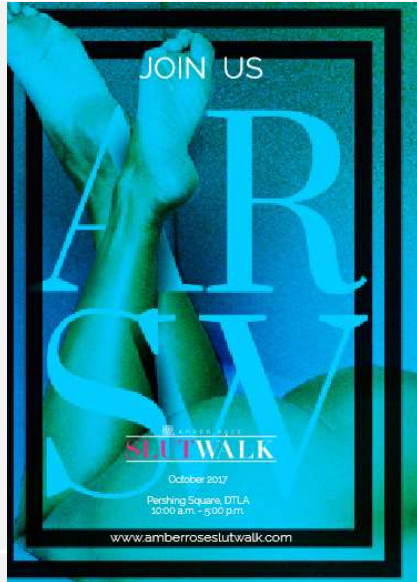


# BRAND FEMINISM: THE LOGICS OF PROMOTIONAL CULTURE IN CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST ACTIVISM

Dr. Kaitlynn Mendes  
Feminism, Queer and Neoliberalism -  
Critique, Complicity and Complexity  
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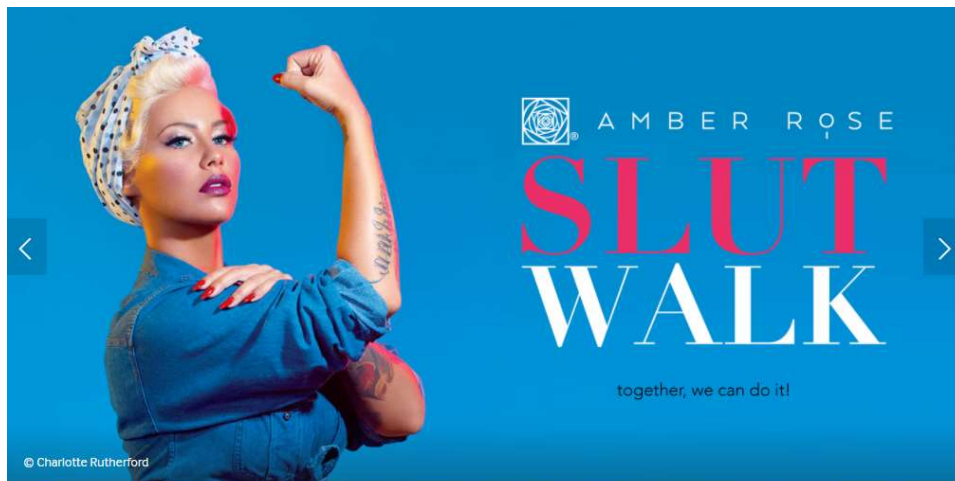


## BACKGROUND

Never intended to study branding or marketing theories

Been aware of discourses stating feminism needs to be 're-branded' or several years

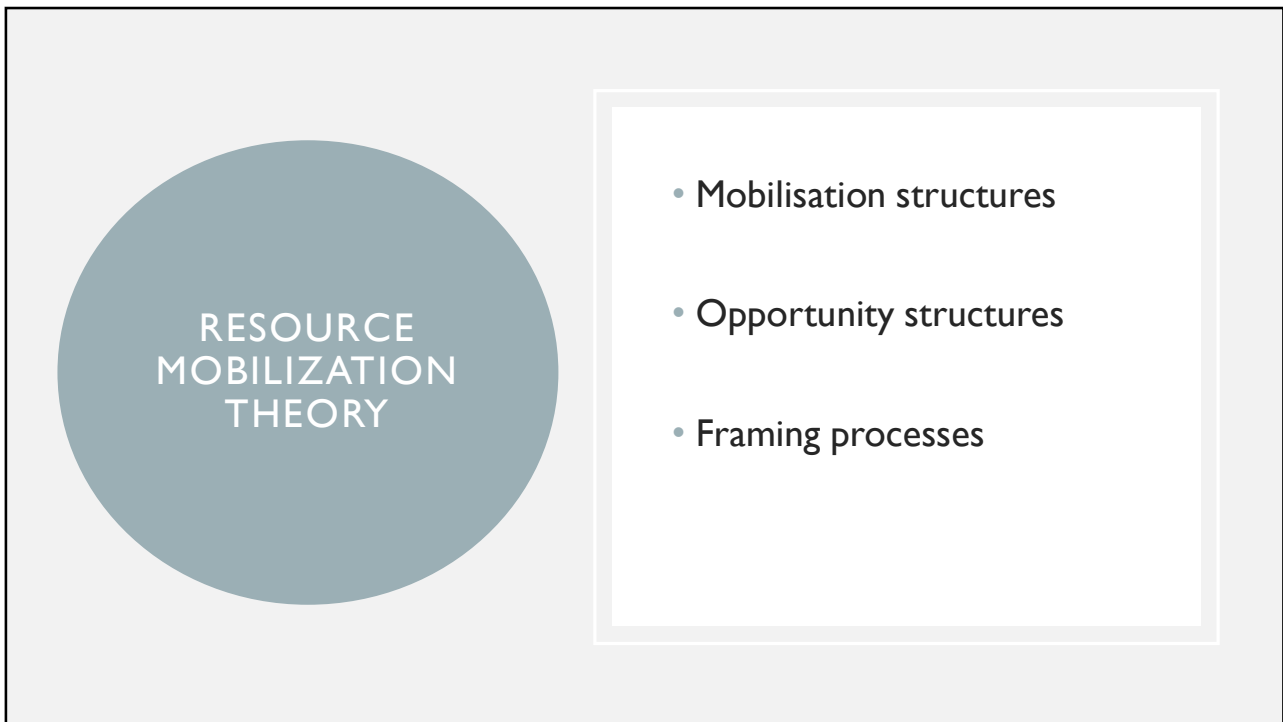
Idea crystalized when I heard about the Amber Rose SlutWalk



