



Spring 5-20-2023

Fighting for Change in the 21st Century: An Examination of Social Activism and the Role of Social Media in the US and France

Emily V. Cooper
Fordham University

Follow this and additional works at: https://research.library.fordham.edu/international_senior



Part of the [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cooper, Emily V., "Fighting for Change in the 21st Century: An Examination of Social Activism and the Role of Social Media in the US and France" (2023). *Senior Theses*. 129.
https://research.library.fordham.edu/international_senior/129

This is brought to you for free and open access by the International Studies at Fordham Research Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Fordham Research Commons. For more information, please contact considine@fordham.edu, bkilee@fordham.edu.

**Fighting for Change in the 21st Century: An Examination of Social Activism and the Role
of Social Media in the US and France**

Emily V. Cooper

ecooper19@fordham.edu

B.A in International Studies, Global Affairs Concentration
Fordham College Lincoln Center

Thesis Advisor: Casey McNeill, cmcneill5@fordham.edu

Seminar Advisor: Stephanie Sztanyi, S.sztanyi@gmail.com

Fall 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introducing The Scope: A Relationship Between Two Modern Democracies.....	2
Constructing A Framework: The Creation of a Comparative Analysis.....	4
Assessing Scholarship: What Activism Means In Contemporary Context.....	8
Case by Case: A Dissection of Social Activism in The United States and France.....	14
<i>And Justice for All: American Activism, Media and Public Opinion</i>	15
<i>Vive Le Activisme: French Activism, Media and Public Opinion</i>	28
Conceptually Reflective: Identifying Divergences and Commonalities Between American and French Social Activism.....	36
Drawing Conclusions: Answering the Inquiry and Exploring Further Paths for Research.....	43
Bibliography.....	46

Introducing The Scope: The Tale of Two Modern Democracies

In anthropological study, we are taught that all cultures are unique in their beliefs, customs and societal norms. Still, in an age of increasing globalization, the cross-pollination of ideas between countries of the modern world has become increasingly frequent. A key tool in this phenomenon is social media, a digital landscape that grants anyone with access to the Internet the freedom to share their opinions in a relatively unregulated manner. In recent years, social media has become essential to activism relating to political and social movements, and discourse among academics, government administrations, and the public have brought attention to media platforms' ability to spread awareness of movements and sentiments not just within one country, but into the social structure of other countries of the global community. One such example of this is the debate over the influence of American 'woke' activism upon social initiatives taking place in France, with President Emmanuel Macron and government officials asserting that the digital influence of American social movements is destroying French culture.¹

From such an argument come questions of the validity of its claims: Does social media really create enough of a difference in public opinion to incite movements to restructure whole societal philosophies? If so, how does it do this, and is there evidence to show the influence? These questions open a discussion about the relationship between countries in the age of social media and the Internet, bringing forth curiosity about how social activism benefits from the universal nature of online content accessibility. This thesis will analyse a contemporary example of such a relationship by focusing on France and the United States by and attempting to answer the question: What do the commonalities and divergences of contemporary political activism in

¹ Dalton, Matthew. "In France, Criticism Grows Over U.S.-Inspired Activism on Race, Gender." *Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2021.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-france-criticism-grows-over-u-s-inspired-activism-on-race-gender-11639319941>.

the United States and France reveal about the efficacy of social media as a tool for activism to address social issues and change public opinion?

By conducting research on social movements from the past decade that have occurred in both the United States and France, the main question posed will be explored in detail. A well-developed review of contemporary scholars' views upon modern activism will allow for a comprehensive contextual basis through which to observe how social media functions in the social atmospheres of both countries. From there, observations about the Black Lives Matter and '#MeToo' movements in the United States and the anti-racist BLM-inspired movement in France will be organized in a way that provides cultural context, in-depth qualitative and quantitative data about the media dissemination of the movements, and the resulting impact of the movements upon their respective society's public opinion. Commonalities and divergences between these aspects of the movements will help to answer the guiding question, and findings reveal that social media functions as a tool in contemporary activism to gather support, discuss opinions and organize demonstrations. It does not, however, have the power to influence universal cultural conversion in favor of a social movement's goals relating to any particular topic that has been cause for debate in a country's cultural discourse.

The exploration of the guiding question in depth with the chosen case studies in the United States and France will help to uncover the validity of the claims that the French government and the majority of its citizens assert about the taint of American activism upon their culture. It will do so by assessing how media disseminates within each country and what the tone of reception to social movements has been in the respective country of each movement. This will help to gain a better understanding of the ability for social media to influence populations, and

serves to provide a basis upon which to directly address the possibility of social and political cross-pollination.

Constructing A Framework: The Creation of a Comparative Analysis

Exploring the commonalities and divergences between contemporary social movements in the United States and France addresses the claims of the French government about the influence of American activism upon the rise of ‘woke’ inspired activism in France. President Macron’s assertion that American activism is “threatening to cleave the [French] republic,”² questions the ability of mechanisms that would have the power to facilitate such a powerful cultural exchange, such as social media and the Internet. Although there is ample scholarship that addresses the impact of social media upon American activism, the scope of such academic inquiry is more limited for the exploration of France’s relationship between activism and social media. This gap in the scholastic network presents the importance of the analysis that will be presented in this comparative analysis, which will organize key elements of the social movements selected in order to produce an assessment of commonalities and divergences between them. Such an analysis will provide ample evidence by which to gauge the efficacy of social media’s power to change public opinion for the specific movements, and in turn for the possibility of cultural cross-pollination.

Selecting Subjects

To properly address the guiding question for this comparative analysis, the subjects to be observed must be selected. With the help of Dalton’s article, the United States and France are already singled out as the locations of social activism observed, and further, observation centers around movements that focus upon the contemporary social issues of racism and sexism. The

² Dalton, 2021

‘#MeToo’ and Black Lives Matter movements serve to represent the American contingent, and anti-racist BLM-inspired activism the French. For the purposes of the study, ‘#MeToo’ functions to establish perspective about the advent of social media as a key tool in modern American activism, and also serves to demonstrate the flexible nature of social media as a mechanism to facilitate contemporary activism as a whole. After this contextual observation, the development of comparison focuses upon commonalities and divergences between the American Black Lives Matter movement and the French anti-racist BLM-inspired activism. Doing so allows for direct comparison and a clear assessment of the connection between the two movements.

The gathering of resources also plays a part in the ability for an effective analysis to form, and in the case of this comparative analysis, the inspiration taken from the article written for the Wall Street Journal by Matthew Dalton inspires the selection of scholarly articles that form the research essential to well-rounded representations of key elements of the ‘#MeToo,’ Black Lives Matter, and BLM-inspired movements. Resource search engines, most notably Google Scholar, JSTOR, and the Fordham University Library Database, function to provide the ample resources necessary to gain a fuller understanding of each movement.

Categorical Distinction

The resources found for analysis of the ‘#MeToo,’ Black Lives Matter, and BLM-inspired movements are individually important in forming a comprehensive observation of each. In order to effectively utilize the information found, though, it is necessary to create a conceptual framework within which to organize the sources relating to each movement. This will allow for the analysis of commonalities and differences to be more precise in creating distinctions, and in turn, answering the guiding question of this thesis. For each movement to be observed, research findings will fall into one of three categories: *Conceptualizing Context*, *Quantitatively and/or*

Qualitatively Speaking, and Social Synthesis. These categories serve to dissect the beginnings of the movements, their connections to social media, and the impact they impart upon society, all of which contribute to assessing the efficacy of social media's impact upon public opinion.

The first category, *Conceptualizing Context*, presents the way in which the '#MeToo,' Black Lives Matter, and BLM-inspired movements came to be of cultural relevancy in their respective societies in recent years. '#MeToo' is defined by sexual assault, and its history as a movement highlights the first social activism that began almost entirely online in the United States. Such a unique quality makes this movement a perfect example from which to glean the relationship between social media and activism in the modern era, and allows for the subsequent study of Black Lives Matter in the United States as well, which began in 2013 as a response to racially-driven police brutality and came to the forefront of American political and social discourse in the summer of 2020. French BLM-inspired movements follow a similar trajectory to the United States, but changes to the French Constitution also play a key role in comprehending contemporary context. By weaving together news articles and academic journal articles that discuss the catalysts for these movements, a foundation of context is built, upon which in-depth analysis of social media's role in activism dissemination can be observed.

The role of social media in spreading sentiments for each movement is addressed in the category of research of the case studies entitled *Quantitatively or Qualitatively Speaking*. This section for each movement addresses the functionality of social media as a key tool for facilitating the dissemination of information at the height of each movement's popularity in its respective culture. Because of the importance of qualitative observation in the analysis of social movements and other topics pertinent to social anthropology, research focused on both the data-heavy quantitative aspects of social media as social conduit and the qualitative observations

of the relationship between society and activism. The ‘#MeToo’ and Black Lives Matter movements are observed through a quantitative lens, and have data from numerically-driven sources that represent the saturation of social media engagement in the United States, where the respective movements and their activism occurred. The BLM-inspired movements in France are observed through a qualitative lens due to the lack of scholarship that specifically deals with French social activism and social media as its tool. Because of this, the research relating to France utilizes sources such as news articles that discuss the relevant hashtags used for social activism and the response of traditional media to calls to action for the anti-racist cause. This well-rounded exploration of social movements and the social and traditional media that supported their spread helps to understand the way that each movement’s message reached the public, and leads to engagement with the effect upon public opinion.

