and internet access. There will also be an introduction to online activism and physical/offline response connected to Brazilian social media users.

4 Chapter four: Social Media

This chapter is an introduction to social media networks, including definitions on the platforms Facebook and Twitter, as well as considering facts around social media users in Brazil. The mobile phone, the smartphone, is creating opportunities for many women to participate in ways they would not be able to do otherwise. Many people do not have internet access, especially the marginalized population in rural areas. However, smartphones and mobile internet access are spreading throughout the whole population, including the marginalized population. Further, the issue of online activism will be considered, which is connected to how people engage on social media and how they come together online by creating a collective community. However, it is important to keep in mind that offline activism is still vital for a long-lasting change rooted in the society.

4.1 Social Media

Social media is a 21st century term used to broadly define a variety of networked tools or technologies that emphasize the social aspects of the internet as a channel for communication, collaboration, and creative expression, and is often interchangeable with the terms Web 2.0 and social software.

Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2012: 3).

The idea behind social media is that it is a 'co-creation' by the *users*. Web 2.0[1] provides the resources and the platform for this kind of information sharing, collaboration, linking and sharing content (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014: 368). Internet technologies allow protesters to organize in a decentralized manner without a central authority. Efficient mobilization relies on the free flow of information.

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[1] From Web 1.0 (sending emails and texts), there have been a transition to Web 2.0 (social media and smartphones), linking social media and social protest. Source: Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia (2014: 368).

The two core social media sites considered throughout this thesis is *Facebook* and *Twitter*;

Facebook is a social media website used for networking, which can be used for connecting with friends, used to market companies and ideas and create virtual communities for discussion.

Twitter is a social media website used for microblogging, using 140 characters at a time to communicate, which is called a tweet, when you share that tweet, you retweet it. Twitter uses hashtags (#) to facilitate communication and discovering topics.

Martini (2016: 8).

"Facebook provides an additional space for personal expression" (Boellstorff, 2013: 50).

Forms of expression and relationships are created through Facebook and other social media platforms. It is a 'safe' space where Brazilian women freely can share their personal stories and stand up against the machismo norm rooted in the society.

> The spatially and temporally specific social realities are no longer limited to the physical world; the process of moving through space and establishing common grounds can now take place online as well as offline.

Boellstorff (2013: 52).

4.1.1 Social media generation

Social media users are not limited to the youth, and users between 35-44 years old is increasingly joining social media networks (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 59). The figure below shows the distribution of social media users by age in Brazil, as of June 2015 (Statista, Undated: para. 1).
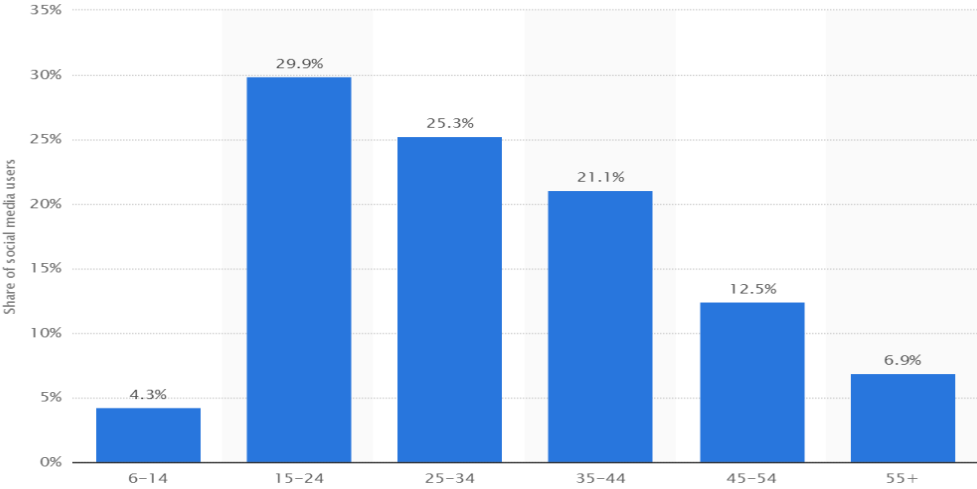
8.Figure: Social media users by age in Brazil. Source: Statista (Undated: para. 1).

According to Statista and figure 10 from 2015, the majority (29.9%) of social media users are teenagers and youth between the age 15-24; young adults between 25-34 are represented by 25.3%; adults between 35-44 is represented by 21.1%; older adults between 45-54 are represented by 12.5%; the older generation from 65 years and above is represented by 6.9%; while the youngest group between 6-14 years old is represented by 4.3% (Statista, Undated).

4.1.2 Mobile phones

Women come together in groups and organizations within their communities to collectively solve common problems, to network, to share experiences, and to fight for change. The mobile phone, especially with the development and spread of the *smartphone*, have affected communication tremendously within women's groups. Women who use mobile phones can communicate with other women and men *freely*. Networking via the mobile phone creates virtual communities and 'social capital'[2] (Abraham, 2009: 102). Social trust, - norms and - networks are virtual as they are embodied in the social media networks through the mobile phone, which is used to build networks to fit specific purposes. Networks of civic engagement on the subjects and visions for transformation expressed by women are an essential form of social capital. The more solid these networks are, the more likely are the members of the community and decision-makers willing to respond to their recommendations. Further, this kind of social capital might be influencing policy and successful advocacy (Abraham, 2009: 102).

4.1.3 Brazil and internet access

With a population of almost 208 million, 59 percent have internet access in Brazil (FreedomHouse, 2016). *"Social networks, communication apps, and video-sharing websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are – for the most part – freely accessible and widely used in Brazil"* (FreedomHouse, 2016: 7). Even though Brazil has seen an increase in economic growth recently, the access rates remain below average compared to Europe and North America. According to *The International Telecommunication Union* (ITU), it is estimated that the internet penetration rate was 59 percent in 2015, compared to 55 in 2014 and 51 percent in 2013 (FreedomHouse, 2016). Many complications continue to prevent households from accessing the internet, such as high prices and social inequalities in the society. There is substantial digital divide in infrastructure between the rural and urban areas. Yet, mobile penetration has seen a significant increase recently, where mobile connections

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[2] Social capital is defined as "stocks of social trust, norms and networks that women can draw upon to solve common problems". Source: Abraham (2009: 101).

has become a dominant means for Brazilians to access the internet with an increase from 88 percent in 2009 to 126 percent in 2015. Although, advanced internet services, such as '4G subscriptions', are highly concentrated in wealthy urban areas (FreedomHouse, 2016).

By January 2016, over 99 million Brazilians were using Facebook actively and 88 million were using social media via mobile technology. Social networking platforms have become significant platforms for citizens to access information, defend civil rights and express a political voice (FreedomHouse, 2016).

4.1.4 Online activism

Online or cyber-activism refers to the digital technology that is used in an activism e-movement, and the economic, political and social context where the technology use takes place. Differences in economic, social, and political factors adjust to how activists uses this technology (Sivitanides & Shah, 2011: 2). Social networks link people together and connectivity is distributed, which allow large groups of people to easily connect to each other, exchange content and coordinate acts, creating the opportunity to establish an effective political movement. People living in wealthier countries are usually more able to participate in digital activism as internet costs are lower and the internet connection are faster and more available (Sivitanides & Shah, 2011: 2). Yet, it does not directly prohibit those with limited financial resources from taking part in digital activism. The growing worldwide use of the smartphone has increased availability in many parts of the world (Sivitanides & Shah, 2011: 3). There are also social norms on how an individual can use digital technology for activism. These expectations differ and depend on factors such as age, gender, education, and ethnicity. Political factors have an impact on digital activism as well, where citizens in democratic societies have an influence over the actions of their government, which is the case of Brazil (Sivitanides & Shah, 2011: 3). This means that Olgas and women in Brazil have the potential to affect government institutions to be involved in the sexual harassment movement. A large collective community have a higher chance of impact and being listened to, rather than small groups or individuals, which is why it is essential to create awareness to increase the collective community to be able to 'force' government institutions to listen. With vital 'proof' of sexual harassment, such as the harassment map, it is possible to 'pressure' governmental institutions to look more attentively at violence against women.

The influence of social media has changed how groups and organizations advocate for social change to spread awareness and participating in their causes (Glenn, 2015: 81).

> Politics has to do with the power to define what is right and wrong, what is legal and illegal, what is legitimate dissent or treason. Traditionally, it has used the mainstream media (newspapers, television, radio, film) to disseminate these discourses, with access (in terms of production) limited to a narrow elite, and with content subject to varying political and economic agendas. Social media have made possible the presentation of alternative discourses to local and global audiences, challenging the orthodoxies of those in power.
>
> Christensen (2011: 156).

