Frames in Collective Action: Case of Online #Boycott

Completed Research

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Abstract

Online platforms are being increasingly appropriated for setting socio-political narratives (both offline and online). We investigate one such case study from India where a nationalist rhetoric took the form of a call to boycott an e-commerce company, Snapdeal, endorsed by Aamir Khan, an Indian celebrity. We term this a case of online collective action where Twitter users banded together to uninstall/downvote the Snapdeal app on Playstore. Through the use of "frame analysis" - a sociological device, we seek to understand the different "arguments" and "calls to action" that appear in the process of online collective action and how effective were they in terms of user engagement. We investigate these through a deductive coding process. We identify six major logical fallacies and three primary calls to action strategies and present their engagement metrics. We also discuss the role of frames in setting political narratives online and offer learnings for designing online civic media tools.

Keywords

Online collective action, social media boycott, framing theory, civic media

Introduction

Social media and online platforms are increasingly being used by a section of political fraternity to set agendas and facilitate actions supporting a political narrative. ICTs aid mobilisation and messaging efforts through affordance of large scale and quick communication, helping people with similar activist agendas to connect and pool resources for collective action (Castells et.al, 2011). In recent times, we have seen many socio-political movements like #BlackLivesMatter, Occupy Wall Street, Arab Spring, #JeSuisCharlie with strong online digital traces. Users engaged with these movements via Twitter and Facebook to provide real time information on live events, in outreach and mobilisation efforts, and utilising internet platforms as a pressure building exercise appealing to the international community.

An intriguing aspect of these social movements with strong digital traces are the narratives and dialogues expressed in the online space. These dialogues are studied by sociologists through a framing process: a study of ideologies, incidents, and interaction between actors within that socio-political movement (Benford et.al, 2000, Goffman, 1974, Reese et.al, 2001). The process leads to formation of frames that are extremely relevant to the study of online collective action. These are utilised by different stakeholders to indulge and make a sense of the arguments in the ongoing social movement they are engaged in. (Rettie, 2004) The arguments are moulded and shaped with time incorporating competing ideas while navigating complex narratives around a specific agenda or movement. For instance, in #BlackLivesMatter the frames which
emerged were regarding police brutality that also gave rise to a parallel discourse countering this framing and messaging in the form of #BlueLivesMatter (Stewart et.al 2017). Hence, the discourse and the counter discourse, were both formed in the light of the framings initially adopted to sustain the movement. There is a large body of work (Benford et.al, 2000, Bennett et.al, 2012, Rettie, 2004) which discusses how these frames are created, disseminated and interpreted in the online space. It is framed as the talking point for the public, and in due course, picked up both by the mainstream and alternative media. Frames also act as the node around which the different beliefs of the people who have a stake in the process are moulded and are also challenged.

While scholars of communication and social movements highlight the importance of frames and “schmetas of interpretation” (Goffman, 1974, Rettie, 2004) in sustaining and negotiating different ideas in these movements, we investigate their role in mobilising online users to partake in collective action. For this purpose, we look at a case study from India where a nationalist rhetoric took the form of a call to boycott an e-commerce company, Snapdeal, endorsed by Aamir Khan, an Indian celebrity. On 23 November 2015, he expressed his reservations and concerns over growing “intolerance” and religious animosity in India. This statement, picked up and circulated by the national media, led to an outrage by a section of Twitter users affiliated to right wing nationalist and religious groups. The following days saw pressure building tactics to counter the “intolerance” narrative by a segment of Twitter users calling to boycott Snapdeal and by extension, Aamir Khan’s endorsement of the e-commerce company. This boycotting behaviour demanded the Indian public to downvote/uninstall the app on the Google playstore (play.google.com) with a motive to pressure Snapdeal into withdrawing his brand-ambassador contract (we henceforth call it the Snapdeal-Aamir Khan incident).