After gathering context and media presence, the final section for each case study, titled *Social Synthesis*, focuses upon the societal reaction to the sentiments expressed by each movement through their digital activism. The quantitative and qualitative data collected earlier in the case studies informs this section, which assesses the efficacy of attempts to inspire social change through the use of social media by the movements addressed. American public opinion shifts are expressed with mostly quantitative data through the reading of surveys and other data of note, such as the trends of hashtags relating to ‘#MeToo’ and Black Lives Matter. For the French BLM-inspired movements, a qualitative assessment is made by gathering public opinion sentiments after anti-racist activism from news articles and academic journals that discuss intellectual debates occurring in France relating to race. The organization of public opinion in reaction to movements in both the United States and France provides another layer of observation that helps to more fully answer the guiding question, just as the two other categories

provide the contextual foundations and essential facts situating the role of social media as a tool for the contemporary activism addressed.

Assessing Scholarship: What Activism Means In Contemporary Context

The exploration and analysis of the parallels and divergences between societal movements in the contemporary United States and France cannot be achieved in full depth without an understanding of how scholars have documented the evolution of the conception of ‘modern activism.’ Properly navigating the relationship necessitates an understanding of the evolution of how we perceive ‘activism’ in a contemporary sense, and also it requires a point of inspiration from which to begin gathering context about both the United States and France’s current events. In order to fulfill the first of these requirements, ‘activism’ as a term in academic discourse will be traced from its emergence in the 1960s up into today, and by exploring how the term has gone through stages of meaning and associations, the modern events to be dissected in the cases studies will become more clear.

Before diving into the history of academia’s perception of ‘activism’, though, the inspiration for singling out the United States and France for this study must be established. Two articles published in American newspapers shed light on the general outline of the relationship between the United States and France relating to activism, and each added a layer of clarity that helped to guide how modern activism should be observed and defined. The article, “In France, Criticism Grows Over US-Inspired Activism on Race, Gender,” published by journalist Matthew Dalton, provided a basis from which to begin thinking about the role of activism in the societal landscape of both countries addressed. He puts forth observations about the internal debate in France about the, “impact that U.S. protest movements over race and gender have had in

France,” and how these debates are, “drawing criticism from some politicians and intellectuals” in France.³ His article provides various examples, such as the comments made by French President Emmanuel Macron and Francois Jolivet, a French lawmaker who advises the Academie Francaise. These two Frenchmen, along with other voices in Dalton’s article, bring light to the issue surrounding the effect of American culture, and specifically American political activist culture, upon other countries that possess their own distinct cultures, such as France. This article began the formation of parameters within which to consider the definition of modern ‘activism’ for this case study, as a term connected to contemporary phenomena such as social media, transcontinental informational dissemination, and the social change spurred by both of these. From dissecting Dalton’s article, the connection between activism in France and the United States is clear, along with the socially conceived general understanding of the term ‘activism,’ but in order to properly build an in-depth case study and comparative analysis, a more tangible definition of the term in a contemporary academic sense is essential.

To achieve this, though, the history of how modern activism has been academically perceived must also be explored, and it will be the basis upon which we can more precisely define activism for the purposes of this study. Beginning in the 1970s, the term ‘activism’ was introduced to academic circles as, “referring to the ability to act and make or change history,”⁴ and in a chapter of his book, *Reclaiming the Media: Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles*⁵, social scholar Bart Cammaerts outlines the essential tools of activism as it forms around its original definition into the contemporary moment. According to Cammaerts, a major component of activism comes in the form of ‘direct action,’ defined by Cammaerts as, “a core

³ Dalton, 2021

⁴ Cammaerts, Bart. "Activism and Media." Introduction to *Reclaiming the Media: Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles*, by Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpenter, 217-24. Bristol: Intellect, 2007.

⁵ Ibid

process of social change,” with examples such as,” protests and demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, etc.”⁶ This assertion rings true when one thinks of major moments in the evolution of activism in the United States since the 1970s, such as with the Anti-War Movement surrounding the Vietnam War and the Gay Rights Movement throughout the latter part of the 20th century. The focus on public displays in physical space in Cammaerts’ chapter is oriented towards defining the more ‘traditional’ conception of activism, one that functions by bringing people together physically to bring awareness to a topic of political and social interest.

When considering these comments and analyses in the context of the contemporary moment, though, the importance (or lack thereof) of the internet in the spread of social movement sentiments and activism is not very promising. Cammaerts says that, “...the Internet is burdened with many constraints, of which access and fragmentation are the most obvious,”⁷ which admittedly can sometimes be the case with the vast metascape of the virtual world, but the argument that this fragmentation leads Internet activists to, “ diversify their media strategies to also include...media such as print and radio”⁸ is not congruent with the monopoly social media holds as a tool of social change today. It must be taken into account that Cammaerts was writing in 2007, a time just before the rise of social media as a tool of activism began. To bridge the gap between a world where the Internet is a tool with limited scope and a world where it is the main avenue by which a movement is formed, scholar Bradley Allsop’s review of scholarly sources dealing with social media as a tool for modern activism is invaluable for contextualizing how contemporary scholars see the efficacy of social media’s influence upon modern activism.

Allsop’s collection of sources provides three distinct sides of current academic argument centering around how to define the role of social media in relation to the progression of modern

⁶ Cammaerts, 217

⁷ Ibid 220

⁸ Ibid 220

activism. To set the tone for his exploration into the various voices of contemporary scholarly thought, Allsop introduces the debate he will dissect. He describes it to be focused upon,

“whether social media augments existing, more traditional forms of activism or whether it opens up a new realm of separate, ‘virtual’ political behavior detached from the more traditional forms (and whether this is a good thing) and whether social media represents a revolution of sorts in political behavior and engagement.”⁹

With the academic debate defined, Allsop goes on to divide his review of the various voices into three categories: ‘slacktivism’, ‘paradigm shifting’, and ‘facilitating’. Each of these categories provides a clear understanding of the ways that contemporary activism can be defined conceptually in relation to social media by defining parameters of engagement and their efficacy.

The first school of thought presented by Allsop, ‘slacktivism,’ is a term made up of a combination of the words ‘slacker’ and ‘activism’.¹⁰ ‘Slacktivism’ “suggests that online political actions that require relatively little time or commitment often act to supplant, rather than supplement, physical, ‘real world’ activism, have little political impact and only really serve the egotistical needs of those participating in them,”¹¹ and credits H.S. Christensen¹² with the conception of the definition that Allsop creates. This side of the argument as to what social media does in connection to the goals of modern activism paints a picture that is pretty bleak, with social media engagement contributing only to the noise that is the endless void of opinions circulating the Internet. It seems that ‘slactivism’ perceives that any slightly passive action of engagement on social media in connection to a social movement is an act of self-aggrandizement and does not substantively contribute to the goals and progression of the movement commented

⁹ Allsop, Bradley. "Social media and activism: A literature review." *Social Psychological Review* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2016), 35.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Christensen, H.S. (2011). Political activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or political participation by other means? *First Monday*, 16(2).

upon or engaged with on a social media platform. If this is the case, then it would seem that most of the hashtags, retweets and reposts that occur in Internet communities would be null and void, and begs the question as to what *does* constitute constructive Internet engagement.

While this question lingers in the air, though, Allsop turns his attention to the next camp of academics in the debate to conceptualize social media's role in furthering social change. The 'Paradigm shifters' are those scholars who believe that, "social media is fundamentally changing political behavior and challenging existing power structures in society in a potentially revolutionary way."¹³ In contrast to the pessimism that defines 'slacktivism,' the core of the 'Paradigm shifter' assertion is that social media's reach and flexibility allows for it to be the tool that will lead the way to social revolution. This outlook feels a little over-zealous, but does help to conceptualize the general sentiment in popular culture that social media is a key tool in promoting change organically and toward the result of restructuring society for the better. What the 'Paradigm shifter' lacks, though, is a sense of reality that does not assign blind faith to social media as the agent of social reordering.

The last group of academics the Allsop presents bridges that gap, and the 'facilitators' do so by utilizing concrete evidence to measure how much actual change is produced by engagement on social media. In presenting a definition of what the 'facilitators' argue for, Allsop references P. Gerbaudo,¹⁴ who argues for the importance of empirical work in the realm of assessing social media's connection to contemporary activism. This search for evidence is inspired by the belief of 'facilitators' that, "social media is very rarely its own activity in and of itself," and that, "it is often utilized as part of a broader set of political activities."¹⁵ Such an assessment of social media as just one tool in an arsenal of other actions that contribute to

¹³ Allsop, 36

¹⁴ Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the streets: Social media and contemporary activism*. Pluto Press.

¹⁵ Allsop, 38

activism diverges completely from the other two categories of scholars that Allsop brings forth to be interpreted. By doing so, the complete spectrum of academic arguments, from social media as the key to reordering society to media posts only aggrandizing egos without any contribution to change, is complete. The conceptual understanding of how the relationship between activism and social media is perceived is built upon the definition of activism as a term that embodies the ability to produce change that alters the course of history that was presented by Cammaerts,¹⁶ and allows for a critical lens through which to further explore how scholars have worked to find answers to the way that social media engagement facilitates or hinders the change it intends to support.

In her doctoral thesis for Regent University, Nadine Barnett Cosby focuses upon just that, centering her qualitative research upon the role social media takes in activism that has recently occurred in the United States. She, “investigate[s] the quality and types of engagement that occur on social media platforms related to social justice movements,”¹⁷ and the findings after completing research conclude that, “discourse via social media affords movements and activists the opportunity for organization, mobilization and free expression of a movement’s people, purpose and plans.”¹⁸ In reviewing Cosby’s doctoral work, the application of the concepts described by Allsop can be seen in action, most specifically in the employment of elements that directly relate to the ‘facilitators.’ Observations and analysis from conducting research relating to the Black Lives Matter and Take a Knee movements help Cosby to conclude that social media engagement with a movement’s presence online is positive for furthering the progression of the movement in question. Engagement does this by making, “those who perceive a positive

¹⁶ Cammaerts, 218

¹⁷ Cosby, Nadine Barnett. "The Revolution May Not Be Televised But It Will Be Hashtagged: The Impact of Social Media on Social Movements, Racial Perceptions, and Real-World Activism." PhD diss., Regent U, 2018, iv.

