

The Cultural Context of Media:

*A Qualitative, Cross-National Analysis of
the #MeToo Campaigns in Norway and India*

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Master's Thesis in Media Studies: Nordic Media

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Dedication

In honor of

*the late United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg,
who dedicated her life to creating a more welcoming and inclusive world for all.*

Acknowledgements

Writing this master's thesis has been an incredible, enriching adventure—one I hope to never forget. For me, this project signifies more than its findings. It marks a life-altering experience, and for that reason, I am beyond grateful to all who have made this trek possible.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: The #MeToo movement ignited in October 2017 when American actor Alyssa Milano encouraged survivors of sexual harassment and assault to share their personal experiences on social media using the hashtag ‘*metoo*’ as a way to expose the magnitude of sexual violence. Since then, the movement has spread to over 85 countries, underlining how sexual violence is a worldwide issue that deserves immediate attention and action.

OBJECTIVE: In effort to join the fight against sexual violence, this thesis aimed to gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the #MeToo movement by investigating the national #MeToo campaigns which have occurred in Norway and India. Using a three-part theoretical framework, the qualitative cross-national analysis sought to uncover underlying sociocultural factors that supported and/or hindered the campaign’s development in each place.

METHODS: For this qualitative cross-national analysis, 20 in-person, semi-structured interviews were conducted (10 in Norway; 10 in India). All of the informants recruited for this study had an expert-level understanding of gender issues within their respective country, as well as extensive knowledge on the national #MeToo campaign. To analyze the collected interview data, the study relied on a qualitative content analysis.

RESULTS: In addition to producing more extensive knowledge of the #MeToo campaigns which have taken place in Norway and India, the qualitative analysis also identified parallel sociocultural factors between the campaigns, which is critical as the countries have varying gender regimes (with Norway being more gender-egalitarian and India more patriarchal). For example, informants in both countries denoted that there is a lack of policy implementation, which they perceive as hindering the advancement of gender equality. Other parallel factors found in the data include: a strong social stigma around sexual violence and shame; variances in gender socialization; and a lack of sexual education and harassment prevention in school curricula and workplace environments.

CONCLUSION: Overall, this study demonstrates how the #MeToo movement can be further unpacked, specifically through the lens of a cross-national analysis, to identify barriers which work against combatting sexual violence. While the results from this research underline the complexity of #MeToo, they also provide a more refined pathway for future advocacy work by illuminating underlying factors that may be hindering the advancement of gender equality.

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Glossary of Key Terms

Given the broadness of certain key terms and concepts, the following definitions are meant to provide contextualization for language interpretation in the current thesis research.

Gender equality: refers to the notion that “the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Equality does not mean ‘the same as...’ Equality involves ensuring that perceptions, interests, needs, priorities, and outcomes (which can be very different because of the differing roles and responsibilities of women and men) will be given equal weight in planning and decision-making” (UN Women, n.d., p.1).

Gender norms: “social norms defining acceptable and appropriate actions for women and men in a given group or society,” which “play a role in shaping women’s and men’s (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting their voice, power, and sense of self” (Cislaghi & Heise, 2020, p.415-416).

Sexual violence: “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (World Health Organization, 2002, p.149). Based on this definition, the current thesis interprets sexual violence as encompassing both sexual assault and sexual harassment, the terms of which are defined as the following:

- **Sexual assault:** “sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim” (RAINN, n.d.), including, but not limited to, attempted rape and rape.
- **Sexual harassment:** “behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual’s sex” (Berdahl, 2007, p.641). While Berdahl uses the term ‘sex,’ scholars have emphasized that individuals can also be harassed on the basis of their gender (Fernando & Prasad, 2019, p.1567). Thus, in the context of this thesis, sexual harassment refers to any behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual’s sex *and/or* gender.

Rape myths: a “belief about what constitutes rape, who can be a rape victim, or how victims reach before, during, or after they have been raped” (Amnesty International, 2019, p.14). For example, a frequent rape myth is the notion that a victim “asks for sex” if they flirt with the perpetrator, wear certain clothes, and/or are in public spaces after a certain hour.

1 Introduction

Civil rights activist Tarana Burke first planted the seeds of the #MeToo campaign in 2006 when she introduced the phrase ‘me too’ as a way to build solidarity among survivors¹ of sexual violence and empower them to publicly voice their experience(s) (Ohlheiser, 2017). However, it wasn’t until over a decade later that this two-word phrase would spark a “global movement of unprecedented scope” (Gersen, 2017). On October 15, 2017, American actor Alyssa Milano posted a message on the social media platform Twitter to encourage women who had faced sexual violence² to publicly share their stories with the hashtag #metoo as a way to demonstrate the magnitude of sexual violence that must be endured on a daily basis worldwide (CBS, 2017). Within minutes, the hashtag went viral and was tweeted (i.e., used) half a million times throughout the next 24 hours (Fox & Diehm, 2017). Days later, #MeToo had trended in over 85 countries (Thorpe, 2017), and has since remained a consistent topic of conversation across the globe.

While the rapid spread of #MeToo undoubtably showcases how social media can play a vital role in driving social activist efforts worldwide, it also clearly illuminates the global issue of sexual violence, particularly among women. Unfortunately, this is not a new issue. This issue is deeply rooted in every society (to varying degrees), so much so that it is recognized as one of the most prevalent human rights violations to date (UNFPA, 2013). For decades, gender-justice advocates across the world, including leading intergovernmental organizations, have fought to end sexual violence, with the United Nations even stressing the urgency of the issue by prioritizing it under one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³. Yet, despite these efforts, sexual violence has yet to be combatted. In fact, in many places it has further escalated due to implications of the ongoing COVID-19 health pandemic (UNFPA, 2020).

¹ In this thesis, the terms ‘*victim*’ and ‘*survivor*’ are used interchangeably. While ‘victim’ is the official term adopted in the United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuses of Power (UN General Assembly, 1985), I concur with Amnesty International (2019) that the term ‘survivor’ “better reflects the strength and resilience of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence” (p.14). More so, it is the preferred term for many women and girls who have had to suffer from sexual violence (Gupta, 2014).

² While it is acknowledged that anyone can be a survivor of sexual violence and gender discrimination—including men and boys—this thesis specifically refers to women when discussing these violations.

³ The SDGs anchor the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goal 5 of the 17 SDGs aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. As part of this goal, Target 5.2 specifically aims to “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation” (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.). More information about Goal 5 can be found here: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>.

To that end, it is imperative to continue the battle against sexual violence, which this thesis seeks to do by examining the #MeToo movement⁴ through the lens of qualitative research. Specifically, this thesis will investigate the local #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India via a qualitative, cross-national analysis. As a global movement, “#MeToo presents an ideal case for comparative research” on gender injustice, as it offers a “window onto how public debates about sexual harassment and violence are unfolding differently across national contexts” (Møller Hartley & Askanius, 2019, p.30). The fact that #MeToo campaigns took place in both Norway and India as part of the global #MeToo movement, despite how the countries are classified on opposite ends of the gender-equality spectrum—with Norway recognized as the second most gender-equal country in the world, while India ranks 112 out of 153 (World Economic Forum, 2020, p.9)—underlines the pervasiveness of sexual violence worldwide.

Thus, by conducting a cross-national analysis on two countries with differing gender regimes (i.e., with Norway being more egalitarian and India more patriarchal), this thesis aims to provide a deeper, more nuanced understanding of underlying sociocultural (i.e., societal and cultural) factors⁵ that supported and/or hindered the campaign’s development in each place. For instance, were survivors more prone to voice their experiences of sexual violence in Norway, given the country’s widespread gender-equal policies? What about in India; how was #MeToo generally viewed? Did the campaigns in either country contribute to the implementation of legislation advancing gender equality? Given how sociocultural factors have the power to influence gender roles, expectations, and identity, in addition to policymaking (Ess, 2019; Scott, 2017), gaining greater knowledge on the underpinnings of the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India can assist in uncovering key insights to further combat sexual violence in various settings.

⁴ This thesis interprets #MeToo as a global social movement. Social movements are defined as “political embodiments of human connection” (Lim, 2018, p.121) and are essentially about “power struggles” (p.128). Keeping in line with the United Nations, which recognizes violence against women as being “rooted in the historically unequal power relations between women and men” (UN General Assembly, 1993), this thesis interprets #MeToo as a gendered power struggle for justice. While I will refer to the national renditions of #MeToo as campaigns (i.e., the campaigns in Norway and India), this thesis interprets these campaigns as part of the collective #MeToo movement.

⁵ Since sociocultural factors fall under the umbrella of culture, it is important to acknowledge that ‘culture’ is a “notoriously ambiguous and contested concept” (Ess, 2020). As Williams (1985) observed decades ago, ‘culture’ is one of the most complex words in the English language, and one which has no agreed upon definition. However, I concur with Hall and Hall (1990) in that culture is essentially communication and by carefully studying its makeup, “we can come to recognize and understand a vast unexplored region of human behavior that exists outside the range of people’s conscious awareness” (p.3). Thus, in the context of this thesis, I will make no effort to define the concept. Rather, I will use it in the way Nocera and Camara (2010) denote culture as a “can-opener;” meaning I will seek to uncover sociocultural factors as a way to further ‘open up’ the issue of sexual violence, particularly in regard to the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India. As we will see in the coming chapters, I will draw primarily on Lim’s (2018) use of sociocultural factors for my analysis to identify perceived aspects (e.g., self-identity; gender norms, roles, and expectations) which potentially supported and/or hindered the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India.

Therefore, the primary research question of this thesis is as follows:

How do gender equality advocates in Norway and India perceive the #MeToo social media campaign's role in advancing gender equality in each country?

To set the stage for what will be discussed in the current research, I will now outline the coming chapters. In the following pages, I begin Chapter 2 by contextualizing gender and society and what it means for this study (2.1). I then offer a brief historical summary of gender and society in Norway (2.2), as well as in India (2.3), in effort to provide sufficient background information for discussing the #MeToo campaigns which have taken place in both countries (Norway, 2.5; India, 2.6). Yet, before I provide details on the country-specific campaigns, I will offer insight on the origins and evolution of the #MeToo movement (2.4).

Chapter 3 will then focus on the existing literature on the #MeToo movement (3.1). As we will see, there is still very limited research on #MeToo, which is why I expand the literature review to discuss prior studies on social media activism (3.2), including identified challenges with such activist work. Together, the noted literature on #MeToo and social media activism sets important groundwork for the current research, while highlighting major research gaps and opportunities—such as the need for more qualitative, cross-national research—which I further discuss in Section 3.3. It will also be in Section 3.3 that I denote the ways I aim to fill certain identified research gaps with the current study.

Next, in Chapter 4, I articulate in detail the three-part theoretical framework—*Roots, Routes, Routers* (Lim, 2018)—I primarily rely on for the current research. As will soon be discussed, Lim's framework is an all-encompassing one and focuses specifically on social movements. Importantly, it offers a systematic outline which I will use to assess the nuances of the social media movement #MeToo. In this part of the thesis, I divide the chapter to discuss each pillar of the framework (*Roots*, Section 4.2; *Routes*, 4.3; *Routers*, 4.4), while also explaining how its key components will be used in the current qualitative analysis on Norway and India.

Following this explication, in Chapter 5, I discuss the specifics of the research design and methodology. While I offer an overview of the methodology in Section 5.1, including a brief justification for conducting cross-national research, I then go into greater detail in Section 5.2 regarding why I chose interview methodology for the current study—specifically in-person, semi-structured interviews. It is in this section (5.2) that I also discuss the seven-step interview framework (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) I used to develop the methodology. This discussion

will include details on topics such as how I developed the study's interview questionnaire; the pilot experiment I led before conducting the study's official 20 interviews (10 in Norway; 10 in India); participant recruitment; in addition to the processes used for transcribing, analyzing, and verifying the collected data. Then, I conclude the chapter with Section 5.3, where I present a brief summary of the discussed methodological approach.

In Chapter 6, I reveal the results of the cross-national analysis. Similar to Chapter 4, which focuses on the theoretical framework (Lim, 2018) used in the study, I divide this chapter into sections to discuss the research findings in each country under the framework's three pillars: *Roots* (Section 6.1), *Routes* (6.2), and *Routers* (6.3). As we will see, the analysis illuminates multiple parallel sociocultural factors between the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India, including the perceived lack of policy implementation for gender-equal legislation, as well as a strong stigma around sexual violence and shame. Such similarities offer valuable insight, especially given the countries' differing gender regimes (i.e., Norway being more egalitarian; India more patriarchal). (The gender regimes will be discussed in Chapter 2, specifically in Sections 2.2 (Norway) and 2.3 (India).) These parallel factors will be further highlighted in Section 6.4, which briefly summarizes and discusses the key findings from the analysis.

Lastly, in Chapter 7, I reflect on the analysis objectives (7.1), and discuss the overall study limitations (7.2), in addition to noting future research suggestions (7.3). I then use the final section (7.4) to end the current thesis by presenting a short research postscript.

2 Background

This chapter is divided into six parts. First, Section 2.1 sets the foundation for the following sections by providing contextualization on gender and society, and how it relates to the current study. Then, the subsequent two sections offer brief historical summaries of gender and society in Norway (2.2) and India (2.3). Following that overview, Section 2.4 notes the evolution of the #MeToo movement, while the last two sections provide summaries of the campaigns which have occurred in Norway (2.5) and India (2.6).

2.1 Gender and Society Contextualization

As mentioned in the Introduction, the #MeToo movement has demonstrated the persistent, worldwide issue of sexual violence. Yet, how did sociocultural factors shape specific localized campaigns, in addition to subsequent policymaking? The goal of the current research is to better understand how sociocultural factors (e.g., self-identity; gender norms, roles, and expectations) in Norway and India may have contributed to the development of the national #MeToo campaigns. As I will soon highlight in greater detail, in-person interviews were conducted with gender-experts in each country as a way to identify such underlining factors, which in turn revealed participants' perceptions of key challenges to gender-equality advancement. Yet, before looking at the analysis in the coming chapters, it is first important to consider conditions which help determine whether gender-equality advocacy efforts, such as the #MeToo movement, are converted into tangible policymaking (i.e., legislation aimed at advancing gender equality). For instance, when and why do countries respond to demands for gender equality policies, and if they do, what factors constitute policy reform?

It has been argued that the capacity of gender equality advocacy to contribute to a “workable formula for the delivery of social justice within which women’s interests, diverse though they be, are given recognition” is reliant on the presence of “favorable political circumstances” (Molyneux, 2001, p.160). The nature of such conditions is not explicitly stated in Molyneux’s work, but other research highlights the value of recognizing both conventional variables (e.g., regime type and legal environment) and less visible aspects, such as sociocultural factors (e.g., self-identity; gender norms, roles, and expectations)—both of which add to how conducive settings may be for advocacy work (Goetz & Jenkins, 2018, p.715). With that said, before the current research assesses sociocultural factors (i.e. the less visible aspects) of the #MeToo

campaigns in Norway and India, it is important to look at the sociopolitical regimes (i.e. the conventional variables) of each country, which can illuminate societal views on gender equality.

To that end, the below two sections will provide brief historical summaries of gender and society in Norway (2.2) and India (2.3) in an effort to contextualize the current sociopolitical regimes in each country. The intent here is that this type of context will be beneficial for understanding the development of #MeToo in the two countries. Following these two sections, a short look at the origin and evolution of #MeToo will be discussed in Section 2.4 to set the scene for the chapter's two concluding sections, which will offer brief summaries of the #MeToo campaigns that have occurred in Norway (2.5) and India (2.6).

2.2 A Brief Summary of Gender and Society in Norway

Situated in the northernmost part of Europe, Norway is acclaimed for being a top performer in numerous categories such as economic competitiveness, civil liberties, quality of life, and human development. The country, which has a current population of nearly five and a half million people, governs as a social democratic welfare state. Its egalitarian political regime is part of what is widely known as the Nordic Model¹, which aims to create universal rights within the country, in addition to cultivating a society that has “comparatively small class, income, and gender differences” (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe, 2014, p.1).

Although gender is the primary focus of this section, it is important to first point out the large role media plays in Norway, as this is a key ingredient in the health of the country's welfare state. In order to foster solidarity and universalism—two tenets which underpin the nation's commitment to the “principle of inclusionary and equal citizenship” (Lister, 2009, p.246)—Norway places great emphasis on advancing residents' political knowledge by prioritizing widespread distribution of and access to print and online news media (Ohlsson, 2015, p.9). For example, as part of the global shift toward digitalization, all Norwegian regions now have Internet access, and, as of 2019, the Internet penetration rate is 98 percent (Tankovska, 2019). The extensive position the government has in public broadcasting is part of the national ideology that “the media are social institutions for which the state has a responsibility, and not purely private businesses” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.191). Thus, the state must play an active (yet legally limited) role in the media field to guarantee “equal opportunities of

¹ The Nordic Model refers to the egalitarian political regimes of five countries located in the Nordic Region—specifically, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland.

communication for all the organized social voices in pursuit of the ‘common good’” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.197). Some have argued it is this strong relationship between the media and state which has enabled such high political participation rates among Norwegian citizens (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp.160-164; Ohlsson, 2015, p.9).

While political participation is often discussed in relation to the Nordic Model’s success, another factor that stands out is the country’s prioritization of gendered social citizenship (i.e., gender equality and women’s economic independence) (Lister, 2009, p.256). Yet, it is critical to point out that before notions of equal status between genders were introduced into the social democratic regime in the late 1960s, Norway, like many places throughout the world, was built on patriarchal traditions which catered to gendered hierarchies of men being perceived as superior to women. As historian Yvonne Hirdman (1991, p.60) emphasized through her concept of the ‘gender system,’ these patriarchal beliefs shaped political, economic, social, and cultural structures, including sex-bound ‘gender contracts,’ which influenced power dynamics between men and women, in addition to how each carried out their lives. For example, throughout the 1930s to 60s in Norway, men were primarily seen as the chief ‘breadwinner’ (i.e., wage earner), while women took on most of the household responsibilities, including caring for children, and stayed largely within the private sphere (i.e., the home). However, to meet the demands of this interwar and postwar period, political leaders began formally encouraging women to enter the public workforce. Although at this point in time they had formal rights, including the right to vote which they obtained in 1913, women’s overall citizenship status was still heavily through their spouses. To combat this gendered discrimination, women’s rights activists advocated for gender-specific reform, such as joint taxation of spouses’ incomes being changed to separate taxation, which began turning the wheels toward Norway’s egalitarian welfare state that is praised today (Danielsen, 2015).

As part of activist efforts, the woman’s movement mobilized in Norway throughout the late 1960s and 70s, with advocates demanding the ‘gender contracts’ ensure equal status rather than its previous hierarchical structure (Hirdman, 1991, p.66). Institutionalized social reform, such as the adoption of the Gender Equality Act in 1978—which declared men and women be granted equal opportunities in education, employment, and cultural advancement—not only strengthened the citizenship of women, economically and socially. It also opened the door to a more gender-inclusive society by creating broader opportunity structures for civil society and gender balance in political decision making (Teigen & Skjeie, 2017, pp.142-144).

Once Norway's first woman Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, was elected in 1981 and more women became active members of the leading cabinet as well as in various levels of government, substantial gender reform continued, which helped shift the nation's ideological view of gender equality (Karvonen & Selle, 1995, pp.8-11). The increased representation was significant "not just as a marker of women's political citizenship but also because of its implications for policy" (Lister, 2009, p.251), which shaped new lifestyles and norms. In summary, through the use of 'state feminism'—which combines mobilization 'from below' (among women's rights advocates) and integration from above (via government reform)—Norway planted the roots of more gender-equal social policies, which allowed the country to blossom into a more 'woman-friendly' welfare state, a term gender studies pioneer Helga Hernes coined to describe environments which do "not force harder choices on women than on men, or permit unjust treatment on the basis of sex" (1987, p.15).

Today, the nation consistently ranks at the top of numerous global and regional reports on gender equality, including the UN Development Program's Gender Inequality Index; the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap; and the European Union's Gender Equality Index. As of the most recent Global Gender Gap Report, Norway is rated as the second most gender-equal country in the world, trailing only slightly behind Iceland (World Economic Forum, 2020, p.9). It also has some of the highest workforce participation rates for women in the world (OECD, 2019). Given these top rankings, Norway is not only externally acclaimed for its widespread egalitarian efforts, but it also now categorizes *itself* as a "world champion" for gender equality (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs., 2016, p.2). As of 2017, 40.8 percent of women hold national parliament seats, which is a four-and-a-half-point increase from 20 years ago. More so, as of 2019, 40.5 percent of women hold local government seats, which is nearly six and a half points higher than 20 years ago (Statistics Norway, 2020). For comparison, as of 2020, women hold 23.7 percent of the seats in the United States (U.S.) Congress (Center For American Women and Politics, 2020).

Furthermore, the country has since integrated additional legal frameworks to foster a more equal, inclusive national society. For example, The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act was formally adopted in 2018 to replace four former acts against discrimination on the basis of gender, identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and disability. Additionally, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud Act was also put into place in 2018 as a way to increase "the Ombud's role as a promoter of equality," while also strengthening the "enforcement of anti-

discrimination legislation through the establishment of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal” (Ministry of Culture and Equality, 2020). Moreover, each year the Minister of Culture and Equality delivers an annual statement to the Storting (Norway’s supreme legislature) to address the status of efforts in advancing equality and diversity across all sectors.

To that end, Norway has made substantial progression throughout the last few decades—change that can be attributed to a social welfare state which places strong emphasis on the advancement of gender equality. Pervasive political and social reform have transformed the nation from what was historically a patriarchal, ‘male-breadwinner’ society (where men were the primary wage earners and women the primary caretakers) into a “dual-earner/dual-carer” society (where it is formally promoted that both parents participate in the public workforce and take care of children and household responsibilities) (Ellingsæter, 1999, p.113).

However, despite the country’s extensive gender-egalitarian endorsement and its consistent ranking as one of the world’s most gender-equal countries, Norway still faces considerable challenges to *achieving* gender equality. While gender-equal legislation is now more multidimensional in its approach to anti-discrimination (Borchorst, Freidenvall, Kantola, Reisel, & Teigen, 2012, pp.67-69), which assists in creating a more ‘woman-friendly’ state, it is critical to remember that “not all women do equally well in women-friendly states” (Lister, 2009, p.264). For instance, some have raised concerns about *which* women are prioritized through gender-equal efforts, arguing that women from various minority groups, such as the Indigenous Sámi community, do not receive as much recognition (Knoblock & Kuokkanen, 2015, p.278). Others have noted the simultaneous inclusion of women from ethnic majority backgrounds and exclusion of women from ethnic minority backgrounds in core political institutions (Siim & Skjeie, 2008, p.324).

Another issue currently faced in Norway is the widespread gender-based abuse against women, including sexual violence, which demonstrates how “unequal power relations between men and women still prevail” (Amnesty International, 2019, p.11). For example, national research published in 2014 revealed that almost one in 10 women in Norway had been raped at least once in their lifetime, with nearly half before the age of 18 (Amnesty International, 2019, p.19). More so, of the cases that are reported to the police, between 75 and 80 percent of the investigations never reach the stage of prosecution (Statistics Norway, 2018). Recent studies have revealed how rape myths (which place the blame for violations on women) and gender stereotypes about female and male sexuality are still tenacious and may

be contributing to what has now become known as the “Nordic Paradox,” a concept referring to the discrepancy between the country’s high levels of gender equality yet elevated levels of gender-based sexual abuse (Amnesty International, 2019, p.11). Though the national Ministry of Culture has stressed that combating gender-based violence is an area of great importance for the development of society and for individual welfare (Ministry of Culture and Equality, 2015), current statistics show that Norwegian authorities have fallen short with taking the necessary measures to prevent such criminal violations.

In conclusion, this brief historical summary of gender and society in Norway highlighted a broad-brush view of the country’s journey to becoming what the United Nations has denoted a “haven for gender equality” (UN Press Release, 2003). However, this overview also showed that there is *still* much work to be done, particularly in relation to sexual violence. This thesis research aims to contribute to the country’s efforts toward achieving a gender-just society by better understanding the underlying sociocultural context of sexual violence in Norway and exposing residents’ views of key barriers to gender-equality advancement. That said, I will now turn to outline a brief summary of gender and society in India.

2.3 A Brief Summary of Gender and Society in India

Located in South Asia, India is the home to over 1.38 billion people and is recognized as the second-most populous country in the world (with the first being China). It is also the seventh largest country and features 28 states, along with seven territories. While Hindi and English are two official languages recognized in the country by the central government, the latest national census points out that there are over 120 major languages spoken throughout India, with hundreds more recognized as regional dialects (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011). The purpose of drawing attention to these statistics is not only to provide contextualization of India’s demographics; it is also to emphasize the vast diversity of this country and underline the complexities that therefore arise in relation to culture and society. To that end, the brief summary that follows on gender and society in India is a very limited, macro perspective.

Although India is a multidimensional country when it comes to aspects such as ethnicity, race, religion, and languages, it is also a nation in which deep beliefs about men’s superiority cultivate a widespread, patriarchal culture (Mishra, 2020, p.2). While women have long fought for change in the country’s legal and social domains, with activism dating back to

colonial times (Heuer, 2015, pp.25-29), the majority of the structural reform took place post-independence² in the 1970s and 80s.

As part of an international agenda shift toward women's rights, in 1971 the United Nations instructed India to critically investigate the current social conditions of women in the country. The final report, *Towards Equality*, published in 1975, detailed the severity of gender discrimination, highlighting demographic trends including: women's lower life expectancy; higher illiteracy rates among women; the declining sex ratio of women to men; in addition to high female infant mortality. Though the Committee on the Status of Women in India (the formal group who issued the report) offered reform recommendations to rectify the gender imbalances, the declaration of National Emergency, which the Prime Minister ordered shortly after the report, tabled any serious action (Heuer, 2015, p.28). This 24-month period lowered citizens' trust in the government toward positive reform and once the Emergency Rule ended in 1977, earlier existing and newly formed women's rights groups emerged. During this time, prominent national organizations, including the Women's India Association, partnered with various transnational networks, including the media, advocacy groups, and non-governmental agencies, to raise awareness on pervasive sociocultural issues, such as dowry deaths (bride-burning), *sati* (widow-burning), rape, sexual violence, and caste-based gender discrimination (the caste system will be described in the following pages). To combat such issues, the local and international action campaigns heavily centered around specific rights guaranteed by the Indian constitution including Articles: 14, the right of equality between genders; 15, the prohibition against discrimination; and 21, the right to life (Mishra, 2020; Heuer, 2015).

As a result of activist efforts, additional legislation has been adopted throughout the last few decades to advance gender equality in India. For example, in 1976 the Equal Remuneration Act was adopted, with the aim to prevent employment discrimination and unequal pay on the basis of gender. In 1987, the government enacted the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act as a way to prevent the ancient Hindu practice of burning women upon their spouses' death. (*Sati* was originally banned in 1829 but is still practiced among specific groups). Additional legislation includes: an act to prohibit medical professionals from conducting sex-selection abortions (the Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Regulation & Prevention of Misuse Act; passed in 1994), as well as the 2006 Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, and the 2013 Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace Prevention & Protection Act. Yet,

² India gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1947.

despite this gender-specific legislation, in addition to the country's constitution which defines women's right to equality and non-discrimination as justiciable fundamental rights, India still faces substantial challenges to achieving gender equality, including socioeconomic issues and gender-based violence (Menon-Sen & Kumar, 2001), both of which will be highlighted in the following paragraphs.

Today, according to the most recent Global Gender Gap Report, India ranks 112 out of 153. While political advancement for women has improved throughout the decades—with India being one of 10 nations which have had the most years with a female head of state in the past 50 years—economic opportunities for women are still very limited (World Economic Forum, 2020, p.11). For example, 94 percent of women in the country are employed in the informal (also known as the unorganized) sector, working in jobs that are low-skilled, low-paid, highly insecure, and lack labor rights and social welfare benefits (e.g., healthcare coverage, paid sick leave, social security, retirement, etc.) (Banerjee, 2019).

Further, the recent Global Gender Gap Report emphasized how India's gender gap is being persistently “undermined by the abnormally low sex ratios at birth,” at 91 girls for every 100 boys (World Economic Forum, 2020, p.24). Research revealed this skewed ratio is largely attributed to the high number of female infanticide and sex-selective abortions that take place throughout the country (Menon-Sen & Kumar, 2001, pp.12-13), crimes which have resulted in millions of women ‘missing’ (i.e., never being born or dying shortly after) (Heuer, 2015, p.28). A reason brought forth for these crimes, which take place across economic and social classes, is the cultural preference of having sons rather than daughters (Jha et al., 2006, pp.1-2). This notion is based on the perceived ‘burden’ girls will bring on families, as they are socially thought of as natural dependents (Doshi, 2018). For instance, although dowry (i.e., tangible assets, including property, money and jewelry, that a bride brings into marriage) was legally banned in 1961, it is still commonly practiced and expected, and rarely reported (Sukumar, 2017).

In addition to the socioeconomic challenges mentioned above, gender-based violence (specifically, sexual violence) is another critical issue on the rise in India. According to data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), an Indian government agency, over 378,000 cases of crime against women and girls were reported in 2018, with domestic abuse marking the highest category. The country's average rate of reported rape cases is about 6.3 per 100,000 of the population. Yet, it is important to note that this statistic masks significant

geographical differences. For example, in the national capital territory of Delhi the rate is 22.5, while in Tamil Nadu (a state in South India) the rate is less than one (Bandyopadhyay, 2018). More so, it is imperative to point out that the mentioned data represents the *reported* cases; however, other research has revealed that 99 percent of violence faced by women in various parts of the country often go *unreported* (Bhattacharya & Kundu, 2018). While cases being reported have increased over the last few years, conviction rates have largely remained stagnant, with some areas even experiencing a slight decrease. In total, the conviction rate for all crimes against women is about 19 percent, compared with an average conviction rate of 47 percent for all crimes. Yet again, it is critical to emphasize that, here, conviction rates refer to only the cases which have completed court proceedings, and as of 2017 there were more than 127,800 rape cases still pending (Reuters, 2019).

The aim of the above statistics is *not* to generalize the results for the entirety of India. As previously emphasized, the amount of crime committed against women largely differs across various states and regions. Yet the persistency and pervasiveness of sexual violence, in addition to how such crimes are treated, suggests that there are overarching sociocultural factors which undergird the hierarchical gender relations (i.e., men are viewed as superior to women) in the country (Srirupa Roy, 2016, p.364). One such factor that has long been recognized as extending gender inequalities is the widespread caste system. For example, despite decades of progressive gender-equal advocacy work, India is still largely a traditional society, characterized by caste, which places strong emphasis on patriarchal beliefs and customary laws (Mehta, 2016, p.283).

