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#SayHerName: Putting the "I" in Intersectionality in Black Female Social Movements

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#SAYHERNAME: PUTTING THE "I" IN INTERSECTIONALITY IN BLACK FEMALE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Mediated channels continue to be one of the main methods of dispersing pertinent information to and from Black communities. Black women's voices have historically been stifled due to patriarchy and racism; thus, Black women have often used forms of media as a primary means to build coalitions with other Black women and to effectively communicate resistance. This research will closely analyze how prominent participants in the #SayHerName movement approach intersectionality in the digital era of the 21st century. Data will be directly extracted from the digital platform Twitter to contribute to the growing conversation surrounding Black women's impact on Twitter, as well as the need for intersectional social media movements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

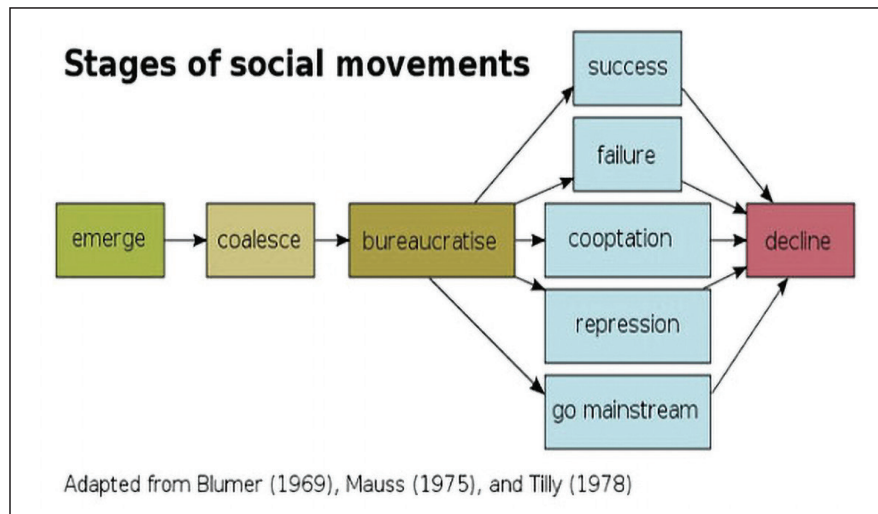
Background and Definition of Social Resistance Movements

Social movement and intersectionality theory. According to sociologists inspired by the early work of Herbert Blumer (Christiansen, 2009), social resistance movements consist of four deliberate stages: *emergence*, *coalescence*, *bureaucratization*, and *decline*. *Emergence* is a stage when a social movement lacks true organization. Many groups come together over a shared social concern until a major event occurs that creates a need for a stronger organizational approach. Next, *coalescence* arises in the midst of discomfort. Leaders are promoted during *coalescence*, providing guidance for the growing movement. Third, *bureaucratization* occurs with the hiring of functional staff who relay the organization's messages both to other members and to the public. Finally, *decline* occurs when social resistance movements decide on centralized authority, and policies are put in place. The decline stage comprises the

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following: *success, failure, co-optation, repression, and/or merging* with the mainstream (Christiansen, 2009). The succession of these stages is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Stages of Social Movements from L7 Visual Education*



The #SayHerName movement has undergone Herbert Blumer's various stages. The movement *emerged* from the national outcry following the 2015 death of Sandra Bland, an African American woman who died under mysterious circumstances while in police custody. Black women's discontent with being subjected to state-sanctioned violence and police brutality, which has often gone unaddressed by mainstream society, brought them to *coalescence*. Black feminist theorists Kimberlé Crenshaw and Andrea Ritchie subsequently co-authored a 2015 report using the term "Say Her Name," which was published by the African American Policy Forum (Crenshaw & Ritchie, 2015). Crenshaw and Ritchie have become Black feminist thought leaders in the academic space, providing avenues for them to help *bureaucratize* the movement. Crenshaw utilizes the hashtag and speaks on relative issues predominantly through her personal Twitter account. Now, many Black women and female-centered organizations politically mobilize and organize around the #SayHerName cause.

In navigating these theoretical stages, Black women face a series of nuanced, unique challenges unlike any other marginalized group. I expand on Blumer's social movement theory by utilizing the concept of *intersectionality* as a key framework in this research. *Intersectionality*, a term coined by Crenshaw, investigates "race, gender, and other identity

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categories [that] are most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination—that is, as intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude or marginalize those who are different” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). Kimberlé Crenshaw argues that social movements, namely feminist movements, rarely take into account both the gendered and racial aspects of the Black female identity. Heyes (2016) writes:

“Identity politics” has come to signify a wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice [against] members of certain social groups. Rather than organizing solely around belief systems, programmatic manifestos, or party affiliation, identity political formations typically aim to secure the political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. (para. 1)

