

From the Collective Obligations of Social Movements to the Individual Obligations of Their Members

Paul-Mikhail Catapang Podosky

Macquarie University

Sydney, Australia

Email: pmpodosky@gmail.com

+61448654281

William Tuckwell

Charles Sturt University

Wagga Wagga, Australia

Email: willtuckwell5@gmail.com

Abstract This paper explores the implications of Zeynep Tufekci's capacities approach to social movements, which explains the strength of social movements in terms of their capacities. Tufekci emphasises that the capacities of contemporary social movements largely depend upon their uses of new digital technologies, and of social media in particular. We show that Tufekci's approach has important implications for the structure of social movements, whether and what obligations they can have, and for how these obligations distribute to their members. In exploring these implications, we develop a tripartite taxonomy of social movements. Each type of social movement in the taxonomy corresponds to a different type of group: *social campaigns*, *social struggles*, and *social agitations*. We show that all three types of social movement can bear obligations in virtue of their capacities. Finally, we argue that a surprising upshot of the obligations of social movements is that members of oppressed groups can have obligations to resist their own oppression in virtue of being members of social movements.

Keywords Social Movements; Zeynep Tufekci; Groups; Collective Obligations; Obligations to Resist Oppression

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1 Introduction

In her popular 2017 book, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* sociologist Zeynep Tufekci develops what she calls a *capacities* approach to social movements. The core idea is that the strength of social movements lies in their capacities: to set narratives; to affect electoral outcomes, and; to disrupt the status quo (2017, 191). Tufekci explains that the capacities of recent social movements are heavily bound up with new digital technologies, and social media in particular. *Twitter and Tear Gas* chronicles how social media was used to get around censorship practised by Turkish television stations by those involved in the Gezi park protests in Istanbul in 2013; how Twitter, Google spreadsheets, and the mobile messaging app Viber facilitated successful logistics operations throughout the 2011 Tahrir Square clashes in Cairo, and; how those in the Occupy movement made heavy use of social media to amplify their messages and to organise.

Tufekci's capacities approach has implications for the structure of social movements, whether and what obligations they can have, and for how these obligations distribute to movement participants. Our project in this essay is to explore these implications.

Our first task will be to develop a taxonomy of social movements according to the different kinds of groups they involve: *social campaigns*, *social struggles*, and *social agitations*. This taxonomy maps onto Stephanie Collins's (2019) tripartite distinction between different types of groups. Social campaigns take the form of what Collins calls "collectives"; social struggles take the form of what Collins calls "coalitions"; social agitations take the form of what Collins calls "combinations" (2019, 1 - 21).

Developing this tripartite taxonomy sets us up to answer the following question: do social movements have obligations? This might strike some as an odd question. How could, say, MeToo have obligations *as a group* given its un-structuredness and thus inability to perform collective actions? Using Bill Wringe's (2010, 2014) framework for collective obligation, we show that given the capacities of social movements, they often have obligations as groups, even when they are unorganised as MeToo.

Finally, we will argue that the group-level obligations of social movements entail that members of oppressed groups have obligations to resist their own oppression. To elaborate, discharging group-level obligations requires distributing individual-level obligations to group members. Often these members will be from oppressed groups. Thus, members of such oppressed groups, as members of social movements that have obligation, acquire an obligation to resist their own oppression. This is a novel argument for the claim that members of oppressed groups have obligations to resist their own oppression that is distinct from those already offered in the literature by, for example, Cudd (2006); Hay (2011); Silvermint (2012) and; Vasanthakumar (2018).

2 The Capacities Approach to Social Movements

Zeynep Tufekci's (2017) *capacities approach* to social movements analyses the strength of social movements in terms of their capacities. She contrasts the capacities approach with an alternative approach that explains the strength of social movements in terms of the size and scale of participation. This approach is unsuccessful because it does not explain why some social movements fail despite high participation. The protests against the Iraq war starting in 2002 were the largest anti-war rallies in history, spreading across 600 cities, and involving hundreds of millions of protestors. The war went ahead anyway (2017, 189 - 191).

