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The interdependency of online and offline activism: A case study of Fridays For Future-Barcelona in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown

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La interdependencia del activismo online y offline: El caso de Fridays For Future-Barcelona en el contexto de la COVID-19

ABSTRACT RESUMEN

The lockdown imposed in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak as well as the resulting surge in the use of digital technologies and social media for activism or social life all represent a unique opportunity to study the relationship between online and offline activism. To do so, we focus on the Barcelona branch of Fridays For Future, the recent and global youth climate movement that expanded through social networks and organised several large-scale global protests. Based on data from Fridays For Future-Barcelona's *Twitter* account, the analysis looks at and compares the level of activity and interactions during normal times and during the lockdown. The results suggest a close and mutually-reinforcing relationship between offline and online activism, with peaks of *Twitter* activity and interactions usually revolving around offline protest actions. They also show that the lockdown period was characterised by an increase in the number of tweets but a decrease in the number of interactions and thus in the repercussion of the movement on social networks.

El confinamiento impuesto a raíz del brote de COVID-19, así como el consecuente aumento en el uso de tecnologías digitales y redes sociales para el activismo y la vida social, representan una oportunidad única para estudiar la relación entre el activismo online y offline. Con este propósito analizamos el movimiento de Fridays For Future en Barcelona, parte del reciente movimiento climático global y juvenil que se ha expandido a través de las redes sociales, organizando protestas globales y manifestaciones a gran escala. Basado en datos de la cuenta de Twitter de Friday For Future-Barcelona, el artículo compara el nivel de actividad e interacciones durante el período de normalidad en relación con confinamiento. Los resultados sugieren una relación estrecha y de refuerzo mutuo entre el activismo online y offline, con picos de actividad e interacciones en Twitter que generalmente giran en torno a acciones de protesta en la calle. También muestran que el período de confinamiento se caracterizó por un aumento en el número de tweets pero una disminución en el número de interacciones y, por lo tanto, en la repercusión del movimiento en las redes sociales.

KEYWORDS PALABRAS CLAVE

Social movements; Online activism; Offline activism;
Social media; Fridays for future; COVID-19.

*Movimientos sociales; Activismo online; Activismo offline;
Redes sociales; Fridays For Future; COVID-19.*

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1. Introduction

In a context of isolation and home confinement, digital technologies - and social media in particular - have practically become the sole source of social life beyond the family (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2020). This sudden and exceptional situation represents an opportunity to test theories about the digital world, and especially about its interaction with offline social life. In the context of COVID-19, social movements have had to adapt their strategies in order to keep their demands alive and push them in a public debate saturated by information related to the pandemic (Spear et al., 2020). Furthermore, these adaptation efforts and the switch to online activism have had to be carried out in an unexpected and unknown context in which the essential face-to-face, physical dimension of protest had been swept away entirely. Comparing social movements' behaviour on social networks during confinement and during a period of "normality" offers an unprecedented perspective on the relationship between online activism and offline mobilization.

Fridays For Future is a movement that was built hand in hand with social networks. The speed and ease with which it has expanded in different countries around the world can be explained by the capacity offered by social networks to disseminate its message, identity and repertoires of action (Wahlström et al., 2019; Thompson, 2020). At the same time, it is a movement that expresses itself on the street with weekly strikes and regular large-scale protests and major global actions that have successfully brought to the street millions of young people across the world. Therefore, both the nature of the movement and the exceptional context of the COVID-19 lockdown offer an unprecedented opportunity to improve our understanding of the relationship between online and offline activism.

This article is based on two ongoing research projects on the Fridays For Future movement in which the Youth, Society and Communication Research Group (JOVIS.com) of the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) participates: YouGECA (Youth Global Engagement for Climate Action) funded by the PlanetaryWellbeing2019 UPF programme, and #4F (Hashtags For Future. El moviment juvenil pel clima a les xarxes socials) funded by the AJOVE2019-AGAUR. These projects were not originally aimed at investigating the effects of COVID-19 on the youth climate movement, but have been adapted to incorporate this exceptional situation in the analysis.

