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#Share #Retweet #Activism: The effects of onlineification on collective action movements

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Introduction

Collective action movements are a common form of political gathering (Olson, 1989). These collectives are made up by individuals who coordinate together in the pursuit of common objectives and goals. The easy access to mass-scale communication that the rise of the internet has provided, specifically through social media nowadays, has become a tool for these movements to reach a larger audience (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). These movements can now collectivize without having to constantly organize physical gatherings (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Online collectivization has been on the rise, with several hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter and #FridaysForFuture being used to organize protests and to show support of said protests (Day, 2020; Fisher, 2019).

The literature on the efficacy and power of collective action through social media is, however, divided. Some research argues that the flexibility created by social media causes instability and unsustainability, while others show that this flexibility makes for more agile and sustainable movements (Shahin & Ng, 2011; Clark-Parsons, 2019). These studies however have only focused on movements in which large-scale protests were used as a tool to attempt to create the desired change. Dr. Bennett and Dr. Segerberg, some of the leading experts in the field, used the examples of demonstrations against the G20 London Summit in 2009, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and the Arab Spring in 2011 in their research (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). These movements did make heavy use of social media to mobilize and organize, but they ultimately did their protesting as physically gathered collectives. The online collective moved offline. The act of physically gathering is however not always present in a collective movement. Collective movements that happen exclusively online have not yet been studied in relation to the power of collective action. Research comparing a fully online movement to a hybrid, partially online movement will therefore broaden the understanding of collective action in the 21st century. This is especially relevant since screen times are increasing, and the world and its politics are becoming increasingly online (Papacharissi, 2015). This paper will therefore go into the question of how the power of collective action within a social movement is affected by the movement existing entirely online. Through this it will make the argument that the power of fully online movements will be negatively affected through the strength of their network and the clarity and consistency of their agenda, but that they will be positively affected in their ability to create an engaged following.

Firstly, the existing literature will be reviewed. Here it will be shown how power exists in the form of the collective, how this power can be harnessed through the form of collective action, and what is known on the influence of social media on this action. Through this information it will create the hypothesis that through weaker networks and inconsistent, vague agendas, movements their power will be negatively affected when solely using the online to collectivize, while their power will be positively affected by causing more engagement of followers. To test this hypothesis, two cases will be compared: the 4B movement and the #MeToo movement. The 4B movement collectivizes entirely online, while the #MeToo movement has made use of mass-scale protests. Both cases are feminist movements with revolutionary aims for societal change (LaMotte, 2017; Zimmermann, 2023). To compare the cases, discourse analysis of social media posts will be used to gain insights on the agenda strength, the network strength and the engagement strength within the movements. Throughout this paper, the people involved in the 4B movement and the #MeToo movement will be referred to as followers, not members, as the movement has no centralized organization and no official membership.

Literature review

Power in the collective

In order to research how power is affected by a variable, in this case the variable being the online existence of a movement, an understanding of power must be conceptualized in the first place. The understanding of power is at the root of the study of international relations and lays the basis for its theories. While using theories such as realism and liberalism make the concept of power easier to grasp and measure, the costs of these simplifications do not outweigh the benefits. Instead of simplifying power as only existing through the possession of material good, such as in these theories, power is a much more subjective and human concept.

The most dominant of international relations theories is realism. According to realism, power sought after and exercised by sovereign states (Schmidt, 2007). Realists believe that these sovereign states live in an international order of anarchy in which power stems from a state's military capacities. Realism argues that by living in this state of anarchy, without a higher power

to provide a form of structure and security, states will attempt to accumulate power, since there is always a possibility for other states to threaten their survival.

An issue with realism, however, is how it portrays states as homogenous and unitary actors, while they in fact are not. States are made up out of people, both on the elite level and on the general population level. These people have their own perspectives, ideas, personalities, and morals and these will in turn impact their decision-making, both through passive and through active political participation. Since the content of these variables is not always the same throughout different cultures and states, no state will be the same and therefore no state will behave in the exact same way as another. The possession of material goods, which in the case of realism are the military resources of a state, do play a role in the international community as a means to exercise power, but these resources are merely a link in this chain of power, not the source. All military resources are linked to human action, whether it be by creation of resources, using them or by being. These actions therefore require individuals to be willing to do the tasks involved in the creation of military resources, showing how these resources themselves are not at the root of power, but human support and belief is. Even when force is used to make someone act against their beliefs, the exercise of this force must be carried out by someone else with the opposing belief. There must be a collective on the side of the one in power. The source of the power therefore lies in the collective.

