



Why do individuals create posts on organizations' social media pages? Identifications, functions, and audiences beyond the organizational boundary for social change

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Abstract

Previous research has centered on nonprofit organizations' (NPOs') roles in developing relationships with the public and leading collective action. However, individuals may also create posts on NPOs' social media pages to generate relationships with audiences other than the organization, and to self-mobilize connective action to reach their own goals. Based on content analysis of 576 actual posts and survey responses about them, this study suggests that posters with high organizational identification respond to the focal organizations, while those with high issue identification use the organizational context for their own purposes, disseminating information related to the focal issue to the general population or promoting the issue to their personal networks. This study extends discussions of ramifications of multiple identifications in the social media environment and captures the transformed relationships between organizations and individuals who create posts on NPOs' social media pages and their new roles in connective action.

Keywords: connective action, nonprofit organizations' social media pages, issue identification, organizational identification

@boyscouts: Boy Scouts of America [BSA] launches historic 'Scout Me In' campaign and unveils the new name for its iconic program for older boys and girls. ...

Replying to @boyscouts (@anonymized individual 1): As an Eagle Scout, I'm really disappointed in the latest in a string of bad decisions on the part of BSA in recent years. My wife and I have four sons, ages 3–10. They haven't joined Boy Scouts, and they never will.

Replying to @boyscouts, @anonymized individual 1 (@anonymized individual 2): Agree. My wife and I have already discussed this. If we have sons, I can't in good faith allow them to follow my steps to Eagle in. It's no longer the organization I grew up in. I can't trust them anymore.

Replying to @anonymized individual 1, @anonymized individual 2 (@anonymized individual 3): The BSA is a mess. As an alternative, check out the [*anonymized organization's website address*]. They're going back to the original model and mindset.

Source: Boy Scouts of America's Twitter page

Many studies have focused on how nonprofit organizations (NPOs) use their social media pages as spaces for strategically initiating dialogic organization–public relationships, extending the public's social media engagement with the organization (public engagement, from now on) and leading the public to increase their participation in collective action (Guo & Saxton, 2018; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Their focus on NPOs corresponds with the central role of NPOs in the traditional form of collective action. Collective action refers to action the public takes together to achieve a common goal that

cannot be accomplished alone, such as advocating for a cause (e.g., women's rights) or creating public value (e.g., a public park). NPOs have traditionally organized the public in collective action and solved the problem of individuals free riding on the efforts of others (Olson, 1965).

However, the tweets above reveal organization–public dynamics on NPOs' social media pages that past studies have disregarded. They include individual expression and self-mobilization for the poster's own goals, such as sharing their Scouting experiences or promoting another organization. This new form of collective action is called "connective action" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). In connective action, individuals take advantage of the social media environment to spread their own goals to a broad audience and generate social change for themselves and those who support the same issue. They do not directly engage with or identify with the organization in connective action, and formal NPOs no longer lead the action. Examples of connective action include individuals advocating for "creating an economy based on the fair distribution of wealth" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 739), fundraising to eradicate cancer, and sharing emergency information during natural disasters (Ihm, 2019).

Organizations' traditional control of the dyadic organization–public relationship (Guo & Saxton, 2018) and leading the public for collective action (Olson, 1965) may shift to individuals forming relationships among themselves (Yang & Taylor, 2021) and self-organizing for connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Research is needed to examine individuals' posting behaviors on NPOs' social media pages and to investigate the changed relationship between the organization and individuals as well as their roles in connective action. Such examination will (a) provide the organizational communication scholarship with a novel theoretical

perspective beyond centering the organization in generating social change and (a) enrich the connective action research with a concrete conceptualization of connective action.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate how and why individuals create posts on NPOs' social media pages, and to unearth the changed dynamics between individuals and organizations in the current connective action topography. First, based on organizational identification research (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Scott, 1997), this study distinguishes two identification targets—organizational identification and issue identification—to explain why individuals create posts on NPOs' social media pages. Organizational identification refers to the degree to which individuals perceive oneness with or belonging to the focal organization with which they are affiliated (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Issue identification refers to the degree to which individuals define themselves as social groups of supporters for or promoters of the focal issue and the degree to which they perceive the focal issue as self-defining and congruent with their personal beliefs (Ihm & Lee, 2021; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Scott & Stephens, 2009). Second, based on connective action research (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), this study compares two dynamics of collective and connective action in individual posting behaviors and presents a model that connects different identification targets leading to varied roles (i.e., functions) and relationships (i.e., audiences) in individual posts on NPOs' social media pages. Thus, this study extends discussions on outcomes of multiple identifications to the social media environment and advances the theorization of connective action.

Multiple identifications and individuals' posts on NPOs' social media pages

Social identity theory posits that individuals define themselves through the social groups to which they belong (Tajfel, 1978; Turner & Onorato, 1999), referred to as *identification targets* (Scott, 1997). Individuals' social identities may be important predictors of their behaviors, including creating posts on organizations' social media pages because of self-consistency and self-enhancement motivations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bednar et al., 2020). Self-consistency motivation is the desire to maintain one's identity as consistent with the norms and expectations of their social groups; self-enhancement motivation is the desire to enhance self-esteem by improving the positive aspects and status of their social groups. Both lead individuals to act in ways that correspond with their identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

However, individuals do not have one identity. They maintain multiple identities, each of which is linked to different social groups (Scott, 1997). For instance, employees may identify with varied social groups within their organization, such as occupation or work groups, as well as the focal organization (Lammers et al., 2013; Russo, 1998). When individuals create posts on NPOs' social media pages, they may also maintain multiple identities. Previous research suggests that two identifications are relevant to behaviors in the nonprofit context.

First, individuals may identify with the focal NPO (i.e., organizational identification, defined above). Anyone, from internal stakeholders (e.g., volunteers and employees) to external stakeholders (e.g., supporters, donors, and beneficiaries), can create posts on NPOs' social media pages.