A common critique of identity politics is that they promote divisiveness and exclude marginalized groups from dominant groups while encouraging people to politically mobilize around an identity, not an issue (Heyes, 2016). Crenshaw posits that ignoring differences is what causes tension among groups, further marginalizing Black women (Crenshaw, 1991). I believe that individuation breeds a sense of self-determination among marginalized groups, which can assist a social movement in successfully navigating all four theoretical stages. In understanding that Black women come into self-identity differently than White women, due to social structures and conditioning, one may also comprehend the reasons why they carve out their own social spaces to unify through discourse. This is what has created Black feminism and, in turn, a need for female social movements with an emphasis on intersectionality. This approach is best outlined in an essay from Audre Lorde’s 1984 book, *Sister Outsider*:

What we must do is commit ourselves to some future that can include each other and to work toward that future with the particular strengths of our individual identities. And in order to do this, we must allow each other our differences at the same time as we recognize our sameness. (p. 142)

To further clarify my stance that Black female social movements are birthed out of necessity and a need to acknowledge difference, I look to the pointed concept in Crenshaw (1991) of *political intersectionality*.

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Political intersectionality speaks to Black women having to deny their full self-vested interests and

the need to split one's political energies between two sometimes opposing [groups]. [This] is a dimension of intersectional disempowerment that men of color and white women seldom confront. Indeed, their specific raced *and* gendered experiences, although intersectional, often define as well as confine the interests of the entire group. (p. 1252)

This research sets out to examine the following questions: Does the social media SayHerName hashtag represent one specific identity group? What are the common socio-political interests expressed in the tweets of #SayHerName users, and do those interests illustrate intersectionality? What are some of the challenges presented to Black women who are spear-heading modern hashtag social movements?

BACKGROUND

Black Female Social Resistance Movements Prior to the 21st Century

In the mid-nineteenth century, at the start of the Suffragist Movement, the exclusion of Black women in socio-political movements was pervasive. Many White women left Black women out of organizing efforts, as they knew women's rights would not be easily attained with Black women in the forefront (Mayo, n.d.). The idea that race and gender both played a role in an individual's identity was not yet understood. As a result, Black women started their own women's rights clubs, where they organized and drafted plans of voting reform.

In 1896, the National Federation of Afro-American Women and the National League of Colored Women merged to be re-christened as the National Association of Colored Women. Longtime activist Mary Church Terrell served as the organization's first president and spokeswoman. Under her leadership, the Nineteenth Amendment, granting women the right to vote, was enacted. However, many Black women, especially those in Southern states, were not granted the right to exercise their vote until the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Mayo, n.d.).

Public speeches. Sojourner Truth, a prominent women's rights activist, spoke to the marginalization of Black womanhood in her famous

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1851 address, "Ain't I A Woman," at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio (Mayo, n.d.). Truth was known for traveling and speaking to audiences at women's rights conventions across the United States. Her southern dialect and stage presence converted many to the suffragists' cause. Sojourner Truth argued the point that her humanity was never acknowledged by the masses, despite her suffering. Therefore, her public rhetoric provided a space for her to voice her grievances as a Black person *and* a woman a century prior to the technological means of the digital age (Truth, 1851).

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? (para. 2)

In the mid-nineteenth century, Black female social resistance movements *emerged* out of a shared dislike of the poor social conditions placed upon Black women. Though they did not belong to any single organization, a group of agitators used their individual platforms to enact change and spark discourse. Ida B. Wells, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Nannie Burroughs assisted in raising "consciousness around issues and [helped] to develop the sense of discontent among the general population" (Mayo, n.d.; Christiansen, 2009, p. 3).

Newspapers. Since the 1827 founding of the first Black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, the Black press has provided a sense of interconnection within the public sphere for African American communities (Rhodes, 2016). Teresa (2019) writes that

[Jim Crow-era] Black...newspapers advocated for Black communities by publishing stories that emphasized race pride, self-help, and community cohesiveness... They published stories that challenged prevailing Jim Crow legislative and judicial practices, endorsed political candidates for office, investigated lynching, charted the migration of Blacks from south to north, and supported Black-owned business and social institutions. (p. 14)

Black people were widely terrorized by Whites belonging to organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan. Public lynchings and sexual assaults on Black women were commonplace in the 19th and 20th century.

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In fact, myths about the uncontrolled sexual impulses of Black men and women caused fear among White people. “Nearly one in four Black people lynched from 1877 to 1945 were accused of improper contact with a White woman” (Equal Justice Initiative, 2016).

DeNeen Brown (2018) reported that in 1944, the sexual assault of 24-year-old Recy Taylor in Alabama gained widespread attention through Black-owned newspapers. Taylor was assaulted by six white assailants after leaving a church service with friends. The assailants forcibly abducted her, drove her to a field to rape her, and threatened her life if she were to tell. The Chicago Defender was one of the first Black newspapers to document Recy Taylor’s story and to bring attention to the fact that her assailants offered to pay her husband \$600 to compensate for her sexual assault.