The collective has been discussed as a concept for power by many scholars, including Hannah Arendt, who argued the following: 'Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together' (Arendt, 1970, p. 44). A collective movement according to Arendt, holds power precisely because of the collective nature of the movement (Arendt, 1970). Arendt sees power as an attribute of a group, not as individual strength, and argues that the power disappears upon the disbandment of a group. While one could argue that some individuals might be more powerful than others because of their positions within society, Arendt claims that this is because the powerful person in question has been authorized to act on behalf of the group, by the group. This further argument further demonstrates how power, while it may not always seem that way at first, does always belong to a collective. A necessity of effective power creation withing a collection, according to Arendt, is group cohesion. The absence of such cohesion

can leave a collective susceptible to the control of outside forces, thus making it weaker. The level of unity in the group therefore does matter according to this theory (Skocpol, 1979). Not only Arendt argued for the power in the collective. Parsons argued for it too, by using money as an example to demonstrate how collective power works. He claimed that the meaning of money can only exist as long as the belief in it is upheld by the society in which it is used. If it is used illicitly, for example by illegally printing extra money, the money loses power (Parsons, 1967). This is because the perceived power of the money, just like in Arendt's theory, is authorized by the collective of the society (Arendt, 1970; Parsons, 1967).

Collective action

The power of the collective does not only exist when upholding a system. In the form of collective action, it can be harnessed for all kinds of social movements to instead make changes to a system, including feminist ones. An example of collective action successfully being used in a feminist movement is the case of the Women's Strike in Iceland on Oct. 24, 1975 (Brewer, 2015). On that day around 90% of women within the country went on strike, refusing to clean, look after children or work, to improve gender equality in the workplace. It worked and Iceland has since been ranked the best country regarding gender-equality by the World Economic Forum for 14 years in a row. The effective power of collective action has been touched upon by various scholars. Piven and Cloward, for example, argued that it has a higher efficacy compared to institutionalized activism, in creating social change (1977). They argued that especially disruptive grassroots movements were successful in creating policy changes and reforms through the pressure they put on political elites. Historical examples have additionally been used to show the power of collective action, such as Skocpol, who used the example of the Russian peasantry collectivizing and using the power of collective action to make changes to the social hierarchy and even creating a new regime (1979). Perspectives have been given on the specificities within collective movements too, and on which elements are key to their success. Sidney Tarrow argued that a delicate balance is needed in collective action between organization and freedom (2011). He argued that organization is needed to keep a high level of engagement within the movement, but that too much organization can leave participants in the movement oppressed, potentially causing them to engage less or to leave the movement altogether. Tarrow also argued that a high focus on a shared purpose is key in creating a powerful collective. Charles Tilly argued that a strong collective identity increases the power of

a movement, through creating group cohesion (1978). This fits with Arendt's argument of group cohesion being key to the success of a collective, showing how the power of the collective is intertwined with the power of collective action.

Connective action

But what happens now that social media has become a useful and often used tool for collective action? Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg came up with a distinction between three types of collective action movements (2012). The first of these types they call brokered organizational networks, with which they mean networks collective action with centralized management. These refer to movements relying on formal institutions and organizations. The second type is "connective action". Connective action is characterized as " large-scale, sustained protests are using digital media in ways that go beyond sending and receiving messages" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 739). The last type is hybrid networks, which use a combination of the elements of both connective action and brokered organizational networks. Bennett and Segerberg mention how personalized identification took over collective identities because of individualization of society and because of social media: there's more freedom and diversity in being a "member". There is often no central leadership or mortar-and-bricks organization, and less physical gathering involved. This means that to join a political or social movement, followers of the movement do not need to come together with that group often, and therefore will be less influenced by the group, creating less of a collective identity. Because of this, movements are more easily accessible, but membership or adherence is less intense. There is more diversity within followers of a movement. Because of this there is also more of a focus on the sharing of personal experiences and stories within the movement. Because of the lack of physical contact, there is less incentive to be as intense because of the decreased amount of group pressure and monitoring in online spaces. Additionally, there are often no real entry requirements online because of the lack of centralized leadership and organization. There seems to be a trade-off between quantity and quality here. The lack of collective identity in online collective action can take away from the power of a movement by potentially decreasing the group cohesion, which is a necessity for its power (Arendt, 1970). On the other hand, the lower threshold for entry to a movement that this lack of collective identity creates could possibly have a positive effect on the size of the collective, which in turn could give it more power.