Organizational identification research has found that internal stakeholders of NPOs, such as volunteers who identify strongly with the focal NPO, are more likely to remain in, pay attention to, and commit time to the NPO (Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014; Scott & Stephens, 2009). External stakeholders of organizations, such as consumers of a corporation's products or donors to an NPO with high organizational identification, are also more likely to pay attention to and show support for the organization by making positive statements about it, purchasing its products, or donating to it (Ahearne et al., 2005; Boenigk & Helmig, 2013; Tukej et al., 2013). Thus, when internal or external stakeholders identify strongly with the focal NPO, they are likely to show their interest and support by creating posts on the NPO's social media pages.

Second, issue identification, defined above, is relevant to individuals' posting behaviors on NPOs' social media pages. Individuals engage with NPOs based on not only their attachment to the organization but also their broader sense of community (Lewis, 2005). Studies have found that individuals are more likely to commit to, remain in, and promote campaigns for NPOs when they identify more strongly with the issue that the NPOs focus on, such as performing arts, music, or feminism (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014; Scott & Stephens, 2009). Similarly, individuals with high issue identification may show commitment to and promote campaigns related to the issue by creating posts on the social media pages of NPOs pertinent to the issue. For instance, in 2012, many individuals created posts to express their concerns about the issues of feminism and abortion on the social media pages of a breast cancer charity, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and an NPO that provides abortion care, Planned Parenthood, when the former NPO decided to cut funding for the latter.

When individuals identify with multiple targets such as organizational and issue identification, its situational relevance (Bednar et al., 2020), its place in a hierarchy (Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014), and its size (Scott et al., 1998) can all determine its salience and, thus, their behaviors (Bednar et al., 2020). By negotiating the compatibility and competition among multiple identification targets, individuals identify with the most salient social group and act correspondingly. For instance, Scott (1997) found that different communication situations cue individuals to identify and act differently according to each situation. Volunteers' communication with other organizational members acted as the cue of the focal organization, which led to strong organizational identification and increased intention to remain in the organization. Another study (Grube & Piliavin, 2000) also found that volunteers with stronger identification with general volunteering than with a specific NPO tended to volunteer for multiple NPOs. Those with stronger identification with a particular NPO rather than general volunteering committed more hours to the focal NPO and fewer hours to other NPOs. These studies (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Scott, 1997) suggest that among multiple identification targets (i.e., the focal NPO and the issue in this study's context), the more salient one affects individual behaviors, such as the types of posts individuals create on NPOs' social media pages.

Much research on organizational or multiple identifications in the organizational context has discussed the consequences of multiple identifications within the organizational boundary, such as remaining in the organization, committing time or money to the organization, and participating in

organizational events or campaigns (Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014; Scott, 1997; Scott & Stephens, 2009). However, the social media environment diversifies and broadens the ramifications of multiple identifications beyond the organizational boundary because individuals with multiple identifications may create posts to reach audiences beyond the organization or its members and achieve varied goals beyond the organizational goals. For instance, individuals may try to inform the general population, change their opinions, or mobilize them on an issue of interest to the individuals. In this way, individual posts on NPOs' social media pages may affect not only the organization and its members but also individuals' own friends or the general population, and ultimately the society (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Extending research on multiple identifications in the social media environment, the next section integrates research on connective action to introduce the different functions and audiences resulting from individuals' different identifications on NPOs' social media pages.

Functions and audiences of individuals' posts on NPOs' social media pages

Connective action refers to a new form of collective action undertaken by digitally networked individuals, who emerged with the advent of social media (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Connective action contrasts with the traditional form of collective action. Traditionally, when two or more individuals wanted to accomplish a common goal that could not be achieved alone, the individuals acted collectively, or participated in *collective action* (Olson, 1965). However, "for a long time, scholarly literature placed organizations, not individuals, at the center of collective action" (Bimber et al., 2012, p. 1) because organizations could solve the problem of individuals' free riding and sharing the benefits from the collective efforts of others. Indeed, organizations led the collective action by acting on behalf of individuals and mobilizing them for common goals (Knoke, 1990).

Prior research has focused on how organizations may use their social media pages to lead the public to further participation in collective action (Guo & Saxton, 2018; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). For instance, research has revealed what types of NPOs' posts improve the organization–public relationship (e.g., dialogic posts or posts from NPOs with active social media accounts; Guo & Saxton, 2018; Saxton & Waters, 2014). Research has also uncovered varied social media functions NPOs employ as a "ladder" to shift public engagement from attracting the public to bonding with the public, and to mobilizing the public for the ultimate goal of collective action (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 350).

However, such research cannot capture the changed roles and relationships of *individuals* in connective action or account for the increasing phenomenon of connective action, such as the individual posts on the Boy Scouts' social media page. In connective action, individuals also act to advocate for a cause (e.g., fair distribution of wealth; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) or create public value (e.g., fundraising to eradicate cancer; Ihm, 2019) as in collective action. However, in connective action, individuals play active roles on social media pages to spread posts to a broad audience and self-mobilize for their own goals, instead of depending on formal organizations as in collective action. Whereas in collective action, organizations represent a group of individuals sharing group slogans or organizational identification, in connective

action, individuals express personalized slogans and individual voices without organizational identification (Khalil & Storie, 2021). Instead of strengthening their relationships with the organization, in connective action, individuals form relationships with other individuals in the social media environment (Yang & Taylor, 2021). Thus, this section examines (a) the functions individuals employ in their posts, and (b) the audiences they target through their posts to identify the transformed roles and relationships of individuals, respectively, in connective action.

Functions of individuals' posts on NPOs' social media pages

Individuals' posts on NPOs' social media pages can be classified into two types that reflect the different aspects of collective action and connective action. The first is *community posts* that respond to organizations' traditional social media strategies for *collective action*. Community posts are pertinent to collective action because they respond to organizations' traditional ways of organizing the public for collective action. Organizations have attempted to use their social media pages to strengthen organization–public relationships and lead the public to increase their participation in collective action for organizational goals (Guo & Saxton, 2018; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Individuals, in turn, may engage with the focal NPOs by creating community posts on the NPOs' social media pages (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Community posts spark direct interactive "dialogues" (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Taylor & Kent, 2014) between the poster and the organization or organizational members (e.g., asking questions about, commenting on, or replying to an organization's posts) or strengthen ties between the poster and the organization or organizational members without an expectation of conversation (e.g., giving acknowledgment related to the organization; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Many of these posts show support for the organization or its members (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Some posts may include neutral or negative content pertaining to the organization, such as criticism and complaint, but may still bring attention to the organization or its members (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Community posts may ultimately contribute to building *communities* between the poster and the organization or organizational members.