Due to the media attention, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) called sexual assault investigator Rosa Parks, the woman who would later refuse to give up her seat on a bus, to interview Taylor. After intimidation from white officials, Rosa Parks returned to her native Montgomery to create an anti-rape committee a decade before the start of the Civil Rights Movement. Parks wrote protest letters to Governor Sparks of Alabama to demand justice for Taylor. Governor Sparks ordered a new investigation of the case, but the six men who violated Taylor were never indicted (Brown, 2018).

This event marked the transition from an *emergent* to a *coalescent* stage, showcasing how newspapers circulated messages faster than ever before to marginalized groups. Where “a person may [have commented] to friends and family [of their dissatisfaction] with conditions or [wrote letters] to the local newspaper or representative,” now Black women were navigating their pain as a collective (Christiansen, 2009, p. 2). That is when strategic acts of resistance, such as sit-ins, marches, and controversy-raising campaigns, were implemented.

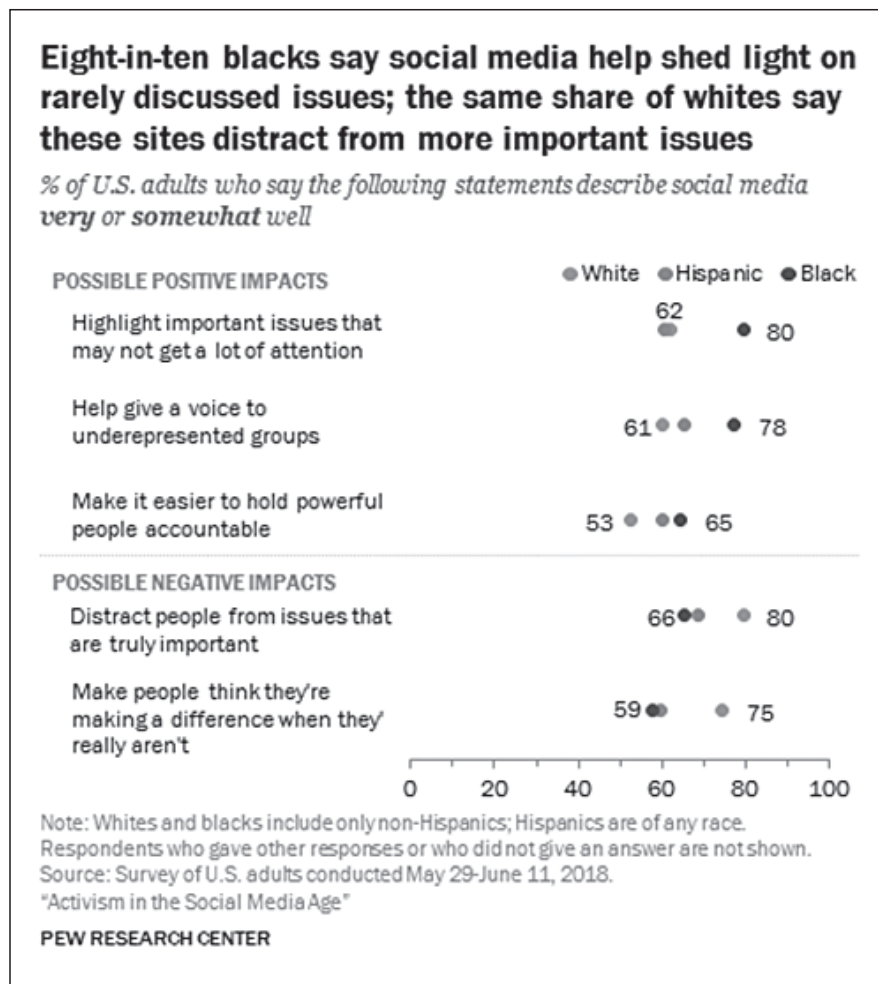
The Rise of Black Female Social Media Movements

Twitter and Black feminist hashtag movements. Since its inception in 2006, Twitter has been a means for users to collectively share thoughts, ideas, and opinions in a limited number of characters. Blacks utilize Twitter to participate in discussions and experience kinship through their experiences as marginalized people in an online community called #BlackTwitter. University of Virginia media studies professor Meredith Clark believes #BlackTwitter arose from the 2010 article by Farhad Manjoo called, “How Black People Use Twitter” (Reid, 2018).

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Figure 2 shows that 8 in 10 Black people say that social media brings attention to rarely discussed issues, whereas a large majority of White people find social media sites to be distracting from real-life issues (Anderson et al., 2018). Another study found that only 25% of African Americans believe they are represented accurately in the mainstream news. Additionally, 70% of African Americans own a smartphone, and among those smartphone owners, 85% of African Americans use their smartphone to access news. This is indicative of a digital divide suggesting that Black-identifying Twitter users employ Twitter as a means of combatting mainstream media bias and Black misrepresentation (American Press Institute, 2014).