Tufekci defines capacity as "the movement's collective ability to achieve social change" (and so is using capacity and ability interchangeably) (2017, 192). She focuses on three capacities of social movements in particular, though she is clear that these are not exhaustive: capacities to shape narratives, to disrupt the status quo, and to effect electoral and institutional change (2017, 192). *Narrative capacity* refers to "the ability of the movement to frame its story on its own terms, to spread its worldview" (2017, 192). Exercising narrative capacity is a matter of convincing people to pay attention to a movement's concerns, and of persuading them of the importance of these concerns. *Disruptive capacity* refers to the ability to "interrupt the regular operations of a system of authority" (2017, p.192), or to "interrupt business as usual" (2017, 197). This includes momentary interventions, such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) temporarily shutting down a highway, or prolonged disruption, such as the occupation of a centrally located public space like Tahrir Square in Cairo during the Arab Spring. The aim of such disruptive acts is to get attention, and so disruptive and narrative capacity are connected. *Electoral/institutional* capacity refers to "the ability to keep politicians from being elected, re-elected, or nominated unless they adopt and pursue policies friendly to

the social movement's agenda, or the ability to force changes in institutions through both insider and outsider strategies" (2017, 192 – 193). Also important to effecting change are social movements' abilities to *signal* their capacities. This is because other actors respond to signals of capacities as well as exercises of the capacities themselves.

We will have more to say about what these capacities involve when we come to discuss social movements' obligations. For now what's important is that an implication of the capacities approach is that social movements are constituted by groups that engage in patterns of activity in order to achieve social and political goals. Tufekci is clear that by capacity she means collective, or group, ability. If social movements have group abilities, then social movements are groups. This may not amount to a complete account of what social movements are. But, assuming with Tufekci that social movements have capacities, whatever the complete account turns out to be it will involve the idea that social movements are groups. There are different types of groups, with different abilities. With this in mind, in the next section we will suggest that social movements can take the form of either collectives, coalitions, or combinations (Collins 2019). We will then go on to unpack the different abilities of different kinds of social movements and argue that these abilities ground social movements' obligations.

2.1 Campaigns, Struggles, Agitations

We will now propose a tripartite taxonomy of the different kinds of social movements according to the kinds of groups that constitute them. This taxonomy maps onto Collins's (2019) tripartite taxonomy of groups: collectives, coalitions, and combinations.

2.1.1 *Social Campaigns*

Social campaigns are social movements that take the form of what Collins calls "collectives" (2019, 11 - 16). Collectives are groups of agents that are united under a group-level decision making procedure that takes beliefs and preferences of individual group members as inputs and processes them to produce group level decisions. Within the collective, roles are assigned to members for enacting the collective's decisions. Paradigm cases include nation states that take individual voter preferences as inputs to produce decisions at the state level that are then executed by elected representatives and civil servants.¹

Elizabeth Anderson (2014) is one thinker who appears to believe that social movements can be constituted by collectives, which is evidenced by a hypothetical case that she provides in which a group of citizens come together to form a consumer-led movement to contest unjust labour market practices:

Suppose you want to contest some policy you think is unjust – say the abuse of workers in sweatshops who make clothes for major apparel companies. What do you do? First, you call a meeting of like-minded citizens to organize a campaign to raise wages and improve workplace conditions... The group formulates a set of claims it wants to make on the company and perhaps on the state, to pass laws requiring that the company meet those claims. The group gives itself a name and adopts a logo and perhaps a slogan to encapsulate its claims. Everyone supplies their contact information and agrees to a division of labour. The group appoints some members to

¹ Extinction Rebellion is plausibly a social campaign despite being decentralised. This is because they consist of largely autonomous groups that relate to each other in a way that might constitute a decision-making procedure. However, this is controversial. We won't use Extinction Rebellion as a primary example.

undertake information-gathering... Others design a campaign to publicize this information to the wider public... Some take charge of recruiting members... Most importantly, they agree to undertake a large-scale concerted and sustained campaign of contentious activities to pressure the companies and the state to meet the group's claim (2014, p. 11).

When the group comes together, formulates demands, and agrees to a division of labour so as to carry out the work that is required to realise the group's demands, the group has become a collective, and is thus a social campaign.

