

# How a Hashtag Can Shape a Movement

## **Analysis of Social Movement Theory with Twitter and the Black Lives Matter Movement**

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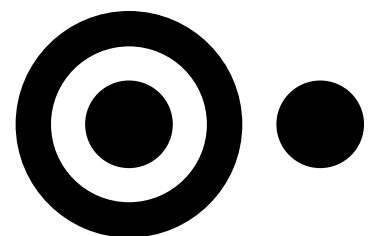
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## Abstract

This study is an exploration of social movement theory and how it can be applied to the field of journalism. Differing characteristics of social movements are defined and related back to journalism and media studies. The scope of the dissertation narrows in on the specific event of the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States during the summer of 2020. The thesis serves an in-depth analysis on how the social media platform Twitter is utilized as a tool by verified actors, journalists, and individual citizens. The methodology of the dissertation is a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter is used as the main search key to accumulate the data. The top retweeted tweets of the day with the largest numbers of tweets using #BlackLivesMatter serves as the timeline for the research. Mecodify is the data retrieving tool utilized to gather data from Twitter's API system. This dissertation serves the purpose of analyzing how modern social media platforms are used as a mechanism to exchange news and information during a social movement. In addition, investigating if hashtags on Twitter's platform can form collective identities, and inciting movement for social justice.

**Key terms:** *#BlackLivesMatter, collective action theory, collective identities, framing, hashtags, social movement theory, Twitter*

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of Black Lives Matter Movement

As far as social movements go, the United States has had its fair share of nationwide protests. From #MeToo, the Women's March, and the first Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s. There have been multiple studies completed on social movements and what drives people to gather and organize protests to seek social justice. With the modernization and increasing use of the internet and social media, it adds another element to the building and mobilization of a movement.

One movement that is currently spreading globally is the Black Lives Matter Movement. Although it has been 40 years since the conclusion of the Civil Rights Movement, there is continued violence and oppression towards Black Americans, which has incited the new social movement known as the Black Lives Matter Movement (Clare, 2016). The movement began with a hashtag, created on Facebook in 2013. The movement was sparked after the acquittal of George Zimmerman—the neighborhood watchman who shot and killed 17 year-old Trayvon Martin. Zimmerman claimed Martin looked suspicious and thought he had been carrying a gun, and shot and killed him in supposed defense. Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi are the three women who coined the now famous hashtag #BlackLivesMatter because of the non-guilty verdict of Zimmerman. Their combined frustration led to the creation of the hashtag #Blacklivesmatter, which later merged into an entire organization.

As stated on their website, the Black Lives Matter Movement “seeks to eradicate the white supremacy that is behind the violence inflicted on Black communities by the State and vigilantes” (Black Lives Matter, 2021). Black Lives Matter can be described as a *grassroots movement*- meaning using people in a community as the basis for political or economic movement. Grassroot movements use collective action from the local level to effect change at the local, regional, national, or international level (Yenerall, 2017).

Along with providing helpful resources through the website, the Black Lives Matter Movement functions as a vehicle for social movement. The movement was highlighted in the 2015 Time's Magazine Person of the Year article: “Black Lives Matter is anchored in the physical occupation

of public space and amplified by social media” (Altman, 2015). What makes this movement so popular is the help of technology and mass spread on social media. For it was the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter that gave the movement momentum from the beginning. Young activists have been able to use the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter as a rallying cry on social media and have been capable of organizing and mobilizing protests across the United States.

During an interview conducted on April 21, 2021, freelance journalist and grassroots attorney Anoa Changa discussed Twitter’s impact on social movements. From her own experience, Changa has seen a rise in the use of Twitter for social movements because of the accessibility and sense of community that is formed around a campaign. The individual “I” changes into a “we”, and there is a stream of consciousness feel to each tweet—each a new thread or point of view to consider on the topic. With Black Lives Matter specifically, she claims that the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter is both recognizable and easy, and the plus side of such a generic hashtag is that it can be used for different purposes—even if it is not directly connected to the Black Lives Matter organization. Changa concludes this is most likely why it has spread so much over the last few years. The movement has now grown from a hashtag into a global network engaging nonviolent action to bring attention to racial injustices, with over 30 chapters in the United States and other countries around the world (Black Lives Matter, 2021).

