Rochester Institute of Technology

RIT Digital Institutional Repository

5-15-2021

Centering Black Trans Lives: Social Network Exploration of #BlackTransLivesMatter Content on Twitter

Jordan Brooks
jcb2039@rit.edu

Recommended Citation

Centering Black Trans Lives: Social Network Exploration of #BlackTransLivesMatter Content on Twitter

Jordan Brooks

School of Communication

College of Liberal Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis presented

in partial fulfillment of the

Master of Science Degree in Communication

Degree Awarded:

May 15, 2021

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of

Jordan Brooks presented on April 29, 2021.

_____

Nickesia Gordon, PhD
Associate Professor
School of Communication
Thesis Advisor

_____

Katrina Overby
Post Doctoral Researcher
School of Communication
Thesis Advisor

_____

Ammina Kothari, PhD
Associate Professor and
Director of Graduate Program
School of Communication

_____

Kelly Norris Martin, PhD
Associate Professor and
Director
School of Communication

Table of Contents

Abstract

May 27, 2020 saw the fatal shooting of Tony McDade, a Black transgender man. McDade is one of many lives underlying the Black Lives Matter movement which, in 2020, became the largest movement in United States' history. Although the Black Lives Matter movement has successfully brought the reality of systemic racism in the United States to the forefront of media, there remains a lack of visibility for and conversation surrounding the most vulnerable members: the Black transgender community. Through an intersectional lens, this thesis broadly examines the sentiment surrounding tweets utilizing the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag, and how the intersection of race and gender impact marginalized community members' experiences in the United States. Using mixed-method content analysis and a social network analytical approach, I provide a detailed exploration of the current attitudes surrounding the movement and #blacktranslivesmatter media content circulating on one of today's most influential social media platforms: Twitter. I address the following questions: What textual or media content is included in tweets utilizing the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter? Who is tweeting or retweeting content with #blacktranslivesmatter? What do these tweets reveal about the sentiment surrounding the #blacktranslivesmatter movement?

Introduction

May 27, 2020, two days after the fatal shooting of George Floyd, saw the fatal shooting of Tony McDade, a Black transgender man in Tallahassee, Florida. McDade is one of many lives underlying the Black Lives Matter movement, a movement that, in 2020, became the United States' largest movement in history. At the forefront of this historical moment is the face of George Floyd, a Black man that died in police custody in Minneapolis, MN. Floyd has become the emblematic figure of the modern Civil Rights movement initiated through Black Lives Matter, as evident by the New York Times cover for June 2020. In this edition of the New York Times' magazine cover, Floyd's face is enfolded by other victims of police brutality and systemic racism in the United States: Trayvon Martin, Breonna Taylor, Martin Luther King Jr., and countless, nameless American enslaved. In this image, Tony McDade's picture is at the base of Floyd's throat, and one of the smallest and least prominent images in this whole collection. This alone illustrates a metaphor for the obscurity of the Black transgender experience in the narrative of Black oppression in the United States. Although the Black Lives Matter movement has successfully brought the reality of systemic racism in the United States--of which police brutality is but a mere symptom--there remains a lack of visibility for members of the Black community facing intersectional discrimination. I speak specifically of the most vulnerable members: the Black transgender community.

Significance

This thesis broadly explores the sentiment surrounding tweets utilizing the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag, and the use of Twitter as a tool for distributing information regarding the intersectional experience of Black transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals in the United States. The study was initially inspired by the seeming lack of attention

given to queer Black historical figures during Black History Month, whose racial identities intersected into gender and sexual minorities. For example, James Baldwin and Martha P. Johnson, whose efforts are greatly recognized in the Civil Rights Movements, but whose intersectional identities seemed neglected in favor of the homogenous Black narrative. As stated by Cox (2021), "Black History Month is a time devoted to understanding, open dialogue, and celebrating the contributions of Black culture. An opportunity to expand the Black narrative." Individuals' intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1989)—any combination of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.—can significantly impact how they experience the world. Using an intersectional approach is key to exploring the multidimensional narrative of the Black experience in the United States, as it relates to race, as well as gender, sexuality, and religion.

The Black Lives Matter movement is not the sole indicator of homogeneity when stories are shared about Black culture and history; however, it does prove that the fight against systemic racism and for equality in the United States needs to focus on the most vulnerable members of the entangled web that is discrimination in the United States. From here, we can begin to untangle the very roots of the issues plaguing the United States and seek change from the ground up. In the words of Allsop (2020): "Centering those that are most vulnerable is critically important in movement work because a specific community's distinct pain can be minimized when lumped in with others (para.3)." Such a line is what finally brought me to examine the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, where Black transgender and gender nonconforming lives are brought to the front of the conversation. I sought to explore the sentiment surrounding this conversation and explore the degree to which the hashtag #blackstranslivesmatter and associated hashtags circulate the Twitter social media platform. For the latter, I sought to learn how users interacted with the hashtag, and if the hashtag was being used to circulate information about the

movement and its objectives. I specifically explored Twitter, a platform on which hashtag movements appear to obtain the greatest popularity and traction, because it is specifically through hashtags that topics on Twitter are considered "trending" by the platform's algorithm and brought to Twitter users' attention.

In light of the popularity and heated conversations following—and encompassing—the Black Lives Matter movement, social injustices, and discriminatory violence in the United States, I asked myself the following questions: Why is Black Trans Lives Matter seemingly at the margins of Black Lives Matter? "Though active in the Black Lives Matter movement from the beginning, [transgender women of color] have not been prioritized [in the movement or in the "gay rights movement"]. At no point have black trans people shared fully in the gains of racial justice or L.G.B.T.Q. activism, despite suffering disproportionately from the racism, homophobia, and transphobia these movements exist to combat (Paz & Astor, 2020, para.2)." I sought to understand Black Trans Lives Matter's comparable lack of visibility and explore what more could be done to bring Black trans lives to the forefront of media attention and to the center of the Black Lives Matter movement. Further, as Black Lives Matter gained traction as a social media phenomenon, I sought to explore what it was about hashtag movements that made them so influential. These questions are broad and will not be fully addressed in this thesis; however, I do cite literature regarding hashtag movement digital discourse, the unique vulnerabilities of minorities with intersecting identities, and the significance of distributing media content to effect attitudinal change or, at least, spark conversation. I explore current attitudes surrounding the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, and the degree to which the movement is discussed within #blacklivesmatter. Ultimately, I seek to contribute to the current conversations surrounding the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, and the effectiveness of hashtags in bringing a topic to

media attention, by providing a detailed exploration of the attitudes surrounding the movement and #blacktranslivesmatter media content circulating on one of today's most influential social platforms: Twitter.

Literature Review

Black Lives Matter

There are many conceptions and misconceptions of what Black Lives Matter seeks to accomplish; however, it is best described by the official website of the Black Lives Matter Movement, stating that the purpose of the movement is to broaden "the conversation around state violence to include all of the ways in which Black people are intentionally left powerless at the hands of the state" (2021). Since its creation in 2013 after the death of Trayvon Martin, the Black Lives Matter Movement has brought national attention to the tensions between the police force and Black community; specifically, the rate of killings of unarmed Black men and women, and unjust incarceration of community members. According to Yglesia (2019), the Black Lives Matter's increasing popularity was a result of increasing awareness of systemic racism, manifested through the unequal treatment and brutality that the Black community faces at the hands of the police in the United States. As a result of this increasing awareness, "White Democrats suddenly started expressing dramatically higher levels of concern about racial inequality and discrimination, while showing greater enthusiasm for racial diversity and immigration (para.5)." This precedes even the greatest awareness and support that the Black Lives Matter Movement garnered in 2020. According to the Buchanan (2020) article for the New York Times, the Black Lives Matter movement may be the largest movement in U.S. history, promoted by social media users' physical isolation from each other and, thus, reliability on and

compulsion to monitor digital media to stay entertained and informed. Indeed, per the Nielsen Company (2020), between March 2019 and March 2020, the percentage of time spent on mobile devices accessing current events and global news in the United States had increased by more than 215%. The rise of digital media has more than doubled, with Americans paying significantly more attention to the news around them. This is undoubtedly what led to the increase in awareness of Black Lives Matter discourse, lending to increasing popularity and visibility of the movement's objectives and issues pertaining to it. This greater awareness led to an increased visibility of the Black experience in the United States, in streaming services, in public representations of Black speakers and professionals, and even increased visibility of Black individuals in commercials. Overall, there has been a significant shift in attitudes among the American populace regarding minorities' experience in the country and a heightened awareness of institutions' roles in this experience. Cohn and Quealy (2020) report that "public opinion on race and criminal justice issues has been steadily moving left since the first protests ignited over the fatal shootings of Trayvon Martin in 2012, and Michael Brown in 2014. And since the death of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis, MN on May 25, 2020, public opinion on race, criminal justice, and the Black Lives Matter movement has leaped leftward (para 3)." Events such as national tragedies, protests, and conversations have the power to shape public opinion, attracting intellectual contributions as well as encouraging movement for change. The Black Lives Matter movement has fully demonstrated the power that conversation and sharing media can have in transforming sentiment and effecting change. It is this demonstration of power that makes examining the Black Trans Lives Matter Movement and its presence on digital media worth studying, to understand the differences—if any—between it and the Black Lives Matter movement and what media content—if any—is being shared. If there are differences, this

exploration might reveal what can be done to progress conversation, if not action. If there is media content, an examination of the sentiment might reveal how this sentiment has already changed and how it can further evolve to have real world implications.