2.1.2 *Social Struggles*

Social struggles are social movements that take the form of what Collins (2019) calls "coalitions" (2019: 16 - 20). A group of agents constitutes a coalition if the following three conditions are met:

(1) each holds the same goal (preference, desire) as the others, where it is out in the open between them that the goal (preference, desire) is held by each (even though it might be held only tacitly or implicitly); (2) each is disposed to act responsively to the others (insofar as they encounter one another) to realize the goal (satisfy the preference/desire); but (3) the members are not united under a rationally operated group-level decision making procedure that can attend to moral consideration (2019, 16).

Paradigm cases of coalitions include 'environmentalists', 'the oil lobby', 'democracy-promoting states', and 'conservatives'. Social struggles are perhaps the most common prominent social movements. BLM provides one recent example. BLM started as a phrase, which became a prominent hashtag. The purpose of the phrase was to bring to light various forms of racism, such as the violence and discrimination that Black people face at the hands of the police. This is the goal that is held by each member of the coalition. Thus condition (1) is met. Its popularity rose in response to the shooting of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager, only 17 years old, by George Zimmerman. It drew even more support following the police killings of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and George Floyd. The hashtags '#BLM' and '#BlackLivesMatters' have been used tens of millions of times in online spaces such as Twitter and Facebook; and street protests have been seen across the US, UK, and Australia. These actions are members manifesting the disposition to act responsively. Thus condition (2) is met.

BLM is a mass social movement, involving tens of millions of people, that does not have a formal organising core. Thus condition (3) is met.² A majority of the movement's members do not meet with one another to discuss ideas, potential changes to law, or what banner they ought to fall under. Rather, the movement has a somewhat spontaneous character. Technological possibilities allow for syndication at a distance. People online are able to express shared grievances in response to horrific police brutality, and they do so under a common label. Moreover, from here, in-person protests can be arranged and promoted on shared online pages such as on Facebook or through information being passed through communication networks on Twitter.

From this, we can identify three ways in which the character of many contemporary social movements are influenced by recently developed technologies. Firstly, *enablement*: online technology

² There is a more formal BLM group, the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. This group is *not* the movement itself but is one collective that is a part of the broader group carrying out the BLM movement.

allows for the widespread access to and dissemination of information (e.g., posts about an injustice, or where a protest might be held, that can reach audiences across the world). Second, *coordination*: online technology has reproducible elements that enable the expression of a shared attitude and in-group membership (e.g., retweets with a hashtag or the use of a common language). Third, *control*: online technologies make it possible to engage in moral evaluation and judgement in highly visible ways. This can cause changes to social facts (e.g., calling out a particular wrong done by someone that causes them to be fired from a job or face the tribunal of law, or engaging in practices of virtue signalling that facilitate co-operation to bring about morally desirable ends).^{3,4}

2.1.3 *Social Agitations*

The third kind of group in Collins's taxonomy is "combinations" (2019: 20 - 21). Combinations are constituted by agents that together do not constitute either a collective or a coalition. Paradigm cases include 'men', 'humanity', and 'the people in this pub'. Can there be social movements that take the form of combinations? This is to ask whether there can be social movements that meet (3), but fail to meet either (1) or (2), of the necessary conditions for a group's being a coalition.

Let's focus on condition (1), that each member of the group holds the same goal as all of the others. Collins tells us that "for the goal to be truly the same amongst members, the goal must not be relativized to any of the members" (2019, 17). So where several democratic states hold the agent-relative goal of themselves being democratic, rather than the agent-neutral goal of 'democracy being promoted' more generally, these states do not meet condition (1) and so do not form a coalition (at least not around the stated agent-relative goal).

This clarification means that if there are, or can be, social movements that take the form of groups of agents that are made up of members that hold agent-relative goals, then social movements can take the form of combinations. The Arab Spring provides one plausible example. In the early 2010's, a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions spread across the Arab world. The protests began in Tunisia in response to poor economic performance, widespread corruption, and a desire for greater political participation *within Tunisia*. The protests then spread to Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, and beyond where the protestors in each state were concerned with issues *within their own states*. What we have, then, is millions of people in different countries participating in political actions that are aimed at promoting democracy and democratic values *within their own states*: some have the goal of promoting democracy in Egypt, some with promoting democracy in Libya, some with promoting democracy within Tunisia, and so on. So, the agents that made up the Arab Spring had agent-relative goals, and so do not meet condition (1), do not meet condition (3), and so are a combination.