The institutionalized caste system, which dates back as far as 3,500 years, is deeply rooted in Hinduism culture (Hinduism being the top practiced religion in the country) and is made up of five hierarchical social classes, including: the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, and Dalits, respectively. These customary categories are widely embedded in civil society throughout India, and operate as political, economic, and social barriers. To that end, due to caste being hereditary and heavily connected to occupation, lower caste women suffer further levels of “gender discrimination and poverty that often keeps them poor, and ultimately serves as an additional barrier to class mobility,” (Mehta, 2016, p.283). While caste in India is extremely nuanced and could not possibly be explained in a few sentences (see Mehta (2016) for further detail), it is still briefly mentioned to emphasize the discrepancy between formal legislation (i.e., constitutional laws) and customary laws. Although the constitution prohibits gender- and caste-based inequality, it has been argued that by ensuring religious

freedom, the legislation also *fosters* this type of discrimination as it broadly stems from patriarchal religious and customary practices (Mehta, 2016). One case in point is the 2013 Criminal Law Amendment Act, which fails to criminalize marital rape. Many view this ‘oversight’ as “the persistence of traditional, patriarchal values” (Heuer, 2015, p.29).

Socially speaking, the sociocultural norm of traditional marriage (i.e., a male-dominant, heterosexual relationship) is still prominent in Indian society, with 47.4 percent of young adolescents marrying by the age of 18. The notions that men are the primary wage-earners and have the ‘right’ to control their wives in numerous ways, including violence, are also still deeply ingrained. According to a recent government survey, 52 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 believe husbands are justified in beating their wife for specific reasons (International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF, 2017). This reflection of women’s subordinate status within the family sphere parallels with the country’s high rates of domestic abuse (Keelery, 2020), and also demonstrates societal gendered norms which can give rise to gender-based violence—both inside and outside the home (Kabeer, 2014, p.27).

In the last decade, women’s rights activists in India, particularly young women, have looked to social media platforms to raise both national and international awareness about gender-related issues, including street harassment (often called “eve-teasing”) and sexual violence. For example, attention to these issues were heightened in 2012 after a brutal gang rape of a 23-year-old woman on a bus in Delhi. The case, known as the ‘Nirbhaya rape case,’ quickly became globally recognized when activists led a social media campaign, calling for legal prosecution against the perpetrators (Poell & Rajagopalan, 2015). While changes in legislation were ultimately made, as the previous paragraphs highlight, the path to gender equality in India is still a long and arduous one. However, as the number of social media users continues to rise in the country (see Section 3.2 (p.35) for more detail), gender-justice advocates now have more opportunities to keep gender issues at the forefront of media coverage, domestically and internationally. To that end, this thesis research aims to explore how sociocultural factors of Indian society (and Norwegian society) affect gender advocacy within the digital landscape—the findings of which can hopefully be used to further advance gender equality initiatives.

As a brief review, the previous two sections presented brief historical summaries of gender and society in Norway (2.2) and India (2.3) in an effort to contextualize the sociopolitical regimes in each country. Looking ahead, this chapter will now turn to Section 2.4, which

will provide a short overview of the origin and evolution of the #MeToo movement. Then, the chapter's two concluding sections will discuss summaries of the #MeToo campaigns that have occurred in Norway (2.5) and India (2.6).

2.4 Origins and Evolution of the #MeToo Movement

For many, 2017 will always be remembered as the 'Year of #MeToo.' However, it is critical to note that this globally recognized awareness campaign did not begin in 2017. In an effort to encourage and empower women who had been sexually violated to publicly voice their experience(s), Tarana Burke, an African American civil rights activist, introduced the phrase 'me too' in 2006. As someone who had suffered sexual violence, she wanted to create "empowerment through empathy" to let survivors of sexual abuse—particularly women and girls of color from marginalized communities—know they are not alone (Ohlheiser, 2017).

Eleven years later on October 15, 2017, these two words launched a "global phenomenon" (Zarkov & Davis, 2018, p.3) when American actor Alyssa Milano posted the following on her Twitter profile: "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet" (Milano, 2017). Once it became known earlier in the month that American film producer Harvey Weinstein had been accused by more than three dozen women of sexual harassment and/or abuse, including rape, Milano aimed to showcase the magnitude of sexual violence that occurs on a daily basis worldwide (CBS, 2017). Within 20 minutes of posting her message on the social media platform, Milano received over 10,000 replies (Columbia Journalism Review, 2019), and within the next 24 hours, the two-word hashtag garnered half a million tweets from around the world, igniting a "broad, borderless, and transnational" social movement (Mishra, 2020, p.1).

Ten days after Milano's initial tweet, the hashtag had trended in over 85 countries, spreading from the U.S. to Canada, Australia, Sweden, Israel, China, Columbia, Kenya, the Philippines, and beyond (Thorpe, 2017). Moreover, various adaptations were manifested in order to respond to differing cultures and demographics. For example, such allied hashtags included #YoTambien in Spain and Latin America ('me too'); #QuellaVoltaChe ('that time') in Italy; #BalanceTonPorc ('expose your pig') in France; and #RiceBunny in China, which mimics the sound of 'me too' in Mandarin (Devex Editor, 2018). Religious communities also created their own versions of the hashtag. One instance was the creation of #MosqueMeToo, which Muslim women used to publicize sexual abuse suffered during the *hajj*, a holy Muslim

pilgrimage (Eltahawy, 2018). Altogether, over the course of a year, between October 2017 and October 2018, #MeToo was used over 19 million times on Twitter, with the average number of tweets per day accumulating 55,319 (Columbia Journalism Review, 2019).

Throughout the past few years since going viral, #MeToo has been recognized as being “arguably one of the most pervasive and consequential social media campaigns to date” (Kunst, Bailey, Prendergast, & Gundersen, 2018, p.834). Many have categorized #MeToo as a social movement which has become a “transnational feminist consciousness-raising endeavor” (Ghadery, 2019, p.254). Others have pointed out how #MeToo “raised the curtains on the pandemic that is sexual harassment,” making “gender-based violence and toxic masculinity household discussion topics” (Pegu, 2019, p.151). By spreading to nearly 100 countries, #MeToo shed light on the pervasiveness of sexual violence, patriarchy, and rape culture³ embedded in various sectors—from the entertainment industry to academia and the political sphere (Roy, 2018, p.2).

As a result of the millions of online testimonies via the various renditions of the campaign, “powerful men—producers, actors, directors, politicians, TV anchors, journalists, sports doctors—have been publicly accused of sexual harassment, assault, and rape” across the globe (Zarkov & Davis, 2018, p.3). This exposure has brought forth major repercussions, socially, legally, and professionally. For example, a union minister in India was forced to resign in the wake of multiple charges of sexual violence (Roy, 2018, p.1). Furthermore, thousands of men created hashtags, such as #IDidThat and #HowIWillChange, to admit and apologize for inappropriate behavior (Khomami, 2017).

Yet, despite the widespread impact the campaign has had worldwide, it has also undergone many criticisms. For instance, some characterized #MeToo as being a “battle of the sexes,” which pits men and women against each other (Fallon, 2017). Others called it a “witch hunt” (Wright, 2018). A top aide official to the Texas attorney general in the U.S. even asked, “Aren’t you also tired of all the pathetic ‘me too’ victim claims?” (Astor, 2017). One of the more common critiques, however, has focused on concerns about the media’s role in #MeToo

³ Rape culture is defined as “the social environment that allows sexual violence to be normalized and justified, fueled by the persistent gender inequalities and attitudes about gender and sexuality” (UN Women, 2019). While the contexts may differ depending on the place, rape culture is arguably “rooted in patriarchal beliefs, power, and control” (ibid). An example of rape culture is noting whether the survivor of sexual violence was intoxicated at the time of the crime.

and how it is largely individualizing cases included in the movement. For instance, Tarana Burke, the original founder, noted how #MeToo has become heavily concentrated on outing the actions of individual perpetrators rather than providing support to the survivors of sexual violence—which was her initial goal when she first introduced the phrase (Jaffe, 2018, p.80)

Furthermore, the media representation of #MeToo has been challenged for only catering to a specific subset of women—mostly whom are affluent, powerful, and well-connected—while excluding the stories of victims who are unable to participate, “either because they don’t have access to (social) media or because the sanctions would be too great” (Zarkov & Davis, 2018, p.5). Some have even argued how, in the U.S., the media coverage of the campaign “could largely be interpreted as a conversation between white people: the privileged white women ‘speaking out’ and the privileged white men with platforms to defend themselves” (Phipps, 2019, p.9). This type of marginalization has created unease about the movement’s ability to effect global change across social and economic divisions. Yet, the extent to which #MeToo has been used by such a substantial number of women around the world to vocalize their experiences with sexual violence should not go unrecognized—nor unstudied.

In summary, this section provided a brief overview of the origin and evolution of the #MeToo movement, which first went viral in the U.S. in October 2017 and quickly spread across the world. For the purpose of the current research, the next two sections in this chapter will paint a broad-brush summary of the campaigns that occurred in Norway (2.5) and India (2.6). It is important to note that the aim of these sections is not to provide a detailed timeline of the campaign that took place in each country, but rather to offer contextualization for the cross-national analysis that will follow in subsequent chapters.

2.5 Overview of the #MeToo Campaign in Norway

After #MeToo was first introduced in the U.S. during October 2017, adaptations of the campaign quickly gained traction in Norway, with numerous groups using petitions to showcase the magnitude of sexual violence taking place within various sectors, including the entertainment and media industries, academia, and the political sphere. Similar to the U.S., women employed in the entertainment industry were among the first voices to come forward in Norway. One month after the viral spread of #MeToo, more than 560 actors signed a petition under the hashtag *#stilleforopptak* (‘silent for recording’) and shared stories of sexual violence through *Aftenposten*, one of the country’s prominent newspapers,

which were published on November 17 (Aftenposten Editorial Staff, 2017a). Days later, over 700 musicians spoke out under the hashtag *#nårmusikkenstilner* ('when the music fades') to share their own encounters (Aftenposten Editorial Staff, 2017b). Then, nearly 800 dancers followed suit, signing a petition and sharing their personal experiences under the hashtag *#nårdansenstopper* ('when the dance stops') (Aftenposten Editorial Staff, 2017c).

Toward the end of November 2017, equality ombudsman and senior adviser Marit Hovdal Moan, together with faculty of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), initiated another version of the campaign: *#metooakademia*. Their aim was to not only highlight the pervasiveness of sexual violence that occurs in academia, but to also show the skewed power dynamics that can arise due to hierarchical structures (Fimland, 2017). By February 2018, more than 600 people had signed the campaign petition (Sørum, 2018), and over 100 new cases of sexual violence among Norwegian universities and colleges were filed (Grace, 2018).

While a large portion of media coverage at the beginning of the campaign centered around measures to improve processes for managing sexual violence in the workplace, the media attention then shifted toward the political sphere, which is when coverage started to take more of an individual focus, specifically calling out accused perpetrators (Elnan, 2019, p.4). Consequently, multiple influential politicians across multiple parties were accused of sexual violence, which eventually prompted them to step down from their positions. For example, Trond Giske⁴, the deputy leader of the Det Norske Arbeiderparti (Norwegian Labor Party) and former cabinet minister in Norway, was the first politician to resign, after a wave of allegations of inappropriate behavior with young women came forth in December 2017. Further, newly elected leader Kristian Tonning Riise from the Unge Høyres Landsforbund (Norwegian Young Conservatives Party) stepped down after numerous complaints of sexual violence dating back to 2013 were reported (Gurzu, 2018). Ulf Leirstein, deputy leader of the Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party) parliamentary group, also resigned once reports surfaced that he shared 55 pornographic images to young boys volunteering in the Fremskrittspartiets Ungdom (Youth Progress Party), including a 14-year-old (Svaar, 2018).

⁴ My supervisor, Dr. Charles Ess, has made me aware that in August 2020, Trond Giske's ostensible comeback as leader of the Labor Party in the Trondheim region (Trønderlag) was blocked in response to still further accusations of sexual violence under the #MeToo banner. This update shows the ongoing importance of the #MeToo movement in Norway.

The mentioned accounts are, of course, not the only instances of sexual violence publicized through #MeToo efforts in Norway, as this section is primarily meant to provide a brief overview of the campaign that occurred in the country. However, it is critical to stress that since #MeToo first ignited in Norway in November 2017, approximately 10,000 people signed the multisectoral petitions to express their own experiences of sexual violence—an unprecedented amount in the country’s history (Elnan & Ringnes, 2018). With this number in mind, it is imperative to also point out the country’s strict defamation laws, which includes provisions prohibiting any person from acting “in a manner that is likely to harm another person’s good name and reputation...” (Norwegian Civil Penal Code, n.d., p.67). Since it can be particularly difficult to prove sexual violence cases—especially when the crimes occurred years prior—many survivors of such crimes were potentially deterred from speaking out for fear of having such lawsuits brought against them, as if found guilty, they could face fines and be imprisoned for up to six months (this subject will be further discussed in Chapter 6).

In summary, Section 2.5 demonstrates a broad overview of the #MeToo campaign that has occurred in Norway. While women in the entertainment industry launched the campaign in the country by publishing their stories in a leading national newspaper in November 2017, #MeToo quickly gained attention as it spread across various sectors, including academic and political spheres. The estimated 10,000 people who signed the cross-sectoral petitions as a way to express their own experiences with sexual violence highlights that these such crimes are still very much a national issue. To continue forward, the next and last section of this chapter will provide a broad overview of the #MeToo campaign in India.

2.6 Overview of #MeToo Campaign in India

The #MeToo campaign came to India in two waves, with the first known as ‘The List.’ In response to the wake of #MeToo in the U.S., Raya Sarkar, an Indian law student in the U.S. encouraged women in Indian academia to reveal the name of any sexual harassers they had encountered. She then compiled the names of nearly 70 highly respected academic men in India into an anonymous, crowdsourced list and shared it online on October 24, 2017. According to Sarkar, she did not seek legal action toward the perpetrators but rather aimed to warn women about such behavior while also publicly showcasing how caste and hierarchy play key roles in protecting those accused (Singh, 2017). Though she said to have confirmed each violation, many people, including prominent Indian feminists, criticized the list for undermining due process and the credibility of #MeToo (Borpujari, 2017).

Throughout the following months, a steady drip of #MeToo stories appeared on social media from India, but it wasn't until prominent Bollywood actor Tanushree Dutta came forth in September 2018 with her testimony against a fellow-actor—which she originally brought up 10 years prior but no action happened—that launched the second wave, as a series of posts by other women shared their own experiences on social media (Goel, Venkataraman, & Schultz, 2018). One of those women, well-known writer and comedian Mahima Kukreja, revealed on Twitter that comic star Utsav Chakraborty harassed her two years earlier by sending sexually connotated messages and unsolicited pictures of his genitals. Many women quickly chimed in, voicing similar experiences with Chakraborty on social media (Bloomberg News, 2019). The subsequent rush of allegations by numerous other influential women led media outlets, both nationally and globally, to portray these events as the long-awaited catalyst for #MeToo to properly take off within India (A. Roy, 2019; Goel et al., 2018).

Similar to campaigns in other countries, once #MeToo became viral in India in late 2018, it spread from the entertainment industry across numerous sectors. For example, in the area of news media, dozens of women came forth with allegations of inappropriate behavior by male colleagues—many of whom are well-known editors and reporters at some of India's leading news organizations (Goel et al., 2018). Several of the accused men were stripped of management roles, including Prashant Jha, the Chief of Bureau and Political Editor of *The Hindustan Times* (TNM Staff, 2018). Others were initially placed on 'leave,' such as K.R. Sreenivas, a top editor of *The Times of India*, who eventually resigned from their positions (Dharmadhikari, 2018). Another sector where the #MeToo campaign had major implications was the political sphere. For instance, after at least four women accused the Minister of State for External Affairs, M.J. Akbar, of sexual violence, he quickly resigned (Kirby, 2018).

Again, the above accounts by no means represent the entirety of the #MeToo in India, only an overview of key events meant for contextualization. To that end, similar to the previous #MeToo section on Norway, it is imperative to recognize India's severe defamation laws when discussing the country's #MeToo campaign. Under the Indian Penal Code, defamation is viewed as a communicated false statement about another that can unjustly harm one's reputation. In India, cases can be filed under criminal and/or civil laws and can come with a possible fine and two-year imprisonment (Indian Penal Code, n.d.). Several of the accused, high-profile men, such as Akbar, have filed criminal defamation cases against women who vocalized their experiences (Kirby, 2018). As noted, sexual assault and harassment can be

particularly difficult to prove—especially when such crimes took place years prior—so the risk of criminalization, in addition to extensive legal and court fees, potentially dissuaded many survivors from participating in the campaign. However, to lessen risks of coming forward, influential #MeToo leaders such as Kukreja (the comedian mentioned above), as well as other affluent women, offered to use their personal social media accounts as outlets for less-powerful individuals to anonymously reveal personal experiences of sexual violence in an effort to continue propelling the campaign forward (Bloomberg News, 2019).

Despite the campaign having been widely criticized in India, with many calling it exclusive, elite, and metropolitan in nature (Mustafa, 2018), it should not go unrecognized that #MeToo brought forth an outpouring of sexual violence allegations unlike anything the country has ever seen (Pathak & Khan, 2019). This point alone merits more research on the campaign regarding whether it has contributed to gender equality advancement, which is partly what this thesis research sets out to do and what will be discussed in the coming chapters.

To summarize, this section provided brief historical overviews of gender and society in Norway (2.2) and India (2.3) as a way to contextualize the present-day sociopolitical regimes in each country. Following the contextualization, a broad-brush summary on the origin and evolution of #MeToo was discussed in Section 2.4. Lastly, the two concluding sections gave brief overviews of the campaigns in Norway (2.5) and India (2.6). The following chapter will discuss the existing literature on the #MeToo movement.

3 Literature Review

In this chapter, I divide the content into three sections. First, in 3.1, I discuss the existing literature on the #MeToo movement, highlighting both the results of past analyses, as well as the methodology used to conduct such research. As we will soon see, there is still very limited research on #MeToo, with an even smaller amount on the campaigns in Norway and India. Thus, I expand the literature review in 3.2 to highlight prior studies on social media activism. Together, these two sections not only lay important groundwork for the current research, but also illuminate major research gaps and opportunities regarding #MeToo. I will articulate the recognized gaps and opportunities in the last section of the chapter, 3.3.

3.1 Research on the Global #MeToo Movement

Despite the rapid proliferation of the #MeToo movement on social media worldwide, there is little literature on the impact this social movement has had on combating sexual violence, as will be shown in the coming pages. One possible reason for the small selection of existing research on #MeToo could be timing, as the hashtag only gained significant popularity in late 2017 and its usage is still ongoing across the world. However, given the prompt viral spread of the movement and its global elevation of such a sensitive topic—sexual violence—#MeToo is indeed a subject that warrants further study.

As will soon be established, the studies that have been conducted thus far on #MeToo fall largely under the quantitative umbrella of research and particularly focus on either the media coverage of the campaign or the content of the campaign itself, rather than assessing specific underlying factors that supported or hindered the campaign's development in various places. For the qualitative research that has been completed, again, much of it has relied on assessing the content of the campaign (e.g., through content analyses.) Very few studies have centered around in-depth interviews. Furthermore, there have only been a small number of cross-national studies executed, many of which mainly focused on Western countries with similar economic and sociocultural backgrounds, as will soon be discussed. To that end, I will now turn to demonstrating the above claims by first discussing completed cross-national research.

One of the first cross-national studies conducted on #MeToo was published in 2018 and concentrated on the U.S. and Norway (Kunst et al., 2018). For this research, the scholars orchestrated a quantitative analysis by surveying a total of 433 respondents via an online

questionnaire. The goal was to analyze gender-based differences in attitudes and feelings toward #MeToo by investigating ideological perceptions of variables including sexism, feminism, and rape myths, as well as variances in experiences with sexual violence (Kunst et al., 2018, p.824). Pulling from psychological-based research to provide critical insights, they explored the essential factors behind various responses men and women had toward the campaign, and found that in both countries women displayed more positive attitudes to the campaign than men—with men perceiving the campaign as more harmful and less beneficial to society. Overall, “substantial gender differences were observed on all outcome variables, with men generally being less supportive of #MeToo” (p.834). However, on an individual level, the researchers noted that participants with personal experiences with harassment, unexpectedly, viewed the campaign as being less beneficial than those who had not experienced such violations. The scholars noted that “this relationship could suggest victims of harassment believe the campaign has led to an inflationary use of the term *sexual harassment*, thereby trivializing their own experience” (p.835). Another possible reason behind this finding which the authors put forward is that social media campaigns such as #MeToo might be viewed as an “ineffective means to achieve social change in legislative environments that seem to protect harassers more than victims” (ibid). In other words, sexual violence is an engrained structural issue (Hsu, 2019; Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018), one in which some people might perceive social media activism as not being able to sufficiently tackle. To that end, it seems fitting that the authors stress the need for more research surrounding the subject.

In regard to overarching cross-national differences among attitudes in the noted analysis (Kunst et al., 2018), few were found among most of the outcome variables. However, one surprising variance the study revealed was how the Norwegian participants, compared to U.S. respondents, reported #MeToo as being overall more harmful. Given how Norway arguably has a more gender-egalitarian population than the U.S., the researchers stated that this finding displays how Norwegians seemed to recognize “potential downsides” of #MeToo more than U.S. participants, thus showcasing a more nuanced view of the campaign (p.836). Yet, it is critical to note that ideological beliefs on factors such as gender egalitarianism and injustice were not assessed in this analysis. As the authors noted, future research on #MeToo should “optimally, compare countries that differ even more in their gender egalitarianism than Norway and the United States” (ibid)—which is what the current thesis seeks to do by investigating the #MeToo campaigns that took place in Norway and India.

Keeping in line with this train of thought, a recently published article revealed the results of a cross-national, media-framing analysis of #MeToo which focused on four countries: the U.S, Australia, Japan, and India (Starkey, Koerber, Sternadori, & Pitchford, 2019). By comparing a total of 352 mainstream news stories on the women who became associated with the start of the campaigns in each country, the researchers examined the articles through the lens of three sociocultural dimensions: *masculinity* (i.e., the notion that men are assertive and tough while women are modest and caring); *individualism* (i.e., individual interests are perceived as more important than group interests); and *power distance* (i.e., refers to the relationship between individuals in a society who are perceived to have more power than others) (p.441). With an initial aim to uncover cross-cultural norms in media framing across national borders, the content coding process categorized the findings into four frames: “brave silence breaker; stoic victim of an unjust system; recovered or reluctant hero; and hysterical slut” (p.443).

While the results illuminated cross-cultural differences in media framing of the campaign (such as the variances in articles sensationalizing cases), they also revealed consistent cross-national instances of media outlets “silencing or shaming” the victims who voiced their experience with sexual violence (Starkey et al., 2019, p.452). This consistency is particularly compelling given the differences of the four nations in relation to the social and cultural norms that were assessed. For example, Australia and the U.S. rank much higher in regard to the individualism dimension than Japan and India, which implies that the overall culture in the former two countries emphasizes personal agency over the social collective (p.453). It is critical to note here that while the media outlets in the four countries being studied initially ‘silenced’ the women who came forward as part of #MeToo to share their encounters of sexual violence, it was social media that offered these women a platform to share their stories, which then galvanized audience interest that “forced the media, and ultimately the authorities, to pay attention and take action” (p.454). Put differently, despite the cultural differences (and similarities) in media framing behind #MeToo, social media allowed for a “new collective identity” (ibid), one that spanned across national and cultural boundaries. However, as the authors stressed, most of the cross-national research on #MeToo focuses on Western countries (p.440), and thus insight from analyses between Western and non-Western countries is still needed.

Another example of cross-national research on #MeToo is the study by Møller Hartley and Askanius (2019), which centered around mainstream media coverage on the campaign. In

this instance, the two nations assessed were Denmark and Sweden, two neighboring countries in the Nordic Region. A comparative analysis was conducted to examine the reporting that occurred in each country for differences in scope, genres, sources, and main themes. The study consisted of two steps, with the first step being a quantitative content analysis of the coverage in eight leading national newspapers, both from print and online. Focusing on coverage published from 15 to 31 October 2017, the analysis included 879 articles (245 Danish, 634 Swedish), and included both the news content and the corresponding comments to “give evidence to a broad spectrum of tone, style, and perspectives” (Møller Hartley & Askanius, 2019, p.24). In the second step, the researchers conducted a qualitative framing analysis of 109 newspaper articles published over the course of a month to better understand the coverage framing in relation to the political and sociocultural contexts of both countries, respectively. Four overarching frames emerged from the study: “#MeToo as a (1) personal testimony, (2) social movement, (3) political correctness, and (4) witch hunt” (p.26).

Interestingly, the results in research mentioned above tapped into the conceptions of ‘selfhood’ and how individual actions relate back to the larger society. For example, the cross-national data revealed that the debate about #MeToo “predominately remained at the individual level in both countries, framing sexual assault as a personal rather than a societal problem” (Møller Hartley & Askanius, 2019, p.30). Another telling finding in the study was the differences in discussion. For instance, while the Danish media coverage mainly framed the hashtag as revolving around workplace policy and sexism, in addition to personal stories, the Swedish coverage depicted #MeToo as an issue that needs to be addressed “by the state on a policy level” (ibid). While this cross-national study is an important addition to the pool of existing literature on #MeToo as it reveals key differences in media framing between Denmark and Sweden (e.g., whether sexual violence is a personal or societal issue), the fact remains that it compares two nations which have shared histories and are consistently ranked as top gender-equal societies (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Thus, additional cross-national analyses which focus on countries that are further apart on the gender equality spectrum are vital for a more nuanced understanding of the overall perceptions of #MeToo.

To provide a brief review, the studies mentioned thus far demonstrate the few cross-national analyses on #MeToo which have been conducted to date. As shown, most of the research revolves around Western countries with somewhat similar economic and sociocultural backgrounds (e.g., comparisons between the U.S. and Norway; along with Sweden and

Denmark). More so, the one cross-national study that did compare Western and non-Western countries (with the U.S., Australia, Japan, and India as the four national subjects) centered around a media-framing analysis, rather than qualitative in-depth interviews. That said, I will now shift away from the cross-national research to highlight additional studies that have been completed on #MeToo, the majority of which, like the mentioned cross-national analyses, were conducted using quantitative methodology.

One such example is a quantitative content analysis designed to examine the underlying rhetorical messages of #MeToo media coverage (Bloomfield, 2019). Specifically, the study aimed to uncover patterns in the assignment of guilt in #MeToo news coverage. As the researcher noted, the main goal was to “provide insight into the dominant narratives that circulate about sexual violence,” particularly within the public discourse on #MeToo (p.396).

Bloomfield (2019) focused on mainstream reporting from newspapers and online media outlets, collecting articles that were written between October 2017, when the campaign first went viral in the U.S., to the end of 2018 (p.400). With an initial data pool of over 10,000 results, the data was systematically narrowed the articles down—yet, the specific number eventually used was not mentioned—and then coded for patterns. The study found common themes of “scapegoating” and “transcendence” rhetoric (p.404), the latter which has been argued to serve as an approach for advancing systemic change by “transforming people’s conception of sexual harassment from isolated cases into societal ills” (ibid). Although the results highlight ways in which mainstream media outlets categorize the blame of sexual violence within societies while also prescribing corrective actions for public issues, this analysis only offers a macro-type perspective by concentrating on the global #MeToo movement. Put differently, it lacks a more micro, country-specific focus. Given how the campaign has trended in over 85 countries to date (Thorpe, 2017), culturally dependent versions of #MeToo have sprouted worldwide, as noted in Section 2.4 (p.15). Thus, research focusing on such culturally specific versions is needed for uncovering sociocultural factors which may have contributed to the campaign’s development in each place.

As previously discussed, of the studies that have been conducted on #MeToo thus far, the majority have relied on quantitative methodology for analyzing data. Another case in point is the research led by Lindgren in 2019, which drew on data from nearly four million #MeToo Twitter posts. Given the instantaneous, global spread of the campaign, with a half million people responding to actress Alyssa Milano’s tweet in the first 24 hours, this study sought to

analyze the “complex and multilayered character of social media mobilization” behind #MeToo, as well as to showcase key challenges the campaign faced in maintaining momentum (Lindgren, 2019, p.419). The hypothesized obstacles noted by the researcher included: noise and dilution (i.e., significant amounts of content that may have diluted the campaign’s focus); hate speech; and disengagement through ‘clicktivism.’ To prevent discrepancies, the latter term was categorized as “tweets that were simply echoed (i.e., retweeted), compared with how often users made the additional effort to craft replies or original tweets” (p.423). The analysis focused on tweet (i.e. message) content that spanned from October to December 2017, which was collected into a single database. Findings revealed that despite the initial viral spread of #MeToo, the campaign somewhat began to lose momentum on Twitter by mid-December (p.432).

To get a better sense of the campaign’s presence on various social media platforms, the researcher then analyzed content apart from Twitter, including YouTube, Tumblr, and Facebook, which revealed interesting results. For instance, while the data portrayed that much of the #MeToo activity on Twitter occurred within the first few days of the campaign going viral, participation then transitioned to other social media platforms, with substantial amounts occurring within closed Facebook groups (Lindgren, 2019, p.433). These findings warrant additional research, specifically qualitative, to better understand this communicative shift, since varying sociocultural factors might justify why some groups and/or individuals feel more comfortable discussing such sensitive topics, such as sexual violence, in private online groups rather than on public platforms with greater visibility. As the next few pages will demonstrate, there is currently limited research of this kind.

Additionally, of the qualitative research that has been conducted on #MeToo, much has concentrated on either content or exploratory analyses. One example of the latter is the exploratory, empirical analysis focused on workplace sexual-harassment reporting by Hart (2019). Curious to examine the reasoning behind why workplace sexual harassment is often unreported, the researcher centered her study around a national survey experiment where respondents were asked to propose career advancement outcomes for colleagues who experienced workplace harassment. The results revealed that “participants were less likely to recommend a woman for promotion if she self-reported sexual harassment relative to other identical women who experienced nonsexual harassment or whose sexual harassment was reported by a coworker” (Hart, 2019, p.534). Ironically, the #MeToo movement went viral as

Hart was conducting her study. Given the potential shift in view about sexual harassment due to increased media coverage, Hart (2019) reran her experiment to track changes over the span of four months—November 2017 to February 2018—and directly asked participants about their perceptions of #MeToo via an open-ended question, which allowed her to assess their reaction to, as well as familiarity with, the various campaigns (p.543). As Hart noted, “when asked about the #MeToo movement, two-thirds were familiar with it in November and more than three-quarters were familiar with it in the following three months” (p.552). While the analysis revealed a decline in bias against harassment self-reporting over the timeframe, Hart emphasized that this particular study “cannot pinpoint the cause of the declining bias” (ibid). However, it is important to acknowledge that the data did highlight the potentiality a movement such as #MeToo can have on sociocultural perceptions and stereotypes regarding widespread issues like sexual violence. Thus, the need for more qualitative research on this subject is paramount for fostering culturally specific, long-term solutions.

