

## Making the Harms of Street Harassment Visible: Think Olga and Brazil's Feminist Spring

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“Eu era uma menina de onze anos . . . Mas os homens nas ruas . . . achavam que já estava na hora de falar de sexo. A primeira vez que sofri assédio foi no caminho da padaria para casa e eu chorei. Uma senhora me viu chorando pelo caminho e tentou me consolar. Quando contei para ela o que tinha acontecido ela me disse que eu era boba—que eu não deveria estar chorando por isso. Que eu tinha que aceitar como um elogio, que era muito bom, isso era positivo. E quando tivesse a idade dela, eu ia sentir falta.”<sup>1</sup>

(I was an eleven year old girl . . . But men on the street . . . thought it was already time to start talking to me about sex. The first time I was harassed happened on the way home from the bakery and I cried. An older lady saw me walking and crying and tried to console me. When I told her what happened she replied that I was being silly—that there was no reason to cry, that I should feel flattered because it was a good thing, a compliment. And that when I got to be her age I would miss it.)

—Juliana de Faria, founder of Think Olga (São Paulo-based NGO), TEDxSão PauloTalk (2015)<sup>2</sup>

Juliana de Faria’s memory of her first encounter with street harassment as an eleven year old child, quoted above, testifies to the harms inflicted on girls and women in streets throughout the world—and in this case in the city of São Paulo—on a daily basis. Her narration of the older female bystander’s response in particular speaks to a societal incapacity to perceive men’s sexual aggression in public spaces for what it truly is: an “intrusion . . . into women’s experience of their bodily-self” and, thus, a form of symbolic (and in some cases physical) violence (Vera-Gray 11). Moreover, entrenched social interpretations of such inappropriate overtures as harmless flirtation or as “men being men” give harassers cover to operate unchecked. As sociologist Fiona Vera-Gray puts it, “trivialisation and commonality combine to render the experience [of street harassment] invisible as a social problem” (6). Faria’s testimony is significant for another reason as well: it was one piece of an influential grassroots campaign to combat gender-based violence that she and her non-governmental organization Think Olga helped launch, one whose impact has rippled across Brazil, especially its urban areas. This essay traces the trajectory of Faria—a white cisgender middle-class woman who did not initially identify as a feminist when she first took on the issue of street harassment back in 2013—and her NGO, analyzing the various strategies comprised by their multi-year *Chega de Fiu Fiu* (Enough with Catcalling) campaign that helped make sexual harassment—or what Vera-Gray calls “men’s stranger intrusions on women in public space”—visible in Brazil, in social terms and ultimately in legal ones as well.<sup>3</sup>

Feminist media studies scholar Heloísa Buarque de Almeida has discussed Think Olga’s *Chega de Fiu Fiu* campaign at length, arguing persuasively that Faria’s NGO helped to shift the issue of street harassment in Brazil “From Shame to Visibility” (the title of her article on the subject) through what she calls its “feminist pedagogy of perceiving the violence against girls.” Taking Almeida’s analysis as my point of departure, I am interested in further exploring the what and the why of said visibility. What, exactly, is being made visible, and to what effect? This question stems from the recognition that, as historian Evelyn Hammonds points out, “Visibility in and of itself does not erase histories of silence nor does it challenge the structure of power and domination, symbolic and material, that determines who can and cannot be seen” (141).<sup>4</sup> In what follows I explore the role of Think Olga’s campaign in making street harassment visible in Brazil by performing a close analysis of the homonymous documentary film *Chega de fiu fiu* (Enough with Catcalling, 2018) directed by Amanda Kamanchek Lemos and Fernanda Frazão under the aegis of the NGO—a text that Almeida men-

tions only in passing since her analysis focuses on Faria's hashtag activism.<sup>4</sup> I also place this cinematic work within the larger contexts of both Faria's multi-pronged anti-harassment initiative as well as the explosion of women's activism that marked the beginning of what has been called Brazil's Feminist Spring.<sup>5</sup> *Chega de fii fii* is much more ambitious, I argue, than its titular denunciation of catcalling would suggest. The film approaches the issue of street harassment as but one manifestation of intersecting systems of oppression in urban spaces and exposes the multitude of ways that women—whether cis or trans, and especially Black, lesbian, and/or working class women—are denied full access to Brazilian cities; it also maps out paths of resistance for girls and women determined to exercise their right to the city regardless of where they call home.

Like Almeida, I view the struggle led by young Brazilian feminists against gender-based violence over the last several years not so much as a social movement but, instead, as an example of what political scientist Sonia E. Álvarez calls feminist discursive fields of action (Álvarez, "Beyond NGO-ization?" 177; Almeida 22). Álvarez coined this term in her work theorizing Latin American feminisms to designate "feminist movement webs [that] span vertically as well as horizontally," encompassing not only conventional political activities such as marches and protests but also activism that unfolds in "new spaces/places"; these discursive fields of action involve grassroots and state actors, often working in partnership, to transform political discourse and the language available to make sense of women's experiences (Álvarez, "Latin American Feminisms" 316). This conceptualization is crucial when analyzing feminist struggle in Brazil and elsewhere because, by placing emphasis on links between multiple actors, entities, and initiatives, which together constitute a complex web of feminist praxis, as well as on both action and discourse, it helps to preempt the tendency to view such struggle in monolithic terms. To adopt Álvarez's framework is to acknowledge from the outset that this article explores only one facet of a much larger field of activism that includes countless other NGOs and grassroots feminist collectives across Brazil (many led by Black, indigenous, trans, lesbian, and/or working class women) as well as members of municipal, state, and (during the Lula and Dilma years) federal governments. Moreover, as the case of Think Olga illustrates, governments themselves are composed of heterogeneous actors, ranging from urban planners and policymakers, whose efforts often create and maintain gendered spatial exclusions (even if unintentionally), as well as feminist government officials and employees working on their own or in partnership with outside entities to eliminate those exclusions.

