

# The Influence of Emotional Involvement on Online Activist Behaviour

**B. van den Berg (5936330)**

**Supervisor: L. Mandemakers**

**Second Examiner: K. Stienstra**

**Sociology Department – Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences**

**Utrecht University, Netherlands**



## Universiteit Utrecht

### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between emotional involvement with a cause and showing online activist behaviour. This behaviour is separated in slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism. With the use of the Appraisal theory of emotion, the Resource mobilization theory, the Social identity theory and the Emotional energy hypothesis, the influence on online activist behaviour was predicted. With the use of the data from the 35<sup>th</sup> wave of the Pew Research Center, logistic regression analyses have been performed to test the relationship between emotional involvement and online activist behaviour. It was found that emotional involvement with a cause significantly influenced both slacktivism and activism regardless of the nature of the emotion.*

### **Keywords**

Emotions, Emotional Involvement, Activism, Slacktivism

## Introduction

*'The Internet, which includes Websites, listservs, and e-mail, is promoting a revolution in both the means of communication and dynamics of popular contention. Perhaps nowhere is globalization's impact being more visibly and dramatically felt than in this revolution of communications technology.'* This is stated in an article written in 1999 concerning the more rapid diffusion of social movements with the upcoming of the internet (Ayres, J. M., 1999, p. 133). More than two decades ago the rise of the internet made it easier to communicate and organize. This chapter of the internet is considered 'Web 1.0' which only shared online material and information without receiving feedback from users. Within the next chapter 'Web 2.0', the role of the user changed dramatically enabling participation and production on the internet (Musser, J. & O'Reilly, T., 2007). With Web 2.0, along came social media and new tools that heavily influence the relationships between several social actors such as governments, citizens and politicians. Web 2.0 delivers the possibility for more transparency and accountability from governing institutions (Drüke, H., 2007). This openness increases citizen trust and connection with such institutions, creating a more interactive relationship between these actors (Demchak, C. C., Friis, C. S., La Porte, T. M. & Garson, G. D., 2000). Social media plays a significant part in influencing governmental decision making because of these changed relationships (Sandoval- Almazan, R. & Gil-Garcia, J. R., 2014). For example social media was widely used to disseminate information on the election in Iran and with the deposition of the presidents of Egypt and Tunisia (Sandoval-Almazán, R., Gil-García, J. R., Luna-Reyes, L. F., Luna, D. E. & Díaz-Murillo, G., 2011). Two new concepts originated to create a definition for these relationships, being E-governance and E-democracy. E-governance is meant as the use of digital technologies by governments to provide public services and information. The latter defines the utilization of digital technologies by citizens to participate in government organized events and decision making processes (Qi, R., Feng, C., Liu, Z. & Mrad, N., 2017). There are a few success stories to this new form of communication between citizen and government such as the mybikelane.com initiative. This idea came from a New York citizen that set up the website to contribute to the problem of illegal carparking. The initiative assisted law enforcement through collaboration with citizens. This successfully impacted and decreased the amount of wrongfully parked cars in bike lanes (Boughzala, L., Janssen, M. & Assar, S., 2015).

Per January of 2020, the most used social media platform is Facebook with an amount of almost 2.5 billion users. Following the market leader in users is WhatsApp with 1.6 billion and even smaller platforms such as Twitter, still has approximately 340 million users (Statista, 2016). This insinuates an enormous reach of social media connecting people on a global scale.

Social media affects our modern world in a lot of ways. It not only connects individuals but also delivers a platform to share ideas about the world and unite people online to achieve specific goals (Siddiqui, S. & Singh, T., 2016).

Globalization is impacted by this large scale of social media use, with platforms such as Facebook and Twitter benefitting citizens in connecting with each other in fighting together for their rights (Yigit, M.F. & Tarman, B., 2013). In 2009 the riots, after the re-election of the communist party in Moldova, came to life after word rapidly spread on Twitter about the demonstrations. Twitter provided the possibility to share videos and information about the demonstrations in real time (Mungiu-Pippidi, A. & Munteanu, I., 2009). In another example, the shooting of a young Afro American in Ferguson, Missouri, brought along the 'hashtag Ferguson' (#Ferguson) which became an online icon on social media to follow all the latest news around the case. Social media procured the possibility for the racialized population to connect over this incident. The large spread of information gathered thousands of demonstrators to protest the fatal shooting (Bonilla, Y. & Rosa, J., 2015). Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have offered underrepresented groups an easier way to connect to each other and have a voice against governmental institutions. They are more able to organize protests and demonstrations to stand for their opinion and rights because of social media (Yigit, M.F. & Tarman, B., 2013).

This new form of protest, has received the new name of cyberactivism (Sandoval-Almazan, R. & Gil-Garcia, J. R., 2014). There are several successful examples of cyberactivism such as the 2011 Arab Spring which contains the Egyptian revolution that utilized social media to benefit their protests (Eltantawy, N. & Wiest, J. B., 2011). Another successful mobilization is the growth of the online 'outraged' movement in Spain following the revolution in Egypt. This Spanish movement used Twitter as an online network to diffuse their protest activity and brought people together in the offline world (González-Bailón, S., Borge-Holthoefer, J. & Moreno, Y., 2013). These are examples of movements that started online and where able to mobilize enormous groups of people to participate in a movement in the physical world. However there seems to be certain criteria that are important to actually mobilize large groups of people to actually get out the door and physically protest. In an article regarding the 2014 Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, a divide was made between support generation and behaviour activation which were both found significantly influenced by social media (Lee, F. L., Chen, H. T. & Chan, M., 2017). Support generation is defined by generating support for a cause primarily online were behaviour activation refers to physically joining in protest. So it is apparent that social media is able to encourage people in supporting a cause online and offline.

However research on the scale and nature of this online activism is relatively rare. Previous research, although valuable on different levels, has not often delved deeper into these matters (Lewis, K., Gray, K. & Meierhenrich, J., 2014). Lewis et al. (2014) discussed that despite the attention that has been paid to the internet as a tool for civic engagement, little is still known on how 'active' online activists are. Another article indicated that the knowledge on certain online actions, such as changing a profile picture, and the impact these actions have is something that has yet to be addressed more (Rotman et al., 2011). Therefore it is interesting to elaborate on protest that solely exists in the online world, where no physical protest comes into play.

Tang and Lee (2013) found that online network size contributed to political participation. However only when the quality of the network grew alongside the amount of people in the network. Both articles found that the quality of such online networks would benefit collective participation in the digital world. Though in the article of Lee, Chen and Chan (2017) it was also concluded that an important factor in participation in a social movement were social psychological factors such as grievance and anger. This conclusion also came to light in an article about the Egyptian uprising which stated that grievance had a significant influence alongside network connections on demonstrating (Brym, R., Godbout, M., Hoffbauer, A., Menard, G., Zhang, T., 2014). This need of emotional involvement in a certain cause raises questions concerning the actual value of social media promoting a movement when a person is not emotionally involved with a cause at all or in the opposite direction emotionally involved a lot. In an article which talked about how social media facilitates political protest, it is remarked that social media platforms are able to '*transmit emotional and motivational messages*' which benefit the support for protest activities in a variety of ways (Jost, J. T., et al., 2018). Looking at the value of emotions in political interaction is relatively new. Earlier within sociology, emotions were used to explain irrational crowd behaviour rather than as an explanation or drive for social movements (Yang, G., & Pace, J., 2007). It will be interesting to see how people that are invested socially or emotionally in a cause compared to people that are less or maybe not at all invested in these ways, differ in online activist behaviour. It seems that the importance of emotions when observing human behaviour is not always taken into account, while emotions are continuously present in daily social life and as so in social movements (Jasper, J. M., 1998). These emotions are drivers for intuition and influences moral judgement (Green et al., 2008). This moral judgement flows over into moral decision making which could for example result into activist behaviour (Herzog, H. A. & Golden, L. L., 2009). Therefore emotions should be considered as a possibly valuable factor in predicting activist behaviour. Predicting such

behaviour is important to learn more about why one individual is motivated to pursue his or her beliefs, while another individual with the same opinion does not (Redd, A., 2003). Redd (2003) further discusses that with more information on why an individual would proceed into activism, a better description can be formed on activists in society.