Based on preliminary findings on the case study of Fridays For Future-Barcelona and tapping on the immediacy of the COVID-19 pandemic, this paper intends to

shed light on potential avenues for future research on the relations between online and offline activism, as well as on the capacity of social movements to sustain themselves without offline protest actions. It tries to move beyond the usual focus on the rise and peaks of movements' online activity to take a broader look at movement life-cycles and the intermittence between online and offline actions. This temporal perspective could further our understanding of change, adaptation and continuity of social movements in the digital age, both in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The preliminary findings suggest a reciprocal or mutually-reinforcing relationship between online and offline activism. They show that peaks of *Twitter* activity and interactions tend to revolve around offline protest actions, mostly in the form of pre-protest online mobilization and post-protest online coverage of the actions. They also show that the lockdown period has been characterised by an increase in the number of tweets but a decrease in the number of interactions and thus in the repercussion of the movement on *social networks*, *suggesting a potential disruption of the mutually-reinforcing cycle of online-offline participation as a result of the lockdown*.

2. COVID-19 and social movements

Assessing the impact of the Coronavirus crisis on social movements and contentious politics is essential to better understand and anticipate the potential changes that will take place, in the medium and long term, on the dynamics of democracy. Throughout the past years, political science has revealed a process of "depolicitisation" by which some spheres of politics and policy-making have been left out of democratic institutions' decision-making processes and, therefore, out of citizen control via representative institutions (Burnham, 2001; Kettell, 2008; Mair, 2013). This process is at the root of the growing alienation and disaffection of citizens with respect to formal politics (Fawcett et al., 2017), the symptoms of which include low election turnouts, falling membership in political parties and a general disregard for politicians and their parties. This is particularly accentuated in the case of young people, as their political identities and forms of involvement have been shaped precisely in reaction to this context of disenchantment from formal politics (Reguillo, 2012). However, this apparent decline ought not be misinterpreted as a simple loss of interest on the part of young people. Rather, there are signs of a gradual shift whereby the aspirations and forms of political expression of citizens, and of young people in particular, are increa-

singly articulated through extra-institutional means (Cammaerts et al., 2014) in which social movements - as mobilization agencies - play a central role.

That being said, the outbreak of COVID-19 has significantly altered the natural landscape of social movements - from community relations to mass physical protest actions - and has placed institutions, and governments in particular, at the centre. In fact, in a reversal of current trends in contemporary democracies, the pandemic has entailed a renationalisation of decisions and the strengthening of national governments' leadership in line with citizens' preferences (Amat et al. 2020). In a certain way, citizens' capacity to preserve democratic control and civil liberties depends on the ability of social movements to adapt and survive to this new situation. In this context, many social movements have readjusted their strategies and repertoires of contention, opting, to a large extent, for online coordination and mobilization.

In fact, in the last decade, social movements - and particularly those led by young people - have increasingly incorporated the digital environment as an everyday space for mobilization and an essential tool for internal organisation (Jost et al., 2018; Treré & Mattoni, 2016). This is particularly evident for Fridays For Future, being a global movement with a significant reliance on social media to mobilize, spread its message, shape its identity or to organise and coordinate large-scale (often global) protests (Wahlström et al., 2019). In the case of Fridays For Future Barcelona, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital environment already represented one of the main spaces for coordination through a freeware application designed for video game communities (Discord) characterised by structured commissions, information, debates, and task management, all of which is preserved online and accessible to active members at all times.

From an optimistic perspective, it could be said that digitally-organised youth movements entered the lockdown with an advantage to adapt, or even to capitalise on this new situation.

Although social movements' widespread use of online mobilization strategies is not exactly new - considering, for instance, the 15-M Indignados movement that started in 2011 (Fernandez-Planells, Figueras-Maz and Feixa, 2014; Anduiza, Cristancho Sabucedo, 2014) - youth movements like Fridays For Future were already well adapted to the digital world. This means that they could more easily and rapidly adopt online strategies to remain active and compensate for the loss of offline presence in the streets, as well as build on the ecological and social dimensions of the pandemic to strengthen their message and appeal through online means. Howe-

ver, while tools and spaces for the dissemination of their message and for internal organisation were already well established, there was obviously a need to adapt the mobilization agenda and its features, having to renounce any sort of street protest. In fact, the climate movement has been doubly challenged during the pandemic: first, by the end of 2019, climate activists were already realising that their protests did not have the desired impact as they did not translate into any sort of radical change (Thompson, 2020). And second, mass media attention to the climate movement, already decreasing by the end of 2019, was further diverted by the Coronavirus crisis and its acute health, social and economic consequences. In a will to reduce their dependence on the mass media and to compensate for decreasing news reports on the climate crisis during the pandemic, climate activists have increasingly turned to social media (Thompson, 2020).

