Nothing to Lose, Everything to Gain: An Investigation of Efficacy and Identification as Predictors of Moderate and Radical Collective Action

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Master Thesis - Applied Social Psychology

[*s3225917*]
[*July*] [*2022*]
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Abstract

The study investigated support for Collective Action, Collective Action intentions and perceived risks of Collective Action behaviors in relation to differing efficacy predictions put forward by the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE) and the Nothing-to-lose (NTL) model. Efficacy was differentiated along a group level and an individual, participative level. Additionally, the strength of identification was investigated as different identifiers may display different Collective Action behaviors. The study was conducted via online-survey with students from the University of Groningen as participants. Participants were manipulated along an individual level of participative efficacy trough a constructed personality test, and along the group level efficacy through a fictitious newspaper article in the university newspaper. Evidence was found in support for the NTL account that lower participative efficacy may facilitate radical collective action, as well as an exploratory finding that participative efficacy exerts influence on risk assessment of collective action behaviors. Additionally, identification was found to influence participants support for collective action behaviors). The findings build support for a needed differentiation of efficacy when discussing collective action, as well as the notion that both SIDE and NTL may be more suited to predict moderate and radical collective action behaviors, respectively.

Keywords: Collective Action, Efficacy, Identification, SIDE, NTL

Nothing to Lose, Everything to Gain: An Investigation of Efficacy and Identification as Predictors of Moderate and Radical Collective Action

What do the riots at the Capitol in Washington D.C., a demonstration against new coronavirus measures, and a boycott of a certain product have in common? They are all an expression of collective action. Collective action denotes an (in-)action, to be understood as an expression of an individual speaking for a certain group and as an individual undertaking action to reach goals perceived to be the goals of one's in-group. Collective action can be placed on a spectrum, ranging from accepted, normative forms of dissent (petitions, demonstrations, etc.) to more radical, non-normative, possibly illegal, and socially sanctioned actions (riots, hate-mail, threats, etc.).

Research has been devoted to the understanding of social influence processes facilitating collective action since the late 19th century, and the literary body surrounding it has grown substantially over the years. What began as the study of the mob mentality has become an increasingly diverse, sophisticated, and complicated body of literature. Different researchers have placed different emphasis on variables that could give rise to collective action. Technological changes like mass media, email, and social networks, have made a continuous revisiting of theories and models in the field of collective action research necessary. This paper will seek to test assumptions from two of these models in an experiment.

Collective Action and Deindividuation: From Le Bon to SIDE

Vilanova et al. (2017) offer a good overview of the development of social influence literature in the collective action realm. They argue that when Le Bon (1908) published his influential book about crowd behavior, he introduced a concept that would resonate in the social influence literature of collective action until today: Deindividuation (Vilanova et al., 2017). Vilanova et al. (2017) state that according to Le Bon (1908), the crowd acts as a single collective organism, and its' members individual conscious personality fades, and the group unconscious personality grows stronger. This, in turn, would help understand mob violence or anti-social and illegal crowd behaviors, as the individuals that make up the crowd might have only engaged in these behaviors when in a crowd, and with their own individual values and attitudes fading to the values and attitudes of the crowd.

According to Vilanova et al. (2017), Festinger et al. (1963) expanded on Le Bon's theory and explored the social influence processes taking place in a group more while also coining the term deindividuation itself. To them, deindividuation meant that the individual is "submerged in the group", which lowers restraint and makes radical collective action more likely to occur than compared to the individual sans group influence (Festinger et al., 1963, p.1). Vilanova et al. (2017) describe that Festinger et al. (1963) found evidence for deindividuation processes taking place in smaller groups than crowds, implying that social

influence processes influencing collective action occur on many levels of groups. An important finding, as it demonstrates that underlying processes can also occur outside of “the mob”, for example online, where perceptions of group size and strength may be more abstractly present than in a situation “on the streets”.

According to Vilanova et al. (2017), one of the most recent incarnation of theories investigating deindividuation and collective action is the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE), (Reicher et al., 1995). SIDE takes inspiration and foundations laid by the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979) and the Self-Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987) to synthesize a new model to discuss deindividuation and collective action. Social Identity Theory (SIT) postulates that people partly form their identity from their group memberships. One’s identity is thus tied to different groups (e.g.: gender, nationality, occupation etc.) that all have norms and rules on how to act in situ (Tajfel et al., 1979; Vilanova et al., 2017). Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) suggests that there are two levels of self-categorization, an individual level, and a social level (Turner et al., 1987). In some situations, people think of themselves as individuals and highlight their differences from and idiosyncrasies compared to other people. In these cases, the individual’s identity is strengthened. However, in situations where the similarities within one’s group are highlighted, people may categorize themselves more as members of a group, the individual differences within that group move into the background, and “individuals tend to see and categorize themselves as interchangeable representatives of some social category more than as different and unique people.” (Vilanova et al., 2017, p.12).

SIDE, then, incorporates these two theories when investigating deindividuation and collective action (Reicher et al., 1995; Vilanova et al., 2017). In a situation with many other people present, opportunities to emphasize individual differences are diminished, strengthening the group identity. Individual norms of conduct fade to make way for the norms of the group, as described in SCT (Turner et al., 1987). Additionally, contrary to Le Bon’s (1908) early theorizing, the individual does not “get lost” in a group situation, but rather has one’s individual identity overwritten by the group identity, as described in SIT (Tajfel et al., 1979; Vilanova et al., 2017). SIDE stresses perceived in-group norms’ importance and stipulates that people infer norms in situ and act accordingly.

Collective action, in this philosophy, is thus a product of an interplay of group norms and depersonalized group members. But what makes the individuals of a group act out collective action? SIDE offers a broad approach to collective action, it assumes that the *higher* the efficacy of the group, the *higher* the willingness to engage in collective action. Efficacy describes one’s perceived ability to successfully influence one’s surroundings, and efficacy beliefs have been shown to be a strong predictor for behavior generally and of collective action intentions (Bandura, 1997; Stekelenburg et al., 2013; van Zomeren et al.,

2008; van Zomeren et al., 2012; Mummendey et al., 1999; Saab et al., 2016). The members of a group must feel that they are influential and able to achieve their goals (i.e., having *high* group efficacy), then collective action is more likely to occur (Reicher et al., 1995).