Gladwell argues that social action on social media cannot be compared to *offline* activism at any level. Many people might agree that sending a tweet or sharing a photo on Facebook is not the same as protesting out in the public. Yet, social media does provide a way to facilitate awareness of issues at a much larger scale which might lead to further action and practical activism (Rotman et al., 2011: 3). A great example here is *the Women's March* that took place on January 21st this year, the day after the inauguration of President Trump. Women and men all around the world gathered to march together for women's rights issues, which was an event created by social media and was spread out to millions of people accordingly.

4.2 Offline activism

Even though social media can play a vital role in awareness-raising, it is still important to consider both sides of the use of these networks. On one hand, it is a space for people to raise their voice on a more 'low-key level'. Yet, these new social relationships and cyber-communities might also become a future of human social activity that no longer are conducted in meaningful face-to-face communities where people become isolated. Brazilian women should not need to hide behind the screen. Social media and other forums for online activism is a great starting point to raise awareness but it should not become the only place and space where women can raise their voices.

Another important point is that access to the internet is rejected, adopted, extended or ignored by specific individuals and social groups. Those who are privileged enough to have internet access are most likely the more powerful and resourceful in the society. It is therefore important to not just assume that internet is either beneficial or harmful to a society but rather examine the situation through ethnographic exploration of specific examples (Wilding, 2006: 128). Although cyberspace and virtual communications can bring useful opportunities and positive impact - they cannot replace the *offline* physical life in space and place. Social media cannot alone create gender equality if the offline space is not *on-board*. Cyberspace can bring awareness but not sustain a long-term physical effect on the society (Wilding, 2006: 138). Another essential issue is that the majority of Olgas are *females* who contribute to the

awareness of feminist activism through Think Olga. If the rooted machismo gender norms in the Brazilian society are going to change, it is necessary to involve all members of the society, both men and women, as well as changing people's mindset and the way they look at sexual harassment. Women need to recognize their worth as social agents and believe that they are worthy on the same level as men, while the men need to do the same.

Instead of assuming some sort of homogeneous identity between women, it is more sufficient to look at how people identify themselves with others or with specific issues which can provide a more real basis for advocacy and for action. Instead of thinking about all women-in-general are against all men-in-general, it is necessary to recognize that some men do support the inclusion of women and might therefore be important allies. Challenging and transforming relations of power which turn difference into hierarchy is a common thread that can bring together feminist and participatory practitioners' concerns with choice and voice. What is needed to addressing gender is strategies and tactics that shows the power impact of difference, combining advocacy to control open spaces for voice with processes that help people to recognize and practice their agency. Either by reconfiguring the guidelines of interactions in the public arena, permitting silenced participants to raising their voice or reaching out beyond the infrequent suspects to democratize decision-making. Such processes might change gender-blindness into rather addressing power and powerlessness (Cornwall, 2003: 1338).

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter have introduced social media and relevant factors related to Brazil. Social media users are not only limited to the youth; 59 percent of the population have internet access; 126 percent have mobile connection access. The spread of the smartphone is providing marginalized people, especially women, an opportunity to participate in the online community. Social media is connecting people online giving people an opportunity to share and participate, creating a collective identity. Social media provide a way to facilitate awareness of issues at a much larger scale, which might lead to further action and practical activism. However, social media cannot replace offline activism as it does not sustain a long-term physical effect on the society. If the rooted machismo gender view in Brazil are going to change, it is necessary to involve all members of the society, as well as changing people's mindset and the way they look at sexual harassment also outside social media – in the offline space.

5 Chapter five: Online survey results & social media analysis

This chapter is presenting the results and findings of the online survey in part I, and the social media analysis in part II. In part I, all the questions asked in the online survey are listed with an explanation for why I chose to include these questions, as well as an analysis and a possible explanation of the results accordingly. The four-stage theoretical approach is implemented throughout the survey analysis. In part II, the social media analysis explores Olgas engagement level on Facebook and Twitter; 'Is the engagement level high or low, and in what way do the Olgas engage?'

5.1 Part I: Online survey

The response rate for the survey was low with 17 Olgas participating. It is not possible to make a 'true' conclusion from this data collection considering that this is not a true representation of the population, the Olgas. Yet, it is still possible to do an analysis on the data available if taken into consideration the high margin of error.

1) Are you a follower of Think Olga on Facebook and/or Twitter?

This question is essential as it provides the key to this survey and the other questions. All 17 participants (100%) answered 'yes'. If anyone would have answered 'no', it would not have been applicable to use these responses as they must be an *Olga* to take part in the survey.

2) How old are you?

This question is to establish the age range of the Olga. My expectations to age was that most of the participants were under 35 years old because it is expected that mostly *younger* people engage on social media. According to the figure we saw earlier, 59.5% of social media users in Brazil are under 35 years old.

13 (77%) of the respondents were under 35 years old, while 4 (23.5%) were between the age 36–45. There were no respondents over 45 years old, which indicates that most of the Olgas are younger women, as expected.
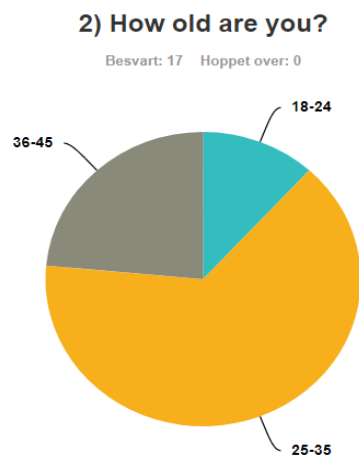
Svarvalg	Svar	
Under 18	0,00%	0
18-24	11,76%	2
25-35	64,71%	11
36-45	23,53%	4
Over 45	0,00%	0
Totalt		17

3) Where do you live?

This question is to find out where the Olgas live - if it is in an urban or rural area.

13 (76.4%) said that they live in an urban area, 3 (17.6%) said that they live abroad, while 1 (5.8%) said that they live in a community *within* an urban area. The latter is referring to a *favela,* which is a low-income historically informal urban area, and is another term for 'slum'. Favela is a sensitive term to use in a social context, which is why I chose to call it 'a *community* within an urban area'. I expected most of the Olgas to live in urban areas. None of the Olgas said that they live in a rural area, and only *one* live in a *favela*. This indicates that most of the Olgas live in resource-rich areas where they have higher access to internet and mobile networks.

3) Where do you live?

Besvart: 17   Hoppet over: 0
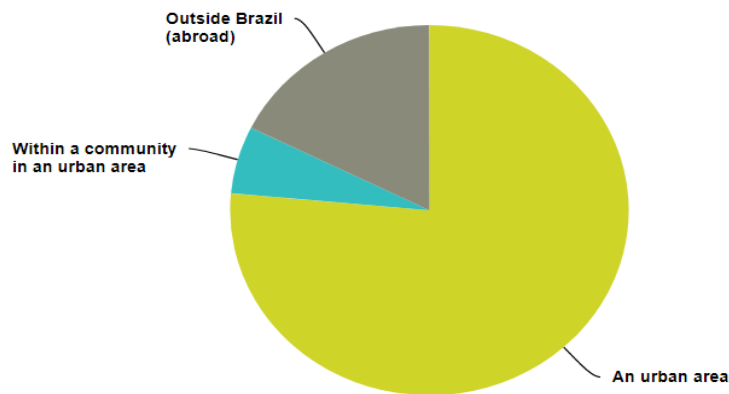
Svarvalg		Svar	
▼	**An urban area**	76,47%	13
▼	**Within a community in an urban area**	5,88%	1
▼	**A rural area**	0,00%	0
▼	**Outside Brazil (abroad)**	17,65%	3
Totalt			17

4) What gender do you identify with?

All participants answered that they were 'female', which was what I expected. I added options for 'male', and 'other' as well.

It would be interesting to see if there were any males taking part in this survey. All members of the society need to be aware of the problem around sexual harassment. I added the option for 'other' in case someone did not identify themselves with either female or male, and maybe saw themselves as a third gender, *transgender*.

5) What is your ethnicity?

This question is to establish the different ethnicities among the Olgas.

12 (70.5%) said they were 'white', 2 (11.7%) said they were black, and 3 (17.6%) said 'other', which I believe refer to 'mixed race' or 'brown'[3]. No one said they were 'indigenous'. I expected the majority of Olgas to be 'white', which is also the case. Considering that the majority population in Brazil today is black and mixed race people, the percentage of the Olgas' ethnicities should technically be higher than 30% - especially when considering the fact that black and mixed race people face more discrimination than white people.

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[3] I made an error when setting up the online survey as I, by mistake, forgot to set up the option for 'brown'. I found the categories for ethnicity in Brazil through IBGE (the national institute of geography and statistics). Source: IBGE (Undated).