As studies (Klein et.al, 2004, Li et.al, 2018) inform us, consumer boycotts are performed to force companies to make fair choices in their business policies. While the efficacy of this tactic is contested (Sen et.al, 2001, Neilson, 2001), in our case study of the Snapdeal-Aamir Khan incident, the twitter outrage coupled with downvoting and uninstalling on the Google Playstore eventually lead to Snapdeal not renewing the contract with Aamir Khan. The Government of India, who had previously recruited Aamir Khan as brand ambassador for tourism in India, also dropped him post the twitter outrage. Thus, the socio-political implications for the Snapdeal-Aamir Khan incident spilled outside of the online space. It also triggered similar boycott calls (#BoycottAmazon, #BoycottSnapchat, #BoycottYatra, #BoycottRepublic) through downvoting and uninstalling apps associated with specific internet companies (OP staff, 2016, FP staff, 2017, Garima, 2018). Our paper substantiates the recurring behaviour of corporate boycotts through downvoting applications on play stores through a deeper analysis of the Snapdeal-Aamir Khan incident.

Since the entire life cycle, from outaging to uninstalling is uniquely online, it presents us with an opportunity to extend our understanding of the framing process in encouraging users to partake in collective action (in our case, uninstalling/downvoting of apps). We extend the work of Arif et.al (2018), Sheraz et.al (2012), Steward et.al (2017), most of which has so far been to understand competing frames polarisation in users, misinformation seeping into social media conversation and other work on framing processes in formal activist organisations (Cornelissen, 2014). Our work extends the above range of understanding by analysing the type of frames and narratives aiding users to mobilise and partake in an (online) action. In light of this we enquire the following research questions -

1) What kinds of tweets-based frames are the most influential, in terms of effective messaging for user engagement in the controversy?

2) Which Calls to Action strategies influenced users the most to partake in boycott behaviour?

We conduct a mixed method and interpretive analysis for these questions (explained later in the paper).

**Background**

**Role of frames in social movements:**

In sociological studies, frames play an important role in understanding how people make sense of competing narratives, rising out of structural or non-structural forces (Benford et.al, 2000, Bennett et.al, 2012, Morris
et.al, 2004). As Goffman(1974), argued, frames help to “locate, identify, understand and navigate” world and social situations at large. In context of social movements/collective action, they perform the process of condensing the complexities in ways such that it mobilises people, garner support, “demobilize antagonists”. Social movement scholars view frames as much more than just sources of text. They are niches within which users actively engage with ideologies and with each other, in order to allow for a continuously evolving definition of the social movement. Frames are employed to engage people with action oriented-messages, often condensing a larger idea into an idea for wider consumption (Bennet et.al, 2012, Brown et.al, 2017, Castells, 2011). This process has the ability to identify the main problem being addressed within the movement and urge actors within the movement to act on repairing/ responding to it. It allows actors to emotionally or rationally relate to a socio-political situation (movement) which is in dire need for a collective action (Brown et.al, 2017, Castells, 2011). This then facilitates the most influential arguments and actors to build a narrative that effectively mobilizes actors for an action.

In the past few years, the process of framing has been effective in explaining social movements with digital traces such as #BlackLivesMatter, #OccupyWallStreet, #JeSuisCharlie, #Kony2012. HCI and CSCW research have shown recent interest in understanding evolving frames of such movements online (Arif et.al, 2018, Wilson et.al, 2018). Stewart et.al(2018) utilised an integrated networked gatekeeping and framing lens, to examine how the #BlackLivesMatter frames were created and contested by supporters and critics on the political left and right. Meraz et.al (2013) analysed networked framing in context of the Egypt uprisings in 2012, and how significant frames were “revised and rearticulated” by elites and non-elites. Similarly, other work by Wilson et.al, Arif et.al (2018, 2017) studied how frames can function as ways for “information operations” - to undermine the traditional information systems and manipulate civic discourse.

We contribute to this growing field in HCI and CSCW, by finding which tweet based frames appear in the Aamir-Snapdeal incident, and how well they resonate with the users to encourage them to partake in the boycotting activity.