In addition to Hart’s 2019 exploratory analysis, another qualitative study conducted on #MeToo centers around one of the countries in this current cross-national research—India. Mishra (2020) designed a qualitative textual analysis of 641 news articles to examine the domestication of foreign news coverage on #MeToo through an Indian context. As the scholar noted, “the print news media, unlike television, has historically been outside the Indian government’s control,” and has played a critical part in social justice advocacy (p.4). Furthermore, “geographical proximity and cultural/historical ties” have been classified as “important determinants in the presentation of foreign news in an Indian context” (p.6) In the study, data was gathered from five of India’s prominent English-language newspapers, and all of the collected content was published between October 2017 (when #MeToo first took off in the U.S.) and October 2018 (when the campaign officially launched in India) in effort to examine how the Indian press covered the international campaign specifically for its main readership (p.7). The results indicated that mainstream media coverage was tailored for its target audience (the urban, middle-class of India) in several varying ways, such as shifting the international orientation “toward local industries, people, and cultural concerns” in the early stages of reporting to enhance the local relevance (p.8).

According to Mishra (2020, p.10), this local shift implies the strategy of framing sexual violence in an Indian context as not simply a ‘foreign’ issue, but one that is local, cultural, and systemic. As she points out, much of the content “highlighted problems with India’s

patriarchal culture and misogyny,” and also emphasized that the “patriarchal conditioning of women had resulted in their reluctance to speak up about their experiences with harassment and abuse” (Mishra, 2020, p.11). This textual analysis revealed compelling findings on how prominent media outlets in India frame sexual violence within an Indian context. This is critical knowledge given how previous researchers have found that, in India, the resonance and coverage of online campaigns by mainstream media outlets can contribute to their overall success (Guha, 2015). Mishra’s (2020) study also exposed insight on coverage prioritization. For instance, while personal narratives from the film and media industries, corporations, and academia were highlighted, “discrimination and unfair treatment of certain groups of less-privileged women” were rare (p.11). The scholar argued that this type of reporting exhibits the “hierarchy of social struggle” within India, “in which certain groups and topics are given precedence and legitimacy over others” (p.14). Yet, because this research focused on media coverage which ultimately lacked representation of certain marginalized communities, further qualitative research—particularly with local policy experts and gender-equality advocates—is vital for gauging the extent to which the campaign benefited such discriminated groups.

As demonstrated in the literature review thus far, much of the research conducted on #MeToo has assessed media coverage, whether it be through textual analyses (Mishra, 2020); framing analyses (Møller Hartley & Askanius, 2019); or content analyses (Bloomfield, 2019). Yet, it is also important to highlight the studies on #MeToo which were designed to use the social media campaign as a springboard to explore broader social issues. In China, for example, where #MeToo has since been suspended due to Internet censorship, Zhou and Qiu (2020) used the campaign as a way to study the conditions under which this form of hashtag gender activism—specifically activism against sexual violence—may resurface in the country.

By conducting a cross-sectional survey which included over 700 participants, the researchers (Zhou & Qiu, 2020) argued that although #MeToo is currently banned in China, there is still possibility that such hashtag activism will reoccur. However, the results of the survey implied that future activist campaigns should center around frames of gender injustice to increase the feeling of solidarity between participants toward the campaign. They also argued that this sense of group collectiveness is especially important in campaigns like #MeToo, as its success is heavily reliant on individuals’ willingness to speak out publicly about sexual violence (p.15). Further, it is important that activists facilitate various online discussions which promote the belief in the democratic role of the Internet “without crossing the ‘high-

voltage' line of online censorship" (Zhou & Qiu, 2020, p.15). While the study does have limitations—for instance, participants were mainly urban, middle-class females—the results shed light on the importance of considering sociocultural variables, such as group identity and perceived injustice, when assessing online activist engagement. Knowing such factors could assist in better understanding the variations in response to local #MeToo campaigns across national and cultural boundaries. Yet, as the literature highlighted thus far has shown, very few studies on #MeToo have focused on Norway and India—let alone compared the two, as is the intention with the current research.

Another study that used the campaign to investigate broader issues is the research by Fernando and Prasad (2019), which drew on #MeToo to examine sexual violence and organizational silencing in academia. To answer the main research question of '*How are victims who start to voice their experiences of sex-based harassment silenced within the workplace?*', the scholars conducted a qualitative analysis of early and mid-career female academics in business schools across the United Kingdom (p.1566). The results showed how these participants were led by various third-party actors (such as managers, colleagues, and Human Resources) *not* to report such violations (p.1574). More so, when they attempted to speak up about their concerns, such actors tried to overturn such concerns, ironizing the experiences as common or normal (p.1575). These findings demonstrate the significance of understanding the sociocultural nuances of organizational silencing. To that extent, this study is particularly interesting for the current research at hand, as academia is an area wherein a substantial amount of the #MeToo cases evolved in Norway (as noted in Section 2.5, p.18).

Finally, an additional analysis that used #MeToo as a basis for a broader focus is one that concentrated on the politicization of the campaign and how the media bolstered the exclusion of marginalized, incarcerated people who regularly endure sexual violence (Hsu, 2019). By using the coverage of #MeToo as a framework, Hsu conducted a case analysis on the book *#SurvivedAndPunished*, which was written by incarcerated survivors of gendered violence (whom were either people of color, queer, transgender, poor, and/or disabled) as a way to voice personal experiences with sexual abuse committed by officers in authority in the U.S. prison system. The aim of the research was to show the sociocultural foundations of gender violence within the U.S. (e.g., power dynamics between genders; between law enforcement officers and those incarcerated) through an intersectional lens. For the study, the scholar relied on the theory of intersectionality, originally introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), to

stress the need for employing an intersectional approach (i.e., recognizing the interconnected nature of social categorizations, such as race, gender, class, and how these categories impact the extent of discrimination and oppression one faces) when studying human rights violations, including sexual violence. (For example, how does a Black, transgender woman living in an impoverished neighborhood experience the world, and how does this vary from the experience of a White, middle-class, heterosexual man?) Hsu (2019, p.271) underlined that employing an intersectional approach when assessing social injustices could reveal potential pathways for advocates to create more inclusive responses against oppressive state institutions—responses that address the many particularities (i.e., the various intersections) of individual experiences.

To that end, the study highlighted linkages between interpersonal and state violence to show the pervasiveness of sexual abuse, and also to draw notice to several sociocultural aspects which may contribute to this current environment (Hsu, 2019, 280). For example, two factors that were recognized as having played an underlying part include the notion of maintaining power (p.280) and multi-level “governing structures engineered to protect the elite” (p.282). According to Hsu, a culture of violence cannot be transformed until power is understood to be a “resource that can be shared rather than hoarded” (p.283). In other words, marginalized voices need to be recognized for any reform to take shape, yet many of these voices still go unrecognized by mainstream media (ibid). These findings are important for understanding #MeToo, especially since the reporting on the various campaigns has been criticized for focusing largely on “heterosexual, middle- and upper-class White women” (p.273), while excluding marginalized, minority groups and individuals, such as people with differing abilities, economic statuses, racial backgrounds, and sexualities (Banet-Weiser, Gill, & Rottenberg, 2020; Mishra, 2020). Further, it has been argued that this type of exclusion demonstrates the “culture of the powerful,” one where people with racial and economic privilege are most visible (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020, p.18).

That said, when the coverage of campaigns like #MeToo are researched, the results can inadvertently reinforce the exclusion of certain voices, regardless of inclusive intentions, since these voices were not included in the first place (Hsu, 2019, p. 273). More so, this type of exclusion can then influence how other countries report on such issues within a localized context. Take Indian journalistic practices for example. It has been argued that in India, news about the U.S. is commonly considered ‘newsworthy’ by many Indian journalists (Mishra, 2020, p.6). Thus, the media logic behind U.S. #MeToo coverage can inadvertently impact

how the campaign will be covered in India, which in turn has the potential to shape how Indian citizens interpret and respond to the campaign (Fadnis, 2017, p.1113). To that end, it is vital to understand sociocultural tenets that undergird #MeToo in its various adaptations throughout the world, as recognizing such factors can assist scholars in more sufficiently assessing how culturally salient #MeToo has been in relation to advancing gender equality.

In summary, the literature pool on #MeToo is relatively shallow for a campaign that has trended in at least 85 countries since going viral in 2017 (Thorpe, 2017). As demonstrated in this section, there is an even smaller amount of research on the specific #MeToo campaigns for the two countries being evaluated in this current study—Norway and India. In the case of the latter, this is not very surprising, as #MeToo in India did not gain sharp momentum until October 2018 (Goel et al., 2018). However, given how this analysis is centered around what is “arguably one of the most pervasive and consequential social media campaigns to date” (Kunst et al., 2018, p.834), it is important to thus expand the literature review to also include research on social media activism, specifically in relation to gender-related issues in Norway and India. This additional literature is highlighted in the following section. The chapter will then be concluded in Section 3.3, where the major research gaps and opportunities relating to #MeToo will be discussed.

3.2 Research on Social Media Activism

Over the last two decades, social media has played a vital role in driving societal activist efforts worldwide. Its far-reaching ability to influence how and when people engage in collective action has opened the door to a new realm of research in which scholars from various disciplines have sought to participate (Chon & Park, 2020; Kaun & Uldam, 2018). Hence, the concept ‘social media activism’ is broadly defined. For example, Brown, Ray, Summers, & Fraistat (2017, p.1831) label the term as the “use of social network technology to organize and coordinate real-world action.” Similarly, Chon and Park (2020, p.73) refer to this “subset of activism” as “communicative action on social media that seeks to collectively address a problem” with regard to contentious issues. Other scholars, such as Brady, Young, and Mcleod (2015) denote social media activism as a form of “digital advocacy” (p.257) to demonstrate the democratizing power of social media platforms and how “social media has progressed from a predominant tool for social interaction to an important tool for organizing practices” (p.258).

Taken together, the noted statements emphasize how social media platforms offer a gateway for individuals and groups to build and sustain online activist campaigns in order to advocate for wide-ranging issues. While there is now a deep sea of research available on social media activism in relation to various topics (e.g., racial justice, environmental causes, etc.), for the purpose of the current study on Norway and India, this portion of the review solely includes social media activism research specifically relating to gender-based issues. As Fadnis (2017, p.1112) noted, social media has transformed gender equality activism worldwide as a result of its ability to shed light on the pervasiveness of gender oppression. Some have even argued there is a direct relationship between the media visibility highlighting such issues and the subsequent level of energy and activism (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020, p.15). Thus, recognizing the nuances of social media activism is important for assessing underlying cross-national, sociocultural factors of the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India. In the following pages, I will elaborate on the main challenges of social media activism which have been pointed out in previous studies. Yet, first, I will discuss the research that has been conducted on social media gender activism, addressing key results and the common types of methodology used.

One country in particular that has been a popular case study for social media gender activism is India. This might be due to the country's "traditional patriarchal culture and deeply held beliefs about men's superiority," which has contributed "to a host of gender-related social problems" (Mishra, 2020, p.2) (as noted in Section 2.3, pp.10-14). A number of prior studies have been organized around social media-based, gender-equality campaigns (Titus, 2018; Fadnis, 2017; Guha, 2015; Kumar & Thapa, 2015; Losh, 2014), which merit value in the absence of existing research on #MeToo in India specifically. For example, Losh (2014) focused on the Twitter activity of two Indian activist groups to analyze the metadata schemes these organizations employed to promote gender equality via the use of culturally specific hashtags (p.11). The informational labor she highlighted that goes into the selection of text, images, videos, and links organizations post on social media revealed critical communication strategies. As Losh emphasized, not only must hashtags be "simultaneously short, unique, memorable, unambiguous in meaning, resistant to variant spellings, and descriptive as content labels" (p.20); they also must have specific sociocultural significance (e.g., the usage of the hashtag #Nirbhaya—which translates to 'the fearless one'—when discuss the 2012 Delhi rape case). In other words, when using messaging strategies for social media campaigns, such as #MeToo, it is critical to understand sociocultural dynamics of a particular place—which is what the current cross-national research on India and Norway seeks out to do. According to

Losh (2014), this type of insight can have tremendous value for advocacy work, as it can assist in cultivating and/or sustaining campaign momentum.

Building on Losh's study, another scholar (Fadnis, 2017) emphasized the significance of generating an emotional appeal when creating social media campaigns. According to Fadnis (2017, p.1113), a campaign must also have an emotional element that resonates with viewers. In her 2017 study, the scholar examined the strategies behind the hashtag #LahukaLagaan in India, a campaign led by a local women's rights non-profit organization, SheSays, to protest the government's decision to impose a high tax on sanitary pads. At the time, sanitary pads were categorized as a "luxury commodity for women," and as a result the products were tacked with a 14 percent Goods and Services Tax (p.1111). The hashtag, which translates to 'tax on blood,' quickly gained popularity after it was posted on Twitter with a parody video featuring a well-known feminist comedian, and soon became India's largest women-led Twitter campaign to demand policy change (ibid). Both studies mentioned above (Losh, 2014; Fadnis, 2017) discussed the tactics behind using social media to make certain activist topics visible and part of a larger cultural conversation in India (e.g., raising awareness about menstrual hygiene management by demanding tax-free sanitary pads), which is vital insight for advancing activism. Yet, as the researchers underlined, the strategy element of social media campaign messaging is just one piece to the puzzle. It is just as essential to assess sociocultural attitudes behind gender norms and social practices, as these perceptions can influence the responses to such cultural conversations, (Losh, 2014, p.20), including the amount and depth of mainstream media coverage (Guha, 2015, p.156).

A key benefit of social media is its ability to propel messages onto a global stage, yet as users quickly find out, not all social media campaigns are guaranteed to trend. As Guha (2015) stressed, the challenge can be even more profound in emerging digital landscapes such as India. In order to reach a larger audience, including policy makers, digital campaigns must resonate with individuals while also converging with mainstream media (Guha, 2015, p.155). Here, the scholar presents the notion of "collaborative agenda setting," and suggests activists should work together with the news media to set the agenda for public discussion (pp.155-156). This tactic of partnering with various media outlets not only can increase resonance, but also awareness on societal issues, such as sexual violence, on a wider cross-section of the public since many people only visit a small number of websites online (Guha, 2015 p.156).

Similar to studies mentioned above, Kumar and Thapa (2015) also evaluated social media activism in India, except in their case they focused on a specific area: the city of Dehradun. Curious to assess whether social media can serve as a catalyst for civil society movements in the country, the researchers selected the location of Dehradun since it is “an education hub of India, having a sizeable number of young, active [social] media users” (p.1299). As they pointed out, the city is also known for its politically involved citizens and is situated in the Garhwal region, which has a “history of fighting for social causes and civic rights” (p.1304). For the study, data was gathered from a questionnaire that was administered to 195 people. Participants, who were mostly in college and ranged in age from 17-27 years old, were asked about their frequency of media usage (including radio, television, newspapers, magazine, and social media), outlet preferences, as well as reasons for usage.

The results suggested that not only does social media have a limited effect on this particular demographic, but also that television plays the most dominant role, both in penetration and influence (Kumar & Thapa, 2015, p.1311). While television has been a leading form of media in India since its 1959 introduction, these findings are especially compelling since Internet access has become more readily available in the country, specifically among the educated middle-class which was the target of the study (pp.1311-1312). In fact, recent data shows that India is now the world’s second largest Internet user domain—behind China—with 450 million users (Udupa, Venkatraman, & Khan, 2019, p.4). (Yet, it is critical to keep in mind that despite this increase in users, only 26 percent of India’s total population has Internet connection, with the majority being urban dwellers (Udupa et al., 2019, p.4).) Nonetheless, the results from the study (Kumar & Thapa, 2015) illustrate the significance of understanding media infiltration in various locations and also points to the potential success that can come from collaborating with multiple media sectors—a point which Guha (2015) also underlined, as previously noted. Furthermore, this analysis showcases the notion that while activism might start online via social media, campaign successes may be contingent on the level to which they converge with offline/on-street action (Lim, 2018)¹.

For example, the advantage of social media campaigns collaborating with traditional media (such as print and television) to transition offline is clearly emphasized in the #IWillGoOut movement that swept across India in 2017. Through an in-depth case analysis, Titus (2018)

¹ I will further discuss this viewpoint raised by Lim (2018) in Chapter 4, when I articulate how I will use Lim’s three-part theoretical framework, *Roots, Routes, Routers*, in the context of the current cross-national analysis.

explored how activists leveraged the reach of social media to transform online interest into offline action by organizing real-time marches in various locations to spark local, national, and international media attention. She emphasized that “for a campaign to be successful, the timing of the campaign and values that form its foundation are vital” (p.246). To that end, although #MeToo went viral in the U.S. shortly after the sexual abuse allegations against former Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein, as discussed in Section 2.4 (p.15), few studies on #MeToo have focused on the underlying factors that prompted the campaign to sweep across so many countries throughout the world. Rather, much of the conducted research has assessed the amount of media coverage and the framing of particular media content (Mishra, 2020; Bloomfield, 2019; Møller Hartley & Askanius, 2019). Therefore, recognizing specific sociocultural tenets that supported and/or hindered the development of #MeToo within a local context could assist scholars in studying the campaign’s saturation in different places, in addition to the varying degrees of engagement.

Of course, the sociocultural foundation that undergirds gender equality differs depending on the landscape, and the case of this current cross-national study between Norway and India is no exception. (Please see Sections 2.2 (pp.6-10) and 2.3 (pp.10-14) for more detail.) Yet, it is important to understand what role such factors play in shaping social media gender activism. The critical reflection by Gajjala (2018) sheds light on this question in relation to India. For example, by centering her discussion around the social media campaign #LoSha (a list of sexual harassers in Indian academia), which took place in 2017, the Indian scholar argued that it is the country’s long history of patriarchal power and institutional status which drives the caste-class networks embedded in academia across the nation (p.491).

While #LoSha is yet another example of an Indian social media campaign aimed to combat gender oppression, Gajjala (2018) argued it also exhibits how engagement can be hindered due to the lack of digital infrastructural support needed to ensure protection of the victims speaking out (p.492). Given the substantial increase of Internet access and affordability across India, she emphasized how paramount it is to create safe, digitally secure spaces—which she refers to as “whisper networks” (p.492). “Even in digital spaces, whether it be Facebook, Twitter, or Google Docs, there is still a serious risk of exposure through hacking and doxing” (Gajjala, 2018, p.492). In the case of #MeToo, these reflective insights are critical for better understanding why and what sociocultural factors (e.g., gendered norms;

roles; and expectations) may prevent and/or enhance one's ability to speak up and engage in online activism.

The literature on social media activism discussed thus far has largely concentrated on India, and therefore it is important to emphasize this is not by design but rather due to research of this kind being more limited in relation to Norway. However, one study that should not go unnoticed in this review is the cross-national analysis between Norway and Turkey (Sümer & Eslen-Ziya, 2015) which focused on feminist mobilization via public protests and social media activism aimed against proposals put forth regarding abortion rights. Upon providing a brief historical overview of the women's movements in both countries to show the different gender regimes for contextualization, the researchers then assessed public debates on issues of abortion and bodily rights that took place on social media in each nation. Although the women's movements have varied in both countries—with the one in Norway having close contact with the state, unlike the one in Turkey, which developed much later and has since been rather weak (p.27)—the results revealed many significant similarities and differences.

For instance, the proposals put forth in both countries regarding abortion rights differed in content. While key messaging in Turkey centered around abortion restrictions, in Norway, the proposal focused more so on giving doctors an option to opt out of referrals for abortion. However, both instances triggered similar backlash from women's rights advocates, which exemplifies the power of collective action coming together to advance social and political change (Sümer & Eslen-Ziya, 2015, p.33). This cross-national study is significant in revealing varying sociocultural dynamics that contribute to gender issues and policymaking. As the scholars pointed out, sociocultural and religious doctrines are heavily woven into the debates of Turkish women's rights, which is then filtered through a policy lens that places strong emphasis on cultural conservatism and traditional gender norms (ibid). On the other hand, the central welfare state of Norway embodies a more egalitarian approach to gender-related issues. These differing gender regimes parallel with the notion that sociocultural norms matter not only with expectations set for individuals; they also influence politics, legislation, and social policy (Scott, 2017). With that said, uncovering the sociocultural nuances in the varying versions of #MeToo can exhibit how such fundamental dynamics contributed to the campaign by supporting and/or hindering its development.

Challenges Within Social Media Activism

While the previous pages in this section highlighted critical insights about social media gender activism (e.g., strategies behind hashtag usage, the benefits of collaborating with traditional media, etc.), it is also critical to address several main challenges recognized in regard to this form of online collective action. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss these key obstacles, along with explaining how they relate back to the current research at hand. Finally, in Section 3.5, I will outline the major research gaps of #MeToo and conclude the chapter by articulating how the current thesis aims to fill in some of the discussed gaps.

As a start, one significant challenge related to social media activism for gender-based issues is the notion of creating safe, inclusive online spaces wherein people with varied experiences can come together to partake in the cause at hand. While social media platforms can make it easier for such spaces to be created, as earlier noted, there are still multiple risks (ranging from dismissive interjections to more serious, fatal threats) which leave activists, participants, and victims who are speaking out publicly about such issues via social media particularly vulnerable (Gajjala, 2018, p.492).

Despite some social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, taking regulatory action to combat this vulnerability, “the sexual harassment of women online remains a major social problem” (Megarry, 2018, p.1071). This claim alone can drastically impact the gender-equal (and gender-just) nature of these platforms, particularly in regard to whose voices are more likely to be heard and taken seriously through social media activism. As Megarry emphasized (p.1073), it is not just social media users who can influence online discussions, but also the sociocultural ideologies behind the corporate leadership of such social media sites as these views are ultimately embedded in the platform’s design, engineering, and operation. Building upon the work of scholar Tarleton Gillespie (2015), Megarry (p.1074) stressed how vital it is to remember that “social media platforms are imbued with ‘explicit and implicit norms [with built in] cultural presumptions,’” and also that these sites, including Facebook and Twitter, have moderation teams which decide “which contentious content is allowed to circulate, and what is deleted.” In turn, these decisions can shape the online political discourse surrounding specific issues, as well as whether interactions lead to additional advocacy offline (Chon & Park, 2020, p.73).

Another growing challenge of social media activism is ‘digital slacktivism,’ wherein individuals solely use “social media and web-based technologies for advocacy in lieu of

traditional boots-on-the-ground organizing and action” (Brady et al., 2015, p.260). It has been argued that only using social media for social change has the potential of creating a “false sense of accomplishment and altruism among people,” as from a historical perspective, social change usually requires “much more investment of time and resources than is attainable by web technologies alone (ibid). This point is also echoed in Lim (2018), which I will soon highlight in Section 4.4 (pp.-50-53).

Drawing attention to the possible impediments of digital slacktivism is not to undercut the extensive benefits social media has when it comes to gender equality activism, which is heavily evident in a number of studies (Baer, 2015; Brown et.al., 2017; Yang, 2016). It is more so to recognize the significant value of narrative agency, which can be understood as individual stories crafted into a larger forum that is “communal, social, cooperative, and participatory and, simultaneously, constituted and constrained by the material and symbolic elements of context and culture” (Campbell, 2005, p.3). The creation of widespread narrative agency is another key challenge in social media gender activism, specifically when aiming to cultivate large-scale social movements. As Yang (2016, p.14) pointed out, “narrative forms have agency because they ‘invite’ audiences, readers, or listeners to participate in the co-production of stories.” Narrative agency can be even more influential within social media activism as hashtags allow the form to consistently shapeshift from platform to platform, all while being categorized under a larger collective. “Part of the artistry of a collective hashtag narrative derives from its versatility of expressive forms...In the middle of these personalized but artful story-telling, a protest narrative is created and carried forward” (Yang, 2016, p.16).

Although protest narratives can assist in developing broad partnerships with civil society and governmental leaders, which can in turn lead to future policy reform (Dhar, 2018, p.49), Yang (2016, p.14) highlighted that the fluidity and openness of narrative agency can also make it “susceptible to perversion,” particularly online where the narrative can have global reach. That said, while the current research will not rely on a narrative component as part of the analysis, Yang’s study is still important to keep in mind as it indicates the significance of uncovering differences in sociocultural factors (e.g., self-identity; gender norms, roles, and expectations) which may impact gender equality advocacy. Such knowledge can then assist in modifying international campaigns such as #MeToo into more specific local contexts, all while avoiding media misrepresentation (Mishra, 2020).

In summary, it is clear social media activism can provide a global perspective in shedding light on some of the fundamental bases of gender inequality (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020, p.20). However, as the mentioned literature has demonstrated, it is ultimately the extent to which a specific cultural landscape is understood that will allow activists to determine how exactly social media can be used to promote change (Kaun & Uldam, 2018; Losh, 2014); when and which platforms should be used (Lindgren, 2019; Megarry 2018); as well as the type of messaging needed to resonate with various individuals on a wide spectrum (Brown et al., 2017). Altogether, cultural-specific research of this kind plays a substantial role in assessing whether and/or how one can participate in such activism (Fadnis, 2017, p.1113). Having now discussed existing literature on both #MeToo and social media gender activism in relation to Norway and India, I will turn to highlighting the major research gaps and opportunities.

3.3 Major Research Gaps and Opportunities

The previous pages in this chapter have demonstrated many critical research gaps, with one of the more pressing holes being the lack of literature on #MeToo. To reiterate, upon going viral overnight in October 2017, this two-word hashtag garnered half a million tweets within 24 hours, becoming a “broad, borderless, and transnational” social movement (Mishra, 2020, p.1). Some have even recognized #MeToo as having “ruptured a pervasive silence around sexual assault” (Hsu, 2019, p.270). Yet, despite the rapid, worldwide spread of the hashtag, there are few studies conducted on the subject. As shown in the review, much of the existing research focuses on either the evolution of #MeToo or specific media coverage relating to various campaigns (Mishra, 2020; Bloomfield, 2019; Møller Hartley & Askanus, 2019). Additionally, a large amount of the literature available is comprised of quantitative analyses (Lindgren, 2019; Kunst et al., 2018), and there is a limited amount of research on #MeToo from a cross-national perspective. Moreover, the scholars who have conducted cross-national studies on the movement have primarily focused on Western countries, in addition to cultures that do not have widely differing outlooks on gender egalitarianism (Møller Hartley & Askanus, 2019; Kunst et al., 2018).

The current study aims to assist in filling the research gap in a number of ways. First, this study will be a qualitative, cross-national analysis centered around the #MeToo campaigns which have occurred in Norway and India, two countries with varying cultures and views on gender equality (please see Sections 2.2 (pp.6-10) and 2.3 (pp.10-14) for greater detail). To date, there is no such research that has this specific focus. Second, this cross-national analysis

will also seek to uncover the underlying sociocultural factors which have contributed to the development of the campaign in both places. Although “social media campaigns have a unique potential to achieve social change globally and at a fast pace” (Kunst et al., 2018, p.837), it is critical that social media gender activism is tailored to specific cultures in order to have impact (Carter-Olson, 2016, p.780). By identifying such factors, the current study will add to the literature on #MeToo and offer a more thorough sociocultural understanding of Norway and India. Further, it will contribute to existing research on social media activism, particularly in relation to gender equality, as the insight found can help inform how future social media campaigns might be crafted for specific cultural variables and demographics. Finally, this study will add to the global debate around the nuances of sexual violence.

To that end, I would like to again present the primary research question for this thesis, which aims to explore the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India by answering the following:

How do gender equality advocates in Norway and India perceive the #MeToo social media campaign's role in advancing gender equality in each country?

While I will use Chapter 5 to discuss in great detail how I designed the study methodology to sufficiently answer the noted research question, I will first use the subsequent chapter (4) to summarize the three-part theoretical framework I relied on for the cross-national analysis.

4 Theoretical Framework

Chapter 2 presented brief historical summaries on gender and society in both Norway (2.2) and India (2.3), and also discussed the evolution of the #MeToo movement (2.4), as well the campaigns which have occurred in Norway (2.5) and India (2.6). Chapter 3 explored existing literature on #MeToo (3.1), in addition to prior research on social media activism (3.2), and also discussed the major research gaps and opportunities for studying the movement (3.3).

As noted in Chapter 3, previous studies underlined the value of assessing sociocultural factors in relation to gender equality advocacy (see Losh, 2014; Fadnis, 2017, Kunst et al., 2018), yet few analyses on the #MeToo movement offer direction for conducting qualitative interviews to examine the topic, as the current research aims to do. However, as I will soon demonstrate, the three-part theoretical framework introduced by Lim (2018)—Roots, Routes, Routers—provides a broad outline for identifying sociocultural factors that may have contributed to movements, such as #MeToo. Additionally, it has been developed in a way that can be easily replicated and tailored to various methods (Lim, 2018, p.128). These reasons (and others, which will soon be highlighted) led and supported my decision to use Lim’s framework for the current analysis. That said, I will summarize the Roots, Routes, Routers framework in the following pages and also articulate how it will be used in the context of this thesis research.

4.1 Overview of Theoretical Framework

This cross-national analysis which centers around the #MeToo campaigns that have taken place in Norway and India will be conducted through the lens of the broad theoretical framework articulated in *Roots, Routes, Routers* (Lim, 2018). Lim describes her framework as an “interdisciplinary analysis of the complexity of communications and media as they are embedded in the making and development of contemporary social movements” (p.92), and divides the analysis into three parts: *Roots, Routes, Routers*. She defines the first part, *Roots*, as characterizing a “broad context for analyzing communications and media of contemporary social movements by tracing varied and multifaceted *roots*” (ibid) of activist campaigns. The second part, *Routes*, “maps out the *routes* a social movement takes, traces how communications and media are entangled in these routes, and identifies various key mechanisms occurring at various junctures of movements’ life cycles” (ibid). Finally, the third part, which Lim refers to as *Routers*, “explores roles of human and nonhuman...*routers* in the making and development

of social movements” (Lim, 2018, p.92). This thesis will analyze the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India by using all three parts (*Roots, Routes, and Routers*) of Lim’s framework.