### **The Trajectory of Think Olga: From *Chega de Fiu Fiu* to #PrimeiroAssédio**

How did a woman who initially did not identify as a feminist come to found what is today one of Brazil's most influential feminist NGOs? A freelance journalist, Juliana de Faria first began thinking about street harassment in 2012, when she tried repeatedly and in vain to pitch a story on the subject to editors of mainstream women's magazines such as the Brazilian version of *Elle*, where she had started her career. Her frustration with the ubiquity of the problem and the generalized apathy toward it reached a breaking point the following year after reading a Facebook post by a friend who vented about rampant catcalling on Brazilian streets. In 2013, Faria took matters into her own hands by founding the non-governmental organization Think Olga. In its early days, the NGO—run originally by Faria and other young women who, like her, were white, cis, middle-class journalists—consisted of a Web site and Facebook page devoted to spreading information and awareness about street harassment through its first major campaign, *Chega de Fiu Fiu*. This inaugural initiative started as an online survey and soon morphed into an interactive map designed to chart street harassment in São Paulo and other Brazilian cities.

Think Olga started *Chega de Fiu Fiu* in the form of an online survey in an effort to grasp the nature and scope of the problem of street harassment so as to create effective interventions. At the time, serious studies on street harassment in Brazil were scarce, so the NGO devised the Internet survey, spearheaded by journalist Karin Hueck, to collect its own hard data. Over a two-week period in August 2013, a total of 7,762 women responded to the series of questions contained in the online questionnaire. Of the women who responded to the NGO's invitation to participate, 99.6 percent reported having experienced male sexual aggression in public spaces—an astounding statistic even when accounting for self-selection bias—and the vast majority of the women surveyed indicated that they disliked catcalling (83 percent) but felt too afraid to confront their harassers in the heat of the moment (81 percent) (Think Olga, "Pesquisa *Chega de Fiu Fiu*").<sup>7</sup> Initially circulated on social networking sites like Facebook, the results soon garnered attention from alternative outlets and the mainstream media. In the process Faria became one of the nation's most visible emerging activists in the area of sexual violence, appearing on the women-hosted talk show *Saia Justa* on Globo's GNT cable channel in September 2013 and granting interviews to the Brazilian editions of magazines like *Marie Claire* and *Vogue*—some of the same publications that had passed on her earlier pitch of a feature article on the topic—in which she spoke about her personal experience as a target

of street harassment and shared her journey from shame to outrage and, ultimately, action.

In early 2014, the Think Olga Web site launched the *Chega de Fiu Fiu* campaign's interactive map, an online platform where women who experience male sexual intrusions in public spaces could post time- and site-specific denunciations; originally restricted to São Paulo, this innovative tool that is part map, part database, and part archive eventually expanded to include other Brazilian cities. Like the online survey, the *Chega de Fiu Fiu* map, which remains active to this day, provides a rich source of data about the problem of street harassment in Brazil. The resulting cartography allows the NGO to pinpoint "hot spots" where street harassment is most rampant and identify what characteristics or factors might be exacerbating male sexual aggression toward women in specific locales and types of urban spaces. The ultimate goal of this work is not to warn women away from such danger zones, since doing so would only serve to further restrict their mobility. Instead, Think Olga seeks to use the data from its map to design interventions capable of disrupting harmful male behavior patterns and making such spaces safer for girls and women, as the NGO explains on its Web site: "Não queremos que o mapa limite ainda mais os espaços da cidade por onde as mulheres podem circular tranquilamente, e sim ampliá-las" ("FAQS") (We don't want the map to further limit the number of places in the city where women can safely go, but rather to increase it). In other words, beyond merely making street harassment more visible, the NGO makes productive use of that visibility to transform the urban space in a way that ensures more equitable access to the city. Moreover, in 2014, it also collaborated with a specialized women's unit of São Paulo state's Public Defender's Office (Núcleo Especializado de Promoção e Defesa da Mulher da Defensoria Pública do Estado de São Paulo) to produce an informational brochure explaining what street harassment is as well as how to report it and seek help, illustrating the kind of partnerships that make up the feminist discursive field of action theorized by Álvarez.<sup>8</sup>