**Online collective action:**

In context of social movements, the typical understanding of collective action has been with organising on-ground, taking part in protests and similar such acts. Social computing has extended this affordance, to include different ways to coordinate and conduct collective action. A few examples of such socio-technical systems are e-petitions (Macintosh et.al, 2004), and crowdsourcing systems (Doan et.al, 2011). Additionally, online platforms also get appropriated in different ways for this. Studies by Flores et.al (2018) highlight how the subreddit r/The_Donald is utilised as a ground for mobilising the redditors for actions online such as rigging online polls, or collectively trolling people of different political inclinations. There have also been instances of collectively altering the reviews of a book (SanFilippo et.al, 2017), collective doxxing and harassment of female journalists and gamers (Massanari, 2017) on reddit and Twitter. All these incidents highlight how group of users utilise the affordance provided by online platforms to collectively pursue their ideological agendas.

As social computing systems and platforms are gaining traction and have real world implications, it has been a challenge to discern the nature of effective messaging and framing techniques that lead to a successful online collective action. It is in this challenging area that we place our findings. We also provide design implications for interfaces and socio-technical platforms which aim to engage people for different causes.

**Timeline of the incident:**

We provide a brief timeline on the events as they unfolded in the Snapdeal-Aamir Khan controversy.

23 Nov 2015: Aamir Khan, a popular film celebrity from India, makes a remark on the "growing intolerance in India" and how his wife (Kiran Rao) suggested moving out.
24 Nov 2015: Statement picked up by the media and Twitter, leads to outrage over the said remark. "Nationalist" sentiments claim to be hurt over the remark.

25 Nov 2015: Twitter users troll Aamir Khan and begin a call to boycott Snapdeal (a brand endorsed by Aamir Khan). Users begin to give poor reviews, rating and uninstalling the app on the playstore with the hope to leverage power as consumers and build pressure over Snapdeal to remove Aamir Khan.

7 Jan 2016: Aamir Khan loses Govt. of India’s Incredible India ambassador contract

5 Feb 2016: Snapdeal does not renew Aamir Khan’s contract.

Data Collection
Since the Aamir-Snapdeal controversy played out on Twitter, leading to an act of collective downvoting/uninstalling on app-store, we source our data from these two platforms. Primarily we gather tweets on the controversy and then find users who engaged in the activity on playstore. Tweets inform us of the frames that emerged in the controversy. We relate these frames and how they were engaged with by the users who partook in some degree of boycotting the Snapdeal company.

Tweets collection:
We gather our data for our analysis by running the Twitter API and employing other search and retrieval techniques such as using Twitter Scraper - an open source front-end retrieval tool which performs queries on Twitter's advanced search platform. Since, the twitter API doesn't retrieve all the data, it was important to additionally engage with other methods of extraction. We gather tweets for the controversy from 20 November 2015 to 3 March 2016, using a seeding process. We initiate gathering tweets with seed hashtags of #AamirKhan and #Intolerance. As and when the tweets come, we increase our set of hashtags and add the ones that co-occur with the seed hashtags like #BootOutSnapdeal, #AppWapsi, #IStandWithAamirKhan and #IntoleranceDebate. We also ran boolean queries such as "aamir AND snapdeal", "aamir OR intolerance". It is also noted that running a search in the scraper or the API returned results for substrings and were non case sensitive. Searching for "#Aamir" returns results for aamir, AAMIR, #Aamir. We converted the tweet into a lower case string, and tokenized them using Stanford's NLTK library (Manning).

In order to ensure that the tweets used in our analysis reflect our lists in our topics of interest, we ran it through our own post-filtering process. We run our tweets through a regular expression built to check if the tweet contained at least one of our keywords and hashtags. All these tweets were then selected in our data set.

The data set consisted of 117632 number of tweets, by 39461 number of users. Of these 52127 number of tweets were NOT retweets (but include quote retweeting). This doesn’t imply that tweets which were not retweets were unique tweets, as we also observe that there were tweets which were copied across handles (indicating co-ordination and spamming)

Identifying cross-platform users:
To study the kind of framing that resonated with users who possibly engaged in some level of boycotting behaviour, we aim to extract a list of such user handles. Our metrics aren't exhaustive, and they are limited by the ability to verify information on online platforms but serve as a useful method to study user engagement.