Black Trans Lives Matter

We have already described what the Black Lives Matter movement seeks to accomplish. More narrowly, in the context of the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, we discuss how Black transgender and gender non-conforming people face increased and discriminatory violence, with little to no state protections and policies, which allow for these violent crimes to continue. Multiple studies demonstrate the outside damage done by racist and transphobic policing, as Griffin (2016) describes, such as "from employment discrimination issues, to healthcare issues, and prisoners' rights (p.133)." Further, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are at a particularly high risk for being subjected to physical and sexual violence. "Among people who identified as trans in kindergarten through high school, 54 percent reported verbal harassment, 24 percent reported physical assault, and 3 percent reported sexual assault (Hattery & Smith, 2021, p149)."

While a quarter of White trans and gender-nonconforming people report being treated disrespectfully during interactions with police, according to Holloway (2020), that figure skyrockets to 47 percent among Black trans and gender-nonconforming people, according to a 2011 report by the National Center for Transgender Equality. Through a racial lens, such a statistic illustrates the ways in which Black lives are consistently endangered, notwithstanding the disrespect to which transgender and gender-nonconforming people are subject for gender alone. This is an additional justification for why Black transgender lives should be more greatly centered in social discourse and actions within the Black Lives Matter movement. In the words

of Morrison (2021), "We can no longer talk about Blackness without acknowledging how race interacts with gender, sexuality, ability, socioeconomic status, and other aspects of identity to create multi-layered Black experiences that are often stigmatized and ignored. This includes trans people who identify outside the gender binary and trans people with disabilities (para.3)." In all fights for equality, in the United States or otherwise, there needs to be a holistic lens through which one examines the discriminatory violence and policies to which marginalized community members are subject. In short, and in the words of Steinmetz (2020), anything that is meant to combat gender inequality must also include a racial approach, and anything that is meant to combat racial inequality must similarly include a gender/sexuality approach.

The problem that this study seeks to address is the fact that "Black trans lives are commonly erased within power structures and ecosystems across society, from the broader Black Lives Matter movement to the news media (Allsop, 2020, para.3)." In the very same New York Times cover (2020), in which the newspaper illustrates the many faces of unjust brutality, violence, and death in the United States, the descriptor does not identify Tony McDade as a transgender man. One might perhaps argue that the artist wanted to include Tony McDade into the larger narrative by neglecting this piece of information; however, it is important, in these conversations, to acknowledge how intersectional identities contribute to the oppression of individuals in the United States. In the United States, transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals face a unique level of targeting and social inequalities, from the hands of police brutality to hate crimes at the hands of other civilians, and even obstacles imposed by legislation. Acknowledging the prejudice individuals face due to their gender is essential to identify how legislation and policies should be fixed to better protect members of the transgender community.

Importance of Intersectional Exploration

The study of intersectional identities in social discourse emerged in the twentieth century, in which the global women's movement, civil rights movements, the end of the Cold War, and the end of apartheid in South Africa indicated that there are deeply ingrained social inequities throughout the world that contribute to the engineering of social problems (Collins, 2019). The term "intersectionality" was coined by the theory's founder and developer Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. According to Crenshaw, the theory is meant to provide a lens through which one can observe how "various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigration status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts (Steinmetz, 2020, para.2)." Racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression have interconnected in a way that makes unraveling social problems and engaging in social change a long, tedious process, as liberating whole communities involves the dismantling of various status quos, lifting obstacles, and changing attitudes. Indeed, as intersectional studies have matured and expanded over the years, scholars have begun to realize that, even within various studies of liberation such as decolonization and feminism, there remain harmful biases. It is such internalized biases that concerned the research into the subject of the Black Lives Matter movement, and if there are current biases and sentiments that inhibit the visibility of Black transgender and gender non-conforming in the fight for social justice in America. In examining the tweets collected for the sake of this study, the researcher obtained information pertaining to the attitudes and concerns of Twitter users engaging in the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag.

Online Discourse and Real-World Implications

Since its formation, Web 2.0 has provided a new venue in which real-world discourse can take place. The virtual environment supplies a variety of contexts in which individuals actively

interact with each other as well as with curated content and messages. According to Terras (2015), at the heart of Web 2.0 are applications on which active participation is generated by curated content. Curated content refers to content and media created and distributed by individual users across the Web. This participation enables the application users to curate their virtual identities by intentionally interacting with others, posting and creating content, and in short leaving their digital footprint in micro—posting content—or macro ways—entering and leaving an application. In this way, the interaction between users via Internet applications is equivalent to that which they experience offline. Therefore, the digital world is just as significant to social discourse as conversations conducted in-person. Indeed, per Sharma (2013) "digital media should be understood as an adjunct to the 'real world' (p.47).'" In this virtually simulated real-world, one can witness real-time conversations complemented by media content that serves as a topic guide or filter. Yardi and Boyd (2010) share that there are four reasons that people share information: (a) to satisfy informational and interest needs; (b) to establish social status, that they are superior to other people in some manner; (c) to express affection; and (d) to initiate social contact, to talk with others. Emotions spark a variety of behaviors, such as a need for comfort or social support during threatening or tragic events. Just as the increased popularity of the Black Lives Matter movement was due to increased visibility of police brutality via digital media, and therefore led to Web users congregating and interacting with one another for support and understanding, there is presumably a similar effort made in relation to the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, where information is shared and individuals unite after a tragedy. Exploring the media content within Tweets shared via the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag is important in understanding how social media operates in regards to engaging in discourse and a step to understanding what may be inhibiting Black transgender lives' visibility.

Hashtag Activism

Hashtag activism has long been a means by which members of racially and sexually marginalized communities engage in social discourse and effect change. As asserted by Jackson et al. (2020) "African American, women, transgender people, and others aligned with racial justice and feminist causes have… repurposed Twitter in particular to make identity-based cultural and political demands, and in doing so have forever changed national consciousness (p. xxv)." From the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter to the #MeToo movement, hashtags have proven themselves an effective tool in generating community and promoting social discourse.

For this study, it is important to understand how hashtags operate on social media, particularly on Twitter. Hashtags allow Twitter users to step outside their immediate social circle and connect with others on a variety of topics. Hashtags play a role in the wide circulation of popular or important information, allowing anyone to read the tweeted content, and are often signifiers of major events, such as natural disasters or national movements. The study relies on the assumption that hashtags are used to distribute content, generate conversation, and effect real-world change. This process might best be described as hashtag activism, defined in Liao's (2019) article, as "discursive protest on social media united through a hash-tagged word, phrase or sentence." In the situational context of the article, Liao describes social media users' application of hashtag activism as a means to protest China's digital censorship, specifically using the hashtag #IAMGAY to protest the censorship of topics related to homosexuality and other illegal media content. Liao also applauds digital media for its ability to provide a space for "counter dominant discourse"—discourse that seeks to present the world differently from the status quo or codes—and to connect individuals who are both online and offline. A similar phenomenon can be seen in Overby's #AskRachel study (2019), where a White woman lies

about her ancestry, alters her physical appearance, and claims to be a Black woman. In this study, the researcher reveals, through her exploration of Tweets on Black Twitter, that there is more to "being Black" than mere appearance. Overby explores the hashtag #AskRachel, and the conversation surrounding it, to illuminate the social and cultural aspects of the Black community, and how these aspects--rather than simply looks and ancestry--are what form the Black identity. Hashtags have thus proven to be a means by which individuals can be connected in a digital space and actively participate in online discourse beyond their immediate social group.