The "Nothing-to-Lose" Model

Another model grounded in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979), the "nothing-to-lose" model, seeks to explain collective action but takes a different approach. The "nothing-to-lose" (NTL) account of collective action argues that stable *low* status (ergo *low* group efficacy), predicts *radical* collective action (Scheepers et al., 2006). Collective action, especially the radical, non-normative kind, is facilitated by a feeling of hopelessness and seen as an ultima ratio. When groups experience stable low status, (i.e., low group efficacy), they have "nothing-to-lose" and are more likely to engage in or support radical non-normative collective action. Like SIDE, the NTL approach is grounded in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979) and added more nuance to the theory. In their research investigating in-group bias, Scheepers et al. (2006) discovered that contrary to most accounts of SIT, stable low status did not necessarily reduce in-group bias or even induce bias favoring the out-group. Instead, they found evidence that stable low status may induce more extreme and desperate form of in-group bias. While not explicitly concerned with collective action, in-group bias or out-group discrimination can give a hint at potential collective action intentions, and the more radical forms of out-group discrimination are active behaviors, and can be understood as an iteration of collective action. Additionally, their research informs that the picture about the role of efficacy in predicting collective action is not clear cut. They identified variables that may influence the expression of in-group bias and out-group discrimination and potential collective action behaviors like the stability of status (stable vs. unstable) (Scheepers, et al., 2006). When status is low but unstable, it may be beneficial to uplift one's in-group instead of putting down and potentially provoking the (potentially more powerful) out-group (Scheepers et al., 2003). In a similar vein, when status is low and stable, members of the in-group have "nothing-to-lose", and more extreme and radical forms of out-group discrimination are more probable (Scheepers et al., 2006). From this point of view, it is conceivable that low group efficacy (stable low status) might be a strong predictor of radical collective action behaviors.

Efficacy ≠ Efficacy: Individual and Group Level

Let us remember the role of efficacy in SIDE: SIDE suggests the higher the efficacy, the more likely collective action, of any kind, is to occur. In the NTL account, it is stable low status, ergo low efficacy, that facilitates radical collective action. At face value these accounts seem contradictory. Adding to the conundrum, research has shown that people prefer to "free-ride" (also known as social loafing) in group contexts when efficacy is high, counter to what SIDE suggests (van Zomeren et al., 2012). Is it a high or low perception of efficacy that facilitates collective action?

It may be helpful to distinguish between different kinds of efficacy. Van Zomeren et al., (2012) pioneered the idea of *participative* efficacy as distinct from *group* efficacy as part of investigating the "efficacy-paradox". They distinguish an individual level (participative efficacy) and a group level (group efficacy) and offer an avenue to reconcile contradicting predictions of efficacy, and with that of SIDE and NTL that way. Participative efficacy "refers to the belief that one can make a difference through one's own contribution to the collective efforts aimed at achieving group goals." (van Zomeren et al., 2012, p. 2) in contrast to group efficacy being "beliefs in the group's achievement of group goals through collective action" (van Zomeren et al., 2012, p. 2). Crossing high and low participative and high and low group efficacy may shed light on conditions and situations that give rise to moderate, normative as well as radical non-normative collective action, and allow us to test and compare the predictions made by SIDE and NTL. For that end, the research will do exactly that by attempting to manipulate both participative and group efficacy in our participants and comparing the different groups along their willingness to engage in and their support for collective action ranging from moderate to radical.

Behavior type and Identification

Additionally, to distinguishing types of efficacy, it may be gainful to also deliberate on the dimensionality of collective action behaviors when it comes to their normativity. After all, NTL (Scheepers et al., 2006) is explicitly concerned with radical collective action, whereas SIDE (Reicher et al., 1995). does not necessarily differentiate the type of collective action behavior. Behavior type will be the nomenclature to describe the difference of moderate and radical collective action. Part of the contradicting predictions might thus be explained by the fact that they vary when it comes to predicting collective action behavior types. In that sense, there might not be a contradiction at all, and what are differing predictions are differing because what they predict is different too. With that notion in mind, the approach SIDE takes may be more suited to predict moderate collective action, whereas the NTL account may be more fruitful in making predictions on the radical side of collective action.

When discussing any kind of collective action, especially against the background of models based in SIT (Tajfel et al., 1979), an interesting effect deserves mention and inclusion in the research model. Findings that the strength of one's identification with one's (in situ) in-group influences expressions of collective action, especially with regard to radical non-normative collective action, may offer an additional avenue to disentangle the differing predictions of SIDE and NTL (Packer, 2014; Jiménez-Moya et al., 2015). On one hand, high identifiers with a group may be cautious to resort to radical collective action, as they may be concerned with tarnishing their in-group's reputation. Similarly, low identifiers may not be concerned with leaving negative impressions, since they may only identify with the in-group and its goals spontaneously in situ and may thus be more prone to radical collective action

(Jiménez-Moya et al., 2015). On the other hand, highly identified individuals may also be more willing to engage in radical collective action when it is seen as an ultima ratio, and at greater cost to them individually (for example as terrorists) (Packer, 2008). The role of identification is not entirely clear but seems to exert considerable influence in the collective action domain (van Zomeren et al., 2008). In the quest to unravel antecedents of collective action and investigate the different effects of individual and group level efficacy, identification may be a powerful informant and influence, while exploring differences between moderate and radical collective action may offer new avenues to explain collective action behaviors. The present study seeks out to investigate and potentially replicate the findings by Jiménez-Moya et al. (2015) that lower identifiers engage in more radical collective action.

Behavior Medium

At the time of conception of this research, COVID-19 and associated regulations and changes to many peoples' lives were in full swing. Against that background, and for a more "holistic" investigation, it was decided to include behavior types of collective action taking place both online and in Face-to-Face (FtF) contexts. It may be conceivable that participants display different collective action behaviors depending on the behavior medium in question, and an additional exploratory analysis of these findings was deemed potentially fruitful. To account for potential differences between behavior across mediums (not every FtF behavior has a perfect analogue online and vice versa) two additional variables were introduced: The perceived risk and the perceived effectiveness of collective action behaviors. These were added to explore differences between mediums, but also assess how similar the behaviors across medium are perceived to be. Furthermore, the inclusion of these variables offers a potential avenue for exploratory analyses pertaining to the potential effects of participative and group efficacy and strength of identification on appraising risks and effectiveness of collective action behaviors.

The Present Study

The aim of this thesis is to further investigate the antecedents that facilitate moderate, normative as well as radical, non-normative collective action in a Face-to-Face as well as an online context by applying the paradigms that emerge from related theories and models that seek to explain collective action. Additionally, identification will be investigated. From this, the research questions emerge: *How do differing efficacy combinations (high vs low) at the participative (individual) level and the group level affect the support for and willingness to engage in collective action?*

What role does the level of identification with a group play?

The hypotheses are

Hypothesis 1: Intention and support for radical collective action, is negatively influenced by stronger, individual level, participative efficacy, and positively influenced by group level efficacy.

Hypothesis 2: The strength of identification negatively influences intentions and support for radical collective action and positively influences intentions and support for moderate collective action.

Method

Participants and Design

Three hundred eighty-two participants were recruited from the university's SONA-system pool. The SONA pool consists of psychology students that have to take part in studies as participants to earn a mandatory number of credits, usually in their first year. The sample consisted of 263 female, 94 male and 2 diverse, with 23 preferring not to say or not answering. A measure of participants' age was not included due to ethical concern relating to participants' anonymity.