While I will provide greater detail on each pillar of the three-part theoretical framework in the coming pages, it is important to first offer additional justification as to why this framework was selected for the current study rather than alternatives. For starters, as noted earlier, Lim (p.128) articulates the *Roots, Routes, Routers* framework as one which can be tailored for the analysis of various contexts and methods. Further, it can “contribute to a more comprehensive, nuanced, deeper, and contextual analysis and understanding of the complexity of contemporary social movements” (ibid). These reasons supported my decision to choose this extensive, three-part framework as the primary theoretical lens for my research, since the current study focuses on the contemporary social movement of #MeToo and aims to gain a more nuanced understanding of the campaigns in Norway and India. I was also drawn to the clear, systematic approach the framework offers, especially given the complex nature of cross-national research (a topic which I highlight in more detail in the following chapter on Methodology.) More so, my selection of Lim’s framework was upheld upon conducting a pilot experiment for the study, which allowed me to examine the suitability of the theory in relation to both my constructed questionnaire and analysis design (all of which will be further discussed in Chapter 5).

To that end, I will now dissect Lim’s *Roots, Routes, Routers* framework by discussing each pillar of her analysis in greater detail in the following paragraphs, while also shedding light on the relevancy of each in regard to the current research on Norway and India.

4.2 Pillar I: Roots

According to Lim (2018) the term *root cause* is “commonly used to describe the deepest cause in a causal chain which would prevent the problem from occurring if they are resolved” (p.95). Yet, pinning down the *exact* root causes of social movements is anything but simple. Although Lim addresses how scholars widely agree that it is important to uncover the root causes of groups and individuals collectively coming together to form a social movement, she underlines that “establishing a causal relationship between movements and their presumed causes is difficult” (ibid). In fact, “due to their complexities, no comprehensive models exist that can explain the causal chains that would lead to such complex events” (ibid) (i.e., social movements). While many causal factors are “simply unknown” (ibid), she refers to prior research (Renn, Jovanovic, & Schröter, 2011, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.95), arguing that most

factors deeply rely on historical, political, and sociocultural contexts. Given the complexities of “what constitutes as root causes and what level root causes exists,” Lim stresses that, for this part of her analysis, the framework is *not* used to identify root causes or develop causal connections amid social factors, but rather to illuminate and map tenets that *contribute* to such collective action (pp.95-96). Thus, in the context of this thesis, I will follow Lim’s path by not attempting to identify root causes and develop causal ties amid social factors and the rise of #MeToo in Norway and India. Instead, like Lim, I will use the *Roots* pillar to uncover various sociocultural factors that may have *contributed* to collective action in each country.

Further, Lim (2018) argues that root factors which contribute to social movements are diverse and intertwined, many of which are “deeper seated than others” (p.96). These tenets represent a variety of social and temporal relations, revealing “commonalities as well as complexities of contemporary popular protests globally” (ibid). In the following pages, I offer additional clarification on the various temporal relations she points out, including *long-term enablers*, *short-term causes*, and *immediate triggers*. I will then point out how these temporal relations will be used in the context of the current research on Norway and India.

Temporal Roots: Long-Term Enablers, Short-Term Causes, and Immediate Triggers

According to Lim (2018), the multiple roots of social movements exist within varying temporalities (i.e., while some might have formed years ago, others could have developed over previous months or even days). For example, while *long-term enablers* might pave the way for social movements to arise, such collective action can also be driven by *short-term causes* and *immediate triggers* (p.97)—all of which I will discuss in the next few paragraphs.

First, in regard to *long-term enablers*, Lim states these are factors which have been “brewing for many years and provide the fundamental conditions for collective grievances to develop” (p.97). Here, she notes it is vital to consider structural, sociocultural tenets (e.g., gender norms; roles; expectations) of the specific environment in which collective action is taking place by looking at elements of change (i.e., political, economic, technological) (Carothers & Youngs, 2015, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.97).

Further, for *short-term causes*, Lim classifies these factors into three clusters: socioeconomic factors (e.g., widening income gap; poor working/labor conditions); the political system and governance-related factors (e.g., lack of government accountability; violence); and concerns with citizen rights (e.g., women’s rights; freedom of speech) (pp.98-99). Finally, Lim denotes

that in addition to *long-term enablers* and *short-term causes*, it is important to also consider *immediate triggers*. While “long-term causes create necessary conditions for collective action (of shared dissatisfactions and contentions) and short-term causes provide an immediate environment for collective networks of resistance to emerge,” Lim states that “typically an immediate trigger is what sparks protests to break out in certain space and time” (p.99). Usually, these include “highly symbolic” and/or “visually dramatic” events (e.g., a political scandal or deadly assault), which resonate locally and then spread national/globally through media (p.103).

When considering temporal roots, Lim (2018) notes it is also critical to recognize that most social movements “are generally not sudden or spontaneous but, instead, result from long processes of the transformation of culture and politics” (p.100). Further, movements diffuse with mixed results. For instance, while some social movements are triumphant (e.g., protestors’ demands are achieved), others may fade due to fear-inducing strategies (e.g., imprisonment; heavy fines; death) spread by sociocultural aspects and political regimes (p.102). However, as Lim points out, using a *hybrid of media/communication networks* (e.g., social media and traditional media, such as television and newspapers) can assist in expanding and sustaining movement momentum, across various spheres—locally, nationally, and globally (p.103). Yet, how these forms of communication are incorporated into collective action (i.e., the *routes* taken) fall into the second part of the framework, which will soon be discussed.

To recapitulate, Lim describes the *Roots* pillar of her analysis as a way to “provide a broad context for analyzing communications and media of contemporary social movements by tracing varied and multifaceted roots” of a form of collective action (p.92). Yet, she explicitly stresses that it is not her intention to identify root *causes* or develop *causal* connections amid social factors, but rather to illuminate and map tenets that *contribute* to such collective action (pp.95-96). In the context of this current thesis, the study does not seek to identify *exact* root causes behind the rise of #MeToo in Norway and India, but rather aims to reveal individual perceptions of various underlying sociocultural factors (e.g., self-identity; gender norms, roles; and expectations) which may have contributed to the campaigns’ development. For instance, what sociocultural *long-term enablers* contributed to the launch of #MeToo in each country? Did the egalitarian-nature of Norway’s welfare state foster citizen engagement? What about in India where, as noted in Section 2.3 (pp.11-15), there is a more traditional, patriarchal environment? Further, were there specific sociocultural *short-term causes*, such as economic and/or political factors, which aided in the campaigns’ development? Did any local

immediate triggers spark the campaigns? Together, according to Lim (2018), assessing these types of inquires will offer a broader and more-thorough contextual understanding, with this case being the #MeToo campaigns in both Norway and India. With that said, now that the *Roots* pillar has been discussed, I will turn to the next part of the framework: *Routes*.

4.3 Pillar II: Routes

The second part in Lim's analytical framework (2018) is what she refers to as *Routes*. Broadly speaking, this step "maps out the routes that social movements take; traces how communications and media are entangled in these routes; and identifies various junctures of movements' life cycles" (2018, p.92). More specifically, Lim proposes to assess the routes of social movements through three modes (i.e., phases): *imaginaries* (i.e., the visionaries of the movement); *practices* (i.e., the movement's development via *participation* and *symbolic* activities), and *trajectories* (i.e., various phases of the movement). However, it is important to address that in the context of this thesis, the current study will *not* focus on *imaginaries*, but rather on the modes of *practices* and *trajectories*, both of which will be further explained in the coming paragraphs. The reason for exempting the *imaginaries* mode is because Lim interprets this phase as being when activists come together to imagine (i.e., envision) how they will create and ignite a social movement (pp.104-106). In short, it is the strategizing phase before a campaign officially launches. Yet, this thesis is primarily concerned with analyzing individuals' perceptions of #MeToo in Norway and India, once the campaign had *already* taken off in either country. Thus, the following paragraphs will only cover the modes which will be used in this thesis: *practices* and *trajectories*.

In regard to these two modes, Lim points out several mechanisms that are used throughout social movements, all of which are "interconnected...in space and time" (p.103). These include *dis/connecting*, *brokering*, *bridging*, *framing*, *hybridizing* (*repertoires of contention*), *in/visibility*, *intermodality*, *on/offline connectivity*, and *globalizing*. In the coming pages, I will further discuss these mechanisms, while also explaining the *practices* and *trajectories* modes. Yet, first, I would like to re-emphasize the interconnectedness between the modes and mechanisms in the *Routes* pillar, which is illustrated in the Figure 1 on the following page. According to Lim, "pathways of social movements are not linear" (p.104). For instance, as shown in the figure, the modes (left) are non-sequential and the mechanisms (right) are all interrelated. Therefore, while I will associate certain mechanisms with only one mode as part

of my explication to avoid textual redundancy, as Lim emphasizes, each of the mechanisms can adapt to both the *practices* and *trajectories* modes (p.104).

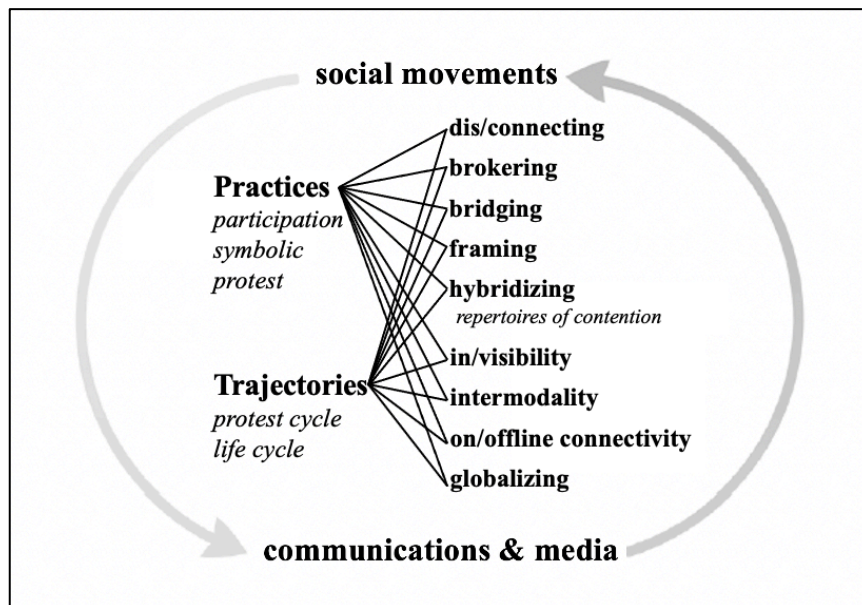


Figure 1. Communications & media of social movements—an analytical framework (adapted from Lim, 2018, p.104)

The Practices

According to Lim (2018), social movements need multiple spheres in order to emerge, grow, and sustain themselves. These spaces are what allows “narratives of resistance to be created and nurtured” (p.106). This type of development “involves a set of practices consisting of various activities to render mobilizations possible and sustain them in many ways” (p.110). Referring to previous work of Mattoni and Treré (2014, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.110), Lim clusters these practices into categories, such as *participation*, *symbolic*, and *protest practices*. First, the notion of *participation practices* focuses on the idea of social movement participants engaging with one another (as well as nonparticipants), on or offline in public or private spaces. Lim explains that it is this interplay of on/offline communication, which she refers to as the mechanism of *dis/connection* (i.e., communicating openly via public, online platforms, such as social media, or talking—connecting—in a more private setting offline, such as a one’s home or in a café) which is critical to increasing awareness of activist efforts (p.108). In other words, interacting with others (whether via a small-group discussion on/offline or a more pronounced protest) in relation to furthering the activist cause can attract the attention of potential participants and thus assist in increasing the movement’s momentum. Furthermore, Lim (2018) articulates that through the *participation practices*, the

mechanism of *brokerage* (or *brokering*) can arise, which is essentially the production of new connections between previously disconnected individuals (Lim, 2018, p.109). Not only can *brokerage* occur both on or offline (e.g., on the street or on social media); *brokerage* between previously disconnected individuals can also pave the way for *bridging*, which is a mechanism that “transpires when two separate clusters are linked” (pp.109-110).

In addition to *participation practices*, Lim explains that social movements are also reliant on *symbolic practices*, which center around the process of meaning-making (i.e., how specific issues are being presented). Here, she notes *framing* to be the central mechanism. Referring to previous research conducted by Benford and Snow (2000, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.111), she emphasizes how “frames are utilized to organize experience and guide action and render events meaningful, largely by simplifying the issues, causes, reasons, and rationales for participation” (p.111). However, because content on social media platforms can be over-abundant, she also emphasizes that, in regard to social movements, the meaning of such messaging has to have portability (i.e., a “readily spreadable narrative”) (p.112). Specifically, in relation to human rights, Lim says that “in creating a frame of injustice, the simplification processes are important to embolden the sense of injustice, evoke shared emotion and rage, and incite public outcry” (ibid). Lastly, she stresses it is also important to consider *protest practices* when assessing social movements. With this concept, Lim points to the mechanism of *hybridizing repertoires of contention*, which is contextualized as “the changing practices” of a movement, evolving with “time, place and available technologies” (p.113). Examples of such repertoires include online petitions, virtual sit-ins, and collective usages of hashtags—all of which add to social movement participation.

In the context of the current thesis, this research will explore individuals’ perceptions of the various *practices* used in the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India. For example, were there specific narratives of the campaigns? Did a particular type of *framing* (e.g., a frame of injustice) contribute to people feeling more comfortable in speaking up? Did occurrences of *dis/connection* take place primarily on or offline, and who (or what) served as primary *brokerages* and *bridges*? Furthermore, were various *repertoires of contention* used? Again, these are just a few of the inquiries which will be posed in the research to better understand sociocultural factors (e.g., self-identity; gender norms, roles; and expectations) underpinning the localized campaigns. Now, I will briefly explain the *trajectories* mode that is also highlighted as part of the *Routes* pillar.

The Trajectories

According to Lim (2018), social movements are shapeshifting forms of collective action: “They emerge, develop, grow, surface in public, interact with power, decline, fade away, and then eventually end” (p.114). Referring to previous research (Oliver & Myers, 1998, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.115), she discusses the various *trajectories* social movements experience (i.e., their overall *life cycle*), which usually includes one or more *protest cycle*. Here, she interprets a *protest cycle* as “a phase heightened conflict and contention across the social system with intensified interactions between challengers and authorities which can end in reform, repression and sometimes revolution” (Tarrow, 1994, p.153, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.115). While Lim notes that *protest cycles* are created through the set of *practices* previously discussed (via mechanisms such as *brokerage, bridging, framing, etc.*), she also notes that movements need to be diffused in various places (socially, geographically, demographically) to have a far-reaching impact (p.115). The key to sustaining the momentum of the *protest cycles*, according to Lim, is through a number of additional mechanisms, which include *in/visibility, intermodality, and globalizing*. In the following paragraphs, I will briefly discuss these terms while also tying them back to the current research at hand.

Starting with *in/visibility*, Lim argues that in order to cultivate a highly dense and broad network, social movements must first be ‘invisible’ (i.e., the idea of discussing a movement’s tactics in an untraceable, non-surveilled place, such as somewhere offline in a private space). Referring to Foucault (1995, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.115), she argues that in public spaces, both on and offline, people are constantly subjected to surveillance. Therefore, “the availability of networked on/offline spaces allow a social movement to control its *in/visibility* and possibly generate multiple spaces of *disappearance* (i.e., going out of the public eye for strategizing) and *appearance* (i.e., publicly claiming power through demonstrations in a public space) (p.116).

With *intermodality*, Lim means “a mechanism in which different media and communication modes and networks are utilized in conjunction to carry a message from one place to another without being altered or distorted” (p.117). This is especially important in areas with highly controlled media environments. She emphasizes the influence media has on shaping the public’s perceptions of the protested issue, and while this can have a positive impact on activists’ efforts, it can also have a negative one, depending on the coverage. Thus, the access to “citizens’ media” (Rodríguez, 2001, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.117), where participants can

have more control over how their message is publicized (e.g., posting messages on social media) is critical for sustaining collective action, all while strengthening a movement's collective identity (Lim, 2018, p.117). Further, this type of media prevents third parties (e.g., state authorities and mass media) from “retaining centralized control of communication” (p.121). In addition to *in/visibility* and *intermodality*, Lim emphasizes that the mechanism of *globalizing* is just as critical for the development of social movements. One reason is because it allows the movement to increase in scale that is “beyond the boundary of state control,” permitting it to “diffuse the resistance and expand the network” (p.119). More so, a global audience can provide the movement with “new opportunities for participatory politics that, in turn, are valuable in generating external support and pressure” (ibid). Noting how local and global networks are mutually linked, Lim states that together they may generate a “network of networks” to galvanize activist efforts, ultimately helping to sustain the movement (p.121).

In summary, Lim describes the *Routes* pillar of her framework as a way to “map out the routes that social movements take, trace how communications and media are entangled in these routes, and identify various key mechanism occurring at various junctures of a movement's life cycle” (p.92). In this part of the analysis, she aims to explore social movements through three modes (*imaginaries, practices, and trajectories*), while assessing various interconnected mechanisms (e.g., *brokerage, bridging, framing, intermodality*). Although Lim uses these terms in a technical sense to map the chronological unfolding of specific social movements, in the context of this thesis, I will use them to assess individuals' perceptions of the routes taken in the local #MeToo campaigns of Norway and India, as this particular inquiry was a gap I found missing in the existing literature on #MeToo (please refer to Section 3.3 (pp.41-42) for more detail). For example, what do people perceive as the *trajectories* of #MeToo in Norway and India? What factors supported and/or hindered these *trajectories*? Were the campaigns perceived as having a far-reaching impact and if so, what role did the media (traditional and contemporary) play? Together, this type of analysis will aid in better understanding such factors which may have contributed to #MeToo in Norway and India. That said, I will now turn to the third and final part of Lim's framework: *Routers*.

4.4 Pillar III: Routers

The last part of Lim's (2018) analysis is focused on exploring the “roles of human and nonhuman *routers*...in the making and development of social movements” (p.92). With the *Routers* pillar, she emphasizes the significance of connectivity in social movements (i.e., the

routers of connection). After all, “at the core of social movements is connectivity” (Lim, 2018, p.121). With the term *routers*, Lim means the actors of connectivity which “enable the connectivity between people, social groups, networks, and places” (p.122). Using the analogy of routing in computing to offer additional clarification, she states “just as a router connects two or more data lines from different computer networks, in social movements, routers make connections among various social networks by forwarding messages, narratives, and symbols of resistance...” (ibid). Here, Lim refers to *human* and *nonhuman routers* as being central to social movements. Arguing that social movements are essentially a form of self-organizing collective action, she stresses the availability of *routers* as “crucial to the growth of the network” (i.e., advancing the cause at hand) (ibid). In the following paragraphs, I will further explain Lim’s notion of *nonhuman* and *human routers* and provide contextualization for the current research. I will then conclude this section with a brief summary of the three-part analytical framework before turning to the subsequent chapter (5) on Methodology.

Nonhuman Routers

One example Lim (2018) refers to as a possible *nonhuman router* (i.e., point of connection) is social media, which provides vital “tools and spaces for expanding networks of social movements” (p.122). While this *router* has the power of connecting people and groups at various levels (e.g., locally, nationally, globally), she stresses that social media is “not the main or the only actors who perform connectivity” (ibid). Other notable *nonhuman routers* to keep in mind include *cultural/religious routers* (i.e., cultural/religious spaces which serve as places where resistance can be collectivized) and *urban routers* (i.e., translocal social spaces which can “connect people and groups to each other and allow them easy access to information on urban protests” (p.123). Together, by serving as spaces for messages to be communicated, these *nonhuman routers* allow social movements to build in “successive iterations, form layers, and organically expand” (p.125).

In the context of this thesis, I aim to explore individuals’ perceptions on the role *nonhuman routers* played in the local #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India. For instance, were there specific places where individuals felt most comfortable speaking out? And if so, were these spaces both on or offline; private or public? Did certain state authorities support/hinder such discussions in either country? According to Lim, this type of mapping can assist in deepening knowledge of the complexities (i.e., underlying factors) that are embedded in the making of social movements. With that said, I will turn to briefly describe the notion of *human routers*.

Human Routers

As Grosz (1987, p.3, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.125) stated years ago, the human body is “a political object *par excellence*; its forms, capacities, behavior, gestures, movements, potential are primary objects of political contestation.” Referring to this statement, Lim stresses that “the most essential and central medium for contemporary social movements is the human body. It is the vital nexus of online and offline, between physical struggles and digital communication, connecting spaces of flows and spaces of places” (p.125). When making this point, she also addresses several types of *human routers*, including *dissenting bodies*, *vocal bodies*, and *silent bodies*—all of which serve as the “most significant and, yet, fragile *router*” (ibid). In the following paragraphs, I briefly discuss these various types of *human routers*, and also provide further contextualization for the current thesis.

Starting with *dissenting bodies*, Lim builds upon Foucault’s theory of *docile* (1995, as cited in Lim, 2018, p.126). As Lim explains, when humans collectively participate in “political rituals” (i.e., going along with the societal status quo), they allow a political institution to “subject, use, transform, and improve them as it sees fit,” essentially rendering themselves “politically impotent” (i.e., docile) (p.126). However, *dissenting bodies ‘en masse’* (i.e., participating in protests, marches, etc.) are anything but docile, transforming individual injustices into a shared “display of collective power” (p.126). In turn, *dissenting bodies* are vital to “tapping into the minds and hearts of (recruitable) strangers,” while connecting the movement’s message to a larger public (p.126). Additionally, *vocal bodies* are just as central. Whether speaking or chanting, Lim explains one can exercise the power of self-expression in numerous ways—all of which have the ability to “temporarily silence the dominant power” that tries to suppress such vocalization (p.127). As a result of certain coverage by *hybrid media/communication networks* (both traditional and social media), this vocalized messaging can then spread across time (e.g., recorded videos of demonstrations being later replayed) and space (e.g., recorded videos being uploaded onto multiple online platforms), thus cultivating and sustaining a movement’s overall momentum (p.127).

Yet, as Lim (p.128) argues by quoting Ramzy (2015, p.652), “agency is not always directly audible, overt, or spoken loud in clear and unambiguous ways.” In that sense, sounds of silence and sonic disengagement (i.e., *silent bodies*) should also be considered political, as these bodies act and resist beyond voice and noise (p.128). By emphasizing the significance of *human routers* in social movements, Lim expresses that while imperative to the cause at

hand, *nonhuman routers*—including social media—are not attached to their “own inherent emancipatory power” (Lim, 2018, p.128). In other words, with social movements, “the human body will always be the most essential and central instrument” (p.129).

In regard to the current research, I aim to explore individuals’ perceptions of sociocultural factors (e.g., self-identity; gender norms, roles, and expectations) which contributed to *human routers* participating in the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India. For instance, while women in the entertainment industries in both countries were among the first groups to *dissent* (i.e., speak up), as mentioned in Sections 2.5 (pp.17-19) and 2.6 (pp.19-21), were there specific sociocultural factors that assisted in enabling their participation? More so, which groups and individuals served as the *silent bodies* in the campaign? In other words, were there certain people who could not speak up for various reasons (e.g., too great of risk; unaware; lacked access to social media)? According to Lim, such details will help facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the campaigns in Norway and India.

4.5 Summary

In summary, Lim’s three-part analytical framework (2018) was chosen for the current research as it offers a comprehensive outline for deepening one’s understanding behind the complexity of communications and media in contemporary social movements. The first part, *Roots*, provides a “broad context for analyzing communications and media of contemporary social movements by tracing varied and multifaceted *roots*” of campaigns (p.92). The second part, *Routes*, “maps out the *routes* a social movement takes, traces how communications and media are entangled in these routes, and identifies various key mechanisms occurring at various junctures of movements’ life cycles” (ibid). Lastly, the third part, *Routers*, “explores roles of human and nonhuman...*routers* in the making and development of social movements” (ibid).

In the context of this thesis, I will rely on all three parts to explore the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India. The flexibility and adaptiveness of the framework, as underlined by Lim (p.128), allow it to be embraced for analyzing various contexts which may contribute to a deeper, more nuanced understanding of contemporary social movements. Thus, I will use this comprehensive outline to uncover individuals’ perceptions of how sociocultural factors (e.g. gender norms; policies) supported and/or hindered the growth of the campaigns. In the next chapter, I provide a detailed overview of the methodology used in this cross-national study.

5 Methodology

With the theoretical framework for this qualitative, cross-national study having been discussed, I now turn to address the methodology that was utilized in the research. In the following pages, I first provide a brief overview of the selected methodology (5.1) and then offer greater detail in relation to the systematic framework used to conduct the methodology (5.2). The chapter will conclude in Section 5.3, where I briefly review the noted methodology.

5.1 Overview of Methodology

As earlier noted, this qualitative, cross-national study relied on in-person, semi-structured interviews, which I will provide a full explication on in the coming pages. Yet, before I dive into more detail regarding specifications of the methodology, it is important to first offer justification regarding why I chose to conduct cross-national research. While this particular type of investigation can be easily skipped over or dismissed due to possible costs (e.g., travel expenses) and complications that can arise when studying more than one country (e.g., differing social and cultural norms), the wealth of knowledge that cross-national studies can bring forth “is incontestable” (Jowell, Kaase, Fitzgerald, & Eva, 2007, p.1).

In recent decades, researchers across disciplines, including the social sciences, have turned more attention toward conducting cross-national studies in response to the world becoming ever-increasingly connected (Ryen, 2001, p.335). One reason for this trend is the opportunity that this research offers for better understanding global issues (Griffin, 2016, p.1). It has also been argued that cross-national studies can reveal telling information “that would be difficult or impossible to detect from domestic data alone” (Jowell et al., 2007, p.1), as this type of research has the potential to crystalize things we do not tend to notice and therefore do not usually conceptualize (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 3). In other words, cross-national research has the “capacity to render the invisible visible” (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995, p.76), meaning it can draw our focus to possibly taken-for-granted notions, including ideologies that may undergird sociocultural practices and political policymaking. However, as pointed out in the Literature Review (please see Section 3.1, pp.22-32), there is very limited cross-national research on the #MeToo movement currently, with an even smaller amount on the national #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India.

That said, this study aimed to contribute to the collection of cross-national research by concentrating on Norway and India and assessing individuals' perceptions on the #MeToo campaigns that have occurred in each country. By focusing on these particular social media campaigns, which revolved around the widespread issue of sexual violence, this study also sought to gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the sociocultural factors perceived by informants to be hindering the advancement of gender equality. To achieve these stated goals, the study relied on in-person, semi-structured interviews—a method in which I provide greater detail about in the following paragraphs. Before making that shift, however, I would like to again present the primary research question for the current study in effort to keep it top of mind as I now turn to discuss the methodological procedures used to answer the question.

Thus, the primary research question in the cross-national analysis was as follows:

How do gender equality advocates in Norway and India perceive the #MeToo social media campaign's role in advancing gender equality in each country?

5.2 Interview Methodology

As highlighted, this qualitative, cross-national study relied on in-person, semi-structured interviews. For decades, qualitative interviews have been acclaimed as “key methods of social research” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.11). Some have even argued how qualitative interviews have the power to operate like “night-vision goggles, permitting us to see that which is not ordinarily on view and examine that which is often looked at but seldom seen” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.vii). While interview research may at first seem simple and straightforward, since “conversation is a basic mode of human interaction” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.xvii), scholars emphasize that this method is “hard to do well” (p.1) and requires a rigorous, systematic approach to help ensure obtaining a deeper understanding of the subject at hand (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.1).

To that end, this qualitative research followed the interview inquiry framework laid out by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.102). As the scholars note, their framework consists of seven stages: (1) *Thematizing*, (2) *Designing*, (3) *Interviewing*, (4) *Transcribing*, (5) *Analyzing*, (6) *Verifying*, and (7) *Reporting*. All of these stages will be further explained in the coming pages, where I also articulate in detail how this methodological framework was used in the current cross-national research.

(1) *Thematizing*

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.102), the first stage in planning the study, known as *thematizing*, essentially revolves around establishing the research purpose. More specifically, this stage refers to the “formulation of research questions and a theoretical clarification of the theme investigated” (p.105). In other words, it is part of the planning process and is concerned with answering the ‘*why*’ (i.e., the purpose of the research) and ‘*what*’ (i.e., gaining knowledge of the subject matter) of the study. In the coming paragraphs, I explain how I went about answering these investigation concerns within the context of the current interview research.

The ‘Why’

As detailed in the Literature Review (Section 3.3, p.22-26), out of the few cross-national studies conducted on #MeToo, the majority of the research relied on quantitative methods, such as online surveys and content analyses, and concentrated primarily on Western countries, including the U.S., Sweden, Denmark, and Australia (Møller Hartley & Askanus, 2019; Starkey et al., 2019; Kunst et al., 2018). Throughout my literature investigation, I was unable to locate studies which aimed to assess the perceptions of gender-experts in relation to the campaigns that occurred within local settings, let alone previous cross-national research on Norway and India. To that end, I sought to fill this research gap by designing the current study to qualitatively assess the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India through the lens of the *Roots, Routes, Routers* theoretical framework (Lim, 2018). As previously highlighted in Section 4.5 (p.53), Lim’s three-part framework is both comprehensive and flexible, allowing it to serve as a useful analytical tool to deepen the understanding of the complexities behind the development and sustainment of the #MeToo campaign in differing locations.

The ‘What’

In order to gain sufficient knowledge of the subject matter being investigated (i.e., the #MeToo campaign in Norway and India, as well as an understanding of gender equality in both countries), several steps were taken in preparation for this cross-national research. First, to strengthen the balance of my study and my understanding on the topics being examined, I completed a course focused on gender equality in the Nordic Countries during my time at the University of Oslo, and then traveled to India during the summer of 2019 to take an intensive four-week course at the University of Hyderabad, which concentrated on gender and society within the Indian context. (My time in India is further discussed in the coming pages.) As a

non-native citizen to both Norway and India, these classes (which had mirroring curricula) served as critical tools for providing me with a pertinent foundation of knowledge to execute the research. For example, in both of these courses, I gained an in-depth overview of how the concept of gender equality evolved in each country, respectively, and also obtained a deeper understanding of current social norms, issues, and legislation relating to gender equality.