Why Twitter?

Yglesias (2019) writes in his article in which he interviews John McWhorter from Columbia University, that "if there had been no Twitter or Facebook… Trayvon [Martin] and Mike Brown would have had about as much impact on White thought as, say, Amadou Diallo did (para. 4)." In this comparison, McWhorter refers to the murder of Amadou Diallo, a 22-year-old West African immigrant on whom New York City police officers open fired and shot 41 times in 1999. The use of social media and the attached content, such as digital videos and links, have led to what Vox and the New York Times have referred to as "The Great Awokening" in which Americans have become increasingly aware of the racial and social inequality that exist and persist in the country.

Among the popular social media platforms, Twitter is unique because the content is largely text-based. Unlike Facebook and Instagram, where the focus tends to be the visual media, Twitter's emphasis is on the text that users send out. Facebook and Instagram virtually allow an unlimited character limit in their captions; there could be a great story or a great message in the caption but there is no guarantee that anyone is going to read it, especially

because these posts are often accompanied by an image or photo. On these social platforms, the call to action is to "Like" it, and move on. By contrast, Twitter's first call to action is to read a message, and then retweet it or "Like" it. Users must read the brief caption to successfully interact with it, and Twitter's character limit makes it easy to do so. For this reason, there is a direct correlation between one's affluence on Twitter and the quality of the messages they post, and the contributions they make to digital discourse. This quality of the text is what makes Tweets worth examining critically: the character limit means that each word Tweeted is considerably more valuable than those on other social media platforms. Further, as a social network, and as explained by Pereira-Kohatsu (2019) "Twitter is a well-known real-time public microblogging network where, frequently, news appear before than on official news media (para.2)." If there were any social network worth exploring in terms of content and public discourse—Twitter would be it.

The second reason I chose Twitter is more simple: hashtags. As described, hashtag movements play a fundamental role in gathering media attention, particularly on Twitter. Hashtags, by way of their user-generated design and implementation, rely on the interest of the individuals using them to be fully realized and to become relevant. This is evident by the circulation of the hashtag #proudboys in October, 2020. According to the Elassar's (2020) article for CNN published in October, the hashtag #proudboys was generated by members of a far-right group on Twitter in order to celebrate former President Donald Trump's endorsement of the white supremacist group Proud Boys. The hashtag was a simple use of the organization's name in order to promote the group and affiliated members' association with the former President. This demonstrates the ease with which hashtags can be generated by users on Twitter, and how it brings members with similar values together even on a smaller scale. However, what

demonstrates the use of hashtags on a larger scale is when the hashtag #proudboys was seized by gay men on Twitter, who used the hashtag as a pun for being "proud boys," as in Gay Pride. In bringing the Gay Twitter community together, the hashtag gained enough traction to amass itself on Twitter collectively, making its way to news media attention. (Peiser, 2020) This example demonstrates the power hashtags possess once users propel them. The premise of this study is that Black transgender lives do not get enough media attention and that the assumed best way to do that is through conversations on social media.

Research Questions

- Who is tweeting or retweeting content with #blacktranslivesmatter?

- What textual or media content is included in tweets that utilize the hashtag in #blacktranslivesmatter?

- What do these tweets reveal about the sentiment surrounding the #blacktranslivesmatter movement?

Theoretical Approach

Intersectional Theory

As stated above by the intersectional theory's founder, Kimberlé Crenshaw (2020), intersectionality is meant to provide a lens through which one can witness how different sources of inequality not only frequently work together, but compound upon each other. Both in mainstream discourse and scholarly discourse, a community's experience with inequality is often presented through a singular lens--race, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.--without examining how individuals with multiple identities are subject to the sum of multiple or all of these experiences, rather than just one. Griffin (2016) describes in his examination of current policies and legislation impacting transgender and gender nonconforming individuals in the United States,

"intersectionality provides a look at complex problems faced by a marginalized group [allowing] the writer to develop a more complete picture of the issues and challenges faced that are often compounded by each other while at the same time needing conflicting methods of resolution (p.124)."

Social Network Theory

As defined by Liu, Sidhu, Beacom, and Valente (2017), social network theory focuses on the role that social relationships play in sharing information, facilitating media influence, and allowing attitudinal or behavioral change. Social network theory relies on the ability of individual nodes to connect and form larger social networks. A network is best described as "a set of relationships, containing a set of objects and a mapping or description of relations between the objects or nodes (Kadushin, 2012, p.14)" or individuals. Social network theory offers three types of network centrality qualities to identify the position that opinion leaders usually hold: degree, betweenness, and closeness. The "degree" measures the number of connections to and from a single individual in a network; "betweenness" measures the frequency at which the individual node lies on a short path connecting other individuals in a network; and finally, "closeness" measures the average distance between an individual and other individuals (Liu, Sidhu, Beacom, and Valente, 2017). Social network theory enables communication researchers to measure network cohesion and detect subgroups or communities within a larger social network. In this study, I explore the inter-communications between Twitter users and how they use hashtags to connect on mutually relevant topics.

Kadushin (2012) asserts that "people who are near to one another also tend to share the same characteristics, values, and social status." People's proximity to each other tends to reveal similar values, interests, and positions in life. While such a statement usually refers to physical

proximity—real-life closeness—the same can be argued about people's proximity to each other in digital spaces as well. This proximity can be demonstrated through individuals' immediate online connections, groups, and hashtags. Hashtags in the digital space replicate the proximity that people share in the physical world by deliberately connecting individuals through their mutual interests, concerns, and social spheres.

The most important wielders of hashtags are ordinary individuals on Twitter, who use them to circulate content and media outside of their immediate social circles, generating and disseminating information across and beyond their networks. Hashtags have the unique ability to connect individuals across familiar connections into mass social networks. Social network theory is primarily concerned with the role social connections play in sharing information, facilitating personal or media influence, and enabling attitudinal or behavioral change. Kadushin (2012) illustrates the transmission of information through individual in the following example: =

> "Suppose the number of 'friends' you have on your profile is a modest 100. If none of them is a friend of the other, then two steps forward, you have access to 10,000 people (100 times 100), who can also reach you. Three steps removed there are 1,000,000 (100 times 100 times 100)."

This is an important phenomenon on social media, which is defined by Ramelb (2016) "as the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration (p.3)." Individuals with even the most modest following on social media can amass significant "impressions"--viewership--of the content that they share, thereby contributing to the digital distribution of media content.

This brings me to the purpose of this study, which is to examine the degree to which #blacktranslivesmatter and other relevant hashtags are used to circulate media content on Twitter. I seek to understand who is driving the conversations, explore the content embedded using these hashtags, and analyze the overall sentiment surrounding #blacktranslivesmatter. History--and

even recent media--has shown that topics can be brought to the forefront of social attention but first requires that enough people are talking about it and that information is being circulated. As asserted by Hargittai (2008), access to news and information is important for promoting social equality and effecting change. For this study, I explored how the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag on Twitter, a social media platform on which hashtags seem to generate the most attention, is being used to circulate information, bring awareness to the issues affecting Black transgendered lives, and aid in the Black Trans Lives Matter movement.

Methodology

This study seeks to explore the content of the conversations pertaining to the Black Trans Lives matter movement and relies on the use of hashtags and the textual and media content to which they lead. For this, I conduct a mixed-method content analysis in order to explore the content and sentiment of tweets using the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter as well as approximate hashtags. As defined by Hsieh (2005), a content analysis "focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (p.1278)." This form of analysis enables social researchers to collect individuals' voices to explore how they experience and interact with the world around them. Social media has become an outlet for users to express how they feel and to share their experiences. As stated by Adreotta et. al (2019), through social media, qualitative researchers have access to hundreds of individuals and the content they generate, enabling researchers to identify voices that might not be heard through traditional methods, such as interviews and focus groups. Unlike interviews and surveys, where orchestrated environments may discourage complete honesty, social media data extends from real-world social environments with real people, without any prompting. Such realism is why I will conduct a mixed methods

content analysis of the tweets generated between May 2020 and March 2021. Extracting the data will be through a mixed-method approach of using the WebDataRA data collection tool to conduct user and Twitter content and generating a codebook through which to assess the conversations occurring on Twitter. A mixed-methods approach to this exploration of Twitter data allows for the quantification of the Twitter users' data and the quantitative analysis of the level of engagement that the collected tweets received, while also permitting for the qualitative analysis of more humane, subjective elements such as the sentimental valence of the tweets and content embedded in the tweets. In order to examine the level of engagement that a tweet receives, I explore the number of retweets, likes, and replies that a collect tweet received, and I also look at the number of days that the thread lasted in order to see how long users were participating in that particular conversation.