<p>Social movement theory currently doesn't take into account marketing logic</p>	<h2>MARKETING + PR STRATEGY</h2> <p>THE AMBER ROSE SLUTWALK HAS SECURED A TOP MARKETING, BRANDING AND PR FIRM TO SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATE AND IMPLEMENT YOUR CORPORATE AGENDA AND BRAND'S OBJECTIVES.</p> <p>The winning marketing mix merges the worlds of both push (traditional) and pull (social media, hashtag campaigns and viral grassroots) and a collaborative marketing strategy designed to achieve the perfect marketing and public relations strategy.</p> <p>This year the Amber Rose SlutWalk's footprint is guaranteed to spark conversations, trigger emotions and have a strong social currency value while adding a community-centric twist to your corporate messaging.</p> <p>The 2016 Amber Rose SlutWalk had so much press interested that we held a press conference prior to the event to accommodate the massive press requests.</p>	<h2>PARTNERSHIP</h2> <p>We look forward to partnering with national and local businesses to showcase your goods and services while expanding your brand awareness amongst all of the event attendees. Your brand will benefit from a partnership with the Amber Rose SlutWalk in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Amber Rose SlutWalk relationship will distinguish you from the crowd and leverage your brand to build relationships with your customers.</li> <li>2. The Amber Rose SlutWalk brand is fluid enough to connect with various types of audiences in different marketing venues and across diverse demographics.</li> <li>3. Provide an opportunity to connect with the public and build better customer relationships.</li> <li>4. Enhance your corporate reputation by aligning yourself with a hip, young, and ambitious brand that support social justice issues and arts empowerment.</li> </ol>
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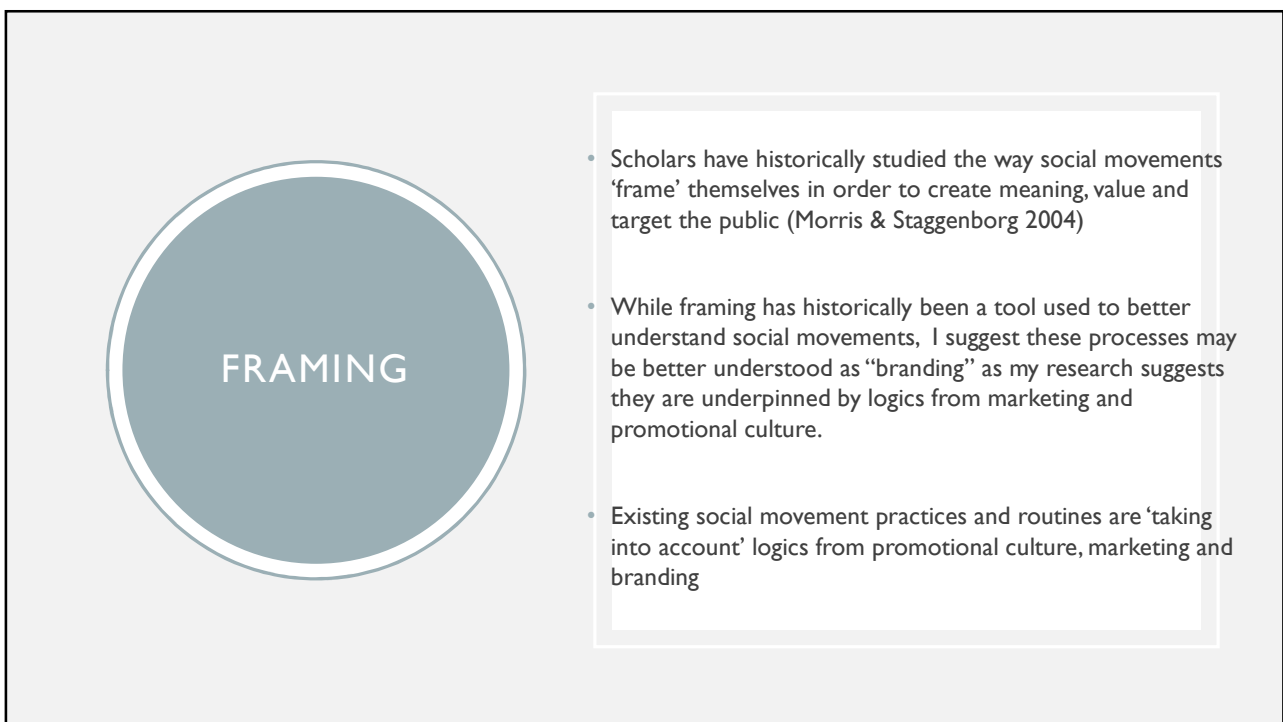
## SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES

1. Marx and Engels once claimed that all history is a record of struggle between the powerless and powerful.
2. Social movement theory is the study of social why mobilisation occurs, its characteristics and impact
3. Early theories interested in what made people join collective action
4. See a shift in theories from the 1960s
  - New Social Movement Theory
  - Resource Mobilization Theory



RESOURCE  
MOBILIZATION  
THEORY

- Mobilisation structures
- Opportunity structures
- Framing processes



FRAMING

- Scholars have historically studied the way social movements 'frame' themselves in order to create meaning, value and target the public (Morris & Staggenborg 2004)
- While framing has historically been a tool used to better understand social movements, I suggest these processes may be better understood as "branding" as my research suggests they are underpinned by logics from marketing and promotional culture.
- Existing social movement practices and routines are 'taking into account' logics from promotional culture, marketing and branding

## RELEVANT THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

- 'Commodity feminism' coined by Robert Goldman (1992); see also (Banet-Weiser 2012; McRobbie 2008)
- 'Power femininity' (Lazar 2006)
- Neoliberalisation of feminism (Rottenberg 2014)
- Shift from 'state feminism' to 'market feminism' (Kantola & Squires 2012)
- 'Corporatization' of activism (Dauvergne and Lebaron 2014)

## RELEVANT THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

It is difficult for activism to operate outside the logic of neoliberal capitalism (Mukherjee and Banet-Weiser 2012)

Very little research on social movements relationship with capitalism or market logics at a holistic level.

## BRAND FEMINISM: A FRAMEWORK

- I propose that as neoliberalism continues to gain global dominance, we need a new theoretical framework in which to understand the relationship between activism, promotional culture, and social change.
- *Brand Feminism* framework attends to the ways feminist activists are increasingly drawing on promotional culture strategies to 'brand' their activism.
- *Brand Feminism* is tied up within other practices within promotional culture.

## BRAND FEMINISM: A FRAMEWORK

- I am not suggesting that *all* feminist campaigns or organisations adhere to *all* of these tactics.
- I am not suggesting that in creating a brand, *financial capital* is the (sole) aim of all of these feminist campaigns
- This framework contributes to arguments which show that contemporary feminist activists is not only *informed by*, but *steeped within* the logics of neoliberal capitalism, promotional culture, marketing and branding.
- This framework suggests we should study social movements with an eye towards social changes franchises, commodification, merchandizing, professionalization and the increased use of celebrity icons.

## 'BRANDING' FEMINISM

- Branding is about the making and selling of (im)material things
- Branding often involves creation of visual signifiers (logos), mottos, taglines, and spokespeople
- Branding is not new, but has become intensified with the rise of neoliberalism and opportunities for visibility with new media technologies.