Figure 2. Comparison Between Race and Social Media Usage, from the Pew Research Center



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Data show that the most prolific tweeters among U.S. adults are likely to be women (Hughes & Wojcik, 2019). Black women play an important role in this demographic; numerous viral cultural hashtags were created by Black women. Conley (2017) states that

[Black feminist hashtags posit] sameness and substitutivity between digital mediation and embodiment. Black feminist hashtags are not simply a confluence of text, hypertext, symbols, and “racially charged” feminist trends on social networking platforms. They do things. They proliferate to mediate connections across time and space. (p. 23)

In essence, hashtag movements are movements that evolve beyond the digital space into actual community engagement. It is important to note that at the intersection of race and gender, communication varies even more. Black female communicators are often criticized for speaking too loudly and/or aggressively. Twitter allows Black women an opportunity to voice their concerns outside of face-to-face interactions. Therefore, I postulate that #BlackTwitter is revolutionary, as it offers a safe space for Black people at large, but especially for Black women, to avoid the pressures and confines of code-switching—a process of changing one’s linguistic behavior to perform societal expectations (Molinsky, 2007).

#BlackLivesMatter inspires #SayHerName. The #BlackLivesMatter movement was created by three Black women: Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi. These women crafted tweets in response to the viral 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin (Black Lives Matter Official Website, n.d.). The #BlackLivesMatter movement has since grown to become a chapter-based international organization. Khan-Cullors, Garza, and Tometi have each taken on the respective positions of co-founders and strategic advisors. Black Lives Matter organizations regularly hold protests, marches, and panels catering to Black-related issues. #BlackLivesMatter is noted for bringing social issues affecting Black people into the mainstream (Black Lives Matter Official Website, n.d.).

Twitter created a space for Black-identifying users to speak on racial issues, using #BlackLivesMatter as a social catalyst. As of May 2018, the hashtag has been used 30 million times since its creation (Anderson et al., 2018).

After the July 14th, 2013, not-guilty verdict of George Zimmerman, who was accused of shooting and killing Trayvon Martin, Twitter users expressed outrage. To provide context, “the nearly 5 million tweets

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(4.9 million) in the first 26 hours after the verdict virtually equaled the total volume of tweets (5.1 million) about the case posted during the entirety of the 33-day trial” (Jurkowitz & Vogt, 2013, para. 5).

Though the social media movement was primarily launched to address the recurring killings of Black boys and men at the hands of corrupt police, it became imperative to Khan-Cullors, Garza, and Tometi that “we must view this epidemic through a lens of race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity” (Black Lives Matter Official Website, 2019, para. 5). Many Black women expressed the opinion that society needed to address the fact that cisgender and LGBT Black women and girls are also victims of police brutality and state-sanctioned violence. The frequent denial of Black female victims of police brutality is an example of *failure* within this specific social movement. The repression of Black female voices on Twitter has increased the stakes of Black Lives Matter’s *decline* stage. However, this stage of the social movement led to more Black female voices becoming prominent in digital spaces.

In 2015, scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw co-authored the African American Policy Forum report, *Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women*, to call more media attention to the case of Sandra Bland and Black women killed by police. Crenshaw stated that the “...inclusion of Black women’s experiences in social movements, media narratives, and policy demands around policing and police brutality is critical to effectively combatting racialized state violence for Black communities and other communities of color” (Crenshaw & Ritchie, 2015, para. 4). This led to the use of #SayHerName across Twitter. #SayHerName served as a platform for Black women to commemorate the struggles of other Black women. This further prompted candlelight vigils, tweets, and mentions of Black women unjustly killed by police officers due to racial discrimination (Crenshaw & Ritchie, 2015).

Sandra Bland, one of the main Black female police brutality victims highlighted through #SayHerName, was a 28-year-old Black woman who failed to signal a lane change and was pulled over by Texas Officer Brian Encinia. She then was detained for resisting arrest and was found dead in her cell three days later. Bland’s case was one of the few cases of questionable deaths related to the police that received national media coverage.

On June 15, 2017, the Sandra Bland Act was passed by the Texas Senate. The bill “mandate[s] county jails [to] divert people with mental health and substance abuse issues toward treatment, make[s] it easier for defendants with a mental illness or intellectual disability to receive a per-

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sonal bond, and require[s] that independent law enforcement agencies investigate jail deaths” (Silver, 2017, para. 6). The bill also aims to provide greater access to health care in jails, electronic sensors and cameras for security purposes, and implicit bias training to officers. The family of Sandra Bland expressed their disappointment with the bill’s wording, as they believed her death was due to negligence and not mental illness (Silver, 2017). As #SayHerName has become more well-known, its *success* rests on the movement’s goals and intended audience, which is Black women.

METHOD

An analysis of Twitter information was conducted, examining a dataset of ~102 respondents’ tweets utilizing #SayHerName. The advanced search tab on Twitter allowed data to be filtered by specific keywords, location, hashtag, language, dates, and mention of account. The advanced search was filtered to observe #SayHerName tweets posted on dates spanning from November 20, 2019, to February 7, 2020. The aforementioned dates were intentionally chosen, based on a need to test the interests of users who utilize #SayHerName by engaging in intersectional social media activism during times of political stress and questioning. November 20, 2019, was the date of the first Democratic presidential primary-election debates, and February 7th is the birthday of the late Sandra Bland. The location was not restricted; the tweets represent user responses from across the United States and Canada. All of the tweets were accessed via a registered Twitter account.