The experiment follows a 2 (participative efficacy: high vs low) x 2 (local group efficacy: high vs low) x 2 (protest behavior: moderate vs radical) x group identification (continuous) mixed design with repeated measures on the third factor. The study was approved by the University of Groningen's ethics committee (Research code: PSY-2021-S-315) and all participants provided informed consent.

Materials and Procedure

Participants could access the study online through the SONA-portal, where they were redirected to a Qualtrics survey (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). Initially, participants were presented with an informed consent form that outlined the goals of the research and what to expect when taking part in the study. The participants were informed that they could decline their informed consent and break off their participation at any time by leaving the webpage or closing their browser. Only when informed consent was given could the participant continue with the study and proceed to the next screen, the participative efficacy manipulation, followed by a manipulation check. Subsequently, participants were faced with a second manipulation: The group efficacy manipulation as well as a collective action trigger in the form of a newspaper article, with a manipulation check directly following. Finally, the dependent variables as well as some demographics were collected, and participants ended the study with a debriefing.

Participative Efficacy Manipulation

To manipulate participative efficacy, participants were faced with a constructed personality test, the PET (participative efficacy test) as well as feedback on the results of their scores. In both conditions, the same positive and negative statements would be presented, but with differences in severity (Example positive statements: "I feel listened to in

group discussions."; example negative statements: "My contributions to group goals are negligible."). Depending on the participative efficacy condition, some statements had extreme qualifiers (e.g. always, without fail, all the time, without exceptions), while others had moderate qualifiers (e.g. at times, sometimes, occasionally, often, usually, mostly). This was done to create statements that were easier to agree with (moderate statements), and others that were more difficult to agree with (extreme statements) and to induce bias in the participants. In the low participative efficacy condition, participants were faced with moderately negative statements (i.e. "My contributions to group goals are at times negligible.") and extremely positive statements (i.e. "I always feel listened to in group discussions."). In contrast, in the high participative efficacy condition, participants were presented with moderately positive statements (i.e. "I often feel listened to in group discussions.") and extreme negative statements (i.e. "My contributions to group goals are always negligible."). This type of manipulation has been shown to be successful before (Jetten et al., 1997, based on Salancik, 1974). Items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The full range of items can be found in the appendix. This first part of the manipulation intended to bias participants towards the negative statements and against the positive statements in the low participative efficacy condition and intended to bias participants towards the positive statements and against the negative statements in the high participative efficacy condition.

The second part of the manipulation came in the form of feedback on the PET results, presented to participants after completing the PET. The feedback consisted of a short text that outlined how the score of the PET is an indication of the test-takers typical behaviors and participative efficacy, by matching previous test results to group outcomes and individual inputs. Participants in the low participative efficacy condition were told that their scores fall in the lower 30th percentile of test-takers, and that their participative efficacy as well as their ability to exert influence in a group context is rather low. In the high participative efficacy condition, participants received similar feedback, but in the opposite direction. They were told that they had scored in the higher 30th percentile of test-takers and that their influence in group contexts as well as their participative efficacy were high. The full feedback text for both conditions can be found in the appendix A.

In a final step, participants were asked to indicate what feedback they had received as a manipulation check ("Please choose one option that summarizes your results of your PET the best." Answers: "My scores indicate that…" "…my overall participative efficacy is high."; "…my overall participative efficacy is low."; "…my overall participative efficacy is moderate."; "…my participative efficacy is not captured by the PET.").

Collective Action Trigger and Group Efficacy Manipulation

Working with a sample of student participants made it important to tailor the “issue” toward the student context. For that reason, a (fabricated) raise in tuition fees, more so than what would be expected or within “normal” bounds, was selected as an issue to induce a state that may warrant collective action to change the course of the situation. To that end, a mockup article of the university’s newspaper, using similar font and layout, was constructed. The article detailed how a memo of a meeting of the board of the university had been leaked, where the board outlined its plans to drastically increase the tuition fees for the coming year. The final word had not yet been had on this, and student organizations had reacted with outrage. This first part of the article was the same across conditions.

The manipulation of group efficacy came in the form of an expert testimony, namely by Prof. Dr. Klandermans of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, who was presented as an expert on the topic of student protests and collective action (which he arguably is). In the low group efficacy condition, participants were told that “based on recent research on student protests”, he concluded that “most protests do not achieve their goals, and the potentially increased awareness on the issue slowly fades away. Often, demands are not met. In my most recent research I showed that (student) protests of this nature are not effective at reaching collective goals.” In addition, a quotation box was presented within the article stating in bold letters and bigger than the rest of the article’s font: “Student protests do not work!”. In the high group efficacy condition, Klandermans statements were reversed, and participants read that “based on recent research on student protests, most protests manage to achieve their goals eventually, not only by increasing awareness, but often also by having their demands met. In my most recent research I showed that (student) protests of this nature are effective at reaching collective goals.” Again, a quotation box was presented within the article stating that: “Student protests work!”. Both articles can be found in the appendix.

Finally, participants were asked to indicate what the protests were about as a comprehension check (“What are the students of the RUG protesting?” Answers: “The increase in tuition fees despite different promises.”; “The decrease in quality of education.”; “The increase in prizes for coffee and hot water in the university’s break rooms.” and “The cost of access to literature such as articles and textbooks.”) and what Klandermans had suggested as manipulation check (“What is Prof Klandermans' evaluation of the success of student protests?” Answers: “Protests by students are an effective way to change the RUG’s policy intentions.”; “Protests by students are not an effective way to change the RUG’s policy intentions.”; “Protests by students are an effective way to change the RUG’s policy intentions, but only if the students act in a humorous way.”; “I don’t know.”).

Support for Collective Action, Collective Action Intentions, Perceived Risks, and Perceived Effectiveness of Collective Action[1]

After being presented the manipulations, participants were asked to answer some questions regarding the dependent variables. Twelve collective action behaviors were presented to the participants, six of them in a face-to-face context and six in an online environment. Furthermore, six items depicted "normative" or moderate behaviors, and six items described "non-normative" or radical behaviors (Example normative, face to face: "Make a financial donation to organizers of student protests."; example non-normative, face to face: "Disturb events held by the university, for example a meeting of the board or networking events."; example normative, online: "Express support for the student protests in posts on social media such as Twitter or Facebook."; example non-normative, online: "Sign members of the board up to spam email lists." (Adapted from Tausch et al., 2011 and Teixera et al., 2020)). Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to support the collective action behavior (Cronbach's α = .739), how likely they would be to engage in the behavior themselves (Cronbach's α = .781), how risky (how likely they would be to personally incur negative consequences if "caught") they perceived the behavior to be (Cronbach's α = .745) and how effective they perceived the behavior to be in changing the board of the university's plans (Cronbach's α = .729). Support for and willingness to engage in collective action was rated with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Perceived risks and perceived effectiveness were scored with a slider, ranging from 0 to 100, with 50 representing a middle point.