While the *Chega de Fiu Fiu* campaign certainly raised awareness of street harassment as a social problem, the real turning point for feminist struggle around issues of gender-based violence was arguably Think Olga's subsequent hashtag campaign, #PrimeiroAssédio (First Harassment/Assault). On October 20, 2015, the name of a twelve-year-old female contestant on the Brazilian edition of *Master Chef Junior* became a trending topic on Twitter when male viewers posted disturbing, sexual tweets about the girl as the show's premiere was airing. The next day, Faria took to Twitter to encourage women to channel their outrage over the incident by tweeting personal stories of their earliest memories of sexual harassment under the

hashtag #PrimeiroAssédio. The hashtag quickly went viral on Twitter and Facebook, catapulting the issue of sexual violence into the national spotlight to an extent never-before seen in Brazil. As Faria's Twitter campaign was unfolding on social media, key sexual and reproductive rights that women had won over the previous decade came under serious attack from the political right. The same month #PrimeiroAssédio was launched, conservative congressman Eduardo Cunha secured a key congressional committee's approval for PL 5069/2013, a bill he had authored that, if passed, would have denied abortion access to rape survivors as well as reverted from the consent-based legal definition of sexual violence that Brazil had adopted in 2009 back to the previous model predicated on the presence of physical and psychological threat. The bill unleashed a wave of protest by Brazilian women, who tweeted their outrage under the hashtag #MulheresContraCunha (Women Against Cunha) and participated in dozens of protests in cities all over the country from late October to mid-December, including the historic Marcha das Mulheres Negras (Black Women's March) of fifteen thousand protesters in Brasília on November 18. In the face of the largest and most widespread demonstrations supporting abortion rights in Brazilian history, Cunha and his allies were forced to abandon the controversial bill. The confluence of so many gender-related protest initiatives online and in the streets invited comparisons to the Arab Spring of 2010, prompting some participants and observers to propose that Brazil was witnessing a Feminist Spring, or Primavera Feminista, a designation that was popularized by the national media.<sup>9</sup>

Think Olga's viral #PrimeiroAssédio hashtag campaign had a slightly different focus than its earlier initiative: whereas *Chega de Fiu Fiu*, explicitly defined as "uma campanha de combate ao assédio sexual em espaços públicos" (a campaign to combat sexual harassment in public spaces) invited girls and women to post denunciations of street harassment and provided them with a designated forum—the interactive map—for doing so anonymously, #PrimeiroAssédio called on them to share specifics about the age at which they first experienced sexual violence, regardless of where it occurred, and to do so openly, in their own names, on Twitter and Facebook (Think Olga, "Projetos"). By urging participants to thus shed the cover of anonymity and explicitly name their experiences as assault via the proposed hashtag, the latter campaign sent a powerful message that rejected the stigma of surviving sexual assault and replaced the prevailing discourse of shame with the nomenclature of feminist anti-rape/assault politics.<sup>10</sup> Girls and women answered Faria's call, flooding social media with harrowing stories of childhood sexual trauma. Two weeks into #PrimeiroAssédio, Think Olga announced a grim statistic: based on data compiled from testimonies

posted under the hashtag, the NGO estimated that the average age of first exposure to sexual abuse for Brazilian girls was 9.7 years old (Think Olga, “#PrimeiroAssédio”).

With #PrimeiroAssédio, Think Olga effectively carried the anti-harassment message beyond the feminist and leftwing spaces where such issues usually circulate in Brazil and engaged mainstream opinion makers and so-called influencers in the debate over sexual violence. Not surprisingly, the most powerful voices (in terms of audience size) to enter the conversation tended to be those of white, cisgender, heterosexual men from the elite class. Some of these participants, especially young male celebrities and intellectuals in their twenties and thirties, posted statements in support of #PrimeiroAssédio on their social media accounts. In addition, a number of high profile male journalists and bloggers leveraged their media platforms to help amplify Think Olga’s critiques of Brazil’s sexual culture, following the feminist NGO’s lead in unequivocally calling the male tweetstorm surrounding the young Master Chef Júnior contestant *assédio* and, in some cases, temporarily handing over their columns and blogs to their women colleagues (in what was called the #AgoraÉQueSãoElas, or #HerTurnTo-Speak, campaign).<sup>11</sup> Not all male commentators were supportive, however. Influential men in the rightwing media as well as some male celebrities responded to #PrimeiroAssédio with attempts to trivialize women’s stories of sexual trauma and portray feminist anti-rape/harassment activists as killjoys (Almeida 34–35). Even more virulent were the comments posted by male trolls in response to women’s online testimonies.

Feminist activists in Brazil have tirelessly fought for women’s sexual citizenship for at least the past fifty years, achieving important victories along the way, such as the 2006 Maria da Penha law that addresses domestic violence.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the impact of #PrimeiroAssédio was unprecedented, especially in the mainstream media. Almeida outlines two main reasons why the commercial media may have been willing to run with the story of #PrimeiroAssédio after having largely ignored similar initiatives in the past. First, the 2015 campaign focused on young girls—that is, on children, who tend to elicit more public empathy in discussions of sexual violence than their older female counterparts (who are often blamed for abuse men inflict on them). As Almeida points out, #PrimeiroAssédio’s emphasis on child survivors also made it possible for the media to portray the male aggressors as pedophiles and thereby avoid confronting the uncomfortable reality that the men who inflict sexual harm on girls and women are the same ones who occupy positions of trust, such as fathers, teachers, and religious leaders. Second, Think Olga was relatively palatable to a mainstream audience steeped in white supremacy and capitalist ideology since, as Almeida puts

it, “It was easier to portray Juliana de Faria and not the working class black feminists or [feminists] from the outskirts that were also part of the same movement. The white middle-class demands for ending street harassment seem to commercial media less offensive than anti-capitalist, anti-racist, or pro-abortion [wings of feminist movement]” (36). To its credit, Think Olga is no longer an organization of white, cis, middle-class women. Today it employs women with a range of racial, gender, and class identities and takes an emphatically intersectional approach to its activism, centering and amplifying the voices of Brazil’s most marginalized and vulnerable women, a transformation evident in Kamancheck and Frazão’s documentary film *Chega de fu fu*.