Focusing on our case study, let us investigate what Fridays For Future Barcelona has done to organise and adapt themselves to this new situation. On the one hand, internally, they stopped organising general face-to-face assemblies (and welcome assemblies for newcomers) that were usually held every week or twice a month. They quickly went on to organise themselves in structured online assemblies using video conferencing software. These were highly operational, building on prior work done by the various working groups that were meeting online using different tools such as Discord.

On the other hand, they had to rethink their offline presence and protest strategy, canceling Friday strikes and various scheduled actions (e.g., 15th of May 2020 protest). They then opted for online actions, which success and impact are much more difficult to assess. Among these, we can mention their participation in the #GlobalStrikeOnline, the success of which has been limited, or the light and shadow global climate strike, which took place on the 24th of April 2020.

In parallel, tapping on the relationship between the pandemic and the climate crisis, they decided to organise an awareness and mobilization campaign on social networks. They needed, as other climate activists (Thompson, 2020), to develop a new narrative that is concrete and immediate. Fridays for Future-Barcelona organised around thematic areas to support the search of information and their online discourse. The campaign was built around three main axes of work: The first one is resilience and addresses mutual support networks, care work, the importance of public services, global and planetary health, sovereignty and degrowth. The second axis, called current context, focuses on the causes of the crisis, the groups that are most affected, international

cooperation and health, globalisation, extractivism and North-South relations. The third and last axis looks at future challenges and includes topics such as getting out of the crisis, the "capital or life" dichotomy, fossil fuel divestment, as well as global, financial, inter-territorial and ecological debt.

This online campaign, the development of a new narrative, and the need to fill the void left by their inability to take offline actions contribute to explain the increase in the average number of weekly tweets after the start of the lockdown, as will be touched upon later in this article.

3. The relationship between online and offline activism

So far, studies on the relation between online and offline activism have generated mixed findings, usually resulting in claims of either a non-existent, negative, positive or reciprocal relationship. Indeed, while some have claimed that the online and offline realms as well as online and offline political behaviours develop independently of each other (Emmer et al., 2012; Vissers et al., 2012), proponents of 'slacktivism' claim that online actions, by their alleged low-risk and effortless character, tend to hinder more demanding and effective offline actions, and merely serve to boost activists' feel-good factor (Morozov, 2011). These views, however, have been considered as reductionist and as not accounting for the multitude of factors (e.g., age, network heterogeneity, political efficacy) that moderate the relationship between online and offline activism (Halupka, 2018; Wilkins et al., 2019; Kwak et al., 2018).

On the other side of the debate, evidence of a positive relationship between online and offline activism is not scarce (Boulianne, 2018; Slavina & Brym, 2020; Conroy et al., 2012). On the one hand, online participation is believed to act as a gateway to offline political participation, by preparing people and helping them acquire the qualities and psychological preconditions (e.g., thick social identity, self-efficacy, shared beliefs and grievances) to engage in more demanding offline protests (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015; Rohlinger & Bunnage, 2018; Alberici & Milesi, 2018). On the other hand, offline participation is believed to fuel online activism, considered as a tool that offline activists use to further their influence as well as maintain existing relationships and networks. In this case, online activism is considered as being subsequent to offline activism (Kim et al., 2017; Krueger, 2006).

Lastly, and in line with our hypothesis, some studies found online and offline activism to be reciprocal and mutually-reinforcing, as online activists are also active

offline and vice-versa (Nam, 2012; Harlow & Harp, 2012). Vissers and Stolle (2014) found early offline participation to be a predictor of subsequent online participation, as well as early online participation to be a predictor of subsequent offline participation.

Building on this idea of reciprocity, one could see online and offline activism as being part of a mutually-reinforcing cycle of intermittent online-offline participation, and conciliate the different advocates of a positive relationship between online and offline participation. Indeed, one could consider online activism as a preparatory and mobilising force, and offline activism as the core strength and staying power of the movement and as fuelling further online participation, building on post-protest momentum and maintaining it alive online.

4. Fridays For Future-Barcelona's online-offline dynamics: Data and preliminary results

The context of the COVID-19 represents a unique opportunity to analyse the mutually-reinforcing dynamics of online and offline activism. As in the case of a laboratory experiment, it allows us to examine the online behaviour of a social movement in a context where the offline dimension of participation has been abruptly removed and compare it with their online behaviour in normal times (i.e., pre-lockdown). Being aware that many factors (e.g., political agenda, mass media coverage or political efficacy) may influence the behavior of activists and their followers on social media, the comparative analysis of these two periods can offer relevant insights to better understand social movements' online-offline relationship.