The second type of individual post is in the form of *connective action*. While some individuals engaged in connective action create social media posts to respond to others for community functions (e.g., Khalil & Storie, 2021), previous studies have revealed more prominent functions in this type of post, referred to as *noncommunity posts* from now on. Prior research suggests three functions in noncommunity posts. First, individuals may employ *information functions*. For example, individuals shared damage and rescue information on their blogs after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the southeastern United States in 2005 (Macias et al., 2009). In another example, Twitter users distributed facts about an NPO, Autism Speaks (Parsloe & Holton, 2018). Individuals employ the information function when alternative information is unavailable, or decisions related to the information are important to them (Berger, 2014). Such posts distributing and sharing information about organizational issues, or facts about the focal NPO, serve the *information function*. Second, individuals' posts may employ *action functions* to "persuade" others

(Berger, 2014) to take part in connective action. Active periods in Canadian politics (Small, 2011); uprisings in Spain, Greece, and the United States (Theocharis et al., 2015); and the Saudi women's movement for the right to drive (Khalil & Storie, 2021) have inspired social media posts to mobilize others to participate in connective action (i.e., vote, donate, or drive a car, respectively).

Third, individuals' posts may serve *expression* and *influence functions*. Individuals express their own opinions and feelings on political situations, attempting to make their voices heard and influence the public opinion or organizational performance (Parsloe & Holton, 2018; Small, 2011; Theocharis et al., 2015). They also share personal experiences and stories about rescue, damage, and emergent situations with their social media networks (Caraway, 2016; Macias et al., 2009). These studies together suggest that individuals' posts on NPOs' social media pages are based on two different dynamics (i.e., collective and connective action) and may employ different functions accordingly.

Linking functions of social media posts to different audiences

Different functions imply targeting and connecting to different audiences because individuals are likely to target and reach more appropriate and effective audiences for their functions. Indeed, previous research on audience representation suggests that the functions of posts define and influence whom the posters imagine and target (Litt, 2012). This section distinguishes different target audiences based on different functions of posts.

First, when individuals make community posts, as in the first type of post described, they are likely to target those within the organizational boundary—the focal organization or organizational members who are directly affiliated with the organization. Previous research has interpreted individual posts on organizations' social media pages as desired outcomes in response to the organizations' social media strategies, and implicitly assumed that these posts reciprocate the ties of the focal organization or its members and target them as their audience (Saxton & Waters, 2014). The focal organization and its members are the tangible and effective audience with which individuals are likely to continue their conversations and build community in the organizational background via their community posts. Studies on audience representation also suggest that individuals with community functions target an intimate audience within the social boundary with whom they can communicate and maintain relationships (Litt, 2012; Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

However, in the second type of post (i.e., posts with non-community functions), individuals may target those beyond the organizational boundary (i.e., beyond the organization and its members) to address those who are neither affiliated with nor internal stakeholders of the organization. The social media environment allows individuals to reach a broad audience beyond the organizational boundary, ranging from specific individuals, such as a funder of the NPO or a poster who created a previous post, to a broad audience, such as the general population (Litt & Hargittai, 2016). Individuals' non-community functions include disseminating their information, opinions, and campaigns to their audience in a form of connective action. To accelerate the goals of connective action, reaching an audience beyond those within the organizational

boundary may be more effective because the larger the audience who reads the individuals' posts, the more chance that the audience shares and partakes in the individuals' objectives (Aaker & Smith, 2010). Accordingly, research on audience representation suggests that when individuals create posts to promote their goals or share information, they use the social media environment to imagine and target a broad fan community (Litt, 2012) or an abstract, nonintimate audience, such as the general population (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Further, successful connective action cases involved many individuals sharing information and action posts and reaching as broad an audience as possible (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

These studies suggest that individuals create different types of posts with different functions and audiences. Investigating different dynamics in the posts is meaningful because it addresses different organizational and social impacts generated by individual posts on organizations' social media pages. For instance, individual posts serving a community function may strengthen ties between the poster and the organization or ties between the poster and the organizational members who visit the focal NPO's social media pages. Posts with an information function, on the other hand, may shape the social media sphere and public knowledge. Audiences of posts also reflect whom individuals intend to affect and how relationships between individuals and their audience change as individuals participate in collective or connective action via different posts. The next section discusses the associations between different identifications, functions, and audiences of individuals' posts on NPOs' social media pages. In this way, this study unearths how individuals employ effective functions to reach their target audiences based on their identifications and induce varied individual, organizational, and social outcomes.

Linking identifications to functions and audiences of social media posts

Organizational identification, community functions, and audiences within the organizational boundary

When organizations create posts on their social media pages, individuals' level of organizational identification may influence how individuals respond to the posts. Those who identify strongly with a given organization are more likely to pay attention to, be concerned about, and commit resources to the focal organization or its members because of their self-consistency and self-enhancement motivations to engage with the organization in a way that benefits the organization and corresponds with the organizational goals (Russo, 1998; Scott et al., 1999). They are also more likely to maintain and strengthen ties with the organization or its members because they want to maintain the intraorganizational cooperation and cohesion and sustain the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Indeed, the definition of high organizational identification indicates that those who possess it care about the fate of the organization and feel intimacy with the organization and its members (Cheney, 1983). Thus, individuals with high organizational identification are more likely to make community posts to show their attention to the organization by asking questions about or replying to the organization's posts and to strengthen ties with the organization or its members. They may also focus on and target the organization and its

members and perceive the audience as intimate. Thus, this study hypothesizes:

H1: As individuals' level of organizational identification increases, their likelihood of creating posts with community functions increases.

H2: As individuals' level of organizational identification increases, their likelihood of targeting (a) an intimate audience (b) consisting of the organization and its members increases.