Both the movement and the hashtag were called upon again in the summer of 2020, when a particular incident created the largest spike in the hashtag’s engagement on Twitter. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020—a Black American male named George Floyd was killed by an officer on duty during an attempted arrest. What made this such a global phenomenon was that the incident was recorded—and then shared via Facebook. The 8-minute video went viral and spread to other social networking platforms such as Twitter. The video, combined with the national lockdown due to global pandemic COVID-19, caused the virality of the hashtag to surpass any numbers it had reached prior. Within the first day after his death there were roughly 218,000 tweets containing the hashtag #Blacklivesmatter, and once protests began in Minneapolis and spread across the globe, the daily use of the hashtag passed 1 million on May 27<sup>th</sup> (Anderson et al, 2020). The following day—May 28<sup>th</sup>—the hashtag reached its highest number of uses in a single day—8.8 million (ibid, 2020). This specific date is where the focus of this dissertation begins.



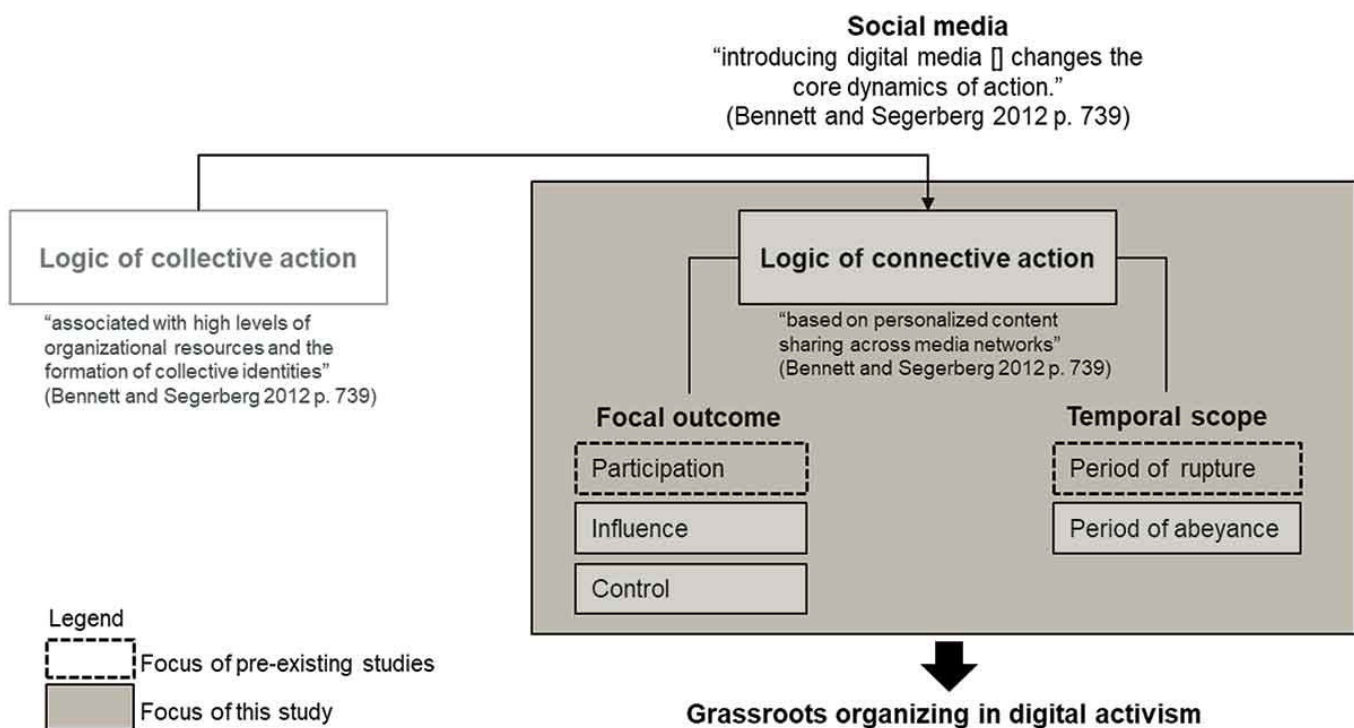
## 1.2 Twitter as a form of Journalism

Ryfe argues in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies* that journalism is not reaching its shelf life but is instead switching focus, potentially to new mediums and theories which includes digital journalism. (Ryfe, 2019). Digital journalism blurs the boundaries of the actors—journalists and citizens—and helps create a new public sphere for news and communication (Dickens et al, 2015). This can be highlighted through the advancement of technology and increasing popularity of social media. The use of social media has changed the way that people, communities, and organizations communicate and interact (Ngai et al, 2015). Additionally, social media provides a portal into how people create narratives that survive over time and become ingrained into society (Ray et al, 2017).

Among the various social media applications, Twitter is a standout amongst the rest due to its real-time nature (Nazir, 2019). Twitter is a social networking platform that allows users to send and receive short text-based posts known as “tweets” (Moon & Hadley, 2014). In addition, the free micro-blogging platform is limited to 140 characters (Jewitt, 2009). Users can like tweets, as well as “retweet”—a function in which another user can share what someone has posted on their own feed or “timeline”. Hashtags are an important tool used on Twitter that make it unique to other social media platforms. Hashtags categorize messages or build communities around a specific topic of interest (Ferragina et al, 2015). With the use of these functions Twitter can become like an awareness system, “broadcasting” breaking news on the mainstream feed (Moon & Hadley, 2014).

Twitter is unique in the way that it places individuals at the very center of a vast network (Leong et al, 2019). The real-time publishing of posts, combined with the grouping of hashtags and virality of retweets give Twitter an advantage when it comes to social movement organizing. By assigning a ‘#’ sign, or hashtag to a specific word or phrase, Twitter users are able to access an organized top of discussion, a “cut-through way” to reach users discussing the same thing (Moe & Larsson, 2013). Hashtags are inclusive and democratic in the way that any Twitter user can use the tool (Enli et al, 2018). Hashtags can also be seen as a substitute for physical presence of participants, organizers, or moderators (ibid, 2018).