There are varying opinions on the power and efficacy of the usage of social media for collective action, compared to more traditional methods of collectivizing. Some say that because of the temporal nature of social media, social and political movements do not last (Barassi & Zamponi, 2020). It is thought that social media turns social and political movements into mere trends and that it takes away from their sustainability. According to Thomas Poell, this is worsened by the way in which social media movements are often unable to access anything more than episodic coverage in the mainstream news (2019). Other studies have shown how social and political movements that primarily organize through social media struggle to sustain themselves due to three pitfalls: the individualized nature of mobilization, the excessive flexibility of social networks and a negative emotional culture (Shahin & Margaret, 2011). This flexibility additionally creates a fundamental lack of consistency and commitment in terms of its agenda and issue frames (Servaes & Hoyng, 2016). On the other hand, it has been shown that the usage of social media does in fact have a positive impact on low and medium levels of political engagement in youths, such as forming political opinions, consuming news and interacting with politicians (Paolillo & Gerbaudo, 2022). Besides this, a movement being leader-less does not make it organization-less, which is one of the main pitfalls in most of the pieces of literature that argue against the efficacy of social media in social and political movements (Fong, 2023). This could mean that the individualized nature of movements created by social media, as mentioned by Shahin and Margaret, does not necessarily have to be a weakness (Shahin & Margaret, 2011). The short-form and entertaining nature of the platforms used for connective action, such as TikTok does not have to take away from the seriousness or the efficacy of a movement either. It has been proven that more fun methods of sharing political ideology does not take away from serious political engagement and that these methods can even have a positive effect on engagement (Kjølsrød, 2021). The ability to share personal stories through social media helps to facilitate affective engagement too with and within a movement (Papacharissi, 2014). Additionally, a meta study done using the data of 13 previously done studies shows that social media creates no difference between online and the offline in their ability to create social and political change (Oser et al., 2022). Its results actually show that social media creates more stable movements compared to offline alternatives. One study specifically aimed at a partially online feminist movement, the #MeToo movement in the United States, found that the flexibility of the movement, because of its usage of

social media and room for personalization, made it more sustainable because it was able to evaluate its shortcomings regarding its campaign and through this it could create quick solutions (Clark-Parsons, 2019).

According to this literature, the main weaknesses caused by the usage of social media in collective action movements revolve around the flexible nature of these kinds of movements and on the sustainability of their networks, while the main strengths of these movements are their flexibility, their ability to get more people engaged and involved, and their stability. These effects are likely to be higher in a movement that collectivizes entirely online, as the effects of these platforms will play a bigger role in these movements. The flexibility within these movements will likely be amplified, as will its effects. This flexibility will likely cause a fully online movement to have a less stable and clear agenda. The engagement on the other side will most likely be stronger in fully online movements, especially regarding low-level political activity, as this is already established as a positive effect of social media on collective action. Additionally, the personalized options for engagement on social media lower the threshold for participation, which can have a positive effect on the engagement of more online movements as well (Dobrin, 2020). The negative emotional culture associated with online movements will most likely cause fully online movements to have less of a stable network, compared to movements that only partially collectivize online. Based on this information, this paper will hypothesize that the power of collective action within a social movement is negatively affected by an entirely online existence in the consistency and clarity of their agenda, Additionally, it hypothesizes that the strength of the network will be affected negatively, but that the ability to mobilize followers will be affected positively, which impact the power of collective action negatively and positively, respectively.

Indicators

To test the hypothesis and answer the research question of how the power of collective action of a movement is affected by a movement operating entirely online, ways to measure the power of collective action must be set. This paper will base its methodology on those which came before it, to the best of its ability. Bennett and Segerberg used three capacities of collective action in their research on connective action, which they used to measure the power of partially online social movements (2011). These capacities were based on literature that proved the importance of these

capacities. Since they have been used in previous research that is closely related to the topic of this research, and since they have additional academic backing, these elements will be useful in understanding the effects of operating entirely online on the power of these movements in multiple dimensions. The measurements used will therefore be engagement strength, agenda strength and network strength. These three dimensions can be used to test the hypothesis, since these dimensions fit the three expectations in the hypothesis.

The first capacity, engagement strength, refers to a movement's ability to effectively mobilize its members or followers, showing the commitment of these supporters (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011, p. 775). The measurement of engagement strength was built upon findings from earlier works, such as that of Charles Tilly, who emphasized its importance to show the commitment of a movement's collective to both the general public and to the targets of a movement (2004). Additionally, it has been shown that strong engagement and little heterogeneity is important for the productivity and power of a movement (Druckman & Kjersten 2003). Engagement strength is therefore necessary for the power of a collective movement.

The second capacity is agenda strength. This refers to the ability of a collective movement to keep a clear and executable agenda, by clearly communicating collective aims and goals to the general public (Bennett, 2011). There is a fear regarding online mediums of collective action that it compromises and clouds the original agenda of a movement, which would in turn make it less effective and less easily able to mobilize (Heaney & Rojas, 2014). Additionally, it is thought that a lack of commitment, created through a scattered agenda, negatively affects the power of a movement (Tilly 2004). Agenda strength is therefore necessary for the power of a collective movement.

The third and final capacity is network strength. Network strength refers to the coherence and the quality of the relations between the people involved in the movement (Bennett, 2011). This is based on the notion that focusing on network lines is important when researching the power of a collective movement (Diani, 2003). The strength of connections within networks is also mentioned as a necessity for the efficacy and power of a collective by Arendt, who argued that group cohesion and unity is detrimental in protecting a group or a movement against external

threats (Arendt, 1970). Having little cohesion could make a collective susceptible to external control or manipulation, which would weaken its power. Network strength is therefore a necessity for the power of a collective movement. Since negative emotional culture has additionally been characterized as a pitfall of online collective action, this element will be taken into consideration too within the analysis.

