

#MeToo – Just Another Symptom of Neoliberal Feminism?

LEA INA SCHNEIDER

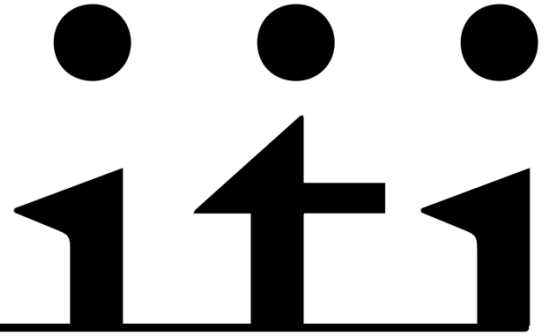
Zitiervorschlag

SCHNEIDER, #MeToo, in: cognitio 2022/LGS.

URL: cognitio-zeitschrift.ch/2022-LGS/Schneider

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.6518362](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6518362)

Publikationsreihe in Kooperation mit F.Ius (Feministisch.Ius):
Legal Gender Studies in der Schweiz



#MeToo – Just Another Symptom of Neoliberal Feminism?

LEA INA SCHNEIDER*

This article critically examines the larger context of the popular social media campaign known as #MeToo, focusing especially on the relationship between #MeToo and neoliberal feminism. The author argues that conceiving of #MeToo only as a product of neoliberal feminism is too simplistic: even though neoliberal feminism was an important precursor for the movement and can partly help explain its existence and success, the desired outcome is exactly the opposite of what the neoliberal feminism agenda wants to achieve. Whilst #MeToo demands structural changes in society, neoliberal feminism lays the burden for change on each individual.

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I. Introduction

In recent years, the feminist campaign #MeToo has gained widespread attention. Even the most radical opposers of feminist ideas could not escape it completely and felt the need to respond.¹ At the same time, the movement had to face criticism from feminist scholars who depict it as just another product of neoliberal feminism. In her 2018 article, CATHERINE ROTTENBERG wrote

«#MeToo was able to gain such widespread traction at this particular moment in history [...] because feminism had already been rendered popular and

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¹ GOLTERMANN SVENJA, «Macht und Gewalt: #MeToo jenseits einer Position der Schwäche», in: [Geschichte der Gegenwart](#) of May 9, 2018.

desirable by *Sandberg, Beyonce, and Emma Watson*, to name just a few.»²

Based on these considerations, this article critically engages with ROTTENBERG's assertion. I will argue that indeed, neoliberal feminism was one of the background developments for the #MeToo-movement and can help explain why #MeToo met so much approval. However, depicting the wide-spread attention of #MeToo solely as a result of neoliberal feminism falls short. I argue that feminists' criticisms of neoliberal feminism do not apply to #MeToo. Additionally, the desired outcome of #MeToo is exactly the opposite of what the neoliberal feminist agenda attempts to achieve – #MeToo aims for structural changes in society, whereas neoliberal feminism lays the burden for change on each individual. Thus, this article claims that even if #MeToo could build on neoliberal feminism, the movement's effects and goals are entirely different.

Therefore, this article poses the following research question: Is #MeToo only a product of neoliberal feminism?

This research question is relevant because if the answer were yes, the criticisms of neoliberal feminism would also apply to #MeToo. To answer the question, an analytical rather than a normative point of view is taken. First, this article will outline the origin and the most important facts about #MeToo drawing on newspaper articles and academic papers. Thereby, the role of social media and the challenges that #MeToo poses to criminal law will be examined. For a detailed understanding of #MeToo, its downsides must also be pointed out, especially, as otherwise the impression might be created that #MeToo, in comparison to neoliberal feminism, does not bring any negative aspects with it. Accordingly, this article

does not argue that #MeToo cannot be criticised at all, but, that the grounds for criticism differ from those applicable to neoliberal feminism. Second, in order to understand why the question of whether #MeToo is just a product of neoliberal feminism is important, it is essential to analyse the critique of neoliberal feminism. Hence, I will analyse neoliberal feminism and study the role of famous women (as for example SHERYL SANDBERG) as well as outline the critique of neoliberal feminism. To conclude and answer my research question, the essay examines whether #MeToo is merely a product of or more an opposition to neoliberal feminism.