Twitter serves as a non-institutional channel which allows the powerless—everyday citizens—to voice their grievances in an online forum. Creating this channel allows for individuals to “activate and act as catalysts of collective action”, which helps to promote grassroots self-organizing (Cardoso, Boudreau, & Carvalho, 2013, p. 3). There is a more expansive path through the self-motivated sharing of personalized content on social media—and it allows dispersed individuals to come together spontaneously (Leong et al, 2019). Figure 1 (Leong et al, 2019) breaks down social media-enabled movements to try and understand how individuals and grassroots organizations drive a social movement.



**Figure 1. Core Dynamics of Action through Social Media**

Source: (Leong et al, 2019)

Figure 1 introduces terms such as collective and connective action, which are addressed in further detail in the theoretical framework section. The focus taken from this figure is how the grassroots organizing in digital activism is created. A combination of the focal outcome—participation, influence, control—and the temporal scope—period of rupture and period of

abeyance. Participance and influence play an important roll on social media presence, which is one aspect that is analyzed further on. The period of rupture is where the main source of data retrieval comes from in this study—which is the peak day of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests.

In terms of journalism and media studies, Twitter has only recently begun to be taken seriously as a platform where news can take place. Within the core values of journalism, it is expected to contribute valid and reliable information, play a democratic role of a watchdog, and serve to the public (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2001). There have been anxieties about the state of journalism and maintaining a well-informed citizenry. One concern with including Twitter as a contributor to journalistic news is the sustainability of material—and how the emphasis can be placed on speed rather than reliability (Jewitt, 2009). However, it is the speed and real-time sharing that does give social networks such as Twitter an advantage over traditional media. In addition, there is the vitality of not only holding officials and institutions accountable, but also citizens to each other. Public accountability can also emerge through new forms of journalism—including citizen journalism with the help of social network platforms such as Twitter. Twitter can offer a version of open sourcing, where a community can be called upon to contribute facts and correct errors to the greater good (Ettema, 2009). Further, Twitter can help facilitate the instant, online dissemination of information from both official and unofficial sources (Hermida, 2010). However, since it is a social media platform, it is still up for debate whether or not its content can be deemed newsworthy.