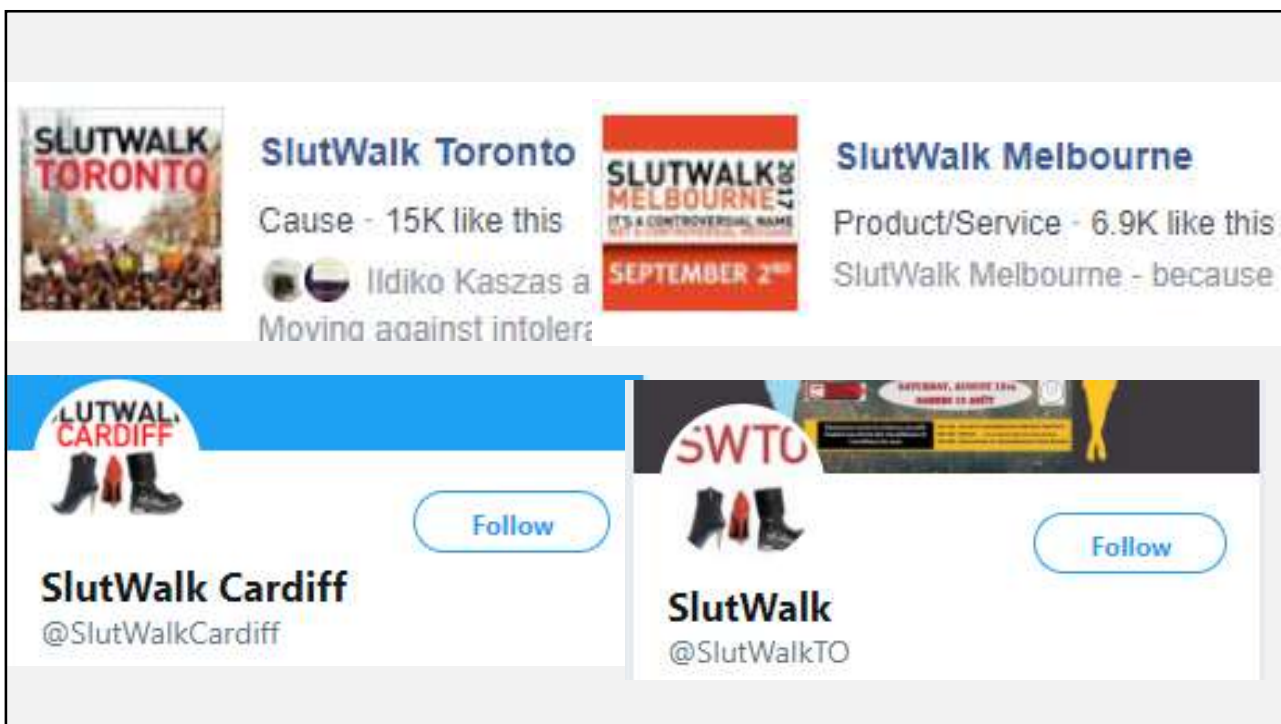
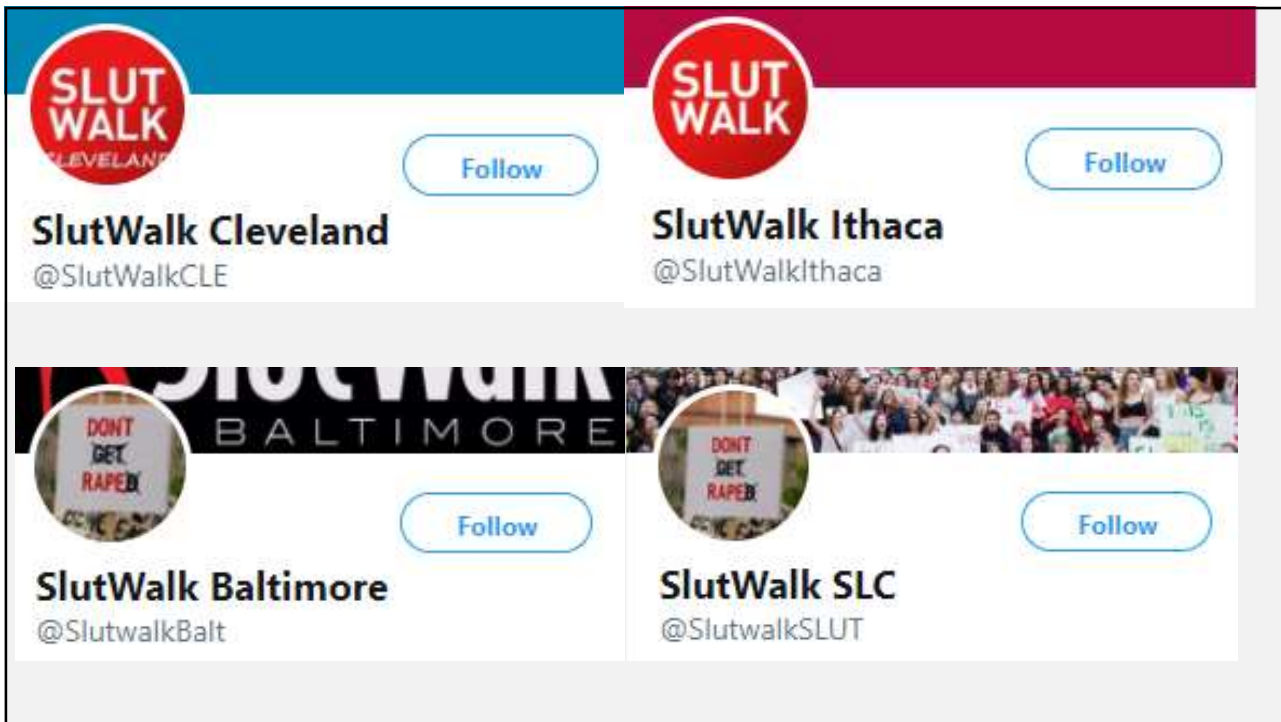


## UNIFORM LOOK



(Symposium "Feminism, Queer and Neoliberalism", Centre for the Study of Women and Gender, University of Warwick)





(Symposium "Feminism, Queer and Neoliberalism", Centre for the Study of Women and Gender, University of Warwick)

## 'SOCIAL CHANGE FRANCHISING' OF FEMINISM

- Within the fields of entrepreneurship, management and marketing, scholars have paid attention both to processes of business format franchising and social entrepreneurship.
- All franchising, including social change franchising, relies on brand recognition to function.
- Social change franchising is nothing new
- It has however become easier, slicker, and more uniform in nature.