5) What is your ethnicity?
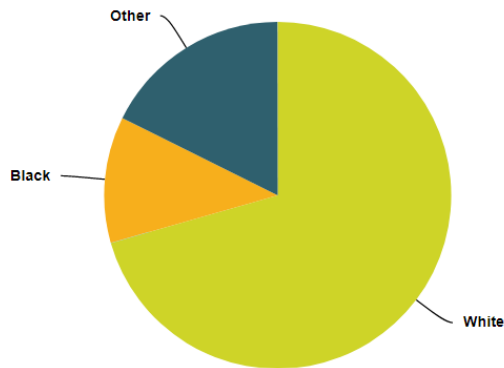
Svarvalg		Svar	
▼	White	70,59%	12
▼	Indigenous	0,00%	0
▼	Black	11,76%	2
▼	Yellow	0,00%	0
▼	Other	17,65%	3
Totalt			17

6) What is your completed educational level?

I asked this question to see what educational level most of the Olgas had completed. I was expecting the majority to be highly educated.

8 of the Olgas (47%) were highly educated with either graduate or postgraduate degrees. It is worth mentioning here that *graduate studies* are called *postgraduate studies* in Brazil. 7 of the Olga (41.1%) had higher education such as college or an undergraduate degree. Only 2 (11.7%) of the respondents did not have higher education and had completed 'only' high school/ upper secondary school.

6) What is your completed educational level?

Besvart: 17   Hoppet over: 0
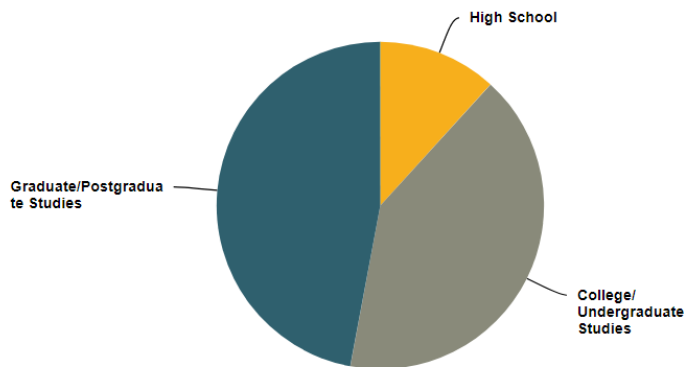
Svarvalg	Svar	
Elementary School level 1	0,00%	0
Elementary School level 2	0,00%	0
High School	11,76%	2
College/ Undergraduate Studies	41,18%	7
Graduate/Postgraduate Studies	47,06%	8
Totalt		17

7) Are you actively engaging with Think Olga on social media?

This question is to find out the engagement level and what kind of engagement the Olgas engage through social media. This question is related to the *online media response,* to establish how actively the Olgas engage with Think Olga's content, and to estimate how the Olgas are creating a collective identity and the way Olgas discuss and share ideas through social media.

Most of the Olgas have a high engagement level on social media, where 10 (58.8%) said they share posts and retweets, which is the most significant engagement for creating more awareness. When someone share a post/tweet on Facebook or Twitter, all their friends and followers may see this post, and these people might not be Olgas and would not have been exposed to this information unless it was shared/ retweeted. Thus, social media has the potential to reach a huge audience and create awareness on important issues. Think Olga has the potential to reach hundreds of thousands, maybe even millions of people when its followers engage and share its contents. Even though the numbers of engagement could be higher, it is still significant to recognize the importance of the awareness spreading that is happening beyond these numbers as it is not possible to collect the numbers of followers reading the content and spreading the word offline to friends and family.

Further, 2 (11.7%) said they 'comment' on posts and tweets, while 7 (41.1%) said they 'like' posts and tweets. Both commenting and liking is also spreading awareness at a similar way as through sharing/retweeting because when someone *comment* or *like* a post, it might also become visible to your friends and followers in their newsfeed where you can see others' engagement on Facebook or Twitter. 2 (11.7%) said they do not engage but they still read the content, which creates awareness-building on an individual level. 1 (5.8%) said they do not engage with the content at all. Yet, when it comes to the latter, I believe this is not entirely true as this respondent would not have participated in this survey if the person did not read or engage with the content at all.

7) Are you actively engaging with Think Olga on social media?

Besvart: 17   Hoppet over: 0
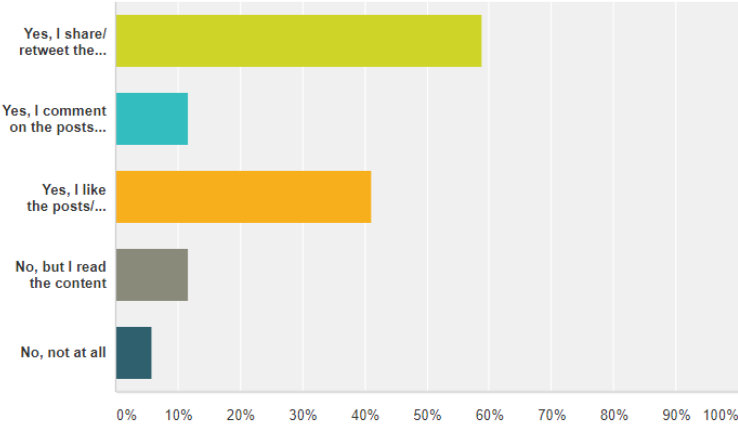
Svarvalg	Svar	
Yes, I share/ retweet the posts	58,82%	10
Yes, I comment on the posts/ tweets	11,76%	2
Yes, I like the posts/ tweets	41,18%	7
No, but I read the content	11,76%	2
No, not at all	5,88%	1
Totalt antall respondenter: 17		

8) Do you connect to social media mostly on your phone or on your computer?
This question is to find out how the Olgas connect to social media, if it is through their mobile phone or by using a computer. I expected the majority to connect through their phones.

11 (64.7%) said they connect through their phone, while 6 (35.2%) connect through the computer. If we look back at some numbers provided earlier regarding Brazil's use and access to internet and mobile network, it shows that 59.5% of the population have internet access, and mobile penetration has seen a significant increase recently, where mobile connections have become a dominant means for Brazilians to access the internet with an increase to 126

percent in 2015. Yet, there are still many complications which continue to prevent households from accessing the internet, such as high prices and social inequalities in the society.

This might be one explanation for why there are mostly white and highly educated people living in urban areas participating in this survey because many people living in rural areas or in favelas might not have internet access. Perhaps they do have a mobile phone with internet access but it is more complicated to respond to an online survey with text boxes on a mobile phone compared to a computer, as previously mentioned.

8) Do you connect to social media mostly on your phone or on your computer?

Besvart: 17   Hoppet over: 0
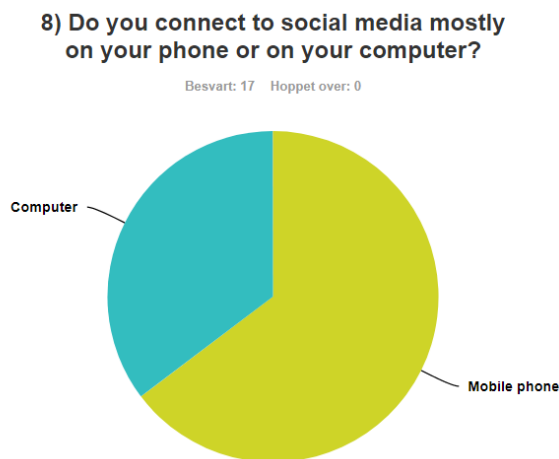
Svarvalg		Svar	
▼	**Mobile phone**	64,71%	11
▼	**Computer**	35,29%	6
▼	**Other**	0,00%	0
Totalt			17

9) Have you ever experienced sexual harassment?

This question is a *sensitive* question where some of the respondents would perhaps not want to answer, which is why I added an additional option to this question - "*Do not want to answer this question*", as all questions in the survey were mandatory. This question is further related to the *triggering event,* which is the issue of sexual harassment women face in Brazil.

I created this question to see if there is a connection between Olgas and experiencing sexual harassment as this is the key of Think Olga's work. I also added the definition on sexual harassment, as mentioned in chapter 1 provided by the UN, to the question as people define it in different ways.

14 (82.3%) said 'yes' to having experienced sexual harassment, while 3 (17.6%) said 'no'. No one used the third option. All respondents were anonymous, which is probably why the respondents were open to tell their stories. I added a text box next to the 'yes' option. The

respondents were free to say what they wanted about what happened to them, and there were a lot of different replies. The results were similar to what I expected, as I expected the numbers of 'yes' to be high. This proves the fact that sexual harassment is a serious problem throughout Brazil.

The respondents mentioned different incidents, such as verbal aggression; psychological abuse; catcalling, unwanted sexual comments; unwanted physical contact; sexual jokes from family members and co-workers; attempted rape; sexual abuse and sexual abuse as a child.

Some of the testimonies of the respondents were emotional and upsetting, as seen below:

"In addition to verbal harassment and threats, I have suffered from two harassments and attempted rape when some guy tried to throw me in a car".

"My co-worker touched my breasts and was angry at me because I said I was going to tell someone. People often find me crazy when I talk about women's rights. He said I should be happy because many women are punished when they talk like I do. I never had the courage to tell anyone this until today and I even felt wrong to doubt a serious professional like him, but I still avoid being alone with him".