With this objective in mind, we collected and analysed data from the official *Twitter* account of Fridays For Future-Barcelona (@f4f_barcelona), from its creation in February 2019 until the end of the 'state of alarm' (the constitutional instrument used by the Spanish government to restrict some fundamental rights to reduce mobility and social interactions) for the control of the pandemic, on June 21, 2020. *Twitter* data were directly downloaded from the official account. The interpretation of the data has been complemented with the information obtained from the movement's observation as well as from exploratory interviews with movement activists. The research team has had access to the online and offline activities, assemblies and internal meetings of Fridays For Future-Barcelona starting a few weeks before the lockdown, and remaining at the time of writing this article. As mentioned above, this is a preliminary and descriptive approach highlighting potential

dynamics that will have to be validated with subsequent data and analyses foreseen in the project.

Two indicators have been used to compare the behaviour of the movement and its followers during the two distinct periods (normality and lockdown): On the one hand, the number of tweets per week as a measure of the intensity of the movement's online activity, and on the other hand, the average number of interactions (retweets and likes) received by each tweet, as an indicator of the movements' vitality and repercussion on social networks (and more specifically on *Twitter*). Table 1 presents the average of these two indicators, comparing the period of "normality" with that of the lockdown.

The data shows a substantial change in both indicators when we compare them before and during the lockdown. Specifically, during the lockdown period, Fridays For Future-Barcelona increased their number of *Twitter* posts by around 50%¹, while the impact of these tweets - accounted for by the number of interactions per tweet - was clearly reduced. Faced with the impossibility of organising and engaging in street mobilizations (and the consequent decrease of mass media coverage), the movement's external actions have revolved around social networks, seeking, as we have seen, to link its discourse on climate emergency and climate justice with the pandemic. Although this has resulted in an increase in the number of tweets, it seems that their ability to gain traction and capture the attention of the move-

	Normality	Lockdown	sig. (ANOVA)
Average number of tweets per week	9,9	14,2	0.122
Average interactions per tweet	85,0	26,7	0.005

Table 1. Average number of tweets per week and interactions per tweet (normality vs. lockdown).

ment's followers through social networks has suffered considerably. This might partly be understood in terms of the importance of the mainstream media for the visibility of social movements (Berenson, 2018), as well as these media's seeming reluctance to relay (youth) social media actions and political claims (Terren et al., 2020).

To better understand the underlying dynamics behind these results, Figure 1 presents the weekly evolution of both indicators on the Fridays For Future-Barcelona *Twitter* account (@f4f_barcelona). Some key dates corresponding to some of the movement's offline actions have been added to facilitate the contextualisation of the data and its relation with street protests.

At first glance, the graph seems to corroborate the data found in Table 1, showing how the lockdown period is characterised by an increase in the number of tweets