Would you like to translate

Transl

# the everyday sexism project

Sobre Entre em contato

O projeto Everyday Sexism foi criado para catalogar situações sexistas vividas pelas mulheres diariamente. Desde situações graves, extremamente ofensivas até aquelas que são tão corriqueiras e intrínsecas em nossa cultura que você pode achar desnecessário protestar. O relato pode ser curto ou longo, fale o quanto você quiser, use seu nome ou um pseudônimo. Ao contar sua história você está mostrando para o mundo que sexismo existe sim, que é vivenciado por mulheres todos os dias e é sim um problema. *Please, é possível em português. Please, it is possible in Portuguese or English, ambos idiomas são aceitos.*


# the everyday sexism project

エブリディ・セクシズム・プロジェクトについて 連絡先

エブリディ・セクシズム・プロジェクトは、女性が日々直面するセクシズム(性差別)を“見える化”するプロジェクトです。差別は、深刻なものから目立たないもの、またとつもなく攻撃的なものから、あまりに日常化されていて、声をあげるまでもないと感じるものまで、様々なものがあると思います。文字数の制限はありませんので、好きな長さで投稿ください。また、本名でも匿名でも構いません。様々な体験をシェアすることで、セクシズムがこの社会に存在しているということ、毎日女性が経験しているということ、また解決されるべき問題だということ、を、社会に伝えていきましょう！

## WHO NEEDS FEMINISM?

- Campaign began in 2012 at Duke University
- Has since spread all over the world, with educational institutions starting their own
- Franchisees often engage in 'glocalisation' (think global, act local)



### GLOCALIZATION

- Some feminist organisers engaged in ‘glocalization’ – or ‘think global, act local’ to ensure the movement resonated with local populations and responded to local needs.
- In the case of SlutWalk, organisers took the global issue of rape culture, and adapted it using local language and concepts
- Focused march on ‘eve-teasing’ and challenging the ways women are blamed for this practice.

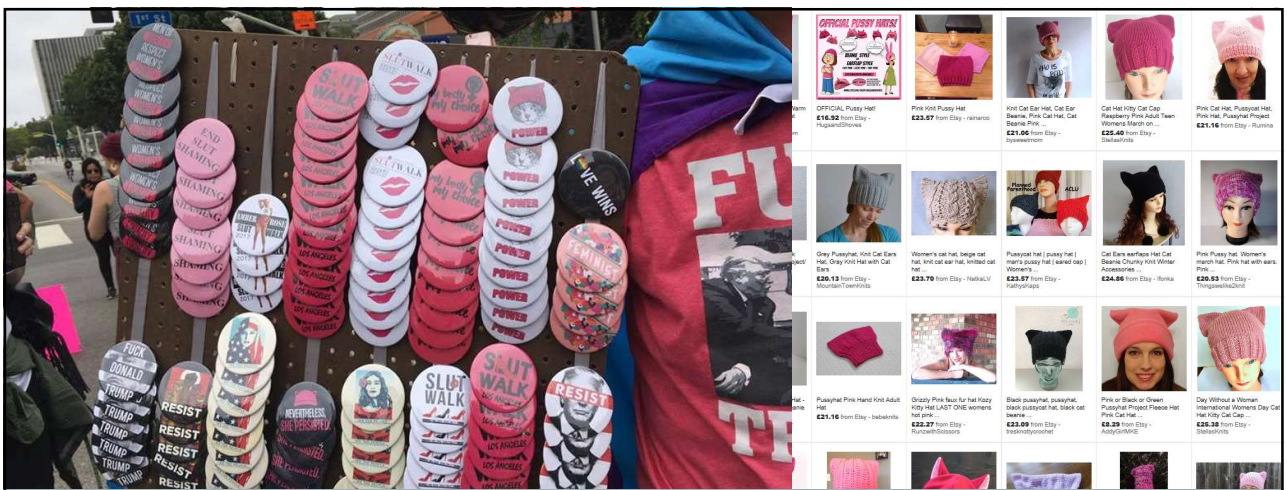
### THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL

- In order to connect to a global SlutWalk movement, it became necessary for local satellite groups to adapt the movement message in a way to suit local issues and values
- SlutWalk Bangalore organisers told me they kept the name ‘SlutWalk’ for ‘branding purposes’



COMMODIFICATION

- Ideas and practices developed by social movements are frequently “taken up by the market and commodified” (King and Busa 2017, 549).
- We can see increased evidence of the ways feminist identity and style has become commoditized