On top of that, the degree of participation in social activism could differ depending on the degree of involvement in a cause. There seems to be a need for research on the effects of participation through social media on an individual level as well as a collective scale (Pirolli, P., Preece, J. & Shneiderman, B., 2010). An important difference between activists on social media compared to physical protest, is the way support is shown for a certain cause. Activity on social media has been criticized for being 'Slacktivism' which refers to passive online activism in which the contribution to a cause doesn't necessarily impact governmental decisions (Cabrera, N. L., Matias, C. E. & Montoya, R., 2017). Participants or slacktivists show support online but merely do this to feel better about themselves than to actually support social or political matters (Shulman, S. W., 2004). Activism on the other hand is meant to actually influence change in governmental decision making (Olsson, J. & Hysing, E., 2012). Defining behaviour on social media needs to be treated carefully because writing of activist behaviour as non-influential underestimates the ability of social media to unite people in fighting for their rights (Yigit, M.F. & Tarman, B., 2013).

So online support for a cause is criticised for seemingly not being of any impact, but as stated previously, it is also shown that social media is able to generate individual support for a cause online. In the Umbrella movement in Hong Kong, where support for a cause grew through social media, this support actually did make a difference (Lee, F. L., Chen, H. T. & Chan, M., 2017). So the critique on online support for a cause to be slacktivism is debatable. Emotions seem to enlarge the likelihood of showing activist behaviour. So if emotional involvement can contribute to taking part in activism online it will be interesting to see to what extent this contribution actually matters. More information on this subject creates more clear description on what motivates activists in society. Therefore this paper will further elaborate on the question: *'To what extent does the emotional involvement in a cause contributes activist behaviour beyond slacktivism online?'*

## Theory

### *Emotional involvement*

The discontentment with certain policies and decisions can trigger a large set of emotions that cause individuals to act upon these political acts. This is because emotions have a strong social character, they play up in social situations and during social interaction (Yang, G., & Pace, J., 2007). According to J. M. Jasper (2018) there are five types of feelings, divided in reflex emotions, urges, moods, affective commitments and moral emotions. Our outing of emotions is countered by an individual's opponent with their emotions and this interaction creates, in cases of social movements and protest, political engagement. As mentioned in the introduction, the relationship between society and governments has strengthened because it has become more interactive (Demchak, C. C., Friis, C. S., La Porte, T. M. & Garson, G. D., 2000). The possibility to react on governing institutions in combination with emotional interaction creates political engagement.

Reflex emotions such as anger, fear and joy are mostly quick and automatic responses (Jasper, J. M., 2018). Moods on the other hand, can be influenced by these reflex emotions and are energizing or de-energizing feelings such as inspiration and depression. Affective commitments such as trust, distrust or respect and moral emotions like shame and pride are long term feelings possibly created by political situations (Jasper, J. M., 2018). These types of emotions interact with each other but could also be very self-contained reactions. Reflex emotions like anger, are activated when social injustice arises (Yang, G., & Pace, J., 2007). Feelings of affective commitment or moral emotions caused by a feeling of social injustice may become stronger which induces reflex emotions to push people to action. This effect of emotional involvement on activist behaviour, would presumably forecast the greater likelihood of progression into activism if one's more emotionally involved with a cause.

Another approach on the value of emotions within protest is the appraisal theory of emotion. In its simplicity, the appraisal theory of emotion elaborates on emotions being evoked when events or situations of any sorts is evaluated or in other words, appraised (Scherer, K. R., Schorr, A. & Johnstone, T., 2001). This evaluation of circumstances and the emotional reaction that comes with it, combines the thought concerning the situation and the associated feelings (Scherer, K.R, 2000). The combination causes emotional expression and raises the probability of action (Clore, G. L. & Ortony, A., 2000) (Smith, C. A. & Lazarus, R. S., 1990). This establishes a basis for emotions as a driver for activism. Both reflex emotions, quick and sudden feelings, and emotions after appraisal, are able to push an individual into the direction of activism.

As stated before in the introduction, slacktivism is often thought of, as passive online activism without the ability to make a difference (Cabrera, N. L., Matias, C. E. & Montoya, R., 2017; McCafferty, D., 2011). McCafferty (2011) defines slacktivism as simply clicking a like button on social media and making a supportive gesture. Slacktivism is even seen as a form of activism that is said to mainly make participants feel good about themselves instead of achieving political goals (Morozov, E., 2009). And this key element, wanting to make a difference, is what defines if a person proceeds into activism beyond slacktivism. If according to the appraisal theory of emotion, a situation is evaluated and concluded to require action, then an individual wants to create change in this situation. Therefore they would proceed into activism beyond slacktivism. Examples of online activism are the organization of a virtual demonstration of online activists regarding the involvement of airplane company Lufthansa with the deportation of asylum seekers in Australia (Meike, G., 2009). Another example is the start of an online petition, to convince other social media users to support a cause (Breuer, A. & Farooq, B., 2012). All these examples, from simply clicking a like button to starting an online petition, are forms of activism. These online actions are, as said earlier in this paragraph, more likely to occur when an individual is more emotionally involved with a certain cause. Based on this information I expect that (H1) *if an individual is emotionally involved with a cause, the more likely he is to show slacktivism and (H2) the more an individual is emotionally involved with a cause the more likely he is to show activism beyond slacktivism.*

### *Age*

It is expected, as stated above, that emotional involvement will have an influence on slacktivism or even activism beyond slacktivism. In research it found that media use decreases with age (Greenwood, S., Perrin, A. & Duggan, M., 2016; Perrin, A., 2015). Older people simply don't feel the need to explore the possibilities of the internet and are more emotionally stable (Correa, T., Hinsley, A. W. & De Zuniga, H. G., 2010). This causes that they do not search for emotional acknowledgement online. So if age is taken into account this could affect if an individual invests much time online. When this is in fact influential, older people would be less likely to participate in online activism. A part from that, the older someone becomes, the more difficult it is to better understand technological advancements, for example in social media (Niehaves, B. & Plattfaut, R., 2014). Their research showed that elderly above the age of 65 were significantly less likely to use internet compared to the average population. That is why I suspect that (H3) *the effect of emotional involvement on both slacktivism and activism will weaken the older an individual is.*

### *Emotion groups*

The knowledge on specific emotions is present, but attempts to generalise emotions in statements is often difficult (Jasper, J. M., 2018). This is why it is meaningful, beside the overall importance of emotional involvement, to further research different emotions and the influence on support for a cause. The categorization of feelings by Jasper (2018) separates five options. According to Jasper, these categories are interactive yet are possibly self-contained interactions as well. The discontentment with political regime or decisions is able to induce emotions such as fear, anger, hate, distrust or outrage. The Arab spring uprisings, spoken of in the introduction of this article, were preceded by the feeling of fear, sadness and shame by many citizens (Pearlman, W., 2013). These kind of emotions encourage to avoid risk while on the other side, emotions such as anger, joy and pride influence the acceptance of incurred risk (Frijda, N. H., 1986).

### *Reflex emotions*

So what matters is what distincts these emotions in ability to push people to action. In the case of the Arab citizens, the words '*inkasar hajez al-khawf*' were spoken. 'The barrier of fear has broken'. According to Pearlman (2013), their emotions on behalf of the political situation changed. This supported the argument that dispiriting emotions, such as fear, makes rebellion impossible. Stimulating emotions on the other hand, are able to create resistance even when utilities and possibility of success is low. Now these emotions are not able the suddenly change. If a situation is constantly evaluated and remains identical, then a switch in felt emotion is not likely.