Identification

As a further DV, the participants' level of identification with being a student was assessed. Six items were presented to participants ("I have a lot in common with the average student."; "I am similar to the average student."; "I often think about the fact that I am a student."; "Being a student is an important part of how I see myself."; "I feel solidarity with students."; "I feel a bond with students."; (Adapted from Leach et al., 2008)). These items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree (Cronbach's α = .821).

Manipulation Checks

Following the DVs, participants underwent four additional manipulation checks. Firstly, the participative efficacy manipulation was assessed with the item "Please indicate on

[1] Perceived effectiveness of collective action behaviors was initially included in the research design but was later dropped in the face of the scope of analysis and the paper itself. The data is still included in the data set and is available for further analysis by interested parties. Saab et al. (2016) offer a good starting point for the interested reader, as they investigated the relationship between perceived efficacy of radical collective action and moderate collective action and its effects on radical collective action intentions.

the slider below what *you* think *your* personal level of participative efficacy (your beliefs about the effectiveness of your individual contributions to a group effort) is.", scored via slider with the description "My personal level of participative efficacy is…" ranging from 0 = very low to 100 = very high. Secondly, the group efficacy manipulation was assessed via the item "Please indicate on the slider below how effective you think protest actions by students are to change the boards course.", scored via a slider ranging from 0 = barely effective to 100 = highly effective. Thirdly, participants were asked "Did you read an article in the Ukrant newsletter (*not in the current study*) that was concerned with students protests in Groningen?". This item was included in the study to check for confounding effects of an article released in the actual Ukrant newspaper that had student protests in response to housing prices and availability as topic. Finally, participants were asked "In one sentence, what was your overall reaction (or thoughts about) to the Ukrant article in this study?", with a textbox allowing participants to enter their own text. This item is included to test for the perceived authenticity of the used Ukrant article.

Demographics

In a final item, participants were asked to indicate their gender and could choose from the options "Male"; "Female"; "Non-binary / third gender"; and "Prefer not to say".

The experiment concluded with a debriefing that informed participants about the purposes of the study, as well as to apprise them of the constructed nature of the PET and the Ukrant article.

Results

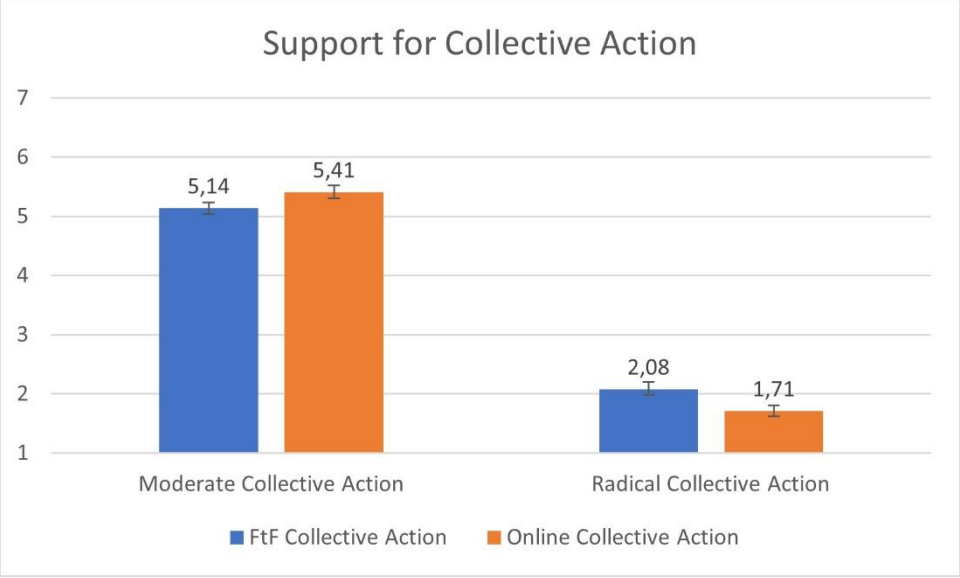
Analysis of Collective Action Support

To test our hypotheses and analyze participants' support for collective action behaviors, a general linear model with the repeated measures of two between subject factors of participative efficacy and group efficacy, within subject factors of behavior medium (FtF collective action vs Online collective action) and behavior type (moderate collective action vs radical collective action) and a centered covariate of identification was utilized. A significant main effect of behavior type was detected $F(1, 354) = 3296.871$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.903$. Participants were more likely to support moderate collective action ($M = 5.278$, $SE = .045$) than radical collective action ($M = 1.897$, $SE = .049$). The main effect of behavior medium proved to be non-significant $F(1, 354) = 2.447$, $p = .119$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$. Participants were not more likely to endorse one avenue of collective action over the other (FtF: $M = 3.613$, $SE = .042$; Online: $M = 3.562$, $SE = .038$). While most interaction effects remained non-significant, the interaction behavior type and behavior medium showed a significant effect with $F(1, 354) = 93.564$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .209$ and a reversal of preferences could be observed (Moderate and FtF: $M = 5.144$, $SE = .048$; Moderate and Online: $M = 5.418$, $SE = .054$; Radical and FtF: $M = 2.083$, $SE = .06$; Radical and Online: $M = 1.711$, $SE = 0.47$; see Figure 1. Note the

reversal of preferences, namely that participants preferred supporting moderate collective action in an online context, but favored radical collective action in an FtF context.). Participants seem to be slightly more likely to support moderate collective action in an online context, while radical collective action seems to be slightly more supported in an FtF context. Furthermore, the interaction of behavior type and identification with being a student showed significance $F(1,354) = 9.171$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$. To further investigate this interaction, correlations were employed. Identification was significantly correlated to support for moderate collective action with $r(357) = .2$, $p < .001$, indicating that higher identification with being a student made moderate, normative collective action more likely. In contrast, identification did not significantly correlate with radical collective action, with $r(357) = .011$, $p = .834$, indicative of identification playing a lesser role in participants' support for radical collective action. All means can be found in the appendix.