Methodology

The research method that will be used in this paper is a comparative case study, since it is able to give in-depth insights into the ways that the fully online nature of one movement affects its power, by comparing it to a movement that is not fully online. It is for this purpose that a Most Similar Systems Design will be used, so that the specific effects of the online nature of one of the movements can be isolated as much as possible. The cases chosen for this paper are the 4B movement that originated in South-Korea, and the #MeToo movement. Both cases are feminist in nature, both make use of connective action, and both cases have revolutionary aims.

The 4B movement is a feminist movement that uses connective action to not just fight patriarchical norms, but to step away from it altogether (Sussman, 2023). Its original goal wass to change the South-Korean patriarchal society and South-Korea's pro-natalism in radical ways, and it has since grown to a global level (Zimmermann, 2023; Sharma, 2024). The method used in this movement is abstention, specifically from the so called 4 B's: heterosexual sexual relationships (비섹스 bisekseu), marriage (비혼 bihon), heterosexual dating (비연애 biyeonae), and childbearing (비출산 bichulsan) (Zimmermann, 2023). The 4B movement has chosen these four areas to boycott because of the high number of instances of domestic abuse in the country, as well as economic gender inequality and the way in which law enforcement handles cases of sexual assault. Besides this, the low birth-rate is an already insecurity in South Korean specifically. This is currently at 0.72 per woman, which is currently ranked as the lowest birth rate in the world (Newkey-Burden, 2024). Through weaponizing this existing insecurity, the 4B movement hopes to maximize its impact (Jung, 2023). It is a revolutionary and feminist movement since it attempts to make societal changes. It is against the patriarchal system in place in South-Korea and it does not only focus on legislation and policy changes, but also on the way in which women are treated socially, economically and on their own views of themselves (Lee & Jeong, 2021). The 4B

movement differs from previously studied social movements in two ways. For one, it is a movement that exists almost fully on social media, through which women share their experiences and ideas. The 4B movement makes use of mostly short-form content such as TikTok's and posts on X (formerly known as Twitter), through which it got its start (Wong, 2024). There is diversity within the movement, with some followers of the movement only boycotting some of the B's and others rejecting their imposed gender roles entirely by dressing boyish and cutting their hair. The 4B movement specifically has women as its target group (Jung, 2023). It involves women sharing their experiences and ideas with other women. The 4B movement, through using social media to share experiences, information, self-help discussions, and ideological viewpoints, uses the algorithms to create a large and diverse following with personalized identification (Izaakson & Kim, 2020). This large spread of the feminist ideas involved makes it so that women who encounter them get the tools to critically think about the gender roles imposed on them, not only to boycott them, but also to envision a future without them (Lee & Jeong, 2021). Through the sharing of negative experiences with gender roles and the patriarchy and by providing 4B as an alternative, and through the various self-help discussions, the women involved in the movement show how other women could possibly personally benefit through joining the movement. The 4B movement does not involve offline protests.

The #MeToo movement is a feminist movement that specifically focuses on the justice for and the recognition of rape culture, sexual harassment, and assault (Zacharek et al., 2017). The movement is not made up of a hierarchical organizational structere, neither does it have a leader. The movement instead collectivizes through both social media and physical protests and marches to create a dialogue on these topics, including specific cases (Zacharek et al., 2017; Frye, 2018). The #MeToo phrase was originally coined by social activist Tarana Burke back in 2006, and it grew in popularity after the accusations of sexual misconduct regarding the famous former movie producer Harvey Weinstein (Ohlheiser, 2021; Chuck, 2017). This surge in popularity of the phrase was caused by an online Tweet by actress Alyssa Milano, who asked her followers to reply to the Tweet with the words "me too" if they themselves had experienced sexual harassment or assault (Chuck, 2017). The movement started out in the United States of America, but quickly spread around the globe, reaching 85 countries within the week after the Tweet by Milano (Zacharek et al., 2017). Many women and men spoke up about their own experiences, including many celebrities. The

movement was impactful on society, with some high-profile public figures that had been accused being tried in front of a court and fired. The movement further on impacted policy, causing over 200 new bills to be introduced (McCarthy, 2021).

Both the 4B movement and the #MeToo movements make use of social media. Unlike the 4B movement however, the #MeToo movement has made use of physical means of collectivizing, such as through physical mass protests (Shinkman, 2018). Additionally, the #MeToo movement has worked together with established mortar-and-brick organizations, whereas the 4B movement has not (Chen, 2018). The main difference between these two movements in terms of collective action has been that one has remained entirely online, while the other has had offline manifestations of its action. This makes these cases suitable for the research conducted in this paper.