¹⁸ Ibid

consequence or reception from posting on social media using artifacts related to a movement consistently report that they are more likely to participate in the movement offline.”¹⁹ To come to such a conclusion after undertaking the task of qualitative research and analyzing the language of 1400 hashtag samples that directly related to Black Lives Matter and Take a Knee²⁰ provides a well-informed example of the ability of social media to act as a tool to facilitate activism. The research Cosby presents demonstrates the ability for social media to function as one element of multiple mechanisms that support the success of a social movement, and contextualizes the theoretical definitions and conceptions that contemporary scholars.

In reviewing all these sources, a breadth of knowledge relating to the definition of activism, scholarly views on its relationship with social media, and academic projects that aspire to decode the relationship can begin to form. It will contextualize the research to be presented, and provides an informed lens through which to analyse the qualitative data collected upon social movements and activism manifested in the United States and France.

Case by Case: A Dissection of Social Movements in The United States and France

The observation and eventual analysis of activism’s impact upon cultural sentiments in the United States and France must be narrowed in scope in order to properly gain perspective. In the following exploratory text, findings from the specially chosen movements to be observed are organized and presented in order to paint a fairly full narrative of recent social movements that have been shaped by the inclusion of social media in their efforts. The focus of this case study ultimately attempts to understand the permeation of activism relating to social justice in western democracies, and so both the United States and France will be viewed under this lens. In the

¹⁹ Cosby, 162

²⁰ Cosby, 163

United States, the movements to be held under an analytic lens are the Black Lives Matter Movement and the ‘#MeToo’ movement, both of which rely upon social media to effectively convey their messages. On the French side, the rise of anti-racist activism and the evolution into the French strain of Black Lives Matter will be explored. The movements and their respective cultural context are essential to deciphering the role that social media plays in modern activism’s achievement of its goals oriented towards tangible social change, and illuminate the ways in which social activism in the United States and France both mirror and juxtapose one another.

And Justice for All: American Activism, Media and Public Opinion

In the case of the United States’ current and recent activism, the Black Lives Matter and ‘#MeToo’ movements stand out as instances in which social media functions as a pivotal tool in the effectiveness of the spread of each movement’s initiatives. Each of these examples of modern American activism highlights the emphasis upon racial and gender equality that has been amplified in recent years of political discourse, and each helps to tangibly understand how activism in the digital age evolves. ‘#MeToo’ functions for the purpose of this study to illuminate the story of one of the first highly successful social media-driven social movements in the United States. Observations of ‘#MeToo’ will help to inform the examination of the evolution of Black Lives Matter by demonstrating the former’s influence in building a digital network foundation upon which the latter built.

Conceptualizing Context: #MeToo

The American contemporary movement, #MeToo, stands firmly in public discourse today as a testament to the effectiveness of social media in helping to spark social change. The seeds of activism that would grow into a nationwide and global sexual abuse awareness movement began

back in 2006 by social activist, Tarana Burke.²¹ The goal of Ms. Burke's efforts was to, "support women and girls...who had survived sexual violence,"²² and was established before the advent of social media as a major source of cultural capital. The meteoric rise of #MeToo into discourse influencing American public opinion was on October 15, 2017, when actress Alyssa Milano posted a tweet that directly inspired the 'metoo' label,²³ which is displayed in its entirety in Fig. 3. In the 24 hours that



Fig 3. The tweet that started an outpouring of experience and support related to sexual assault.

followed Ms. Milano's post, over 1 million tweets and retweets using 'metoo' saturated the Twitter platform, and began a nationwide reckoning with the subject of sexual abuse and survival in the United States.

The activism response to the initial catalyst, Ms. Milano's post, allowed for sexual abuse survivors and supporters of the affected to blossom on social media platforms. The amorphous nature of the digital landscape allowed and continues to allow 'MeToo' to serve as,

“ a sign of empowerment for victims who may have feared they were alone, who thought they would not be believed, or who simply did not think justice was a possibility. Posting

²¹ Williams, Jamillah Bowman, Lisa Singh, and Naomi Mezey. "#MeToo as a Catalyst: A Glimpse into 21st Century Activism." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 2019, 374.

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

on social media has provided a simple and subtle way to speak out and share their experience.”²⁴

These sentiments are the central point from which subsequent activism to fight against the complacent treatment of sexual assault originates, and observing the journey of ‘#MeToo’ from Ms. Milano’s post to a leading movement in the realm of digital activism will help to more fully comprehend the impact of the movement as a whole.

Quantitatively Speaking: #MeToo

The expansion of ‘#MeToo’ in American public discourse following the initial tweet posted by actress Alyssa Milano is a deeply layered phenomenon in the study of digital activism. The uniqueness of ‘#MeToo’ stems from the highly flexible and accessible nature of social media, with, “ the use of searchable hashtags such as #MeToo allow[ing] for the rapid development of a large-scale social movement.”²⁵ To properly understand the way that social media’s plasticity facilitated the expansion of activism related to ‘#MeToo,’ it is imperative to observe social media posts from various chronological points after October 15, 2017. In a study that isolated data from the 24-hour period following Ms. Milano’s post, researchers conducted a “sentiment analysis,” which is described as, “ a complement to human-based assessment in examining social media responses,”²⁶ by categorizing “context and content of incidents”²⁷ relayed in social media posts. Of the categories created to organize posts with the hashtag ‘#metoo’ label, two categories garnered the most attention. “Validation/Belief, ” which was defined for the purposes of the study as sentiments that relate to, “reassurance that [the] target is

²⁴Ibid, 374-75

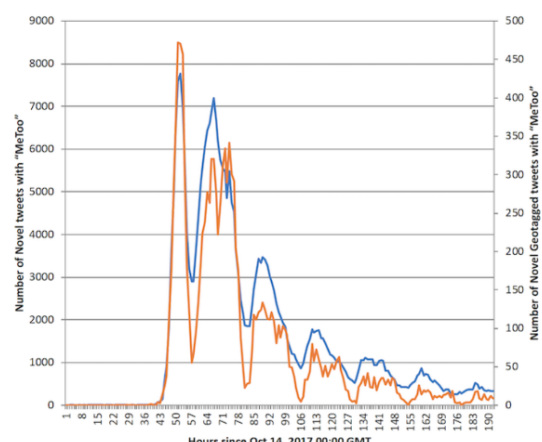
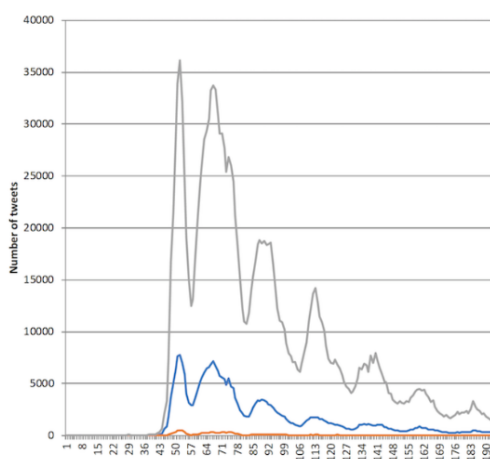
²⁵ Schneider, Kimberly T., and Nathan J. Carpenter. "Sharing #MeToo on Twitter: Incidents, Coping Responses, and Social Reactions." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 39, no. 1 (March 12, 2019): 87-100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-09-2018-0161>, 88.

²⁶ Ibid, 90

²⁷ Ibid

believed,”²⁸ accounted for 12.5%²⁹ of the 2,102 tweets chosen to be sampled. Making up 12.2% of the samples were posts in the “Advocacy” category, which was defined by researchers to be sentiments that, “express individual or societal intent to change the culture.”³⁰ Though the percentages for these categories seem to be relatively small, their totals are proportionately higher than the other 6 categories of posts that were examined. The results showing that validation of stories and subsequent advocacy for the sexually abused were ‘trending’ immediately after Alyssa Milano’s call-to-action post demonstrates how ‘#MeToo’ began to gain influence, and looking further into the use of the hashtag the weeks following the initial interest can help to assess lasting impacts of the movement.

In the week that followed October 17, 2017, with the post that initiated the digital presence of ‘#MeToo’, trends in posts on Twitter that included ‘#MeToo’ content followed a declined. A study that isolated this time period focused upon, “ the number of #MeToo tweets per hour starting October 14, to show the time trends comparing all #MeToo tweets, novel English #MeToo tweets, and US-based geotagged novel English language #MeToo tweets.”³¹ The visual representations of the findings (Fig. 4, Fig. 5) demonstrate that in all three categories of data, the most notable point of decline begins at around 106 hours,³² or 4.4 days, whereby subsequent resurgences were not as exponential as in the initial hours of the hashtag’s trending status. With this observation from the data collected, it is evident that the social media presence of the ‘#MeToo’ movement did not enjoy a prolonged period of high saturation in digital



discourse. It could be inferred from this observation that digital activism did not create a sustained impact, but in looking further into activism relating to sexual assault and gender equality outside the digital sphere, the tangible impacts of ‘#MeToo’ upon American public opinion can become clear.