Figure 1

Support for Collective Action by Behavior Medium and Behavior Type



Analysis of Collective Action Intentions

In addition to the first analysis, collective action intentions, the willingness to engage in collective action, were analyzed via a general linear model with repeated measures, participative efficacy and group efficacy as two between subject factors, behavior medium and behavior type as within subject factors and with a centered covariate of identification. A significant main effect of behavior type was observed, $F(1, 354) = 2768,853$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .887$. Similar to support of collective action, participants were more likely to be willing to engage in moderate collective action ($M = 4.4$, $SE = .057$) than radical collective action ($M = 1.492$, $SE = .038$). The second main effect, of behavior medium was shown to be significant

when willingness to act instead of support was considered with $F(1, 354) = 21{,}365$, $p < .001$ $\eta_p^2 = .057$. When actual collective action intentions come into play, participants seemed to prefer online collective action behaviors ($M = 3.026$, $SE = .038$) over FtF collective action behaviors ($M = 2.866$, $SE = .047$). A significant interaction between behavior medium and behavior type was detected with $F(1, 354) = 128.416$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .266$ and, again, a reversal of preferences could be observed (see Figure 2. Note the reversal of preferences, namely that participants prefer moderate collective action in an online context but favor radical collective action in an FtF context, as well as the generally lower means when compared to support for collective action.). When asked about collective action intentions, participants seemed to favor moderate collective action over radical collective action in an online context, and radical collective action over moderate collective action in a FtF context. Additionally, an interaction effect was observed between behavior medium, behavior type, and the participative efficacy manipulation with $F(1, 354) = 4.986$, $p = .026$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$. In line with the hypotheses and predictions based on the NTL model (Scheepers, et al., 2006), participants in the low participative efficacy condition were more willing to engage in both avenues of radical collective action than their counterparts in the high participative efficacy condition (see Figure 3. Note the higher radical collective action intentions of either behavior medium in the low participative efficacy condition.). For moderate collective action behaviors, this effect is less clear (see Figure 4). As reported above, participants seem to prefer online collective action behaviors to FtF collective action behaviors when the behavior is moderate and participative efficacy is low. The interaction effect with group and participative efficacy did not reach significance. The appendix offers a table with all means presented.

Figure 2

The Intention to Engage in Collective Action by Behavior Medium and Behavior

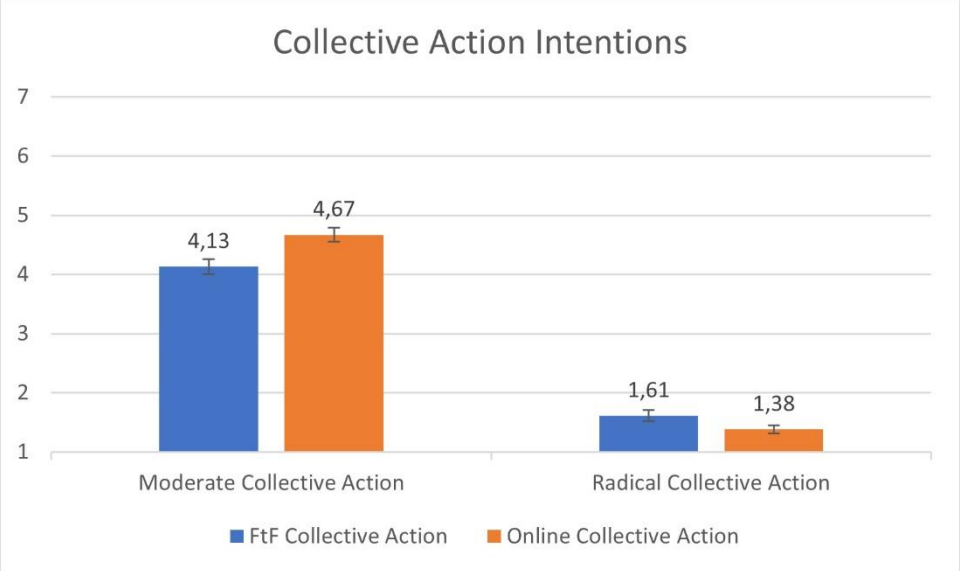


Figure 3

The Intention to Engage in Radical Collective Action by Participative Efficacy

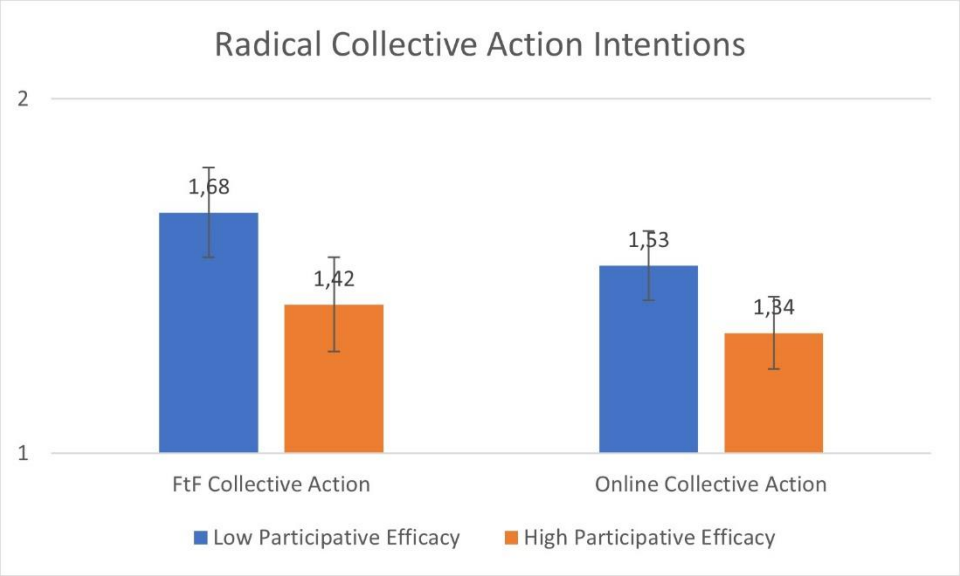
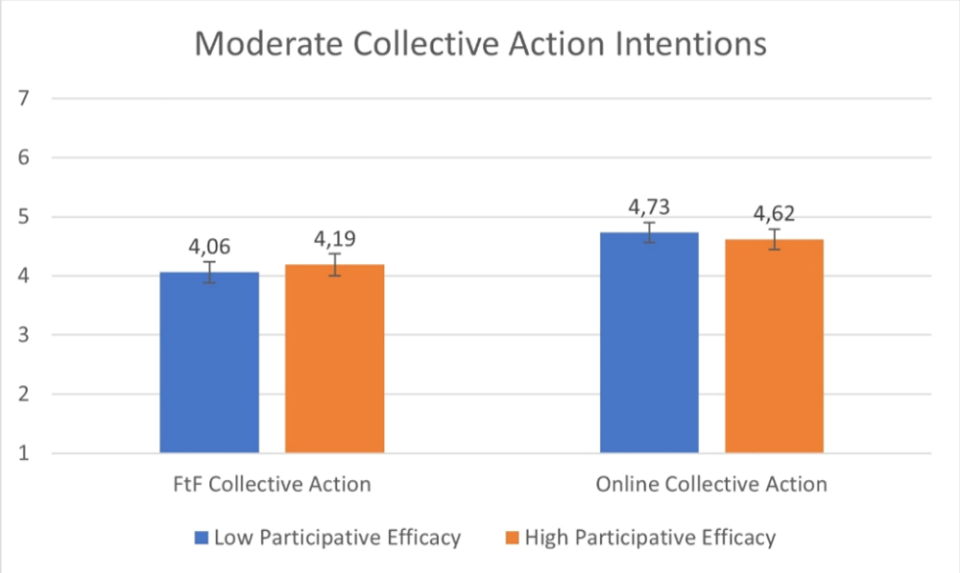