II. A Brief Synopsis of the #MeToo-Movement

In autumn 2017, the #MeToo movement gained widespread attention worldwide when actress Alyssa Milano responded to allegations of sexual assaults against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein uncovered by the New York Times.³ Milano encouraged women to make use of the hashtag #MeToo, in order to demonstrate the severity and omnipresence of sexual violence and harassment.⁴ Overnight, thousands of women (and men) responded to Milano's tweet.⁵ Through the Internet, women all over the world were taking part and declared that they had experienced sexual assault and harassment. #MeToo could be considered

² ROTTENBERG CATHERINE, «How neoliberalism colonised feminism – and what you can do about it», in: [The Conversation](#) of May 23, 2018.

³ The story first unfolded after the New York Times published this article: KANTOR JODY/TWOHEY MEGHAN, «Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades», in: [New York Times](#) of October 5, 2017.

⁴ ASKANIUS TINA/HARTLEY JANNIE, Framing Gender Justice: A comparative analysis of the media coverage of #metoo in Denmark and Sweden, in: *Nordicom Review* 2019/40(2), p. 19 et seq., p. 19.

⁵ COSSMAN BRENDA, #MeToo, ex Wars 2.0 and the Power of Law, in: Rehman Javaid/Shahid Ayesha/Foster Steve (eds.), *Asian Yearbook of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law*, Leiden/Boston 2018, p. 18 et seq.

broad insofar as it included women's experiences from all over the world in all areas of their lives.⁶

However, before the #MeToo-movement, another MeToo-campaign (without the hashtag) emerged over a decade ago as part of a grassroots movement, led by the African American activist TARANA BURKE.⁷ BURKE named the movement «MeToo» to stress the importance of empathy in the process of healing wounds resulting from sexual violence.⁸ This movement focused on a local level and less-privileged African-American women who had experienced sexual assault.⁹ The idea was to symbolise the concept of «empowerment through empathy» by creating a forum for survivors and building a community of healing and trust.¹⁰ Today, the website explicitly refers to the #MeToo campaign and its development from the local grassroots movement to the worldwide campaign.¹¹ Critical voices have argued that, once again, the development of MeToo shows how feminism is demographically and politically dominated by white women, who have often ignored or co-opted the experiences and contributions of women of colour.¹²

A. Writing a Tweet – the Role of Social Media

It is essential to mention another potentially critical aspect of #MeToo; namely its possible conflict with criminal law. This critique can only be understood when briefly outlining the role social media played in the #MeToo-movement.¹³

In the early 21st century, there was an explosion of feminist hashtag activism, from #bringbackourgirls to #solidarityisforwhitewomen to #yesallwomen to #NotOkay and, finally, to #MeToo. Nowadays, social and digital media function as the most visible platform for feminist concerns.¹⁴ #MeToo is an example of feminist digital activism for consciousness-raising.¹⁵ Surely, the huge success of #MeToo can at least partly be explained by its use of social media; allowing the movement to spread fast and reach a wide range of people.¹⁶ Furthermore, it might be easier for victims to come forward on a virtual platform than in person, as they might feel less ashamed. Some scholars see the fast and enormous expansion of #MeToo with the help of social media as a manifestation of what ROBIN MORGAN once called «global sisterhood».¹⁷ According to MORGAN, women all over the world should unite to fight the common enemy, namely

⁶ GHADERY FARNUSH, #MeToo – Has the 'sisterhood' finally become global or just another product of neoliberal feminism?, in: *Transnational Legal Theory* 2019/10(2), p. 252 et seq., p. 256.

⁷ FILEBORN BIANCA/LONEY-HOWES RACHEL, Introduction: Mapping the Emergence of #MeToo, in: Fileborn Bianca/Loney-Howes Rachel (eds.), *#MeToo and the Politics of Social Change*, Cham 2019, p. 1 et seq., p. 6.

⁸ BURKE TARANA, «Me Too Is a Movement, Not a Moment», *Opening talk at TedWomen*, 2018.

⁹ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 256.

¹⁰ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 256 et seq.

¹¹ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 257.

¹² See e.g. PHIPPS ALISON, «Every Woman Knows a Weinstein»: Political Whiteness and White Woundedness in #MeToo and Public Feminisms around Sexual Violence, in: *Feminist Formations* 2019/31(2), p. 1 et seq., p. 2.

¹³ HÖRNLE TATJANA, Evaluating #MeToo: The Perspective of Criminal Law Theory, in: *German Law Journal* 2021/22(5), p. 833 et seq.

¹⁴ BANET-WEISER SARAH/GILL ROSALIND/ROTTENBERG CATHERINE, Postfeminism, Popular Feminism and Neoliberal Feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in Conversation, in: *Feminist Theory* 2020/21(1), p. 3 et seq., p. 11.