### **Combatting Street Harassment: From Campaign to Documentary Film**

*Chega de fu fu* follows three women as they go about their everyday routines, reliant on public transport (buses, subway) and alternative modes of locomotion (walking, cycling, skateboarding) at all hours of the day and night. The documentary approaches the subject of street harassment by focusing on how it affects the lives of this trio of women whose perspectives are complemented by talking head interviews with various feminist experts (including historian Margareth Rago, philosopher Djamila Ribeiro, and Juliana de Faria herself) as well as clips of a male moderator-led group discussion in which several men debate the issue. Bringing together these disparate viewpoints, the film exposes a nationwide epidemic of street harassment that denies Brazilian women their lawful right to occupy streets as pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, commuters, citizens, and protesters. The result is a rich, multi-perspectival treatment of the quotidian reality of women living in Brazilian cities.

The opening sequence in the film starts with the camera pointed toward the horizon, affording a panoramic view of the São Paulo skyline, an endless expanse of skyscrapers. The drone-operated camera then points straight down to the streets, capturing an overhead shot, and begins to pan. Although it does occasionally drift over the rooftops of buildings, homes with swimming pools, and, at one point, a soccer field, the camera follows, for the most part, one city street for a few blocks, then cuts away and follows another street, and then another, and so on. The altitude of the camera makes everything below appear tiny (cars, buses, motorcycles, a train) or nearly invisible (people). The one significant exception to the invisibility of human bodies occurs when the camera briefly pans over a small coastal town. It captures

the sight of a woman carrying a purse over her right shoulder. As she walks through a deserted intersection, a lone man darts out from under the canopy of a tree and accosts her before the camera abruptly cuts away, leaving the viewer to wonder: was the man a friend or boyfriend hastening to greet her, or have we just witnessed an instance of catcalling? This ambiguity is part of the point. Since women typically have no way of knowing in advance the intentions of the male stranger approaching her or walking behind her, they are forced to remain hypervigilant.<sup>13</sup> The brief scene poignantly illustrates how pervasive street harassment produces in women a constant sense of uneasiness and vulnerability that has significant implications for their relationship to urban space. The most immediate of these is a pronounced limitation of women's mobility for, as feminist geographer Hille Koskela observes, "Women's decisions concerning the routes they choose and places they go to are modified by the threat of violence" (112). What results is a vicious cycle, since "by restricting their mobility because of fear, women unwittingly reproduce masculine domination over space," meaning that city streets remain "male-dominated, heterosexual spaces" (113).

Aside from the woman with the purse and the man who accosts her in the aforementioned scene, few other pedestrians are visible in the film's opening sequence. The focus falls instead on the city streets and on the modes of public, private, and alternative aboveground transportation. The camera eventually pans upward and back to the original skyline view. Its presentation of a panoramic view of streets, intersections, and other urban spaces is accompanied by a series of voiceovers in which various women denounce episodes of sexual harassment in public spaces. The first of these survivors recounts an incident that happened to her on the São Paulo metrô, or subway:

13 de setembro de 2017. Linha amarela do metrô, estação Paulista. Naquela noite, voltando do trabalho, metrô lotado, senti algo quente na minha calça. Quando olhei para trás, deparei com um cara com o zíper aberto. Comecei a debater com ele, comecei a bater no rosto dele. . . . Eu gritava feito uma louca . . . mas ninguém ajudou.

(13 September 2017. Yellow line, Paulista station. That evening, on my way home from work on a packed subway car, I felt something warm on my pants. When I looked behind me I saw a guy with his zipper open. I started yelling and hitting him in the face. . . . I was screaming my head off . . . but no one helped me.)

Her story is followed by those of other women, whose voices increasingly overlap until they reach a clamor. There is a striking disconnect between the harrowing stories that spill out of these disembodied voices, on one hand, and the seeming tranquility of the streets on a bright, clear morning, on the other, signaling the film's central theme: the invisibility of the harms endured by Brazilian girls and women on a daily basis due to endemic street harassment.

The imagery of traffic intersections that dominates the beginning of the documentary and the wide range of neighborhoods shown (affluent, low-income, urban, small town) call to mind the key metaphors of maps and intersecting streets in US legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's writing on intersectionality, the Black feminist term she coined in the early 1990s to theorize how systems of oppression overlap and compound one another. The association is not fortuitous, given that one of the experts featured in *Chega de fu fu* is Afro-Brazilian feminist philosopher Djamila Ribeiro, whose intervention in the film underscores the importance of centering Blackness in discussions of sexual harassment in addition to serving the didactic function of introducing and defining the term *intersectionality*:

O racismo aliado ao machismo impede . . . que a gente [mulheres negras] seja enxergado como sujeitos, como pessoas. Mas ao mesmo tempo, mulher negra significa resistência. A partir do nosso lugar como mulher negra, de mulheres que durante muito tempo foram excluídas até dos próprios movimentos políticos de reivindicação de direitos, a gente consegue pensar maneiras de atuação que contemplem . . . nós mesmas. Quando a gente pensa em interseccionalidade, que foi um conceito criado por mulheres negras, é pensar o quanto as opressões [racismo e sexismo] se entrecruzam e como agem combinadas, e não tem como a gente eleger qual é a mais importante.