Figure 4

The Intention to Engage in Moderate Collective Action by Participative Efficacy



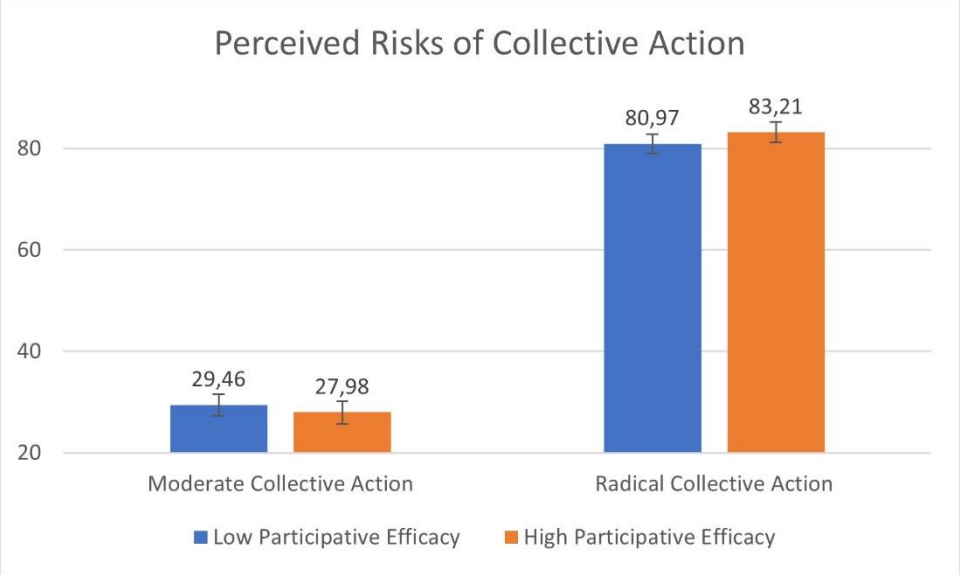
Analysis of Perceived Risk of Collective Action Behaviors

To further inform our results, the perceived risks of collective action behaviors were investigated with a general linear model with repeated measures, with participative and group efficacy as between subject factors, behavior type and behavior medium as within subject factors and with a centered covariate of identification. A significant main effect for

behavior type was detected with $F(1, 353) = 3309.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .904$. Unsurprisingly, participants perceived the moderate collective action behaviors as less risky ($M = 28.72$, $SE = .64$) than the radical collective action behaviors ($M = 82.09$, $SE = .71$). A second significant main effect for behavior medium with $F(1,353) = 80.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .186$ was detected. Subjects perceived FtF collective action behaviors to be riskier ($M = 57.92$, $SE = .64$) than Online collective action behaviors ($M = 53.01$, $SE = .64$). Interestingly, a significant interaction effect was observed between perceived risk of behavior type and the participative efficacy experimental condition with $F(1,353) = 3.98$, $p = .047$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$ that seems to influence that relation (see Figure 5.). This barely significant effect however did not translate into significant simple effects between participative efficacy conditions split by behavior type. All means can be found in the appendix.

Figure 5

The Perceived Risks of Collective Action Behaviors by Participative Efficacy



Discussion

The realm of collective action has been of interest for researchers for more than a century. Over this time, different theories and models were proposed, some of which were showcased in this paper: Le Bon's (1908) beginnings in investigating the mob mentality, Festinger et al.'s (1963) extension of theory showing that the processes involved are not necessarily limited to crowd sized groups, and later Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987) that form the foundations of modern approaches like the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (Reicher et al., 1995) and the Nothing-to-lose model (Scheepers et al., 2006), the latter two being of focal

interest for this research. The inherent discrepancies in the two models of SIDE and NTL were highlighted in regard to their differing predictions of the influence of efficacy on collective action behaviors, namely that SIDE postulates that the higher efficacy, the more collective action is probable (but perhaps implicitly focused on moderate collective action), whereas the NTL model argues that it is low efficacy that drives collective action, especially radical collective action. An avenue to consolidate both models with the help of distinguishing between group level and individual, participative efficacy was put forth (van Zomeren et al., 2012). Additionally, the normativity of collective action was introduced to help solve the conundrum: SIDE and NTL may be better suited to predict moderate and radical collective action, respectively. Furthermore, an additional variable, namely of strength of identification with one's in-group was raised as a potential influence, as findings pertaining to identification in the context of collective action have been promising (Packer, 2014; Jiménez-Moya et al., 2015; van Zomeren et al., 2008; Packer, 2008). The study was conducted through an online survey with participants from the university's SONA-system pool. Participants participative efficacy was manipulated through a constructed and biasing personality test, whereas group efficacy was manipulated through a fabricated news article of the university newspaper. The dependent variables described both moderate and radical collective action behaviors and asked participants to indicate how likely they would be to support someone engaging in a certain collective action behavior, how likely they think they would engage themselves in certain collective action behaviors, and how risky they deemed these behaviors to be. Following that, a measure of the strength of identification with being a student was included, as well as demographics.

Identification and Collective Action

In the analysis of collective action support, participants' support for members of their in-group engaging in moderate collective action behaviors was positively influenced by strength of identification with being a student. The positive and significant correlation between identification and support for moderate collective action replicates and is in line with findings by van Zomeren et al. (2008) as well as Jiménez-Moya et al., (2015). This is further underlined by the non-significant correlation between identification and radical collective action, implying that identification played a lesser role in participants support for radical collective action. These findings build indirect evidence for our hypothesis 2 that strength of identification negatively influences people's radical collective action behaviors. When analyzing collective action intentions instead of support, identification however did not yield significant results. One could hypothesize that identification was more relevant when concerned with supporting others engaging in possibly tarnishing collective action behaviors, as high identifiers may be more worried about the public perception of their in-group. These

considerations, however, may be less salient when people are thinking of their own behaviors, potentially through processes akin to the fundamental attribution error (Ross, 1977), where people evaluate their own behavior differently than the same behavior enacted by someone. They may be aware of their own motives and intent, but one does not have that introspection available when assessing other people's behavior, where motives and intent can only be estimated, but behavior tangibly seen.

Behavior Medium and Type

A perhaps unsurprising finding is that participants endorsed support for moderate collective action more than they did radical collective action, without showing a clear, overall preference for behavior medium (FtF vs Online). Interestingly though, an interaction between behavior medium and behavior type was detected, which showed that participants preferred supporting moderate collective action in an online context, whereas radical collective action was more supported in FtF circumstances. One could hypothesize that participants estimated moderate collective action to be more cost effective online than in a FtF context, after all, signing an online petition or posting on social media is easily done, perhaps more easily than participating in a demonstration or distributing flyers. Regarding radical collective action, the effect may be reversed: Online radical collective action may take more intimate knowledge of technologies involved and may leave more traces that may leave one open to persecution, while FtF radical collective action may offer a more "direct" pathway to achieving group goals through more tangible actions nested "in the real world". The results are similar for collective action intentions: Participants were generally more likely to have intentions to engage in moderate collective action than radical collective action and they were more likely to intent in engaging in moderate collective action in an online context and radical collective action in an FtF context. Participants may differ in their appraisal of the different routes, perhaps for similar reasons as mentioned above for support for collective action.