For the rest of the data, I generated a codebook using an inductive approach, meaning that the questions are generated not necessarily through the literature surrounding social network theory, but the themes found within the Twitter data itself (Braun, 2006). These themes include the hashtags, the user icon, the media/URLs attached, and any sentiment perceived in the tweet. All of which will be analyzed using a coder inter-reliability test. Such an approach, separate from the objective use of social network theory, will rely on human interpretation of the data gathered. The Black Trans Lives Matter movement is a human issue, and in exploring the sentiment of the tweets associated with the movement--and therefore the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of those tweeting--the study requires a human eye.

By "approximate hashtags," I refer to hashtags outside of #blacktranslivesmatter that are also circulated on the Twitter platform and, at the surface level, seem to pertain to topics related to #blacktranslivesmatter.

#Blacktranslivesmatter

#blacklivesmatter

#translivesmatter

#allblm

#Blacktranslives encompasses both the Black identity and the transgender/gender non-conforming identity. In pursuit of ensuring both communities are present in this study, I have also included variations of #blacklivesmatter and the racial exclusive #translivesmatter.

Transgender and gender-nonconforming people are facing an epidemic of violence in the United States, with hate crimes being reported at a consistently high rate. By the end of 2020, according to the Human Rights Campaign (2020), 44 individuals were reported as being fatally shot or killed by other violent methods, the majority of whom were Black and Latinx transgender women. This number does not include the number of crimes that were not reported, or misreported by incorrectly deadnaming the victims--using these individuals' birth name--or referring to these individuals using the gender assigned at birth. By March 3, 2021, with the fatal shooting of 23-year-old Diamond Kyree Sanders in Cincinatti, Ohio, the lives of 11 transgender and gender-nonconforming people had been claimed. The Black Lives Matter movement has shown that community and change can be manifested through conversation; particularly, through the conversation brought on through social media. The purpose of this study is to examine the content of conversations on Twitter using #blacktranslivesmatter, and answer three questions: Who is tweeting or retweeting content with #blacktranslivesmatter? What textual or media content is included in tweets that utilize the hashtag in #blacktranslivesmatter tweets? What do these tweets reveal about the sentiment surrounding the #blacktranslivesmatter movement?

A total of 49 tweets were collected within the specified time frame, all of which were collected from Twitter's "Top Posts" section.

To conduct this content analysis, I used the WebDataRA tool. The WebDataRA tool is specifically designed to help researchers collect Web-based data. Although the tool works for various social media platforms, its functionality focuses on Twitter and aiding researchers in conducting social network analyses. WebDataRA is a Google Chrome extension that allows me to input my desired keywords/hashtags, scroll through Twitter pages until reaching the bottom of the web page, and gather tweets until the server has reached the end of the relevant keywords/hashtags or until I manually stop it from collecting data. In examining Twitter users and their inter-connecting conversations, WebDataRA will help me collect tweets using the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag AND #blacklivesmatter, OR #translivesmatter, OR #allblm hashtags. This order tells the algorithm to prioritize tweets with #blacktranslivesmatter over the other listed hashtags. After the tweets are collected, they were exported into an Excel sheet where the content is automatically sorted (title, contents, date, author, embedded URLs, mentions, etc.),

For this analysis, May 27, 2020, to March 10, 2021, was the selected time frame for the tweets collected in relation to this story. The beginning date has been selected in proximity to the shooting of Tony McDade, a Black transgender man who was killed in a shooting two days after the murder of George Floyd. In selecting this date, I presume to find tweets reacting to this news story, linking articles relevant to this event in the tweets, and conversations using the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag. Further, I choose this date because it is in close proximity to the death of George Floyd, a man whose death sparked the fire of the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement. Tony McDade's murder parallels George Floyd's because of the police's use of

excessive force; however, unlike Floyd, his death is not the face of the BLM movement. The end date for this collection is March 10, 2021, seven days after the murder of Diamond Kyree Sanders, a 23-year-old Black transgender woman killed during a robbery in Cincinnati. The additional seven days is inspired by the study conducted by Overby (2019), in which Overby collected tweets surrounding her research hashtag from the first day Overby's study started, Day 1, to a week later, Day 7. In collecting the tweets that occurred just a week after the crime, I expect the engagement and number of tweets will be highest then. Through Web Data RA, I exported an Excel sheet documenting the tweets, their users, and their textual and media content. Through the qualitative content analysis of this study, I want to contribute to the use of hashtags' effectiveness to circulate textual and informative media and contribute to discourse examining the attitudes and conversations surrounding the Black Trans Lives Matter movement. Currently, literature examines the policies that currently fail to protect Americans based on gender and/or sexual orientation, data regarding the increased rate at which Black transgender lives are placed in danger, and general documentation of the role that Black transgender figures have played in the Civil Rights Movement. However, there seems to be a lack of analysis as to what the general attitudes are about the community and what lies at the roots of these lives' lack of visibility in the media.

In the results section, I describe the sentiment of the content attached to the collected tweets, describe how many of them utilized the #blacktranslivesmatter, and what other hashtags and topics were attached to the tweets.

Results

For this data analysis, 49 tweets were collected from the "Top Posts" section of Twitter, from the dates of May 27, 2020, to March 10, 2021. The initial date was selected based on the

24-hour methodology (Rightler-McDaniels & Hendrickson, 2014), which asserts that peak

tweets occur 24 hours after an event. In this case, I wanted to collect the top tweets from the day

of Tony McDade's murder, in which the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter would presumably be

most relevant and therefore see the greatest number of tweets. Using the same assumption that

peak tweets would appear a week after the event, I selected March 10, 2021, which is seven days

after the shooting of 23-year-old Diamond Kyree Sanders. Sanders' murder in the robbery

marked the 11th tragedy of a Black transgender or gender nonconforming person in the year

2021 (HRC, 2021) and was the most recent event at the time of this study. By including the

seven additional days, I expected to collect tweets in the peak days following the event. Using

the generated codebook, two coders analyzed the 49 tweets in order to address the following

questions: Who tweeted or retweeted the collected tweets? What content was embedded in the

collected tweets? What do the tweets reveal about the sentiment surrounding

#blacktranslivesmatter?

      To begin the coder training, I sent the codebook to the coders three days before our

training session. This way, the coders had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the

research objectives and questions, while formulating any questions they might have had for the

training session. To ensure they did not make any presumptuous errors, I did not provide coders

with the data until the day of the training session. In a two-hour session, I went through the

codebook and explained each of the questions to the coders, addressing any concerns and

clarifying details as needed. Then, I had the coders code ten of the tweets in front of me. Because

looking at the codebook is different from actively interacting with the data itself, this gave

coders the opportunity to ask any clarification questions while they coded. Once coders finished

coding the first ten tweets, I conducted an inter-coder reliability test using the reliability

calculation software provided by Deen Freelon (2020). For these first ten tweets, coders had an average agreement of 78% and an average Cohen's Kappa of .73. Based on the kappa, the inter reliability agreement was accepted, as the range for Cohen's Kappa 0.61 - .80 between raters is considered "substantial" (Mchugh, 2012, para. 11). With this satisfactory agreement, coders completed the remaining 39 tweets on their own.