The Arab Spring is best characterised as a combination constituted by several coalitions. There was the coalition organised around the goal 'promote democracy in Tunisia', there was the coalition organised around the goal 'promote democracy in Libya', there was the coalition organised around the goal 'promote democracy in Egypt', and so on. Each of these coalitions were constituted by agents with democracy promoting goals within their particular states, and taken together these coalitions formed the social movement that was the Arab Spring.

³ See Tuckwell (forthcoming) for discussion of the benefits of virtue signalling.

⁴ This is adapted from Dolata and Scharpe (2014, 14).

The boundaries between these categories are not always clear. Sometimes it will be hard to tell whether a particular social movement is, say, an agitation or a struggle. This is because agitations have the potential to turn into struggles, and struggles into campaigns. When members of an agitation start talking with one another, this can have the effect of refining and unifying the beliefs and values of a particular group, which can lead to the development of a common label (e.g., BLM or MeToo). After this, members might think it wise to come up with ways of interacting that allow for joint decision-making, and thus might come to constitute a collective. This developmental relationship, typically one-way, between social agitations, social struggles, and social campaigns explains some of the obligations that fall on social movements. We will return to this developmental relationship in §4.

3 The Obligations of Social Movements

We have provided a taxonomy that identifies social movement types by the kinds of groups that constitute them. Using this taxonomy, we will now argue that social campaigns, social struggles, and social agitations can all bear obligations.

3.1 The Obligations of Social Campaigns

Real-world examples of social campaigns seem hard to come by. Paradigm examples of social movements often involve large numbers of actors extended across the world. These actors are unlikely to meet the conditions for being a collective. However, Anderson's (2014) anti-sweatshop example makes clear that social campaigns are possible. In Anderson's case, a group consisting of citizens form a collective in order to oppose unjust labour practices. In terms of our taxonomy, the social movement described by Anderson is a social campaign. If Anderson is right that the example she provides is properly described as a social movement, then social campaigns are in fact common.

The idea that collective agents can have moral obligations is widely accepted in the literature. Peter French (1979, 1984), Toni Erskine (2003), Margaret Gilbert (2006), Christian List and Philip Pettit (2011), Tracy Isaacs (2011), and many others have all made the case for this. Stephanie Collins (2013, 2019) and Holly Lawford-Smith (2015) go further in arguing that collective agents are the only kinds of groups that can have obligations. If collectives can have obligations, and social campaigns are social movements that take the form of collectives, then social campaigns can have obligations.

When do collectives have obligations? Invoking capacity as a source of obligations (e.g., Singer 1972), we can say that collectives have obligations when there is some morally desirable end that they have the capacity to bring about. Applied to the example of a social campaign just described, we can say that Anderson's citizen-led anti-sweatshop collective has a reasonable chance of bringing about the morally desirable end of workers enjoying greater employment justice. Given that the group *can* do this, they should. So, we have an example of a social group that carries out a social campaign having an obligation. This story can be generalised to show that social campaigns often have obligations.

How are the obligations of collectives to be discharged? Collectives have mechanisms for assigning roles to members. The role that a member finds themselves in determines what their part is in ensuring that the collective level obligation is fulfilled. Different authors spell this basic idea out in different ways. Holly Lawford-Smith argues that there are different kinds of obligations that “devolve from collectives to members in different ways” (2012, 453). Sean Aas says that “when a group is obligated to do something,

its members are obligated to be prepared to do their part in that thing if (they ought to be sufficiently confident that) others will do theirs as well" (2015, 10). Stephanie Collins says that "[i]f a collective has a duty to see to it that X, then each member, because they are a member, has a duty to use their role, if possible and as appropriate, with a view to seeing to it that X" (2019, 196 – 197). We do not need to adjudicate between these different proposals here. What's important to note is that the *members* of a group social campaigns have member obligations in virtue of the fact that the *group itself* has obligations.