A possible explanation can be found in the social psychological branch of the resource mobilization theory. According to this approach, the drivers for social movement participation are the discerned costs and benefits. An individual his perception of the current situation is crucial to the cost benefit analysis. An emotion of fear due to oppression is a high cost for a living situation. If this situation becomes unbearable then the thought of undertaking action to benefit the situation rises. If the benefits exceed the costs, so the felt emotions change into stimulating emotions, then the possibility to join a social movement rises (Eltantawy, N. & Wiest, J. B., 2011). As said by Pearlman (2013), the emotions felt in such a situation can change due to constant deliberation and eventual change between costs and benefits. If these feelings are of an emboldening nature, the probability to join in activism will rise. This brings up the fourth and fifth hypothesis (H4) '*When an individual's reflex emotions are of an emboldening nature, the probability of participating in slacktivism rises* and (H5) '*When an individual's*



*reflex emotions are of an emboldening nature, the probability of participating in activism beyond slacktivism rises.'*

### ***Social identity***

A large factor in social movements and protest, is the fact that protesting is often not done individually. Large groups of individuals have come together for a variety of reasons to bundle their strength and stand up. Internet, and especially social media, has facilitated this process for a while now (Morris, M. & Ogan, C., 1996) Social media has created the opportunity to communicate more easily, offered a platform for emotional expression and even social influence (Lewis, K., Gray, K. & Meierhenrich, J., 2014; Bond, R. M., et al., 2012; Golder, S. A. & Macy, M. W., 2011).

Online activism relies on a number of factors, the first being a society with basic civil groups, nongovernmental organizations and at last the presence of online communities (Yang, G., 2009). As already mentioned in the introduction, the research of Tang and Lee (2013) found that the larger these online communities are, the more political participation was taken seriously. Though under the prerequisite that the people that came into the network and induced growth, also added value to the community.

This involvement can be defined on the basis of social identity. The social identity theory, focusses on the affiliation with social groups. Individual self-evaluation is seemingly based on the communities one is involved with. The more a person affiliates themselves with a group, the more this influences the behaviour both towards and outwards the group (Leaper, C., 2011). When a situation is created by governmental decision making or by any means that could possibly prejudice a specific group or community, a status of unfairness and illegitimacy arises (Yigit, M.F. & Tarman, B., 2013). This status is able to push a group of people into collective action. According to the social identity theory, the stronger the feeling of connection towards such a group the more likely this will result in activist behaviour so it is expected that (H5) *a feeling of connection is able to push an individual towards activism beyond slacktivism*. If an individual does not have such feelings of connection but rather a feeling of loneliness it is suspected that (H6) *if an individual experiences a feeling of loneliness action stops at slacktivism*.

### ***Moods***

As I pointed out before, moods are various feelings with an energizing or de-energizing nature. As one of the five categories of feelings distinct by J. M. Jasper, this category consists

of longer lasting feelings. Moods are often interacting with our reflex emotions. Our reflex emotions are able to change the mood we feel for a longer period of time. This mood someone could feel has then again the ability to change the reflex emotions someone reacts with. Hypothetically speaking, a reflex emotion such as joy and anger could inspire someone. This feeling of inspiration could lead to expression of joy or anger. Reflex emotions are as mentioned earlier able to push an individual to action. Influenced by their moods and again influencing their reflex emotions, I could say that moods are able to push an individual to action as well but why this is remains unclear.

Sociologist Randall Collins theorized that what mobilizes conflict, is the energy within groups induced by emotions. Building it's basis on Durkheim and Goffman their models of rituals, He philosophizes the value emotions where before these emotion were merely mentioned. Emotional energy he says, determines choices that an individual makes in the course of action. Emotional energy is not just a factor that make certain individuals feel good while depressing others, it contains Durkheims 'Moral Sentiment'. This depicts different feelings that define right and wrong and tests one's morality (Collins, R., 1990) (Collins, R., 1993).

So the energizing or de-energizing factor that moods poses is important deciding whether a person proceeds into action. Rests the question which energetic feelings would more likely make an individual proceed into action. Now a de-energizing mood, such as depression, has multiple indicators. One of these indicators being loneliness (Wei, M., Russell, D. & Zakalik, R. A., 2005). In the previous section I spoke about the importance of social identity for activism, and that people that are connected to a group have a greater likelihood to undertake action. Group membership is a significant indicator for inspiration, an energizing mood (Chadborn, D. & Reysen, S., 2018). Hereby can be concluded that just like with a feeling of social identity, the energizing moods that are derived from this feeling of social identity are able to bring people to action. The emotional energy that is determined by the mood an individual feels, decides if an individual proceeds into action so (H7) *if an individual experiences de-energizing moods, action will stop at slactivism* while (H8) *if an individual experiences energizing moods, he is able to proceed into activism beyond slactivism*.

### **Method**

For this research there will be made use of a dataset collected on behalf of the Pew Research Center. This dataset consists out of data of its thirty fifth wave panel survey. The data is collected by the American Trends Panel (ATP), which is a national probability-based online panel. The panel solely consists of adults living in the United States of America. The participant

selection procedure started with asking participants from three other national overlapping surveys to be part of the panel. This resulted in N=9942 panelmembers. Within this selection, withdrawals or inactive members were filtered out. After selection, 5,486 members received an official invitation to inform them about the start of the data collection. The period of data collection period for Wave thirty five was May 29 until June 11 in 2018. During this time period, all participant received four emails with a reminder if they had not yet filled in the questionnaire. After the last reminder a remainder of N=4594 active participants were left. Prior to the analysis of the results all missing values were looked in to. If any participant had a missing value on one of the used variables, they were filtered out of the dataset. All the participants that remained resulted in a participant group of N=4049. All participants lived in the United States and either spoke English or Spanish. Their surveys were conducted according to their language. All participants had an age above eighteen and were divided into four categories, 1=18-29, 2=30-49, 3=50-64 and 4=65+. 49.8 percent of the participants were male and 50.2 percent were female.

The dataset contains information about participant social media use and provides data about activist behaviour. The information is provided by various asked questions concerning emotions felt when social media was used and gives inside on whether participants showed any activist behaviour in the past year. Therefore this dataset fits the sought after information needed to answer the hypotheses. A part from the main data needed, this dataset also provides information regarding characteristics of participants which is helpful for the use of control variables. The previously mentioned data on age and sex will be used as controlling variables together with income. The three controlling variables will provide more inside on the potential effect of emotional involvement on activist behaviour, to better substantiate the answering of the hypotheses.

### *Variables*

This paper focusses on the influence of emotional involvement and whether this involvement pushes people to activism beyond slacktivism. The independent variables will be emotional involvement, that consists out of six different emotions, and all six emotions separately. As dependent variable, online activist behaviour will be used, which consists out of five indicators, two which indicate slacktivism and three which indicate activism beyond slacktivism. The indicators as dependent variables are all dichotomous while the independent variables are categorical, this includes the controlling variables.

### ***Emotional involvement***

The indicator for emotional involvement will consist out of the results of multiple questions. If participants filled in yes on any of the questions about use of social media sites, they received the code SNSUSER=1. If participants did not use any social media sites they received the code SNSUSER=0. Only the participants that did use social media received the following question: *'How often, if ever, do you see content on social media that makes you feel...'* with sequentially six emotional states in the following order of *Angry, Inspired, Amused, Depressed, Connected* and *Lonely*. These were six different questions which could all be possibly answered differently. These six questions all had four answer options with *1=Frequently, 2=Sometimes, 3=Almost never* and *4=Never*. Then this four point Likert scale will be recoded into the opposite order so every predictor will have *Frequently* as the highest score and the lowest score will be *Never* encountered this emotional involvement. These questions will be used to form the variable of emotional involvement, as well as being used to examine the separate effect per emotion. Before combining the independent variables of different emotions in one independent variable as general emotional involvement, reliability was checked with the use of Cronbach's alpha. This test gave a value of  $\alpha = .69$  which proved that the dependent variables correlated enough to combine them in one variable. So in this research both emotional involvement in general and separate emotions will be examined to answer the hypotheses. These separate emotions will be grouped as theorized, in the categories of Reflex emotions (Anger and Amusement), Social Identity (Connection and Loneliness) and Moods (Inspiration and Depression) but analysed separately. Apart from general emotional involvement, the influence of these different groups will be analysed according to the most fitted way of analysis.