The differences between the two cases will be analyzed using discourse analysis in order to deconstruct these movements on how they operate through the language that they use. Posts on the platform X (formerly known as Twitter) by followers of both movements will be used, as these are primary sources. X is used since this is the platform on which both movements are most active. Posts under the hashtags #MeToo and #4b will be analyzed and filtered, leaving only those that through the language used are clearly from users agreeing with and involved with one of these movements. This will filter out unrelated discourse surrounding the movements, as well as potential mentions of the hashtags that are unrelated to the movements themselves, but just used for algorithmic reasons. Additionally, the posts by journalists on the movement will be filtered out, as these do not give any information on the network, engagement, and agenda strength from primary sources themselves and can therefore not be guaranteed to be able to give an objective view of these strengths. Since the full number of posts will be too large to reasonably analyze, a selection will be made. According to Google Trends (n.d.-a), the #MeToo movement was most often searched for between October 2017 and October 2018. This can give an indication of the height of popularity and relevancy of the movement. The popularity of the 4B movement seems to still be growing, according to this same tool (Google Trends, n.d.-b). A timeline of the popularity of these hashtags on X would have been preferred for this research, but these tools were not accessible. For the #MeToo hashtag, the timeframe of October 2017 to October 2018 will be used

and for the #4b hashtag, the timeframe of May 2023 to May 2024 will be used. Because of this, both timeframes are of equal duration. Since the number of posts within these timeframes are still too large of a quantity, the top 50 posts that align with the limitations set, under the "Top" tab will be analyzed. This is to make use of the algorithm of X, which will provide the most popular posts. For the 4B movement, the search term" was used. For the #MeToo movement it was the search term "(#MeToo) until:2018-09-30 since:2017-10-01". Both searches included all languages, as people from countries around the world often use English instead of their native language (Alcaraz Ariza & Navarro, 2006). For non-English posts, the translation option was used. The AI behind this is able to give accurate and human sounding translations because of its large number of parameters (Smith, 2024).

The coding frame

All of the 50 most popular posts within the relevant year that fit the aforementioned criteria will be coded. This includes the posts themselves and any content of pictures, videos, links, and previous posts that the post is in agreement with, that show up in the post itself. Any pictures, links, videos, and previous posts that are not in agreement with the original post will not be coded, as they are not part of the content brought forward by the movement. Responses to post, even by the original poster, will not be included in the coding either, as these additional responses did not show up within the top 50 posts.

In order to research the agenda strength specifically, two different measures will be used. To be able to analyze both the clarity of the agenda of a movement and the specificity of it, the coding frame will include both the clarity as a category, and the kind of feminist goals and aims that the movement has. The latter will be used to be able to see how much the movements studied stick to a goal and aim. The subcategories used in the coding frame are equality, freedom, justice, economic change, societal change, and intersectionality. These are based on the core aims of 4 popular feminist theories, namely liberal feminism, radical feminism, social justice feminism, and socialist or Marxist feminism. The equality subcategory is most closely related to liberal feminism, which has the goal of social, political, legal, and economic equality of genders (Maynard, 1995). The freedom and societal change subcategories fit with radical feminism, which has the goal of freeing society from the patriarchy (Willis, 1984). The justice and the intersectionality subcategories fit

most closely with social-justice feminism, which aims for the recognition of the qualities and struggles of all genders and specifically centers inclusivity (Janus, 2013). The economic change subcategory is most closely related to socialist and Marxist forms of feminism. Both of these types of feminism focus on the interplay between the capitalist system and the patriarchy (Kennedy, 2008). Societal change would per this definition also fit with this type of feminism, since both socialist and Marxist feminism do wish to make societal changes, but since these are so specifically economic in nature, they are not included in this subcategory but make use of their own. Marxist and socialist feminism do have key differences in their preferred methods and views on societal issues (Harriss, 1989). However, these differences are not relevant to this research, and since the ideologies overlap in their general focus and goals they are grouped together as one. Splitting them up would not make a difference for this research and would only convolute the coding frame. The clarity aspect of agenda strength will use one negative subcategory and two positive ones, with one including a measure for executability of the goals and aims mentioned. This could be a follower of one of the movements providing clear steps and tips to participate in the movement and to help further the cause for which the movement stands.

To measure for engagement strength, two different aspects will be looked at too. In this case it is to provide insights through two different views, namely those of following and recruiting. The following aspect analyzes through followers of the movement speaking about their own experiences within the space of the movement. These posts are clearly aimed at other followers of the movement, or just posted for the user themselves. Follower posts might mention their own experiences in protesting, participating online or adapting their lifestyles to help further the movement. This differs from recruiting posts, which might include more encouraging language towards others to get them to participate in the movement. These kinds of posts vary too much in their tone and content to keep them combined in one category and they are therefore split into two. The subcategories for both of these categories are related to offline, online, and doubtful participation. For following related posts, language used to indicate offline and online participation by the user are coded as separate and positive subcategories. Language indicating doubts and uncertainty about participation is coded as a negative subcategory, because this would indicate less mobilization within the movement.