Applying the idea of *member obligations* to the social campaign identified by Anderson, we can say that the individual members of the group have member obligations, and the content of these obligations are dictated by the roles assigned to members such that they should do their part in bringing about greater labour market justice. Provided that the members of Anderson's citizen-led anti-sweatshop group discharge their member obligations, then the group will have fulfilled its obligations too.

3.2 The Obligations of Social Struggles

Can social movements that take the form of non-agential groups bear obligations? Let's start with social struggles, and then turn our attention to social agitations.

To focus our discussion, let's take the example of the MeToo movement, which is a movement against sexual harassment and sexual violence against women. In 2017, following a high number of allegations of predatory behaviour by Harvey Weinstein, actress Alyssa Milano tweeted, "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem". (It was later revealed that the phrase 'MeToo' was initially used by Tarana Burke in 2006 in an attempt to promote 'empowerment through empathy' amongst women of colour who have been sexually abused). Other high-profile women joined in, with responses from Gwyneth Paltrow, Jennifer Lawrence, and Uma Thurman. Millions of people started using the hashtag. The initial goal was to empower and to express solidarity with women who have been victims of and who are vulnerable to sexual harassment and sexual violence. The effects went further in sparking discussions of the need for a change to social norms relating to the treatment of women.

MeToo is a social struggle: it is a social movement that takes the form of a coalition. The agents that are parts of MeToo each share the same goal, are disposed to act in response to one another with a view to realising the goal, but are not united under a group-level decision-making procedure.

Can MeToo have obligations? A position that is gaining increased prominence in the literature on collective obligations is that non-agent groups can indeed have obligations. A representative sample of philosophers who take this position includes: Virginia Held (1970); Tracy Isaacs (2011); Larry May (1992); Bill Wringe (2010, 2014); David Miller (2012); Felix Pinkert (2014); Anne Schwenkenbecher (2013, 2014, 2019); Gunnar Bjornsson (2014); Aas (2015), and; Paul-Mikhail Catapang Podosky (2021).

Our preferred view of how it is that a non-agent group can bear obligations is offered by Wringe (2010, 2014). A concern some have raised (e.g., Lawford-Smith 2015) about attributing obligations to non-agent groups relates to whether they're able to act *as a group*. The concern is that when they act, it seems that they do not act together but rather as separate and stand-alone individuals. And because a non-agent group cannot act as a group, there is no plausible sense in which the group could discharge an obligation as a group.

But according to Wringe, non-agential groups can discharge, and hence bear, obligations. The difference between the obligations of agential and non-agential groups is that whereas the addressee of an obligation

for the former is the group itself, the addressee of an obligation for the latter are the individuals that constitute the group:

“in the case of claims about collective obligations which fall on collectives which are not agents, we should take the addressee of the claims to be the individuals who make up the collective rather than the collective itself” (2010, 225)

Of course, no individual member acquires the obligation bestowed on the group. Rather, the individuals that make up the group acquire obligations to do things that, when performed, “constitute fulfilment of the collective obligation” (2010, 227). Podosky describes the same idea in different terms: “individual group members acquire obligations that are non-identical to, but grounded in, a group-level obligation; and fulfilment of the individual-level obligations constitutes fulfilment of the group-level obligation” (Podosky 2021, 2017). Groups can have obligations that supervene on individual obligations; individuals acquire *contributory* obligations in virtue of being members of groups that themselves have obligations.⁵

Collins herself, whose taxonomy of groups we are using, argues that non-agential groups, whether coalitions or combinations, cannot have obligations (2019, 85 - 94). We won’t examine Collins’s argument in detail here, but we will note that a crucial premise in her argument has come under pressure. The key premise says that in order for an entity to be an obligation bearer, it must have the ability to fulfil at least one obligation. *Fulfilling an obligation* is a technical notion that means doing an obligation for the right reason. Doing something for the right reason means making a decision. Since non-agential groups can’t make decisions, lacking decision-making procedures, they can’t have obligations.