More so, learning from gender-experts who taught the lectures allowed me to become better equipped to discuss and evaluate gender equality challenges across a wide spectrum, including education, the workforce, politics, and personal relations, all while placing these subjects in societal and cultural contexts. Additionally, participating in the in-person courses presented an opportunity for me to immerse myself in the everyday life that occurs within each place, which deepened my contextual understanding of local environments and sociocultural norms. As Au (2019) argues, it is imperative to familiarize oneself with cultural differences when conducting cross-national studies. These variances are “not meta-data that can simply be ignored but are valuable data sources that expose how cultural norms affect the way participants think and form their responses” (p.59). That said, given how this study would revolve around in-person interviews, these direct observations were critical to the validity of my data (which is discussed in greater detail in the following pages).

Furthermore, a brief case review of #MeToo was required to better understand the timeline and key milestones of the campaigns that occurred in each country (the details of which were noted in Sections 2.5, pp.17-19, and 2.6, pp.19-21). This review was limited to the purpose of establishing a timeline and did not include a content analysis, as the primary focus of this thesis was to assess underlying perceptions of topics related to #MeToo and not to research content of the campaign itself. This part of the preparatory work also assisted in identifying specific actors with sufficient knowledge on the campaigns who could potentially be contacted for interviews. (The participant selection process will be discussed further in the coming pages.) In addition, the review was also seen as a way to familiarize myself with terminology and key events that I thought might come up when examining the collected data during the final analysis.

Taken together, the mentioned preparatory work allowed me to obtain a greater knowledge of the subjects in which I sought to further investigate. Now that I have discussed the primary aspects behind the *thematizing* stage (i.e., the study’s ‘*why*’ and ‘*what*’), I will address the second phase: the *designing* stage.

(2) Designing

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) refer to the second stage of the interview inquiry as the *designing* phase. As the scholars note, “designing the interview study involves planning the procedures and techniques—the ‘*how*’—of the study” (p.109). For the current qualitative research, I designed the study to analyze empirical data collected from in-person, semi-structured interviews, as this was an approach that I found was lacking in the literature pool on #MeToo (please see Section 3.1, pp.22-32, for existing research on #MeToo) and one in which I viewed as a way to cultivate more qualitative knowledge on the campaign in relation to gender equality activism.

Qualitative methodologies are oftentimes selected when researchers aim to gain a more thorough understanding of human behavior; whether it be investigating people’s experiences, attitudes, or beliefs about a certain topic or phenomenon (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.xvii). For the current research, I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of individuals’ perceptions of the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India as a way to reveal underlying factors that may have supported and/or hindered the advancement of gender equality in each country. I selected the method of semi-structured interviewing as an information-seeking approach in which I could ask specific questions to participants, yet also offer them the latitude to freely reply. While scholars have pointed out the benefits of unstructured questioning (such as how the flexible nature of the questioning can lead to richer information), they have also pointed out limitations of this approach, with the “most important limitation” being the “inability to broadly generalize the answers provided” (Peterson, 2000, pp.4-5). Thus, I chose the mode of semi-structuring interviewing as a way to ignite and manage the discussion accordingly.

To further prepare for conducting the semi-structured interviews, I designed an open-ended interview questionnaire (please refer to Appendix A, p.120, for the final questionnaire). As Peterson (2000) states, “questionnaire construction is one of the most delicate and critical research activities” (p.13). That said, I referenced Peterson’s (2000, p.14) questionnaire framework (as shown in Figure 2 on the following page) to systematically construct my questionnaire as a way to better ensure that I would ask the right questions throughout the interview process which would produce useful information for the later analysis.

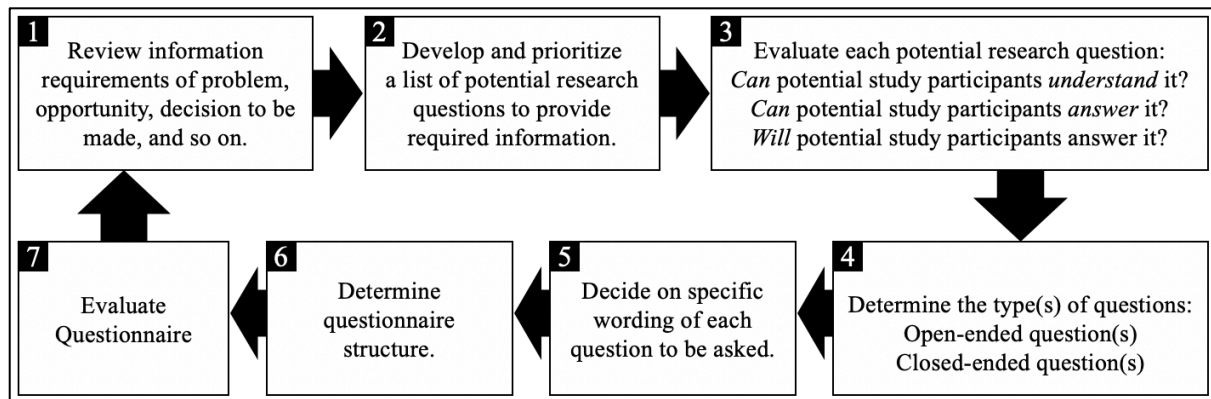


Figure 2: Steps used in constructing the questionnaire (adapted from Peterson, 2000, p.14)

Keeping the *Roots, Routes, Routers* theoretical framework (Lim, 2018) I would be using for my analysis in mind, I split the questionnaire into two parts. The first section contained more general introductory questions related to gender equality in the respective country (questions which could potentially uncover sociocultural factors that would fall under the *Roots* section, as highlighted in Section 4.2, pp.43-45). For this portion of the questionnaire, I developed questions by referring to information on gender equality in Norway and India (as detailed in Sections 2.2, pp.6-10, and 2.3, pp.10-14). Specifically, prior research found noted challenges such as gender roles, social expectations, policymaking, and certain cultural norms. Thus, I constructed the questions in the first section using these themes with an aim to motivate respondents to discuss key obstacles in advancing gender equality.

For example, I asked participants how gender equality is promoted throughout the country (e.g., socially, politically), and also whether there are any barriers that hinder it. The broad nature of these questions was intended to “yield spontaneous, rich descriptions” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.135), while also potentially illuminating sociocultural contexts that might relate to certain *root* factors they discuss (Lim, 2018, p.95). I also referenced common themes found in existing literature on gender equality challenges (e.g., gender roles, norms, social expectations) to generate possible probing questions in case participants’ initial responses did not produce enough detail that would be needed for the later analysis. For instance, in regard to the question mentioned above about how gender equality is promoted/hindered, I created several probing questions (such as “*Are you aware of any laws or policies that have an impact on gender equality?*”) as a way to decipher the extent to which gender equality (or inequality) is institutionalized (e.g., via the government). However, as with all of the constructed probing questions, I was careful to probe participants’ content

(i.e., encourage further dialogue) without stating my specific aim behind the questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.135).

The second part of the questionnaire revolved around the #MeToo campaign in each country, respectively, and featured questions that would potentially prompt answers related to the *Routes* and *Routers* portion of Lim's theoretical framework. As with the first section, I began this part of the interview with broader questions, such as asking participants to describe their overall view on the #MeToo campaign which had taken place in the country as part of the #MeToo movement. Again, this was a planned approach to foster spontaneous, detailed descriptions of #MeToo, which potentially could produce insight on the various mechanisms Lim (2018, p.103) articulated in the *Routes* and *Routers* pillars (e.g., *framing*, *bridging*).

Although I found few studies in the existing literature on #MeToo that consisted of using qualitative interviews (as highlighted in Section 3.1, p.22-32), I used the research to assist in forming specific questions for the questionnaire. For example, previous studies mentioned strategies of media framing with #MeToo, as well as campaigns being criticized for the lack of inclusivity. Thus, I referred to these results when forming questions (primary and probing) aimed at unpacking participants' perceptions of how the campaigns unfolded. For instance, one probing question was geared toward uncovering respondents' thoughts on why the campaign spread so quickly, while another one asked whether there were certain groups or individuals that they perceived as not being a part of the campaign. Together, these questions were aimed at exploring factors Lim (2018) discussed under the *Routes* and *Routers* pillars, such as the *practices* and *trajectories* of the campaigns (*Routes*), as well as the *human* and *non-human* connectors that made the campaign development possible (*Routers*).

Once I finished constructing the interview questionnaire, I sought approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). (Please refer to Appendix B, pp.121-123, for the NSD approval confirmation.) As the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees guidebook on research ethics (NESH, 2016) states: "Research ethics is a codification of scientific morality in practice" (p.5). Put differently, "potential ethical concerns should be taken into consideration from the very start of an investigation to the final report" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.62). Therefore, it was also during this approval step that I presented my prepared "ethical protocol" (p.63) for the research, which detailed procedures I previously took (and would continue to take throughout the analysis) to ensure I thoroughly integrated potential ethical concerns into the seven-step interview inquiry framework I followed for my

study (as currently being discussed). These actions, which were based on the Norwegian National Research Ethics committee guidelines (NESH, 2016), included steps for obtaining informed consent from all participants (please see Appendix C, pp.124-126, for the study Information and Consent Letter), as well as on the proper handling (and discarding) of any gathered confidential information—all of which will be discussed in the coming pages.

After gaining research approval from the NSD, I tested the constructed questionnaire by conducting two pilot interviews (one in Norway; one in India) to evaluate how potential informants in both countries might respond to the posed questions. Many researchers view this step as a way to “minimize possible questionnaire deficiencies” (Peterson, 2000, p.101). As Peterson points out, “the easier a questionnaire is to administer, the less likely errors will occur when questions are asked and answered” (p.102). That said, I aimed to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the questionnaire, assessing whether the questions asked were clearly stated, easy to understand, and free of bias.

As a result of the pilot process, I did make one alteration to the questionnaire, which was to change how I approached the first section of the questionnaire. More specifically, I decided that before asking the questions, I would preface the section by stating how the questions are intentionally broad and explaining that the reason for this is because I was simply interested in hearing about the respondent’s personal perception on the topics being discussed. This decision was made in response to how the informants from the pilot interviews reacted to questions in the first section. For example, they initially seemed overcome by the range of the questions and thus took an extended period of time to form their responses. My decision to acknowledge the section’s broadness was a way to keep its expansive nature, given how scholars have noted that such questions can “yield spontaneous, rich descriptions” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.135).

Upon conducting the pilot interviews, I also assessed how the pilot interviewees’ responses would transfer to the theoretical analysis. Scholars argue that this type of assessment prior to formally “administering a questionnaire typically yields great returns” for the later analysis (Peterson, 2000, p.102), and it was during this stage that finalized my decision to not focus on the *imaginaries mode* under the *Routes* pillar of Lim’s framework (2018). As noted in Section 4.3 (p.46), Lim (2018, pp.104-106) interprets the *imaginaries* phase as when activists come together to imagine (i.e., envision) how they will create and ignite a social movement. In other words, it is the planning phase before a campaign officially launches. Because this thesis is mainly concerned with assessing individuals’ perceptions of #MeToo in Norway and India

once the campaigns had *already* ignited, the questions were not specifically geared toward uncovering how #MeToo participants strategized publicly voicing their experiences with sexual violence, nor did the informants in the pilot interviews discuss such information. That said, when I assessed their responses and found that much of the data would categorize under the *practices* and *trajectories* phase Lim interprets as part of the *Routes* pillar, my decision not to also focus on the *imaginaries* mode was further confirmed.

The last phase of the *designing* stage consisted of recruiting participants for the cross-national analysis. After considering resources (i.e., financial and material) and time limitations, as well as consulting with my project supervisor, I decided that recruiting 20 participants (10 in Norway; 10 in India) for the research would be sufficient for fulfilling the goals of the study. However, there were several specifications that went into the recruiting process for the current research. First, since this study aimed to assess not only the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India but also the perceived challenges to the advancement of gender equality, it was vital to recruit informants who had an expert-level understanding of gender equality in relation to the respective country, as well as sufficient knowledge of the #MeToo campaign which had occurred within the local setting. As Rubin and Rubin (2005, pp.64-65) point out, while selecting interviewees who are both knowledgeable and experienced in the subject area is critical to the credibility of the research at hand, their combined views should also present a balanced perspective. Therefore, in the context of the current research, I aimed to recruit informants from a variety of professions, such as persons in journalism, politics, activism, and the academic sphere. This diverse sample would assist in gathering a wide range of viewpoints, all while strengthening the credibility of the study and the validity of the results (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, pp.67-68).

More so, I sought to find respondents who were permanent residents of the country in which they were being interviewed as a way to add to their contextual understanding of the local situation that they would describe as part of their responses. Finally, as someone who is not fluent in the native languages spoken in either country except English, I sought to recruit participants who were also fluent in English as a way to allow for direct, two-way (i.e., interviewer to interviewee) communication, which would increase the accuracy of my findings and ultimately my analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.70).

To recapitulate, the respondents in which I would recruit for the current research needed to have expert-level understanding of gender equality in relation to the respective country, as

well as sufficient knowledge of the #MeToo campaign which had occurred within the local setting. To achieve this aim, I used purposive sampling (i.e., actively seeking out specific persons) as the primary scheme used for participant selection, which aided in the recruitment of experienced and knowledgeable respondents—two characteristics viewed as critical to fulfilling my research goals (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, pp.64-65). As previously discussed, the background case review I conducted to prepare for the study assisted in identifying specific actors who were involved in the campaigns within each country and who were qualified to best answer the constructed questionnaire.

While the majority of participants recruited were identified using this purposive strategy, it is important to note three of the interviewees were recruited through snowball sampling. Known as a convenience sampling method, snowball sampling is when existing participants recruit potential respondents among their acquaintances. This method is oftentimes used when it is challenging to find and recruit participants who possess the target characteristics (Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie, 2017, p.2). Although this sampling method has been pointed out as having the potential to possibly dilute the study's reliability since recruited participants through snowball sampling can be biased, scholars argue it is still a suitable solution for meeting the requirements of a specific participant criteria (ibid).

To that end, the main reason for adding this approach to the recruitment process was due to time constraints. While I did not have to use snowball sampling when recruiting informants in Norway since I had more time in the country, I did have to use it for recruiting the last three participants in India, as I was only in the country for six weeks and wanted to ensure I could conduct those few remaining interviews in person. The names of these three individuals were among a short list provided to me by professors at the University of Hyderabad (the institute where I completed the course on gender equality), who themselves are experts on the research topic and have extensive local networks. Upon receiving the contact information for these individuals, I confirmed each of them who were identified by snowball sampling met all of the same qualifications as other participants included in the study, including level of expertise and relevance of experience, while also adding new perspectives. Despite this difference in sampling strategy, all interview requests were sent via email which offered me the opportunity to briefly describe my research and also attach the interview information and consent letter (included Appendix C, pp.124-126) I created to provide greater detail regarding the study.

To summarize, in the *designing* stage, I focused on the ‘*how*’ of the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.109) by narrowing down my interview methodology to consist of in-person, semi-structured interviews. In this phase, I also designed the interview questionnaire by consulting both the *Roots, Routes, Routers* theoretical framework (Lim, 2018) that was used for the current study, as well as previous literature on #MeToo (see Section 3.1, pp.22-32) and information on gender equality in Norway (Section 2.2, pp.6-10) and India (Section 2.3, pp.10-14). I constructed the final questionnaire by following the guidance of Peterson’s (2000) framework (previously illustrated in Figure 2, p.59) and evaluated the questionnaire structure through pilot interviews—a process which resulted in altering the way I approached Section 1 of the questionnaire. This stage also involved participant recruitment, where I used purposive and snowball sampling methods to recruit 20 informants for the study. Altogether, these steps sufficiently prepared me for conducting the in-person interviews, which I will provide greater detail about in the following subsection.

(3) Interviewing

The third stage of Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) interview inquiry process centers around the actual conducting of the interviews based on the interview questionnaire created in the *designing* phase. In this section, I will summarize the interview process that took place in both Norway and India. To get started, it is important to first provide an overview of the 20 participants recruited for the study. All of the respondents (10 in Norway; 10 in India) met the established criteria previously noted and had expert-level knowledge on gender equality in their respective country, along with sufficient awareness of the #MeToo campaign which had taken place. Participants who were recruited had a wide range of professions, including journalists, lawyers, politicians, policy makers, directors at women’s rights organizations, professors, researchers, consultants, trade union advisors, and social activists. Further, a concerted effort was made to balance the professions of the interviewees in each country. (Please refer to Appendix D, p.127, for a detailed overview of the participants’ occupations which showcases this mirroring of occupations).

The majority of the interviews were conducted in person in two large metropolitan areas: the Norwegian capital of Oslo, and India’s sixth largest city, Hyderabad. These locations were selected not simply for convenience (as they were where I was located during my stay in each place) but also due to the higher probability of recruiting relevant experts to participate. In a few instances, interviews were conducted over a video call (which allowed for face-to-face

communication) or via a phone call. Some of these remote interviews were conducted with experts who were located in places I was unable to visit (i.e., Mumbai and Delhi, India; Adger, Norway), while two interviews were conducted remotely in Norway due to restrictions associated with gathering in person during the COVID-19 pandemic. In all situations where an in-person interview was not possible, I believed the perspectives of these experts warranted the use of remote interview technology in order to obtain their viewpoints for the study. However, no matter the method, all of the discussions were conducted as semi-structured interviews, which helped the interactions proceed in the form of in-depth conversations with a certain extent of flexibility (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp.123-124).

The length of each interview ranged between 30 minutes and 1 hour, with the average interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. While Kvale and Brinkmann do not propose general rules for interviewing as part of this phase in their seven-stage process, they do describe techniques of the interview craft, which I followed and will now describe. To start, at the beginning of each interview, I spent time “setting the stage” for the interview by thoroughly briefing participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.128). During this time, I walked them through the structure of the interview process, explaining how the interview would consist of two sections—the first of which would contain broader questions related to gender equality in the respective country, with the second focusing on the #MeToo campaign specifically. It was also during this period that I reminded the interviewees of their rights as a participant and asked for permission to audio-record the session, clarifying that the recording would be solely used to transcribe the data after the interview. I also asked them to reaffirm their consent to participate. Additionally, I explained how their personal information would be kept anonymous throughout the research, including in the final report, and discussed how the data would be stored, secured, and eventually destroyed. Lastly, I asked if they had any questions before proceeding to ensure they felt comfortable with the process.

During all 20 interviews, I referred to the same interview questionnaire, which had bracket placeholders in each question to signal either Norway or India where applicable (e.g. *How would you define gender equality in [Norway/India]?*). As noted, the final questionnaire was comprised of a fixed set of questions which I constructed based on findings from existing literature, in addition to the *Roots, Routes, Routers* theoretical framework (Lim, 2018). Overall, the questionnaire emphasized the points I hypothesized would be most relevant to help ensure my research question would be fully explored. For example, I aimed to uncover various sociocultural contexts that potentially could help explain certain *root* factors relating

to gender equality and #Metoo—contexts which Lim (2018, p. 95) stresses as being vital to the *Roots* pillar. I also structured questions that aimed at assessing #MeToo via the lens of the *Routes* and *Routers* pillars, which would offer a deeper understanding of the campaigns' *life cycle* (Lim, 2018, p.115) and on the actors which contributed to the campaign development (pp.125-128). The alteration made as a result of the pilot interviews (i.e., where I prefaced the broad nature of the questions in Section 1 before proceeding, as earlier noted) proved to be helpful as informants did not express apprehension when forming responses.

At times I did ask respondents to elaborate on a topic or term they mentioned to gain a greater degree of detail; otherwise, I followed the sequential questionnaire in order, only skipping questions if they had sufficiently answered the question in a previous reply, and this was done to avoid repetition. To that end, I relied on the questionnaire to ignite and manage the conversation, which would help ensure I could ultimately produce useful information for the later analysis (Peterson, 2000, pp.4-5). After all of the questions had been completed, I asked the respondents whether they had any questions and offered them another chance to elaborate on their responses. Furthermore, I reiterated my contact information in case they wanted or needed to follow up on (or opt out of) the research. Upon the completion of each interview, I securely stored the audio recordings in compliance with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) regulations—a subject I will soon discuss in greater detail.

To recapitulate, the previous paragraphs discussed the steps taken in the *interviewing* stage of the seven-part interview inquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) I followed for the current study. I will now turn to review the fourth step, which centers on transcribing the interview data.

(4) *Transcribing*

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.102), the *transcribing* stage is focused on preparing the interview material for analysis. In the context of the current research, this stage entailed transcribing oral speech which was recorded during the live interviews to written text. For this step, I converted the audio recordings word for word in an attempt to create a verbatim interview transcription. While this was a time-consuming task, I viewed it as necessary since I did not have the resources to recruit additional transcribers and wanted to ensure that the data was a proper rendering of the interview conversation in order to preserve its accuracy and reliability (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.178). As with the interview audio recordings, I securely stored all transcriptions on a locked device, and altered participants' names to ensure anonymity. In preparation for the *analyzing* stage, which will be discussed

next, I then created a password-protected document which I would use for my data analysis. With the transcribing process having been discussed in detail, I will now address the fifth stage of the inquiry: the *Analyzing* phase.

(5) *Analyzing*

As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) explain, the *analyzing* stage consists of deciding, “on the basis of the purpose and topic of the investigation...which modes of analysis are appropriate for the interviews” (p.102). After thoroughly considering the various modes of interview analysis that the scholars discuss, such as theoretical readings, narrative analyses, and content analyses, I chose to use the latter for the current research. Lim (2018, p. 128) also pointed out that her theoretical framework, *Roots, Routes, Routers* (which is the framework used for this study) easily adapts to content analyses, which reaffirmed this analysis decision.

Broadly speaking, a content analysis is defined as a method of examining written, verbal, or visual communication messages. Although this type of analysis is frequently selected as a quantitative method (e.g., when aiming to count the frequency of a particular word or phrase), scholars have denoted it also as a suitable solution for assessing qualitative data, such as print documents and interview transcripts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.203). Thus, for the current cross-national investigation, I used the method of a qualitative content analysis as a way to better understand the participants’ responses to the development of the #MeToo campaign in Norway and India, as well as on the broader challenges to the advancement of gender equality in each country. When conducting the analysis, I first created a password-protected Excel file as a way to systematically organize the interview transcription data. In this document, I created two tabs, one for Norway and one for India, both of which listed the fixed set of interview questions along the top row. Next, I pasted the transcribed data from the respondents under each question. I organized individuals’ responses by assigning code names to participants (e.g., N1, N2, etc. for Norway; I1, I2, etc. for India). Once all of the responses were organized accordingly, I began executing the coding process of the analysis.

As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) state, “coding can be either concept driven, or data driven” (p.202). For this study, I relied on concept-driven coding, which is a process that “uses codes that have been developed in advance by the researcher, either by looking at some of the material or by consulting existing literature in the field” (ibid). With Lim’s (2018) *Roots, Routes, Routers* framework as a lens, I used the concepts she denoted under each of the three pillars (e.g., *long-term enablers* under *Roots* (p.97); *symbolic practices* under *Routes* (p.111);

and *dissenting bodies* under *Routers* (Lim, 2018, pp.125-128) as the basis of my codes, and then coded the text vertically (i.e., coded the responses within each question ‘bucket’).

For example, if an informant pointed out patriarchal norms when discussing gender equality, I interpreted these norms as specific *long-term enablers*—a term which Lim suggests as factors that have been “brewing for many years and provide the fundamental conditions for collective grievances to develop” (p.97) (i.e., structural, sociocultural tenets). As another example, I interpreted actors whom informants discussed as having played a large part in the #MeToo campaigns as specific *dissenting bodies*, a term which Lim (p.126) uses to denote as people using their bodies (whether to physically add to the collective force of a protest or simply speak up about an issue) in effort to participate in an activist campaign. Analyzing the text via this systematic approach served as a way to code the data into well-defined categories (which will be presented in the subsequent chapter). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), this type of categorization has the ability to effectively “facilitate comparisons and hypothesis testing” (p.203), and in the current study it allowed me to evaluate the data and summarize how the informants’ responses fit within the *Roots, Routes, Routers* framework (Lim, 2018). This categorization approach has also been argued to serve as a way for the data to be “checked for coder reliability” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.205). Thus, in the coming paragraph, reliability is further discussed as I transition to the sixth stage of Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) seven-phase interview inquiry: the *Verifying* phase.

(6) *Verifying*

The *verifying* phase of the inquiry revolves around affirming the validity and reliability of the interview findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.102). As the scholars note, these concepts are often discussed in relation to the strength of the data and the transferability of knowledge that the research encompasses (p.241). In regard to reliability, Kvale and Brinkmann interpret this term as pertaining to the “consistency and trustworthiness” of the research findings (p.245). One concern of interview reliability is whether participants will change their responses, providing different replies to different interviewers (ibid). Although I did not have adequate resources to test the interviewee reliability by bringing on another interviewer to also interview respondents (further research limitations will be noted in Section 7.2, p.108-109), I did make a concerted effort to increase the (my) interviewer reliability across various steps in this cross-national study by following suggestions pointed out by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.245). For example, in the *designing* stage, I decided to

conduct pilot interviews in both Norway and India as a way to better assess how potential informants might respond to the structure of the questionnaire. More specifically, this step allowed me to test the ease of the questionnaire (i.e., how easy it was to administer; how clearly the questions were stated; how easy they were to understand, etc.), which lessened the likelihood of confusion during interviews (Peterson, 2000, p.102).

For the *interviewing* stage, I opted to conduct as many interviews in person as possible—a decision partly chosen in order to make direct observations which would then assist in minimizing errors in the *transcribing stage* (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp.183-184). Having the opportunity to spend time in both Norway and India while conducting fieldwork also offered me firsthand knowledge of participants' local environments, which was critical for my analysis given how much emphasis the current research places on sociocultural factors (NESH, 2016, p.26). Further, since I did not have the resources for additional transcribers, I transcribed the data word for word to better ensure accurate transcriptions for the analysis. Together, these types of decisions, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.245), served as strategies to enhance the researcher reliability of the cross-national analysis, which I viewed as a way to make up for any uncertainties relating to the interviewee reliability.

Moving on to validity, Kvale and Brinkmann (p.246) interpret this concept as relating to the quality, truth, and strength of the research. Yet, as the two scholars notes, “validation does not belong to a separate stage of an investigation, but rather permeates the entire research process” (p.248). Throughout this study, I used reflective judgment to assess how to increase the validity of the overall research (p.249), with one of the most fundamental decisions being to conduct the interviews in person. Being a student at the University of Oslo provided me the opportunity to spend two years diligently observing unique cultural aspects, specifically in relation to gender (e.g., sociocultural norms, roles, expectations). While I did not have this amount of time in India, I was able to experience a smaller-scale cultural immersion firsthand during my time at the University of Hyderabad. In total, I spent six weeks exploring parts of the country, as I traveled to India two weeks before my class started to have more time to observe the surroundings and converse with local residents. More so, since I had lived in Norway for over a year prior to executing fieldwork, I waited until the last few weeks during my time in India before conducting interviews in order to simulate a similar sense of timing.

Furthermore, as noted in previous paragraphs, validity was also top of mind during the recruiting process. Along with selecting participants with an expert-level understanding of

the research subject, I also chose to recruit individuals who spoke fluent English so I could speak with them directly, limiting the need for an intermediary translator while also allowing me to maintain the integrity of the empirical data. Additionally, in order to limit response bias and presumption, I chose *not* to inform participants of the overall research aim to study two countries (Norway and India)—a decision I discussed at length with my supervisor. Given the preconceived notions informants might have had of the other country, I refrained from revealing this detail as a way to encourage them to freely respond without attempting to draw comparisons themselves, which I viewed as a tactic to help retain the integrity of the raw data for my own later analysis.

While I considered the strategies mentioned above as an approach to enhance the validity of my overall study, as some scholars note (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp.259-260; Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.21), it is important to recognize individual elements of truth (both for the interviewer and interviewee) when discussing the rationale and soundness of research design—especially when the goal of the research is to better understand the nuances of a complex social issue (with this case being sexual violence through the lens of the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India). In other words, it is important to acknowledge possible differences between how I, as the researcher, interpreted informants’ responses and their personal intended meanings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.255). Although I did not have enough time to cross-check my analysis of informants’ responses with them directly (further research limitations will be noted in Section 7.2, pp.108-109), I did seek to increase the validity of my data through “peer validation” (ibid) by discussing the study results with an academic scholar who has extensive knowledge on some of the interview themes (i.e., gender equality; gender issues; and #MeToo). This discussion allowed me to better understand the nuances behind particular findings (e.g., why specific media outlets played such critical roles in certain areas). (I will further note this peer discussion in Section 7.2, pp.108-109.)

To summarize, the previous paragraphs provided more detail on the *verifying* process that was undertaken for the current research, including the steps taken to increase the study’s reliability and validity. In the following paragraph, I will briefly highlight the final step in the interview inquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.102) used in this research: the *reporting* stage.

(7) Reporting

The *reporting* stage in the seven-step interview inquiry centers around communicating the results of the study in a readable product while also taking into account the limitations of

the investigation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.102). However, because a full explanation of the findings found in the current cross-national study will be presented in the next chapter (6), I will refrain from going into detail here; the same goes for the research limitations, as these will be denoted in Section 7.2, pp.108-109. Thus, I will conclude this chapter in the following paragraph by offering a brief review of the study methodology.

5.3 Summary of Methodological Approach

To summarize, this chapter discussed the methodology which was used for the current cross-national study. In Section 5.1, an overview of the methodology was provided, which explained how and why this research relied on in-person, semi-structured interviews. This section also offered justification behind the reason for conducting cross-national research. Then, in Section 5.2, greater detail was provided on the interview methodology. Specifically, this section articulated the systematic, seven-step framework (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.102) that was used to conduct the in-person interviews and discussed each of the seven steps, while also noting the extent to which each step was used in the context of the current research. Further detail was also presented on topics including: the design of the interviews; the construction of the interview questionnaire; the sampling strategies used for participant recruitment; as well as the transcription and analysis of the collected data. As earlier noted, the following chapter (6) will discuss the results found in this cross-national research. Then, the thesis will finally be concluded in Chapter 7.

6 Results

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the data for this qualitative study was collected by conducting 20 in-person, semi-structured interviews—10 in Norway and 10 in India. In this chapter, I discuss the results of the collected data through the lens of the Roots, Routes, Routers theoretical framework (Lim, 2018), as articulated in Chapter 4 (pp.42-53).