The research was centered on #SayHerName and the examination of its relationship to intersectionality and identity politics; thus, an assessment of the users’ online attitudes and common themes was necessary. For this reason, a text-sentiment analysis was conducted to analyze the online attitudes, feelings, and thoughts of its users in order to test the validity of the research. As a result, the data collection in Table 1 was highlighted and coded based on the negative and positive emotions users conveyed through certain words and phrases.

Users who had particular demands of government or vowed to fight were coded as showcasing feelings of *justice*. Many tweets articulating feelings of justice were posted during important court hearings. Users who used all-caps, exclamation points, and expletives were coded as expressing *anger*. Users who articulated pain, sorrow, or grief due to the loss of a person were coded as demonstrating *sadness*. There were some

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Table 1. Coding Word Bank of Sentiment-Related Phrases/Words

Anger	Sadness	Happiness	Justice	Honor	Questioning	Love	Naming
she deserved to live	broke me	Cheers	fight	celebrate life	who is this?	love you	her name is/ was
f**	Hurt		demand	reminds us	what happen to her?		trending
PERIOD!	Lost		answers	remember her	are these natural causes?		legacy
hate	heart hurts		dignity	thinking about	here's my question?		erased
infuriating	so sad		Act	never forget	ready?		remember her
	heart-broken		justice	would have turned	why doesn't anyone?		will not be forgotten
	devastating		Stop	she was			naming
	saddened		deserves	honor the life of			tells/told
			must end	our thoughts are with			say
			called/calling for	Rest			
			justice for	highlight			
			need				

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users who utilized the hashtag to reclaim a deceased person's narrative and to participate in the collective memory of the victim. Some users posted a picture of a victim or posed questions about the victim to the Twitter community as a means to become educated about the victim's story.

Quantitative data on the total count of "likes," retweets, and replies as well as links, photo, and video usage were collected. The race and gender of each user was collected as data. As both race and gender are mostly subjective and cannot be known solely through firsthand observation, only the Twitter users with accounts and actual profile photos explicitly stating and showcasing their race and preferred gender pronouns were counted. Actual usernames are not used in the research to protect the personal identities of users. In this way, research can be effective, unbiased, and more accurate. The data explores intersectionality as it pertains to feminism and Black female-related issues in the digital world.

To further comprehend the impact of Black Twitter and Black feminist hashtags, much emphasis was placed on: (1) the racial and (2) gender identities of the users, (3) the issues and/or topics, (4) and the people these particular users tweeted about. Also, there was much attention given to the topics generally discussed along with #SayHerName in the tweet dataset. Overall, #SayHerName was essential to the research as it encapsulates a number of intersectional identities in its framework.

RESULTS

One-hundred two (102) respondents' qualitative data was collected, which is shown in Figure 3. The results validate the assertion that #SayHerName is still perceived as highly relevant among users. In fact, on average, there were a total count of 87 likes, 34.5 (35) retweets, and 2.27 (2.3) replies across the dataset. On average, 0.35 (0.4) photos and videos were utilized and 0.53 (0.5) links were used.

Findings indicate that *honor* and preserving the memory of a victim are the most common sentiments evident in the dataset. *Justice* and the naming of a victim are the second and third most common sentiments expressed by the users. Figure 4 shows that users aimed to remember the lives of victims of state-sanctioned violence and gender-based violence through the dissemination of pictures, links to their respective news stories, and by highlighting aspects of their lives unknown to the rest of the world. Calls for justice and the demand for policy reforms were prevalent, as well. Figure 5 shows that various users felt it appropriate to explicitly name women as a sign of respect and recognition.

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Figure 3. *Quantitative Trends of #SayHerName*