Collins defends the key premise by saying that it provides the best explanation for why average adult humans have obligations, but that babies, dogs and tables lack them (2019, 93). But, as Wringe (2020, 122) points out, it’s not clear why the key premise is a better explanation for this than the fact that average adult humans are capable of performing obligations (i.e., acting in accordance with obligation either by fulfilling it or in some other way) in ways that are non-flukily and relatively reliable across a range of circumstances whereas dogs, tables, and young children are not. The availability of this alternative explanation undermines Collins’s defence of the key premise.

What obligations does the MeToo movement have? This depends on MeToo’s capacities. Let’s focus on narrative capacity, which is the capacity of a movement to get attention for and uptake of its grievances and goals. Tufekci uses ‘capacity’ and ‘ability’ interchangeably to mean what Collins (2019, 71) means by ‘ability’. For Collins, to say that a non-agential group has an ability to X is to say that it meets two conditions. First, the group’s members have individual abilities to perform actions that contribute to X. Second, if enough members of the group do their contributory parts, then X will be (robustly) secured. Kai Speikermann (2021, 716) puts Collins’s account of non-agential group abilities in helpful slogan form: for non-agential ability, “what is needed is sufficient *participation* in a suitable *choreography*.”

Applied to MeToo, its narrative capacity consists in a large number of members who have individual abilities to, given their own personal experiences, speak authoritatively about sexual harassment and sexual violence. The fact that members speak out with authority means that they are able to successfully

⁵ Social struggles can have group agents at their core. However, the movement is not identical to the core. Rather, it is the core *plus* all of the other group members. For example, BLM has an organised group at its core that organises protests and runs a website, but that group is not the social movement we call “Black Lives Matter.” It is a *part* of the movement.

invite, encourage, and embolden others to speak out about their own personal experiences. Upon seeing and hearing members share their stories, more people came to join the movement and share their stories too. This pattern of individual actions raised awareness of the pervasiveness of problems of sexual harassment and sexual violence at all levels of society, ultimately leading to perpetrators being held accountable, and to the shifting of social, legal, and workplace norms.

Essential to the narrative capacity of MeToo are the digital technologies at its disposal. Coalitions do not have the formal distribution mechanisms that collectives possess for assigning tasks to individual group members. But the availability of digital technologies means that social movements carried out by coalitions have tools that can be used to distribute jobs to members with a view to fulfilling group level obligations. Sometimes making an announcement on a social media platform is all that's needed to assign jobs. This can be a particularly effective distribution mechanism when the person who uses it has a large following. When Alyssa Milano tweeted "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me Too' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem" she was utilising features of Twitter to distribute jobs to members of the coalition, where those members could then perform their jobs and see to it that the collective obligation was fulfilled.

It is fair to say that MeToo put sexual violence firmly on the political agenda. This did not by itself bring about the end goal, which is something like 'ending sexual harassment and sexual violence', but getting the word out and convincing people that the issue is important is an essential step in bringing about the goal. The MeToo movement has resulted in some morally good outcomes: some US states have banned nondisclosure agreements that cover sexual harassment; some US states introduced greater protections for workers; US Congress reformed its processes for staffers reporting sexual harassment; some survivors have received financial restitution (North 2019), and; there has been an increase in the reporting of sex crimes (Cummings 2020). These achievements would have been far less likely without MeToo exercising its narrative capacity. So, given that MeToo had this capacity to bring about, or bring us closer to, morally desirable ends, we can intelligibly say that it had obligations to exercise its capacity.

3.3 The Obligations of Social Agitations

We have explored the idea that social campaigns and social struggles have obligations given their capacities. Let us now consider whether *social agitations* can bear obligations.

In 2.1.3., we said that the Arab Spring is an example of a social agitation in that it was a combination that consisted of several coalitions. It's not hard to see that the coalitions that were parts of the Arab Spring movement had capacities. The coalition organised around the goal 'promote democracy in Egypt' had electoral capacity. Facilitated by social media, large numbers of people were mobilised to gather in Tahrir Square to demand that President Hosni Mubarak resign. 18 days after the protests began the military announced that Mubarak had resigned. But this was a capacity of the Egypt based coalition that was a constitutive part of the Arab Spring movement, rather than a capacity of the Arab Spring itself. It's hard to see what capacities the Arab Spring itself had that are not reducible to the capacities of one its constituent coalitions. So, while social agitations can in principle have capacities, and so obligations, in principle, it is hard to think of examples in practice.