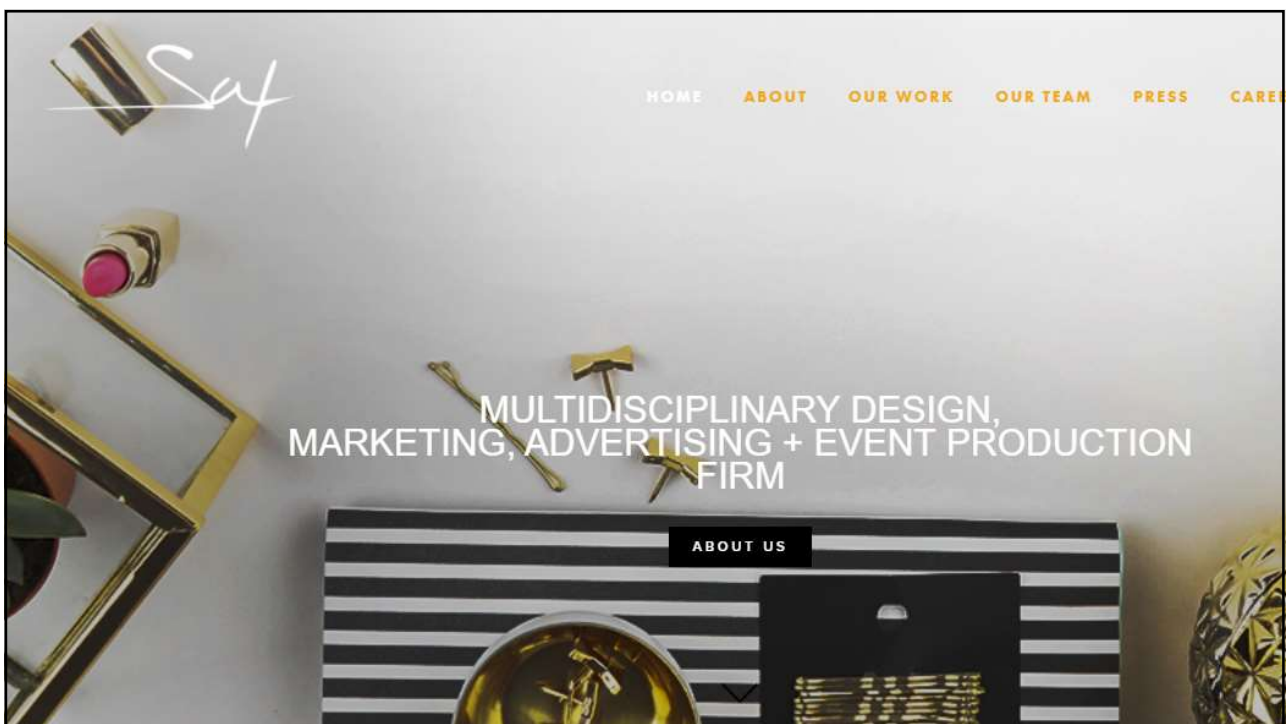


COMMODIFICATION

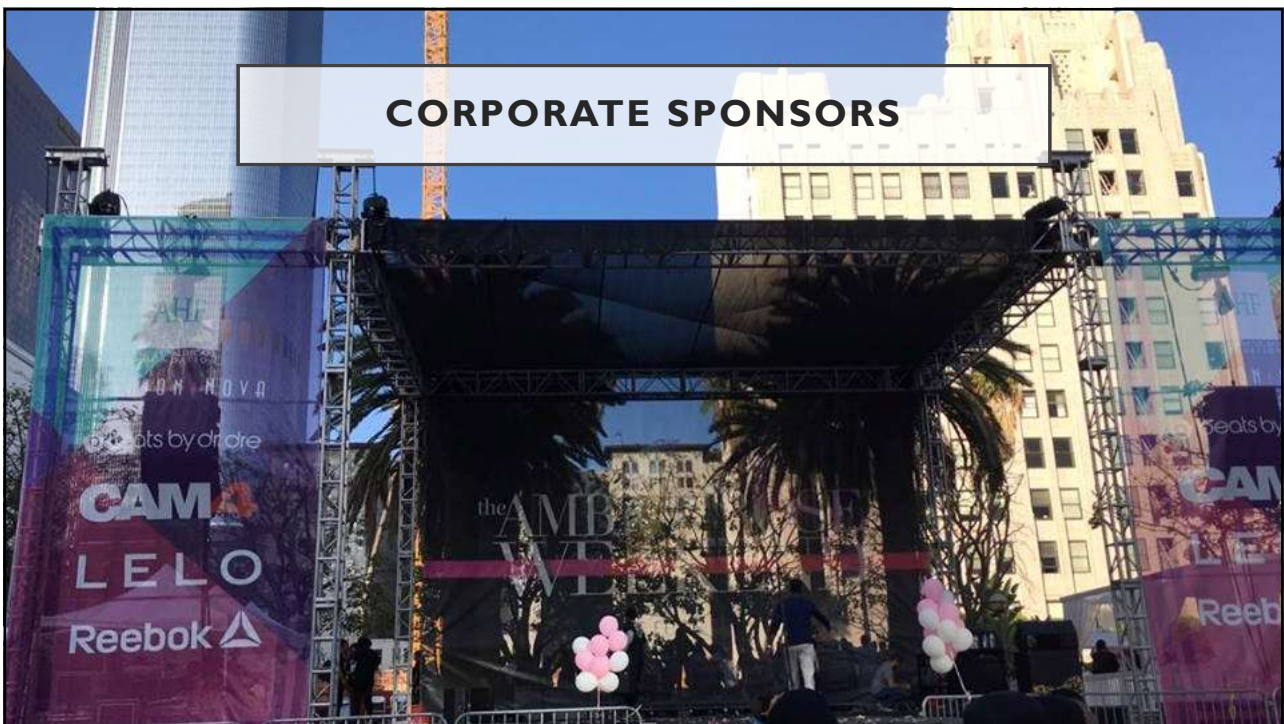
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## PROFESSIONALISATION OF ACTIVISM