¹⁵ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 260.

¹⁶ BERGER ANNE-EMMANUELLE, Subject of Desire/Subject of Feminism: Some notes on the split subject(s) of #MeToo, in: Chandra Giti/Erlingsdóttir Irma (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Politics of the #MeToo Movement*, Abingdon/New York 2021, p. 57.

¹⁷ HARMAN HARRIET, «Women Have Changed the Mood. Now We Need to Change Policy», in: *The Guardian* of February 20, 2018.

patriarchy.¹⁸ What could be understood as an indicator of MORGAN's «global sisterhood», will be referred to as the collective aspect of the #MeToo-movement in this article.

B. Implications for Criminal Law

Some of the criticism #MeToo has faced can be traced back to general scepticism towards social media. To name one example, the movement is criticised for not complying with standards of procedural fairness.¹⁹ The argument goes as follows: #MeToo makes use of social media to convey its message, principles of criminal law are challenged: the crux regarding #MeToo lies in the fact that sanctions and accusations are inseparable. This challenges the general principle of assumption of innocence in criminal law: as soon as a wrongdoer is exposed on social media, the person is not only blamed but also sanctioned. Thus, naming and shaming on social media has huge consequences for the wrongdoer's life and reputation. Even if the accused person can defend themselves successfully in a criminal court, the public denunciation persists.²⁰ In a state governed by the rule of law, just because more people point to a person and label them a criminal, does not necessarily make them one according to legal standards. #MeToo is criticised for acting under the assumption that allegations by several complainants make the accusation necessarily more trustworthy and carry greater evidential weight. Generally, this might often be true, but it is not always the case.²¹ However, this argument falls short in including the fact that criminal sanctioning by independent courts and sanctioning through social media cannot be equated. This is not to say that sanctioning through

social media cannot have dire consequences. However, these are different types of sanctions.

III. Neoliberal Feminism

In order to analyse whether #MeToo is only a product of neoliberal feminism, the latter has to be analysed first.

Neoliberalism can be understood by outlining its differences to liberalism. Whereas neoliberalism focuses on free and self-regulating markets and greater mobility of capital, liberalism is associated with notions of freedom, democracy and the rule of law (besides a free market economy).²² Neoliberalism suggests that human well-being is best achieved by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.²³ However, nowadays neoliberalism is more than economic theory – its «free market mentality» influences social and political life.²⁴ Neoliberalism is increasingly understood – at least in feminist circles – not simply as a political and economic rationality, but as a theory that is profoundly connected to intimate life and subjectivity.²⁵

¹⁸ MORGAN ROBIN, *Sisterhood is Global*, New York 1984, p. 4.

¹⁹ HÖRNLE TATJANA, #MeToo - Implications for Criminal Law?, in: *Bergen Journal of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice* 2019/6(2), p. 115 et seq., p. 119.

²⁰ HÖRNLE (Fn. 19), p. 119.

²¹ HÖRNLE (Fn. 19), p. 120.

²² LEBARON GENEVIEVE/ROBERTS ADRIENNE, *Toward a Feminist Political Economy of Capitalism and Carcerality*, in: *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2010/36(1), p. 19 et seq., p. 19, p. 24; PECK JAMIE/TICKELL ADAM, *Neoliberalizing Space*, in: *Antipode* 2002/34(3), p. 380 et seq., p. 385–386; BOAS TAYLOR C./GANS-MORSE JORDAN, *Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan*, in: *Studies in Comparative International Development* 2009/44(2), p. 137 et seq.

²³ HARVEY DAVID, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford 2005, p. 2.

²⁴ BROWN WENDY, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, New York 2015, p. 9–10; SPRINGER SIMON/BIRCH KEAN/MACLEAVY JULIE, *The Handbook of Neoliberalism*, New York/London 2016, p. 2; GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 257.