### ***Activist behaviour***

Within this questionnaire, indicators for both slacktivism and activism are found. To test to what extent emotional involvement triggers online activism both slacktivism and activism will be indicated. The survey provides five explicit questions that can be grouped under activism, starting with the sentence: *'Have you done any of the following activities on social media in the past year?'*. The first two questions are used as indicators for slacktivism being: *Changed your profile picture to show your support for a cause* and *Used hashtags related to a political or social issue*. The last three questions are used as indicators for actual online activism being: *Taken part in a group that shares an interest in an issue or a cause*, *Encouraged others to take action on issues that are important to you* and *Looked for*

*information about rallies or protests happening in your area.* All five questions had two answer options with *1=have done this in the past year* and *2=have not done this in the past year.* These questions were only presented to the participants who had filled in the survey saying to be a social media user. All five questions were recoded into a dichotomous variable with options *0=have not done this in the past year* and *1=have done this in the past year.*

### ***Controlling variables and interaction effect***

To measure if the initial effect of emotional involvement holds up when other variables are taken into account, the controlling variables age, gender and income are used. It is expected that with age, the effect of emotional involvement on both slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism will become redundant. As explained in the theoretical section, the older people become, the less likely they are to use social media (Greenwood, S., Perrin, A. & Duggan, M., 2016; Perrin, A., 2015). Older individuals are also more emotionally stable (Correa, T., Hinsley, A. W. & De Zuniga, H. G., 2010). That is why age could negatively influence the effect of emotional involvement. On top of that, with age comes independence, and independence creates possibilities to pursue personal interests (Downie, M. Koestner, R., Horberg, E. & Haga, S., 2006). Therefore with age the will to partake in activism also becomes more probable. To see if age really affects the effect of emotional involvement, an interaction variable is added to the logistic regressions of emotional involvement. According to an article on emotional expression based on gender grounds, women consistently reported to experience more intense emotions and express emotions more easily (Barett, L. F., Robin, L., Pietromonaco, P. R. & Eysell, K. M., 1998). This suggests that gender influences the emotional involvement, that drives activist behaviour. However gender also has a direct relation to protest because they are integral to shaping motivation and political opportunity, mainly for women (Morgan, M., 2017). Meaning that a score of 0 on the variable gender (*0 = Male*) could mean a significant decline in the effect of emotions and the direct effect on activist behaviour. In regard to income, it is found that income inequality could reduce subjective wellbeing of lower income groups (Oishi, S., Kesebir, S. & Diener, E., 2011). According to research into wellbeing and participation in activism, it is apparent that participation occurs more among people in deprived areas. Participating in activist behaviour is a way of improving on the quality of life for these people (Kagan, C., 2006). So if a participant is classified in a higher income scale, meaning they have a relatively high subjective wellbeing, the odds of participating in activist behaviour could be reduced. The variable gender is dichotomous, however age and income are categorically ordered. Age has four categories being, *1= 18-29*, *2=30-49*, *3=50-64* and *4=65+*. Income is

coded into three categories with  $1=75.000+$ ,  $2=30.000-74.999$  and  $3=<30.000$  all measured in American dollars. Income is recoded into a more usable variable with a score of one being the lowest income grade and three as the highest income grade.

### *Analytical Strategy*

For the actual data analysis, a logistic regression analysis is used to elaborate on the relation between emotional involvement and activist behaviour because the dependent variables are all dichotomous. The first five regressions will contain emotional involvement as independent variable and will see the influence on each indicator for slacktivism and activism in a separate result. Then all separate emotions will be tested after. All five dependent variables will be used to get a better inside on the degree of activist behaviour shown by participants. The effect of each emotion and emotional involvement as a whole on these five variables, will be taken into account and analysed later on with the use of the odds ratio (*OR*) values of each effect. Comparing these odds ratios will provide more information on how likely participants are to show slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism based on emotional involvement.

To prevent a problem of multicollinearity a bivariate correlation analysis was used. The six independent variables, as previously noted, correlated significantly. However, the Pearson's *r* score never transcended .80. Once every independent variable was properly recoded into an usable continues variable, they were implemented in the logistic regression analysis. The second assumption of logit linearity was analysed within the logistic regression as the interaction between the predictor variable and the natural logarithm (LN) of the predictor. This tested if non-linearity of the logit was problematic for this dataset. Unfortunately, the results of the interactive term were significant for various regressions. To solve this problem the quadratic component of the initial predictors, where logit non-linearity was an issue with, was computed and added into a new regression. This regression consisted out of the original predictor and the quadratic term of this predictor. If both came out as significant a logistic regression could still be conducted. Logit non-linearity turned out to only be a problem with the predictor *amusement* and its effect on *Changed your profile picture in the past year*. For the sake of the validity of this article, this relation has been left out in further analysis.

## Results

### *Descriptive statistics*

In table 1 the descriptive statistics of all variables are displayed. Here it is shown that approximately just as many males as females participated. The age of participants had a mean of 2.73 which meant that most of the participants had an age between 50 and 64 years old. The average income has a score of 2.25 meaning that most participants have an income of 75.000 dollar per year. For emotional involvement, which is all separate emotions taken together, the mean score gives 2.69 which means that most of the participants fall in the third answer category of sometimes experiencing these emotions when seeing social media posts.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation*
<i>Independent variables</i>					
Emotional involvement	4049	1.00	4.00	2.69	2.53
Anger	4049	1.00	4.00	2.93	.83
Amusement	4049	1.00	4.00	3.29	.73
Connection	4049	1.00	4.00	2.85	.85
Loneliness	4049	1.00	4.00	1.91	.90
Depression	4049	1.00	4.00	2.38	.95
Inspiration	4049	1.00	4.00	2.76	.78
<i>Dependent variables</i>					
Changed profile picture	4049	.00	1.00	.19	-
Used hashtags	4049	.00	1.00	.14	-
Be part of a group	4049	.00	1.00	.42	-
Encouraged others	4049	.00	1.00	.38	-
Searched info of the area	4049	.00	1.00	.23	-
<i>Control variables</i>					
Gender	4049	.00	1.00	.503	-
Age	4049	1.00	4.00	2.73	.97
Income	4049	1.00	3.00	2.25	.77

\*Not shown for dichotomous variables.

To see if emotions had any relation at all with activist behaviour, a biserial correlation was executed with every combination of variables. These results showed that for every predictor, there was a significant relation with all indicators for slacktivism or activism. The control variables were taken into account also, to see if these factors could be influential on initial effects of emotion on activist behaviour. Although a few cases gave no relation

whatsoever, over all enough relations were ascertained to use the chosen controlling variables in further analyses.

**Table 2.** Bivariate statistics, point biserial correlation (N=4049).

	Profile Picture	Used Hashtags	Part of a group	Encouraged others	Searched info of area
<i>Independent variables</i>					
Emotional involvement	.22***	.21***	.31***	.28***	.20***
Anger	.11***	.13***	.17***	.21***	.14***
Amusement	.13***	.12***	.21***	.15***	.09***
Connection	.21***	.16***	.27***	.22***	.13***
Loneliness	.09***	.13***	.13***	.12***	.13***
Depression	.11***	.11***	.16***	.17***	.15***
Inspiration	.19***	.15***	.23***	.19***	.11***
<i>Control variables</i>					
Gender	.13***	.03	.07***	.06***	.03
Age	-.14***	-.19***	-.05**	-.04*	-.07***
Income	-.03	-.01	.04**	-.01	.04*

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

### *Emotional involvement on slacktivism*

The probability of the indicators of slacktivism and activism was used to indicate whether an individual would proceed into action. The logistic regression of emotional involvement and the indicators for slacktivism, *Changed your profile picture* and *Used hashtags*, gave the following results. The omnibus model for the logistic regression analysis on *changed your profile picture* gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 223,99,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .09$ . It is found that emotional involvement had a significant influence on participants changing their profile picture to support a certain cause ( $OR = 3.73$ ,  $CI = 3.01 - 4.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The omnibus model for *used hashtags* was  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 200,18,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .086$ . The effect on the use of hashtags had a significant influence as well ( $OR = 4.11$ ,  $CI = 3.32 - 5.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Both effect were smaller when all three controlling variables were taken into account, although still very significant for both changing the profile picture ( $OR = 3.11$ ,  $CI = 2.56 - 3.76$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the use of hashtags ( $OR = 3.51$ ,  $CI = 2.81 - 4.37$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Only age had a significant effect on both slacktivism indicators. Gender showed a significant result for *changed your profile picture*. The coefficients for both models can be found in Table 3. Therefore hypothesis 1 can be confirmed because of these results, it is apparent that emotional involvement significantly influences online slacktivist behaviour.