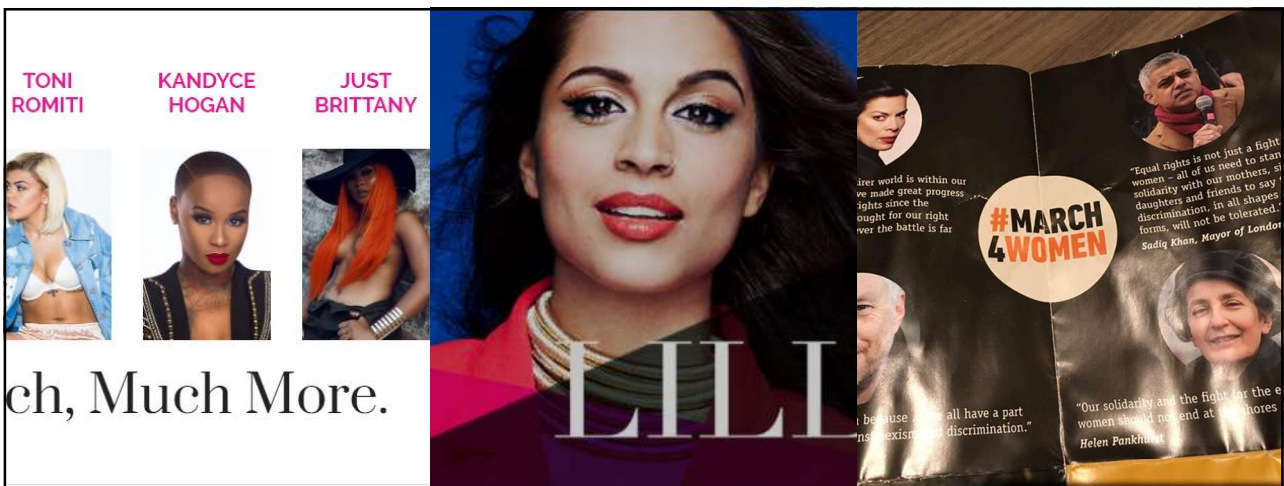
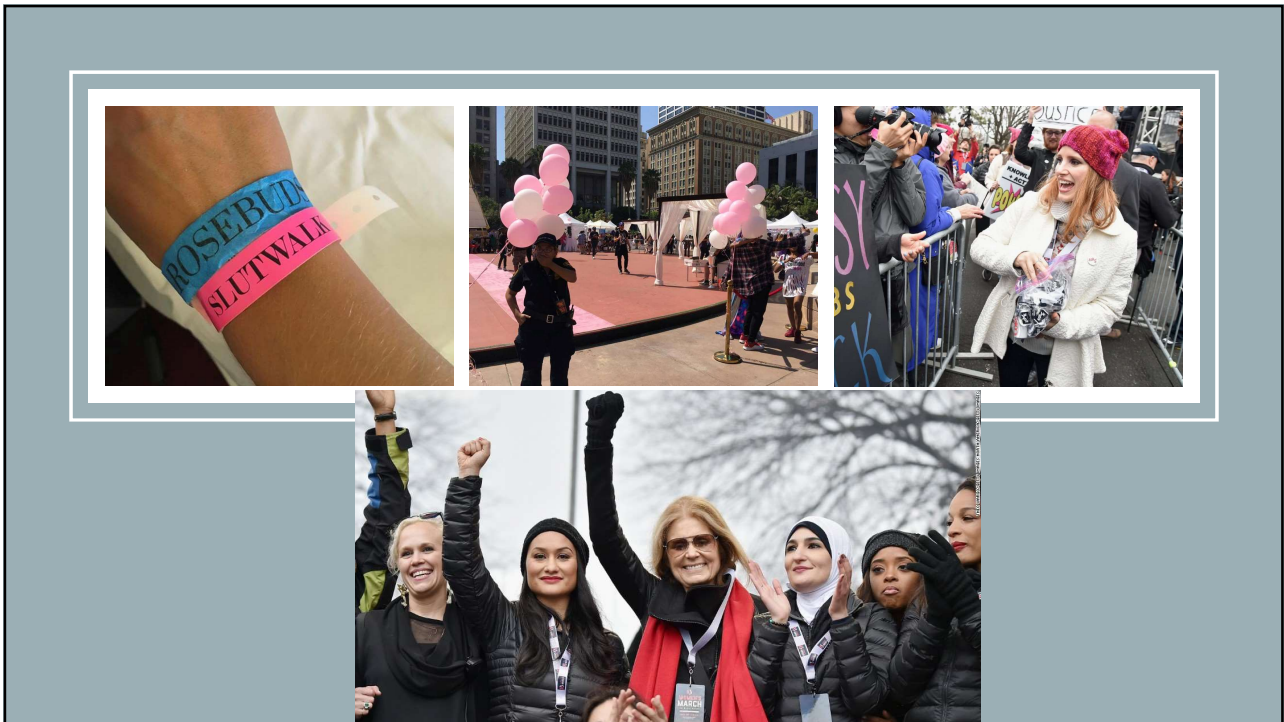
- For several decades now, scholars have paid attention to the increased professionalisation of activists (see McCarthy and Zald 1973; Skopcol 1999).
- Making use of people who are paid for their work
- Making use of people with various expertise