Tufekci makes the important point that although digital technologies enhance the capacities of social movements in various ways, they can also have disempowering side effects. Organising by digital means can bring large numbers of people out into the streets giving movements substantial narrative,

disruptive, or electoral capacity. However, such movements often lack decision-making structures and mechanisms for collective action. This has often resulted in what Tufekci calls *tactical freeze*, which is a point at which a movement is unable to agree upon new paths to take. Many digitally coordinated left wing movements have adopted leaderless horizontalist structures and are mistrustful of more hierarchical forms of organisation. But leaderless movements are limited in their capacity to negotiate when the opportunity arises. After Mubarak resigned following the demands of the Tahrir Square protestors, the military announced that its own council was to take over. Those in Tahrir Square did not have the structure that was required to facilitate deliberation, to resolve disagreements, or to negotiate with the military council. The country ended up under full military rule that was just as brutal as Mubarak's, rather than transitioning to democracy (Tufekci 2017, 77 -82).

In order to overcome tactical freeze, social movements can become more organised. If social agitations become social struggles, and social struggles become social campaigns, then they can develop the capacities that are needed to deliberate and negotiate, the exercise of which can get them closer to the realisation of their ultimate morally laudable goals. When social movements have the capacity for such capacity enhancing transformations, then they have obligations to undergo transformation. These obligations are similar to Collins's (2013) collectivization obligations, which are individual obligations to form collectives that are able to realise morally important ends. The difference is that whereas Collins suggests that it is individuals that have obligations to form collectives, we're suggesting that social movements of one type can have obligations to transform themselves into social movements of other types.

What about social movements that are not justice-promoting, like the men's rights movement (MRM)? Do they have obligations? For the most part, we think not. While the MRM has capacities, given their fundamental commitments they are not capacities to bring about morally desirable ends. Rather, the exercise of their capacities might make it even harder to realise justice. The MRM has, for example, narrative capacity in some contexts. But it's a capacity to set the agenda in a way that makes justice even harder to achieve. If non-justice-promoting social movements have obligations at all, then they are going to be obligations to dissolve themselves entirely. We might go further and say that after dissolving themselves the members have obligations to form a new social movement that is justice-promoting. But once this happens, they are a new justice-promoting social movement that is a candidate for bearing obligations, not a non-justice-promoting social movement that has obligations to promote justice.

4. Oppressed Member Obligations

We have argued that there are three distinct types of social movements that map on to different types of groups: social campaigns, social struggles, and social agitations. Each can have capacities that ground group-level obligations. In this final section, we will argue that given the way that individuals acquire obligations from being a part of social movements, members of such movements who are from oppressed groups come to bear obligations to resist their own oppression. Call these *oppressed member obligations*.

Let's begin with social campaigns. Some members of social campaigns to whom roles are assigned and who have member obligations are members of the oppressed groups that suffer from the oppression that the collective has obligations to act against. This means that in virtue of being members of such groups, oppressed members have member obligations to resist their own oppression. Consider a version of Anderson's anti-sweatshop worker case in which some of the group members are members of the group suffering from poor working conditions that the group came into existence to improve. Those members

have member obligations to do their part in bringing about that the anti-sweatshop worker group fulfils its obligation to promote employment justice. That is, those members have obligations to resist the injustice that they themselves face. This provides a novel argument for the conclusion that members of oppressed groups have obligations to resist their own oppression – such members have *oppressed member obligations*.

Ashwini Vasanthakumar (2020) taxonomizes existing arguments for victims of oppression having duties to resist their own oppression into *self-regarding* and *other-regarding* accounts. The former are duties to resist one's own oppression and act in ways that serve one's own interests because doing so serves one's own interests. The latter are duties to resist one's own oppression because doing so serves other people's interests.