Social Synthesis: #MeToo

The data presented relating to the online engagement of ‘#MeToo’ reflects a history that can be construed as limited in its long-term influence. This illusion, though, does not reflect the ways in which online activism of the movement, which began in 2017, translated into spreading awareness about sexual assault and influencing change in public opinion. The more long-term impact of ‘#MeToo,’ comparatively to its trending status for the week following Alyssa Milano’s tweet, can be seen in changes in public attitudes related to the credibility of accusers and the accountability of abusers. Polls taken to survey the general American public after the rise of ‘#MeToo’ found that, “ between 59 and 85 percent of Americans believed these recent allegations of harassment,”³³ and, “two-thirds of Americans - 62 percent of men and 71 percent of women - now think that sexual harassment is widespread.”³⁴ Such a shift in public opinion is monumental in the evolution of American society, and its beginning can be directly tied to the outpouring of testimony and support that began with its initial digital activism in 2017. This type of monumental change has been named by scientists as a “norms cascade,” referring to, “ a series of long-term trends that produce a sudden shift in social mores.”³⁵ ‘#MeToo’ served as the catalyst for the shift in American society’s views upon and awareness of sexual abuse, as the polls summarized show. Along with this, specific instances of changes in social reactions to

³³Rhode, Deborah L. “#Metoo: Why Now? What Next?” *Duke Law Journal* 69, no. 2 (November 2019): 401.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

allegations of sexual misconduct after October 2017 illuminate the more long-term impact of the movement.

This long-term impact can be seen when observing examples of the treatment of sexual abuse allegations relating to employment in American businesses. In 2018, more than a full year after the initial digital mobilization of ‘#MeToo,’ employers across the United States were beginning to feel the tangible shift in public intolerance for sexual misconduct. Mayer Brown, a globally recognized law firm,³⁶ experienced a situation that served well as an example of the rising sentiments of intolerance when one of the firm’s American offices hired, “a new recruit who had left two previous firms after allegations of misconduct.”³⁷ Women who had previously worked with the new associate in question sent a bouquet addressed to Mayer Brown sarcastically thanking the firm for hiring a lawyer who had been accused of sexual misconduct at his previous place of employment, and after the display, Mayer Brown began an internal investigation that resulted in the resignation of the newly minted associate. The actions taken by those women to bring awareness to issues of sexual misconduct in law firms resulted in Mayer Brown publicly announcing, “the termination of [a] powerful partner due to ‘inappropriate personal conduct with a subordinate.’”³⁸ After this situation, law firms around the country began on a journey to uphold a commitment to accountability against sexual abuse, with repercussions extending into firm operations worldwide.³⁹

Other instances that demonstrate the impact of ‘#MeToo’ even after its initial appearance on social media platforms, characterize the movement as one that inspires substantive social change and utilizes the digital realm as a tool for maintaining social relevancy. According to

³⁶ "About Us | Mayer Brown." Mayer Brown. Last modified 2023.
<https://www.mayerbrown.com/en/about-us/about?tab=Overview>.

³⁷ Rhode, 406

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

research conducted by the Massive Data Institute at Georgetown University, “the #MeToo hashtag is heavily correlated with social and political events, reaching a high point in September 2018 during the Brett Kavanaugh hearings.”⁴⁰ Such findings highlight the continued importance of addressing sexual misconduct in American society led by ‘#MeToo,’ and legitimizing the activism as, “not simply a fleeting trend from October 2017.”⁴¹ The resulting societal shift towards accountability relating to sexual misconduct has not faded since its initial height after Alyssa Milano’s tweet; if anything, the movement has become a fundamental value in contemporary American political discourse. As recently as December 2022, Harvey Weinstein, 70, a former film executive who was a lead perpetrator in the allegations of sexual misconduct that fueled the initial ‘#MeToo’ discourse, “faces the possibility of 18 to 24 years behind bars in California,”⁴² which he will serve, “after completing his sentence in New York, where he still has 21 years left in prison.”⁴³ This example, along with other instances of abuser accountability that have circulated in recent years, stands as a testament to the transition of ‘#MeToo’ from an example of digital activism to a long-lasting influence upon public opinion in the United States.

Conceptualizing Context: Black Lives Matter

The Black Lives Matter movement, though having had the height of its social media saturation after the death of George Floyd in 2020⁴⁴, began back in 2012 with the death of Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of George Zimmerman⁴⁵. The movement’s intention, as quoted from one of the movement’s initial leaders, Patrisse Cullors, was to address, “the lack of

⁴⁰Williams, Jamillah Bowman, Lisa Singh, and Naomi Mezey, 380

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴²Herstik, Lauren, Jill Cowan, and Livia Albeck-Ripka. "Los Angeles Jury Finds Harvey Weinstein Guilty of Rape in Mixed Verdict." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), December 19, 2022.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/19/us/harvey-weinstein-trial-verdict.html>

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Miller, Althea Legal. "Race, Policing and Black Lives Matter." In *Developments in American Politics 9*, by Gillian Peele, 33-48. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2022, 33.

⁴⁵ Hillstrom, Laurie Collier. *Black Lives Matter: From a Moment to a Movement*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2018, vii.

recognition towards the killings of black people by vigilantes and law enforcement,”⁴⁶ especially by news outlets and political discourse of the early 2010s. As the influence of the Black Lives Matter initiative progressed, it drew upon not only the initial catalyst of Trayvon Martin’s death, but upon the exponential rise in, “national consciousness following a spate of police-involved deaths of unarmed black men.”⁴⁷ The unwarranted violent suffering of African Americans that has continued through the last decade and into the early years of the 2020s provides the purpose and the voice for the Black Lives Matter movement, and this fervor, in conjunction with tools of the modern age, was what brought the movement to its height in the summer of 2020. The catalyst for the all-encompassing political discourse that currently permeates contemporary American society began on the 25th of May 2020, when, “[George] Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis Police Department officers after he was taken into custody, [and] Officers J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane used their body weight to pin Floyd face down on the ground, while Officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck.”⁴⁸ The death of George Floyd brought the efforts of the Black Lives Matter movement into the spotlight of American political discourse and inspired the organization of activism to publicize social injustice. Floyd’s death served as a motivating factor for protests and social media-facilitated discourse responding to the injustice that occurred with increasing frequency following the events of the 25th of May 2020⁴⁹. According to Legal-Miller, “the nationwide rallying cry of ‘Black Lives Matter’ resulted in over 8500 demonstrations by the close of 2020,”⁵⁰ and that sentiment surrounding themes such as the severity of social justice issues has been on the rise in the contemporary United States since at least 2015.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Miller, 33

⁴⁹ Ibid, 38

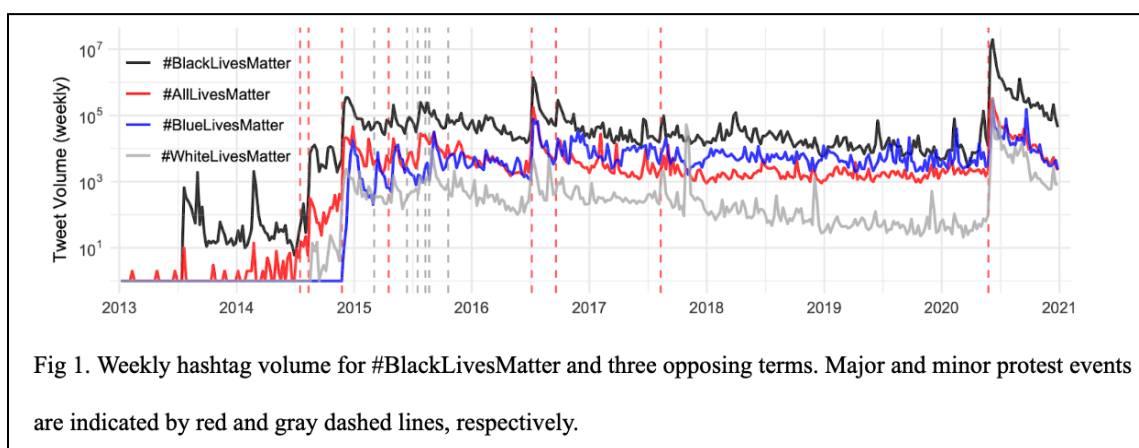
⁵⁰ Ibid, 39

⁵¹ Ibid, 39

Quantitatively Speaking: Black Lives Matter

This shift in general belief could not have appeared independently, but must have evolved over time to be the key discussion that circulates in American politics of the current moment. In observing the evolution of the Black Lives Matter movement, the repeated discussion of social media across academic and news sources places the digital platform in the prime role of facilitation device for the progression of the BLM movement, which began in 2013 with the creation of ‘#blacklivesmatter’ by community organizer Alicia Garza⁵². Social media’s role in the explosion of discourse and activism can be seen in observing the timeline of social media trends and by choosing key moments in the progression of the movement to isolate social media data. Fig. 1 is a graph designed to show the fluctuations of hashtag use for racially-related sentiments that rose around the same time in the early 2010s, listing the hashtags observed: #BlackLivesMatter, #AllLivesMatter, #BlueLivesMatter, and #WhiteLivesMatter⁵³.