Finally, to measure network strength, mentions of the collective or of other followers of the movement are used. With positive mentions of the collective or of other followers as a positive subcategory, references to the collective as powerful and revolutionary as very positive, and negative references to the collective and those within it by other followers of the movement as a negative subcategory. This is because negative mentions and interactions within the movement could indicate infighting and non-coherence, which would indicate low levels of network strength. High perceptions of the movement from within, however, indicate a good quality of relations between group members and high group cohesion and unity, which in turn indicates high levels of network strength. Through these indicators a coding frame was created, which can be found in appendix A.

Findings

Engagement strength

The 4B movement, according to this data, is much more engaged compared to the #MeToo movement. This difference exists both in terms of its regular engagement, as shown through the "following" category, and in its efforts to get more engagement, through the "calls for recruitment" category. This latter part shows that not only the engagement itself is high, but that the engagement is deemed as important. The movement uses social media to actively recruit more followers, even for offline participation. The offline participation within 4B centers mostly lifestyle changes, specifically the four principles that the movement named itself after: the boycott of heterosexual sexual relations, marriage, heterosexual dating and childbearing. One user for example included: "I say be child-free" (unknown age, female, Montréal) in their post, and another said: "Don't have relations until we can get abortions. Join the #4B movement." (unknown age, female, Texas). Others posted about their personal experience, using additional hashtags such as #SingleWomen, #SingleByDesign and even #HumanExtinction, signalling that they were engaged to the extent of preferring to cause human extinction over giving up on the movement. The mentions of human extinction and the lifestyle changes specifically existing to further the goal of the movement show how the collective, even when communicated between only online, is central in the engagement. The posts, while mostly mentioning engagement directly related to the four principles of the movement, mostly included one of the four within

one post. This suggests that there was a high variety in methods of engagement, which fits with the expectation of more usage of social media causing a movement to have more personalized options for engagement. The #MeToo movement was engaged much less in comparison to the 4B movement. In terms of recruitment, messages to speak up about gender related issues, specifically sexual harassment and assault, were most common with #MeToo, as well as messages to change one's mind, such as in one post, which said: "#BelieveSurvivors" (67, female, Washington D.C.). Calls to stop supporting certain celebrities and calls to speak up were common too. Only two posts centered other methods of engagement, namely through voting. This shows how #MeToo focused its engagement almost entirely on conversations, opinions and on changing mindsets, while the 4B movement focused more on operational methods of engagement and on creating a collective effect through varying actions. Engagement through conversations and the changing of mindsets is inherently relational, while operational methods such as remaining single and refraining from relations can be partaken in individually. Individual action such as seen in the 4B movement is more easily taken compared to the relational action of the #MeToo movement, which involves a higher level of collective identity (Bennet & Segerberg, 2012). This relates back to the concept of personalized collective action: participation in the 4B movement is accessible because of a higher level of freedom involved. The findings indeed follow the expectation of a fully online movement having higher levels of engagement. Since the 4B movement also has more variety in its methods of engagement, and since the engagement is practiced more individually compared to #MeToo, this suggests that the personalized nature of 4B through its social media collectivity is the reason for these higher levels of engagement.

Agenda strength

In terms of agenda strength, the #MeToo movement has a more clear and actionable agenda, compared to 4B. While 4B does have four inherently operational principles, it rarely brings these in conversation with its agenda. Posts such as "American ladies, it's time to follow suit! #4B " (23, female, Texas) in response to a post about declining birthrates across South-Korea, do make an active call for participation in the movement, but do not provide any motivation as to why one should participate. Another post said "Nah. If y'all are gonna be like this, we're done." (60, female, California) in response to a post that positively referred to domestic abuse. While it is clearly a

negative response to domestic abuse, it is not articulated within the post itself. "We're done" most likely refers to ending relations to men, in accordance with the 4B principles, but this is again a vague wording. This is unlikely to provide those unfamiliar with the movement with a clear agenda of said movement. The inability to word precise reasons in combination with actions additionally shows a weak sense of agenda within the movement itself. When mentioning the agenda, broad and unprecise words are used. "#HumanExtinction" and "#LastGaspsOfThePatriarchy" are vague and big statements that are not made small enough to be actionable, neither are they clear on why they are on the agenda. #MeToo in comparison is concise, precise, clear and actionable in its agenda. One #MeToo post says: "We are all Anita Hill. We are all Christine Blasey Ford. We have the power to stop Kavanaugh. Let's get to work. [redacted phone number]" (45, female, Los Angeles). This post calls for a specific action to be made through calling a government representative, in connection to a clear agenda point relating to sexual abuse court cases that were ongoing at the time, namely Ford v Kavanaugh (Moore, 2019). The "we are all" format is an often-used social media phenomenon to indicate collective support of the justice for a certain individual (Khamis & Vaughn, 2012). The combination of the clear aim for justice, the precise mention of the Ford v Kavanaugh case, and the included phone number with the request to call shows a very clear and actionable agenda. Clear and actionable mentions of an agenda were found in 18 #MeToo posts, compared to 11 4B posts. #MeToo had only 13 posts with a completely vague agenda, while 4B had 19. This shows that #MeToo has the clearer agenda out of the two. The different aims were also looked at. #MeToo mostly focused on justice, with 31 posts specifically being about this topic. This makes sense, as the #MeToo movement, while pursuing societal change, mainly focuses itself on the recognition and the justice for victims of sexual harassment and assault. Other topics were covered too, but none more than 3 times. 4B on the other hand covered the topics of equality and freedom equally as much, being mentioned 11 times each. Social change was covered most often as an aim with 16 counts. Justice was covered 6 times, and intersectionality was covered 5 times. Economic change was covered twice by 4B, in comparison to 0 times by #MeToo. This shows that #MeToo is much more committed to an aim compared to 4B, which aims are very scattered. This shows a lower agenda strength in terms of both clarity and in consistency for 4B compared to #MeToo. This fits with the assumption that the flexible nature of social media, which is more prominent in 4B, reduces its ability to create a consistent and clear agenda, therefore negatively affecting its power.