Issue identification, noncommunity functions, and audiences beyond the organizational boundary

As indicated above, not all individual posts on organizations' social media pages are designed for community functions. Many individuals take advantage of NPOs' social media pages to spread posts related to the focal issue with varied functions—such as information and action—without a direct relationship with the organization (Macias et al., 2009; Parsloe & Holton, 2018; Theocharis et al., 2015). These participants in connective action create posts based on their concerns about and attention to the focal issue instead of adhering to slogans or an identity related to that particular organization. Therefore, when individuals identify highly with the focal issue, they are likely to create posts with noncommunity functions to advance their goals rather than community functions to develop dialogues and ties with the focal NPOs. Thus, this article hypothesizes:

H3: As individuals' level of issue identification increases, their likelihood of creating posts with noncommunity functions increases.

Individuals' level of issue identification may also influence how they target their audience. Individuals with higher issue identification are more likely to feel a connection with a broader community of people who also follow the same issue than with the focal organization, because they are concerned about promoting and accomplishing goals related to the issue beyond the organizational boundary (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995). Indeed, participants in connective action attempt to have their voices heard as broadly as possible to reach any individuals, regardless of their organizational affiliation, who might be willing to vote in a political election (Small, 2011), boycott a certain organization (Parsloe & Holton, 2018), or demonstrate in campaigns (Khalil & Storie, 2021; Theocharis et al., 2015). A recent study also found that individuals with higher issue identification were more likely than those with lower issue identification to commit to a greater number of NPOs, thus not limiting their commitment within the organizational boundary (Ihm & Shumate, 2022). These studies imply that individuals who identify strongly with the focal issue may take advantage of the organization's social media pages to reach a broader audience outside the organization instead of responding to the organization. They may target those beyond their intimate ties to broaden their influence on every possible audience that is pertinent to the focal issue. Thus, this study hypothesizes:

H4: As individuals' level of issue identification increases, their likelihood of targeting (a) a nonintimate audience (b) going beyond the organization and its members increases.

Further, considering the association between functions and audiences of posts that were discussed earlier (Litt, 2012), this study hypothesizes that different functions lead to different target audiences. For instance, when individuals create posts with community functions in response to organizations' traditional strategies for public engagement (Saxton & Waters, 2014), they are likely to target people with whom they can build and continue relationships—intimate others such as the organization and its members who are within the organizational boundary (Litt, 2012; Marwick & boyd, 2011). On the other hand, when individuals employ noncommunity functions in the form of connective action, they are likely to target people to whom they can spread their posts beyond the organizational boundary and beyond their intimate social circles to accelerate their goals (Litt, 2012; Marwick & boyd, 2011). Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H5: Individuals whose posts employ community functions are more likely than those whose posts do not employ community functions to target (a) an intimate audience (b) consisting of the organization and its members.

H6: Individuals whose posts employ noncommunity functions are more likely than those whose posts do not employ noncommunity functions to target (a) a nonintimate audience (b) beyond the organization and its members.

(See Figure 1 for the summary of hypotheses).

Methods

Sample

In November and December 2020, online survey links generated by the research company Qualtrics were distributed to 22,624 individuals. Among the 18,286 individuals who clicked the survey link, 72 were screened out of the survey because they were under 18 years old. Another 15,974 reported that they had not engaged in any of the following in the preceding 3 months: (a) posted on a social media page owned by a U.S.-based NPO and directed messages to the organization; (b) replied to an NPO's posts with criticism of or support for the organization; or (c) communicated with others on the page. Among the 2,240 qualified respondents, 701 individuals completed the survey. Invalid or low-quality responses (e.g., missing data, failed attention check, or finishing the survey in less than half the median time) eliminated 125 responses, leaving 576 valid responses (completion rate: 25.71%).

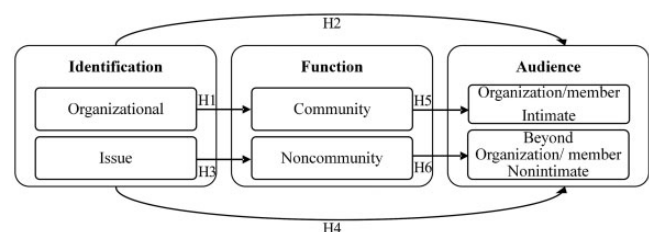


Figure 1. Summary of hypotheses

Participants were 57.43% females (0: female, 1: male) and averaged 48.15 years of age ($SD = 17.01$), and the mean income was \$66,100. More than half had a bachelor's degree or higher (53.47%), and most (81.94%) self-identified as White or European American (Black or African American: 8.85%; Hispanic or Latinx: 5.21%; Asian: 3.13%; Other: 0.87%). They had their own primary social media accounts for an average of 8.90 years ($SD = 3.94$), with an average of 622.60 friends or followers ($SD = 750.05$). They logged in to their accounts on average 12.15 times a week ($SD = 8.01$; see [Supplementary Appendix A](#), e.g., of NPOs' pages on which participants created posts).

Measures

Function of social media post

Study participants were first instructed to "open your primary social media account" and "copy and paste the most recent post you have made on the social media page of a nonprofit organization." The functions of these posts were coded according to the procedure explained below.

Audience of social media post

For *target audience*, participants answered an open-ended question: "Whom did you target for this post? Please indicate every audience you thought of while creating your post." Next, participants responded individually about how they perceived each audience of their posts by adapting a 7-point scale measure of intimacy of social media posts ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.45$; [Bazarova & Choi, 2014](#)): "nonintimate-intimate," "impersonal-personal," and "public-private." Based on a factor analysis, one item (i.e., "public-private") with a factor loading lower than 0.50 was dropped ([Hair et al., 2019](#)). The remaining items were combined into a latent variable of audience intimacy, and factor scores were used in the analysis ($\alpha = 0.83$; see [Supplementary Appendices B and C](#) for full items, factor loadings, reliabilities, and pairwise correlations).

Identification

For *organizational identification*, eight items of a previous measure ([Miller et al., 2000](#))—the shortened, unidimensional measure of the original organizational identification questionnaire ([Cheney, 1983](#))—were adapted. The original measure asked for employees' identification with their companies, so the word "company" was changed to "this organization" and the phrase "to work for" was deleted. For instance, the item, "I talk up this organization to my friends as a great company to work for" was revised to "I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization."