(The combination of racism and sexism has prevented Black women . . . from being seen as subjects, as people. At the same time, being a black woman means resisting. As Black women who have long been excluded from political movements and demands for rights, we've been able to figure out ways of theorizing that account for our unique situation. When we think in terms of intersectionality, which is a term developed by Black women, it means understanding that these oppressions [racism and sexism] intersect,

they act in concert in such a way that for Black women they are inseparable).

Consistent with an intersectional sensibility, Kamanchek and Frazão choose as their film's subjects three women who experience sexual harassment from very different social locations. Rosa Luz—a college student, visual artist, activist, and rapper—is a twenty-two year old Black transgender woman from Gama, a community on the outskirts of Brasília. Raquel Gomes dos Santos, for her part, is a twenty-nine year old Black lesbian living in a working class neighborhood in Salvador who freelances as a manicurist while pursuing a nursing degree. Tereza Chaves is a thirty-three year old white, cisgender middle class woman who works as a History teacher in São Paulo. Each woman appears in various contexts: sitting at home for a formal interview, walking or cycling in their cities at various hours of the day and night, using public transportation, and, in the case of Rosa, engaging in performance art in a bus terminal and rapping for the camera in the film's final scene.

The filmmakers use various strategies to render street harassment intelligible to viewers as an “intrusion . . . into women's experience of their bodily self” (to invoke Vera-Gray's apt phrase once more) and to make clear that each woman's embodied experiences as she moves through the city are the product of both her social location (that is, the intersection of the specific oppressions she faces) and her geographical location (the unique features of the city she inhabits, whether that be the juxtaposition of extreme affluence and poverty in São Paulo, the rigid planning of Brasília, or the relatively more limited mass rapid transit options of Salvador) (11). Camera positioning is arguably the most effective of these strategies. For the most part the camera is trained on the three subjects' faces and bodies, shot from different angles (front, sides, behind), but occasionally the camera assumes the women's perspectives as they navigate various urban environments, particularly as they approach dark, deserted places such as an underground tunnel or an empty side street. In such moments the camera invites the viewer to see through each woman's eyes, its gaze alighting, for example, on bushes lining the road or men leering out of bars, a technique that emphasizes the ubiquity of potential threats to women's safety in urban settings. The directors use a similar tactic to convey the lived experience of street harassment by including footage filmed by co-director Frazão as she wanders the streets of São Paulo donning spectacles fitted with a miniature video camera. This special “eyeglasses camera” is rolling as Frazão is accosted by one harasser after another, encounters that spectators view as if through her own eyes. Another set of effective strategies relates to the abundant and varied use of first-person and expert testimonies. The women's descriptions of more mundane experiences tend to

be conveyed as voiceovers that are layered over footage of them going about their daily routines, whereas, when it comes to topics that are difficult and highly personal (such as Raquel's disclosure of having been sexually assaulted by an uncle when she was a child and Rosa's description of the relentless street harassment she has endured since transitioning), the subjects are shown speaking directly into the camera in shots explicitly presented as interviews, allowing viewers to more closely observe details such as facial expressions and body language. The film also periodically cuts to expert interviews that contextualize and corroborate key parts of the women's testimony, such as Djamila Ribeiro's discussion of the historical hyper-sexualization of Black women's bodies in Brazilian culture.

Beyond addressing the social problem of sexual harassment, *Chega de fiu fiu* exposes the many ways that contemporary Brazilian cities perpetuate and exacerbate persistent inequities. The film pays particular attention to the connections between physical and economic mobility, especially in the cases of Rosa and Raquel, who speak at length about how deficiencies in their respective public transportation systems have forced them to sacrifice their well-being in the pursuit of their educations. Rosa, for instance, depends on buses to get to and from school. A resident of one of Brasília's satellite cities, she attends evening classes until 10:30 at night, by which time the city is dark and deserted, a situation that is especially dire for her as a Black, trans woman given Brazil's alarming murder rate of transgender women and travestis. At one point in the film, the camera follows Rosa as she heads home from class one evening. As she explains, few buses pass by campus at that late hour, forcing her to catch one at the nearest terminal. A large, overgrown, vacant lot lies between the two locations, forcing her to go the long way (circumnavigating the lot) or the short way (climbing through a hole in a fence and cutting across it). Either way, she runs the risk of being assaulted. Standing next to the gap in the fence that leads to her shortcut, Rosa tells the camera,

E eu acabo optando pelo matagal porque senão a gente tem que dar toda essa volta. Porque a cidade não é feita para pessoas que andam. Já faz parte da minha realidade, né? . . . Uma coisa que tenho que enfrentar todos os dias se eu quiser me formar. Eu tenho consciência que é uma resistência, né? . . . Já naturaliza essa precariedade do espaço para quem não tem as condições, por exemplo, para ter um carro. Acho que isso ainda é próprio da estrutura e da arquitetura da cidade, né, que não facilita [para] quem caminha.

(I end up cutting through this overgrown lot because otherwise I'd have to go all the way around it. The city isn't made for people who get around on foot. It's part of my reality, you know? . . . It's something I have to deal with on a daily basis if I want to graduate. I'm aware that what I'm doing is an act of resistance. . . . The precariousness of the space has been normalized for people who can't, you know, afford a car. I think it's something that's actually built into the structure and architecture of the city, not being conducive to pedestrians.)