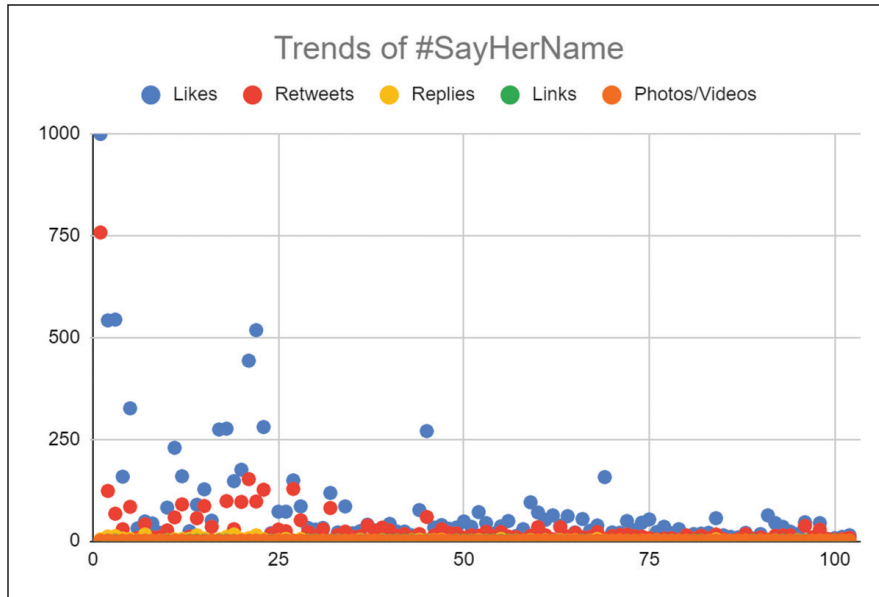
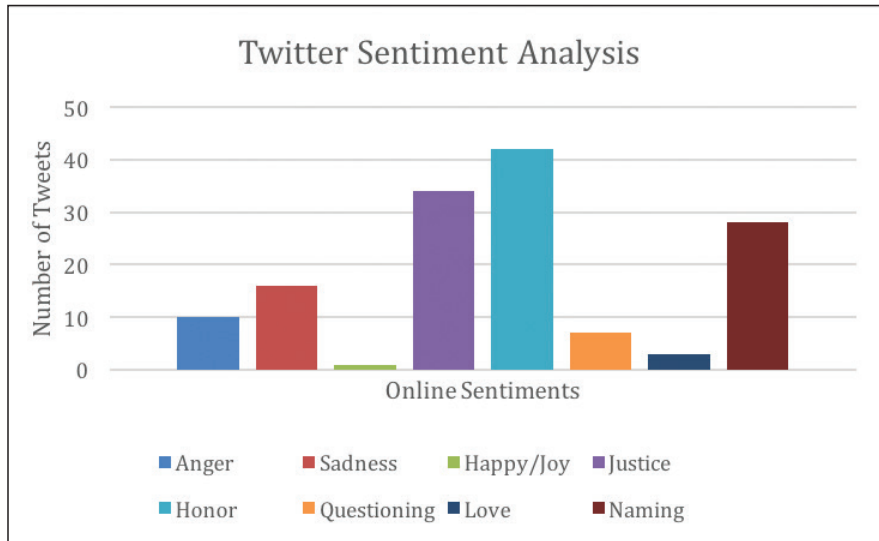


Figure 4. *Online Attitudes and Sentiments of #SayHerName Users*



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Figure 5. Women Mentioned in #SayHerName Tweets

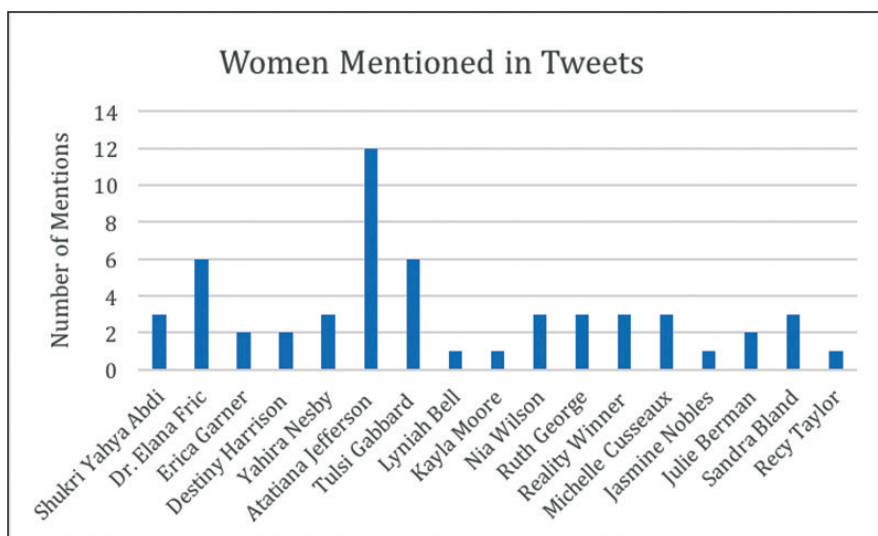
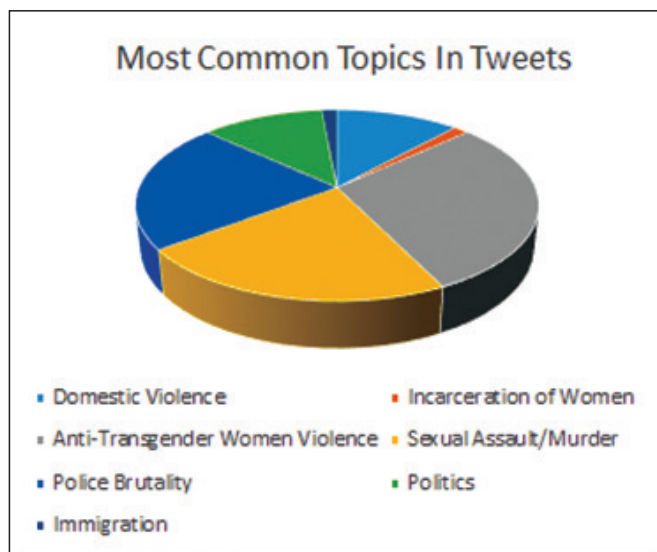