We employ our list of user handles from our twitter dataset and gather users who also wrote reviews and gave poor rating on the App store (using Heedzy for App store reviews and ratings). We scraped this list with the belief that if a user handle is @manoj_kumar, and they go by the name of Manoj_Kumar on App store reviews, they are likely to be same as they engaged in similar activity of tweeting in Aamir-Snapdeal controversy as well as uninstalling/downvoting as a part of the controversy. We only do this if “Manoj_Kumar” (or any variations of it) occur only once.
We also identified user handles (by means of regular expression search string) which made claims of uninstalling on twitter such as “Just uninstalled Snapdeal” and added it to our list of users who possibly engaged in collective action behaviour. A lot of such users also attached a screenshot along with their tweet. Overall we find 4236 users who partook in some degree of boycotting behaviour. There were 4521 handles.

Findings

**RQ1 - What kinds of tweets-based frames are the most influential, in terms of effective messaging for user engagement in the controversy?**

Since this is a controversy where different arguments are posed to challenge and direct narratives (against or pro Aamir Khan and Snapdeal), we aim to analyse what broad arguments appeared in our dataset. To do this we conduct a thematic analysis of tweets and code them deductively using a “logical fallacy” framework popular in STS studies (Copi, 1953). We call these tweets-based frames and then calculate user engagement metrics through RTs and Favoriting of such tweets.

The two authors of this paper conducted the deductive analysis inspired by the framework. We narrowed the frames that appear in our dataset into, what came up as six logical fallacies- (1) Denial (2) False Dilemma (3) False Equivalence (4) Suspicion (5) Whataboutery and (6) Anecdotal. They were agreed upon with a Cohen’s kappa of 0.79. The number of tweets relevant to our study were 23981 tweets.

We outline each category and present a representative tweet alongside.

**Denial:** Tweets in this category made an argument that if they (the user) didn’t feel that intolerance existed, then Aamir’s claim of intolerance was wrong.

"There is no intolerance as I can’t see it."

**False Dilemma:** These tweets presented a false comparison in which one must choose.

"If there is intolerance then he should move to another country (Pakistan)"

**False Equivalence:** Such tweets made an unjust equivalence between being Hindu (his wife) and being safe because India is a Hindu majority country.

"Aamir Khan who has a Hindu wife, can’t feel unsafe in a Hindu majority country."

**Suspicion:** These tweets cast suspicion over motives of Aamir Khan’s statement. Usual suspicions were over movie promotions, publicity or being agent of the opposition party.

"The intolerance remark is for publicity."

**Whataboutery:** Such tweets engaged in whataboutery, a popular political tactic. These tweets aimed to shift the discourse from Muslim minority being under threat to cases when Hindu majority are unsafe.

"What about intolerance when Hindus are attacked."

**Anecdotal:** These tweets sought to undermine the intolerance statement by citing an anecdotal evidence.

"If he (Aamir Khan) can freely cite his opinion, then there can’t be intolerance."

Results

As we are interested in which frames that emerged in the discourse set the tone for mobilisation and resonated the most with the boycotters, we analyse engagement metrics in terms of retweets and favourites. The descriptive statistics for all the arguments and their engagements are in table- I.

We see that denial and anecdotal arguments resonated the most in terms of both retweets and favourite counts. There was a statistically significant difference between the groups for retweets (ANOVA (21.02, p<0.05)) and favourite counts (ANOVA (41.2, p<0.05)).
This could be explained by their deep held beliefs which deny the existence of intolerance in the country, and their anecdotal experiences of not facing any consequences of effects of religious animosity. These frames hence align with their nationalist world view. This probably also encourages them to partake in action of boycotting to challenge the growing narrative of intolerance (propagated by Aamir Khan) by uninstalling/down-voting.

Amongst retweets we see that, tweets in False dilemma were highly retweeted. Tweets under false dilemma where Aamir Khan was expected to make a choice between moving out of the country or accepting things the way they are, had very strong in their language too. This could explain the high retweet behaviour, as retweeting as a practice is also linked to the emotion conveyed in the tweet (Svelch et.al, 2016, ).