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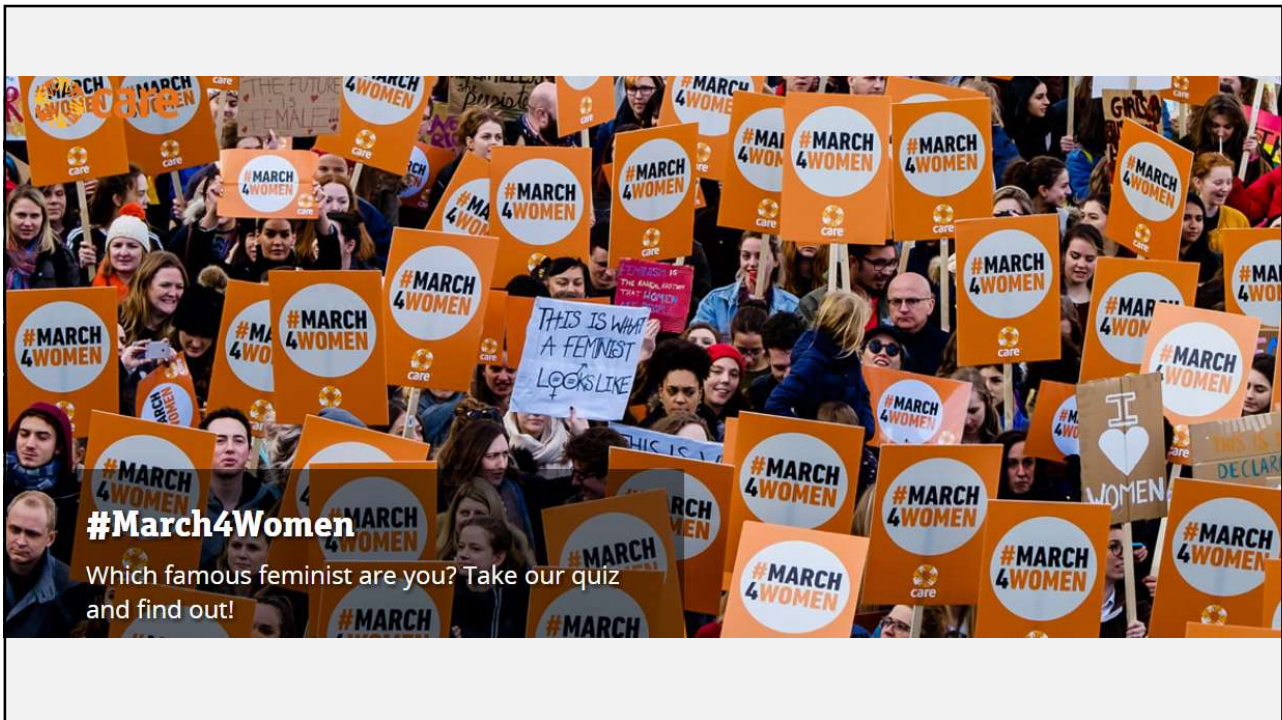
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USE OF CELEBRITY ICONS

(Symposium "Feminism, Queer and Neoliberalism", Centre for the Study of Women and Gender, University of Warwick)





## KEY QUESTIONS

1. How does using neoliberal marketing logics affect (the visibility and voice of) contemporary feminisms?
2. How does thinking about communication and mobilization in terms of branding affect what social movements do or say?
3. What kinds of movements most succeed using 'branding' logics
4. How can the processes and logics seen in some grassroots feminist movements be applied to other contemporary social change movements?
5. What do we as theorists gain from reframing social movements communication in neoliberal terms?
6. How does branding help us better understand the emergence, mobilization, and strategic communication practices of social movements?
7. What does brand feminism framework offer to feminist theorists?

(Symposium "Feminism, Queer and Neoliberalism", Centre for the Study of Women and Gender, University of Warwick)

THANK YOU!

[km350@le.ac.uk](mailto:km350@le.ac.uk)

Kaitlynn Mendes  
University of Leicester

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