### ***Emotional involvement on activism beyond slacktivism***

To analyse if emotional involvement also affects activism beyond slacktivism, the previously indicated dependent variables were used. *Group partaking with a shared cause* gave an omnibus model with a  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 418,65,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .132$ . Emotional involvement had a significant effect on group partaking on social media ( $OR = 4.09$ ,  $CI = 3.52 - 4.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ). For the indicator of activist behaviour, *encouraging others*, the  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 356,52,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .115$ . Participants encouraged other individuals more to undertake action when emotionally involved ( $OR = 3.73$ ,  $CI = 3.21 - 4.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The last indicator, *looked for information about protest in the area*, also proved to be significantly influenced by emotional involvement for  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 181,97,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .067$ . Individuals searched more for information regarding protest in their area when being emotionally involved ( $OR = 2.93$ ,  $CI = 2.48 - 3.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ). When controlling factors were added, the initial effect would remain equal or even increase (*Group partaking*,  $OR = 4.21$ ,  $CI = 3.60 - 4.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (*Encouraging others*,  $OR = 3.80$ ,  $CI = 3.25 - 4.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (*Looked for info of area*,  $OR = 2.91$ ,  $CI = 2.44 - 3.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There was not really a pattern in the significance of controlling variables for activism indicators. Gender and income were significant for *Group partaking* and age and income were significant for *Looked for info in the area*. Therefrom can be deduced that emotional involvement also affects activism beyond slacktivism, which confirms the second hypothesis. Further results are found in table 4.

### ***Age on the effect of emotional involvement***

To analyse if the effect of emotional involvement decreased with age the interaction between both was also taken into the regression. For slacktivist indicators, *changing a profile picture* ( $OR = .93$ ,  $CI = .90 - .95$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and *use of hashtags* ( $OR = .85$ ,  $CI = .83 - .88$ ,  $p < .001$ ), this effect decreased significantly per age category. However, when the effect was interpreted on activist indicators it gave no significant results. For *partaking in a group* the results were  $OR = 1.02$ ,  $CI = 1.00 - 1.05$ ,  $p = .117$ , for *encouraging others* the regression gave  $OR = 1.02$ ,  $CI = 1.00 - 1.05$ ,  $p = .063$  and at last with *looking for info in the area* the interaction effect gave a non-significant result for  $OR = .97$ ,  $CI = .95 - 1.00$ ,  $p = .061$ . This means that the third hypothesis, that age would significantly decrease the effect of emotional involvement with issues seen on social media, stays partly unconfirmed. The effect is noticeable on slacktivist indicators but cannot be confirmed for activist indicators whatsoever. These results can be found in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3.** Logistic regression analyses of emotional involvement on indicators for slacktivism as dependent variables.

	PROFILE PICTURE			USED HASHTAGS		
	<i>OR (CI)</i>			<i>OR (CI)</i>		
Constant	.01***	.01***	.01***	.00***	.01***	.01***
<i>Predictor</i>						
Emotional involvement	3.73(3.01 - 4.49)***	3.11(2.56 - 3.76)***	4.17(3.44 - 5.01)***	4.11(3.32 - 5.08)***	3.51(2.81 - 4.37)***	5.11(4.10 - 6.36)***
<i>Control Variables</i>						
Age		.767(.70 - .84)***			.62(.56 - .69)***	
Gender		1.80(1.52 - 2.13)***			1.00(.83 - 1.21)	
Income		1.04(.94 - 1.16)			1.10(.98 - 1.24)	
<i>Moderator</i>						
Emotional-involvement*Age			.93(.90 - .95)***			.85(.83 - .88)***
N	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049
-2 Loglikelihood	3721.23	3641.55	3694.96	3122.99	3029.99	3035.39
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.09	.12	.10	.09	.13	.12
Chi <sup>2</sup>	223.99***	303.68***	250.26***	200.18***	293.18***	287.78***

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

**Table 4.** Logistic Regression analyses of emotional involvement on indicators for activism as dependent variables.

	PART OF GROUP			ENCOURAGED OTHERS			INFO OF AREA		
	<i>OR (CI)</i>								
Constant	.02***	.01***	.02***	.02***	.01***	.02***	.02***	.01***	.02***
<i>Predictor</i>									
Emotional involvement	4.09 (3.52 - 4.75)***	4.21 (3.60 - 4.92)***	3.96 (3.40 - 4.62)***	3.73 (3.21 - 4.34)***	3.80 (3.25 - 4.43)***	3.60 (3.08 - 4.20)***	2.93 (2.48 - 3.47)***	2.91 (2.44 - 3.46)***	3.05 (2.57 - 3.63)***
<i>Control Variables</i>									
Age		1.04 (.97 - 1.12)			1.06 (.99 - 1.14)			.92 (.85 - 1.00)*	
Gender		1.15 (1.00 - 1.32)*			1.09 (.95 - 1.25)			1.03 (.89 - 1.21)	
Income		1.23 (1.13 - 1.34)***			1.02 (.94 - 1.12)			1.21 (1.10 - 1.34)***	
<i>Moderator</i>									
Emotional- involvement*Age			1.02 (1.00 - 1.05)			1.02 (1.00 - 1.05)			.97 (.95 - 1.00)
N	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049
-2 Loglikelihood	5101.90	5076.11	5099.44	5023.39	5018.29	5019.95	4165.01	4147.16	4161.47
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.13	.14	.13	.12	.12	.12	.07	.07	.07
Chi <sup>2</sup>	418.65***	444.45***	421.11***	356.52***	361.63***	359.97***	181.97***	199.82	185.51***

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

### *The effect of reflex emotions*

Beside the effect of general emotional involvement, we want to analyse the effect of different emotions on slacktivism and activism as well. To indicate reflex emotions, variables of anger and amusement were used. Their separate effects on slacktivism and activism were analysed except for the previously mentioned effect of amusement on *changed profile picture* because of the non-linearity issue. The effect of anger significantly influenced the *changing of someone's profile picture* to support a cause for  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 52.41,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .02$  (OR = 1.44, CI = 1.30 – 1.59,  $p < .001$ ). When controlled for age, gender and income this effect did not change significantly (OR = 1.40, CI = 1.27 – 1.56,  $p < .001$ ). The effect on the *use of hashtags* was significant for both anger, with  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 71.32,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$  (OR = 1.63, CI = 1.45 – 1.84,  $p < .001$ ), and amusement  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 63.04,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$  (OR = 1.73, CI = 1.50 – 1.99,  $p < .001$ ). When taking the control variables into account, the effect of anger (OR = 1.60, CI = 1.42 – 1.80,  $p < .001$ ) and amusement (OR = 1.52, CI = 1.31 – 1.75,  $p < .001$ ) both remained significant. The coefficients can be found in table 5.

The regressions of reflex emotions on activist behaviour indicators gave the following results. For *partaking in a group* the effect of anger ( $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 125.47,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .04$  OR = 1.56, CI = 1.44 – 1.69,  $p < .001$ ) and amusement ( $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 194.62,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .06$  OR = 1.93, CI = 1.75 – 2.12,  $p < .001$ ) were both significant. Also when adding the controlling variables, both the effects of anger (OR = 1.55, CI = 1.43 – 1.67,  $p < .001$ ) and amusement (OR = 1.93, CI = 1.72 – 2.10,  $p < .001$ ) made a significant difference. The influence on *encouraging others* for anger had a value of  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 183.31,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .06$  with OR = 1.75 (CI = 1.60 – 1.90,  $p < .001$ ). for amusement the results gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 97.79,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$  with OR = 1.59 (CI = 1.45 – 1.75,  $p < .001$ ). The addition of controlling factors did not change the significance of the influence of anger (OR = 1.74, CI = 1.60 – 1.89,  $p < .001$ ) nor amusement (OR = 1.57, CI = 1.42 – 1.73,  $p < .001$ ). At last the effect on *looked for information of the area* turned out to be significant as well. The results for the effect of anger gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 87.98,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$  with an OR = 1.56, CI = 1.42 – 1.72,  $p < .001$  and amusement gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 35.27,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .01$  and an OR = 1.38, CI = 1.24 – 1.54,  $p < .001$ . The effect of both reflex emotions remained significant when taking the controlling variables into account (Anger, OR = 1.55, CI = 1.40 – 1.71,  $p < .001$ ) (Amusement, OR = 1.32, CI = 1.18 – 1.48,  $p < .001$ ). More results can be found in table 6. Therefor both the fourth and fifth hypotheses, that 'when an individual's reflex emotions are of

an emboldening nature, the probability of participating in slacktivism rises' and 'activism beyond slacktivism rises.' are confirmed.