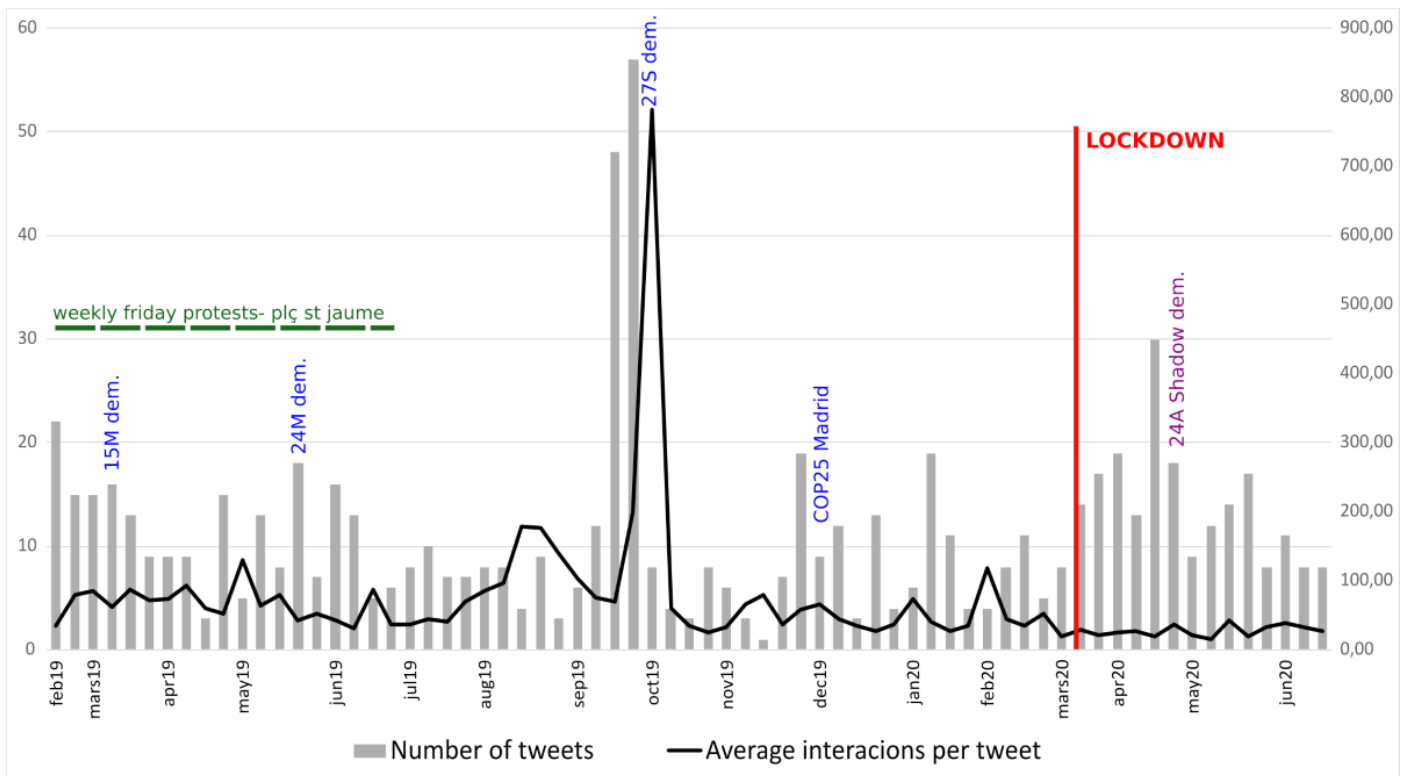


Figure 1. Weekly evolution of the number of tweets and the average interactions per tweet of Fridays For Future-Barcelona's *Twitter* account.

and a decrease in the average interactions per tweet, as well as by the comparative absence of notable interaction peaks, such as the ones that occurred in the pre-lockdown period.

The remarkable peak of activity and liveliness of their *Twitter* account at the end of September 2019 coincides with the great climate demonstration organised and promoted in concert with other organisations and movements, all taking part in the #GlobalClimateStrike called by Fridays For Future globally. The September 27 demonstration, which brought together 100,000 people in Barcelona (according to the organisers), was preceded by a week of smaller-scale street protests but also by a significant increase in activity on *Twitter*. A content analysis of the tweets confirmed two things: on the one hand, since the climate mobilization day was announced globally in the summer, Fridays For Future-Barcelona used their social media accounts to disseminate and encourage participation; on the other hand, the significant peak of interactions that occurred immediately after the demonstration is mainly characterised by tweets that cover - and make direct reference to - the mobilization. Tweets that exceed 1,000 retweets and likes during the night and the days immediately after the mobilization all refer to the demonstration and include photos or videos that directly represent the action on the street. As an example, the following tweet, with a video that compiles images of the demonstration with a simple text based on the movement's key ideas,



Figure 2. Tweet from Fridays For Future-Barcelona (@f4f_barcelona) covering the 27S demonstration.

is the one that has achieved the highest number of interactions on the Fridays For Future-Barcelona *Twitter* account.

Figure 1 above also allows us to interpret the role of social networks across the different phases of the movement. The Fridays For Future-Barcelona *Twitter* account was created in early 2019 and gained immediate public visibility and impact thanks to the global renown that the movement already had. In this initial period, they followed the global strategy and "modus operandi" of the movement, organising a demonstration every Friday on Sant Jaume square in the centre of Barcelona. Each week, they systematically used their social media and *Twitter* accounts to mobilize for and subsequently provide coverage of these gatherings. In parallel, they also posted messages with content related to their demands and linked to other more specific mobilizations. For example, on March 15, 2019, a few weeks after its creation and following the call for a global climate strike, they organised the first larger-scale demonstration with thousands of participants. The second demonstration was held on May 24 and gathered less participants, probably due to the rainy weather on that day.