Efficacy Verdict: SIDE and NTL

The analysis of support for collective action did not find a significant effect of either efficacies on support for collective action, rejecting our hypothesis 1, or at least not supporting it. When it came to *support* for collective action, the present data does not build evidence in favor of the SIDE (Reicher et al., 1995) or the NTL account (Scheepers et al., 2006), as efficacy seemed to not play a role in participants' decisions of how much to support certain collective action behaviors.

When it came to participants' *intentions* for engaging in collective action behaviors, a significant interaction effect between behavior medium, behavior type and participative

efficacy manipulation partially confirms the hypothesis that low participative efficacy positively influences people's radical collective action behaviors. In accordance with predictions from the NTL account (Scheepers et al., 2006), participants in the low participative efficacy condition showed higher intentions to engage in radical collective action behaviors of both behavior mediums than their equivalents in the high participative efficacy condition. The factor group efficacy did not reach significance in any of the analyses, and the results do not confirm the second half of hypothesis 1: Group efficacy did not significantly relate to support for and intentions to engage in moderate collective action. While the absence of a certain effect does not necessarily prove that the other effect must be true, it does offer some credibility to the ideas put forth by van Zomeren et al. (2012) that research needs to distinguish between efficacies, and that such differences need be considered when making statements concerning collective action and efficacy. All in all, the results build evidence in favor or the NTL (Scheepers et al. 2006) approach to collective action, while not offering a confirmation to the approach put forth by the SIDE (Reicher et al., 1995) model.

One could argue that intentions for collective action and support for collective action are assessing different things, and they certainly do slightly differ in what they assess, and that participants with low participative efficacy were just more likely to endorse engaging in collective action *themselves* instead of support *someone else* engaging in collective action. In that sense, the non-significant interaction effect of support for collective action and low participative efficacy may also be understood as a sign for participants preference for more active collective action, instead of collective action "from the sidelines" as is the case with support for collective action.

As a final note, the results may be an indication that both models might be suited for discussing collective action, but need to be differentiated along the normativity dimension of collective action. Low participative efficacy was significantly related to higher willingness to engage in radical collective action, supporting the NTL account. For moderate collective action, this effect could not be reproduced. One could argue that in situations pertaining to radical collective action, NTL may be more suited to analyze and discuss the issue, whereas SIDE may be more suited to analyze moderate collective action.

Exploring Risk Assessment

Our exploratory analysis of perceived risks of collective action behaviors showed some significant effects. Naturally, moderate collective action behaviors were generally rated as less risky than radical collective action behaviors. An interesting and significant interaction effect between behavior medium, behavior type and the participative efficacy manipulation however informs hypothesis 1 and supports the notion that participative efficacy influences

people's collective action behaviors. While simple effects between participative efficacy conditions remained non-significant, the significant interaction opens the door to careful hypothesizing. When participants have "nothing-to-lose", radical collective action may seem almost necessary, accompanied by a perceived lower risk of engaging in radical collective action. Similarly, moderate collective action may seem more futile, and may open one up to unnecessary repercussions without a chance of achieving collective action goals, potentially being seen as more risky by the low participative efficacy condition participants.

Limitations

One could argue that one limitation of the study is its use of collective action intentions as a dependent variable, as it gauges self-reported intentions and not *actual* behavior. Nonetheless, it is a necessary evil of the study to focus on intentions. Firstly, measuring collective action behaviors in situ and not as intentions poses difficulties in the laboratory environment. Actual collective action behaviors can best be observed in an observational study, but that would exclude manipulations like the one's undertaken in this research. As is often the case with exploratory laboratory studies like this one, one must balance the strengths and weaknesses of the experimental design. Controlling the independent variables, having clearly distinct experimental conditions and being able to precisely measure the dependent variables via survey (in comparison to, for example, an observational study with different raters) were considered focal, and thus the decision of the experimental design and laboratory nature of the study was made. Secondly, participants may not be precise in predicting their own actual behaviors versus their intentions (Schwarz, 1999). Collective action intentions are a self-reported measure asking what one would do *hypothetically*, in comparison to measuring actual behavior. It is thus conceivable, that from the comfort of a participant's home computer, participants perceptions of *what they would do* may actually be quite different to *what may actually happen* in collective action situations.

Additionally, since the study utilized collective action behaviors happening both online, as well as in a FtF context., it cannot be excluded that to participants, the different collective action behaviors were less equivalent across behavior mediums than anticipated. The measured collective action behaviors were approximated to be similar in severity and effect, but naturally, not every collective action behavior online has a direct FtF equivalent and vice versa, and it is conceivable that the behaviors where perceived as more different than expected. When analyzing the perceived risks attached to the different collective action behaviors, participants rated FtF behaviors in general as slightly more risky than online collective action behaviors, which might suggest that the FtF collective action behaviors were perceived to be slightly more extreme and radical.

Lastly, one could argue that one limitation of this research was the use of the SONA-system to recruit participants. On the one hand, since the participant pool of SONA consists mostly of psychology students, it can be considered WEIRD (Henrich et al., 2010). If sampled from a different pool of participants, the results may have been different. On the other hand, with the study being specifically tailored towards students it allowed for the creation of a specific collective action scenario in relation to a specific group identity, and with that notion in mind the issue of representativeness can be relativized. Furthermore, with 382 participants, the study was slightly underpowered for the intricate effects that were investigated. Nonetheless, even with a less WEIRD sample and more power, it is unlikely that the direction of the effects would have drastically changed so as to totally change the implications of the results.

Future Research

As is often the case, while providing answers to some questions posed, many issues remain unclear, and new issues have emerged. Future research should be directed at disentangling the differences between support for collective action and collective action intentions, investigating the identification issue more thoroughly, also in relation to support for collective action and collective action intentions, as well as to investigate the differences between collective action in an FtF and Online context. Findings by Lee and Littles (2021) for example offer us a glimpse at the potentially different contextual cues that are at work in an online context, and the further investigation of differences between FtF and Online contexts could provide a fruitful research avenue, also in relation to an increasing “digitalization” of collective action, through online petitions, mass media and social networks. Both the SIDE (Reicher et al., 1995) and the NTL account (Scheepers et al., 2006) should be continuously tested against both experimental laboratory studies like the one on hand, as well as in more natural, observational studies to avoid findings and results that are limited to the laboratory only. The author however recognizes that this poses a serious challenge for reasons outlined above in the limitations section, and that a research design solely based in observation may have several, other shortcomings compared to a traditional experimental laboratory research design.