For *issue identification*, 10 items from a previous study were adapted ([Ihm & Shumate, 2022](#)). Participants were first asked, "Please think about the primary issue that you focused on when creating this post on the organization's social media page." They were then asked to respond to the 10 items in relation to "the primary issue" (e.g., "I consider this issue important," "I see myself as being involved in this issue"). All used 5-point Likert scales. To test the validity of the identification measures, a two-factor model was tested and reached a less-than-adequate fit: $\chi^2(134) = 543.77$, $CFI = 0.92$, $TLI = 0.90$, $RMSEA = 0.10$, $SRMR = 0.06$, $CD = 0.99$. After removing two items for organizational identification and three items for issue identification whose factor loadings were lower than 0.50 ([Hair et al., 2019](#)), the measurement model

reached a good fit, reflecting different constructs between organizational ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.07$) and issue identification ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.09$): $\chi^2(64) = 103.99$, $CFI = 0.97$, $TLI = 0.98$, $RMSEA = 0.05$, $SRMR = 0.05$, $CD = 0.99$ ([Hu & Bentler, 1999](#)). Factors scores were used in the analysis.

Coding procedures

As participants copied and pasted their most recent social media posts and indicated the target audience of the posts in response to the open-ended questions, this article identified the functions and target audiences of the posts by following the coding procedure. For the functions of social media posts, the author and three undergraduate students met for 2 hr per week for 3 months and developed a coding scheme based on previous research ([Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012](#)) that identified functions of *organizations'* social media posts as information, community, and action. To redefine and clarify the three functions applicable to this study's context, the four coders applied the scheme to a pilot set of individuals' posts from November 2017 on the social media pages of NPOs listed in the *NonProfit Times* as the top 100 NPOs in the United States in 2017. Accordingly, the coders categorized functions that sparked direct interactive conversations between the posters and the organization (e.g., "How can I get in touch? I need to donate to this activity"¹) or strengthened ties between the posters and the organizations without an expectation of conversation (e.g., "Thank you for the training," "Yes, I will donate to our fall raffle, same donation as last year") as *community* functions.

The coders defined posts that disseminated information, such as information related to the organizational issues or facts about the focal NPO, as *information* functions (e.g., "India overtakes Brazil as country with second-highest number of Covid-19," "Zuckerberg pours \$250 million into Democratic strongholds"). Functions of mobilizing others to act, such as to donate, vote, demonstrate, or boycott for causes related to the focal organization or the individual themselves (e.g., "Let's go tobacco free this Halloween," "Donate to Red Cross and help our fire fighters"), were coded as *action* functions.

Additionally, the coders identified posts that served functions other than the three functions addressed in previous research ([Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012](#)) and developed two new categories based on previous research ([Caraway, 2016](#); [Macias et al., 2009](#); [Small, 2011](#)). *Expression* functions were defined as functions sharing feelings and emotions on personal experiences, political situations, or issues related to the focal NPO (e.g., "I was in the Tsunami in Thailand in 2004 and saw how inefficient they were with money," "The American Red Cross is financially disgusting!"). *Influence* functions were defined as functions of monitoring and commenting on organizational issues to have influence on public opinion or organizational performance (e.g., "Kamala Harris is not a good choice. You [the focal NPO] should not partner with her," "Faster response was needed on this project").

The coders then coded another pilot set of individuals' posts on the same NPOs' social media pages from one day in May 2018. Discrepancies between coders were discussed and coding criteria were refined until the four people reached 100% agreement. Using the refined rules, the coders coded posts from another day in May 2018 ($\kappa = 0.92$; see [Supplementary Appendix D](#) for an abbreviated version of the coding scheme).

After this process, the author and one of the coders coded 10% of the data from the actual posts in the survey individually ($\kappa = 0.80$) and discussed any discrepancies until the coders reached 100% agreement. The two coders then coded the rest of the data individually. Any posts with controversies or questions were discussed among the coders. Every post indicated one function per post, so it was assigned a single code. The average length of the posts was 8.31 words (Min = 1, Max = 51, $SD = 5.17$; see Table 1).

For the audience categorization, the four members of the coding team first drew on previous research that uncovered varied types of individuals' social media audiences (e.g., the general population, a broad audience, and a specific audience with similar interests; Litt, 2012; Litt & Hargittai, 2016; Marwick & boyd, 2011) and conceptualized three categories that NPOs' social media pages allow individuals to target: the focal organization, the general population, and a specific audience. The first category is *the focal organization* whose social media page the poster creates posts on. For instance, individuals can direct their posts to the focal organization to ask or answer questions about organizational events and issues (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Examples of responses from participants included "the organization" and "the NGO itself." The second category is *the general population*. Individuals may make their posts visible to the general population—that is, an audience that could be any individual or the entire society (Litt & Hargittai, 2016). This could include disseminating information about an alternative to the Boy Scouts to as broad an audience as possible, as in the earlier example. Examples of responses from participants included "the public," "everyone," "the broad public," and "anybody." The third category is *a specific audience*. In the previous example, by using the "replying to @" function, posters targeted a specific audience (e.g., organizational members) to share opinions on the Boy Scouts' decision or their own Scouting experiences.

The author and a trained undergraduate student then divided 10% of responses from the actual survey into three categories and developed three subcategories of "specific audience" based on previous research on imagined audience (Litt & Hargittai, 2016; Marwick & boyd, 2011) and stakeholders of NPOs (Lai & Fu, 2020). The subcategories were (a) "organizational members"; (b) supporters of the organization (e.g., "supporters," "sponsors," and "donors" who provide help to sustain the organization); and (c) personal networks (e.g., "family" and "friends"). Audiences that did not fit into any of these subcategories (e.g., "media," "corporation," "other NPO," and "government") were coded as other.

The two coders coded the rest of the responses based on the refined coding scheme individually and compared and discussed any discrepancies ($\kappa = 0.83$) until 100% agreement

Table 1. Functions of individual posts

Function	Freq.	(%)
Community	134	23.26
Information	184	31.94
Action	209	36.28
Expression	31	5.38
Influence	18	3.13
Sum	576	100

was reached. Participants mostly indicated one target audience per post, but some reported that they had two ($n = 53$) or three ($n = 3$) audiences in mind for some posts. Each response from the same person was coded and used individually in regression analyses with dependent variables of different audience categories (see Table 2).