With the end of the academic year, the weekly protests on Sant Jaume square stopped taking place and the calls for offline actions coming from the movement - constituted fundamentally by students - also significantly waned. However, the online activity was maintained, partly thanks to the media notoriety that climate change and the movement had already acquired both globally and locally. In fact, throughout this first period, the political and media agenda has given climate change a preferential place (Thompson, 2020). These are months, for example, where different local, national and international institutions approved declarations of climate emergency. The government of Catalonia, for example, did so on May 14, 2019. At this moment in time, the Fridays For Future movement was undoubtedly recognised as a leading figure in this new wave of environmental and climate awareness, something that the media was picking up on. In fact, during this period, the mass media did dozens of interviews with activists from Fridays For Future-Barcelona, which are also referenced on their *Twitter* account. In August 2019, the graph (see Figure 1) even shows an important rebound in the number of interactions per tweet, which is explained by a series of tweets on the Amazon wildfires, their relation with climate change, and the global outrage and feelings of helplessness that they provoked.

The success and the online and offline repercussion of the 27S demonstration was followed, in contrast, by a period of lower activity and impact on social media. In

October and November 2019, Barcelona saw unprecedented mobilizations and riots, with a marked youth leadership, as a reaction to the Spanish Supreme Court sentence of pro-independence Catalan leaders. In a certain way, these protests acquired a generational identity that transcends the strict independence dimension of the cause (Ballesté, Mercadé and Venteo 2020). Throughout these intense weeks, the issue of climate change received much less attention than in the preceding months, even - if not particularly - from students and young people. While the Spanish and Catalan media mostly paid attention to the sentence and its aftermath, there was also, in other parts of the world, a general decrease in the media attention given to the climate movement as it possibly started to lose its novelty and was not leading to ambitious climate policies by national governments or international institutions (Thompson, 2020). In parallel, during the autumn of 2019, Fridays For Future-Barcelona started a process of internal debate and organisation restructuring, which turned the energy and efforts of its members away from external matters. As a result, the presence and impact of their *Twitter* account during this period did not follow an upward trend, as could be expected after the successful 27S demonstration and the general evolution of the movement. At the beginning of December 2019, the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 25), which had to take place in Santiago de Chile, was finally held in Madrid. Despite being an opportunity to regain centrality in the political and media agenda, the level of *Twitter* interactions remained moderate.

During this period, the Friday climate strikes on Sant Jaume square were not systematically held. They continued, however, with demonstrations, actions and open assemblies on the street, accompanied by calls for action on social media and subsequent coverage of the actions.

Just before the COVID-19 outbreak and the lockdown imposition, Fridays for Future was preparing a large-scale mobilization due to take place on May 15, 2020, which finally had to be cancelled. The movement, as already mentioned, quickly adapted to the lockdown situation, with online means that either had been used before or that were incorporated in a very natural way. This partly explains why their online activity did not stop, instead increasing immediately. However, despite devising a campaign exclusively through social media and increasing the frequency of *Twitter* posts, the level of interactions dropped substantially and durably. Obviously, this has been a period characterized by the absence of posts calling for offline actions or covering these actions, which were ordinarily the ones that attracted the highest number of interactions. In line with

the international movement, they launched the #ClimateStrikeOnline campaign, calling followers to send pictures (taken at home) of themselves holding climate change-related banners and messages. However, as in other places, the campaign was not a success, nor was the April 24 light and shadow campaign in which movement activists projected - from their windows and balconies - climate-related messages on walls and building facades.

Unlike the previous months' street protests, these actions did not generate much engagement, nor were they echoed in the mainstream media, perhaps reluctant to cover lower-scale and online actions, as well as focusing heavily on the pandemic and its side effects.

5. Discussion and conclusions

As in many other aspects of life, the pandemic has had a completely unexpected impact on research. In some cases, it has turned into an opportunity, offering an unprecedented perspective to analyse social phenomena and processes. In the case of this article, the pandemic and the lockdown arrived halfway through the fieldwork of two projects on the youth climate movement, with a particular focus on their use of social networks. The observation of the movement and the data from their social network accounts immediately showed that, on the one hand, social media had become the unique space to maintain mobilization efforts, and on the other hand, that the online mobilization strategy itself was orphaned by the loss of their ability to protest offline and the disruption of a mutually-reinforcing cycle of online-offline participation.