This testimony is saying that the respondent has not told anyone about the incident before here and now, something that proves in favor of Think Olga promoting empowerment and creating awareness about women's rights issues by providing the voiceless a voice.

"I have suffered from sexual abuse and the reason for understanding my situation was through social media networks and the testimony of other women in the same situation".

This respondent state that social media networks and the awareness of knowing she is not alone has helped her to understand that sexual harassment is not acceptable. In this way, social media can create a collective voice and group identity.

"There are so many cases of abuse that in fact it is difficult to remember all of them, because it is so naturalized in the day to day life even for us - the women and victims."

Another thing worth mentioning is that several of the respondents wrote that sexual harassment is very common in Brazil and it happens all the time. One example is the last testimony from one of the respondents. It is not in a way that they accept it but perhaps it might be a way of recognizing it as *'normal',* because it happens all the time and thus becomes a part of their reality.

Gender representations, and the ideas of gender roles as subordinated and inferior are highly connected to the patterns of structural inequalities of any society. The material reality of the redistributive injustice suffered by many Brazilian women are pushing women to play out

gender stereotypes through wider cultural and social networks within the society. Symbolic or subtle violence such as stereotypes, misconceptions and the trivialization of women and girls with assumptions about what they should be like, can be equally harmful and have strong and lasting psychological consequences on women. This could, for instance, be sexual harassment which started at a young age contributing to a sense of low self-esteem and difficulty in gaining confidence in their life. Nevertheless, the harassment might continue later in life at the workplace or other public spaces where they constantly must fight for their dignity and respect (Matos, 2016: 190).

10) If yes, did you report it through Think Olga?

This question is relevant to see how many of those who had experienced sexual harassment did report the incident(s) by using social media tools provided by Think Olga, such as using hashtags or report it through the harassment map. This question is related to the *viral organization,* a community created online by a mass reaction to the triggering event, *sexual harassment.*

12 (70.5%) said they did *not* report it through Think Olga, while 2 (11.7%) said they *did*. The remaining 3 (17.6%) are the respondents who said 'no' to the previous question, who had not experienced sexual harassment. The majority are not using the tools provided by Think Olga to report their incidents, which is unexpected. The respondents who answered 'yes' wrote in the text box what kind of tools they used. One respondent said that she had reported several incidents through the harassment map, while the second respondent said she used hashtags together with the *#FirstHarassment* campaign. Why does so few of the Olgas report the incidents of sexual harassment to Think Olga? One thought might be that, even though Olgas are aware of the issue that sexual harassment is in fact a violation, it is necessary to take the next step to actively do something about it. To report an incident is to make an action offline, which is something that each individual need to do within their own pace, whenever they are ready to do so. It will take time to get the offline space on-board and as active as the online space.

11) What does the word 'empowerment' mean to you? Can you give some examples on what empowerment mean to you?

This question is related to see how the respondents relate to the term *empowerment* and what it means to them personally. The respondents replied somewhat similar responses. Some keywords were mentioned several times, such as; be treated equally; treated with respect; freedom; strength; given a voice; and resistance.

Below is a collection of some of the respondents' testimonies:

"To me, empowering someone is to make them aware of their rights, how to access them, about their status as a woman in the society, and this only makes sense if it happens collectively. Keeping silent, blaming the victim and other discourses that keeps us unaware of violence against women in our culture is an essential part of this phenomenon of empowering women through knowledge, since recognizing the problem is essential to combat it."

"Empowerment means, above all, having and seeking knowledge. If I have knowledge, I can debate and argue with people. I can also know my rights and fight for them. I can share the information with others. I can raise my self-esteem. In short, empowerment is to have and seek knowledge and self-knowledge."

"Empowerment is to help recognize the abuses suffered and to know that society has not yet evolved to the point of blaming the harasser and not the victims."

As mentioned earlier, empowerment can be defined in many ways. There is not one 'correct' definition but rather the way these women describe what empowerment means to them is just as correct as the definition provided by the United Nations.

Rowlands talked about 'zero-sum' power' earlier; the more power one person has, the less the other has - which is what these women are talking about:

"For me empowerment is to have power over myself. It is being who I am, being what I want to be, doing what I want to do, regardless of what society thinks about it."

This testimony is saying 'I want power over myself', instead of being controlled by someone else, and the same goes for the society as she is referring to the machismo culture, that women are 'supposed' to have less power over themselves, and where the men have power *over* women, and women as a marginalized group, which has further been normalized in the society.

"It means freedom from the patterns that have been imposed on us and introduced as 'natural'."

Empowerment might also be referring to *'power to'*, which is achieved by increasing women's ability to resist and challenge *'power over'*. Empowerment can then be seen as 'the user's interpretation of power', which all of these testimonies are illustrating.

Without the awareness of the fact that women are being marginalized and that it is not just a natural part of their culture, they would not know what empowerment means or be able to give these testimonies. Thus, it becomes clear that Think Olga is creating awareness and collective identities, which are keys to empowerment.

"Empowerment means empowering and stimulating the development of women in different settings and ensuring that women and girls have the capacity to occupy spaces of power, decision-making and recognition."

Empowerment is also about making women believe in themselves as able and entitled to have power over themselves, and be part of decision-making processes, which is creating empowerment at an individual level.

12) Why is empowerment important, in your opinion?

This question is similar to the question above but is still important as it can vary from the different respondents' opinions. Common opinions were keywords such as; to free women; to be respected; and acknowledge women's strength and power.

Below is a collection of some of the respondents' testimonies:

"Empowerment is important because it frees women from rules, values and beliefs carved out by a macho society. Empowerment also makes women more aware of their role as women!"

"As women gain space, independence, and decision making, more women are represented, and they can freely have their work, thoughts, and other valued contributions."

"It is through empowerment that women learn not to view violence as something that is part of life and realize that they need to report it and ask for help, and that there is no reason to be ashamed or blamed for what happened."

"It is the empowerment that keeps us alive, keeps us fighting. It is with my empowerment that I open my friend's eyes a little more every day and save her from an abusive relationship. It is with empowerment that I am free to speak up and make people think about their actions. It is because of empowerment that, for the first time in 27 years, I had the courage to speak up and defend myself and expose my opinions, even if they call me crazy. Because I know I'm not."

Empowerment is important because it is creating a *collective identity,* where women work together to achieve a more widespread impact than they could have done alone. Think Olga is creating empowerment by helping them creating a safe space where they can share stories on social media or perhaps by using the harassment map to report a sexual harassment incident.

"Without empowerment, many of us will remain in a situation of violence, and keep being voiceless."

"Because it is through empowerment that we can form a network of strong women, united and with a common goal that is the elimination of macho oppression."

"Empowerment demonstrates that you are not alone in the world and that there is an available network of support and understanding. It motivates you to go beyond what is expected of you."

Empowerment change depending on contexts, languages, as well as gender-related conceptions and priorities. It is suggested that empowerment as a *"concept itself needs to be*

defined by the communities in which empowerment is to take place in order for this process to be meaningful" (Lund et al., 2015: 5).

13) Do you believe Think Olga is creating empowerment? If yes, in what way?
This question is one of the most vital questions in the survey as it is directly connected to my main research question. All previous questions have been leading up to this question. My expectations are that the majority will say 'yes' to this question when considering the previous questions and answers already collected and analyzed. This question is to establish in what way Think Olga is creating a collective identity, and why the Olgas come together through a *viral organization.*

16 (94.1%) said 'yes' to this question, while 1 (5.8%) said 'no'. This means that the majority *does* feel empowered by social media and by Think Olga.

Think Olga is creating empowerment on different levels, by sharing information through social media. Olgas are becoming more conscious about being marginalized and harassed by hearing other women's stories and testimonies. Thus, it is becoming an educational tool where Brazilian women can learn about sexual harassment and how they can stand up towards the gender norms rooted in a macho society by creating a social protest online and mobilizing together as an online community. Marginalization is constantly built and rebuilt through time and takes various paths in different cultural contexts (Blaikie, Jones, & Brun, 2014: 3).

"Yes, Think Olga brings up issues that needs to be seen. Many women identify with the reported stories and feel more secure in sharing their stories. It is a good educational tool and collective feminine empowerment."

"In presenting several issues and issues that leads to the discovery of empowerment."

"Yes, because it supports and promotes actions that emancipate women especially in relation to violence and entrepreneurship."

"Yes, well, how many thousand women have become feminists because of Olga? Many!!!"

"Women can have other visions, and realize that it is not okay to be silent and that it is possible to change the sexist world we live in."

"Yes, of course! Just the fact of existing is an indication that we are not alone in the world. It helps us to rethink and reconsider."