²⁵ BROWN WENDY, *Neoliberalism and the end of liberal democracy*, in: *Theory & Event* 2005/7(1),

When grasping neoliberal feminism, this transformation of economic values to society and politics is essential. Neoliberal feminism is an effect of the shift from an originally economic focus to the extension of neoliberalism's body of thought to all areas of life.²⁶

At the heart of neoliberal feminism lies the individual woman and her potential for success – if equipped with sufficient skills and freedom. Hence, the focus lies on the economic identity of each woman. Equality is achieved if women use their (economic) freedom wisely to succeed in the market.²⁷ Supporters of neoliberal feminism stress the importance and effectiveness of acting in a given neoliberal framework to push feminist agendas.²⁸ Consequently, gender equality becomes the responsibility of each woman; it is an individual struggle: she alone has to make the choice and effort to change her situation. Therefore, structural inequalities and patriarchy as reasons for gender inequality are neglected. As ROTTENBERG puts it, each woman is «[...] mobilized to convert continued gender inequality from a structural problem into an individual affair.»²⁹ Thereby, neoliberal feminism effectively depoliticises gender inequality and sex discrimination.³⁰ The struggle for equality is shifted from the political and public sphere to an individual level.

A. Individualistic Approach and Criticism

Unsurprisingly, neoliberal feminism has been heavily criticised by many feminist scholars.³¹ Neoliberal feminism pursues an individual approach by arguing that it depends on individual girl's and women's energies and ambitions to overcome the obstacles they might face because of their gender. Thus, neoliberal feminism fails to examine the ways capitalism might lead to gendered inequality.³²

As neoliberal feminism encourages individual women to focus more on themselves and their aspirations, feminism can more easily be popularised, circulated and capitalised in the marketplace. Furthermore, neoliberal feminism is highly exclusive, as it addresses only aspirational, highly privileged women.³³ The vision of equality neoliberal feminism portrays works for people who can reliably purchase their care for their children. Thus, feminism in a neoliberal context depends to a large extent on wealth and power.³⁴ Women's agency is highly dependent on economic wealth, even though neoliberal feminism depicts it as a choice.³⁵

Furthermore, neoliberal feminism has shifted the focus from powerful actors who are the reasons for the structural inequalities to the victims of the system, namely the indi-

p. 37 et seq., p. 37; GILL ROSALIND/ORGAD SHANI, *The Shifting Terrain of Sex and Power: From the 'sexualization of Culture' to #MeToo*, in: *Sexualities* 2018/21(8), p. 1313 et seq., p. 1315.

²⁶ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 258.

²⁷ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 258.

²⁸ WILSON KALPANA, *Towards a Radical Re-appropriation: Gender, Development and Neoliberal Feminism*, in: *Development and Change* 2015/46(4), p. 803 et seq., p. 825.

²⁹ ROTTENBERG CATHERINE, *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism*, in: *Cultural Studies* 2014/28(3), p. 418 et seq., p. 420.

³⁰ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 258.

³¹ See for example: KANTOR JODI, «A Titan's How-To on Breaking the Glass Ceiling», in: *New York Times* of February 22, 2013; HUFFER LYNNE, «It's the economy, sister», in: *Al Jazeera* of March 18, 2013; EISENSTEIN ZILLAH, «Leaning in» in Iraq: Women's rights and war», in: *Al Jazeera* of March 23, 2013; MAHDAWI ARWA, «Sheryl Sandberg saga shows it's time to lean out of corporate feminism», in: *The Guardian* of December 1, 2018.

³² BANET-WEISER/GILL/ROTTENBERG (Fn. 14), p. 9.

³³ BANET-WEISER/GILL/ROTTENBERG (Fn. 14), p. 15.

³⁴ RESTREPO SANÍN JULIANA, *#MeToo What Kind of Politics?*, in: *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 2019/40(1), p. 122 et seq., p. 127.

³⁵ PHIPPS (Fn. 12), p. 7.

vidual woman.³⁶ Women, in comparison to men, are to a greater extent required to work on and transform themselves. This means that they have to take their own responsibility and present their actions as freely chosen.³⁷ Additionally, due to the argumentation of neoliberal feminists, the neoliberal framework can extend its reach by asking women to change in order to fit in with the neoliberal rationality that has made its way into economic, social and political spheres.³⁸ The neoliberal structures are not questioned, rather each individual woman who is not successful within this economic framework is depicted as the obstacle.³⁹

Essentially, neoliberal feminism fails to push forward (or even acts against) what lay at the very heart of feminist agendas for decades: namely opposing the dominant patriarchal power structures that are perpetuating, contributing to or failing to address existing gender inequalities. By ignoring the structural inequalities, neoliberal feminism removes accountability for gender inequalities from those most powerful and those actors at the centre of decision-making.⁴⁰ Hence, neoliberal feminism fails to address questions of social and collective justice.⁴¹