First, in Section 6.1, I highlight the findings under the Roots pillar. As previously noted, the purpose of illuminating root factors is to establish a broad context for better understanding the development of the local #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India. Then, in Section 6.2, I discuss the findings under the Routes pillar, which will highlight the routes of the campaigns, while also pinpointing key mechanisms that took place at various junctures of the campaigns' life cycles. In Section 6.3, I go over the findings of the final pillar, Routers, which illuminates critical roles of human and nonhuman routers that contributed to #MeToo. Lastly, I conclude the chapter by providing a concise summary of the discussed findings across all three pillars.

6.1 Results: Roots

As mentioned in Section 4.2 (pp.43-46), Lim denotes there are various *root* factors that contribute to the development of social movements, all of which represent an array of social and temporal relations, with some more engrained in society than others. To reiterate, these relations are *not* meant to draw causal connections amid social factors, but rather to highlight aspects that *contribute* to collective action (Lim, 2018, p.95-96). In the following two subsections, I discuss such factors found within the results by dividing the findings into categories Lim introduced (2018, p.97-98), including *long-term enablers* and *short-term causes*. (Please refer to Section 4.2 (p.43) for greater detail on these categories.)

6.1.1 Results: Roots of the #MeToo Campaign in Norway

Long-term Enablers

As noted in Section 4.2 (p.44), Lim defines *long-term enablers* as structural factors that are reliant on sociocultural, political, and historical conditions that can contribute to the formation and sustainment of social movements. Upon analyzing the interview data of study participants in Norway, four *long-term enablers* were identified: (1) Culturally Variable Assumptions Relating

to Gender Equality; (2) Gender Socialization; (3) Lack of Sexual Education & Harassment Prevention; and (4) Laws & Policies. Each of these enablers will be discussed in detail in the coming pages, along with specific interview quotes provided for greater context.

Long-term Enabler 1: Culturally Variable Assumptions Relating to Gender Equality

The first *long-term enabler* recognized relates to culturally variable assumptions about gender equality. One of the main structural tenets that several informants pointed out as undergirding various forms of gender discrimination in Norway is the belief that the country has *already* achieved gender equality. For instance, as several respondents pointed out:

“In Norway, things are very often promoted with the idea of ‘we’re there, you know, it’s fine. We live in a gender equal society.’ With that mindset as a premise, of course it doesn’t make sense to do a lot of action because, you know, we’re already there...”
– N3, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

“I think gender equality is seen as a norm in Norway. But it’s a kind of norm that also hides inequality in many ways...It’s a paradoxical norm because, of course, it’s a good thing that people support the idea of equality, but at the same time, people start to think we actually are gender equal, which makes it harder to recognize when problems arise...” – N5, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

“To some extent working towards greater equality is hindered by the fact that we already categorize ourselves as an equal country...we don’t really like to talk about issues that still exist.” – N6, Women’s Rights Activist

Keeping in line with the last quote, another participant (N8) referred to the idea that Norway has a “culture that is anti-conflict,” and thus, many people and institutions like to “deal with problems in a way that restores harmony as soon as possible.” The informant continues:

“Here [in Norway], people try and find a solution that will quickly diminish conflict, but unfortunately, this tends to sweep problems under the carpet and not be dealt with appropriately. Ultimately, this method runs the risk of preserving the hierarchy. See, as you go up the hierarchy, professionally speaking, you have less gender equality within Norway, with more men holding powerful positions...” – N8, Lawyer & Professor

Long-term Enabler 2: Gender Socialization

The second *long-term enabler* identified relates to the variances in gender socialization. As one informant (N7) highlighted, the “‘boys’ club’ mentality is still quite strong in Norway.” Several respondents suggested that this type of mentality likely stems from the differences in socialization that takes place among genders starting at a young age in school. For example, one informant (N9) pointed out recent research revealing how boys are unintentionally given more

time to talk while also given more attention in school than girls, despite how the teachers and daycare workers thought they treated both genders equally. The informant notes:

“These research findings are very interesting when you think about how this type of interaction might impact gender in years to come. For instance, what does that do to girls' ability to stand up for themselves, to believe in their opinions, and so on...even with something as simple as asking for a higher salary. See, it can be difficult to pinpoint exact gender inequalities in Norway because they're not very visible and you can find good arguments for why things are a certain way...” – N9, Gender Studies Researcher

On a similar note, others emphasized this type of social conditioning from a young age can be very long lasting and easily perpetuated. For instance, one informant stated the following:

“The social conditioning that takes place in children can contribute to future inequalities in the labor market structure, in which men and women tend to work in different sectors, different roles, socialize in a more segregated way, create different gender cultures and so on...” – N7, Trade Union Advisor & Women's Rights Advocate

In addition to socialization, eight out of 10 informants brought up that gender inequalities can be reinforced due to how traditional gender roles continue to play a large role in Norway. For example, the following statements characterize how although there is a widespread belief that women should participate in the public workforce, “there is still something about the way the society thinks about gender roles...” (N2), both at home and within the labor market:

“Though we have all these resources, such as state-funded nurseries, generous maternity leaves, etc., there's still a lot of gender discrimination in the home, with most women still doing the most work.” – N2, Journalist & Women's Rights Advocate

“Norway likes to pride itself as one of the most equal countries...but at the same time, we lack something when it comes to changing how we behave in some ways. For instance, if you look at the labor market, it clearly reflects really old gender roles...” – N4, Women's Rights Advocate & Former Politician

“Women represent a large portion in the low-paid, part-time sector, which typically consists of the service sector, healthcare and education sectors, and so on, while men represent a large majority in full-time sectors with higher paying jobs, such as finance and tech.” – N10, Gender Studies Researcher

While the respondent from the last quote (N10) suggested this type of division might be related to traditions or “perhaps due to women's interests,” others stated it is potentially due to the attitudes of some men in male-dominated fields and the problem of sexual violence. Many participants stressed that not only is “sexual harassment still a taboo topic...” (N6), but there's also “...still a strong stigma around people exposed to sexual violence, which creates shame about it” (N3). One informant argued a contributing factor to such stigma could stem

from certain reporting styles in journalistic coverage, such as the use of rape myths, which they define in the following statement:

“While the media promotes gender equality in Norway by keeping the topic alive and regularly writing about it, it also hinders progress in the way that some journalists write about sexual assault. Many will use rape myths, and by that, I mean writing the story in a way to place more of the blame on the survivor by focusing on such things as what she was wearing, whether she was drunk, etc....” – N2, Journalist & Women’s Rights Advocate

Long-term Enabler 3: Lack of Sexual Education & Harassment Prevention

The third *long-term enabler* identified in the research is the lack of sexual education and harassment prevention thoroughly integrated into school curricula and workplace training programs. While one respondent (N9) noted that “many organizations have pushed very hard for this type of education within the school sphere,” one of the main issues is that “teachers do not feel confident talking about the subject...they don’t feel as if they have enough knowledge about it” (N9). This lack of education, as argued by another informant (N6), not only perpetuates how experiences of sexual harassment are perceived as shameful, but it also hinders one’s ability to recognize when such violations occur. The respondent continues:

“The government needs to spend more money on sexual education—teaching what’s okay, what’s not okay, what are the limits, and so on. This type of curriculum needs to be taught in schools, because when people learn at a young age what is okay and what is not okay, they will be able to recognize problems when they arise and know the tools needed to deal with them in the right ways.” – N6, Women’s Rights Activist

As another respondent stressed, this problem spans across various educational levels, including the academic sphere. In the following statement, the informant describes their recent experience of taking a sexual harassment training in a university setting:

“I took the sexual harassment training again at the university...I was interested in seeing whether the training had been updated but found out the program was cut significantly. Now, it’s a very reduced curriculum and very elemental. Basically, what they teach you is that, unless someone grabs you, like in one of your personal areas in front of a witness, unless that happens, it’s all vague. So, I thought, wow, if that’s my training now, you know, then we’re not going to have much progress here.” – N8, Lawyer & Professor

Long-term Enabler 4: Norwegian Laws & Policies

Lastly, the fourth *long-term enabler* recognized as potentially having contributed to the development of the #MeToo campaign in Norway revolves around the country’s laws and policies against sexual harassment. For example, before the campaign ignited, there were no

ombudsmen who had authority to preside over sexual harassment cases, so survivors of such violations had to seek justice in other ways, such as taking the case to court. However, as one informant (N3) noted, “hardly anyone risked having to pay the expensive court fees since these types of cases are extremely hard to prove.” As the respondent went on to explain, if an ombudsman had authority over such cases, this route would be free of charge to individuals seeking retribution:

“We had advocated for years to have sexual harassment included in the ombudsman’s authority, yet various government departments were never willing to change it. No one knew exactly why, and the arguments put forward in the public documents were very vague and inconsistent...for some reason, there was always a very strong resistance against granting the ombudsman and tribunal authority to preside over cases of sexual harassment.” – N3, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

Furthermore, another respondent (N5) pointed out that “many of the sexual harassment laws in Norway are based on the notion that “if something’s going to change, the victim has to say something...” However, as the informant continues:

“The conflict with this type of governing is that you give the burden to the most vulnerable person to say something. Then, they oftentimes won’t speak up because they know they have less power and they’ll go through this process, only to be victimized and not believed again and again. That’s a main reason why our policies are not working...they’re not targeting key structural problems.” – N5, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

To recapitulate, the previous paragraphs in this *Roots* section on Norway illuminated key *long-term enablers* as pointed out by participants. In the following paragraphs, I discuss several *short-term causes* found within the data. I will then briefly summarize the noted findings before turning to the *Roots* section on India.

Short-term Causes

As stated in Section 4.2 (p.44), Lim interprets *short-term causes* as more recent factors, such as government-related accountability and concerns with citizens’ rights, which can help also drive the formation of social movements. Upon analyzing the data, I identified two *short-term causes* (i.e., potential contributing factor) from the informants’ responses in Norway: (1) Lack of Policy Implementation; and (2) Stronger Reactions by Women & the Feeling of Disrespect. Both of these factors will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs, along with specific interview quotes provided for greater context.

Short-term Cause 1: Lack of Policy Implementation

The first *short-term cause* that many informants viewed as contributing to #MeToo in Norway is the lack of widespread policy implementation from the government to further advance gender equality. The following key statements further characterize this view:

“The government promotes gender equality in many ways, from talking about gender roles to showing how they have sufficient committees just for gender equality. This type of communication is great as it reaches the media, which then reminds the public that gender equality is an issue on the agenda. But it's oftentimes seen as just empty promises...many of the policies are not thoroughly integrated in society...”

– N2, Journalist & Women’s Rights Advocate

“The government's strategy for gender equality has been the same for decades...But what we've found through research is that the current tactics are not being implemented very effectively. Gender equality is there in the law and in the Equality Act, but it's not being pushed very strongly... There is a lack of regulation and economic incentive to work systematically with gender equality on every sector and at every level.” – N3, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

In regard to the implementation of policies against sexual violence, one respondent (N8) described the lack of action as being a result of resource prioritization, arguing that this issue “still ranks quite low” compared to other problems the country is currently facing. Another informant (N4) stated: “At this point, gender-equality laws are still embedded in the legal framework, but as for what extent they are promoted depends on which party is in office.”

Short-term Cause 2: Stronger Reactions by Women & the Feeling of Disrespect

The second *short-term cause* is the increased willingness of women to speak up in regard to sexual violence violations in the workplace. For example, as one participant noted:

“Sexual harassment has always been a problem, but more young-professional women today have stronger reactions. I think this is partly because some have perceived that we are a gender-equal society, and we have this kind of norm of gender equality...”

– N5, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

On the other hand, several respondents argued that more women today are willing to speak up due to the lack of respect they feel and the low level of believability they receive when vocalizing experienced inequalities and violations. The following quotes offer further detail:

“While one should be innocent until proven guilty in Norway, many women who speak up about experiences with sexual harassment or assault are immediately assumed to be lying until the claim has been verified.” – N6, Women’s Rights Activist

“Through my research on sexual harassment, many female informants describe that it's difficult for them to get the same type of respect within their positions, with many of them feeling perceived more like a sex object.” – N10, Gender Studies Researcher

“I've talked to female medical students at the university who tell me that they go into the operating room expecting they're going to be grabbed. Yet, they say few people believe them given the power and status of the surgeons...Similarly, women from minority backgrounds whom I've spoken with have described the lack of attention they receive from authorities when reporting violations...” – N8, Lawyer & Professor

Summary of Roots in Norway: Long-term Enablers and Short-term Causes

Section 6.1.1 detailed individuals' perceptions of various underlying *root* factors which potentially contribute to various gender inequalities in Norway. To briefly review, the four *long-term enablers* identified from the data include: (1) Culturally Variable Assumptions Relating to Gender Equality; (2) Gender Socialization; (3) Lack of Sexual Education & Harassment Prevention; and (4) Laws & Policies. The two *short-term causes* (i.e., factors) include: (1) Lack of Policy Implementation; and (2) Stronger Reactions by Women & the Feeling of Disrespect. In the next section, I discuss *root* factors within the context of India.

6.1.2 Results: Roots of the #MeToo Campaign in India

Long-term Enablers

As mentioned in Section 4.2 (p.44), Lim interprets *long-term enablers* as structural factors reliant on sociocultural, political, and historical conditions that can contribute to the formation and sustainment of social movements. Upon analyzing the interview data of study participants in India, six *long-term enablers* were identified: (1) Deeply Ingrained Patriarchy; (2) Intersections of Caste, Class, and Religion; (3) Family & Gender Socialization; (4) Media & Social Norms; (5) Lack of Sexual Education & Harassment Prevention; and (6) Indian Laws & Policies. All of these enablers will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs, with specific interview quotes provided for greater context.

Long-term Enabler 1: Deeply Ingrained Patriarchy

The first *long-term enabler* identified relates to the central patriarchy in India, which views men in a superior status to women. The majority of respondents emphasized that the patriarchy is deeply ingrained in Indian society and spans throughout the country, serving as a key structural barrier that underpins many forms of gender inequality. While one informant

(I4) describes it as “overarching and very structured, starting in families and seeping into societies through education,” another participant underlined the patriarchy’s history in relation to gender activism via the following quote:

“You must remember we are fighting a patriarchy that is more than 5,000 years old. It will take a lot of time; these are biases deeply ingrained in our society.... It’s a difficult fight, as we are a country with very strong notions about what our culture is and how it’s defined.” – I7, Professor & Gender Studies Researcher

Seven participants stressed that one of the key components of the patriarchy is the preference given to sons in the family, with many bringing up religion as a contributing factor. These views are further denoted in the following quotes:

“Within certain religions, having a son is a big deal, because they bring fortune into the family, as family members will get dowry from a son’s future bride’s family when he marries...Having a son is also seen as a continuation of the family name, and the eldest son will always stay with the family and will take care of the parents as they get older...” – I1, Gender Studies Researcher

“In many families, when the husband and wife marry, they pray for a son, and there are so many traditional ceremonies around praying for a son...There are even religious proverbs that state: ‘If you tell lies, you will have a daughter.’ So, the amount of bias cannot be overemphasized. Oftentimes, women are only seen as reproductive machines.” – I7, Professor & Gender Studies Researcher

In addition, respondents described the notion of women being perceived as burdens on the family, specifically in more religious and conservative households. For instance:

“In many religious communities, the prioritization is all about the woman’s honor—basically the woman’s honor is the family’s honor. Therefore, before she gets married, they must protect her at any cost, because if she loses her honor, then the family loses theirs...Usually, this means placing strict restrictions on her and her movement, as many cities are not considered safe for women...” – I1, Gender Studies Researcher

“There are stringent mindsets here which have a great impact on society. One that is very common is the idea that the girl child is always thought of as a burden...See, women are associated as either a mother, a sister, or a daughter—always as someone who is dependent on another...” – I7, Professor & Gender Studies Researcher

Yet, while one informant (I6) emphasized how the country is very much “a man’s world” with many customs and traditions accepted within the framework of the patriarchy, another respondent (I10) stressed that the extent of inequalities “depends on what level of society—rural, urban, northern, southern—and the level of education and empowerment women have.”

Long-term Enabler 2: Intersections of Caste, Class, and Religion

The second *long-term enabler* recognized within the data is the nexus between gender equality and various social dimensions. As one informant (I10) pointed out, “in India, there is no *one* gender-equality concept. Gender equality varies from place to place within our society, depending on caste, class, religion, etc. It is still very much an urban phenomenon, reliant on one’s education...” Similarly, additional respondents emphasized the following:

“Caste is such a blot on humanity, and sadly, such a reality in India. And I don't think we can achieve gender equality without addressing class and caste...It must be done together because the two are just so interlinked...” – I8, Gender Sensitization Advisor

“If you belong to lower classes then already as a young girl, you don't get the same opportunities. Because many families can't afford costs associated with school, they will keep the girl home to help with household duties since she will eventually stay in the home when married...” – I1, Gender Studies Researcher

Long-term Enabler 3: Family & Gender Socialization

The third enabler relates to family and gender socialization. For starters, several respondents discussed how largely of a role family plays in gender socialization, both in relation to self-identity and gender roles, as showcased in the following key quotes below:

“Gender is only one of the identities of a woman in India, and whenever there is a conflict between the gender identity and other identities, it's always the former which is subsumed by the latter. Women don't see themselves as a group. They see themselves as belonging to that community and they stand with them, no matter the issue...”
– I7, Professor & Gender Studies Researcher

“I don't think in India we've ever been able to develop a true sense of sisterhood. You know, because we really are a male-dominated society, and everything is so centered around marriage and family. There's very little to help women connect with each other at deeper levels...” – I8, Gender Sensitization Advisor

While one informant (I2) noted that “Indian culture has a big influence on gender roles,” another respondent (I9) emphasized how there are widespread social norms around marriage (e.g., getting married by a certain age), as well as a woman’s role both inside the home and in the workforce. One participant pointed out that these norms are expressed across various societal spectrums, including within the family and from the government:

“There are still stereotypical gender roles. For example, when the government promotes women empowerment, they typically promote certain kind of jobs for woman, ones which are usually in lower-paid sectors...” – I6, Professor & Media Expert

Long-term Enabler 4: Media & Social Norms

Additionally, certain features of media, specifically television shows and films, were viewed as sociocultural barriers to gender equality, particularly in regard to sexual violence. In the following two quotes, participants describe specific narratives of movies they consider as contributing to men using certain behaviors when pursuing women, with the first detailing a ‘no means yes’ type of storyline:

“One popular narrative in movies and films is the portrayal of women as always resisting a man’s affection, but the more he persists, he eventually wins over her love... You see this time and time again in Bollywood films. The film industry has a big impact on societal culture here, so these common narratives have the potential to perpetuate power dynamics between genders ...” – I1, Gender Studies Researcher

“Within the media, there are also a lot of negative portrayals of women who are aggressive and assertive—they are usually the more villain-like characters in movies. Misogyny and masculine traits are also often lauded. For example, in cinema, you’ll see the concept that if a man keeps pursuing a woman, no matter the cost, he will be loved, and he can continue to do this over and over until she succumbs to his charm...”
– I9, National Director, Women’s Rights Organization

Another social norm that was frequently brought up by informants is how the topic of sex is rarely openly discussed. For example, one respondent (I5) noted that “a lot of people do not feel comfortable talking about sex, no matter the instance.” Others emphasized how sexual violence is still perceived as a taboo topic. As one informant (I8) underlined, “India is still a victim-blaming society,” and therefore, encountering such violations is “considered very shameful.” Similarly, another respondent (I2) stressed: “Women are always perceived as responsible for what happens to them, which is why many don’t come forward, especially when the perpetrator is someone in a position of power.” Respondents also spoke about how caste plays a role in such decisions. For example, as one informant noted about cases of rape:

“If the perpetrator is someone in an upper caste and the victim is in a lower caste, especially if she is a Dalit [the lowest caste group], the assumption would be ‘why would someone of an upper caste rape someone of that level?’ So, the police could very well ignore the case.” – I9, National Director, Women’s Rights Organization

In addition to the chances of police not taking such cases seriously, one informant (I3) argued that the “courtroom culture” is another key barrier to achieving justice, as in this setting it can also be common for the responsibility of the violation to be placed on the survivor. More so, several respondents stressed how cases of sexual violence are very difficult to prove.

Long-term Enabler 5: Lack of Sexual Education & Harassment Prevention

The fifth *long-term enabler* identified is the lack of sexual education and harassment prevention integrated into school curricula and workplace training programs, which multiple informants addressed. For example, one respondent explained the following statement in regard to their personal sexual education in school years prior:

“The closest sex education we received was when a counselor came in to speak to our class. The boys were taken to another room and the counselor held both of her arms out wide and said: ‘This is your bubble. Do not let anyone in.’ Just imagine, this is the type of sex education for 12-year-olds...” – I5, Women’s Rights Activist

Another informant noted how this particular lack of education, both in school and within the home, hinders one’s ability to recognize when such sexual violations occur. The respondent further articulates this view in the following statement:

“Many informants I’ve spoken with who experienced sexual assault expressed that at the time it happened, they didn’t know it was such. They described growing up in a very conservative Christian community, and how within the community there was no talk of sex. It was just kind of something that you would have to avoid at any costs, as it only belonged in marriage. So, as a child they had no clue what sexual harassment was like, including what constituted as such...” – I1, Gender Studies Researcher

Long-term Enabler 6: Indian Laws & Policies

Lastly, the sixth *long-term enabler* recognized which may have contributed to the development of the #MeToo campaign in India is the structure of laws and policies regarding gender equality. Respondents highlighted the gender-equal legal framework of many laws, including the constitution. However, they also explained how various “patriarchal hurdles” (I8) are further hindering advancement, such as people only having a certain time-window to file an assault or harassment report. More so, the bureaucratic nature of legislation and policymaking slows down the pace of change. For example, one informant noted:

“Implementing the law takes a long time in India. After a controversial rape case that took place in 1997, the corresponding legislation did not go into effect until 2013—16 years later...” – I10, Media Researcher & Former National Commissioner

Furthermore, several respondents brought up how because there are both constitution laws (which guarantees individual rights) and customary laws in India, women’s rights are further implicated. The following statements provide greater detail on this issue:

“If you look at the constitution, it states that every citizen has the right to practice certain customs, religions, etc., as long as they do not conflict with the constitutional laws and legislation. Yet, being a country with so many people, and having three dominating religious groups—Hindus, Muslims, and Christians—the issue is that customary laws usually reign. This is a major issue, because due to specific patriarchal norms which underpin certain customary laws, women are not being allowed to claim the rights guaranteed to them in the constitution.” – I4, Director, Local Women’s Rights Organization

“Here [in India], customary laws are largely shaped by what the gender norms are around women’s mobility [i.e., the right to freely roam] and bodily autonomy [i.e., the right to freely make decisions in relation to one’s own body]. Thus, gender-equality advancement can be blocked depending on what the beliefs are of the people in power in certain communities which adhere to customary laws...” – I9, National Director, Women’s Rights Organization

Moreover, informants also pointed out that definitions of various violations, such as rape, can shift depending on differing customary laws. For example, as one respondent described:

“What constitutes as rape changes depending on the time and location of the rape. For instance, in some rural areas of the Northeast states there is a custom that women are not supposed to go out above the hill or below the hill, which acts as a type of boundary. So, if you cross the boundary, especially at night, then the blame is on you. In that case, it would not be considered rape...” – I2, Gender Studies Researcher

In summary, the previous paragraphs in this *Roots* subsection on India illuminated key *long-term enablers* which may have contribute to the development of #MeToo. In the following paragraphs, I discuss several *short-term causes* found within the data. Then, I will briefly summarize the findings before turning to the second part of the analysis, the *Routes* pillar.

Short-term Causes

As highlighted in Section 4.2 (p.44), Lim interprets *short-term causes* (i.e., potential contributing factor) as more recent factors, such as government-related accountability and concerns with citizens’ rights, which can help also drive the formation of social movements. Upon analyzing the data, I identified two *short-term causes* from the participants’ responses in India: (1) Lack of Policy Implementation & Political Accountability; and (2) Advanced Education & Stronger Reactions of Women. In the following pages, both of these factors will be discussed in more detail, with specific interview quotes provided for greater context.

Short-term Cause 1: Lack of Policy Implementation & Political Accountability

The first *short-term cause* that respondents viewed as contributing to #MeToo in India is the lack of widespread lack of policy implementation. While respondents denoted several national schemes, policies, and campaigns promoted by the country’s Ministry of

Women and Child Welfare, they questioned the government's prioritization of achieving a gender-equal society. The following quotes exemplify this view in greater detail:

"Yes, the consciousness is there...there are policies and efforts put forth by the government both at the central level and at the state level to empower women and to bring them to be equal to men. Yet, there is a gap between what's proposed in theory and the implementation taking place on the ground..." – I6, Professor & Media Expert

"Gender equality it is mostly promoted by feminist activists and campaigns. Politically speaking, it depends on the political parties in office; I haven't seen much lately to be honest because the politicians who are in power aren't promoting it. For instance, many responded to the more well-known sexual assault cases as, 'boys are boys, you know, so what can we do...'" – I1, Gender Studies Researcher

Other respondents expressed the issue of not trusting political leadership, as detailed below:

"Women, especially from where I'm from in the Northeast, have been marginalized for so long, it's come to the point where we don't expect anything from the government..."
– I2, Gender Studies Researcher

Short-term Cause 2: Advanced Education & Stronger Reactions of Women

The second factor that was revealed in the data is the increased comfort women have in speaking up and fighting for their rights. Several informants noted how this is partly due to the increased number of women becoming more educated and aware of their rights, as detailed in the following three statements:

"Today, there is a good mix of people who have very progressive thinking, particularly in the urban areas. For example, a lot of women now want to become more educated, get jobs, and be financially independent. They're aware of their rights, and are tired of being hindered by society's patriarchal mindset..." – I6, Professor & Media Expert

"I think more women are getting comfortable speaking about personal experiences with sexual violence...maybe not so much in public, but more like in an intimate setting with friends. Those types of conversations are turning up now, which is unlike how it was a couple of years ago when it never really happened..." – I5, Women's Rights Activist

"A lot more women are more aware of their rights today than, say, even just 10 years ago. In my generation, when I was young, there was no term like sexual harassment—we called it life, you know, this is what it is. But I think now, at least for the women who are aware of their rights, they are eager and more willing to proclaim that enough is enough..." – I7, Professor & Gender Studies Researcher

Other respondents pointed out that after the traumatic Delhi Gang Rape case in 2012, many women's rights organizations created national campaigns to raise public consciousness in regard to the magnitude of sexual violence taking place. These campaigns, as one informant

(I6) explained, “were very impactful as they helped women feel more comfortable talking about these issues, because through these efforts, women believed they’d be heard.”

Summary of Roots in India: Long-term Enablers and Short-term Causes

Section 6.1.2 revealed individuals’ perceptions of various underlying root factors which contribute to various gender inequalities in India. To briefly reiterate, the six *long-term enablers* identified included: (1) Deeply Ingrained Patriarchy; (2) Intersections of Caste, Class, and Religion; (3) Family & Gender Socialization; (4) Media & Social Norms; (5) Lack of Sexual Education & Harassment Prevention; and (6) Indian Laws & Policies. The two *short-term causes* illuminated included: (1) Lack of Policy Implementation & Political Accountability; and (2) Advanced Education & Stronger Reactions of Women. In the following section, I will turn to the second part of the analysis: *Routes*.

6.2 Results: Routes

As discussed in Section 4.3 (pp.46-50), Lim (2018) refers to the *Routes* pillar of her framework as a way to map “the routes that social movements take” by identifying “various junctures of movements’ life cycles” (2018, p.92). Specifically, she proposes to examine the *routes* through three modes, two of which were used in the context of the current research: *practices* (i.e., the movement’s development via *participation* and *symbolic* activities), and *trajectories* (i.e., its various phases). Within these modes, Lim also classifies non-linear mechanisms which are used in the development of social movements, such as *brokering*, *bridging*, *framing*, and *globalizing*. (Please see Section 4.3, pp.46-50, for greater detail on these mechanisms.) In the following two subsections, I discuss the *practices* and *trajectories* revealed from the data, and highlight the mechanisms identified in each mode.

6.2.1 Results: Routes of the #MeToo Campaign in Norway

Practices

As mentioned in Section 4.3 (pp.47-48), Lim (2018) introduces the *practices* mode as activities which assist with collective mobilizing, in addition to the sustainment of that mobilization. She divides the mode into several categories, including *symbolic practices* and *participation practices*, as showcased in Figure 1 (p.47). In the coming paragraphs, I will keep in line with Lim’s approach, categorizing the analyzed data into two buckets: *symbolic practices* and

participation practices. Similar to the previously discussed *Roots* section, I will also include specific interview quotes to provide for greater context.