### *The effect of social identification*

When looking into social identification and activist behaviour, we take the previously mentioned indicators of *Connection* and *Loneliness* and measure their effect on all dependent variables. For *changed profile picture* The effects of both feelings of connection and loneliness were both significant. Connection gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 193.32,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .08$  and an Odds Ratio of 2.07 (CI = 1.86 – 2.31,  $p < .001$ ). Loneliness gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 30.91,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .01$  with an Odds Ratio of 1.28 (CI = 1.17 – 1.39,  $p < .001$ ). With added controlling variables the effects of connection (OR = 1.93, CI = 1.72 – 2.16,  $p < .001$ ) and loneliness (OR = 1.15, CI = 1.05 – 1.26,  $p = .003$ ) remained significant. For *use of hashtags* the results of connection gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 111.67,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .05$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.84 (CI = 1.63 – 2.08,  $p < .001$ ). With loneliness the results were  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 60.83,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.46 (CI = 1.33 – 1.60,  $p < .001$ ). when taking the controlling factors into account this did not affect the significance of connection (OR = 1.79, CI = 1.58 – 2.03,  $p < .001$ ) nor loneliness (OR = 1.29, CI = 1.16 – 1.42,  $p < .001$ ). Further results can be found in table 7.

For the activism indicators, the results were as followed. The effect on *Partaking in a group* gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 306.61,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .10$  and an Odds Ratio of 2.02 (CI = 1.86 – 2.20,  $p < .001$ ) for connection. When using loneliness the results were  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 65.68,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .02$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.33 (CI = 1.24 – 1.43,  $p < .001$ ). with addition of control variables, the effects remained significant for connection (OR = 1.99, CI = 1.83 – 2.16,  $p < .001$ ) as well as for loneliness (OR = 1.34, CI = 1.25 – 1.44,  $p < .001$ ). For *encouraging others*, connection gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 210.30,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .07$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.80 (CI = 1.65 – 1.95,  $p < .001$ ). For loneliness this was  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 75.55,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .02$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.31 (CI = 1.22 – 1.41,  $p < .001$ ). The control variables did not have a large impact on the effect of connection (OR = 1.77, CI = 1.63 – 1.93,  $p < .001$ ) or loneliness (OR = 1.30, CI = 1.21 – 1.40,  $p < .001$ ). At last the effect on *looked for info of the area* was significant for both connection, with  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 73.33,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.49 (CI = 1.35 – 1.63,  $p < .001$ ), and loneliness that gave  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 67.83,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.40 (CI = 1.29 – 1.52,  $p < .001$ ). Adding control variables to the regression did not really affect the effect of connection (OR = 1.46, CI

= 1.32 – 1.60,  $p < .001$ ) nor the effect of loneliness ( $OR = 1.39$ ,  $CI = 1.28 – 1.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Further results can be found in table 8. A feeling of connection had a much higher effect on activist behaviour than feelings of loneliness which confirms the fifth hypothesis that a feeling of connection affects activism beyond slacktivism. However both emotions solely gave significant results regarding both slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism, so the sixth hypothesis that the effect of loneliness stopped at slacktivism cannot be confirmed.

### *The effect of moods*

Finally, the same regressions were executed with the independent variables *depression* and *inspiration* to conduct a probable relation between moods and slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism. Depression and Inspiration had a significant effect on *changed profile picture*, with the results of depression as independent variable being  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 48.25,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .02$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.34 ( $CI = 1.24 – 1.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and the results of inspiration being  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 162.35,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .06$  and an Odds Ratio of 2.03 ( $CI = 1.81 – 2.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Addition of controlling variable did not significantly affect the effect of depression ( $OR = 1.28$ ,  $CI = 1.17 – 1.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ) nor inspiration ( $OR = 1.84$ ,  $CI = 1.63 – 2.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ). For *used hashtags*, the effect of depression was  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 42.74,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .02$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.37 ( $CI = 1.24 – 1.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and for inspiration  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 94.01,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .04$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.82 ( $CI = 1.60 – 2.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Both independent variables remained of significant influence when control variables were added (depression,  $OR = 1.30$ ,  $CI = 1.18 – 1.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (inspiration,  $OR = 1.71$ ,  $CI = 1.50 – 1.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Both moods affected slacktivist behaviour prominently. Further results can be found in table 9.

For the activism indicator of *partaking in a group* the results were  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 48.25,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .02$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.34 ( $CI = 1.24 – 1.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ) for depression. Inspiration gave  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 212.13,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .07$  with an Odds Ratio of 1.86 ( $CI = 1.71 – 2.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Their significant effect on *partaking in a group* remained when control variables were added (depression,  $OR = 1.40$ ,  $CI = 1.31 – 1.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (inspiration,  $OR = 1.85$ ,  $CI = 1.69 – 2.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The effect on the activism indicator *encouraged others* gave  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 122.29,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .04$  with an Odds Ratio of 1.47 ( $CI = 1.37 – 1.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ) for depression. The values for inspiration were  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ,  $N = 4049$ ) = 151.78,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .05$  with an Odds Ratio of 1.70 ( $CI = 1.56 – 1.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Both the effects of depression ( $OR = 1.45$ ,  $CI = 1.36 – 1.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and inspiration ( $OR = 1.67$ ,  $CI = 1.53 – 1.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were not affected drastically by

the addition of controlling variables. The effect on the final dependent variable, *looked for info of protest in the area*, was  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 86.04,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$  and an Odds Ratio of 1.45 ( $CI = 1.34 - 1.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ) for depression. Inspiration, which effect was previously higher on all dependent variables, this time had an effect of  $\chi^2$  (df = 1, N = 4049) = 48.22,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .02$  with an Odds Ratio of 1.41 ( $CI = 1.28 - 1.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The effect of both depression ( $OR = 1.44$ ,  $CI = 1.32 - 1.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and inspiration ( $OR = 1.38$ ,  $CI = 1.25 - 1.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ) remained significant when control variables were taken into account. Further results can be found in table 10. At last hypothesis 7, that a de-energizing mood such as depression would not affect activism beyond slacktivism cannot be confirmed. The eighth and final hypothesis that energizing moods, tested with inspiration, would increase the likelihood of showing activism beyond slacktivism, is confirmed.

**Table 5.** Logistic regression analyses of reflex emotions on indicators for slacktivism as dependent variables.

	PROFILE PICTURE			USED HASHTAGS		
	<i>OR (CI)</i>			<i>OR (CI)</i>		
Constant	.08***	.14***	.04***	.03***	.14***	.13***
<i>Predictor</i>						
Anger	1.44(1.30 - 1.59)***	1.40(1.27 - 1.56)***	1.63(1.45 - 1.84)***		1.60(1.42 - 1.80)***	
Amusement				1.73(1.50 - 1.99)***		1.52(1.31 - 1.75)***
<i>Control Variables</i>						
Age		.697(.64 - .76)***			.57(.51 - .62)***	.59(.53 - .65)***
Gender		2.03(1.72 - 2.40)***			1.17(.97 - 1.40)	1.16(.96 - 1.39)
Income		1.01(.91 - 1.12)			1.05(.94 - 1.19)	1.05(.94 - 1.19)
N	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049
-2 Loglikelihood	3892.81	3750.54	3251.85	3260.13	3109.59	3137.37
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.02	.08	.03	.03	.09	.08
Chi <sup>2</sup>	52.41***	194.68***	71.32***	63.04***	213.58***	185.80***

\*p&lt;.05, \*\*p&lt;.01, \*\*\*p&lt;.001.