"By spreading and strengthening the circulation of information that is important for generating self-confidence in women."
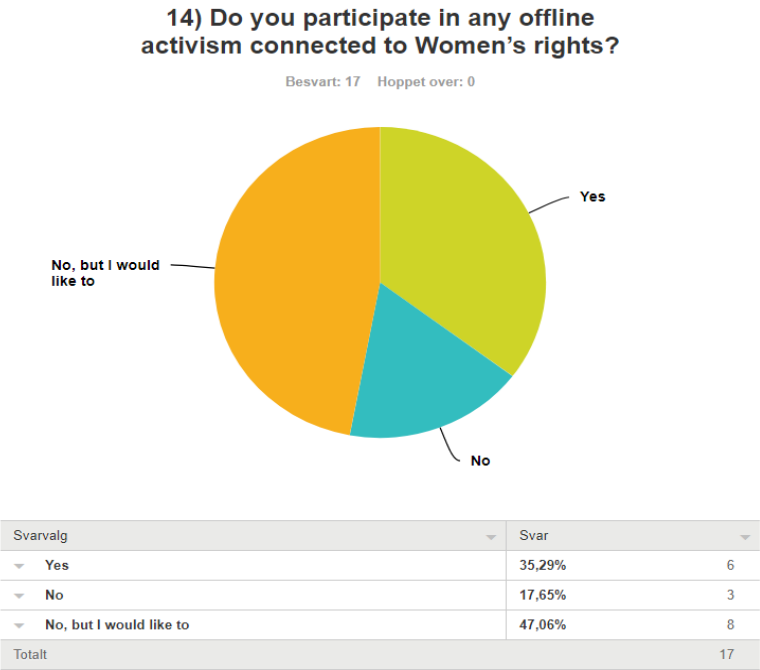
Through these testimonies, it is clear that Think Olga is creating empowerment on both a personal and collective level. I further investigated the one respondent who said 'no' to believing Think Olga is creating empowerment. Even though the respondents were

anonymous, I was still able to look at the individuals' replies. Because by discovering the identity of the Olgas, it is vital to create an image of the social actors, and how they may connect, since this means that people might react to and interact with social phenomena differently because of their background. In this regard, there are several factors that might affect the respondent's answer. Firstly, the respondent is one of the few 'older' participants, she is between 36-45 years old; her ethnicity is white; she is highly educated; and lives in an urban area. In other words, the respondent might be somewhat resource-rich or 'privileged'. The fact that she is 'older' as well, is another point, as older women in the society seems to have an even more struggle to realize that harassment is not a *compliment*. The respondent replied 'no' to the question about activism, that she is not active offline, and does not want to become active in women's rights issues (which is the last question in the survey in question 14, see below). However, the respondent is active on social media, by commenting on posts or tweets. She defined empowerment as *"being treated equally"*. The respondent had experienced sexual harassment, through psychological pressure and gave an example of her boyfriend threating her; *"if you leave me, you won't find anyone else because no one wants you"*. Something to consider regarding this respondent is that she might not yet have gained self-confidence or recognized her own worth. Thus, she might not yet understand the ways in which Think Olga is creating empowerment. Another point to consider is that she might still be affected and be under *domination* by the boyfriend she mentioned in her testimony. I refer here to the three dimensions of empowerment previously mentioned, and this is an example of *close relations,* where empowerment is about developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of the relationship and decisions made within it.

Furthermore, the researcher cannot expect to control the outcomes of 'true' empowerment as true power cannot be given because it comes from within. True empowerment might show some unexpected results, which means that this respondent perhaps also negotiate empowerment differently than what I expected. Individual experiences and in relation to how people and local communities mobilize to create change, is how agency is understood. It is essential to understand the limitations of agency and why people choose passivity as their strategy (Blaikie et al., 2014: 9).

14) Do you participate in any offline activism connected to women's rights?
This question is relevant to see how active Olgas are offline regarding women's rights issues. It is to see if the Olgas are empowered in a way that motivates them to be active also offline through a *physical/ offline response* to the social movement.

6 (35.2%) said 'yes', 3 (17.6%) said 'no', while 8 (47%) said 'no but I would like to'. In this sense, 14 (82.9%) said either 'yes' or that they *want* to be active. This indicates that engagement through Think Olga and awareness spreading on social media *can* lead to *activism offline* or at least have the potential to do so.

14) Do you participate in any offline activism connected to Women's rights?

Besvart: 17   Hoppet over: 0

Svarvalg	Svar	
Yes	35,29%	6
No	17,65%	3
No, but I would like to	47,06%	8
Totalt		17

The work that is necessary for increasing the levels of confidence and self-esteem among marginalized women in such a way that will enhance their ability to take charge or their own needs is considered a long-term process. Thus, this is an individual process that each individual need to do within their own pace. When participating in a group, a certain level of recognizing your abilities and worth is still necessary. Yet, individual empowerment alone is not sufficient. Collective empowerment is needed to be able to make a change in a society, which again depends on the social capital within the group. The impact of such group activity still depends on the individual empowerment, at least of *some* people. In this regard, those who are actively fighting for women's rights offline are needed to be *drivers* of the collective empowerment (Rowlands, 1995: 102).

Agarwal talks about inclusiveness and the idea of people's participation in development. Effective participation requires people's involvement not just as individuals but as a collectivity. An increasing emphasis on community participation is seen through group formation in all forms of development interventions (Agarwal, 2001: 1623). It can be argued that participation is determined by rules, norms and perceptions, in addition to the attributes of those affected, which can disadvantage women both interactively and separately. Women's

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ability to change them will depend on their bargaining power with the community (Agarwal, 2001: 1624).

Next to the women seeking a change in norms and rules, it is also about the group's willingness to act collectively in their common gender interest without any social gaps. To improve women's bargaining power, a required step would be to change both how they see themselves, and how their families and communities see them. Women's visible contributions and collective strength can help relax restrictive social norms, and change a man's view on women (Agarwal, 2001: 1645). Women can resist, accept, and create different meanings out of notions of participation, which can be done in various ways either indirectly or directly, passive or actively.

This explains why women in Brazil raise their voices for the fight against sexual harassment through Think Olga as these women are in the same situation and have experienced something similar. They can relate to each other, which makes it easier for these women to speak up as a collective mass instead of as individuals raising their voices to women in general or to men. Think Olga creates a platform for women who have experienced sexual harassment and are no longer a muted group. They renegotiate their agency through Think Olga.

5.2 Part II: Social Media Analysis of Think Olga's Facebook and Twitter page *(date range from 12/12/2016 to 12/05/2017)*

*All figures are taken from Simply Measured's generated reports.*

1) Think Olga's Facebook Fans Overview
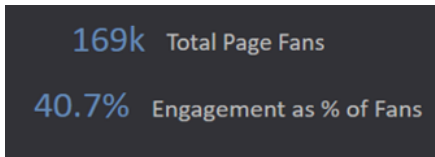
On Facebook, Think Olga has 169k followers, and the percentage of its followers or 'fans' engaging with Think Olga's content is 40.7% on average. The engagement is quite high, as 40 percent indicates that almost every other follower is engaging with Think Olga's content. It is also important to remember that the rest of the 60% might still be reading the content, and is perhaps creating awareness offline, something that cannot be measured.

2) How do the Olgas engage on Facebook?
(Total engagement between 12/12/16 - 12/05/17)
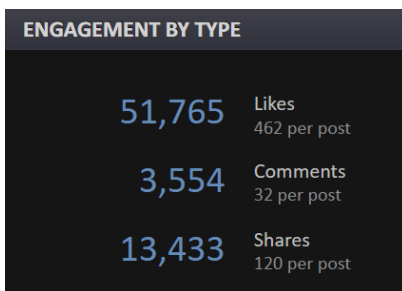
Think Olga's followers on Facebook engage mostly by giving *likes*, which is the most common and easy way of engaging on social media. The average 'likes' per post is 462. Sharing a post has quite higher numbers as well, with an average of 120 shares per post. This indicates that many of the Olgas have high interest rate in Think Olga's content and want to spread awareness to their personal friends and followers. Comments per post on average is 32 per post, which is not too high of a number, but it still shows engagement.

3) How do the Olgas engage on Twitter?