Amongst the tweets which were highly favourited, we observe that tweets under Whataboutery were highly favoured. Whataboutery as a political tactic is very common and resonates with people as a defensive response. This high favoriting behaviour could be explained by this. However, tweets which were framed as a Suspicion over Aamir Khan’s motives of making the statement weren’t received very well(neither in terms of RTs or favourites). It could be believed that people on Twitter aren’t doubting the intention of making the statement but engaging with the argument itself and countering it with frames such as of denial of his experience, whilst countering with their own anecdotal experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument based frames</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets Mean: 156</td>
<td>S.D: 32.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourites Mean: 321.07</td>
<td>S.D: 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Dilemma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets Mean: 340</td>
<td>S.D: 46.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourites Mean: 266.78</td>
<td>S.D: 15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Equivalence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets Mean: 18.02</td>
<td>S.D: 2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourites Mean: 24.8</td>
<td>S.D: 3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets Mean: 9</td>
<td>S.D: 3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourites Mean: 42.29</td>
<td>S.D: 7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whataboutery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets Mean: 91</td>
<td>S.D: 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourites Mean: 187</td>
<td>S.D: 21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets Mean: 228</td>
<td>S.D: 34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourites Mean: 119</td>
<td>S.D: 23.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for different argument based frames

**RQ2- Which Calls to Action strategies influenced users the most to partake in boycott behaviour?**

We borrow the literature from Fleishman(1988) and thematically and deductively code our tweets in the dataset which relate to calls to action behaviour. We see that three primary frames emerge in our dataset. These three primary frames under our study are Direct call strategy, Progress visibility strategy, and
Solidarity strategy. Cohen’s kappa was 0.59 with an inter rater reliability of 71.3%. The tweets under study were 3421 tweets.

**Direct Strategy:** These tweets made direct calls for action, and clearly outlined the steps on how to make an effective boycott statement by uninstalling/down-voting the Snapdeal app on the playstore.

"Go to Play Store, Select @snapdeal and rate them 1 Star * and comment that it is only because of @aamirkhan."

**Progress visibility strategy:** Tweets in this category were the ones which were indicating real(or, fake) progress on the uninstalling and down-voting process. These tweets were intended to present a picture that a successful boycott movement was happening, and others must take part too.

"Wow 85,000 people angry with #AamirKhan’s hypocrisy, uninstalled @snapdeal app. #AppWapsi will hurt badly!"

**Solidarity strategy:** Tweets in this category seemed to indicate a solidarity amongst people who were against Aamir Khan, Snapdeal and had pro-nationalist sentiments and what they were supposed to do to avenge it.

"People who are united against #AAMIRKHAN statement must uninstall @Snapdeal."

**Results**

We calculate which calls to action framing resonated the most with this set of users (the ones who engaged in some level of boycott and uninstalling behaviour). We employ the use of retweets and their favourites to understand their engagement.

In terms of retweets, we find that most of the users engaged with direct strategy at least once. 49.02 % of users retweeted at least one tweet from this category. In terms of favoriting, we see that the engagement is much lower than retweets for this category. Only 26% favorited at least one tweet from the direct strategy. This is possibly because, while retweeting a direct call might reach new users and encourage them to partake in the boycott, favoriting doesn’t amplify the tweet to all the followers of a user.

Around 38.09% of users retweeted at least one tweet announcing some real (or unreal) progress of the movement (progress visibility strategy) while 37.2% favorited it. We see that the progress visibility strategy, trumps over the direct strategy in favouring. Progress visibility encourages people, as it informs them that if they partook in the activity, the effort won’t go waste.

Only 13.9% of these users retweeted tweets indicating solidarity (solidarity strategy). The favoriting count however was the highest amongst all other categories at 41.2%. It suggests that while users might not see much merit in retweeting a tweet with a call to action in terms of solidarity, the sentiment of solidarity resonates with them.

Table-II outlines the descriptive statistics for each call to action styles. The median number of users who **retweeted** the tweets in each category stand at - Direct-521, Solidarity-340, Progress indicating - 91. We find that there was a significant difference between the strategies ANOVA (33.09 , p<0.002). Direct strategy seems to have the highest engagement across all strategies.