Rosa's understanding of her own determination to traverse a city that was not designed with her safety in mind as an act of resistance underscores a key argument of the film: that women who brave the dangers of being out and about at night exhibit not a foolish disregard for their own safety but rather a courageous will to resist in the face of a city that contributes to their oppression. In a similar vein, the documentary includes footage from an April 2016 performance that Rosa staged in Brasília's main bus terminal, or Rodoviária. In it, she stands topless in the middle of a flight of stairs as commuters stream by, some of whom subject her to transphobic tirades while others offer hugs of support. With a high crime rate and hours of operation that fail to accommodate residents who need to get around late at night, the Rodoviária is, as cultural critic Sophia Beal puts it, "a place of contradictions [that] symbolizes both the connections and divisions between the periphery and the center" (198). Titled "Afrontando Ideias, Parte I" (Confronting Ideas, Part I), Rosa's artistic intervention in Brasília's main bus terminal can be interpreted as an affirmation of the right of Black, trans bodies like hers to occupy urban spaces and to enjoy freedom of mobility around the city, as well as a reminder that this right has yet to be fully realized.<sup>14</sup> Rosa's analysis of the androcentrism of urban planning in Brazil is echoed later in the film by Tereza, whose understanding is formed by her training as an historian: "Se eu acho que as cidades são feitas para as mulheres? Não, e não é nem uma questão de achar. Eu estudo isso na história, na formação da cidade na Revolução Industrial, e fica evidente que elas não são feitas para as mulheres" (So, do I think cities are made for women? No, I don't, and it's not a question of opinion. I study this as an historian, the formation of the city during the Industrial Revolution, and it's obvious that they weren't made with women in mind). For Black women this androcentrism is compounded by a racialized logic of urban planning that "nurtures a nostalgic desire for the colonial past on the part of white Brazilians," as anthropologist Keisha-Khan Perry observes (xv).

At various points in the film, the three featured women employ feminist language and explicitly frame issues of safety and mobility in terms of

privilege and oppression. In one of her interview segments, for example, Rosa describes the difference that male privilege makes—having versus not having it—when it comes to the freedom to do something as simple as walking down the street:

Quando eu transicionei mudou tudo, né, [a sociedade] começou a me ler de outra forma. Passei a me sentir muito mais insegura nas ruas, comecei a ser muito mais objetificada, assediada, buzizada, começou a rolar todo dia. Quando eu era lida como homem pela sociedade eu tive esses privilégios, tipo, de sair na rua, por exemplo, e nada acontecer. Porque ainda que a sociedade te leia como um homem gay efeminado, por exemplo, você não deixa de ser homem. Você não deixa de ter privilégios numa sociedade que é machista e patriarcal.

(After my transition, everything changed. Men started looking at me differently, and I started to feel uncomfortable walking down the street. Suddenly I was being treated like an object, harassed, honked at. It started happening all the time. When society saw me as a man, I had the privilege of being able to walk in the street without anyone bothering me. Even if society reads you as an effeminate gay man, you're still a man and have some privileges in a sexist and patriarchal society.)

Her account testifies to how social meanings get layered onto human bodies, conferring a given combination of privileges and penalties, depending one's gender, race, and other identities. It also alludes to the even greater lethal threat that street harassment poses to trans women, especially Black, trans women like her.

Raquel, for her part, analyzes her own experiences of living in Salvador through an intersectional feminist lens as well. She is first introduced in a scene consisting of footage of her riding a city bus accompanied by a voice-over in which she describes how the intersection of race, class, and sizeism has impacted her life:

Eu já pesei muito mais do que eu estou hoje. Eu tive que perder muito peso para ir para a faculdade, que eu tinha vergonha de sair de casa porque eu não passava nas borboletas dos ônibus e os motoristas fazem questão de

me constranger sem me deixar entrar pela frente. Eu perdi peso, sim, para poder estudar porque [senão a situação] estava inviável. Mas eu pouco estou me importando se as pessoas me olham, se me acham gorda, se me acham feia. Eu me acho bem. Eu não preciso seguir um padrão.

(I used to be much heavier than I am now, but I had to lose a lot of weight for college. I was embarrassed to leave my house because I couldn't fit through the turnstiles on the bus and the drivers would make a point of humiliating me by not letting me board through the main door. So yeah, I lost weight so I could get an education because otherwise it wouldn't have been viable for me to go back and forth for school. But I could care less if people stare at me and think I'm fat. I think I'm just fine and I don't have to measure up to anyone else's standards.)

After boarding the bus, paying her fare as she passes through the turnstile, and settling into a window seat, Raquel speaks directly into the camera about the impact of sizeism on her access to public transportation, and thus to education, emphasizing how city buses fail to accommodate bodies of different sizes and therefore serve to perpetuate other inequalities, such as educational and economic disparities. A freelance manicurist, her movements through the city (where she goes and at what time) are also largely dictated by the convenience of her more privileged (and presumably white) clientele. In one scene, she climbs an empty and poorly illuminated street after dark, expressing her uneasiness about walking alone and explaining that the reason she is out late is because of a regular client who demands evening appointments.