The graph attempts to visually represent, “the prevalence of these hashtags from the origin of #BlackLivesMatter following the acquittal of the killer of Trayvon Martin, George Zimmerman, on July 13, 2013, through 2020.”⁵⁴ Observation of the graph reveals that the



⁵² Ibid, 36

⁵³ Dunivin, Zackary Okun, Harry Yaojun Yan, Jelani Ince, and Fabio Rojas. "Black Lives Matter Protests Shift Public Discourse." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119, no. 10 (March 3, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2117320119>, 8.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 7

discourse on social media involving Black Lives Matter has steadily increased in the years since the catalyst event of 2013, and though ‘counter movements’ have entered the political discussions held on social media, the comparative volume of BLM-related posts is most prominent, and can be concluded to be the most supported amongst the American public. Along with this, isolating data from Twitter functions as an invaluable resource from which to comprehend the role of social media in the dissemination of Black Lives Matter sentiments. For example, in the week following the death of George Floyd, between 25 May and 31 May 2020,⁵⁵ of the 324 highest trending hashtags in this time period, “184 were political (57%), [and] of political trends, 116 explicitly concerned the Black Lives Matter protests and catalyzing events.”⁵⁶ This prevalence in the online discourse related to BLM is also evident through observing the saturation of hashtags and keywords generally associated with the BLM movement within the same time period, with posts hosting related labels making, “up almost one-third of the top 200 trending topics.”⁵⁷ Both of these quantitative conclusions, along with the data points presented in Fig. 1, lead to the understanding that the general reaction to political and social sentiments expressed relating to racial justice in the wake of George Floyd’s death was supported by the American public, and that they sustained even after their peak following Floyd’s death.

Social Synthesis: Black Lives Matter

This public support that can be inferred can also be quantitatively proven, and in research conducted by the Pew Research Center, Black Lives Matter’s increasing impact upon social sentiments is evident. Two studies published in 2020 show the ways in which activism related to the death of George Floyd, along with other racially charged events of recent years, has

⁵⁵Bolsover, Gillian. "Black Lives Matter Discourse on US Social Media during COVID: Polarised Positions Enacted in a New Event." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2020. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3688909>, 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 4

⁵⁷ Ibid, 4

heightened awareness surrounding racial injustice and sparked a change in social perceptions. The first study, published on June 12, 2020, assessed various aspects of the effect of activism upon social interactions. The most salient part of the study that helps to illuminate the Black Lives Matter movement's impact relates to asking participants about their participation in conversations about, "race or racial equality in the last month,"⁵⁸ with the results finding that 69% of the respondents to the survey had, "had conversations with family and friends,"⁵⁹ and 37% had, "posted or shared content related to race in or racial equality,"⁶⁰ during the dates of the survey, June 4-10, 2020. These results show the direct results of protests and social media-driven activism following the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and with positive results. The sentiments of Black Lives Matter that permeated social media and political discourse in the weeks after the fatal event are recorded and quantified by Pew's research, and another part of the survey illustrates the tangible change in public opinion relating to race relations. In the same research report published on June 12, 2020, Pew's researchers asked respondents about the most effective ways to achieve change in racial inequality. Below, the responses have been organized visually by the Research Center, and the results relating to 'all adults' are especially of note for this study.

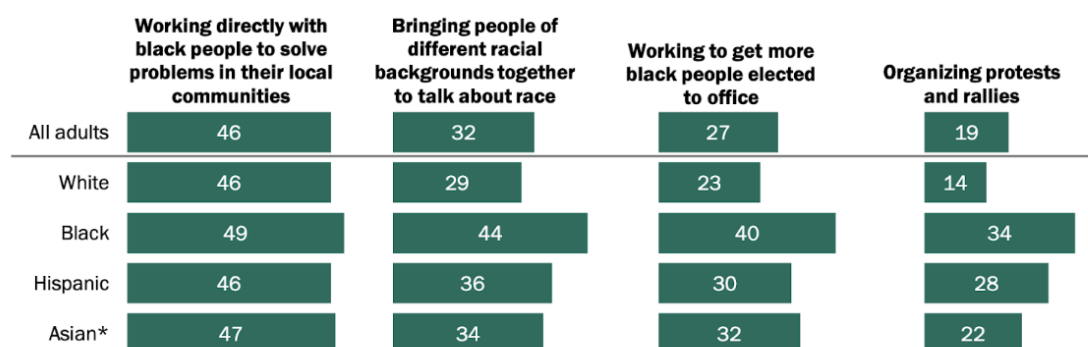
⁵⁸Parker, Kim, Juliana Horowitz, and Monica Anderson. "Amid Protests, Majorities Across Racial and Ethnic Groups Express Support for the Black Lives Matter Movement." *Pew Research Center*, June 2020, 6.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 6

⁶⁰ Ibid, 6

More than four-in-ten Americans say working locally with black people would be very effective in achieving equality; smaller shares say protests are effective

% saying each of the following would be a very effective tactic for groups and organizations that work to help black people achieve equality



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: White, black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.

"Amid Protests, Majorities Across Racial and Ethnic Groups Express Support for the Black Lives Matter Movement"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Fig 2. Pew Research results displaying public sentiments relating to creating change¹⁸

As can be observed in the diagram, most adults who answered the survey believed that working to create change in communities is the most effective way to “achieve equality,” and that somewhat surprisingly, protests and rallies were the least popular tactics to support social change.⁶¹ Such a result would seem to counter the legitimacy of Black Lives Matter-related activism at the time in which the survey was taken when protests and rallies were popular across the United States, but looking back to the movement’s birth in 2013, the original goal was to bring awareness to the injustice being exercised upon African Americans that could help to produce change. In observing the results of the Pew survey, this goal obviously prevails in the consensus of public opinion collected, and another survey conducted under the Pew name reflects a growing shift in changes of public opinion.

⁶¹ Ibid, 11

This second survey, published on October 15, 2020, explores the relationship between social media users in the United States and their views on social issues, most notably relating to racial injustice⁶². According to the survey, “23% of adult social media users in the United States... say they have changed their views about a political or social issue because of something they saw on social media in the last year,”⁶³ which is an increase from the 17% that was recorded by a similar survey in 2018.⁶⁴ The 2020 version of the survey asked about details relating to the respondents’ choices, “and when asked to elaborate on the things they [had] changed their views about, these adults often [mentioned] the Black Lives Matter movement and police brutality.”⁶⁵ These results demonstrate the role that social media plays in moving public opinion, but the remaining 76% of respondents who did not report to have changed their opinions because of social media support the idea that, “social media activity highlights important issues that may not get a lot of attention otherwise,” but that they also assert that, “social media distract people from issues that are truly important.”⁶⁶ Each point expressed in the Pew Research Center’s articles, paired with the quantitative data they present, paints a well-rounded picture of the state of public opinion in response to the surge of discourse surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020. These observations create a vivid perception of the overall movement’s impact and impart understanding of the role of social media and digital activism in achieving the movement’s goals.

Vive Le Activisme: French Activism, Media and Public Opinion

In recent years, systemized discrimination has come to the forefront of French societal discourse. Political discourse relating to topics such as *la laïcete*, or Islamophobia, and

⁶² Perrin, Andrew. "23% of users in U.S. say social media led them to change views on an issue; some cite Black Lives Matter." *Pew Research Center*, October 15, 2020, 1.

⁶³ Ibid, 1

⁶⁴ Ibid, 1

⁶⁵ Ibid, 2

⁶⁶ Ibid, 3

systematized racism against French migrant minority groups, have deeply influenced the country's shifts in social attitudes and governmental policies.⁶⁷ The inspiration for French activism in recent years into the present has drawn upon systemically discriminatory practices that target minority groups in France, most of whom have emigrated from former colonies. In the most recent wave of dissenting voices, anti-racist activism has permeated French society to rail against institutional practices and public opinion that oppress French citizens originating from outside France, and the current wave draws from the American movement, Black Lives Matter, to structure its dissemination and message.⁶⁸ To fully understand the current state of anti-racist protest in France, the compilation of a brief history of discriminatory sentiments will be explored in order to provide observations of the media's role in the current movement's efficacy.

Conceptualizing Context: Le Antiracisme & BLM

The rise of anti-racist political discourse and activism related to Black Lives Matter in France comes at a time in which the foundations of French society are being questioned by those not in control. Since the French Revolution, when the ideals of modern France were formed, "French academic and political tradition considers the discussion of race to be antithetical to the French Republican conception of a national community of citizens of absolute equality."⁶⁹ Fundamentally, French views toward race have adopted a sort of 'race-blindness' that prefers to view all French citizens as equal and without difference in a theoretical sense related to their rights under the French Republic. The word race was included in the French Constitution to

⁶⁷Everett, Samuel Sami. "Interfaith Dialogue and Faith-Based Social Activism in a State of Emergency: Laïcité and the Crisis of Religion in France." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 31, no. 4 (June 13, 2018): 438.

⁶⁸Godin, Mélissa, and Chahrazade Douah. "A Young Black Man Died in France 4 Years Ago in Police Custody. Now Thousands Are Protesting in His Name." *Time*, June 4, 2020.
<https://time.com/5847396/france-protests-anti-racism/>.

⁶⁹ Goldman, Josephine. "Can Black Lives Matter in a Race-Blind France? French Avoidance of 'Race' and Mobilisation of Black Collective Identity in Response to Police Brutality." *Literature and Aesthetics : the Journal of the Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics* 30, no. 2 (2020): 92.

define the parameters of equality for all citizens until 2018, when the Constitution was amended to state France's ideological purpose:

“France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, *without distinction of gender, origin, or religion.*”⁷⁰

Previously, the italicized section had read, “without distinction of origin, race or religion,”⁷¹ and its change to omit the distinction of ‘race’ was viewed by minority groups in France as a denial of racial difference, and by association, the reality of racial discrimination⁷² that pervaded French society at the time and is still a major concern today. The omission of ‘race’ in the French Constitution further highlights the issues of racial discrimination by codifying the official stance of the French government and the majority of French public opinion that favors the romanticized ideal of ‘race-blindness.’ It does not allow for discrimination to be officially recognized and combatted in French society, and in conjunction with events that are overtly discriminatory in recent years, has led to French activism that has progressively escalated from anti-discrimination to anti-racism-focused movements.