Total engagement between 12/12/16-12/05/17
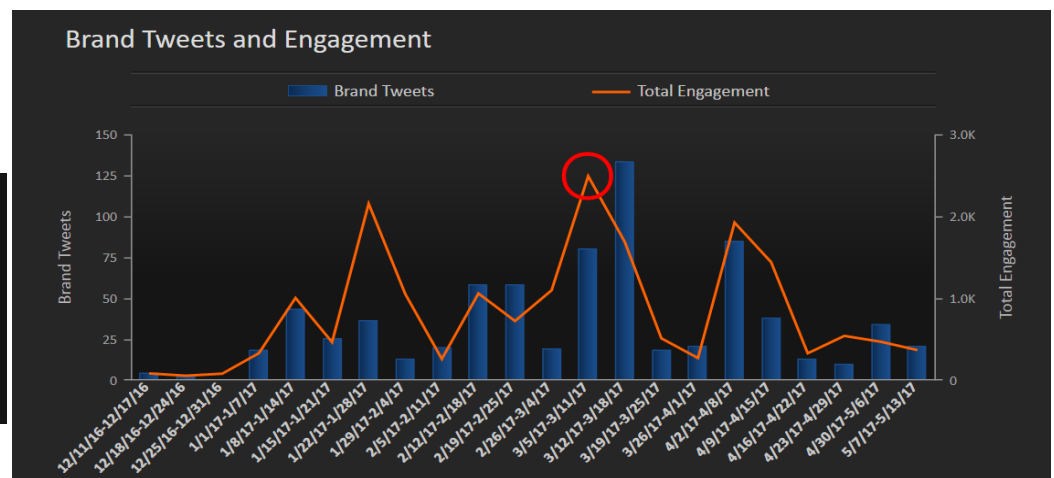
It can be argued when looking at the graph above that the Olgas have high engagement on Twitter. The orange line indicates Olgas' engagement according to the numbers of tweets. The red circle refer to the day with most engagement compared to the number of tweets. The most obvious reason for the high engagement on Twitter is the fact that Twitter is the most used platform for #hashtags, which is an important part of Think Olga's engagement as a part of their online campaigns. On Twitter, 'likes' are the most common way of engagement. Retweets are the second most common way of engagement, which is the same as 'sharing' on Facebook. 'Mentions' is when posting a tweet while mentioning @*ThinkOlga* in the tweet. 'Replies' is the same as commenting, which is the least common way of engagement on Twitter, same as on Facebook.

4) Think Olga's Twitter Engagement
(Total engagement between 12/12/16 - 12/05/17
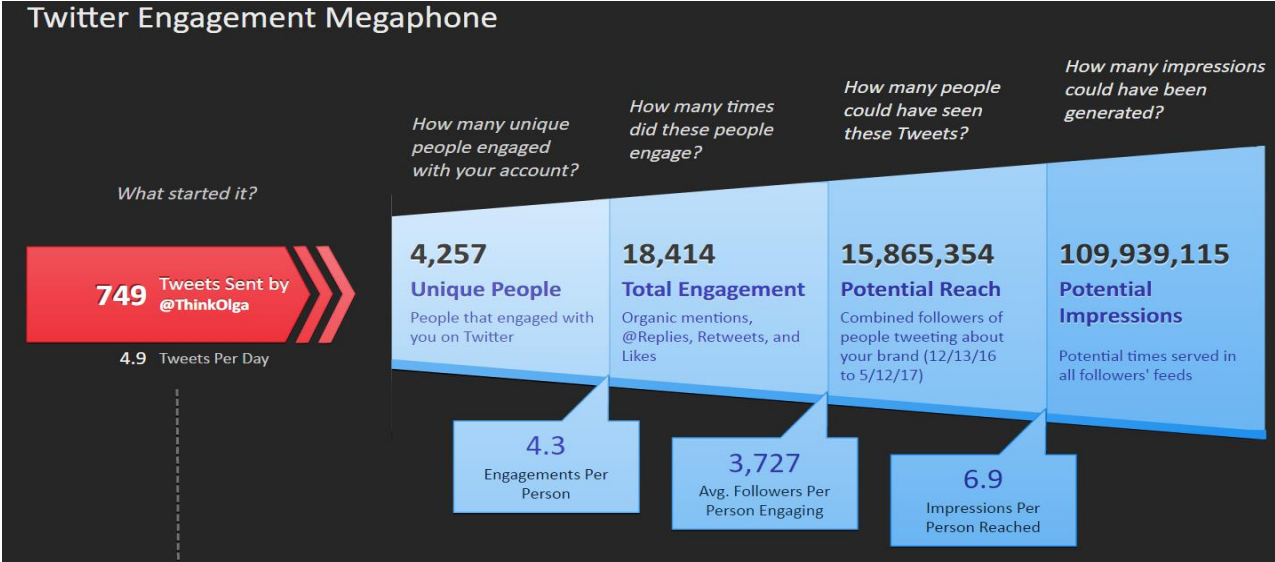
Think Olga tweeted 749 times within this six months' period. 4,257 people engaged with the tweets within this time. Looking at retweets, replies, and likes, the total engagement is 18,414, which is 4.3 engagement per person. Combining followers of people tweeting about Think Olga, the potential reach become as high as 15,865,354, because the average number of followers per person engaging is 3,727. Potential impressions are the potential times all the tweets and engagement to these tweets have appeared in all the followers' newsfeed, which is as high as 109,939,115. That is 6.9 impressions per person reached.

These numbers are extremely high and the specific numbers are not important. What is important here is to recognize the fact that social media has the potential to reach a huge

audience and create awareness on important issues. Think Olga has the potential to reach millions of people when its followers engage with its tweets and posts, as seen above.

Even though the numbers of engagement could be higher, it is still important to recognize the importance of the awareness spreading that is happening beyond these numbers as it is not possible to collect the numbers of followers reading the content and spreading the word offline to friends and family.

5.3 Chapter summary

Throughout this chapter, we have investigated the results and collected an analysis on the online survey replies and the social media generated reports. The survey provided some expected and some unexpected results. Regarding the Olgas social identity, the majority is not representing women in Brazil in general as most of the women were young, white, highly educated, living in urban areas, which indicates that most of the more marginalized women, who live in rural areas; are less educated; and/or are black and mixed race, are not represented throughout the Olgas. However, the margin of error is high, which means that these results cannot be used to conclude anything for sure. Because of the low reliability, if I collected several survey samples, the results and replies might be very different. Yet, as the respondents were able to define empowerment with their own words, and since 16 out of 17 said they do feel empowered by using social media through Think Olga, I believe it is still possible to say to some extent that the Olgas does feel empowered by social media tools. Regarding the social media generated reports, it became clear that Think Olga's followers do have a high engagement level on both platforms. It also became clear how much potential social media networks has to spread awareness and important content in no time with a potential reach of millions of people.

Next and last chapter is a further discussion on the findings throughout this thesis. There will be a summary discussion on the findings in the study with the analytical approach. Further, my research questions will be answered, and there will be some final concluding remarks at the end to conclude my thesis.

6 Chapter six: Discussion on Findings

The last and concluding chapter will discuss the findings in this thesis, firstly with a summary discussion including my analytical approach, followed by my research questions and objectives. As seen throughout this thesis, sexual harassment is a serious problem within the Brazilian community rooted in their macho culture. Social media is a vital tool that can help women all over Brazil to come together as a collective community online to spread knowledge and create awareness as social media have the potential to reach an unlimited amount of people in no time. Think Olga is creating a space where women can speak freely and tell their stories, something we have seen through the Olgas' testimonies, which can further lead to empowerment. Still, it is important to be actively involved in women's rights issues also in the offline space to be able to achieve a long-lasting change in the society.

6.1 Summary discussion on findings

Sexual harassment, the triggering event, is a problem women and girls face all over Brazil in their everyday lives. Many of these women are not aware that sexual harassment is, the matter of fact, a *violation*, and it should not be treated as a naturalized part of the machismo culture. This is starting to change.

Since 2015, the online media response has seen a boom as feminist groups have been resorted broadly to Facebook and Twitter to protest, criticize and mobilize sexism in Brazil. Women come together as they have something in common, and thus, social media have the ability to reach different groups of women all over Brazil, and is creating a collective identity and community online accordingly.

Think Olga, the viral organization, is creating new opportunities for women to be more visible and have a voice in the community. The NGO is created specifically for women in Brazil connected to their cultural experiences, rather than being a top-down organization focusing on developing marginalized women as victims from a 'Eurocentric' perspective. Each of the ideas of gender, class and ethnicity signifies explicit types of power relations produced and exercised in and through numerous of political, cultural and economic practices (Brun & Blaikie, 2016: 10-11). People and communities are affected differently by global processes, which can be both positive or negative as all individuals act differently in the way they use their agency and strategy (Lie & Lund, 2005: 12). We cannot say that women are generally 'victims' as women or gender cannot be treated as global categories. The only way we can analyze women as actors to shape their lives, is by looking at what happens locally in regard to local traditions (Lie & Lund, 2005: 26), which is what this thesis have done by looking into how Olgas feel empowered on their own terms as empowerment comes from within based on the individuals' terms. Think Olga is *transforming* women from being 'victims' at an individual level, being unknowledgeable and by believing they are alone, to becoming 'survivors' and fighters at a collective level by empowering women through a collective online community through using social media. By doing this, Olgas feel empowered by knowing that there are so many other women out there who have experienced the same thing, and who wants to fight back and stand up for their rights.

Social media is, furthermore, a widespread phenomenon created by globalization. Globalization questions individuals' understanding of themselves and their place in the world. People search for new understandings of gender within a constantly changing world by focusing on processes at a structural and individual level through studying communities and people experiencing ongoing economic, cultural and societal transformations by looking at how gender is renegotiated locally, and where new identities are expressed (Lie & Lund, 2005: 8-9). Thus, Olgas are renegotiating the Brazilian community's gender norms and the way it is treating women because of the new knowledge they are exposed to through sharing content on social media. They are renegotiating their agency in a way they make a choice to fight for their rights, either it is online, offline or passive.