The juxtaposition of Rosa's, Raquel's, and Teresa's lives in *Chega de fú fú* illustrates the various ways that urban infrastructure serves to facilitate or foreclose equality. In this sense, Tereza, who avails herself of São Paulo's relatively extensive network of bike lanes to get around the city, serves as a positive example of how adequate infrastructure can foster women's independence. Freed from her reliance on mass transit, she can organize her travel as she pleases (instead of around arbitrary routes and schedules), greatly increasing her mobility relative to that of Rosa and Raquel, although she does of course still endure catcalling along the way. The film is careful to emphasize that Tereza's expanded freedom of movement is a function of intersecting race, gender, and class privileges, since bike lanes are concentrated primarily in the wealthy neighborhoods, where white residents tend to live and work, while remaining scarce in the less affluent bairros and urban periphery, which are primarily populated by residents who are Black and/or

working class. The inclusion of Tereza in the documentary also shows how regional differences interplay with intersecting systems of oppression, since the expanding network of bike lanes in São Paulo is not mirrored in more resource-strapped cities, such as Salvador.<sup>15</sup>

The exploration of the urban problems of street harassment and other gendered spatial exclusions in *Chega de fiu fiu* is not limited to critique and denunciation, however. The three women at the center of the film, as well as other people who appear in it, model specific actions that spectators can emulate, including—but not limited to—tweeting and attending protest marches (activities that are featured extensively in the documentary). First, the film offers examples of women who, upon being catcalled, challenge their aggressors' behavior. The footage from Frazão's "eyeglasses camera" includes multiple instances in which the director stands her ground and confronts the men who harass her, pointedly asking one, "Você não acha que isso é assédio?" (You don't think that's harassment?). Likewise, Rosa recounts talking back to catcallers, even weaponizing their transphobia against them. Second, the film promotes the interactive *Chega de Fiu Fiu* map in an interview clip in which Juliana de Faria explains how the tool works and recounts the story behind it. Third, the film encourages its female viewers to make a paradigm shift when it comes to how they think about and interact with urban spaces: instead of accepting society's implicit directive that they adjust their bodies, their routes, and their daily routines to accommodate the city (for example, by dieting in order to fit through bus turnstiles, seeking to conceal their physiques with certain types of clothing, or avoiding traversing certain parts of the city at certain times of day), women have the right to change the city so that it conforms to *their* needs. The documentary shows that, while cities are fundamentally androcentric, alternative ways of organizing urban space are possible—or, as Rosa bluntly puts it in a rap verse in the film's final scene, "Pinto de macho não é o centro do mundo" (The world doesn't revolve around men's dicks).

Above all, *Chega de fiu fiu* explores language and conceptual tools—or, in some cases, the lack thereof—for thinking about street harassment in critical, feminist terms. Aside from intersectionality, which is defined by Djamila Ribeiro and built into the structure of the documentary (illustrating the importance of adopting an intersectional lens in order to comprehend the true dimensions of a given problem and, specifically, how it affects the most marginalized women in a community), the film highlights the legal invisibility of street harassment in a scene in which Tereza, after having endured catcalling while jogging, runs an Internet search at home to determine what legal recourse she might have in such cases, ultimately concluding at the time that the answer is none. A few months after the film was launched,

however, this state of affairs would change in a development that Almeida credits partly to the activism of Think Olga.

Until recently, Brazilian law recognized gender-based violence that took place within romantic (and family) relationships and in work relationships—that is, within the spaces of the home and office, respectively—but not male sexual aggression occurring in urban environments such as streets and public transportation. In 2018, the Brazilian Congress passed legislation creating a new category of sexual violence called *importunação sexual*, or sexual importuning, defined as: “Pratica[ndo] contra alguém e sem a sua anuência ato libidinoso com o objetivo de satisfazer a própria lascívia ou a de terceiro” (Presidência da República) (Practicing against someone, without their consent, a libidinous act with the objective of satisfying one’s own lust or the lust of a third party). With the advent of this new category, there is finally an umbrella legal term for a range of abuses that the law had not previously regarded as crimes. And while legal remedies alone are insufficient to eliminate sexual violence (and, indeed, can frequently have undesirable consequences themselves, such as further fueling mass incarceration and funneling men, especially those who are Black and/or poor, into Brazil’s private-prison industry), the mainstreaming of the term *assédio* and the creation of the legal category of *importunação sexual* signal, as Almeida asserts, important “changes in [Brazilian] sensibilities concerning notions of violence that are also at the root of processes leading to the formation of Human Rights,” especially the recognition of the personhood of women and girls (24). In this sense, the case of Think Olga and the many other groups and individuals engaged in the struggle to end gender-based violence clearly exemplify the power of feminist discursive fields of action.

Often dismissed as flirting or compliments, the street harassment heaped on Brazilian girls and women is hardly “invisible” nor do the aggressors make any effort to hide their actions. To the contrary, most men who engage in such behaviors do so openly. They presumably *want* to be seen by their targets and by other men at whom their performance of a certain type of masculinity is directed. In other words, the sexual intrusions of male strangers exist to be seen, otherwise there would be little point in enacting them in the first place. What Kamanchek and Frazão’s film *Chega de fiu fiu* makes visible, then, is street harassment’s impact—specifically, the harms that it inflicts on women, especially Black, trans, lesbian, and working-class women—and therefore its significance as an acute social problem. It also connects the dots between street harassment and broader urban patterns of exclusion that obstruct access to the city. And, finally, the documentary, like Think Olga, charts paths of resistance and reimagines Brazilian cities as spaces where all women have the opportunity to thrive.