Network strength

The collective and other followers are referenced more in #MeToo compared to in 4B, with #MeToo mentioning the network 28 times and the 4B movement mentioning it a mere 15 times in comparison. The mentions made by #MeToo mostly fell into the positive sub-category, with many positive references being made to followers coming out with their stories of sexual harassment. This includes posts such as "These are brave women." (unknown age, female, Ohio) and "I so am grateful for the brave women who shared their stories before me" (29 years old, female, Michigan), which clearly indicate a positive network between followers of the movement. The 4B movement has fewer positive mentions if the collective in general, but roughly the same number of references to the collective as powerful as the #MeToo movement. And example of this is a post sharing a video in which the following is said: "Men ain't the only ones with all this power. They (women) got the keys now and without them, civilization doesn't move" (unknown age, gender and place). This shows that the followers believe in the power of the movement, showing a positive network strength. Since this same network strength, however, is not reflected in its total amount of positive references to the collective, the #MeToo movement has more network strength compared to the 4B movement. The view of the collective as powerful, without many positive interactions between and references to others within the movement, indicates a certain level of individuality within the 4B movement. It praises the collective from afar, through calling its followers and its actions powerful, but it does not interact much within this collective. Ideas are shared, but positive approval from others happens less. This could likely be due to the individualist nature of the internet, which makes us more focused on ourselves and less on other individuals (Turkle, 2012; Mayer et al., 2020). A fully online movement such as 4B would therefore include followers that are more focused on themselves and their own participation and would not interact as much with other followers of the movement and their participation. This can additionally be seen in how the #MeToo movement did involve some conversations on how the movement and the members in it should behave, calling out certain members for having double standards and possibly discrediting the movement through it. The 4B movement on the other hand did not have any conversations on the network and the followers itself aside from insinuating its power. This shows how ultimately the #MeToo movement has a higher network strength compared to the 4B movement, which is more individualized. This finding does therefore match the expectation of an increased social

media usage negatively affecting the network strength of a movement, which in turn lowers their power. The finding that both movements have an equally large view of their own power does however contrast with the difference in overall network strength, which is a contrast that was not expected based on the literature. This contrast could be investigated upon in further research.

Conclusion

Within this paper the effects of fully online collectivization on the power of collective action have been investigated. It analyzed the existing literature on the topic and through this, three arguments were created. It argued that the strength of the network, as well as the clarity and the consistency of the agenda of a movement is negatively impacted when said movement collectivizes entirely online, compared to movements that do gather physically. It further on argued that the levels of engagement in the movement are positively affected by the collectives being online, since online platforms create personalized options for participation, lowering the threshold for engagement. It tested these hypotheses through the usage of discourse analysis, in which it compared the fully online 4B movement to the only partially online #MeToo movement as a comparative case study. The coding frame for the discourse analysis included the category of network strength to test the strength of the networks of these movements. Additionally, it included two separate categories to measure the engagement strength within these movements, and finally it included the categories of agenda strength and aims to analyze the clarity and consistency of the agendas of both movements. Through this it found that the engagement strength is indeed positively affected when a movement collectivizes entirely online because of individualized and personalized options for engagement, confirming this hypothesis. It additionally found that the agenda of fully online movements are indeed less clear and more scattered compared to a movement that does involve physical gathering of the collective. This too fits the hypothesis of agenda strength being negatively affected by the sole usage of social media to collectivize in a movement. Lastly, it found that the general strength of the network is negatively impacted by a collective movement existing fully online, with fewer positive references to fellow followers of the movement being perceived. Both kinds of movements do however seem to share an equal view of their strength as a collective, suggesting that fully online movements such as the 4B movement has a more abstract and individualized sense of the collective. This could possibly be explained by the individualization being caused by the nature of the internet, although further research should be done to fully