Research Question 1

For the first question, I sought to understand the degree to which persons of color or non-persons of color were engaging in conversations surrounding the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag or associated hashtags. To address this question, coders examined the Twitter users' icons, giving them the option of coding the icons as having a photo of a human, an avatar, or other. Out of the 49 tweets, 30 of the user icons consisted of photographs or images that depicted the face of a human; 16 consisted of an avatar or generated photo; and the remaining 3 were "other."
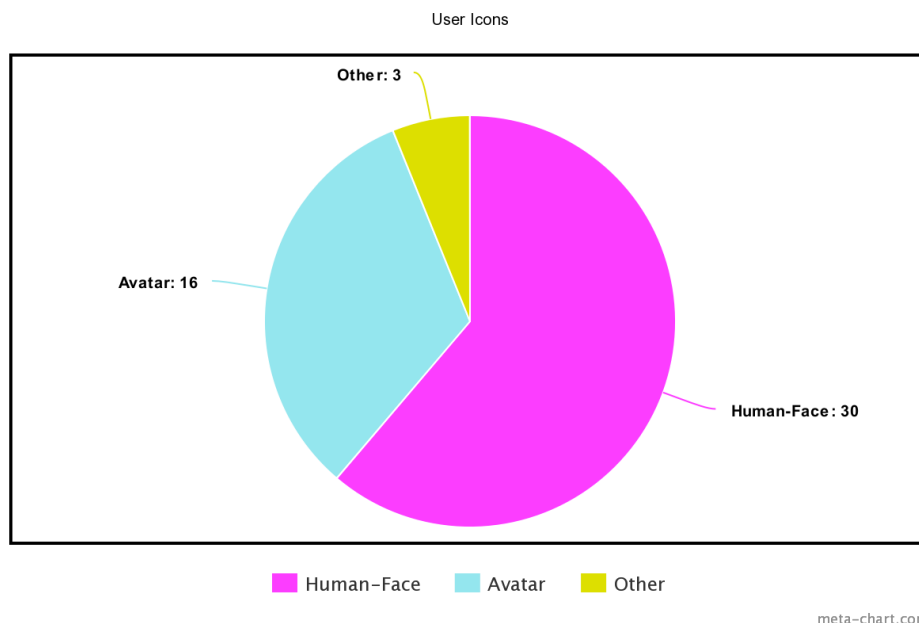
User Icons

Other: 3
Avatar: 16
Human-Face: 30

Human-Face   Avatar   Other

meta-chart.com

Figure 1 Break Down of Twitter User Icons

Following this, coders indicated whether or not the users' racial background was evident:

yes or no. Coders determined that among the generated images or photographs, about 50% of the users' racial background was evident. Lastly, in order to explore the racial makeup of the collected Twitter users, coders assessed whether or not the users were people of color, were not people of color, or not applicable. The latter option provided coders an alternative should the user icon be neither a photo nor an avatar.
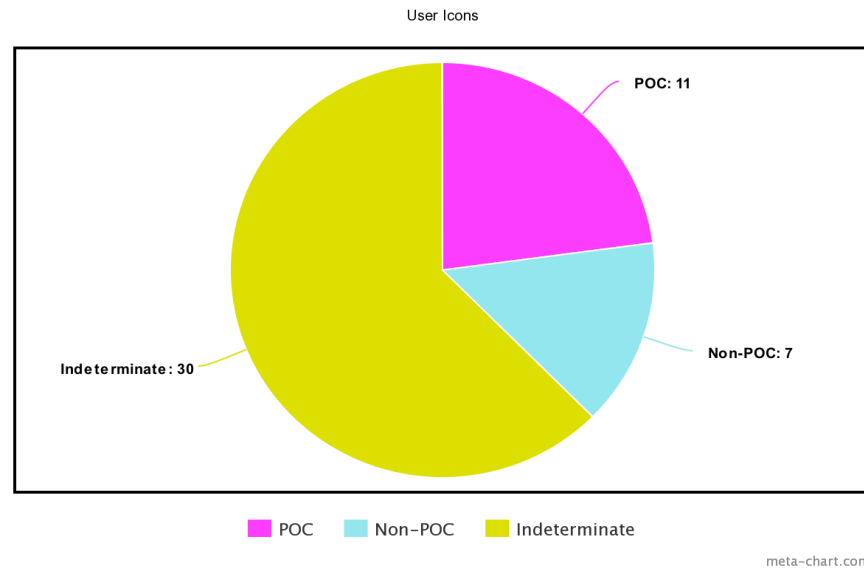
User Icons

POC: 11

Non-POC: 7

Indeterminate: 30

POC   Non-POC   Indeterminate

meta-chart.com

Figure 2 Racial Background of Twitter Users

Research Question 2

For the second question, I wanted to know what textual or media content was included in the tweets utilizing the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter or associated hashtags. To address this question, coders identified what hashtag(s) were used in the collected tweets. This exploration of #blacktranslivesmatter utilization on Twitter relies on the assumption that the hashtag is being used to spread awareness of an issue or cause related to the Black Trans Lives Matter Movement. Therefore, the type of hashtag as well as content is relevant to determining whether or not information is being shared across the platform. Coders identified a total of 183 hashtags used in the tweets. For this specific study, I was interested in the following hashtags:

#blacktranslivesmatter, #blacklivesmatter, #translivesmatter, and #allblm; therefore, I broke the

hashtag exploration results into the quantity of the hashtags relevant to the study. There were 54

counts of #blacklivesmatter, 28 counts of #blacktranslivesmatter, 6 counts of #translivesmatter,

and 0 counts of #allblm. The rest of the hashtags collected in this data set were used either once
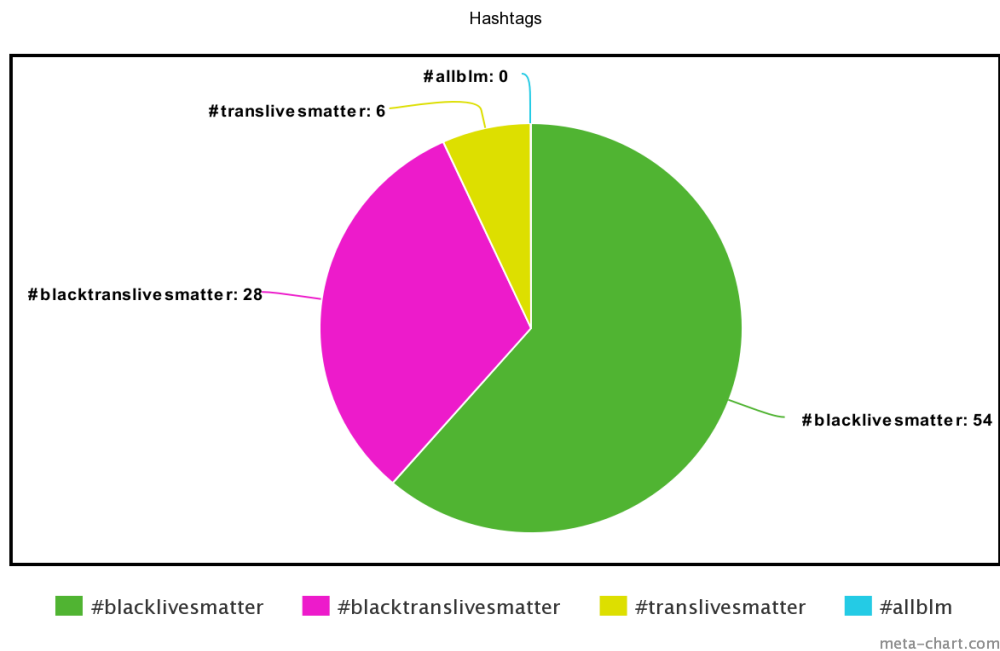
or twice.

Hashtags

Figure 3 Hashtags Used in Collected Tweets

Regarding the content attached to the tweets, coders identified 39 tweets that contained

embedded content. For the content analysis, coders were provided the options of identifying

news articles, fundraisers, nonprofit organizations, blogs, scholarly articles, videos, and other.