In **favoriting** behaviour, the median number of users who retweeted the tweets in each category stand at - Direct-121, Solidarity - 221, Progress indicating - 140 .We find that there was a significant difference between the strategies ANOVA (45.02, p<0.001). In favourites, Solidarity appears to be the most engaging amongst all the strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage users having RT at least once</th>
<th>Percentage users having Favorited at least once</th>
<th>Median number of Users (Change this Heading)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Strategy</td>
<td>49.02%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>Retweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Median: 521</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Favourites</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Median: 121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2025 Americas Conference on Information Systems, Cancun, 2019
We have potential to reach more people wherein people amplify it to other potential participants too. Often online done clearly Calls Our Designing for civic media 

They “indicating users.. disseminated of arguments socio-political been challenged from et.al initial challenge narrative for our analysis of the frames that emerged in our dataset, we see that the narrative of “intolerance” was challenged by the nationalist and political right on the platform by employing different arguments. These initial frames which came up in Aamir-Snapdeal incident, set the stage for potential action later. As Bennet et.al (2012) and Benford et.al (2000) discuss, these frames appear and evolve through the social movements and are critical for participants to make sense of it. Tweets in frames of “denial”, and “anecdotal” category were highly personalised, which resonated with the boycotters. These personalised frames and relatability let itself to challenge the “intolerance” narrative and framework. Other frames like those of “whataboutery” were utilised to shift the discourse from Muslim unsafety to potential safety of Hindu majority. Tweets with aggressive tone, framed in “False dilemma” were highly retweeted indicating a strong desire to reject the counter narrative of fanaticism. As we see that frames that appeared were highly personalised, and must have been a function of Twitter as a platform. 140 characters (as was the case in 2015/16), condensed complex socio-political narratives into personal agendas which emerged as broader frames. These initial frames of arguments and contention, carried themselves into setting stage for mobilising people into a collective action of boycotting/uninstalling. These when coupled with tweets framed as Calls to Action, possibly informed and disseminated information in the network on how to act on the grievance of the right wing sympathisers and users. “Direct Calls to Action” clearly outlining steps for uninstalling/downvote, as well as the ones “indicating progress” in the movement were important frames which seemed to resonate with the boycotters. They inform us of important frames that emerge in this stage of social movements where this translates into a collective action.

### Designing for civic media

Our results have important design implications for designers of civic and social media. As we see, “Direct Calls to Action” strategy was retweeted by the most number of boycotters. These tweets which were framed to clearly outline the steps to take (go to app store -> select app -> downvote/uninstall) were appropriated as a way to effectively challenge the narrative of “intolerance”. Hence, we see that being direct and providing a channel to act on the grievance is an effective way to get people to act. These results are in line with findings of Savage et.al(2015) where “direct calls” strategy by bots were more effective in engaging with potential activists for a cause online, as opposed to calls of “solidarity” or more “manipulative calls”. Similarly, as study done by Flores et.al(2018) for r/The_Donald, the “Viral News Style” mobilised a large number of participants by straightforward way of requesting action. Our work extends these findings, as we are able to track an online trace of collective action leading from mobilisation, to find what strategies actually work. While online platforms can get appropriated for collective action, there is value in integrating these learning for designing interfaces for government, petition signers etc (Cheng et.al, 2014), for better collective action. Governments often faces challenges in engaging people in civic duties (Mosberger et.al, 2007), and so do e-petition designers for gathering signatures for petitions (Proskurnia et.al, 2016). Presenting more “direct calls to action”, can work as an effective way to engage people. As such tweets were highly retweeted, such direct calls have potential to reach more people wherein people amplify it to other potential participants too.