understand this contrast. The hypothesis on network strength can therefore partially be accepted, since the fully online movement does have a generally lower strength of the network according to the findings of this research, but the contradiction on this topic raises doubts. The difference in impact between an objective network strength through relations and a subjective network strength through perceptions cannot be explained by the findings of this research and therefore requires further research. The lack of explanation of this contradiction is a limitation of this research. Further research should be done on this, and on other, non-feminist movements to see if these see a different effect. The findings of this research do however contribute to the field of political science through the expansion of the knowledge on the effects of connective action to include the more recent phenomenon of fully online movements. Within a world in which life and politics exist increasingly online, it is important to understand the impacts of this shift. This importance is relevant for not only academia, but for society too. The understanding that social media as a tool can create a more engaged collective through personalized options of engagement can be used by collective action movements to increase their power. If, for example, the engagement in a movement is low, followers could make more use of social media and personalization to lower the threshold for engagement. The knowledge of social media use scattering agenda points could be used as a warning for collectives to stick to specific set of aims, to not lose any power through unclear goals and aims. The findings on network strength can additionally be used as a warning for social media usage, which creates less connected networks. Online movements can use this knowledge to take measures to diminish this negative effect on their power.

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Appendix A: Coding frame

Category	Sub-category	Description	Code
Engagement strength: calls of recruitment	Calls for offline participation	Calls for participation of followers in their offline lives to help the movement, such as calls for protest, life changes and spreading the message offline.	EC+2
	Calls for online participation	Calls for online participation to help the movement through online means, such as reposting, forwarding the message and posting about the movement.	EC+1
	Uncertainty of participation/doubts	Negative language used regarding the movement to those outside of the movement. This could include warnings, mentions of backlash and negative opinions of aspects of the movement by those already involved in it.	EC-1
Engagement strength: following	Offline participation	Language used to indicate offline participation of followers to help the movement, such as participation in protests, the making of offline life changes and mentions of spreading the message offline.	EF+2

	Online participation	Online participation, such as reposting, forwarding the message and posting about the movement. This can include responses to hate and criticism, as well as negative responses to what the movement disagrees with (usually levels of sexism).	EF+1
	Uncertainty of participation/doubts	Language used to indicate uncertainty and doubt about participating in the movement and the downsides to participating. Negative language used.	EF-1
Network strength	Portrayals of the collective as powerful/revolutionary	Portrayals of the movement as powerful and/or revolutionary by followers. High impact words used.	NS+2
	Positive references to the collective	Positive references made by followers about other followers of the movement, or to the collective as a whole.	NS+1
	Negative references to the collective	Negative references made by followers about the collective as a whole, or about other followers of the movement. Critique of other followers or infighting within the movement.	NS-1

Agenda strength	Actionable and clear agenda	Clear language used when talking about the aims and goals of the movement. It is clear what the movement wants and steps to achieve these goals are mentioned, executable and clear.	AS+2
	Clear agenda	Clear language used when talking about the aims and goals of the movement. It is clear what the movement wants. No clear and executable steps to achieve these goals are mentioned.	AS+1
	Vague agenda	The language used to talk about the aims and goals of the movement is vague and not precise. No actionable steps to achieve these goals is mentioned.	AS-1
Aims	Equality	Equality of genders is centered. This could be legal, political, economic, or social equality.	AE
	Freedom	Freedom from the patriarchy is centered.	AF
	Justice	Justice for women as a gender is centered. This could include recognition of women's issues, the	AR

	want for justice for individual women or for women as a group.	
Economic change	Economic change is centered and included into the movement. This could include mentions of class and economic inequality relating to feminism.	AE
Societal change	Societal change is centered. This could include more revolutionary statements, critiques of the current society and wishes for change.	AC
Intersectionality	Intersectionality is centered. This could include topics such as race, religion, sexuality, weight, age, disability, ethnicity and/or physical appearance being included into the movement.	AI

Appendix B: Findings matrix

	4B	**#MeToo**
Engagement strength: calls for recruitment	Most calls are for offline engagement through personal life choices. There are also calls for online engagement. There was one warning for offline engagement, within this same post, however, was a call for offline engagement.	Much fewer calls for offline engagement compared to 4B. There was one more call for online engagement than in 4B. There were no warnings. Additionally, there were not that many calls compared to the 4B movement.
Engagement strength: following	Most participation is online. This is a lot. There is some offline engagement too. There is no uncertainty.	There is mostly online participation, but less than with 4B. The offline participation also happens much less than with 4B. No uncertainty was found.
Network strength	There are many views of the collective as powerful, but fewer positive references to the collective. There were no negative references.	There were fewer views of the collective as powerful compared to 4B, but many more general positive references to the collective and its followers. There were three cases of negative references.
Agenda strength	The goals are mostly clear, with about a third of them being actionable. Still, a lot of counts of unclear language surrounding the agenda exist.	Much more actionable goals are mentioned compared to the 4B movement and clearer language is used.
Aims	Mostly centered on societal change and equality. Every category is touched upon, showing a wide variety of aims.	Mostly centered on justice. There are only a few posts that center other topics. None of these, however, occur more than 3 times.