The results are as follows: 8 news articles, 2 fundraisers, 1 nonprofit organization, 0 blogs, 0

scholarly articles, 4 videos, 25 others, and 9 tweets without embedded content. As the "Other"

was coded as taking the majority of the embedded content, I examined this set of Twitter data in

order to determine what the codebook did not cover. The data consisted of: photos (11), flyers

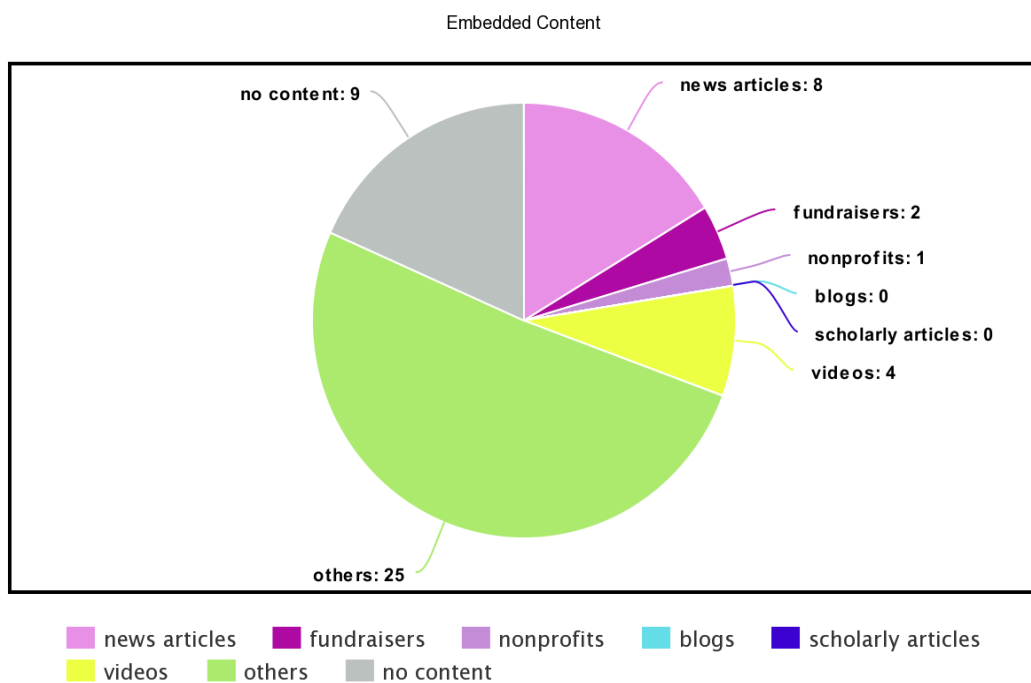(5), retweeted links for information or petitions (3), and retweeted news articles (6).

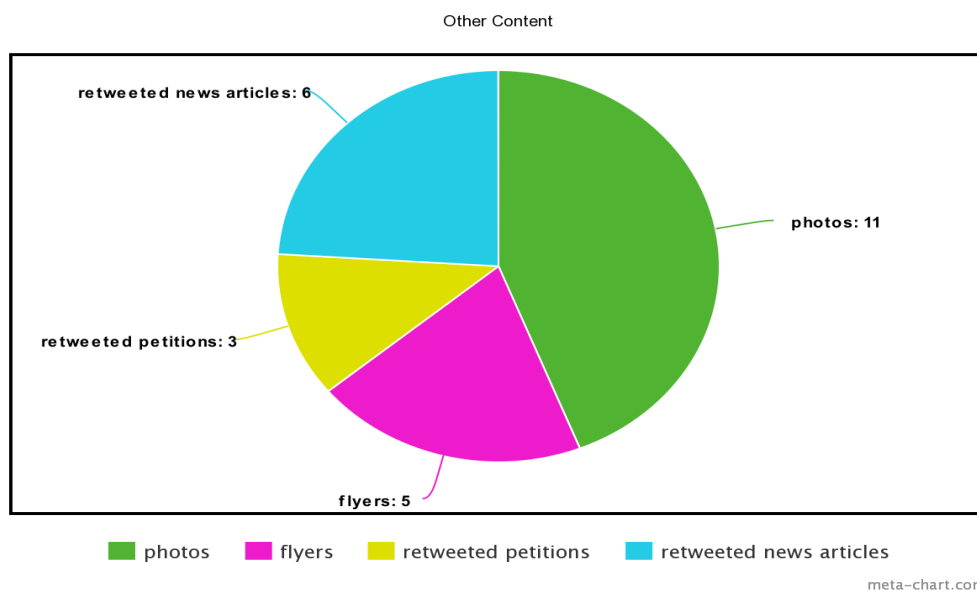*Figure 4* Type of Content Embedded in Tweets

Figure 5 Content Embedded in Tweets, Within the "Other" Category

Research Question 3

For the final question about the sentiment of the content within the tweets using #blacktranslivesmatter and associated hashtags, I had the two coders code for the following qualities: the sentimental valence of the embedded contents' headline, the type of story or content attached, as well as the tone of the content attached to the tweet. For the latter, coders distinguished the tone of the content from the tone of the tweet itself. One of the assumptions underlying this study is the use of Twitter to inform; therefore, I was interested in the type of content that was being distributed on the social platform—not necessarily the opinions of the Twitter users sharing the content. According to the results, at least 83% of the content embedded in the collected tweets possessed headlines with neutral headlines, lacking either extremely negative or positive sentiments.

In addition to coding for the sentiment of the headlines attached to the content, Is searched for the following themes in the content: 1) hate crimes 2) legislation 3) life of the individual(s) 4) protest/advocacy 5) other 6) no transgender person mentioned. These options were provided to the coders under the assumption that these would be the primary themes discussed in relation to a transgender or gender nonconforming individual within the content embedded in the tweet. The Black Trans Lives Matter movement centers Black transgender lives in the conversation of discriminatory violence and policies in the United States. For this reason, I proposed multiple forms of media content that might discuss the experiences of Black transgender and gender nonconforming individuals in the United States, such as blogs, news articles, videos, etc. However, contrary to expectation, the coding revealed more than 90% of the collected Top Tweets using #blacktranslivesmatter did *not* involve a transgender person or gender nonconforming individual as the subject of the embedded content. Finally, coders revealed that more than half—53%—of the content possessed either a neutral tone or did not

pertain to the to the transgender community.

<div align="center">**Discussion**</div>

This study sought to collect and explore content distributed through the Twitter social media platform via the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter to assess the degree to which the tag is circulated, its relation to other relevant hashtags— #blacklivesmatter, #translivesmatter, and #allblm—the sentiment surrounding the content embedded within tweets, and the degree to which the hashtag is being used to circulate information. For this analysis, 49 tweets were collected from the "Top" section of the Twitter platform. The Twitter algorithm selects "Top Tweets based on accounts you interact with most, Tweets you engage with," as well as recency, relevance, engagement, rich media, number of followers, and the account's location relative to other users (Hootsuite, 2020).

Research Question 1: Who is Tweeting or Retweeting Content with #Blacktranslivesmatter?

To answer to this question is that there is no distinct profile for the type of person tweeting or retweeting content using #blacktranslivesmatter. The purpose of this question was to explore and determine who was driving discourse on Twitter pertaining to #blacktranslivesmatter. As described in the section of the literature review, "Hashtag Activism," hashtags allow ordinary Twitter users to step outside their immediate social circle and connect with others on a variety of topics. Hashtags play a role in the wide circulation of popular or important information and drive social media conversations towards the front of media. Further, this is evident by the hashtag #proudboys, circulated shortly after the November 2020 Presidential Debates (Elassar, 2020) by relevant community members: LGBTQIA+ Twitter users and allies. Additionally, in Overby's (2019) exploration of #AskRachel, Overby analyzed the

conversations among Black users on Twitter. One's identity seems to play a role in congregating community members behind a hashtag and bringing a subject to media attention. For this reason, I wanted to see if users—particularly, Twitter users of color—were participating in the #blacktranslivesmatter movement, which centers Black transgender and gender nonconforming individuals within the context of Black Lives Matter. By focusing on users of color, I was looking for Twitter users involved in both the Black Lives Matter movement as well as the Black Trans Lives Matter movement. I found there was a significant mix of individuals involved in the conversation of #blacktranslivesmatter: ordinary users of color, ordinary users not of color, and many users of indeterminate racial background. In the latter group, which made up about 19 of the 49 collected users—40% of the whole data set—there were student unions, nonprofit organizations, news media sources, and other collectives tweeting and retweeting content. What this reveals is, that due to the intersectional nature of the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, there is not a particular racial makeup within this data set. Advocates then are people of color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, allies, and other individuals involved in the conversation with similar values. It would appear that with the exception of one tweet—distinctly against the Black Lives Matter movement—users tweeting information relevant to #blacktranslivesmatter share similar values or are united by the need to share information rather than share a racial background. Seeing as not only were the identifiable users of mixed backgrounds, and the remaining users organizations, in the conversation surrounding #blacktranslivesmatter, it might not have been important to examine the icons of the users tweeting with the hashtag. Instead, I should have looked at user bios in order to determine how they might interact with the Black Trans Lives Matter movement. Presumably, bios might have better revealed their social statuses and political stances or other key factors which would have

provided insight in how a user would engage with the content. Further, I might have gathered

data on their professional background. One of the retweets in the Twitter data was from the U.S.

Vice President Kamala Harris, who tweeted a news article pertaining to #blacktranslivesmatter.

Such a prominent figure would surely influence how content is circulated on Twitter and brought

to news media attention; therefore, I should have better examined what other organizations or

high-profile individuals were tweeting.