## Notes

1. I would like to thank Amanda Kamanchek Lemos for granting me access to the *Chega de fu fu* documentary before it was widely available, as well as Paula Sacchetta, whose friendship and excellent documentary film *Precisamos falar do assédio* have been instrumental in my research on anti-rape politics in contemporary Brazil. I am also indebted to the Tulane University's Newcomb Institute, Stone Center for Latin American Studies, and Lavin-Bernick Fund, all of which provided generous financial support that made this article possible.
2. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
3. To make street harassment and especially its harms more visible so as to more effectively combat the problem, Vera-Gray advocates a phenomenological approach that involves adopting the term *intrusion* in the place of *harassment*: "Intrusion is used . . . to refer to [the] deliberate act of putting oneself into a place or situation where one is uninvited, with disruptive effect. Following such a definition, there is no need to evidence a desire to harm or disrupt the target, the focus is on the deliberateness of the practice, whilst 'uninvited' shifts from 'unwanted' as a qualifier that affirms the power of the target to choose who is able to enter their physical and emotional space. It foregrounds the actions of the perpetrator, rather than their intentions or the target's response, allowing for a broader range of practices to be addressed" (11).
4. In the specific context of debates over gender-based violence in the United States, Tanya Serisier has made a similar point, although employing auditory rather than visual terms, arguing that "Breaking the silence [about rape and sexual assault], despite its significant cultural impact, has not ended sexual violence, nor does it seem to have significantly reduced it, or to have eradicated the stigma associated with being a rape victim" (12).
5. For an analysis of *Chega de fu fu* in relation to another feminist documentary film about gender-based violence that emerged in the context of Brazil's Feminist Spring, Paula Sacchetta's *Precisamos falar do assédio* (Faces of Harassment, 2016), see Atencio.
6. The film falls outside both the thematic scope and the immediate timeframe of Almeida's analysis, which narrates and analyzes the (unintentional and unexpected) role of Think Olga's online activism in pressuring the Brazilian Congress to revise the nation's Penal Code to account for street harassment by creating a new legal category of sexual violence called *importunação sexual* (sexual importuning). The process culminating in the revision was already underway by at least September 2017—when the proposal was formally approved by the congressional Commission for the Defense of Women's Rights, or *Comissão de Defesa dos Direitos da Mulher*. Kamanchek and Frazão's documentary was launched on May 15, 2018, and the addition to the Brazilian Penal Code became official the following September.
7. A major motivation to participate was precisely having had the experience.

8. See Think Olga and Defensoria.
9. See Medeiros and Fanti for a detailed history of this moment. The name notwithstanding, the so-called Primavera Feminista was less a sudden explosion and more the culmination of a process that had been unfolding since at least 2011. That year marked the inaugural Marcha das Vadias, or Brazilian Slut Walk, with annual follow-ups taking place throughout the country ever since. Despite its popularity, the Marcha das Vadias initiative does not appeal to all women for—as Black feminists in Brazil, the United States, and elsewhere have pointed out—the decision to center the campaign around the reclaiming of the word *slut/vadia* marginalizes many Black women, for whom it evokes a long history of the hypersexualization of the Black female body.
10. The discourse of shame is evident even in the statement that the father of the targeted female contestant gave to the Brazilian media, in which he reported having to shield his daughter from the “postagens vergonhosas” (shameful posts) by men on Twitter (qtd. in Toledo). In making this observation, my intention is not to criticize the father (since it is clear from his comments that the shame he speaks of stems entirely from the content of the posts rather than from his daughter) but rather to point out how his words unwittingly reproduced entrenched associations between women’s experiences of male sexual aggression and shame instead of naming the incident as sexual harassment.
11. Marcelo Rubens Paiva, a well-known columnist for the *Estado de São Paulo* newspaper, was among those to denounce the incident as assault. See Paiva.
12. On the origins and significance of Brazil’s Maria da Penha law, see Spieler.
13. Tereza makes this point in a voiceover that accompanies a scene in which she is shown walking down a dark street; the camera is positioned behind her back as if the viewer were following her, in one of the few instances in the film where viewers are invited to assume the perspective of a male bystander (or even aggressor). In her interview, Faria also draws attention to women’s conditioned hypervigilance in relating an anecdote about a man’s surprise when, upon pulling his car up alongside his wife as she walked home to offer her a ride, she hurried away on the erroneous but understandable assumption that he was a male stranger intending to harass her.
14. Sophia Beal describes the Rodoviária as follows: “Part bus terminal, part subway stop, part highway, and part parking lot, the colossal Rodoviária marks the center point of the Plano Piloto [Pilot Plan of the city]. Buses traveling into the Plano Piloto converge at this hub, which is the foci of the city’s two main highways” (197).
15. Regarding spatial exclusions along lines of gender and race in Brazil’s urban areas, see Perry’s *Black Women against the Land Grab*. As part of her analysis of Salvador-based Black women’s political organizing in response to the displacement of their centrally located neighborhoods to the distant periphery, the author offers examples of how intersecting oppressions compromise access to safe and convenient public transportation for her subjects, who endure discrimination by drivers and fare collectors, not to mention rampant sexual harassment by male passengers and other indignities. As she notes, there are fewer buses, bus stops, routes, and schedule options available

to residents of poorer neighborhoods, not to mention that bus companies assign the oldest and least desirable buses in their fleet to service the periphery, reserving the newest and most comfortable vehicles for the city center, where there is a higher concentration of affluent white customers (xii, 28–29).

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