This scenario offered an unprecedented point of view on the role of online activism in social movements and the extent (if any) to which it is dependent on offline mobilization. This article provides a reflection on some very recent events, with the aim of contributing to the debate on the relationship between online and offline activism, comparing a context of normality with that of the lockdown. Specifically, the article has examined the extent to which the lockdown broke the mutually-reinforcing cycle between offline and online activism in the case of Fridays For Future-Barcelona.

The data at hand point to the existence of a close and mutually-reinforcing relationship between the movement's activity on the street and on social networks. In fact, the data clearly suggest that the vitality and repercussion of their *Twitter* account depends, in a significant way, on their offline activity. With the lockdown, the number of interactions per tweet has been critically reduced, despite the movement's swift increase in

social media activity and the reorganisation of its entire mobilization strategy based on a social media campaign linking the pandemic with the climate emergency. A more detailed content analysis of the tweets revealed that, in a normal situation, a significant share of their posts consist in calls for offline actions, coverage of these actions, or the dissemination of other types of activities such as interviews with the media or relations with institutional actors. The case of the demonstration of September 27, 2019 also reinforces this idea of a close link between the movement's offline and online spheres. The demonstration represents the peak of the movement, both in its ability to mobilize for offline street protests (with 100,000 participants) and in its notoriety and impact on social media (exceeding 750 interactions per tweet in that particular week). The *Twitter* account of the movement, on the one hand, was clearly used to spread the word about the action and mobilize participants. On the other, coverage of and references to the demonstration through *Twitter* served to increase their social media impact, keeping the momentum alive online.

However, it is important to highlight that these are preliminary results on a very recent and complex phenomenon involving several factors that need to be incorporated into the analysis. These results, therefore, rather than offering definitive conclusions, open avenues for future research that will need to account for new elements involved in social movements' online-offline dynamics.

Undoubtedly, a key element that needs to be studied more closely is the enduring importance and effect of traditional mass media coverage on the visibility of social movements. Although social movements, and Fridays For Future in particular, make extensive use of social media and digital technologies both at the internal organisational level and in mobilizing and building narratives, the effect of the mass media coverage they have received on many occasions since the movement's inception must be taken into account. It has allowed the movement to reach people outside of communities of activists. The mass media's reduced focus on the climate movement and substantial focus on the pandemic and its side effects might have had an important effect on the visibility of the movement's actions and their social media interactions during the lockdown. It should be mentioned that, although social media theoretically allow us to reach millions of people from across the world, it is often difficult to reach people outside of the movement's "echo chamber" or community of followers.

In this sense, the mass media can still make a difference and have a multiplying effect.

Another aspect that necessarily nuances the results and opens a field of inquiry is the multiple effects that the pandemic and the lockdown have had on the behaviour of both activists and followers. The COVID-19 context is exceptional and much remains to be seen in terms of the interaction of new offline protest actions mediated or fostered by online activism in the near future. Again, they might incorporate new insights into the interaction of the two spheres, especially in a context where the climate crisis and the causes of the pandemic are closely related and feeding their new narratives. In fact, research in the social sciences now has a significant focus on understanding the pandemic and its effects, which suggests that we will soon gain new knowledge that will need to be incorporated into these reflections.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that the climate movement, and Fridays For Future-Barcelona, also have their own dynamics and are subject to waves and cycles of mobilization. They are a movement with only a few years of experience and made out of very young people who have achieved exceptional visibility and impact. Like for any social movement, impact is conditioned by political opportunity structures and it becomes very difficult to anticipate the evolution. Are we facing a dynamic of exhaustion of the movement? Will the social challenges and demands of the post-COVID-19 world incorporate the climate emergency? What role will the movement play globally and locally? These are all open questions that will have to be addressed.

There is no doubt that the pandemic and the resulting global economic and social crisis are linked with the climate crisis. This context of intersecting emergencies represents a major challenge for democracies, while the role of social movements and their ability to set the political and media agenda can be crucial. This will, however, depend on their ability to rethink and combine online and offline action strategies, and to adapt them to a situation of enormous uncertainty.

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Endnotes

- 1 Despite this clear difference, the low significance of the ANOVA test is due to the low number of cases since, for this indicator, the cases correspond to weeks ($N = 70$). However, for the interaction indicator, the comparison of means could be done with the whole set of tweets from the account @f4f_barcelona, taken as individual cases ($N = 778$).

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