**Table 6.** Logistic regression analyses of reflex emotions on indicators for activism as dependent variables.

	PART OF GROUP				ENCOURAGED OTHERS				INFO OF AREA			
	<i>OR (CI)</i>											
Constant	.20***	.08***	.16***	.06***	.12***	.13***	.13***	.14***	.08***	.10***	.08***	.11***
<i>Predictor</i>												
Anger	1.56 (1.44 - 1.69)***		1.55 (1.43 - 1.67)***		1.75 (1.60 - 1.90)***		1.74 (1.60 - 1.89)***		1.56 (1.42 - 1.72)***		1.55 (1.40 - 1.71)***	
Amusement		1.93 (1.75 - 2.12)***		1.90 (1.72 - 2.10)***		1.59 (1.45 - 1.75)***		1.57 (1.42 - 1.73)***		1.38 (1.24 - 1.54)***		1.32 (1.18 - 1.48)***
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Age			.91 (.86 - .98)**	.97 (.91 - 1.04)			.95 (.88 - 1.01)	.98 (.92 - 1.05)			.84 (.78 - .91)***	.86 (.79 - .93)***
Gender			1.35 (1.19 - 1.54)***	1.31 (1.15 - 1.49)***			1.27 (1.11 - 1.45)***	1.24 (1.09 - 1.42)**			1.17 (1.01 - 1.36)*	1.16 (1.00 - 1.35)*
Income			1.17 (1.07 - 1.27)***	1.17 (1.07 - 1.27)***			.98 (.90 - 1.07)	.99 (.91 - 1.07)			1.17 (1.06 - 1.30)**	1.17 (1.06 - 1.29)**
N	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049
-2 Loglikelihood	5395.08	5325.93	5360.33	5300.61	5196.61	5282.13	5180.69	5270.30	4259.00	4311.71	4229.15	4286.34
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.04	.06	.05	.07	.06	.03	.07	.04	.03	.01	.04	.02
Chi <sup>2</sup>	125.47***	194.62***	160.22***	219.94***	183.31***	97.79***	199.23***	109.61***	87.98***	35.27***	117.83***	60.64***

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

**Table 7.** Logistic regression analyses of social identity emotions on indicators for slacktivism as dependent variables.

	PROFILE PICTURE				USED HASHTAGS			
	<i>OR (CI)</i>				<i>OR (CI)</i>			
Constant	.03***	.15***	.06***	.27***	.03***	.08***	.11***	.29***
<i>Predictor</i>								
Connection	2.07(1.86 - 2.31)***		1.93(1.72 - 2.16)***		1.84(1.63 - 2.08)***		1.79(1.58 - 2.03)***	
Loneliness		1.28(1.17 - 1.39)***		1.15(1.05 - 1.26)**		1.46(1.33 - 1.60)***		1.29(1.16 - 1.42)***
<i>Control Variables</i>								
Age			.71(.65 - .77)***	.71(.65 - .78)***			.57(.52 - .63)***	.59(.54 - .66)***
Gender			1.77(1.49 - 2.10)***	2.03(1.72 - 2.40)***			1.03(.85 - 1.24)	1.17(.97 - 1.40)
Income			1.00(.89 - 1.11)	1.03(.93 - 1.15)			1.04(.93 - 1.18)	1.09(.97 - 1.23)
N	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049
-2 Loglikelihood	3751.91	3914.32	3646.52	3785.79	3211.50	3262.34	3078.88	3148.12
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.08	.01	.11	.06	.05	.03	.11	.08
Chi <sup>2</sup>	193.32***	30.91***	298.70***	159.43***	111.67***	60.83***	244.29***	175.05***

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

**Table 8.** Logistic regression analyses of social identity emotions on indicators for activism as dependent variables.

	PART OF GROUP				ENCOURAGED OTHERS				INFO OF AREA			
	<i>OR (CI)</i>											
Constant	.10***	.42***	.08***	.26***	.11***	.36***	.13***	.32***	.09***	.15***	.10***	.12***
<i>Predictor</i>												
Connection	2.02 (1.86 - 2.20)***		1.99 (1.83 - 2.16)***		1.80 (1.65 - 1.95)***		1.77 (1.63 - 1.93)***		1.49 (1.35 - 1.63)***		1.46 (1.32 - 1.60)***	
Loneliness		1.33 (1.24 - 1.43)***		1.34 (1.25 - 1.44)***		1.31 (1.22 - 1.41)***		1.30 (1.21 - 1.40)***		1.40 (1.29 - 1.52)***		1.39 (1.28 - 1.51)***
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Age			.94 (.88 - 1.01)	.96 (.90 - 1.03)		.96 (.90 - 1.03)	.98 (.92 - 1.05)				.85 (.78 - .92)***	.89 (.82 - .97)**
Gender			1.16 (1.01 - 1.32)*	1.34 (1.18 - 1.53)***		1.12 (.98 - 1.27)	1.27 (1.11 - 1.44)***				1.08 (.93 - 1.26)	1.16 (1.00 - 1.35)
Income			1.16 (1.06 - 1.26)**	1.22 (1.12 - 1.33)***		.98 (.90 - 1.06)	1.03 (.95 - 1.12)				1.16 (1.05 - 1.28)**	1.23 (1.11 - 1.36)***
N	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049
-2 Loglikelihood	5213.95	5454.88	5197.79	5417.69	5169.62	5322.36	5165.20	5309.32	4273.65	4279.15	4248.62	4253.76
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.10	.02	.10	.03	.07	.02	.07	.03	.03	.03	.04	.04
Chi <sup>2</sup>	306.61***	65.68***	322.76***	102.86***	210.30***	57.55***	214.72***	70.56***	73.33***	67.83***	98.36***	93.22***

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

**Table 9.** Logistic regression analyses of moods on indicators for slacktivism as dependent variables.

	PROFILE PICTURE				USED HASHTAGS			
	<i>OR (CI)</i>				<i>OR (CI)</i>			
Constant	.11***	.03***	.21***	.06***	.08***	.03***	.28***	.11***
<i>Predictor</i>								
Depression	1.34(1.24 - 1.46)***		1.28(1.17 - 1.40)***		1.37(1.24 - 1.50)***		1.30(1.18 - 1.44)***	
Inspiration	2.03(1.81 - 2.28)***		1.84(1.63 - 2.07)***		1.82(1.60 - 2.06)***		1.71(1.50 - 1.95)***	
<i>Control Variables</i>								
Age		.71(.65 - .77)***		.72(.66 - .79)***			.57(.52 - .63)***	
Gender		2.00(1.70 - 2.37)***		1.80(1.52 - 2.14)***			1.16(.96 - 1.39)	
Income		1.02(.92 - 1.13)		1.05(.94 - 1.16)			1.07(.95 - 1.20)	
N	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049
-2 Loglikelihood	3896.97	3782.88	3762.95	3683.20	3280.43	3229.16	3143.79	3103.95
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.02	.06	.07	.10	.02	.04	.08	.09
Chi <sup>2</sup>	48.25***	162.35***	182.28***	262.02***	42.74***	94.01***	179.38***	219.22***

\*p&lt;.05, \*\*p&lt;.01, \*\*\*p&lt;.001.