We also see that “Progress visibility strategy”, wherein real or unreal progress of action is displayed to the participants is useful in encouraging people to partake in it. As Mazarkis et.al (2018) suggest, such design

<table>
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<th>Frames in Collective Action: Case of Online #Boycott</th>
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| **Progress Visibility Strategy** | 38.09% | 37.2% | **Retweets**
| | | | Median: 91
| | | | **Favourites**
| | | | Median: 140
| **Solidarity Strategy** | 13.9% | 41.2% | **Retweets**
| | | | Median: 340
| | | | **Favourites**
| | | | Median: 221

Table II: Descriptive statistics for different frames in calls to action

**Discussion**

**Role of frames in online engagement in social movements**

From our analysis of the frames that emerged in our dataset, we see that the narrative of “intolerance” was challenged by the nationalist and political right on the platform by employing different arguments. These initial frames which came up in Aamir-Snapdeal incident, set the stage for potential action later. As Bennet et.al (2012) and Benford et.al (2000) discuss, these frames appear and evolve through the social movements and are critical for participants to make sense of it. Tweets in frames of “denial”, and “anecdotal” category were highly personalised, which resonated with the boycotters. These personalised frames and relatability let itself to challenge the “intolerance” narrative and framework. Other frames like those of “whataboutery” were utilised to shift the discourse from Muslim unsafety to potential safety of Hindu majority. Tweets with aggressive tone, framed in “False dilemma” were highly retweeted indicating a strong desire to reject the counter narrative of fanaticism. As we see that frames that appeared were highly personalised, and must have been a function of Twitter as a platform. 140 characters (as was the case in 2015/16), condensed complex socio-political narratives into personal agendas which emerged as broader frames. These initial frames of arguments and contention, carried themselves into setting stage for mobilising people into a collective action of boycotting/uninstalling. These when coupled with tweets framed as Calls to Action, possibly informed and disseminated information in the network on how to act on the grievance of the right wing sympathisers and users. “Direct Calls to Action” clearly outlining steps for uninstalling/downvote, as well as the ones “indicating progress” in the movement were important frames which seemed to resonate with the boycotters. They inform us of important frames that emerge in this stage of social movements where this translates into a collective action.

**Designing for civic media**

Our results have important design implications for designers of civic and social media. As we see, “Direct Calls to Action” strategy was retweeted by the most number of boycotters. These tweets which were framed to clearly outline the steps to take (go to app store -> select app -> downvote/uninstall) were appropriated as a way to effectively challenge the narrative of “intolerance”. Hence, we see that being direct and providing a channel to act on the grievance is an effective way to get people to act. These results are in line with findings of Savage et.al(2015) where “direct calls” strategy by bots were more effective in engaging with potential activists for a cause online, as opposed to calls of “solidarity” or more “manipulative calls”. Similarly, as study done by Flores et.al(2018) for r/The_Donald, the “Viral News Style” mobilised a large number of participants by straightforward way of requesting action. Our work extends these findings, as we are able to track an online trace of collective action leading from mobilisation, to find what strategies actually work. While online platforms can get appropriated for collective action, there is value in integrating these learning for designing interfaces for government, petition signers etc (Cheng et.al, 2014), for better collective action. Governments often faces challenges in engaging people in civic duties (Mosberger et.al, 2007), and so do e-petition designers for gathering signatures for petitions (Proskurnia et.al, 2016). Presenting more “direct calls to action”, can work as an effective way to engage people. As such tweets were highly retweeted, such direct calls have potential to reach more people wherein people amplify it to other potential participants too.

We also see that “Progress visibility strategy”, wherein real or unreal progress of action is displayed to the participants is useful in encouraging people to partake in it. As Mazarkis et.al (2018) suggest, such design
choices mitigate the risk of wasted effort. Most e-petition sites incorporate this design by mentioning the number of people who have signed a petition, and how many more signatures are required. As Hale et al. (2013) have studied, petitions which cross the minimum barrier earlier are more likely to succeed than others. Thus, engaging people by informing them about the progress of an action supports the goal. This can be incorporated in interfaces which incorporate raising money, support or volunteering for their causes.

As these “Calls to action” do not exist in vacuum, there also needs to be prior work in creating effective framing in terms of building a narrative. As we see, narratives framed in terms of “anecdotal” and “denial” of the larger “intolerance” narrative, resonated and worked as building ground for potential collective action. Other techniques of framing such as that of “whataboutery” are popular in political speak. To design civic media and interfaces, our study highlights the importance of creating tools and features which aid in engaging with framing and dialogue before expecting a larger collective action.

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