French discourse about racial discrimination and racism at large has expanded since the early 2000s, and events within the past 10 years have brought the discussion into a prominent place in political discourse. Events such as the “Paris massacres in 2015,”⁷³ otherwise known as the Charlie Hebdo shooting, when Muslim assailants murdered shoppers in a Kosher supermarket, resulted in government action that explicitly ousted Muslims and, “left a deep societal malaise around the place of religion in France.”⁷⁴ This formation of French public

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Ibid, 93

⁷³ Everett, 438

⁷⁴ Ibid

opinion transformed into a definable term, *la laïcete*, or Islamophobia, and is viewed as a religious aversion to Muslims in France. The sentiment has taken on an ambiguity that does not, “clearly [identify] Islamophobia as racism,”⁷⁵ and following the societal shifts in 2015, led to activism under the name of anti-discrimination. Not long after the pervasion of French political action to combat discrimination against Muslims, police brutality in France brought the issue of discrimination against migrants to France of African descent into national focus. On 19 July 2016, Adama Traoré, a young Black French man, was killed in police custody, and the public response to the event sparked activism across the digital sphere and coverage in traditional media.

Qualitatively Speaking: Le Antiracisme & BLM

Directly following the death of Adama Traoré in 2016, “protests broke out for several weeks in Paris, and the slogans #BLMFrance and #Justiceforadama went viral on Twitter.”⁷⁶ The protests that ensued were very similar in structure to their American counterparts. They did not, however, enjoy the same success of a consolidated media presence or guiding principles that Black Lives Matter in the United States began to build in the mid-2010s. The French BLM movement’s stagnation was due almost directly to the, “continued dominance of France’s race-blind model of absolute equality,”⁷⁷ along with institutional limits that did not allow for changes in public opinion to gain popularity with support of context, such as, “statistics concerning race...racial profiling, and the racialized nature of police violence.”⁷⁸ Because of limitations such as this, the short-lived national recognition of racial discrimination and

⁷⁵ Ibid, 440

⁷⁶ Goldman, 94

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid, 96

inequality in France did not inspire change on the national level, but it did influence change initiatives that were operating more locally.

Such initiatives have worked since even before the rise in popularity of anti-racist and French BLM activism after 2015, and their work reflects the introduction of societal themes of discrimination into political discourse in France with the consequences of the Charlie Hebdo shooting and Adama Traoré's death. By working on the local level, groups combatted discrimination by organizing and hosting educational activities and events to spread awareness about discriminatory actions among French minority communities. Two groups that stood out as leaders around 2015 were *Vivre Ensemble l'Egalité*, operational from 2010-2015,⁷⁹ and *PoliCité*, operational from 2016 to present.⁸⁰ These groups, along with others, put forth local initiatives to raise awareness about discrimination with their programming, "in the form of conferences, debates, training sessions, [and] festivals."⁸¹ By doing so, action against the dominant stance of French race-blindness was not direct as outright protest would be and instead focused upon small changes to rewrite narratives surrounding discrimination. The local nature of groups such as *Vivre Ensemble l'Egalité* and *PoliCité* did not solely rely upon media of any sort due to the possibility of interference by government or larger political groups who may dissent and dismantle their work. For *Vivre Ensemble l'Egalité*, its untimely end in 2015 is directly related to the quelling of dissent by national forces. After enjoying social legitimacy across France and even being, "invited to give talks and broadcast their short films all over France,"⁸² they were ousted by their own municipality after engaging in discussions about state racism with their local state representative.⁸³ Because the representative and other consumers of *Vivre Ensemble*

⁷⁹ Balazard, Hélène, Marion Carrel, Sümbül Kaya, and Anaïk Purenne. "Anti-racist Mobilization in France: Between Quiet Activism and Awareness Raising." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, March 8, 2022, 4.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 5

⁸¹ Ibid, 5

⁸² Ibid, 6

⁸³ Ibid

l'Egalité's message had previously perceived their intent to be related to upholding universal equality and not fighting for racial equality, they were, “ attacked locally and nationally and criticized for [their] ‘victimhood position.’”⁸⁴ This example demonstrates the fragility of anti-racist activism in France and speaks to the trend in French activism to not rely upon media as its dominant avenue of dissemination for the majority of the 2010s.

After the short-lived impact of digital activism in 2016 directly following Adama Traoré's death, the role of media in anti-racist and French Black Lives Matter activism virtually disappeared from mainstream French media and discourse, with the events relating to *Vivre Ensemble l'Egalité* presenting a justifiable reason. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic fundamentally changed societal norms, and when African American George Floyd was suffocated to death by Minnesota police officers on 25 May 2020,⁸⁵ the French strain of the Black Lives Matter movement reignited, “to considerable international press coverage.”⁸⁶ In its resurgence, French BLM activism utilized social media to draw inspiration from its American counterpart and to spread its message. Traoré's sister, Assa, led the 2016 protests, and took the same initiative following the death of Floyd, initiating digital activism with labels on Twitter such as ‘#MoiAussiJ'aiPeurDevantLaPolice’ (I am also afraid in front of the police).⁸⁷ The role of social media was active in the progression of BLM sentiment in sympathetic groups in France, but did not gain significant digital engagement from French individuals who did not identify to be a part of a minority. Instead, dissemination of information relating to the French Black Lives Matter movement was centralized in traditional media, with news outlets producing content that was consumed and critiqued by the general French public.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 7

⁸⁵ Bleich, Erik, Amelia Pollard, and A. Maurits Van der veen. "Looking in the Mirror: US and French Coverage of Black Lives Matter in France." *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, October 19, 2022, 3.

⁸⁶ Goldman, 96

⁸⁷ Godin and Douah

The coverage traditional media produced in relation to French BLM was mixed in tone and congregated around the deaths of Adama Traoré in 2016 and George Floyd in 2020⁸⁸. A study of articles posted by leading news publications in France and the United States from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2020⁸⁹ provides insight into French coverage of its own strain of the BLM movement. Among the 35 French articles selected,⁹⁰ direct coverage of protests and activism did not appear in high volumes. Instead, French articles focused, “to a greater degree on the United States... briefly on the reactions of French companies,” and noted, “in passing that BLM was a popular Twitter hashtag in France in a particular year.”⁹¹ There was relatively little published that possessed a sustained focus upon French BLM, with, “four [articles] published in the weeks following Adama Traoré’s death and eleven were published in the month after the murder of George Floyd.”⁹² These fifteen articles make up a representative body of media that covered and related directly to Black Lives Matter in France, and as such, help to identify the possibility of changes in public opinion over the lifetime of the movement in contemporary French culture.

Social Synthesis: Le Antiracisme & BLM

In the first era of the convergence between the anti-racist and Black Lives Matter movements in French political discourse, media coverage following the death of Adama Traoré took a mixed tone with regard to broad social support for activism against racial injustice. In the immediate aftermath of Traoré’s death, articles relating to the event and social reactions, “noted support for the Traoré family,”⁹³ and, “called for ‘transparency’ from the authorities”⁹⁴ relating to

⁸⁸ Bleich et. al., 10

⁸⁹ Ibid, 5

⁹⁰ Ibid, 6

⁹¹ Ibid, 10

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Ibid, 11

⁹⁴ Ibid

the causes of Adama Traoré's death in police custody. In the following weeks, progressive French scholars expanded discourse in the media by taking interviews and, "emphasized the role of BLM in drawing attention to the racial dimension of police brutality and systemic racism more broadly."⁹⁵ Though such articles were circulated in the weeks following Adama Traoré's untimely end, general changes in French public opinion relating to racial discrimination remained relatively unchanged. Thus, the idealization of race-blindness persisted and it became evident that interest in anti-racist and BLM sentiments was isolated to the few weeks of coverage following the death.

Moving to the resurgence of French political discourse pertaining to anti-racist and Black Lives Matter movements, media coverage following the death of George Floyd in 2020 took on a comparatively more harsh tone than was seen in 2016. French media outlets published articles that did not address the tragedy of Floyd's death internationally, but instead took upon a more philosophical tone, producing articles that were, "critical of BLM and associated themes or concepts such as White privilege or 'wokeness.'"⁹⁶ Such articles also accused French activism resulting from Floyd's death as a "mimetic frenzy" that did not align with French culture and instead created a pastiche of activist action directly taken from American BLM protests.⁹⁷ It is evident from the reactions published in French media that general public opinion, which could be defined as that of French citizens who did not identify personally with anti-racist activism, remained attached to the ideals of French Republicanism, most notably in this instance, to race-blindness.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 12

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ Ibid

In contemporary French culture and public opinion, the “continued dominance of France’s race-blind model of absolute equality”⁹⁸ overshadows any sort of change that may have had the potential to occur in reaction to the anti-racist and Black Lives Matter movements. Along with the articles circulated in media that clung to the philosophical ideals of the French republic, public figures, most notably France’s president, Emmanuel Macron, have demonstrated the domination of race-blindness as the preferred outlook towards race in France. Since the resurgence of BLM in France after the death of George Floyd, contemporary France has had fluctuations of discourse relating to their culture, ranging from recognition of race in the French context to the gender inclusivity of the French language.⁹⁹ President Macron, along with other government officials, has asserted that engaging in such discussions, “[threatens] to cleave the republic along lines of race, religion and sexual orientation,”¹⁰⁰ and these leaders place blame for social corruption upon the infiltration of influence from movements in the United States.¹⁰¹ In an article published by *Le Monde*, Macron critiqued the disjointed nature of “Anglo-Saxon societies,” saying that the multicultural nature of their ethnic makeup caused a lack of a “common project.”¹⁰² He expanded this notion to French academics who had produced discourse about race in a French context, criticizing them for, “encouraging ‘ethnicization’ of social issues.”¹⁰³ Observation of media responses and the official stance of the French president effectively demonstrates that French public opinion remains largely unchanged, due to the universal influence of institutional sentiments and the persistence of a rigid national identity.