Figure 6. Topics Commonly Associated with #SayHerName Tweets



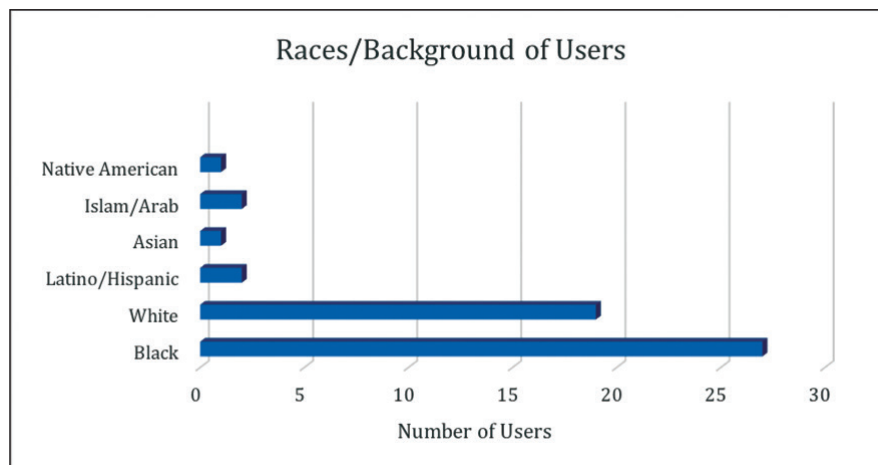
Findings indicate that Atatiana Jefferson, the victim of a police shooting in her home in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2019, was the most commonly mentioned person in the dataset. Democratic Presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard and Dr. Elana Fric, who was murdered by her estranged husband in 2019, followed in the number of searches. This indicates that police brutality is still heavily associated with the #SayHer-

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Name movement. Figure 6 indicates that violence against transgender women, sexual assault and/or gender-based murder, and police brutality were the most common topics associated with #SayHerName in a dataset in descending order. This indicates that these topics encompass important policy issues to #SayHerName users.

Findings also indicated that Black-identifying users employ #SayHerName more than users of other races, as shown in Figure 7. Social media presence would further indicate that Black-identifying users utilize the #SayHerName more because it speaks to their identity in a specific, unique way. Out of the Black-identifying users, 16 of the Twitter users read distinctively as Black female-identifying. In the dataset, various Black female-identifying users shared tweets multiple times from the same account. This showcases the participation of Black women on the Twitter platform.

Figure 7. Racial Identity of #SayHerName Users



DISCUSSION

The research validates the assertion that #SayHerName is an intersectional hashtag. The identities that are promoted via the hashtag are those of women of color and LGBT-identifying Black women. These are all marginalized identities within marginalized groups, creating a space where women can share their similar experiences in a discursive way.

Many of the users who experienced feelings of anger were Black women. This could be due in part to the lack of acknowledgment of Black female-identifying victims in the mainstream media. Also, this could be

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due in part to the lack of acknowledgment of Black women's concerns and pain altogether. With this in mind, the data demonstrate that Black women, and in particular, Black female-identifying #SayHerName users, utilize social media to push back against media stereotyping. Also, users across racial and gender identities emoted feelings of sadness. They usually shared this sentiment around holiday seasons and the birthdays of victims.

As referenced in Figure 5, Atatiana Jefferson was the most highly discussed woman throughout the dataset. During the timeframe the dataset was collected, Atatiana Jefferson had recently been fatally shot by Fort Worth Officer Aaron Y. Dean, who fired through her back window. Prior to the exchange, a neighbor had called the police to conduct a wellness check at Jefferson's home (The New York Times, 2019). Second in popularity was Democratic presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard, who was solely mentioned for her undermined role in politics, amid strong support for Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. Many users expressed outrage that she was referred to as "another woman" by another user, instead of her being identified by her name (Twitter, 2020). And third, Dr. Elana Fric was mentioned due to her being murdered three years ago by her husband after serving him with divorce papers (McLaughlin, 2019).

Other women mentioned in the tweets were mainly women of color. Women such as Ruth George and Yahira Nesby were discussed in conversations surrounding sexual assault and toxic masculinity. Additionally, the data show that the major theme and/or interest of #SayHerName users was to condemn violence against transgender women, and more specifically, Black transgender women. As of November 2019, at least 26 transgender and gender non-conforming people had been murdered that year in the United States, 91% of whom were Black transgender women (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2019). Despite the great barriers facing cisgender Black women, the barriers facing Black transgender women are compounded as they face racism, patriarchy, and discrimination for their gender expression. This potentially speaks to #SayHerName's understanding of how LGBT+ issues affect Black communities at large. A common criticism of other Black-centered hashtag movements is the lack of addressing homophobia, transphobia, and misogynoir.