Furthermore, it has often been criticised that gender inequalities were intensified by neoliberalism as wages stagnated and more women were put in the workplace, but in precarious positions.⁴² Some critics have gone so far as to suggest that neoliberal feminism not only does not help to progress feminist agendas and thus is not feminism – but argue that it actively works against femi-

nism. Feminism is instrumentalized to meet the demand of women's labour as central to sustaining neoliberal capital accumulation.⁴³

B. Famous People as Catalysts for the #MeToo-Movement

Neoliberal feminism reflects in a new trend which can be observed: famous, high-powered women, such as for example Sheryl Sandberg, Emma Watson, and Beyonce are publicly committed to feminist ideas and goals.⁴⁴ In March 2013, SANDBERG's book *Lean In* was published and reached a large audience.⁴⁵ In her book, SANDBERG describes her own experiences with gender inequality through her journey to executive leadership in a male-dominated profession.⁴⁶ Her book can be read as guidance for women to succeed in their careers and overcome patriarchal stereotypes. However, her book was also widely criticised: having privileged women as feminist role models can lead to the assumption that equality is already achieved as they succeeded in their careers. Nevertheless, most women are not as privileged and will never work in managerial roles. These women might not be able to fight for themselves in the same way as these famous women did, as they lack the resources and security. Thus, the success of privileged women might prevent a dialog on the underlying causes of how inequality is perpetuated.⁴⁷ Feminism is depoliticised, becoming less a radical movement seeking social change and more a portrayal of indi-

³⁶ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 258.

³⁷ GILL ROSALIND, *Postfeminist Media Culture: elements of a sensibility*, in: *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 2007/10(2), p. 147 et seq., p. 164.

³⁸ See for example: FRASER NANCY, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis*, London 2013.

³⁹ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 258 et seq.

⁴⁰ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 259.

⁴¹ ROTTENBERG (Fn. 29), p. 419.

⁴² RESTREPO (Fn. 34), p. 127.

⁴³ WILSON (Fn. 28), p. 808.

⁴⁴ ROTTENBERG (Fn. 29), p. 418; see further: LEMON GAYLE TZEMACH, «Emma Watson gives feminism new life», in: *CNN* of September 24, 2014.

⁴⁵ SANDBERG SHERYL, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*, London 2013.

⁴⁶ BLEDSOE CHRISTIE, *Encouragement to Take the Risk: A Review of Sandberg's Lean In*, in: *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* 2014/80(2), p. 58 et seq., p. 58.

⁴⁷ FOSTER DAWN, «Sheryl Sandberg and Christine Lagarde have done nothing to advance feminism», in: *The Guardian* of February 2, 2016.

vidual empowerment on the part of exceptional women.⁴⁸ Furthermore, in this view, success is framed in economic terms only. Therefore other, non-economic successes are not adequately taken into account.

IV. #MeToo – An Outgrowth of Neoliberal Feminism?

ROTTENBERG argues that mass feminist movements, such as #MeToo, could draw from neoliberal feminism, as famous high-power corporate women, such as Sandberg, or Hollywood stars like Watson, had already rendered feminism popular. Additionally, she sees Donald Trump's election and the reappearance of shameless sexism in the public sphere as catalysts for the huge success of #MeToo.⁴⁹ For ROTTENBERG, the focus on the «me» in #MeToo stresses once again the individual responsibility of each woman to step forward and thus is just another demonstration of the body of thought of neoliberal feminists.⁵⁰ Once again, the responsibility rests on each victim to come forward and tell her experience with sexual harassment and violence. Thus, the burden for change lies again, and only too aptly in the framework of neoliberal feminism, on the individual – rather than criticising patriarchal structures.⁵¹ If #MeToo were really only a product of neoliberal feminism, some would question whether it can be called fem-inist at all which shows the importance of examining this relationship.⁵²

⁴⁸ CADDELL APRIL AMANDA, *From Center to Margin: Feminism in an Era of mainstream Co-Optation*, Master of Arts Thesis, University of Alabama 2015, p. 14 et seq.

⁴⁹ BANET-WEISER/GILL/ROTTENBERG (Fn. 14), p. 16.

⁵⁰ ROTTENBERG CATHERINE, «Can #MeToo go beyond white neoliberal feminism? Who can say #MeToo and who will be heard?», in: *Al Jazeera* of December 13, 2017.

⁵¹ ROTTENBERG (Fn. 50), *passim*.

⁵² ROTTENBERG CATHERINE, *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism*, Oxford 2018, p. 74 et seq. She

V. #MeToo – An Opposition to Neoliberal Feminism?

Having outlined and examined both, #MeToo and neoliberal feminism as well as the associated criticism, the question should be answered whether #MeToo is just a product of neoliberal feminism.