In relation to the “efficacy paradox”, future research should be devoted to further investigate differences between individual level and group level efficacy, especially regarding a difference between moderate and radical collective action. As outlined previously, different behavior types may have differing processes behind them, which in turn make one model more suited over the other, as may be the case for NTL and radical collective action. These considerations may prove to be a fruitful avenue for researchers in the collective action

domain and warrant further investigation. A future study could investigate participative efficacy explicitly in relation to radical collective action, with a similar experimental design, albeit with more power. Similarly, the role of group efficacy as different from participative efficacy should be investigated to aid future research seeking efficacy routes to collective action.

Conclusion

The present study investigated support for collective action and collective action intentions as well as the perceived risks of collective action behaviors in relation to group and participative efficacy manipulations as well as in relation to strength of identification. The SIDE and NTL models were compared in their predictions, and the results build evidence in favor of the NTL account, namely that low efficacy is positively related to radical collective action. This finding also partially supports hypothesis 1, however, group efficacy did not show significant interaction effects, and thus does not build evidence for group efficacy positively influencing support for and collective action intentions.

Regarding hypothesis 2, the results offer a mixed picture. In the analysis of support for collective action, identification was positively and significantly related to an increase in support for moderate collective action, in line with the first half of hypothesis 2. The notion that low identifiers are more prone to engaging in radical collective action behaviors was not supported however. Generally, the results support the notion that identification has an important role to play in the collective action realm, and that high and low identifiers differ in their appraisal of collective action. The exploratory finding of differences between *support for* and *intentions to engage in* collective action warrants further investigation, as well as differences noted between Online and FtF collective action behaviors.

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Appendix

PET-Manipulation.

Positive statements: “I feel listened to in group discussions.”; “My contributions to a collective effort are valued.”; “My ideas are adopted.”; “I provide an important contribution to group goals.”; “I contribute meaningfully so that the groups I belong to can achieve our common goals.”;

Negative statements: “My contributions to group goals are negligible.”; “My contributions to group goals are unappreciated by the group.”; “My actions toward a common goal are fruitless.”; “My efforts for a group’s common goals are futile.”; “Putting in effort to contribute to group goals feels meaningless.”.

Low participative efficacy feedback:

Your answers to the participative efficacy test (**PET**) questions gave the following results.

You scored in the bottom 30th percentile of test-takers, indicating an **overall low participative efficacy**.

What does this mean? Based on matching PET score to actual group inputs and outcomes previous research shows that people who score low can experience difficulty in having their contributions to collective goals acknowledged. Often, their efforts can seem meaningless or small in the bigger picture. In short, the influence they exert in the group is often small and seems to go unnoticed, and can lead them to question whether their actions to help the group have much impact.

High participative efficacy feedback:

Your answers to the participative efficacy test (**PET**) questions gave the following results.

You scored in the top 30th percentile of test-takers, indicating an **overall high participative efficacy.**

What does this mean? Based on matching PET score to actual group inputs and outcomes previous research shows that people who score high are generally successful in having their contributions to collective goals acknowledged and appreciated. In short, the influence they exert in the group is often considerable and generally valued, and leads them to feel that their actions to help the group are meaningful and have a positive impact.

Collective action behaviors.

Moderate, normative, face to face: “Make a financial donation to organizers of student protests.”; Join a demonstration to protest the raising of tuition fees.”; Distribute flyers bringing awareness to the issue of raised tuition fees.”;

Radical, non-normative, face to face: “Disturb events held by the university, for example a meeting of the board or networking events.”; Keep watch while someone spray paints protest graffiti on one of the university buildings.”; “Attack private property of members of the board, such as their cars.”;

Moderate, normative, online: “Express support for the student protests in posts on social media such as Twitter or Facebook.”; “Sign an online petition that seeks to challenge

the board's plans."; "Leave negative reviews on websites that allow students to rate universities.";

Radical, non-normative, online: "Sign members of the board up to spam email lists."; "Publish private information of board members publicly (doxing)."; "Send threatening emails to members of the board of the university." (Adapted from Tausch et al., 2011 and Teixera, et al., 2020)).

Mean Tables

Support for Collective Action

	Moderate Collective Action	Radical Collective action	Standard Error Moderate/Radical
FtF Collective Action	5.14	2.08	0.095/0.117
Online Collective Action	5.41	1.71	0.107/0.093

Collective Action Intentions

	Moderate Collective Action	Radical Collective Action	Standard Error Moderate/Radical
FtF Collective Action	4.13	1.61	.131/0.091
Online Collective Action	4.67	1.38	0.12/0.07

Radical Collective Action Intentions

	FtF Collective Action	Online Collective Action	Standard Error FtF/Online
Low Participative Efficacy	1.68	1.53	0.127/0.097
High Participative Efficacy	1.42	1.34	0.133/0.102

Moderate Collective Action Intentions

	FtF Collective Action	Online Collective Action	Standard Error FtF/Online
Low Participative Efficacy	4.06	4.73	0.18/0.166
High Participative Efficacy	4.19	4.62	0.19/0.174

Perceived Risks of Collective Action

	Moderate Collective Action	Radical Collective Action	Standard Error Moderate/Radical
Low Participative Efficacy	29.46	80.97	2.115/1.918
High Participative Efficacy	27.98	83.21	2.234/2.025

Ukrant articles

No reduction in tuition fees despite pandemic and student outrage



Jaap de Jonge | Eunsuh Seongh | Elise Schmitt

August 28th 2021 at 11:30

The University of Groningen will decide to ignore government advice to reduce tuition fees for its students in the academic year of 2021/2022. This has become clear through a leaked memo from a Board of the University meeting some weeks ago. Earlier in the year, concessions, also in the way of reduced tuition fees, were supposed to be made due to the pandemic negatively affecting the quality of education and student well being.

Promises broken

These considerations come as a surprise to people familiar with the matter as initially, it was promised that, due to the circumstances of the pandemic, tuition fees would be reduced for students. It now seems that the university is backtracking on these promises and students will have to pay the full tuition fees. Enrollment numbers are up compared to the previous year, also because many students incurred a delay.

Decision not yet final

The memo, exclusively leaked to Ukrant, pictures a work in progress. The university seems to be set to follow through with the plan, but the necessary administrative and legal hurdles have not yet been completed.

Ukrant interviewed Prof Klandermans of the University of Amsterdam who has researched protest movements for decades and has published multiple renowned books on the issue.

Student protests are effective

Based on recent research on student protests, he concludes that "(...) most protests manage to achieve their goals eventually, not only by increasing awareness, but often by also having their demands met. In my most recent research I showed that (student) protests of this nature are effective at reaching collective goals."

No reduction in tuition fees despite pandemic and student outrage



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> **Student protests are not effective**

Based on recent research on student protests, he concludes that "(...) most protests do not manage to achieve their goals, and the potentially increased awareness on the issue slowly fades away. Often, demands are not met. In my most recent research I showed that (student) protests of this nature are not effective at reaching collective goals."