⁹⁸ Goldman, 96

⁹⁹ Dalton, 2021

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Bleich et. al., 11

¹⁰³ Ibid

Conceptually Reflective: Identifying Divergences and Commonalities Between American and French Social Activism

The observations presented in the previous section as relating to the Black Lives Matter, ‘#MeToo,’ and anti-racist social movements in the United States and France reveal valuable insights into the mechanisms and impact of contemporary social activism in modern western democracies. The entirety of the case studies presented serve to provide a well-rounded understanding of social media’s role as a tool in current waves of activism, but in order to precisely analyze the efficacy of modern social initiatives, the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and the anti-racist Black Lives Matter-inspired movement in France will serve as sources from which to create points of comparison. By analysing the commonalities and divergences between the movements in both countries, inferences about their ability to effectively create change in an age of digital and social media begin to emerge.

Cultural Dichotomies

Differences between the racial injustice-focused social movements in the United States and France can be grouped into three main categories, and each relates directly to the observations that were presented in their respective explorations. These categories focus upon the method of manifestation of movements, the role of social media in the progression and sustenance of the movements, and the sentiments of public opinion resulting from attempts to create change by each movement. All of these categories together allow for the essential elements of each movement to be analyzed, and demonstrate the divergences between two relatively concurrent movements.

The different way in which activism relating to Black Lives Matter and anti-racism manifested in the United States and France respectively is most evident when reviewing the methods of physical demonstration. In the United States, the weeks and months following the

death of George Floyd resulted in over “8500 demonstrations by the close of 2020,”¹⁰⁴ and similar events continued into the following two years. Contrastingly, most protests that related to the anti-racist movement in France that arose as a complement to BLM in the US were comparatively localized, with the initiatives put forth by *Vivre Ensemble l’Egalité* and *PoliCité* being most active in their immediate communities rather than attempting to gain national support.¹⁰⁵ Each of these instances show that there is a clear difference in how activism is carried out between the United States and France; the former exhibits sustained and widespread campaigns, with demonstration and protests occurring across the entire country, while the latter exhibits more isolated instances of demonstration in large scale, and gravitates to creating change in more localized and community-building forms. The delineation can be defined by the terms “victim-based mobilization”¹⁰⁶ and “quiet collective action,”¹⁰⁷ which refer to the tone taken on by individuals involved in activism. The United States aligns most closely with “victim-based mobilization,” meaning that those who participate in and spread awareness about Black Lives Matter identify with an identity that encapsulates the social struggles being fought for by the movement. France, on the other hand, resonates more closely with “quiet collective action,” its community-based programs and deliberations about cultural integrity inspiring more subtle progressions in producing change from the ground up.

Along with the divergences in activism’s manifestation in culture, the role of social media in the progression of movements in the United States and France does not possess a reflective quality, and instead highlights the fluidity of digital platforms as activist tools. In the United States, social media takes on the role of the dominant medium by which awareness is spread and

¹⁰⁴ Miller, 33

¹⁰⁵ Balazard et. al., 6

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 3

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

support is gained by exchanging views on a movement's main focus. This allows for support for a movement's mission to grow and eventually expand enough to influence public opinion positively toward the goals promoted. This is demonstrated in the Pew Research Center survey that documenting social media's influence upon conversations about, "race or racial equality,"¹⁰⁸ with the results finding that 69% of the respondents had engaged in, "conversations with family and friends,"¹⁰⁹ and 37% had, "posted or shared content related to race in or racial equality."¹¹⁰ Such a result indicates the vital role social media has played in the evolution of the Black Lives Matter movements in the United States, with its digital platforms facilitating the spread of awareness and creating space for the exchange of and connection over views relating to the movement. In France, though, social media functioned in a less all-encompassing capacity. Platforms such as Twitter provided space for camaraderie and mobilization among the minority groups who supported anti-racist protest,¹¹¹ and it functioned as a source to take inspiration from American Black Lives Matter to engage in protest.¹¹² In contrast to the United States, French use of social media for activism did not spread a national awareness and discourse, but rather, functioned to mobilize those already in support of the movement's goals and provide a tool by which to inspire actions that drew from the relatively more successful American strain of Black Lives Matter protests.

The final significant point of divergence to be noted relates to each movement's ability to inspire change in public opinion, which can be considered as a key goal to be considered in evaluating the success of a social movement. In the United States, public opinion survey data collected after the death of George Floyd and the related influx of social activism relating to

¹⁰⁸Parker et. al., 6

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 6

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 6

¹¹¹ Goldman, 94

¹¹² Ibid

Black Lives Matter reveals a shift in the American public's view toward social issues. Data collected by the other survey for Pew Research Center from October 2020 reveals an increase from 2018 results of people changing their, "views about a political or social issue because of something they saw on social media in the last year,"¹¹³ with a majority of the respondents having mentioned, "Black Lives Matter movement and police brutality."¹¹⁴ Such a result clearly shows that American public opinion has changed in relation to social and political discourse relating to racial equality and police brutality awareness themes presented by Black Lives Matter, with the conversations referenced in the other survey from Pew serving as further evidence of the positive and intended impact upon public opinion that Black Lives Matter in producing in American society. France's anti-racist Black Lives Matter-inspired activism has not enjoyed the same positive effect upon public opinion as its United States counterpart, with the race-blindness of French philosophical foundations persisting in contemporary culture.¹¹⁵ Various public figures that may function as sources by which to gauge public opinion assert a defensive stance in the preservation of French culture and ideals, most notably French President Emmanuel Macron. His statement that the, "'ethnicization' of social issues"¹¹⁶ caused by anti-racist activism is directly oppositional to the universality of French national identity. Statements such as this, paired with the isolation of activism to short periods of time following the deaths of Adama Traoré and George Floyd clearly demonstrate that public opinion in France has not been greatly changed by activism efforts that attempted to achieve similar goals to their American counterparts.

¹¹³ Perrin, 1

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 2

¹¹⁵ Goldman, 96

¹¹⁶ Ibid

Conceptual Commonalities

Though the contemporary social movements in the United States and France diverge in the key elements of their ability to culturally succeed, there are commonalities between the Black Lives Matter and anti-racist movements that connect activism in the two countries. For both movements, the overarching message had the goal of bringing awareness to racial injustice and unjust police brutality. It could be argued that the reason for this reflective quality is the inspiration that the anti-racist activism in France has taken from American Black Lives Matter efforts, but the context in which the Black Lives Matter-esque sentiments arose from anti-discrimination activism already existing in France proves otherwise. The narrative that supported action against racial discrimination grew from already existing unrest in French minority communities, and if anything, was inspired to go farther because of protests and activism in the United States. Events occurring in both countries relating to police brutality and racial discrimination, with the death of Trayvon Martin in 2012¹¹⁷ at the hands of the police and Adama Traoré's death in police custody in 2016¹¹⁸ provided citizens of each the opportunity to identify with and formulate activism from the tragedies that targeted their minority communities. The reflective nature of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and the BLM-inspired anti-racist protest in France is a result of the similarities in social issues occurring in recent years for both countries, and the ability for one to inspire the other to be more forceful, as with American protests inspiring those in France in 2020.

Shared by movements in the United States and France as well is the role of social media as a mobilization tool for gathering support and planning social action. Though at different scales relative to their universal impact in cultural context, social media's role in supporting the

¹¹⁷ Miller, 33

¹¹⁸ Godin and Douah

progression of activism in both countries is indisputable. In the United States, the studies focusing upon Twitter usage the week after the death of George Floyd revealed a large concentration of posts “explicitly concerned the Black Lives Matter protests and catalyzing events,”¹¹⁹ that could be estimated from the sample set to make, “up almost one-third of the top 200 trending topics.”¹²⁰ These findings demonstrate the indispensability of social media as a tool for facilitating the progression of support for Black Lives Matter in the United States, and provide evidence for the ability of digital platforms to foster mobilization. French activism’s relationship with social media does not have the same nationwide cultural influence as that of its American counterpart, but the use of social media as an essential tool in mobilization and message spreading prevails. The instances in which hashtags such as, “ #BLMFrance and #Justiceforadama went viral on Twitter,”¹²¹ in the week following the death of Adama Traoré highlight the ability of digital platforms to act as mediums through which support and mobilization for a movement can find reception, even if mostly isolated to minority communities and not the entirety of French society. France’s anti-racist activism did not have the same sustained online presence as Black Lives Matter in the United States, but its influence upon supporting the creation of communities aligning with anti-racist sentiment cannot be discounted.

Resulting Inferences

Organizing the points at which the American Black Lives Matter movement and the French BLM-inspired anti-racist movement differ from and possess similarities to one another is essential for assessing the efficacy of social media as an avenue to produce social change. In analysing the similarities of movements in both countries, it is clear that social media serves as a powerful tool for bringing together like-minded individuals to support a common goal, and can

¹¹⁹ Bolsover, 3

¹²⁰ Ibid, 4

¹²¹ Goldman, 94

influence conversations about political and social issues in the realm of public opinion. This impact does ensure cultural conversion of ideals, though. It leads to the conclusion that social media can have a substantive impact upon short-term trends in discourse and has the potential to produce lasting change in public opinion, but it does not necessarily guarantee that efforts by activists who utilize the platform as a tool will achieve cultural conversion in support of their cause. Such a result begs further inquiry into why social media as an activist tool is not a guarantee for spreading awareness to inspire lasting change, but by reviewing the fundamental philosophies of the United States and France, an answer may be found.