Neoliberal feminism and the fact that famous women have spoken out acts as basis for the emergence of #MeToo. #MeToo has indeed pushed each woman to come forward and thus it could be said that the focus lies on each individual, reminding us of neoliberal feminism. A key term for the understanding of neoliberal feminism is agency: women are empowered in the sense that they are not victims anymore, but agents who can claim to get into key positions and have a say.⁵³ So, #MeToo, by enabling each woman to speak out, empowers women and gives them agency. Nevertheless, the crux lies in the fact that the agency itself is linked to external circumstances, such as wealth, power and education⁵⁴ – both, in #MeToo and in neoliberal feminism. Nonetheless, neoliberal feminism has surely encouraged the existence of #MeToo and this is where its merit lies.

However, as SARAH BANET-WEISER notes correctly, «[...] one of the most hopeful manifestations of #metoo has been the focus on the sheer numbers of women coming forward, forcing people to deal with the collectivity of it all.»⁵⁵ So, even if the starting point of #MeToo was an individual neoliberal feminist one, the movement as a whole

claims that it is too simple not to acknowledge neoliberal feminism as «true» feminism.

⁵³ GHADERY (Fn. 6), p. 272.

⁵⁴ See further: WILSON KALPANA, *Agency as «Smart Economics: Neoliberalism, Gender and Development in: Madhok Sumi/Phillips Anne/Wilson Kalpana (eds.), Gender, Agency and Coercion*, London 2013, p. 84 et seq.

⁵⁵ BANET-WEISER SARAH, «Popular feminism: Structural rage», in: *Los Angeles Review of Books* of March 30, 2018.

was collective with common aims.⁵⁶ The campaign provided space for a wide range of women to tell their stories and debate on sexual harassment, sexism, and rape culture.⁵⁷ The role of social media emphasizes this collective aspect of #MeToo further. The success of #MeToo can be explained by the publicity it reached and the huge public pressure it posed – which was only possible because of the broad reach of social media. So, the collective aspect of #MeToo is much more important than the starting point of an individual person coming forward.

Also, the critique on neoliberal feminism explained above, cannot be extended to #MeToo. In fact, the goals of neoliberal feminists and #MeToo are contradictory. #MeToo in its essence challenges and threatens neoliberalism by demanding dramatic economic, social and cultural transformation.⁵⁸ Hence, #MeToo contests the system which neoliberal feminists want to sustain. Also, #MeToo has led to law reforms, as for example on the issue of consent for sexual interactions in Spain as well as the anti-street harassment law passed in France in 2018. Thus, #MeToo had a practical impact.⁵⁹ Therefore, the critique that neoliberal feminism does not push for structural challenges does not apply to #MeToo.

VI. Conclusion

Understanding #MeToo only as a product of neoliberal feminism is too simplistic.⁶⁰ Indeed, neoliberal feminism was an important precursor for #MeToo and can help to explain its existence and its success. Even though, #MeToo pushes each individual to come forward (which could be seen as a neoliberal feminist conception), #MeToo draws its power from the collective. Also, #MeToo challenges the system which neoliberal feminism aims to sustain: #MeToo demands structural challenges which means the focus lies on society as a whole and not on each woman. The individual woman is just the starting point to achieve something bigger. Hence, not only are the aims of the two movements contradictory, but the critique that neoliberal feminism faces does not apply to #MeToo as its aim is to use collective force and pressure, with the help of social media, to change the collective system.

⁵⁶ SUNSTEIN CASS R., #MeToo as a Revolutionary Cascade, in: Chandra Giti/Erlingsdóttir Irma (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Politics of the #MeToo Movement*, Abingdon/New York 2021, p. 50 et seq.

⁵⁷ See further: KELLER JESSALYNN/MENDES KAITLYNN/RINGROSE JESSICA, *Speaking (unspeakable things): Documenting digital feminist responses to rape culture*, in: *Journal of Gender Studies* 2018/27(1), p. 22 et seq.

⁵⁸ BANET-WEISER/GILL/ROTTENBERG (Fn. 14), p. 16.

⁵⁹ LONEY-HOWES RACHEL, *The Politics of the Personal: The Evolution of Anti-rape Activism: From Second-Wave Feminism to #MeToo*, in: Fileborn Bianca/Loney-Howes Rachel (eds.), *#MeToo and the Politics of Social Change*, Cham 2019, p. 32 et seq.

⁶⁰ See IV.