Analysis

For the relationships between participants' identifications and the functions of their posts, three multinomial logistic regressions were conducted because the outcome variable of the functions of social media posts was a categorical variable (Long & Freese, 2006). To focus on the most prominent functions, the influence (3.13%) and expression (5.38%) functions were coded as other functions and set as a baseline category in the analysis.

For the relationships between participants' identifications, their functions, and the audiences of their posts, the audience categories were turned into dummy variables (Yes: 1, No: 0). Because of the imbalanced distribution of the audience categories (King & Zeng, 2001), five penalized logistic regressions were conducted using the *firthlogit* function in Stata 14 software. For the relationships between participants' identifications, their functions, and the audience's intimacy, a multiple regression was used. In every regression analysis, four socio-demographic variables—gender, age, income, and education—and three social media variables—number of years having the primary social media account, number of followers, and frequency of social media use—were controlled.

Results

Multinomial logistic regressions were used to examine whether different identifications were related to different functions of social media posts (see Table 3). The results suggest that organizational identification is positively related to making community posts ($b = 0.48$, $p < .01$), while issue identification is positively related to making information ($b = 0.54$, $p < .01$) and action posts ($b = 0.30$, $p < .01$). Therefore, H1 and H3 were supported.

Penalized logistic regressions were used to examine the relationships between participants' identifications, functions, and target audiences of social media posts (see Table 4). Organizational identification was not related to any of the audience categories. Issue identification was positively related to targeting participants' own networks ($b = 0.39$, $p < .05$). Regression models for the categories of organizational members and supporters were not significant. Thus, H2-b was not supported. H4-b was supported.

Table 2. Audiences of individual posts

Audience	Freq.	(%)
The general population	401	63.15
The focal organization	68	10.71
Personal networks	55	8.66
Organizational member	50	7.87
Organizational supporter	41	6.46
Other (e.g., media, corporation, other NPO, government)	20	3.15
Sum	635 ^a	100

^a Fifty-three responses with two target audiences and three responses with three target audiences.

Table 3. Regression of identifications on functions of social media posts

	Community			Information			Action		
	<i>b</i>	(SE)	RRR	<i>b</i>	(SE)	RRR	<i>b</i>	(SE)	RRR
Gender	-0.47	0.28	0.62	-0.94**	0.26	0.39	-0.73**	0.24	0.48
Age	-0.02*	0.01	0.98	-0.02	0.01	0.98	0.02	0.01	1.02
Income	-0.06	0.04	0.94	-0.05	0.04	0.95	0.01	0.04	1.01
Education	0.03	0.11	1.03	0.30**	0.10	1.35	0.04	0.09	1.04
Years	-0.04	0.00	0.96	-0.09**	0.03	0.91	-0.02	0.03	0.98
Followers	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Frequency	0.01	0.01	1.01	0.00	0.01	1.00	0.01	0.01	1.01
Org. Id.	0.48**	0.17	1.58	0.29	0.16	1.05	0.16	0.14	1.17
Issue Id.	0.10	0.15	1.31	0.54**	0.25	1.66	0.30**	0.11	1.40

LR $\chi^2(27) = 73.80^{***}$
Pseudo $R^2 = 0.18$
N = 576

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

Note. RRR = relative risk ratios; Years = number of years using the primary social media account; Followers = number of followers; Frequency = frequency of using social media; Org. Id. = organizational identification; Issue Id. = issue identification. Significant results related to the hypotheses are in bold.

Table 4. Regression of functions and identifications on audience categories and audience intimacy

	The general population		Organization		Personal networks		Intimacy	
	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)
Gender	0.41	0.20	-0.47	0.31	0.06	0.34	-0.19	0.14
Age	-0.00	0.01	0.03*	0.01	0.04***	0.01	-0.01*	0.00
Income	-0.06*	0.03	0.12*	0.05	0.11	0.06	0.01	0.02
Education	-0.05	0.08	-0.06	0.11	0.31**	0.13	-0.10	0.05
Years	-0.03	0.03	0.14***	0.04	0.05	0.04	-0.09	0.02
Followers	-0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Frequency	0.02*	0.01	-0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
Org. Id.	0.07	0.12	0.03	0.17	0.12	0.16	0.25**	0.08
Issue Id.	0.05	0.10	0.14	0.15	0.39*	0.17	0.07	0.05
Community	-0.52*	0.26	1.22**	0.52	0.39	0.39	0.18**	0.07
Information	0.88**	0.31	0.14	0.36	0.12	0.49	0.08	0.19
Action	0.05	0.24	-1.65***	0.49	1.28***	0.40	-0.03	0.16
N	576		576		576		576	
Wald $\chi^2(12)$	27.46**		39.68***		36.34***			
R^2							0.15	
F(12, 563)							6.28***	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Only significant regression models are reported here. Regression models for organizational members and organizational supporters which were not significant are not reported. Years = number of years using the primary social media account; Followers = number of followers; Frequency = frequency of using social media; Org. Id. = organizational identification; Issue Id. = issue identification; Intimacy = audience intimacy.

Significant results related to the hypotheses are in bold.

The results also suggest that making community posts is negatively related to targeting the general population ($b = -0.52$, $p < .05$) and positively related to targeting the organization as the audience ($b = 1.22$, $p < .01$). Information posts are positively related to targeting the general population as the audience ($b = 0.88$, $p < .01$). Action posts are negatively related to targeting the organization ($b = -1.65$, $p < .001$) and positively related to targeting participants' personal networks as the audience ($b = 1.28$, $p < .001$). Therefore, H5-b and H6-b were supported.

A multiple regression was used to examine the relationships between identifications, functions of social media posts, and audience intimacy (see Table 4 with "intimacy" as the dependent variable). Organizational identification ($b = 0.25$, $p < .01$) and making community posts ($b = 0.18$, $p < .01$) were positively related to audience intimacy. Issue identification

and other functions were not related to audience intimacy. Thus, H2-a and H5-a were supported. H4-a and H6-a were not supported (see Supplementary Appendix E for hypothesis testing summary).