Ideologically, the foundations of culture in the United States and France are fundamentally different. The basis for American identity stems from a deep-rooted sense of American individualism that has been a hallmark of national identity from the country's inception. "In American culture... the ultimate source of action, meaning, and responsibility is the individual rather than the group,"¹²² meaning that citizens of the United States have a strong sense of self and any action they take aligns with their views. This translates into activism by producing people who are faithful to their ideals of individual freedom at the heart of American culture, and therefore, they are more apt to join a cause that promotes the freedom of the individual, such as racial justice. French philosophical foundations, on the other hand, adhere to the ideals of French republicanism, in which is, "constitutional[ly] committed to equality,"¹²³ with its Constitution protecting, "equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion,"¹²⁴ until changes are made by the government in 2018. Such an ideology creates a sense of universal national identity in which all citizens are theoretically equal without

¹²² Fischer, Claude S. "Paradoxes of American Individualism." *Sociological Forum* 23, no. 2 (June 2008): 363 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1573-7861.2008.00066.x>.

¹²³ Goldman, 93

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 92

regard to their differences, which theoretically negates the social currency of differences and renders all French citizens one and the same under a single national identity. Thus, the cultural attitude of the French is one of ‘sameness’ in the name of equality. When in the midst of this ideology, activist initiatives, especially those relating to issues of race, directly go against the singular national identity embraced by French culture by identifying differences among its citizens.

The conclusions drawn from ideological analysis and comparison between the United States and France helps to understand the efficacy of the intersection of the digital age and activism for influencing social change in each country. By conducting such a comparison, though, it may serve as a blueprint upon which to more comprehensively understand the differences between other modern western democracies in their relationships to contemporary activism. Philosophical foundations of a country’s culture serve to illuminate its unique ability to adapt and help to interpret its connection to other global powers. Doing so ultimately allows for a deeper understanding of the modern global community, and at an even more base level, how we are all connected as people, despite our differences.

Drawing Conclusions: Answering the Inquiry and Exploring Further Paths for Research

From the research and comparative analysis presented in this thesis, an answer to the guiding question that intends to examine the efficacy of social media in creating tangible social change has taken shape. In the context of contemporary social and political activism, social media functions as a tool to bring together like-minded individuals to support a common goal, whether that be through online discourse or facilitating mobilization for demonstrations. Actions taken on social media can influence cultural discourse over social issues in the respective

countries that the issues discussed pertain to, but posts and discourse do not guarantee that tangible changes in public opinion will occur because of digital activism.

This answer comes from an arduous but rewarding process of research in which dead ends led to new questions, which were all instrumental in helping to form this body of work. When beginning the research process, it quickly became evident that scholarship surrounding a direct relationship between social movements in the United States and France had not been explored from the standpoint focusing specifically social media's social impact, and so the journey began to fully comprehend activism in an academic sense. The scholarship defining forms of activism in contemporary context provided a foundation from which to explore the Black Lives Matter, '#MeToo', and anti-racist BLM-inspired movements that are relevant to this study. Terms such as 'slacktivism' and 'paradigm-shifting' and 'facilitating' define how various scholars characterize social media's various roles in modern activism, as those of passive engagement, transcendent catalyst, and aide to the cause. From the research conducted for each movement, it is clear that social media most adheres to the 'facilitating' model, in which it acts as a tool through which the message can be transmitted and both ideological and demonstration mobilization can occur. Examples such as the trends of '#metoo' and '#blacklivesmatter' in the months and years following their inception demonstrate the ability of social media to sustain discourse, and the protests related to '#BLMFrance' and '#Justiceforadama' in 2020 highlight the ability of digital social platforms to mobilize activist groups. From these observations, the conclusion that social media is pivotal as a mobilization and information dissemination tool for contemporary activism is clear. It begs new questions about the relationship between movements across the globe, though, which was the original impetus for this study. Moving forward, it would be important to build upon the validity of claims made by political and cultural leaders in

France that American racial justice activism is a direct threat to deconstructing the values of universality and equality that are central to French culture. After finding isolated conclusions about social media's role in the American Black Lives Matter movement and the BLM-inspired activism in France, the next research avenue to be explored could delve into the possibilities of cross-pollination of anti-racist sentiments expressed in American social media into the French cultural sphere through social media interactions. Doing so would provide more quantitative data about the density of social media engagement that occurred in France following the death of George Floyd, which currently has limited coverage in the academic setting.

By answering a guiding question that delves into exploration of the role of social media in influencing social change, a more developed understanding of its place in modern society can be gleaned. Social media, and by association, the Internet, affords the opportunity for people to create community outside of the physical realm, and by doing so, contributes to the construction of group identity and even national identity, as has been evident in this study. These findings and the structure in which they were collected translate into the possibility of further study that has already been suggested, and also allude to the proposition of exploring the relationship between national identity and the affect of activism across the globe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "About Us | Mayer Brown." Mayer Brown. Last modified 2023.
<https://www.mayerbrown.com/en/about-us/about?tab=Overview>.
- Allsop, Bradley. "Social media and activism: A literature review." *Social Psychological Review* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2016).
- Balazard, Hélène, Marion Carrel, Sümbül Kaya, and Anaïk Purenne. "Anti-racist Mobilization in France: Between Quiet Activism and Awareness Raising." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, March 8, 2022, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2022.2041683>.
- Bleich, Erik, Amelia Pollard, and A. Maurits Van der veen. "Looking in the Mirror: US and French Coverage of Black Lives Matter in France." *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, October 19, 2022, 194016122211327.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161222113279>.
- Bleile, Rahel. "'We can't breathe' in these political structures - Political opportunity structures and anti-racism movements." PhD diss., U of Twente, 2021. <http://essay.utwente.nl/87670/>.
- Bolsover, Gillian. "Black Lives Matter Discourse on US Social Media during COVID: Polarised Positions Enacted in a New Event." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2020.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3688909>.
- Cammaerts, Bart. "Activism and Media." Introduction to *Reclaiming the Media: Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles*, by Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpenter, 217-24. Bristol: Intellect, 2007.
- Collins, Lauren. "Assa Traoré and the Fight for Black Lives Matter." *The New Yorker*, June 18, 2020.
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-europe/assa-traore-and-the-fight-for-black-lives-in-france>.
- Cosby, Nadine Barnett. "The Revolution May Not Be Televised But It Will Be Hashtagged: The Impact of Social Media on Social Movements, Racial Perceptions, and Real-World Activism." PhD diss., Regent U, 2018.
- Dalton, Matthew. "In France, Criticism Grows Over U.S.-Inspired Activism on Race, Gender." *Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2021.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-france-criticism-grows-over-u-s-inspired-activism-on-race-gender-11639319941>.
- Dunivin, Zackary Okun, Harry Yaojun Yan, Jelani Ince, and Fabio Rojas. "Black Lives Matter Protests Shift Public Discourse." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119, no. 10 (March 3, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2117320119>.

- Everett, Samuel Sami. "Interfaith Dialogue and Faith-Based Social Activism in a State of Emergency: Laïcité and the Crisis of Religion in France." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 31, no. 4 (June 13, 2018): 437-54. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-018-9291-0>.
- Fischer, Claude S. "Paradoxes of American Individualism." *Sociological Forum* 23, no. 2 (June 2008): 363-72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1573-7861.2008.00066.x>.
- Godin, Mélissa, and Chahrazade Douah. "A Young Black Man Died in France 4 Years Ago in Police Custody. Now Thousands Are Protesting in His Name." *Time*, June 4, 2020. <https://time.com/5847396/france-protests-anti-racism/>.
- Goldman, Josephine. "Can Black Lives Matter in a Race-Blind France? French Avoidance of 'Race' and Mobilisation of Black Collective Identity in Response to Police Brutality." *Literature and Aesthetics : the Journal of the Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics* 30, no. 2 (2020): 92-111.
- Herstik, Lauren, Jill Cowan, and Livia Albeck-Ripka. "Los Angeles Jury Finds Harvey Weinstein Guilty of Rape in Mixed Verdict." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), December 19, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/19/us/harvey-weinstein-trial-verdict.html>.
- Hillstrom, Laurie Collier. *Black Lives Matter: From a Moment to a Movement*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2018.
- Miller, Althea Legal. "Race, Policing and Black Lives Matter." In *Developments in American Politics* 9, by Gillian Peele, 33-48. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2022.
- Modrek, Sepideh, and Bozhidar Chakalov. "The #MeToo Movement in the United States: Text Analysis of Early Twitter Conversations." *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 21, no. 9 (September 3, 2019): e13837. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2196/13837>.
- Parker, Kim, Juliana Horowitz, and Monica Anderson. "Amid Protests, Majorities Across Racial and Ethnic Groups Express Support for the Black Lives Matter Movement." *Pew Research Center*, June 2020.
- Perrin, Andrew. "23% of users in U.S. say social media led them to change views on an issue; some cite Black Lives Matter." *Pew Research Center*, October 15, 2020.
- Rhode, Deborah L. "#Metoo: Why Now? What Next?" *Duke Law Journal* 69, no. 2 (November 2019): 380-427.
- Schneider, Kimberly T., and Nathan J. Carpenter. "Sharing #MeToo on Twitter: Incidents, Coping Responses, and Social Reactions." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 39, no. 1 (March 12, 2019): 87-100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-09-2018-0161>.
- Williams, Jamillah Bowman, Lisa Singh, and Naomi Mezey. "#MeToo as a Catalyst: A Glimpse into 21st Century Activism." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 2019, 371-94.