**Table 10.** Logistic regression analyses of moods on indicators for activism as dependent variables.

	PART OF GROUP				ENCOURAGED OTHERS				INFO OF AREA			
	<i>OR (CI)</i>											
Constant	.32***	.13***	.23***	.09***	.24***	.14***	.25***	.14***	.12***	.11***	.12***	.12***
<i>Predictor</i>												
Depression	1.41 (1.32 - 1.51)***		1.40 (1.31 - 1.50)***		1.47 (1.37 - 1.57)***		1.45 (1.36 - 1.56)***		1.45 (1.34 - 1.57)***		1.44 (1.32 - 1.56)***	
Inspiration		1.86 (1.71 - 2.04)***		1.85 (1.69 - 2.02)***		1.70 (1.56 - 1.86)***		1.67 (1.53 - 1.83)***		1.41 (1.28 - 1.56)***		1.38 (1.25 - 1.53)***
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Age			.93 (.87 - .99)*	.96 (.89 - 1.02)		.96 (.90 - 1.03)	.97 (.91 - 1.04)				.85 (.79 - .92)***	.85 (.79 - .92)***
Gender			1.33 (1.17 - 1.51)***	1.19 (1.04 - 1.36)**		1.25 (1.10 - 1.42)**	1.14 (1.00 - 1.31)*				1.15 (.99 - 1.34)	1.10 (.95 - 1.28)
Income			1.19 (1.09 - 1.29)***	1.21 (1.11 - 1.31)***		1.01 (.93 - 1.10)	1.01 (.93 - 1.10)				1.19 (1.08 - 1.32)**	1.19 (1.08 - 1.31)**
N	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049	4,049
-2 Loglikelihood	5416.77	5308.42	5382.75	5284.70	5257.63	5228.13	5245.13	5223.80	4260.94	4298.76	4232.99	4271.91
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.03	.07	.05	.08	.04	.05	.05	.05	.03	.02	.04	.03
Chi <sup>2</sup>	103.78***	212.13***	137.80***	235.86***	122.29***	151.78***	134.79***	156.12***	86.04***	48.22***	113.99***	75.07***

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to regain insight on to what extent emotional involvement in a cause would contribute activist behaviour beyond slacktivism online. Apart from emotional involvement itself, a distinction was made between different kinds of emotions and their respective effect on activist behaviour. Respectively I looked into reflex emotions, emotions of social identification and energizing or de-energizing moods. All different analysed emotions together with general emotional involvement, turned out to significantly influence the chance of participating in both slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism online.

The first hypothesis, that emotional involvement would affect slacktivism is confirmed. This means that if a participant experienced emotions when on social media, the more likely this person was to show slacktivism. The second hypothesis, that when this emotional involvement grew, the chance of showing activism beyond slacktivism would grow with it, is also confirmed. With the growth of the degree of emotional involvement, the effect on activism beyond slacktivism also became more likely. The interaction effect with age however, did not turn out to have a significant influence on the effect of emotional involvement with regard to the indicators for activism. It was only significant for the indicators of slacktivism. This can be explained through the functional limitations older adults might experience (Leist, A. K., 2013). According to Leist, older people do not use social media and its full functions as younger adults do. Features such as likes on posts and using hashtags, requires a perceptual ability that older people possess very limited (WR, C. N. B., 2009). With activist behaviour on the other hand, indicators such as signing a petition, has been around for a much longer time so the cognitive understanding with older people of such concepts is more present (Spanbauer, J. M., 1993).

Both reflex emotions that were analysed, were of an emboldening nature, previously described in the theoretical section. The fourth and fifth hypotheses of reflex emotions enlarging the probability to show both slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism were confirmed. Both anger and amusement had a significant effect on the chance of a participant showing activist behaviour.

For the emotions of social identification, it was found that indeed a feeling of connection could significantly influence whether a person would participate in activism. However the effect of loneliness on activist behaviour turned out to be significant as well, so the sixth hypothesis that the effect of loneliness stopped with slacktivism cannot be confirmed. So any feeling of social identification significantly influences activism beyond slacktivism. A possible explanation why loneliness did have a significant effect on activist behaviour could be that people who feel lonely seek attention online. They display themselves online in an attempt to

reconnect with society to become the object of other people's attention (Johansson, T. & Andreasson, J., 2017). To achieve this, a possible way would be to actively show activist behaviour online to attract attention.

The last two hypotheses were that the effect of de-energizing moods such as depression would stop with slacktivism and energizing moods would go through to activism beyond slacktivism. However both de-energizing and energizing moods turned out to have a significant influence on activist behaviour. This concludes that our seventh hypothesis cannot be confirmed. An explanation is that people who for example feel depressed, are in search for people that experience the same issues (Johansson, T. & Andreasson, J., 2017). When found, this relationship over mutual problems gives them a way to fit into a group and tackle there problems together. In search for this group, social media can be used to express their problem to the world so that people with the same issues are found more easily. This is a plausible explanation for why depression had a significant influence on showing activist behaviour.

Within this research more knowledge was gained on if individuals could actually show activist behaviour on social media. Emotional involvement with a cause plays a large roll within the potential to show activist behaviour. Based on the results of this paper, any emotional involvement enlarges the chance that an individual is pushed into action although this was not as expected. It was foreseen that emotions such as loneliness and depression would not impact activist behaviour the way anger, amusement, connection or inspiration would do. However it turned out that all emotions that were used in this research affected both slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism. Possible explanations for the significance of loneliness and depression were briefly touched upon.

This implicates that an emotional motivation drives online activist behaviour. The debate on whether online activism should be considered to be slacktivism is still ongoing. This research has proven that online actions with the will to make a difference, that can be classified as activism, also exist. Online activism can not simply be seen as slacktivism or activism but the boundaries of these terms are more vague. With the knowledge that emotional involvement can play a large role in showing both slacktivism and activism, a more distinct description can be given to what motivates activists in society.

## Discussion

There are a few limitations to this research that should be taken into account. The first being, that all participants were American inhabitants. The data was gathered within a large set of American participants. This is not representative for all nationalities, so this research is only valuable to draw a conclusion about online activism in America. In the future, more nationalities could be included to provide more insight on the effect of emotional involvement on activism within the world.

Moreover, the larger part of the participants had an age between the 50 and 64 years. The general knowledge on the age of participants was also bound to four categories of age. Therefore a precise conclusion on the effect of age could not really be conducted. Further research could elaborate more on specific age of participants to see a more clear connection between age and online activism.

Another limitation is that within the logistic regression analyses a few regressions did not suffice the assumption of logit linearity. The interaction effect between the independent variable and its own natural logit came out as significant for almost one third of the regressions. After adding a quadratic term of these independent variables within the analysis it turned out to be significant for both the linear and the quadratic terms. Therefore in future research it could be interesting to see how this relation upholds for the effect on activist behaviour.

Within previous research the discussion arose that online activism is more defined as slacktivism because the impact is limited. To show that online activism beyond slacktivism is a possibility with the proper motivation this research tried to elaborate on the difference between these two definitions. However for the actual research, only two indicators for slacktivism and three indicators for activism were used. This could limit the actual conclusion regarding the difference between these two concepts. To better understand the value of online activism in the future, more indicators for both slacktivism and activism could be used to define a more clear difference between these two factors.

A part from that, the used dataset only provided data on protest behaviour online. It would have been interesting to better understand the relation between activating protest online, for example through emotional involvement, and the connection with activism in the physical world. This subject is briefly touched upon in the introduction with examples such as the Arab Spring, and the Outraged Spanish movement (Eltantawy, N. & Wiest, J. B., 2011; González-Bailón, S., Borge-Holthoefer, J. & Moreno, Y., 2013). Further research could delve deeper into the connection with online emotional involvement and activism in the physical world. As we now know that any emotional involvement can trigger online activist behaviour of any sorts, an



interesting subject is to what extent these emotions rule physical protests. Also research into the value of slacktivism is still needed to try and better understand this concept. If a more clear description can be given to both online slacktivism and online activism, maybe the values of both forms of online activist behaviour will separately become more distinct and better understood. Then factors that influence this online activist behaviour, such as emotions, can also be more widely researched. Curiosity towards what influences slacktivism and activism beyond slacktivism other than emotions contributes to the knowledge of these subjects.

The results of this paper should be taken with any prudence because of the indicated limitations this research brought along. However, the value of online activist behaviour should not be considered lightly. As proven in this paper there is a significant influence of emotions on activism beyond slacktivism. The data on activism indicated that online acting of an individual cannot be easily put aside as slacktivism. As said before, defining behaviour on social media needs to be treated carefully because activist behaviour is not simply labelled as non-influential. It possess the ability to unite people in activist behaviour and emotional involvement with a cause increases this behaviour.

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