Yet, it is important to remember that social media alone does not empower women, but the way women use it to their own benefit that *might* lead to empowerment. For women to experience empowerment and transformation, they need to be agents of their own processes, in charge of and in control of the process of change (Buskens & Webb, 2009: 207).

Strengthen women's access to and use of social media tools indicates a change in people's mindsets and knowledge that have created the gender inequality and male dominance in the first place. Social media increases the global interconnectedness, which should prevent it from creating new spaces of exclusion and marginalization. Still, after investigating the results from the online survey, it seems like there *are* some groups being excluded and marginalized from participating in the feminist discussions online and excluded from being an Olga, such as the less educated women, women living in rural areas, black/ mixed race/ indigenous women, as well as older women. Yet, considering the high margin of error for my study, it cannot be concluded that this is 'true'.

Access to the internet and the smartphone has provided women in Brazil with knowledge they would not have gained otherwise. There are endless opportunities by using social media if the right resources are provided and are accessible to all groups. Even though the male dominance are still standing strong in Brazil, women are slowly becoming more educated and taking part in the global conversations about sexual harassment and women's rights issues through social media networks (Pilch, 2006: 114). Social media cannot alone make a change but it does have significant impact on helping shape debate, influencing and creating awareness. To end sexual harassment in Brazil and to promote gender equality, a change in perception, attitudes, and mentality is required in relation to social groups. Furthermore, social change is a long-term process rather than a quick fix. Making a change calls for an approach that can deal with the diversity of experiences and interactions that are part of the everyday life, instead of imposing categories and concepts from traditional gender approaches. This requires strategies that are sensitive to local dynamics of difference, which builds on the 'gender issues' where men and women can identify with and mobilize around, such as gender violence, instead of essentializing sexual difference (Cornwall, 2003: 1337-1338), which is why it is vital for the Brazilian society to recognize sexual harassment as a *violation* and something that cannot be tolerated instead of something that is locally bounded.

One important step towards this goal is to include physical/ offline response**.** The society should start recognizing this issue as essential for their society's future development. This change has already started as Think Olga's campaigns has reached government institutions and media outlets, and as women are encouraged to come on TV shows to tell their stories. It is important that the government, institutions, international organizations and NGOs are actively involved in this process for a rooted transformation to take place. For instance, the example we saw earlier, regarding the *Public Defender Office of Sâo Paulo state* that helped

place the harassment map all over the city's public transportation system. More action like this is needed from the government and other institutions. Another vital offline activity is the number of phone calls and reports for reporting physical, sexual and psychological violence against women, which has seen a 40 percent increase after 2015. This is an essential change that indicates that a transformation is taking place right now, and that women are starting to feel empowered by the spread of knowledge happening online by acting also outside social media. Furthermore, as seen in chapter 5, 6 (35%) Olgas said they are active within women's rights issues offline. This number is not too high, yet it is a beginning. The vital movement of 'the spring of the woman' took place in 2015, which is quite recently. Thus, this is just the beginning of a new social transformation slowly happening within the Brazilian society. Long-lasting change takes time as all individuals have their own pace for changing their mindsets that has been rooted in them from early childhood. Furthermore, an additional 8 (47%) of the Olgas said they *want* to be active offline, which indicates that a total of 14 (82.9%) Olgas said that they are or that they *want* to be active offline. In this way, engagement through Think Olga and awareness spreading on social media may lead to activism *offline* or at least have the potential to do so.

Collective empowerment *offline* is needed to be able to make a long-lasting change. The impact of such group activity still depends on the individuals' empowerment, at least of *some* people. In this regard, those who are actively fighting for women's rights offline are needed to be *drivers* of the collective empowerment. Further, it is also about the group's willingness to act collectively in their common gender interest without any social gaps. Thus, it is necessary to include all kinds of women from different groups and backgrounds, and included those who seems to be marginalized and excluded at this point, such as the less educated, rural, black/ mixed race/ indigenous, as well as the older generation – in other words, the population living with less resources than the more privileged, educated and white population. This goes for the entire population, and not just the women. To improve women's bargaining power, a required step would be to change both how they see themselves, and how their families and communities see them. Women's visible contributions and collective strength can help relax restrictive social norms, and change a man's view on women (Agarwal, 2001: 1645). Women can resist, accept, and create different meanings out of notions of participation, which can be done in various ways either indirectly or directly, passive or actively. Thus, Olgas are contributing in different ways, where some choose to be *actively* involved online/ offline; some rather *directly* active in close relationships by, for instance, choosing to *resist* as a

strategy; while some perhaps choose to be *passive*, which means that they choose to, for instance, read Think Olga's content on social media and increase knowledge on an individual level. Why someone choose passivity as a strategy could be, for instance, if the individual feel threatened by a boyfriend or family member by being actively involved in women's rights issues, and thus chooses to be passive instead for the person's best interest.

Feminists have not succeeded in creating a mass movement against sexual oppression because the very foundation of women's liberation has, until now, not accounted for the complexity and diversity of female experience. We are not simply oppressed but produced through these discourses, a production that is historically complex, contingent, and occurs through formations that do not honor analytically distinct identity categories.

McCall (2005: 1772).

The analytical approach has throughout this thesis helped to better understand the relationships between social media, social protest, and online mobilization. The four dimensions are complementary, and follow each other in a non-predictable cycle, and has brought an understanding of the different levels of maturity and the development cycle of protests using social media networks. Sexual harassment led to a social protest online through social media, and through Think Olga who helped shape the social protest through mobilizing women online in a community. Collective action is continuously adapting to new contexts or technologies (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). This is further slowly leading to social protest offline, as we have seen, for instance, through the high increase of physical reporting of sexual harassment incidents, which is further putting pressure on governments institutions to act accordingly.

6.2 Research questions findings

This thesis has investigated, analyzed, and discussed if social media empower women in Brazil. Even though the response rate for my online survey turned out to be very low with only 17 respondents, it is still possible to use the findings for discussion, as long as the high margin of error rate is taking into consideration.

Firstly, I identified the Olgas on social media connected to my first research question and objective: *Investigate who the Olgas are on Facebook and Twitter.* For starters, most of the Olgas are young (under 35 years old). Brazil's social media users under 35 are about 60%, which indicates that 40% of social media users are *over* 35 years old. Considering the margin of error, the chances are that there are many more Olgas above 35. However, as argued earlier, older women do look at sexual harassment as more naturalized and as a part of the Brazilian culture, more than younger women do, which makes it even harder for the older

generation to realize that it is in fact a violation, marginalizing and discriminating against women. Every individual need to renegotiate their own agency and becoming empowered on a personal level, which means that every woman need to go through this process within their own pace, even though awareness-raising and feminist NGOs like Think Olga can help speed up this process. A question to further investigate for future research; *Why are not more women over 35 years old actively involved in Think Olga, and what can be done to involve the older generation?*

Secondly, most of the Olgas live in urban areas, where only one respondent lives in a favela but none of the Olgas said that they live in a rural area. This indicates that most of the Olgas live in resource-rich areas where they have higher access to internet and mobile networks. This further shows that Think Olga is representing women who are more resource-rich, and it does not seem to represent the more marginalized and poor women in rural areas. Access to the internet is rejected, adopted, extended or ignored by specific individuals and social groups. Those who are privileged enough to have internet access are most likely the more powerful and resourceful in the society. Further, marginalization is constantly built and rebuilt through time and takes various paths in different cultural contexts, which means that marginalization of women in Brazil is changing as more women are making a stand. However, there are still marginalized groups within the Brazilian female population. Moreover, a group's willingness to act collectively in their common gender interest are dependent on the fact that there are no social gaps within the group. In other words, this research cannot conclude that social media does empower women in Brazil, because it is not a true representation of the Brazilian population. For further research; *What can be done for the rural women in Brazil to take part in the discussions on women's rights on social media, which will keep the rural women from being left behind?*

Thirdly, all the Olgas participating in my survey were women, as expected. For future research, it could be interesting to consider how more men can be involved in the conversation online. Hopefully, men will also become 'Olgas' in the future and realize that sexual harassment is a problem that needs to be discussed in public between all actors of the society. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that not all men are the 'enemy'. The problem is not that men are 'evil' but rather the fact that they are not aware of the issue. In their minds, sexual harassment is not seen as a violation because it has been normalized in their culture since they were children. It is the only reality they know, which is why the men –

in the same way as women – need to renegotiate their reality, and the way they treat their wife, daughter, mother and girlfriend.