Research Question 2: What Textual or Media Content is Included in Tweets Utilizing

#Blacktranslivesmatter?

The answer to this question was that there was a diverse collection of content embedded

in the tweets; however, the majority of the content included in the collected tweets consisted of

image attachments. For the coding, I provided the following options for type of media content:

news articles, fundraisers, blogs, scholarly articles, videos, no content. As the study is based on

the assumption that informative content is circulated on social networks via hashtags, I provided

content that I thought would be informative; however, more than half of the collected tweets

ended up possessing none of these. The majority of the "Other" content was made up of images

and pictures. Images resulted in being the dominant informative textual/media content embedded

in the tweets. Image attachments included photos of the users themselves, photos of the

transgender or gender non-conforming persons, and flyers pertaining to an advocacy group or

protest for Black transgender lives. This is likely due to the fact that Twitter, as a social media

platform, possesses a 140-character limit, making images an invaluable method of

communication information in a limited digital space. Further, images "on social media [they]

allow you to gain attention, build loyalty, communicate vital information, and increase

engagement. (Medium, 2017, para. 14). The fact that the majority of the Top Tweets collected

consisted of tweets with image attachments demonstrates how much engagement images attract on social media; even on a largely text-based platform such as Twitter. Further, of these images, the majority of the content pertaining to #blacktranslivesmatter content consisted of informative flyers, pride merchandise, and images of Black transgender or gender nonconforming individuals. What this reveals is that in order to obtain the highest level of engagement—and therefore appear in the Top Tweets section—for the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, one requires visual content. Not only does this increase engagement and distribute information pertaining to the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, but visual content also enables Twitter users to visibly align themselves with the movement.

Research Question 3: What Do These Tweets Reveal About the Sentiment Surrounding the #Blacktranslivesmatter Movement?

Finally, the coding revealed that the sentiment surrounding content pertaining to the #blacktranslivematter movement was largely neutral, or that there was little content pertaining to the movement in the collected tweets. As described by Yardi and Boyd (2010) strong emotions spark the need for unity and support in times of crisis. Emotions are often the catalyst for people to congregate about a cause. This has been fully demonstrated by the Black Lives Matter movement and why the movement has become the largest movement in United States' History. The rally behind the movement was caused by the increase in blatant concern and anger from White Democrats, as reported by Yglesias (2019) from Vox. A presumably similar level of emotion is what sparked the popularity of the #proudboys hashtag in November 2020, as reported by Elassar (2020) from CNN. This study explored the sentiment surrounding the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag in an effort to understand what sentiment was inhibiting or encompassing the movement. Finding that the sentiment and tone of the content contained within

these Top Tweets is neutral or not relevant to the matter, I conclude that there is not enough energy behind the Black Trans Lives Matter movement, even on Twitter, a social network in which users would engage with others who share their views and engage in conversations with other users beyond their immediate social circle. The cause has not attracted nearly enough energy from users across the social network. This lack of strong sentiment encompassing the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter could explain why the Black Trans Lives Matter movement has been pushed towards the margins of the Black Lives Matter movement. Further, I must reinstate that the majority of the themes surrounding the content imbedded in the tweets did not pertain to a Black transgender or gender nonconforming individual; instead, many of the themes pertained to other subjects pertaining to Black Lives Matter, such as Meghan Markle and the George Floyd trial. The comparable lack of visibility in the movement in the news media could be due to the lack of strong sentiment which, when compared to the progress that the Black Lives Matter movement has received in the past year, is essential to driving force behind the cause. The popularity of the Black Lives Matter movement was driven by negative sentiment rising in the United States, and the mix of positive and negative sentiment was what presumably drove the #proudboys tag; therefore, there needs to be stronger sentiment encompassing the #blacktranslivesmatter hashtag and movement. Disseminating information about the experiences of the Black transgender community in the United States is important; however, so is encouraging emotional force and a stronger sentiment among the population.

Limitations

Using social network theory as the methodological approach, this study relies on the assumption that hashtags are a powerful means to connect individuals across a large social network beyond their immediate followers, following, and immediate social ties. With this

assumption, I examined how Twitter users interacted with the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter: who was using the hashtag, what textual or media content was embedded within the hashtag, and what the collected tweets revealed about the sentiment surrounding the #blacktranslivesmatter. Using the theory of intersectionality, this study also explored the hashtags #blacklivesmatter, #translivesmatter, and #allblm. These associated hashtags are respectively sexually and racially exclusive, while still being generally inclusive (to the groups pertaining to #blacktranslivesmatter, the sum of these hashtags.

I collected the 49 tweets from the "Top Tweets" section of Twitter, which is determined by the level of engagement calculated by the Twitter algorithm. For this reason, I felt that the Top Tweets would be a valid source of data because, by definition the tweets I collected are the most popular; however, as one's Twitter timeline is also influenced by personal preferences, there is a possibility that the tweets collected for the purpose of this study were limited by my own personal search. The Twitter data may be limited due to my current lack of ties with the hashtag. For this reason, I took into consideration the level of engagement that each of the tweets possessed in the collected data. Through this information, I was able to evaluate the popularity of certain content on the platform and explore how that engagement might have contributed to it appearing in Twitter's "Top Tweets" section.

Coders examined the icons of the Twitter users in order to code how they may fit in the conversation of the Black Trans Lives Matter movement or Black Lives Matter movement in general. In examining the user icons, I asked the coders if the racial background of the user was determinate: yes or no. Further, I asked the coders if the users were persons of color, not persons of color, or not applicable. Coders had the option of marking "not applicable" in case the user icon was neither a photo nor a racially indicative avatar; however, in retrospect, I wish I had not

given the coders this option, so that the data was more conclusive in determining the makeup of who was involved in the discussions. In removing this option, coders would have been compelled to examine the icons more narrowly; for example, even if the user icon was not that of a face, perhaps the icon was indicative of an organization or institution made up of people of color. Otherwise, such observations might not have been excluded from the data.

Lastly, the Twitter data revealed the use of 183 hashtags in total, of which the hashtags related to this study made up only 88. This means that the hashtags studies made up less than 50% of the overall hashtags used. This brings hashtag linguistics into question and how much I should have taken hashtag alterations into account, such as the ones coders found in the collected data: #blm, #black, #transcrowdfund, #blacktwitter, #saytheirnames, #pridemonth, and other relevant tweets. Two hashtags that stood out in particular were #transwomenarewomen and #transmenaremen. These hashtags stand out because there was one particular element on Tony McDade's description on the New York Times cover (2020) that stood out to me: not mentioning that he was transgender. The hashtag #transmenaremen makes me wonder what the sentiment might be about having #blacktranslivesmatter as a separate hashtag from #blacklivesmatter. A future study might embark on a focus group or a survey of individuals and their feelings about the Black Trans Lives Matter movement in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have determined that the Twitter users distribution information pertaining to the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter are made up of a mix of Twitter users—both ordinary and high-profile, people of color and non-people of color—and organizations. There was not a distinct racial profile among the Twitter data collected. This reveals that there is not a particular type of person driving the conversation behind #blacktranslivesmatter; rather, it might

be more useful to examine the professions or values that these individuals have in common it

place of their racial background. Further, from this exploration, I have learned that while

embedded links such as news articles and funds are included in the media content distributed via

the hashtag #blacktranslivesmatter, the most prevalent content consisted of informative images

and pictures, used to distribute information about victims and Black Trans Lives Matter

advocacy events. Lastly, the study revealed that the sentiment pertaining to the "Top Tweets"

with #blacktranslivesmatter tend to be neutral or do not specifically pertain to a Black

transgender or gender non-conforming individual at all. All three of these revelations confirm

that the Black Trans Lives Matter movement currently lacks the same vigor and prevalence of

the Black Lives Matter movement, thus carrying with it the same obscurity and near invisibility

that the image of Tony McDade possesses in the New York Times cover for 2020. This study

validates the assertion that members of the Black and transgender community have not been

prioritized in the fight for Black lives in the United States, and that there is a need to bring the

Black transgender community to the forefront of civil rights conversations in digital and media

discourse. Considering the relative absence of the Black transgender community both within

academia and in this social network, it is clear that the community's lack of visibility, as

illustrated by the New York Times cover for 2020, parallels with their marginalization in real-

world discourse.

References

Atchison, G. J., & Nanney, M. (2020). *#BlackTransLivesMatter Reader*. Sociologists for Trans Justice. https://s4tj.com/blacktranslivesmatter-reader/.