Symbolic Practices

As noted in Section 4.3 (p.48), Lim (2018) explained *symbolic practices* as centering on “the process of meaning-making, with *framing* as the central mechanism” (p.111). This process was very much evident in the collected data. For example, the following quotes depict how the meaning of #MeToo was interpreted when the campaign launched in Norway:

“When the campaign first took off in Norway, there was a huge shock effect...the stories actresses brought forth were, for some, a total shock. Like, wow, is this really happening in Norway? Yet the more stories that were published from different sectors, the more the campaign became identifiable for so many people. Many were happy that finally someone had put words to these experiences...” – N2, Journalist & Women’s Rights Advocate

“Having this comprehension of Norway as a gender-equal society, we kind of got things that we didn't expect to happen from the campaign...The wave of #MeToo made us realize we aren't as equal of a society as we might have thought...”
– N4, Women’s Rights Advocate & Former Politician

“I think the campaign highlighted the seriousness of the problem here, and it made people aware that this actually happens...and that yes, there are structural problems related to power...whether it be who has power to define what constitutes as certain violations, or who has power to say they don't feel comfortable in a certain type of setting...”
– N5, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

While respondents articulated how the publicized stories allowed people to connect on social media and offline, (an example of both the *bridging* and *dis/connecting* mechanisms), many noted how the campaign was a needed “wake-up call,” which opened the door to new societal conversations. This view is further exemplified in the following quotes:

“#MeToo was an extremely liberating force, as the campaign finally made it possible to talk about things that have been surrounded by a cloud of silence. It was kind of like a revolution, so to speak, because what it proved was how common of an issue this is and how it's silently accepted...” – N7, Trade Union Advisor & Women’s Rights Advocate

“The campaign gained a lot of momentum here, which has been positive in raising awareness about gender issues. In Norway, it quickly became an issue that was related to sexual harassment in the office...Overall, it gave us a language to be able to talk about such problems, as now people better understand why we need education on this topic, as well as new mechanisms for addressing it...” – N9, Gender Studies Researcher

In addition to the campaign providing a new language for people to more openly discuss the topic of sexual violence, one respondent (N7) brought up how #MeToo also helped shift the meaning of ‘blame’ from the survivor to the perpetrator. The informant continues:

“It’s critical to acknowledge the positive implications #MeToo has had here, especially regarding women and shame. For instance, a colleague of mind told me about a time when she was groped by a man while out, and before #MeToo she said she would have felt shameful that happened. But not now. Now, she said she was just angry at this fucking idiot. I think that’s a huge step forward in itself...However, throughout the campaign we’ve still seen instances where the perpetrators don’t seem but so remorseful, so that’s an area where we still have a lot of work...” – N7, Trade Union Advisor & Women’s Rights Advocate

Participation Practices

As noted in Section 4.3 (pp.47-48), Lim (2018) articulated the *participation practices* as activities through “which social movement actors engage other individuals in daily activities” during “various stages of the movement” (p.111). In the context of this thesis, multiple informants described forms of participation, with many emphasizing how supporters from an array of sectors came together to strengthen the momentum of the campaign. For example, as one respondent noted:

“There for a few months, I thought the #MeToo campaign would really change the world...That’s naive looking back, but I think we had that kind of attitude because we had representation from many spheres, including actors, journalists, politicians, trade union members, you name it...Stories just kept coming out in the media and I think many men were quite shocked to know how it is to live as a woman in the world...all the precautions you have to take...and how limited our life is compared to men...”
– N4, Women’s Rights Advocate & Former Politician

As someone who spoke publicly about their own personal experience of sexual violence during the campaign, the noted participant continued to describe how other survivors (both women and men) have reached out to them directly (online and off) to talk about their stories, which is another example of both the *bridging* and *dis/connecting* mechanisms discussed in Chapter 4 (please see pp.42-53). Though multiple informants noted the benefits of #MeToo being a public-awareness campaign, many stated that some of the media coverage focused too much on individual cases and not enough on the issue of sexual violence as a structural problem within society. The following statements denote this viewpoint in greater detail:

“Once the campaign moved into the political sphere, a lot of the coverage shifted to focus more on individual persons and whether they were guilty or not... This became a very big debate because I think people wanted to talk about the bigger questions, you know, the structural aspects behind the issue—not individual politicians...”
– N7, Trade Union Advisor & Women’s Rights Advocate

“The media definitely focused on certain sectors, such as the entertainment industry. It wasn’t too strange to see women from that group [e.g., the film and music industries] come forward first since that’s what happened in the U.S. However, the coverage was

very much a debate about certain politicians, perhaps too much attention in a way. It's very important, obviously, because members of the government have power and should know that affects their relationships with people and so on. But perhaps the media didn't cover very well on what you should do if you experienced something or how workplaces should address it...” – N9, Gender Studies Researcher

Other respondents brought up how certain media coverage sparked criticism around the campaign, as well as a larger debate in regard to press ethics. As one informant noted:

“#MeToo certainly ignited conversation on several fronts. On the one hand, there has been a renewed interest in discussing sexual violence. But then there has also been a debate about how the press should handle accusations related to the campaign...some critics have said certain coverage has been a witch-hunt on people, and the media has stepped over boundaries with some of its reporting. On the other hand, people have claimed that the legal system and certain societal mindsets haven't really supported women or men to come forward with stories about sexual violence, and how these individuals weren't taken seriously when they turned to normal reporting procedures...”
– N1, Lecturer, Gender Studies Researcher

In addition to societal debates, several informants explained that the widespread, consistent coverage of #MeToo forged bonds across generations while fostering a sense of hope that a new cultural mindset will arise. For example, the following quote illuminates this view:

“Women in my age range never talked about experiences with sexual harassment and assault because we were a culture that understood you weren't supposed to say anything. I hope the collective force of #MeToo will make it difficult to put this genie of an issue back in the bottle...” – N8, Lawyer & Professor

In summary, the previous paragraphs in this *Routes* subsection on Norway focused on the *practices* mode, highlighting aspects of both *symbolic* and *participation practices*. In the following pages, I discuss the *trajectories* of the #MeToo campaign in Norway, illuminating specific mechanisms (e.g., *bridging; framing*) found within the data. More specifically, I shed light on informants' perceptions of the impact of #MeToo, as well as their views on how the campaign should move forward. I then briefly review the findings before shifting to the *Routes* section on India.

Trajectories

As discussed in Section 4.3 (pp.49-50), Lim (2018) interprets the *trajectories* mode as a movement's *life cycle*—how the movement grows, declines, and disrupts the status quo. In the context of the current research, multiple respondents viewed #MeToo as a “very media-driven campaign” (N5). Further, several informants denoted that most of the stories brought forward were collective manifestos published in prominent national newspapers, such as *Aftenposten*.

While it has been three years since the campaign launched in Norway in late 2017, many informants see it as having not yet ended. For example, one respondent explained:

“The #MeToo discussion is still going on in a country where people kind of think of themselves as gender equal. So, you would have thought that the societal debate would have died easily, but it didn’t...” – N2, Journalist & Women’s Rights Advocate

Respondents also emphasized numerous ways the campaign has impacted the Norwegian society. For example, one informant (N5) highlighted how #MeToo has sparked the rollout of multiple surveys to get a better sense of sexual violence in various sectors:

“Since #MeToo, several surveys have taken place about sexual harassment in the academic field. Before, this subject wasn’t regularly asked in workplace studies. Now, researchers are seeing very, very serious numbers. For instance, they found there have been 18 women who reported to have been sexually assaulted at the workplace in an academic environment during the last year. Even though that is a small percentage, it is a number. It is 18 people that suffered from sexual violence. And few respondents had said anything to anyone in the system. So, these results demonstrate the system doesn’t work; a whistle-blowing system doesn’t work...” – N5, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

In addition, several respondents argued that #MeToo was a driving force for the integration of stricter policies and procedures now in place throughout various workplace environments, which specifically address sexual violence. Others pointed out new legislation that has since been implemented, including an amendment to the 2018 Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud Act. The amendment, which went into effect in January 2020, now authorizes the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal to hear cases concerning sexual harassment. Referring to this new law, one informant stated:

“Once the giant wave of #MeToo stories were published, the government proposed to change the act and include sexual harassment into the mandate of the ombudsman and tribunal. Given how we’ve been proposing this type of change for so long but have been met with consistent resistance over the years, I think the bottom-up pressure coming from the people via the campaign is the sole reason the law finally went into effect...a perfect example of state feminism...” – N3, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

Additional respondents referred to ‘state feminism’ (i.e., the interplay of grassroots organizing ‘on the ground’ among advocates and integration from ‘above’ via government reform) when discussing the implications of #MeToo. For example, while acknowledging the support of the government, one informant (N2) stressed the importance of acknowledging that the campaign was “at its core, a grassroots movement.” The participant continues:

“With #MeToo, the people in our country so forcefully and willingly fueled this topic. We wanted to see concrete change and expected the government to listen, especially being that we are a country which prides itself on being so gender equal. So yes, I believe that once the people came forward, the government had a responsibility to make sufficient changes to show we are being heard...” – N2, Journalist & Women’s Rights Advocate

Despite tangible change that has been brought forth since the beginning of the campaign in late 2017, such as new legislation and procedures addressing sexual violence, the majority of participants argue that there is still much to be done to combat the issue. Specifically, several respondents discussed how some of the politicians who were accused of such violations are “slowly trying to get back in office” (N4), both in local and national politics.

“While the campaign made it easier for people to see actual power differences in our society, I also believe that sadly there have been some consequences we weren't really prepared for. For example, a lot of the politicians who were exposed during the campaign are actually being invited back into various levels of the political sphere.”
– N6, Women’s Rights Activist

“One thing the government hasn’t done is make sure that public officials who were outed and whose cases have been verified can’t be re-elected. Yet, I haven’t seen any legislation in that regard...” – N2, Journalist & Women’s Rights Advocate

In addition to the need for further legislation, respondents stressed the importance of keeping the #MeToo campaign alive in order to continue dismantling the stigma around experiences with sexual violence, while also encouraging all genders to become active in the dialogue.

The following quotes further demonstrate this view:

“The way women all over the world have stood up against sexual violence will change, I hope, how future generations recognize what’s accepted. Perhaps my generation has assisted in this change...how we shouldn't be ashamed of ourselves when we suffer such violations, and that we can't be scared to discuss it.... Yet, we can’t stop fighting because there is still so much to do.” – N4, Women’s Rights Advocate & Former Politician

“The #MeToo campaign has illuminated how, previously, the strategy to combat sexual violence has revolved too much around teaching girls what is right and wrong, with little emphasis on the boys. Here, we have lots of work to do, especially when it comes to the younger generation. It takes a huge amount of courage for someone to stand up against sexual harassment, and there's no reason why this should be done only by the victims themselves. They should also have the solidarity and assistance from everyone, no matter the gender or circumstance...” – N7, Trade Union Advisor & Women’s Rights Advocate

Summary of Routes in Norway: Symbolic/Participation Practices and Trajectories

Section 6.2.1 of the *Routes* pillar highlighted individuals’ perceptions of the *practices* and *trajectories* that took place in the #MeToo campaign in Norway. In the former mode, informants discussed forms of *symbolic practices* (i.e., how people formed meaning around

the campaign by creating a *frame* of injustice), as well as *participation practices* (i.e., the extent to which individuals connected through engagement). Data from the *trajectories* mode revealed respondents' perceptions of the impact of #MeToo, such as new legislation that has gone into effect. Informants also denoted the issue of politicians who were accused of sexual violence during #MeToo returning to public office. In the following subsection, I discuss the *Routes* pillar within the context of the #MeToo campaign in India.

6.2.2 Results: Routes of the #MeToo Campaign in India

Practices

As noted in Section 4.3 (pp.47-48), Lim (2018) introduces the *practices* mode as activities which assist with collective mobilizing, in addition to the sustainment of that mobilization. She divides the mode into several categories, including *symbolic practices* and *participation practices*. In the following pages, I will keep in line with the previous subsection and present the analyzed data on India in two parts: *symbolic practices* and *participation practices*. I will also include specific interview quotes to provide greater context. Following the discussion on *practices*, I then articulate the findings within the *trajectories* mode, and will conclude this section by briefly reviewing the mentioned results before turning to the final part of the analysis, the *Routers* pillar.

Symbolic Practices

As discussed in Section 4.3 (p.48), Lim (2018) explained *symbolic practices* as revolving around “the process of meaning-making, with *framing* as the central mechanism” (p.111). This process was very much evident in the collected data from participants in India. For example, several respondents viewed the campaign as a needed outlet for creating meaning around sexual violence, as detailed in the following quote:

“One of the things which is very, very important to remember is that, historically, there has been no language to discuss sexual harassment...Today, when people are vocalizing experiences of sexual harassment, they're getting the courage from other places...”
– I3, Sociologist & Professor

In addition to highlighting specific *framings* of sexual violence (i.e., interpreting it through a lens of injustice), the statement above also represents the mechanism of *globalizing*, as the respondent pointed out how people with access to social media are becoming more aware of various social issues, including the nuances of sexual violence. Further, other respondents

denoted how, because #MeToo was taking place in so many countries around the world, people began to recognize the importance of expanding the definition of sexual violence.

“What #MeToo has done is encouraged us to re-think the way the law and society defines sexual harassment...Previously, sexual harassment was defined as a physical thing, not so much as a mental harassment, but harassment can be mental also. So, in a society where gender equality is not given much importance, it is vital for us to think about #MeToo, because for so long women have been easily dismissed, with many claiming they weren't telling the truth...” – I10, Media Researcher & Former National Commissioner

However, as others noted, not everyone has interpreted the campaign in a positive light. As one respondent (I5) explained, many people have mocked participants and supporters of #MeToo, “dismissing the campaign as a joke.” Similarly, another informant (I4) discussed how larger, “more chauvinistic companies” have started “questioning the integrity of women and their intentions,” and denoted that some businesses are claiming it is “safer all around to do away with female employees.”

Participation Practices

As previously stated in Section 4.3 (pp.47-48), Lim (2018, p.111) denotes the *participation practices* as activities which revolved around the engagement of social movement participants. In the context of the current study, several instances of this practice were found within the data, with a majority of the examples revealing mechanisms of *bridging* and *brokering* (i.e., the bond of previously disconnected people). The following three statements further highlight this representation:

“#MeToo signified a beginning for talking about these issues...Beforehand, many women, to be frank, were not very sympathetic in response to others talking about misbehaviors on part men...They would say things like, ‘oh, she's always complaining,’ or ‘she's being too sensitive,’ ...I think with this campaign, people are finally giving support to the women who have had the courage to speak up.” – I6, Professor & Media Expert

“Before #MeToo, cases of sexual violence were largely pushed under the carpet...it was hidden largely due to power dynamics between genders and class statuses. Oftentimes, this meant men in respectable positions perceiving the women they encountered as powerless...So when #MeToo came along, it provided this type of collective platform for women to speak up and also encourage others to speak a lot about this, no matter the situation...” – I4, Director, Local Women's Rights Organization

“What #MeToo has done is given way to solidarity between women...More women now feel they're not alone in their struggles...What really excited me about the campaign is how it connected people across communities, class, caste, and religious affiliations. That was very interesting, to see such intersectional discussions, because it brought forth more awareness about more nuances of sexism...” – I2, Gender Studies Researcher

To encourage further *brokerage* (i.e., the connection of disparate groups), as well as expand the network of participants engaging in the campaign, several respondents explained how various social media influencers (i.e., well-known individuals with a large social media following) offered to use their own social media profiles as a way to publish other people's experiences of sexual violence. This strategy, as described by an informant (I5), served as a way to counteract power dynamics between castes and class statuses, while also empowering voices which would usually go unheard. The respondent continues:

“Most of the stories that were told in the #MeToo campaign here were anonymous. So, many people would reach out to a certain person and use their platform, like a social media influencer, because everyone was scared to go public, and I don't blame them. I mean, the fact that they could even expose their vulnerability on the media was a big thing. After approaching the social influencer, he or she would publish the stories and create dialogues around it...” – I5, Women's Rights Activist

Informants also noted how #MeToo “managed to trigger conversations on sexual harassment and assault” (I9) both on and offline, as well as in public and private spaces. The following statement further characterizes intimate discussions that arose as part of the campaign:

“Once #MeToo became more well-known, it started to become the center of conversation, and not just within people's inner social circles. Colleagues suddenly started talking about their experiences, many which took place years back...So, this became a very emotional time, because people felt as if they could finally let go of trauma they had bottled up, which allowed them to connect with others in a different way. One woman told me that she was abused as a child, but because she didn't know what sexual harassment meant, she never talked about it. But then with #MeToo, she finally was able to tell her mother what happened, which allowed her to let that trauma out, all while strengthening their bond...” – I1, Gender Studies Researcher

Furthermore, several respondents articulated how through the engagement of the campaign, they recognized a societal shift in blame regarding sexual violence. As one informant (I4) explained, “#MeToo assisted in breaking the silence and also made people realize they are not alone, and that whatever happened, it was not their fault.” Other respondents discussed how #MeToo even prompted self-reflection, as shown in the following statement:

“When the campaign took off in India, I was extremely overwhelmed that first month. If I saw a friend of mine posting something about the same issue, I'd immediately start thinking about what she went through. I then also started thinking about all the previous things that have happened to me in the past. When I decided to speak up, I never imagined I'd be given the level of support I received, even from people whom I had not spoken to in over a decade. This showed me that voicing just one story can make a difference. So many of my male friends were really shocked at the number of stories that came out...see, guys tend to think this doesn't happen that much, let alone to people they know...” – I5, Women's Rights Activist

To summarize, the previous paragraphs in this *Routes* subsection on India focused on the *practices* mode, highlighting aspects of both *symbolic* and *participation practices*. In the following paragraphs, I discuss the *trajectories* of the #MeToo campaign, while denoting specific mechanisms (e.g., *framing*; *globalizing*) found within the data. As with the previous subsection on Norway, I will discuss respondents' perceptions of the impact of #MeToo and also their views on how the campaign should move forward. To conclude this subsection, I will briefly summarize the findings and will then turn to the final pillar: *Routers*.

Trajectories

As noted in Section 4.3 (pp.49-50), Lim (2018) interprets the *trajectories* mode as a movement's *life cycle*—how the movement grows, declines, and disrupts the status quo. In the context of the current research, many informants in India articulated the significance of #MeToo originally starting in Hollywood, with some stating that this was one of the main reasons people became interested in it. Others explained how the campaign in India gained substantial attention in the country once prominent Bollywood actors came forward in late 2018 to share personal experiences of sexual violence. As one respondent (I9) emphasized, “Bollywood is huge in India, so anything that happens there captures the imagination.”

With two years having passed since the #MeToo wave hit India, some informants argue the campaign has “lost its steam” and has started to “fizzle out” (I8) throughout the country, with one reason being that “protestors have yet to find a way to organize themselves to carry the campaign forward” (I2). As one respondent stated:

“While there are a lot of women protesting, getting them to be organized to come together and take legal action is the hurdle. And I think the key problem in all of this has to do with impunity, because so many of the accused are men are in positions of power and, you know, they have a lot of support which can serve as a major roadblock to change...”

– I2, Gender Studies Researcher

On the contrary, other informants view the campaign as having “created the right climate” (I7) to continue strengthening activist efforts, as demonstrated by the following statements:

“Many local NGOs have leveraged the buzz around #MeToo to strategize further activism, including various campaigns that target women's access to public space, as well as ones that try to better understand sexual harassment as a phenomenon in the city.”

– I1, Gender Studies Researcher

“As a result of #MeToo, there is a heightened societal consciousness...It has created an awareness, both on a local and global scale, of the magnitude of this problem. It has also made more men aware of their actions, and how those actions can be perceived in different

contexts. For those people open to change, this raised-awareness will lead to them altering both their behaviors and mindsets...” – I7, Professor & Gender Studies Researcher

“I think the most important thing about the campaign in India is that it has made certain people, especially men, more conscious of their behavior and more aware of the fact that they are being watched...” – I3, Sociologist & Professor

In regard to policy change, several respondents denoted how the momentum from #MeToo has had the most impact in formal workplace environments, in which many companies have placed greater emphasis on initiating or improving sexual violence complaint committees. For example, this type of campaign influence is highlighted in the following statement:

“Before #MeToo, many companies were not at all interested in setting up internal complaint committees, nor spreading awareness to employees about sexual harassment laws. But then #MeToo happened, and that’s when they started to take everything more seriously...even the government took a lot of steps. For instance, local officials have made it mandatory for companies of a certain size to form a sexual harassment committee and upload information about it onto their online portal. This way, employees can file their complaint online, which the government can monitor. If companies fail to do this, there is a high financial fine...” – I4, Director, Local Women’s Rights Organization

Despite the positive impact that participants view the campaign as having made, such as increasing public awareness and stricter policies, multiple respondents emphasized the level of criticism #MeToo has received throughout the country. For example, informants pointed out how many people have raised questions as to why it has taken women so long to come forth and speak openly about their prior experiences with sexual violence. In the following statement, one respondent further elaborates this criticism:

“Many people were saying, ‘why is it that these women took so much time to report.’ And my take on this is that it’s not easy for women to go in and complain immediately. Not only is it difficult to file a report in the first place, but soon her whole life will center around that traumatic experience...she will be questioned over and over. I’ve also heard a lot of criticism about why women didn’t take their case to court...again, many of them did go to court at the time, but others didn’t want to, since the victim can easily become shamed both in the courtroom and in public...” – I7, Professor & Gender Studies Researcher

When reflecting on the life cycle of the campaign, informants discussed how India’s strict defamation laws have largely stood as an obstacle for many survivors of sexual violence to speak about their past experiences. For example, one respondent explained:

“Many women are now even more frightened to come forward because there have been a lot of instances where the accused...many of whom are in very powerful positions...filed cases of defamation against the women who spoke out. Of course, this made for a very unequal fight since many of these women don’t have access to expensive lawyers, nor the means to pay legal expenses...” – I8, Gender Sensitization Advisor

Similarly, another informant (I5) discussed how this sense of fear was heightened once the media shifted its coverage to reporting primarily on the defamation cases instead of on newly shared stories of sexual violence. As the respondent noted, “this essentially got a lot of people scared, while also causing the campaign to go off on a different tangent.”

Overall, while informants denoted the critical role #MeToo has played in gender-equality activism in India, including “allowing certain people to feel safe about speaking up and opening the door for conversations on gender issues and power” (I9), they also emphasized that the fight is not over; there is still much work to be done to bring about both structural and behavioral change. On one hand, some of the respondents argued that the change must be promoted within the family, as demonstrated in the following statement:

“You cannot go into an establishment and start talking about equality for women, expecting things to drastically change. I believe this change has to begin in the family. Because, in the workplace, you already have people who come with bias...who think that women don't deserve to be in certain positions... And if men who are in power and leadership roles have this bias, the teams and organizations they lead are usually not equal. So, ultimately, they're not going to give women a fair chance...” – I10, Media Researcher & Former National Commissioner

On the other hand, multiple informants denoted how the government needs to take a stronger stance in facilitating change, such as collaborating with women’s rights organizations to raise more public awareness about current laws and policies in place for sexual violence, while also creating mechanisms for reporting on such violations in the workplace to be publicly shared. Unless government officials are held accountable for their actions, as respondents point out, the country will only be able to progress but so much. In the following statement, one informant further elaborates this observation:

“Currently, there are so many cases of sexual harassment in various government levels. Unless people who are in these positions are made liable and brought under the law, we will not be able to deliver a strong message to other people. There must be zero tolerance for sexual harassment and assault. The government needs to start walking the talk by playing a larger role in all of this. They must start implementing the law and including themselves in the implementation...” – I4, Director, Local Women’s Rights Organization

Summary of Routes in India: Symbolic/Participation Practices and Trajectories

In summary, the previous paragraphs of the *Routes* pillar discussed individuals’ perceptions of the #MeToo campaign in India through the lens of *practices* and *trajectories*. In regard to the former mode, *practices*, the data exposed various forms of *symbolic practices* (i.e., how people interpreted the campaign), as well as *participation practices* (i.e., how

people engaged in the campaign and formed connections). Further, in the *trajectories* mode, the data revealed informants' views of the impact #MeToo has had, such as new legislation that has gone into effect thus far. Respondents also underlined key barriers to the campaign's progress, including India's defamation laws, and articulated ongoing challenges to advancing activists' efforts. With that said, in the next section, I will turn to the final part of the analysis.

6.3 Results: Routers

As stated in Section 4.4 (pp.50-53), Lim (2018) refers to the final pillar of her three-part framework as *Routers*, which focuses on exploring the “roles of human and nonhuman routers...in the making and development of social movements” (p.92). She defines the term *routers* as the actors of connectivity which “enable the connectivity between people, social groups, networks, and places” (2018, p.122). In the following two subsections, I discuss the *nonhuman* and *human routers* which were revealed from the collected data as contributing to #MeToo in Norway and India. As with the previous section on *Routes*, I also highlight the various mechanisms identified within informants' responses (e.g., *bridging* and *brokering*), which were characterized as playing a critical role in the campaign. Again, Figure 1 (p.47) shows how these mechanisms are interconnected between the *Routes* and *Routers* pillars.

6.3.1 Results: Routers of #MeToo Campaign in Norway

Nonhuman Routers

As discussed in Section 4.4 (p.51), Lim interprets *nonhuman routers* as (nonhuman) tools which advance points of connection between people and groups to social movements at local, national, regional, and global levels. Upon analyzing the interview data of the current research, two *nonhuman routers* were identified regarding the #MeToo campaign in Norway: (1) the national newspaper *Aftenposten* and (2) social media. Both of these routers will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs, with specific interview quotes provided for greater context.

Nonhuman Router 1: The National Newspaper *Aftenposten*

The first *nonhuman router* found within the collected data on Norway as helping to bring awareness about the #MeToo campaign was one of the leading national newspapers in the country, *Aftenposten*. Respondents discussed how, particularly in the capital city of Oslo, *Aftenposten* played a vital role in helping to launch the campaign by serving as an outlet for

the first group of survivors (actors in the entertainment industry) to come forward and share their experiences with sexual violence in the workplace. In the subsequent months following the first collection of stories, the newspaper continued to be a connective medium (i.e., *bridging*) between survivors and the public, as exemplified in the following statement:

“All throughout the #MeToo campaign, Aftenposten gave a good opportunity for people to publish their experiences. We saw very diverse stories, from very serious cases such as rape to less severe accounts of sexual harassment. Aftenposten continued to shed light on these stories and discussed policy updates, as well as strategies on how to work against such problems...” – N10, Gender Studies Researcher

Nonhuman Router 2: Social Media

In addition to the assistance from *Aftenposten*, the second *nonhuman router* identified was social media. As one informant (N2) said, “social media pulled the movement forward,” showing how, in Norway, the campaign consisted of *hybrid media/communication networks*, the mechanism Lim (2018) references when traditional media (i.e., newspapers; television) and contemporary communication networks (i.e., social media platforms) are used together. The following quotes show how #MeToo was seen as a “very media-driven campaign” (N5):

“Once stories were published in Aftenposten, many people flocked to social media to join the conversation. I think social media made it easier for women and men to publish their own experiences with the hashtag #metoo, rather than feeling they needed to say it loud in say, an in-person public forum...Because it became more accepted for people to publish stories online, that also made others realize that this is not a problem that only actresses or famous people experience...This is something that your friend, your mother, father, siblings, and/or people very close to you are experiencing. I think that gave #MeToo a force in a way...” – N2, Journalist & Women’s Rights Advocate

“A huge amount of feminist debates started both on and offline...people also created Facebook groups to organize gatherings and protests for the women who worked in various occupational fields that signed the petitions...While this of course helped steer momentum, it also made people realize they are not alone in this struggle...”
– N5, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

The latter quote not only underlines social media’s role in the #MeToo campaign in Norway, but it also touches on how #MeToo advocacy took place offline—or rather, as Lim denotes, “on the ground” (2018, p.103). Having discussed the *non-human routers* found in the data, I will now turn to highlight the *human routers*.

Human Routers

As noted in Section 4.4 (pp.52-53), Lim (2018) interprets *human routers* as being the “vital nexus of online and offline...,” with these individuals serving as “brokers, bridges,

boundary spanners, liaisons, and more” (p.92). She then splits the *human routers* into three categories: *dissenting bodies* (participants in the campaign); *vocal bodies* (supporters of the campaign); and *silent bodies*. (Please refer to Section 4.4 (p.52-53) for more detail on these categories.) To keep in line with Lim’s framework, the following pages reveals the *human routers* found within the collected data on Norway, starting with *dissenting bodies*. However, it is important to note that while Lim (2018, p.128) referenced *silent bodies* as humans who use their agency to act and resist beyond voice and noise through sounds of silence and sonic disengagement, I will utilize this term to shed light on groups and individuals who were recognized as not being part of the campaign for various reasons which I will further discuss.

In regard to *dissenting bodies*, participants perceived the campaign as having started when actors in the entertainment industry came forward by publicizing personal stories of sexual violence. Some respondents noted how actors in Sweden had already come forward at the time, which as one informant (N4) argued, “probably inspired people here [in Norway] to do the same.” Respondents also discussed how as more survivors started to vocalize their experiences, they then started to collect and organize their stories to be published as collective manifestos in large, national newspapers (such as *Aftenposten*). One informant elaborated on their own supporting role in the campaign, as noted in the following statement:

“Originally, I wrote a post on Facebook to show support for the movement and for the online petitions. I felt it was necessary to vocalize how this shouldn't be the fight for only the women who had been violated...this should be a fight for all of us. Then, a couple of guys contacted me and said maybe we could use this Facebook post as a way to create a similar petition to spark behavioral change, which I thought was a good idea. So we wrote the text and tried to make it more binding in a way that you weren't just signing it proclaiming solidarity, but you were also taking upon yourself a responsibility to react in situations where you see harassment, you know, to be a good comrade...In just a few days, this petition had more than 600 signatures...” – N7, Trade Union Advisor & Women’s Rights Advocate

While informants pointed out individuals in various sectors who came forward (including actors, musicians, politicians, etc.), they also highlighted how the campaign even reached younger age groups, including girls as young as 12 years old who vocalized experiences of verbal harassment at school from fellow classmates. Moreover, several respondents stressed the negative impact they have observed in relation to groups and individuals who participated in the campaign and stated that this type of backlash potentially deterred (and will continue to deter) others from coming forward. These views are elaborated on in the following quotes:

“What has happened to the women who had the courage to speak up is that they have been exposed in the media for so long now that I would consider it to be difficult for other women to come forward as a whistleblower. If you look at those women, you wouldn’t like to be in their situation...their names have been dragged throughout this process.”
– N4, Women’s Rights Advocate & Former Politician

“I think it is still hard for women to speak up, especially young women. On one hand, I think this is partly because in Norway, as well as in other countries, rape and harassment allegations don't get the necessary attention, and people are very, very afraid of being doubted. On the other hand, I think this is also because of how the whistleblowers have been treated throughout the campaign...they've had to deal with a lot of criticism, both online and in their everyday lives, which makes others very afraid. People just assume they are lying until their claims have been verified.” – N6, Women’s Rights Activist

“I think now people will probably be less willing to be a whistleblower than they would have been years ago when #MeToo first started. Then, it felt like it was a collective force. Now pretty much, if you blow the whistle, you must be ready to take the consequences, including ridicule and suspicion. Even if you're anonymous, it can be very hard to protect that anonymity...” – N7, Trade Union Advisor & Women’s Rights Advocate

Additionally, participants highlighted several groups which they articulated as not being part of the campaign (i.e., *silent bodies*). For example, one respondent noted how parts of the service and healthcare sectors were not widely included:

“Here [in Norway], the campaign focused on certain groups, such as actors, musicians, doctors, academics, but not so much on the lower level of the workforce, like in parts of the service sectors and healthcare sectors...With those sectors, there are a lot of foreign workers who may not be as knowledgeable about the processes of reporting such violations, for instance who they can contact in the workplace, etc. It's also a challenge because many of these workers are employed part-time and they're not as well integrated in the workplace...” – N10, Gender Studies Researcher

Another participant (N3) discussed how the campaign lacked an “intersectional focus,” as there were hardly any stories on the intersections of race, sexual orientation, religion, etc. In the following statement, the participant explains the importance of including these topics in the larger conversation around the issue of sexual violence:

“We need to hear from more people who are experiencing overlapping harassment, such as racial harassment combined with sexual harassment, and so on. These instances are very common. For example, trans-women or trans-men have mentioned that harassment on the basis of gender or sexuality is also extremely prevalent against them, but there were not many stories about this community during #MeToo. It's really important not to under-communicate this and pretend sexual harassment is only coming from heterosexual men against heterosexual women...If we’re going to solve this issue, we have to tackle it with a more intersectional focus...” – N3, Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher

While the majority of respondents classified the #MeToo campaign as having only focused on certain sectors (most of which require higher education and encompass higher-skilled

roles), they stressed that its overall force should not be undervalued. As one informant (N7) stated, “it’s very hard and wrong to dismiss #MeToo simply because it was not inclusive enough, as it can still have a significant, far-reaching impact.” In other words, the campaign brought the issue of sexual violence “out from the shadows and into the sunshine,” as another respondent (N6) explained, and helped start a larger conversation.