Together, the results suggest that post functions may mediate identification and audiences of posts (see Table 5). Post-hoc tests of indirect effects were conducted (see Supplementary Appendix F for detailed procedures and results). The results suggest that (a) community posts mediate the relationship between organizational identification and audience intimacy with the indirect effect of community goal about 3.38 times the size of the direct effect as measured by the ratio of indirect to direct effect (Breaugh, 2003), and (b) action posts mediate the relationship between issue identification and personal networks, with the indirect effect of community goal about 2.79 times the size of the direct effect.

Table 5. Mediation analysis

Predictor	Mediator	Outcome variable	z_a	z_b	$(z_a \times z_b) / \sqrt{(z_a^2 + z_b^2 + 1)}$	Ratio of indirect to direct effect
Org. Id.	Community	Org.	2.89	2.35	1.74	0.14
		Intimacy	2.89	3.13	2.07*	3.38
Issue Id.	Information	The General Population	2.16	2.84	1.66	0.66
		Network	2.16	0.24	0.22	0.25
		Intimacy	2.16	0.42	0.38	0.27
	Action	The General Population	2.63	0.21	0.19	0.04
		Network	2.63	3.2	1.98*	2.79
		Intimacy	2.63	-0.19	-0.17	-0.10

* $p < .05$.

Note. Org. Id. = organizational identification; Issue Id. = issue identification; Org. = organization; Intimacy = audience intimacy; Network = personal networks. $z_{\text{mediation}}$ is significant at the $\alpha = 0.05$ if it exceeds $|1.96|$ for a two-tailed test with $\alpha = 0.05$.

Discussion

This study is one of only a few to examine individuals' posts on organizations' social media pages by combining data from actual posts and responses to the posts. Results suggest the transformed dynamics of connective action in comparison to the traditional dynamics of collective action in individual posting behaviors on NPOs' social media pages. On the one hand, in response to NPOs' traditional social media strategies for developing the organization–public relationship and increasing public engagement in collective action (Guo & Saxton, 2018; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012), individuals with high organizational identification create posts to build community with an intimate audience within the organizational boundary and strengthen the organization–public relationship. Individuals with high issue identification, on the other hand, create posts to self-express and self-mobilize for connective action and form relationships among the individuals beyond the organizational boundary.

Results from H1 to H4 suggest that identification with different targets may differentiate how and why individuals engage with and take advantage of organizations' social media pages. Those who identify more with the organization may feel greater intimacy with their audience that is based on the organizational context, and feel more obliged to show attention to or support for the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Russo, 1998; Scott et al., 1999). As a result, they may employ the community function of reciprocating the organization's attempts at public engagement and maintaining online communities within the organizational boundary. Those who are more conscious of the focal issue, however, may take advantage of the organizations' social media pages to spread their information and action messages to an audience beyond the organizational boundary rather than responding to the posts of the focal organizations. They may target not only the members and followers of the organization but also (a) those who are not directly affiliated with the organization, such as their own networks who read their posts, or (b) those who are technically accessible to the organizations' social media pages, such as those who search terms related to the organizational issue, those who are "friends" with the organizational members, those who are "friends" with the organizational followers who "liked" the posts, and ultimately the general population who can access the internet.

Research has regarded organizational identification as the predictor of paying attention to and committing to the organization (Scott, 1997; Scott & Stephens, 2009) and interpreted individuals' posts on organizations' social media pages as

their responses to the organization based on their attachment and attention to the organization (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Studies on organizational identification have also addressed the consequences of organizational and multiple identifications mostly within the organizational boundary (Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014; Scott, 1997). However, this study captures that individuals may identify with both the organization and other targets, which lead to different types of actions: responding to collective action based on organizational identification, or self-mobilizing for connective action based on issue identification. In this way, this study enriches organizational identification scholarship by developing theoretical explanations for how organizational and multiple identification may extend to different types and scopes of outcomes in the social media environment not limited to the organizational boundary. This study also adds a new perspective to the organizational and multiple identification scholarship on understanding individual posts on organizations' social media pages beyond centering the organization in generating social change.

Results from H5 to H6 suggest that different functions of social media posts lead to targeting different audiences. First, community posts were positively related to targeting an intimate audience and the organization; they were negatively related to targeting the general population. These individuals seem to target the focal organization based on their attention to and concern for the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; van Zoonen & Treem, 2019) and perceive the organization as intimate (Cheney, 1983); they feel they can develop and maintain relationships in the organizational context. They may not target the general population because they cannot build meaningful relationships with individuals whom they know nothing about.

Second, regarding two functions of connective action, information posts were positively related to targeting the general population, while action posts were positively related to targeting participants' own networks and negatively related to targeting the organization. This study advances the conceptualization of connective action by identifying the concrete functions (i.e., information and action) of individualized slogans and voices in the posts that create connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Khalil & Storie, 2021). Different functions revealed in this study also indicate individuals' changed roles of self-mobilizing in connective action, instead of engaging with the organization via community functions in collective action. In this way, they provide an analytic scheme to reify the active roles of individuals in connective action,

rather than following organizations in collective action as in prior research (Knoke, 1990; Olson, 1965).

Different functions targeting different audiences reveal how individuals relate to each other differently in connective action versus collective action. Individual posts responding to the organization may contribute to the traditional organization–public relationship and extend to collective action (Guo & Saxton, 2018; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Individual posts targeting audiences beyond the organization, however, contribute to relationships among individuals and form the base for the connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Parsloe & Holton, 2018; Theocharis et al., 2015).

Results suggest that individuals may target the general population and form broad networks with them by employing information functions, corresponding with many massive social movements using social media to reach the general population (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Khalil & Storie, 2021; Theocharis et al., 2015). Individuals seem to target a narrower audience than the general population and strengthen smaller networks with their friends, family, and followers, when employing the more engaging functions of promoting actions rather than spreading information. Such individual attempts may not always build up to massive social movements but represent an everyday format of connective action and autonomous networks among individuals, which can become resources in generating further social change (Ihm, 2019). In this way, this study captures how different relationships emerge at the center of collective and connective action (Yang & Taylor, 2021) and extends previous research focusing on the organization–public relationship based on the logic of collective action in the social media environment (Guo & Saxton, 2018; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). This study also develops the connective action scholarship (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) by uncovering the varied individual networks that comprise the connective action and offering operationalizations on the composition of connective action.

Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the communication research in two ways. First, it contributes to the organizational communication and identification scholarship by combining research on connective action and presenting varied identifications leading to varied levels of outcomes in the social media environment. While organizational identification research has addressed higher identification targets than the organization nested in the nonprofit context (Kramer et al., 2013; Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014; Scott & Stephens, 2009), research has yet to elucidate how such identification may generate different outcomes beyond the organizational boundary. This study suggests that issue identification may accomplish connective action goals and influence broader social media audiences than organizational identification. It enriches research on multiple identifications in the social media environment and opens new areas for future research on multiple identifications of external stakeholders or the public and their ramifications for making social change in the social media environment.

Second, this study contributes to research on connective action by illustrating the transformed roles of and complex relationships between individuals and organizations as connective action evolves in the social media environment. Previous research counted the numbers of replies, likes, and retweets in response to organizations' social media strategies to measure

the degree of public engagement (Guo & Saxton, 2018) or analyzed the content of individual posts for connective action based on massive social movement cases (Khalil & Storie, 2021; Macias et al., 2009; Small, 2011). Extending such research, this study distinguishes individuals' different motivations for (i.e., identification) and roles in (i.e., functions) collective or connective action. Different target audiences also capture the varied relationships individuals create in the social media environment as they participate in connective action. In this way, this study provides a comprehensive understanding and operationalization of individual behaviors in connective action and offers new perspectives for future research on analyzing connective action.

Further, previous research has focused on NPOs' central roles in collective action (Olson, 1965) and NPOs' attempts at improving organization–public relationships in the social media environment (Guo & Saxton, 2018; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Taylor & Kent, 2014). This study decenters organizations. It shifts the focus to individuals and reveals the unique ways individuals connect to each other and engage in social discourse in the era of social media, empowering and amplifying their voices, which were traditionally controlled, led, or muted by organizations (Aronczyk, 2013; Knoke, 1990; Olson, 1965). Integrating an individual layer (i.e., individuals' posts of connective action) into the organizational context (i.e., organizations' social media pages for public engagement), this study theoretically bridges the research on connective action and public engagement and provides a different perspective to understand a social media phenomenon that centers on individuals' active roles and autonomous networks.

Practical and policy implications

This study reveals the transformed roles of individuals and NPOs in connective action. In response to this transformed dynamic, NPOs may provide social technological contexts such as their social media pages for the active individuals to construct their own connective experiences (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) and self-organize for social change in varied “participatory styles” (Bimber et al., 2012). Further, nonprofit practitioners may create organizational policies to use social media actively to connect with and leverage such individuals or influencers who can broaden the reach of the organizational posts (Yang & Taylor, 2021). Considering the different post functions and target audiences stemming from the organizational and issue identification in this study's findings, nonprofit practitioners may differentiate social media strategies depending on what types of posts they want to distribute and whom they want to reach. For instance, when NPOs intend to disseminate noncommunity posts or reach an audience beyond the organizational members, their posts may focus on an issue, so that individuals with high issue identification may pay attention to and spread such posts to a broad audience.

Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on self-reported data, implying conscious audience targeting when creating posts on NPOs' social media pages. While previous research has suggested that individuals consciously imagine and target their social media audience (Litt, 2012), some individuals may not have consciously targeted an audience.

Second, the sample comprised active participants who had posted on U.S. NPOs' social media pages, the majority of whom self-identified as White or European American. The sample is limited in terms of racial and ethnic diversity and may not represent participants of NPOs with other sociocultural backgrounds (e.g., mainstream NPOs and alternative outlaw service providers in suburban areas of New Zealand, Elers et al., 2021; a share-housing-based NPO in South Korea, Ihm & Baek, 2021; counter-human trafficking NPOs within global coalitions, Foot et al., 2021). For better representativeness of the sample, future studies may look for varied data sources to recruit more diverse samples than individuals who create posts on NPOs targeting White or European Americans. Such an attempt may capture more varied dynamics on how individuals identify with NPOs in different ways (e.g., the Indigenous People of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific Islands not identifying with mainstream NPOs while identifying with alternative outlaw service providers, Elers et al., 2021). Future research on individuals with lower levels of participation (e.g., lurkers and readers) may also provide a broader view on individual posts on organizations' social media pages.

Third, this study distinguished the identification and audience based on the organizational boundary (e.g., organizational vs. issue identification, and targeting audience within or beyond the organizational boundary). Because organizational communication scholarship has long discussed bridging the inside and outside worlds of the organization (Cheney et al., 2008; Keyton, 2017), future research may further explore new criteria to distinguish the dynamics between collective and connective action. Finally, the measure of organizational identification was originally used in conjunction with qualitative data (Cheney, 1983). Conducting other research methods with qualitative data, such as in-depth interviews, may contribute to a deeper understanding of how individuals identify with the focal organizations and target their audiences when creating posts on NPOs' social media pages.

The theoretical implications from this research pose a few questions that are worth pursuing in future research. Future research may examine how the posters' varied types of affiliation with the organization (e.g., organizational member, volunteer, or donor) interact with the organizational or issue identification and influence the functions or audiences of their posts. Such research may advance the organizational identification scholarship. Whether and how different functions and audiences in posters' social media posts extend to different types and extent of offline activities (e.g., demonstrations) may embody the theoretical mechanism of connective action and help develop the scholarship.

This study captured how individuals' posts on NPOs' social media pages challenge the traditional organization-public relationship and NPOs' leading role in collective action. Investigation of the outcomes of individuals' changed relationships with organizations and multiple identifications in the social media environment enriches the organizational and multiple identification scholarship. The transformed dynamics of connective action found in this study advance the theorization of connective action and contribute to understanding how society changes through the communicative behaviors, varied roles, and complex relationships of individuals and organizations in the new media environment. Individuals may post on organizations' social media pages, but this study provides theoretical explanations about how and why such posts

may address diverse audiences and stretch the poster's influence beyond the organizational boundary, generating social change in new ways.

Supplementary material

Supplementary material is available online at *Human Communication Research* online.

Data availability

The data underlying this article cannot be shared publicly for the privacy of individuals that participated in the study.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Note

1. To avoid confusion, every example in the coding procedures section is from the responses of participants in the actual survey.

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