Buchanan, L., Bui, Q., & Patel, J. K. (2020, July 3). *Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html.

COVID-19: Tracking the Impact on Media Consumption. Nielsen. (2020, June 16). https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2020/covid-19-tracking-the-impact-on-media-consumption/.

Damshenas, S. (2020, August 18). *Trans influencers savagely beaten by homophobes as police "kept driving"*. https://www.gaytimes.co.uk/life/trans-influencers-savagely-beaten-by-homophobes-as-onlookers-did-nothing/.

Elassar, A. (2020, October 4). *Gay men have taken over the Proud Boys Twitter hashtag*. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/04/us/proud-boys-twitter-hashtag-gay-men-trnd/index.html.

Freelon, D. (2020, December 9). Recal: Reliability calculation for the masses. Retrieved April 22, 2021, from http://dfreelon.org/utils/recalfront/

Griffin, M. J. (2016). Intersecting Intersectionalities and the Failure of the Law to Protect Transgender Women of Color in the United States. *Tulane Journal of Law and Sexuality*, *25*, 123–144.

Hattery, A., & Smith, E. (2021). *Policing Black bodies: how Black lives are surveilled and how to work for change (updated edition)*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Hunter, M. A. (2010). All the gays are white and all the blacks are STRAIGHT: Black gay MEN, identity, and community. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *7*(2), 81–92. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-010-0011-4

Jackson, S. J., Bailey, M., & Welles, B. F. (2020). *#HashtagActivism: networks of race and gender justice*. The MIT Press.

Kadushin, C. (2012). *Understanding social networks : Theories, concepts, and findings*. ProQuest Ebook Central https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Laverne Cox says 'it's not safe if you're a trans PERSON' after attack. (2020, November 30). https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-55128009.

Maker, O. L. (2017, March 29). Why Images Are So Important To Social Media. Medium. https://medium.com/@onlinelogomaker/why-images-are-so-important-to-social-media-b9411dd678a8#:~:text=Using%20relevant%20images%20on%20social,vital%20information%2C%20and%20increase%20engagement.&text=When%20you%20stay%20consistent%20and,will%20have%20more%20staying%20power.

McHugh, M. L. (2012, October 15). *Interrater reliability: the kappa statistic*. Biochemia medica. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3900052/.

Mitchell, K. (2020, June 2). *Black Feminists Are Mobilizing for Trans Women Like Nina Pop*. Bitch Media. https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/to-honor-nina-pop-feminists-must-center-black-trans-women.

Paz, I. G., & Astor, M. (2020, June 27). *Black Trans Women Seek More Space in the Movement They Helped Start*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/27/us/politics/black-trans-lives-matter.html.

Pereira-Kohatsu, J. C., Quijano-Sánchez, L., Liberatore, F., & Camacho-Collados, M. (2019, October 26). *Detecting and Monitoring Hate Speech in Twitter*. Sensors (Basel, Switzerland). https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6864473/.

Queally, J. (2020, August 20). *Two arrested in hate crime, robbery of transgender women in Hollywood*. https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-20/two-arrested-hate-crime-robbery-transgender-women-hollywood.

Roberts, M. (2021, March 13). *HRC mourns Diamond Kyree Sanders, Black Trans Woman*. HRC. https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-diamond-kyree-sanders-black-transgender-woman-killed-in-cincinnati.

Schröder, J. (2019, December 26). Social Network Analysis of Related Hashtags on Instagram (using InstaCrawlR). Medium. https://towardsdatascience.com/social-network-analysis-of-related-hashtags-on-instagram-using-instacrawlr-46c397cb3dbe.

Sehl, K. (2021, April 8). *How the Twitter algorithm works in 2020 and how to make it work for you*. https://blog.hootsuite.com/twitter-algorithm/.

Stewart, D.-L. (2019, March). *Black trans* lives matter*.
https://www.ted.com/talks/d_l_stewart_black_trans_lives_matter.

Violence against the transgender community in 2019. (n.d.).
https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2019.

Violence against the transgender community in 2020. (n.d.).
https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-trans-and-gender-non-conforming-community-in-2020.

Yglesias, M. (2019, March 22). *The great awokening*.
https://www.vox.com/2019/3/22/18259865/great-awokening-white-liberals-race-polling-trump-2020.

Appendix A

The following codebook outlines the information that I seek to obtain, with each piece of data

paired with the corresponding research question:

Date of the Tweet (e.g. 080520 for Aug 05, 2020)

January = 01	April = 04	July = 07	October = 10
February = 02	May = 05	August = 08	November = 11
March = 03	June = 06	September = 09	December = 12

The day is coded by numbers 01-31, months are represented by the corresponding from

01- 12, while the year is coded as 19 or 20 for 2019 or 2020, respectively. Through this, I want

to explore how quickly tweets are distributed after a crime/event." The BLM movement

receives the most media attention when it helps to organize marches and protests, often when

yet another unarmed Black man is murdered by the police." (Hattery 2017) Such movements

appear to take days after the event, and I want to explore tweets that are distributed after a

tragedy. Further, the dates will show me how quickly the event was brought to news media or

social media attention after taking place. It will also show me how continuous the conversations

are.

1. What is in the Twitter user's icon?

    ○ 1 - photo of a human(s)

    ○ 2 - generated/cartoon avatar/art

    ○ 3 - other

2. If a photo of a human, is the user's racial background apparent?

   - ○ 1 - yes

   - ○ 2 - no

   - ○ 3 - N/A

3. What is the user's racial background?

   - ○ 1 - a person of color

   - ○ 2 - not a person of color

   - ○ 3 - indeterminate

4. Was a hashtag used? (With the # sign)

   - ○ 1 - yes
   - ○ 2 - no

5. If no, was it in the form of a keyword? (without the # sign)

   - ○ 1 - yes
   - ○ 2 - no
   - ○ 3 - N/A

6. If yes, what hashtag was used?

   - ○ [   ]

7. Was there more than one hashtag used

   - ○ 1 - yes
   - ○ 2 - no

8. If yes, what was the other hashtag? (going to leave space for 10 more)

   - ○ [   ]
   - ○ [   ]
   - ○ [   ]
   - ○ [   ]
   - ○ [   ]

- ○ [   ]
- ○ [   ]
- ○ [   ]
- ○ [   ]
- ○ [   ]

9. Was there any content attached? (URL, video, media, etc.)

- ○ 1 - yes
- ○ 2 - no

10. If yes, what was the content?

- ○ 1 - News article
- ○ 2 - Fundraiser
- ○ 3 - Nonprofit organization
- ○ 4 - Blog
- ○ 5 - Scholarly Article
- ○ 6 - Video
- ○ 7 - Other
- ○ 8 - N/A

11. For the content, what is the main theme surrounding the transgender person(s) in the

    article?

- ○ 1 - Hate crimes
- ○ 2 - Legislation
-    3 - Life of the individual(s)
- ○ 4 - Protest/Advocacy
- ○ 5 - Other
- ○ 6 - No transgender person mentioned [   ]

12. For the content, is there a secondary/accompanying theme?

- ○ 1 - yes, what [choose from the options provided above or "other"]
- ○ 2 - no
- ○ 3 - N/A

13. If content, what is the sentimental valence of the headline?

- ○ 1 - positive (happy, loving, positive, hopeful, inspiring)

- ○ 2 - negative (anger, sadness, danger, uncertainty)

- ○ 3 - neutral (neither positive nor negative)

- ○ 4 - N/A

14. If content, type of story:

- ○ 1 - news (any story that emphasizes a recent event)
- ○ 2 - feature (long, reflective tone, encompasses the event as well as more general coverage of the social context)
- ○ 3 - opinion (first-person opinion, editorial board, suggestions)
- ○ 4 - other, what [   ]
- ○ 5 - N/A

15. Level of engagement?

- ○ Number of retweets
- ○ Number of likes
- ○ Number of replies
- ○ Number of days the thread lasted

16. If content, what is the tone?

- ○ 1 - positive (happy, loving, positive, hopeful)
- ○ 2 - negative (anger, sadness, danger, uncertainty)
- ○ 3 - neutral (neither positive nor negative)
- ○ 4 - N/A

17. If a nonprofit organization, what is the purpose?

- ○ 1 - advocating for policy/legal change
- ○ 2 - financial benefits for transgender/LGBTQIA+ community
- ○ 3 - other
- ○ 4 - N/A