On the self-regarding side, Carol Hay (2011) argues that victims' duties are grounded in the obligation that they have to protect their own rational natures which are compromised by oppression. Daniel Silvermint (2012) argues that victims have a duty to resist because failing to do so shows insufficient regard for one's own well-being. On the other-regarding side, Ann Cudd (2006) argues that victims have duties to resist their own oppression because by failing to resist one directly harms others by signalling acceptance of the status quo. Ashwini Vasanthakumar (2018, 470) argues that victims of injustice have special epistemic capacities for knowing about injustice *qua* victims of injustice and that these capacities ground victims' duties to testify to those who are better placed to combat injustice.

Oppressed member obligations are other-regarding. The obligations of social movements we have been discussing are capacity-based assistance obligations to bring about good outcomes. This means oppressed member obligations that are grounded in the obligations of social movements are capacity-based assistance obligations too.

Arguments for victims having obligations to resist their oppression have been criticised for having vague content and lacking clear action guidance (Vasanthakumar 2020, 7). For example, Vasanthakumar (2018) argues that victims of injustice have duties to testify, but to what, to who, and when should they testify? The problem of vague content does not arise when considering oppressed member obligations that fall out of the obligations of social campaigns. As long as the collective is clear about what the roles of its members are and what responsibilities are attached to the roles, then it will be quite clear what obligations oppressed members have.

We can make the same move for social struggles and social agitations. If a social struggle or a social agitation has an obligation, where the obligation is discharged by distributing the group-level obligation to individual members, and the members of the social movement are members of oppressed groups, then members of oppressed groups have obligations to resist their own oppression. MeToo is a social movement that has obligations to exercise its capacities with a view to mitigating injustices faced by women. For the MeToo coalition to discharge its obligations, some members of MeToo must take actions that have them do their part in resisting injustices that they themselves suffer from. Thus, some members of the MeToo movement have obligations to resist their own oppression.

A common objection to arguments for victims having obligations to resist their own oppression is that such obligations are too demanding. This might be a demand on material, social, or epistemic resources from those who are less likely to possess an adequate amount of them. Fulfilling such obligations can involve the risk of backlash whether in the form of harassment from online trolls when engaging in resistance online or police violence when participating in protests. (See Vasanthakumar 2020, 5 – 6 for discussion). However, because being a member of a social movement is optional, this objection cannot be made against the argument we have made.

Participation in social movements being optional might be thought to imply that oppressed member obligations are disconnected from the fact that their bearers are oppressed. Oppressed individuals incur oppressed member obligations as a result of freely deciding to join movements that just so happen to be movements that target their own oppression, and so their oppression doesn't *ground* their obligations. But it's important to distinguish the grounds of the obligations from their content. While the grounds of oppressed member obligations is members choosing to join a movement, their contents are often connected to facts about members' oppression. This is because in order for a group to fulfil its obligations it must exercise its abilities, and sometimes the group only has the relevant abilities in virtue of oppressed members exercising abilities they have *given* their oppression. This means that discharging oppressed member obligations require the exercise of abilities that are possessed because one is oppressed.

To see this more clearly, consider again the case of MeToo. MeToo's narrative capacity is explained by the fact that its members have abilities to authoritatively speak out about harassment, and members only have their abilities to authoritatively speak out about harassment *because* they have been harassed. So, in order for MeToo to fulfil obligations to exercise narrative capacity, oppressed members of the movement have to exercise capacities they have because they have suffered from oppression. Their oppressed member obligations are thus importantly connected to their oppression.

Things won't always work out this way. Sometimes the exercise of a movement's capacity only requires a subset of the movement's oppressed member to exercise individually held capacities that they have *qua* oppression, leaving other oppressed members to exercise capacities that are not related to their oppression. What is important is that there is a subset of oppressed member obligations that have contents that are importantly connected to their bearers' oppression.

5 Conclusion

Social movements involve groups that vary in structure. There are social campaigns, which are social movements involving collectives; there are social struggles, which are social movements involving coalitions; and there are social agitations, which are social movements involving combinations. All three types of social movement can have obligations. Which obligations they have depend on their capacities. Group-level obligations of social movements entail member obligations. A consequence is that when oppressed individuals are members of social movements that have obligations to act against the same oppression that said members suffer from, then members of oppressed groups have obligations to resist their own oppression.

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