Summary: Nonhuman and Human Routers in Norway

To briefly summarize, the previous pages of Section 6.3.1 shed light on individuals’ perceptions of the *nonhuman* and *human routers* which contributed to the #MeToo campaign in Norway. More specifically, two *nonhuman routers* were identified regarding the #MeToo campaign in Norway: (1) the national newspaper *Aftenposten* and (2) social media. For the *human routers*, respondents pointed out groups and individuals who participated in the campaign (i.e., *dissenting bodies*), in addition to how others supported such participation (e.g., creating online petitions of solidarity). They also discussed specific groups who they perceived as not receiving as much attention in the campaign (i.e., *silent bodies*), such as members of the service and healthcare sectors, in addition to the LGBTQ community. To that end, in the next subsection, I turn to discuss the *Routers* pillar within the context of India.

6.3.2 Results: Routers of #MeToo Campaign in India

Nonhuman Routers

As mentioned in Section 4.4 (p.51), Lim (2018) interprets *nonhuman routers* as (nonhuman) tools which advance points of connection between people and groups to social movements at local, national, regional, and global levels. In the context of this study, one main *nonhuman router* was identified in regard the #MeToo campaign in India: (1) social media. This specific *router* will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs, accompanied by interview quotes to provide for greater context.

Nonhuman Router 1: Social Media

The main *nonhuman router* found within the collected data on India as helping to connect individuals and groups, as well as advance awareness about the #MeToo campaign, was social media. As discussed in the *Routes* pillar, many people who shared stories as part of #MeToo did so anonymously through the social media platforms of individuals with a well-known digital presence. Additionally, one informant (I4) discussed the media’s role

during the campaign, specifically digital media. While the respondent noted that there were multiple online media sites that reported on #MeToo in a positive manner, they also pointed out that there were many digital news outlets which began to affect the campaign negatively. The following statement further elaborates on this particular view:

“Digital media outlets have played a powerful role in relation to #MeToo. When the campaign first ignited in India, there was a lot of sensible reporting happening, which largely focused on the meaning behind the campaign, but as the campaign progressed, much of the journalism shifted into questioning the victims. The stories were pitched in certain negative directions, which I believe critically impacted the public opinion on the campaign...” – I4, Director, Local Women’s Rights Organization

While social media was the key *nonhuman router* identified in the collected data, there were several *human routers* recognized, which according to Lim, are just as significant in social movements. To that end, in the following pages, I will now shift to discuss the recognized *human routers*.

Human Routers

As noted above, Lim (2018) interprets *human routers* as being the “vital nexus of online and offline...,” with these individuals serving as “brokers, bridges, boundary spanners, liaisons, and more” (p.92). She then splits the human routers into three categories: *dissenting bodies* (participants in the campaign); *vocal bodies* (supporters of the campaign); and *silent bodies*. (Please refer to Section 4.4 (p.52-53) for more detail on these categories.) While the following paragraphs will discuss these three categories in relation to the collected data from India, it is important to re-emphasize that, as with the noted findings on Norway, I will use the term *silent bodies* to shed light on groups and individuals who were recognized as not being part of the campaign for various reasons.

Starting with *dissenting bodies*, respondents discussed how #MeToo has been largely a very class-based campaign. According to several informants, the majority of women who voiced personal experiences of sexual violence (i.e., *dissenting bodies*) were among the elite and upper- and middle-socioeconomic class. Further, respondents explained that many of these women have since received negative treatment, both in public spaces as well as in the press, which, they argue, potentially deterred others from participating in the campaign. Some also pointed out that the court system has served as a major obstacle for *dissenting bodies*, as demonstrated in the following statement:

“The way the courts have handled the cases brought forth by #MeToo is unsettling. Many have been dragged on for months, some even years, which has been very traumatizing for the victims since they’ve had to relive the trauma over and over...I believe this is one reason why more people haven’t come forward, because who would want to go through that, especially when so many of the cases are ruled in the perpetrator’s favor. The government needs to expedite these cases...the court system needs to act faster...but I don’t trust the current government; they’re not going to be of much help...”

– 15, Women’s Rights Activist

Much of the discussion on the participation of #MeToo focused on the groups and individuals that respondents articulated as not being included in the campaign (i.e., *silent bodies*). For example, many of the respondents noted how survivors of sexual violence within the LGBTQ community were not recognized in the media. One informant (I6) specifically stressed how transgender individuals have been largely excluded, even though “these people experience a severe level of discrimination and are frequently sexually exploited.” Others pointed out how individuals in lower classes and castes were not able to speak up, and the ones who did voice their experiences were not taken seriously. Further, respondents explained how the campaign did not target the informal sector of the workforce (i.e., the sector that encompasses low-paid, labor-intensive jobs that have little job security), which is the division that the majority of women in India are classified as working in. For example, as one informant emphasized:

“The #MeToo conversation has not trickled down to the informal sector, which is where 90 percent of women in India are employed...So, #MeToo has not captured the working conditions of women working in places such as the garment factories or construction, or even domestic workers. Unfortunately, we tend to not think of women in these sectors since they aren’t counted as formalized workers...The lines get very blurry because these employment areas are not covered under the Sexual Harassment Workplace Law...”

– 19, National Director, Women’s Rights Organization

Additionally, several respondents pointed out how a significant portion of the population has been left out of the #MeToo conversation largely because they do not have sufficient English language skills and/or lack access to social media. The following quotes elaborate this view:

“#MeToo gained a lot of momentum and attention, but mostly on social media, and a large part of India is not on social media. So, that said, #MeToo in India does reflect a certain demographic: it’s the educated workingwoman who is fluent in the English language, and who also has access to digital devices. It’s very urban...” – 18, Gender Sensitization Advisor

“I wish the campaign was more inclusive, but so far it has been geared only to certain classes and groups of people who are able to use social media. But it is also worth noting that access to social media does not guarantee the ability to speak out... it comes back to the potential repercussions and whether you’re able to handle them or not, because the repercussions are quite a lot. It’s not easy to come out and say these things...”

– 16, Professor & Media Expert

“I find it really sad to think about...that people who do not have access to social media do not know about the community that has been built online through #MeToo. Having said that, however, I believe #MeToo is a great example of how education has helped people, particularly women, to recognize and speak up about sexual violence...” – I2, Gender Studies Researcher

However, despite informants pointing how there were numerous groups and individuals not included in the campaign, the majority of respondents emphasized that #MeToo should still be perceived as having opened up more channels for conversing about the problem of sexual violence. As one respondent (I3) stated, “you cannot expect anything in India to be inclusive, because we are such a complex country.” The informant continues:

“Yes, #MeToo was mostly of the English-speaking world, but numerically speaking, the English-speaking population in India is larger than many European countries. So, you can't undermine that aspect of the campaign and say, okay, it's not inclusive enough, because this is a huge population we are talking about. We should be conscious of the fact that even if the campaign only represents a certain part of the population, it is a very large population and it cannot be pushed aside. So yes, it is a campaign of the educated, middle-class Indian women. However, we must understand that these are real issues and they need to be seriously considered...” – I3, Sociologist & Professor

Similarly, other respondents stressed the importance of remembering that it is not always necessary for social movements to be entirely inclusive. They can still impact societies and advance activism in various ways, as demonstrated in the following statement:

“While the campaign has not spanned across all demographics, we know that sexual harassment and assault does...The women of lower class and caste statuses living in rural areas and working in the informal sector, they do not have enough power to speak up about sexual violence...for them, that is a part of life...But we can help raise their voices by expanding the #MeToo cause and continue to raise awareness that they are very much a part of this struggle...” – I7, Professor & Gender Studies Researcher

Summary: Nonhuman and Human Routers in India

To briefly review, the previous paragraphs discussed informants' perceptions of the *nonhuman* and *human routers* which contributed to the #MeToo campaign in India. In regard to the *nonhuman routers*, respondents denoted social media as playing a central role in the campaign. (One informant also noted the impact of digital media news sites.) As for the *human routers*, informants largely emphasized specific groups who they viewed as not being able to fully engage in the campaign, including members of the LGBTQ community, as well as people in lower caste and class statuses. Overall, however, respondents stressed that this

lack of inclusion does not warrant diminishing the impact #MeToo has had in the country. Now, for the final section in this chapter, I will present a concise summary of the identified results earlier noted in the analytical framework's three pillars: *Roots*, *Routes*, and *Routers*.

6.4 Summary and Discussion of Overall Results

This qualitative, cross-national research analyzed individuals' perceptions of the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India through the lens of the theoretical framework *Roots*, *Routes*, *Routers* (Lim, 2018). The previous sections of this chapter split the gathered data into three parts to highlight the results found within each of the framework's three pillars. In the following paragraphs, I will again use this division strategy to briefly discuss the study's key findings.

First, in the *Roots* pillar, the subsection on Norway (6.1.1) shed light on various structural and sociocultural factors participants perceived as contributing to both overarching ideas of gender equality, as well as to the development of the #MeToo campaign. Here, key factors included the challenge of people perceiving the country as having *already* achieved gender equality, along with differences in socialization between genders. Informants also noted how traditional gender roles (both in occupations and within the home) are still prominent, and there is also a strong stigma around sex, sexual violence, and shame. While sexual education and harassment prevention measures are in place, respondents pointed out that the curriculum is not currently sufficient, nor is it thoroughly integrated in schools and work programs. More so, informants emphasized that there is a lack of policy implementation across governmental levels in regard to both gender equality and sexual violence, which, they denoted, is increasingly becoming recognized by certain groups of young-professional women (e.g., those in higher-paid, full-time positions) who are more willing to address such inequities and discrimination.

Similarly, in the *Roots* subsection on India (6.1.2), informants underlined a widespread lack of policy implementation, and also pointed out how, due to advanced education opportunities, many women (specifically those in upper- and middle-class statuses and employed in formal positions with greater job security) feel more comfortable speaking out for the advancement of a gender-just society. However, as with Norway, there are still numerous factors perceived as hindering progress. For example, informants emphasized the far-reaching influence of the country's deeply engrained patriarchy, and also stressed how the intersections of caste, class, and religion impact gender equality advancement. Furthermore, respondents articulated how, generally, family plays a critical role in gender socialization, both in relation to self-identity

and traditional gender roles. Media, specifically television show and films, were argued to be another factor driving certain sociocultural norms around power dynamics between genders. Lastly, informants discussed the lack of sexual education and harassment prevention, which they view as contributing to the prevalent victim-blaming mindset around sexual violence.

Turning to the *Routes* pillar, the subsection on Norway (6.2.1) illuminated informants' views on various activities which they perceive as assisting with the development and sustainment of the #MeToo campaign. Categorized under what Lim (2018) referred to as certain *practices* (e.g., *symbolic* and *participation*), these activities shed light on the ways people interpreted and participated in the campaign. Specifically, respondents discussed how #MeToo was seen as a needed societal wake-up call and exposed how prominent sexual violence is within the country. Moreover, informants highlighted that the campaign provided a stronger sense of solidarity among survivors of such violations, and articulated how connections were made both on and offline, exhibiting a number of Lim's analysis mechanisms, including *bridging*, *brokering*, and *dis/connecting* (please see Chapter 4 (pp.42-53) for more detail on these mechanisms). Further, respondents discussed their perceptions of the campaign's various *trajectories*, noting specific laws and policies that they view as integrated due to #MeToo.

In the *Routes* pillar on India (6.2.2), respondents explained that the campaign gave way to individuals expanding the meaning around sexual violence, with many noting the critical role social media played in exposing citizens to other #MeToo campaigns taking place globally. More so, mechanisms of *bridging* and *brokering* were also found. For example, respondents discussed #MeToo assisting in building solidarity between survivors across intersectional spectrums, including class, caste, and religion. While some view the campaign as having fizzled out, other respondents see it as still proceeding. Yet, despite the positive impact #MeToo has had in the country, respondents stressed that the campaign has also received wide criticism throughout the media, which has created negative implications for many women, such as companies deciding to only hire men employees.

Lastly, in the final pillar on *Routers*, the subsection on Norway (6.3.1) shed light on the many *nonhuman* and *human routers* informants perceived as having contributed to the campaign. In regard to the former, respondents pointed out the major role *Aftenposten*, one of the country's leading newspapers, played in publishing collected manifestos of survivors of sexual violence across various sectors. Social media was also seen as propelling #MeToo forward. Together, these *nonhuman routers* demonstrated the interplay of *hybrid media/communication networks*

(i.e., the combination of traditional and contemporary media outlets). While informants noted specific *human routers* who engaged in #MeToo (e.g., actors in the entertainment industry), the discussion largely revolved around the negative treatment survivors who came forward have had to endure. Further, respondents emphasized several groups which they denote as not being part of the campaign, including members of lower-paid sectors, as well as individuals in the LGBTQ community. Yet, despite the lack of inclusion, informants emphasized that the campaign still had an incredible force in Norway which should not be undervalued.

In regard to the other half of the *Routers* pillar, the subsection on India (6.3.2) revealed similar findings. For starters, informants emphasized that the main *nonhuman router*, which they viewed as contributed to the campaign's development, was social media, as this was the tool used to publish the majority of stories. One respondent also pointed out the role some digital media news outlets had on the campaign, viewing much of the reporting as negatively impacting the campaign's development since the coverage shifted to largely questioning the survivors' motives for coming forward. As with Norway, informants primarily articulated the negative treatment participants in the campaign have received, which they argue possibly deterred others from further speaking up. More so, respondents shed light on groups and individuals they believe were not included in #MeToo, such as the members of the LGBTQ community, specifically transgender persons, and women with lower caste and class statuses. Overall, informants stressed that, despite its lack of inclusion, the campaign must be viewed as an important contributor to combatting the issue of sexual violence throughout the country.

Altogether, the previous pages in this section broadly summarized and discussed the results of this qualitative, cross-national study, which researched the #MeToo campaigns in Norway and India through the lens of the *Roots, Routes, Routers* theoretical framework (Lim, 2018). In the next (and last) chapter, I will conclude the current thesis by presenting the following: a brief reflection on the analysis objectives (7.1); overall research limitations (7.2); future research suggestions (7.3); and a short research postscript (7.4).

7 Conclusion

With the research results having been revealed and discussed in Chapter 6, I will now use Chapter 7 to conclude the current thesis study. In this chapter there are four sections. The first (7.1) provides a reflection on the study objectives. The second section (7.2) denotes the overall research limitations, while the third (7.3) conveys suggestions for future research. Lastly, the fourth section (7.4) presents a short research postscript.

7.1 Reflection on Study Objectives

For this thesis project, a qualitative, cross-national analysis was conducted to assess the #MeToo campaigns which have taken place in Norway and India as part of the global #MeToo movement. Specifically, the thesis explored the campaigns primarily through the lens of the three-part *Roots, Routes, Routers* theoretical framework (Lim, 2018) and relied on in-person, semi-structured interviews to help answer the research question: *How do gender equality advocates in Norway and India perceive the #MeToo social media campaign's role in advancing gender equality in each country?*

By conducting qualitative interviews with people who had in-depth experience and knowledge on gender studies in Norway and India, respectively, this thesis aimed to uncover informants' perceptions on the underlying sociocultural factors that supported and/or hindered the #MeToo campaign development. Overall, the main goal of the study was to reveal critical insight that can assist in further combatting the persistent issue of sexual violence. To that end, I will now turn to discuss the key research limitations in this thesis.

7.2 Overall Research Limitations

Three main factors limited this research: time, resources, and expertise. First, in regard to time, this study was inherently limited due to the fact that the #MeToo movement is still quite a new phenomenon. Although the #MeToo campaign launched in Norway in late 2017, it wasn't until a year later that a campaign officially took hold in India. With that said, as noted in Section 3.3 (pp.40-41), very few studies on #MeToo have been published to date, which essentially restrains the academic discourse on the subject to an extent. In addition to the timing of the movement, the actual time given to design and execute the current research was intrinsically constrained as a result of deadlines for the thesis submission. Having had a

longer period, this study would have included an increased number of respondents to further strengthen the reliability of the data. Second, this thesis research was also limited by the available resources. While I am fortunate to have received several grants and scholarships for the study to help cover travel expenses incurred from conducting in-person interviews in both Norway and India, I did not have enough funding to hire an external transcriber/coder to verify interview transcriptions and my coding analysis, which could have increased validity.

Lastly, this analysis required a great deal of knowledge on gender studies (specifically in relation to Norway and India)—a subject in which I have immense interest but am by no means an expert. However, I tried to make up for my lack of expertise by designing the study around the interviews of people who have a deep understanding of gender issues in Norway and India, respectively. Additionally, as noted in Section 5.2 (p.70), I sought to discuss my findings with academic scholars who have extensive knowledge on the study's main research themes (i.e., gender equality; gender issues; and #MeToo) in effort to increase the validity of my results. Although I was able to discuss the analyzed data with one scholar from Norway, I was unable to have a similar type of discussion with a scholar from India. Thus, it is possible that another researcher with greater understanding of these topics—specifically in relation to the countries being studied—could have interpreted the data and elaborated on the analysis results in a different way. Having said that, the following section will highlight opportunities to build upon this research with future studies.

7.3 Future Research Suggestions

The timeliness of the #MeToo movement, in addition to its global reach and impact, presents a plethora of research opportunities—all of which can play a vital role in combatting sexual violence. While this study aimed to help fill the gap in research that currently exists on #MeToo, particularly in relation to qualitative research, it only focused on two of the nearly 100 countries the movement has reached thus far. Future studies should continue to prioritize uncovering *root* factors (e.g., sociocultural, economic, political) that potentially hindered the development and sustainment of localized campaigns. For example, given how informants from both countries in this cross-national analysis discussed the lack of sexual education and harassment prevention in school curricula, future studies could investigate how this relates to overarching societal stigmas around sex, sexual violence, and shame.

More so, in the places where this type of curriculum was introduced and/or prioritized as a result of #MeToo, researchers could conduct longitudinal studies to assess how this education impacts one's ability to recognize and speak out against sexual violence. Further, researchers could also examine how thoroughly new legislation has been integrated, especially given how many informants in this study denoted policy implementation as being a barrier for advancing gender equality. Last, but certainly not least, future research could focus on the groups and individuals who respondents in this study recognized as not being included in the campaigns. For instance, what factors constrained them from participating in #MeToo? And if they did try to participate, why did they not receive adequate attention? Together, these inquiries can assist in gaining a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the #MeToo movement as a whole.

To summarize, the previous sections in this chapter discussed the following: a brief reflection on the study objectives (7.1); overall research limitations (7.2); and suggestions for future research (7.3). In the next section, I will conclude this chapter (and thesis) by presenting a short research postscript.

7.4 Research Postscript

Broadly, this thesis was designed to further fuel the efforts behind battling the worldwide issue of sexual violence—which, as previously stressed, is recognized as one of the most pressing human rights violations to date (UNFPA, 2013). By studying the #MeToo movement through the lens of national #MeToo campaigns in two countries with differing gender regimes, one might have predicted that the underlying sociocultural factors found as having potentially contributed to the campaign development would largely vary. However, the results instead shed light on a number of similarities between the two countries, including stigmas of sexual violence and shame, as well as a widespread lack of policy implementation in relation to the advancement of gender equality.

While these parallel findings underline the complexity of combatting sexual violence, they also provide a more refined pathway for future advocacy work. In other words, the insight found in the current study can be taken into consideration for imminent strategizing against sexual violence. For example, what programs can be implemented to increase one's ability (and comfort level) to voice experiences with such violations? What mechanisms can be used to ensure policy integration? It is crucial that these broader types of questions are often asked,

analyzed, and—most importantly—*acted upon*, especially now, when sexual violence against women is escalating due to implications of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions (UNFPA, 2020).

As Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (UN General Assembly, 1948). However, as long as sexual violence remains an issue—which the #MeToo movement so vividly demonstrates it is—we, as a global society, cannot (and will not) achieve gender equality. Though the #MeToo movement revived the flame for discussing sexual violence, more work is desperately needed to increase public awareness about such violations and to ensure that the issue stays at the forefront of civic debate. That said, this study aimed to join the fight for gender justice by unpacking the nuances of #MeToo—the results of which, perhaps, might encourage other researchers to do the same.

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Appendix A: Final Interview Questionnaire

The following is the questionnaire I used to conduct the semi-structured, in-person interviews for the current cross-national analysis on Norway and India. As discussed in Section 5.2 (pp.60-61), the questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first aimed to uncover informants' views on broader sociocultural factors related to issues of gender equality in their country of residence, while the second aimed to reveal information on informants' perceptions about the #MeToo campaign. Because the same questionnaire was used for all the interviews, I listed the country name in brackets, as shown in the following questions, and denoted to the specific countries accordingly when interacting with participants.

SECTION I: SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS RELATED TO GENDER EQUALITY

1. How would you define gender equality in [Norway/India]?
 - *Possible probing question:* Can you describe any societal expectations related to gender (such as roles and norms) in modern-day [Norway/India]?
2. To what extent, if any, is gender equality promoted in [Norway/India]?
 - *Possible probing question:* Are you aware of any laws or policies related to gender equality?
3. What do you view as key challenges to achieving gender equality in [Norway/India]?
 - *Possible probing question:* In your own work, can you describe obstacles you face in efforts to furthering gender equality?
4. Do you believe there are any sociocultural barriers preventing progress or changes related to gender equality in [Norway/India]?
 - *Possible probing question:* Can you describe any specific examples?

SECTION II: #METOO CAMPAIGN PERCEPTIONS & ATTITUDES

1. Can you please tell me what about your overall perceptions of the #MeToo campaign?
 - *Possible probing questions:* Why do you think the campaign spread so quickly in [Norway/India]?
2. How do you think the #MeToo campaign contributed to the discussion about sexual violence in [Norway/India]?
 - *Possible probing questions:* To what extent, if any, do you think the campaign has presented an accurate picture of sexual violence in [Norway/India]?
3. How inclusive do you think the #MeToo campaign has been in [Norway/India]?
 - *Possible probing questions:* Which groups do you believe have received the most/least attention from the campaign?
4. How would you describe the status of the campaign in [Norway/India] today?
5. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to discuss/elaborate on further?

Appendix B: Confirmation of Approval by Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

The following is the notification I received from the NSD on April 30, 2019, confirming that my study was approved and met their ethical standards for conducting research.

10/17/2020

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger



NSD's assessment

Project title

The Cultural Context of Media: A Cross-Cultural Qualitative Study on the #MeToo Movements in Norway and India, and What it Has Meant for Ongoing Gender-Equality Activism

Reference number

382241

Registered

31.03.2019 av Kathryn Daniel Mc Lamb - kathrydm@uio.no

Data controller (institution responsible for the project)

Universitetet i Oslo / Det humanistiske fakultet / Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon

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Type of project

Student project, Master's thesis

Contact information, student

Kathryn Daniel McLamb, kathrydm@uio.no, tlf: 4741324828

Project period

18.06.2019 - 31.12.2020

Status

13.05.2020 - Assessed

Assessment (3)

13.05.2020 - Assessed

NSD has assessed the change registered on 13.05.2020.

The research period has been extended until 31.12.2020.

Please note that in case of further extensions, it may be necessary to inform the sample.

NSD will follow-up the project at the new end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Appendix B (continued)

10/17/2020

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

Good luck with the rest of the project!

Contact person at NSD: Jørgen Wincentzen
Data Protection Services for Research: +47 55 58 21 17 (press 1)

05.08.2019 - Assessed

In reference to the changes registered on 05.08.2019. We cannot see that you have made any changes to the Notification Form or attachments that will affect NSD's assessment of how personal data are processed in this project.

Read more about which changes should be notified to NSD before you send in changes in the future:
https://nsd.no/personvernombud/en/notify/notifying_changes.html

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT

NSD will follow-up the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the project!

Contact person at NSD: Jørgen Wincentzen
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30.04.2019 - Assessed

Our assessment is that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 30.04.2019. Everything is in place for the processing to begin.

NOTIFY CHANGES

If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify NSD. This is done by updating the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified. Wait until you receive an answer from us before you carry out the changes.

TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION

The project will be processing special categories of personal data about political opinions and philosophical beliefs, as well as general categories of personal data, 09.05.2020.

LEGAL BASIS

The project will gain consent from data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn.

The legal basis for processing special categories of personal data is therefore explicit consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a), cf. art. 9.2 a), cf. the Personal Data Act § 10, cf. § 9 (2).

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA

NSD finds that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

- lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient information about the processing and will give their consent
- purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes
- data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary for the purpose of the project will be processed

<https://meldeskjema.nsd.no/vurdering/5ca079f8-2743-4c5f-9ede-20e781545ee1>

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Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

- storage limitation (art. 5.1 e), in that personal data will not be stored for longer than is necessary to fulfil the project's purpose

THE RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECTS

Data subjects will have the following rights in this project: transparency (art. 12), information (art. 13), access (art. 15), rectification (art. 16), erasure (art. 17), restriction of processing (art. 18), notification (art. 19), data portability (art. 20). These rights apply so long as the data subject can be identified in the collected data.

NSD finds that the information that will be given to data subjects about the processing of their personal data will meet the legal requirements for form and content, cf. art. 12.1 and art. 13.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, the data controller has a duty to reply within a month.

FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES

NSD presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.

To ensure that these requirements are met you must follow your institution's internal guidelines and/or consult with your institution (i.e. the institution responsible for the project).

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT

NSD will follow up the progress of the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the project!

Contact person at NSD: Jørgen Wincentzen

Data Protection Services for Research: +47 55 58 21 17 (press 1)

Appendix C: Final Interview Information Letter and Consent Form

The following is the Interview Information Letter created to assist with study recruitment. As discussed in Section 5.2.2 (p.62), I first approached potential informants via email, in which I attached this letter as a way to offer more information about the research. The last page of the letter included the Consent Form, which participants signed and returned before the interview officially began. As with the questionnaire (p.121), I used the same letter for recruiting participants in both Norway and India, filling in the brackets accordingly.

Are you interested in taking part in a research project about the #MeToo campaign and gender equality in [Norway/India]?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to better understand gender equality and the #MeToo social media campaign within the [Norwegian/Indian] context. This letter will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

My name is Kathryn Daniel Mc Lamb, and I am currently a master's student studying Media & Communication at the University of Oslo. For my master's thesis, I am studying the #MeToo social media campaign. In this study, I plan to assess perceptions toward the #MeToo media campaign and also investigate ways in which #MeToo has contributed to gender equality advancement in [Norway/India].

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of Oslo (UiO) is the institution responsible for the project. My research supervisor is Dr. Charles Ess, a professor in Media Studies at UiO.

Why are you being asked to participate?

I am contacting you because of your in-depth knowledge of issues related to gender equality in [Norway/India], as well as with the #MeToo campaign. I wish to hear about your views on the #MeToo campaign, as well as on gender equality, including stereotypes and social norms related to gender norms in [Norway/India]. I aim to interview 20 people for this study.

What does participation involve for you?

With this letter, I would like to invite you to participate in a live interview, which will only consist of you and me. The conversation will last between 35-45 minutes, depending on your schedule. We will talk about your thoughts on the #MeToo media campaign and gender equality in the form of an informal chat, and everything you say will be kept confidential.

I also wish to ask your permission to audio-record our conversation, which will help me analyze the data afterwards. If you agree, please sign the consent form on the last page.

Appendix C (continued)

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy and how I will store and use your personal data

All the information you provide will be anonymized. In other words, your name and the name of the organization you represent will be kept confidential. I will only use your personal data for the purpose specified in this information letter. I will process your data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

I will finish my master's thesis in December 2020, and I will be the only person with access to your personal data, which I will also transcribe and code myself. Data will be stored in code; in other words, organization names and names of participants will be changed, and this key code will be stored in a separate device. My findings will be shared with others and in publications using only a description of your occupation. No personally identifying names will be mentioned whatsoever.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to be completed in December 2020. After the interview, all original recordings will be deleted, but the anonymous transcription and codes will be kept under secure conditions for their use in the study.

Your rights as a participant

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent. Based on an agreement with University of Oslo (UIO), NSD (The Norwegian Centre for Research Data) has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

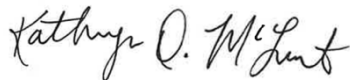
Appendix C (continued)

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Lead researcher: Kathryn Daniel Mc Lamb (kathrydm@uio.no)
- Supervisor University of Oslo: Dr. Charles Ess (c.m.ess@media.uio.no)
- Our Data Protection Officer: personvernombudet@uio.no
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personvertjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,



Kathryn D. Mc Lamb
Lead Researcher

Consent

I have received and understood information about the project and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- To participate in a live, qualitative interview which will be audio-recorded
- For the researcher to contact me regarding a follow-up interview

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project (Dec. 2020)

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix D: Overview of Final Study Participants

The following tables provide an overview of the study participants for this cross-national research. For confidentiality purposes, I intentionally kept the occupational roles broad.

Study Participants: Norway

No.	Occupation	Location
N1	Lecturer, Gender Studies Researcher	Oslo
N2	Journalist & Women's Rights Advocate	Oslo
N3	Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher	Oslo
N4	Women's Rights Advocate & Former Politician	Oslo
N5	Sociologist & Gender Studies Researcher	Oslo
N6	Women's Rights Activist	Oslo
N7	Trade Union Advisor & Women's Rights Advocate	Oslo
N8	Lawyer & Professor	Oslo
N9	Gender Studies Researcher	Agder
N10	Gender Studies Researcher	Oslo

Study Participants: India

No.	Occupation	Location
I1	Gender Studies Researcher	Hyderabad
I2	Gender Studies Researcher	Hyderabad
I3	Sociologist & Professor	Hyderabad
I4	Director, Local Women's Rights Organization	Hyderabad
I5	Women's Rights Activist	Mumbai
I6	Professor & Media Expert	Hyderabad
I7	Professor & Gender Studies Researcher	Hyderabad
I8	Gender Sensitization Advisor	Hyderabad
I9	National Director, Women's Rights Organization	Hyderabad
I10	Media Researcher & Former National Commissioner	Delhi