Research strongly indicates that #SayHerName users are predominantly Black-identifying. Users of Native American, Asian, and Arab racial identity were low in numbers in contrast to White- and Black-identifying users. This could be due to the erasure and underrepresentation of

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these racial groups in society. Meanwhile, White-identifying users were the second highest racial group to heavily utilize the hashtag. The challenge of *co-optation* could present itself as the movement continues to navigate all the four theoretical stages (Christiansen, 2009). Without the complete acknowledgment of the social, economic, and educational disparities between White and Black women, the #SayHerName movement may become "whitewashed" and be seen as a general movement for all those experiencing oppression of various kinds.

More than anything, this research demonstrates that #SayHerName speaks directly to the identities of Black women. It addresses how sexual assault and sexual harassment are intersected with poor Black female-to-police interactions. By focusing on the fact that police relations with the Black community have always been fraught, the hashtag seeks to prove that police brutality is not a single-gender issue. Though Black males are criminalized and targeted by police, they are not the only group dealing with police brutality. The lives of Black women and girls deserve to be protected (Crenshaw & Ritchie, 2015).

The unequal power balance between Black women and White men is heavily critiqued by this hashtag movement, as White males are often the police officers in question. White society often views Black women as inherently angry, non-feminine, hypersexual, superhuman, and susceptible to pain (Crenshaw & Ritchie, 2015). These stereotypes create a narrative that Black female bodies are expendable, disposable, and lacking in feeling, which makes Black women extremely vulnerable not only to police violence, but also to aggressors in their own communities. The power struggles many Black women face with White men in power rival their experiences with Black men.

The #SayHerName movement articulates the importance of Black women in the Black community. Black women are often primary caretakers, nurturers, and pillars of their neighborhood (Crenshaw & Ritchie, 2015). Their deaths further contribute to the breakdown of the Black nuclear family unit, leaving their families and dependents traumatized and unable to function. Also, the loss of the Black men in their lives due to state-sanctioned violence and incarceration leaves them financially and socially vulnerable, especially when they are active in protest and resistance. Though Black women possess strong community power, they usually lack power in economic and social circumstances (Crenshaw & Ritchie, 2015). This alone indicates why #SayHerName is a Black feminist hashtag movement: it moves Black women from anger to action (Conley, 2017).

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LIMITATION

A limitation of this study is the small sample size ($n = \sim 102$) and the data filters. A wider set of locations and dates could result in different outcomes. The research may not completely be representative of the entire Twitter community and their sentiments, as the confidence interval can be easily compromised with smaller sample sizes. However, this research sets out to answer specific research questions.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that #SayHerName does not solely represent one identity group. It is a Black feminist hashtag, for all intents and purposes. The hashtag movement itself was crafted by Black female theorists, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, to address the killing of Black women at the hands of police. The overarching themes and interests evident in the dataset denote that Black women remain at the center of the #SayHerName movement. Twitter creates a safe space for Black women to voice their concerns without code-switching, and allows them to express their anger and demands for justice with other Black female users (Molinsky, 2007). Links, photos, texts, and videos are shared as a way to bring awareness to marginalized victims whose deaths are often ignored and erased in mainstream media. This use of Twitter aids users in the circulation of information across different countries and communities. It makes victims' lives matter.

What does present as a future challenge to the #SayHerName movement is the lesser attention paid to Black female police brutality victims by the American nation. While domestic violence and sexual assault negatively impact all women, these issues appeared to have less relevance to the Twitter users in this study. In part, this may be a result of Black women experiencing “the need to split [their] political energies between two sometimes opposing [groups]...” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 5). The research shows that interests such as Black male incarceration and immigration reform trended the lowest among these Twitter users, which also indicated a lack of intersectionality in the #SayHerName movement. Again, incarceration and immigration reform deeply affect Black and Brown people, whereas gender-based violence is an issue shared by women of all colors. For this reason, further research should be conducted on online “allyship” between White female counterparts who knowingly and unknowingly utilize Black feminist hashtags and Black female Twitter users.

#SayHerName: Putting the "I" in Intersectionality in Black Female Social Movements

Future research should be conducted to validate the hypothesis that Black women utilize Twitter and other digital platforms to ensure their messages are widely heard. The current mainstream news landscape rarely provides news coverage of Black people without White-centric media biases; it is critical that Black digital sub-spaces are valued and protected. According to a Pew Research Center study based on the 2013-2017 U.S. Census Bureau, Black journalists represent only 7% of newsroom employees (Atske et al., 2019). Truly, the lack of Black media gatekeepers directly impacts availability of diverse storytelling. The current role of social media as a medium among the world and its disparate communities breaks down media stigma.

Black women will continue to have opportunities to *coalesce* around major issues that primarily affect them through pushing for policies that protect their interests, as well as by identifying the many forms of oppression they experience inside and outside of their communities. As #SayHerName further includes and centers around Black women, there will be a need for even more intersectional social media movements in the contemporary era.

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