Fourthly, most of the Olgas are white, according to my findings, while only 2 respondents were black, even though the majority of Brazilians are black or mixed race. Black people in Brazil face more discrimination than white people, and the society has for a long time struggled with racism. A big part of the black population is also marginalized socio-economically within the society, where they live in the poorer areas, are less educated, have lower-paid jobs or perhaps are unemployed. It is essential for a strong collective community to stand together, all kinds of women. How strong the community is, depends on the social capital of the group; the social trust, norms and networks that women can draw upon to solve common problems. As the country is struggling with racism, it is vital that the black women are not being left behind. If the social capital is low, the group dynamics would not be sufficient, and would play a negative role in women's bargaining power with the government and other actors in the community. Thoughts for further research; *What can be done to include more black and indigenous women to take part in Think Olga and the conversation online?*

Fifthly, most of the Olgas had completed higher education on a university or college level, which shows that it is mostly highly educated women who are engaging with Think Olga on social media, which again makes this research not a valid representation of Brazilian women as there are many women who are less educated, which are not represented in this study. Though, it could also mean that the participants in my survey were highly educated, which was the reason for why they wanted to participate in my Graduate Studies research, and because of the 23.77% of margin of error, these participants are *not* a true representation of the Olga population. The reliability of my study is low as I was not able to collect several samples throughout the Olga population. Higher reliability is needed to make sure that the sample population is dependable. For further research; *What can be done to include less educated women in the conversation about women's rights issues online?*

My next research question and objective; *Establish if the Olgas feel empowered by using social media, and analyze in what way the Olgas feel empowered.* This question is related to the text box questions in my online survey. Empowerment can be defined in many ways, depending on culture, mindset, socio-economic status, and knowledge. There is not one correct definition on empowerment as individuals are empowered on their own terms.

Empowerment is renegotiated according to people's agency, how they choose to act and stand up for themselves, either it is by resisting or perhaps by being passive. Empowerment happens in different pace for individuals, and it happens, first, by being aware of how they can be empowered and in what situations they *can* renegotiate their agency. They need to be aware that sexual harassment is a *violation,* which is why awareness-building is the first step to changing people's mindsets rooted in a macho society. This is further the key of social media tools and Think Olga's 'main mission'. Without the awareness of the fact that women are being marginalized and that it is not just a natural part of their culture, they would not know what empowerment means or even be able to give the testimonies we saw earlier. Thus, it becomes clear that Think Olga is creating awareness and collective identities, which are keys to *empowerment*. Since the Olgas could write with their own words what empowerment means to them, there were no right or wrong answers. However, the replies were somewhat similar, and the majority defined empowerment as; be treated equally; treated with respect; freedom; strength; given a voice; having knowledge; and be aware of their own rights. Regarding the text box question why empowerment is important, again, the response was similar to each other. The most vital thing mentioned in the testimonies was that empowerment give these women 'a voice in a voiceless society' and by knowing that they are not alone. Regarding the last text box question, 16 out of 17 said 'yes', they do believe Think Olga and the use of social media tools lead to empowerment. The one respondent who said 'no', might not yet realize in what way Think Olga and social media can empower, as individuals define empowerment on their own terms, in their own pace. Empowerment is significant because it creates a *collective identity* where women work together to achieve a more widespread impact than what they could have achieved alone. Thus, Think Olga is creating empowerment by creating a community where Brazilian women can share stories on social media or perhaps use the harassment map to report these incidents. Acting collectively is beneficial as empowerment happens both on a *small scale*, in bringing people together in similar situations, or on a *large scale*, which can further lead to social protest *offline*.

Lastly, to my third research question and objective*; investigate if the Olgas are actively involved with women's rights issues offline outside social media.* Throughout this thesis, it has become clear that social media is a great starting point to raise awareness. Still, it is important to recognize that it should not become the only place and space where women can 'make a stand.' Social media cannot alone create gender equality if the offline space is not *on-board*. Online activism can bring awareness but not sustain a long-term physical effect on the

society. Another thing is that most of the Olgas are *females*, yet if the rooted machismo gender norms in Brazil are going to change, it is necessary to involve all members of the society, as well as changing people's mindset and the way they look at sexual harassment. Women need to recognize their worth as social agents and believe that they are worthy on the same level as men, while the men need to do the same.

At this point, there are very few of the Olgas that report their incidents of sexual harassment to Think Olga. One possible reason for this might be that, even though Olgas are aware of the issue that sexual harassment is in fact a violation, it is still necessary to take the next step to actively do something about it. To report an incident is to further make an action *offline,* which is something that each individual need to do within their own pace, whenever they are ready to do so. It will take time to get the offline space on-board, and as *active* as the online space. Nevertheless, an important thing to add is the fact that, as previously mentioned, the number of phone calls and reports for reporting physical, sexual and psychological violence against women, has seen a 40 percent increase since 2015 for women in Brazil. In other words, even though the Olga population perhaps does not use Think Olga's tools to report their incidents, it does not mean that it does not happen at all. Olgas might still be reporting their incidents *outside* Think Olga.

6.3 Concluding remarks

Throughout this thesis, it can be argued that Think Olga *is* leading to empowerment through social media for women in Brazil. Social media networks are useful tools to spread knowledge and awareness considering its reach and speed. It is creating a space for women to connect and collaborate to a new social phenomenon.

Sexual harassment is a problem that should be considered as a serious issue within the society, where all actors needs to be actively involved for this to change in the long-term. To do this, people's mindsets need to change, which will only happen through awareness-building, also outside social media in the offline physical space. At this point, most of the Olgas are not actively involved offline, even though the majority *wants* to be. Still, Brazilian women, outside Think Olga, have increasingly been reporting incidents of sexual harassment, which is a step in the right direction. This shows that there are potential to be more active offline in the future.

Nothing can be concluded for sure when considering the high margin of error throughout this study. The Olgas are not a true representation of women in Brazil, since many of the more

marginalized women are not present in the study. At this point, it seems like Think Olga is creating empowerment for a *group* of women in the Brazilian society, which cannot speak for the general Brazilian population. Still, what can surely be concluded is that social media does have the *potential* to empower Brazilian women, which is a good starting point for further research on an important topic.

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Appendix A – Original online questionnaire

Olá! Meu nome é Camilla, sou uma mestranda norueguesa e estudo Globalização, Política e Cultura na Universidade Norueguesa de Ciências e Tecnologia. Minha pesquisa é sobre "Mulheres e redes sociais" e estou elaborando um estudo de caso sobre o Think Olga para a minha dissertação. Ficaria muito grata pela sua participação!

O questionário tem 14 questões e leva cerca de 8-10 minutos para ser respondido. Todas(os) as(os) participantes permanecerão anônimas(os) e suas respostas utilizadas somente para pesquisa acadêmica.

Muito obrigada a todas e todos!

* 1. Você segue o Think Olga no Facebook e/ou no Twitter?

○ Sim

○ Não

* 2. Qual a sua faixa etária?

○ Abaixo de 18

○ 18-24

○ 25-35

○ 36-45

○ Acima de 45

* 3. Onde você mora?

○ Numa área urbana

○ Numa comunidade em uma área urbana

○ Numa área rural

* 4. Com que gênero você se identifica?

○ Feminino

○ Masculino

○ Outro

* 5. Com que categoria étnico-racial você se identifica?

○ Branca

○ Indígena

○ Negra

○ Amarela

○ Outra

* 6. Qual o seu grau de escolaridade completo?

○ Ensino fundamental 1

○ Ensino fundamental 2

○ Ensino médio ou técnico

○ Ensino superior (graduação)

○ Pós-graduação

* 7. Você interage ativamente com o Think Olga nas redes sociais?

☐ Sim, eu compartilho/dou re-tweet das postagens

☐ Sim, eu comento nas postagens/tweets

☐ Sim, eu curto os posts/tweets

☐ Não, mas eu leio o conteúdo

☐ Não, não interajo ativamente

* 8. Em que dispositivo você mais usa as redes sociais, no celular ou no computador?

○ Celular

○ Computador

○ Outro

* 9. Você já sofreu algum tipo de abuso sexual?

"Abuso sexual pode incluir vários casos, como pressão indesejada para favores sexuais, olhares ou gestos sexuais indesejados, contato físico indesejado, cantadas, piadas ou comentários sexuais indesejados, estupro ou tentativa de estupro, violência de cunho sexual, entre outros."

○ Não

○ Não quero responder

○ Sim

* 10. Se sim, você relatou o caso através do Think Olga?

○ Não

○ Não se aplica

○ Sim. Como você relatou o caso através do Think Olga?

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* 11. O que a palavra "empoderamento" significa para você? Você poderia dar alguns exemplos do que empoderamento significa para você?

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* 12. Na sua opinião, porque empoderamento é importante?

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* 13. Você acredita que o Think Olga gera empoderamento? Se sim, em que sentido?

○ Não

○ Sim

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* 14. Você participa de algum ativismo fora das redes sociais que seja relacionado aos direitos das mulheres?

○ Sim

○ Não

○ Não, mas gostaria de participar

Concluído