Twitter provides a mix of news, information, and comments, usually connected to current reality, but without an established order (Vis, 2013). Its structure expands the number of different actors potentially involved in the production of journalistic products, specifically news. The role and potential of Twitter for journalism is therefore a rapidly growing area of research. Today's culture emphasizes connections and relationships, which fuels social networking sites and promotes information-sharing, new experience, and new knowledge (Lasorsa et al, 2012). Hermida (2009) maintained that microblogs create new forms of journalism, representing one of the ways in which the internet is influencing journalism practices and, furthermore, changing

how journalism itself is defined. With that being said, Twitter can be seen as part of a complex ecosystem in which journalism takes place.

There is a fluid and open relationship between professional journalists and citizens following random acts of journalism, which highlights instances where citizens may contribute to the creation of journalistic content without necessarily labelling themselves as citizen journalist or “doing journalism”. There is a certain element of transparency required on social networking platforms such as Twitter to maintain the trust of audiences expanded on the issue of trust, noting that news media outlets have struggled with how to best present validity to the public and how to integrate social networking platforms such as Twitter into established journalism norms and values.

However, the platform and culture of Twitter presents, to an even greater degree, the possibility for changes to journalistic norms—i.e., for journalists to be more open with opinions, more liberal in sharing their gatekeeping role, and more thorough in being transparent about the news process (Lasorsa et al, 2012). Through analyses of different Twitter conventions and content analysis of tweets, it is clear that Twitter can become an effective reporting tool. In certain situations of crisis or protest, broadcasters have had to play catch up with Twitter. One of its benefits is that all you need is a mobile device or internet to find out what is going on anywhere in the world.

In light of Twitter’s increasingly popular platform, scholars and professionals should try to reconsider the relationship between the audience and journalists. Twitter provides an open and a collective space for the audience and journalists alike to share news content. In the instance of a social movement, I would argue that this is especially true, and is one of the characteristics that will be reviewed for this dissertation. Instead of only relying on traditional media such as newspapers or TV news, citizens can harness Twitter’s platform to contribute sharing useful information in the form of links, as well as providing their support of the movement. As the definition of journalism evolves to include individuals who may not necessarily consider themselves practicing journalists, their contributions nonetheless add to news conversations on

digital platforms such as Twitter. Their interactions with news and information, audiences, and practicing journalists should not be ignored.

One example of how Twitter and citizen journalism had a powerful impact with a social movement was during the 2008-2009 Gaza conflict with Israel. The channels “Your Media” and “Sharek” were created and filled with pictures, comments, and videos from people living through the conflict. People from both sides were contributing from outside of the premises and outside of the newsroom, to highlight what was happening on the ground. These citizens used cyberspace—Twitter—to lobby public opinion and influence the international community (Hamdy, 2010). The 2008-2009 Gaza war pushed citizens to partake in the journalist experience, creating influence on traditional media and attracting the attention of the government as well as a global audience. Television newsrooms reached out to well-known media organization Al Jazeera and asked for more of the viewers’ opinions. The Gaza conflict not only increased interactivity with citizens, but also began the normalization of citizens partaking in the journalist experience.

I mention this example to show how activism and citizen journalism has started to become more normalized as a reliable source of information—especially during times of crisis or conflict. Changing focus to the Black Lives Matter movement, citizen journalism also saw a large increase. Citizens and journalists alike used the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter during different times of conflict within the movement. This includes the days in which George Floyd’s video surfaced and went viral, throughout the BLM protests that sparked across the nation—and globally. The scientific problem that will be addressed through this thesis is analyzing how both journalists and citizens utilized the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter during its highest peak. Did the most viral tweets during this period come from verified journalists? Or citizen activists? Or another category of verified users altogether? What does this say about social media users and what information they choose to share during social justice movements? Is the majority still reliant on information only coming from journalists or media related page? Or does it not matter on a social network platform? The results and discussions will address the retrieved data and review how Twitter’s platform may or may not have been a source of news during the Black Lives Matter protests.

## 2. Research Design

The design of this dissertation begins with a theoretical framework, which provides a background for how to analyze Twitter and the Black Lives Matter movement. The theoretical framework section includes the topics of social movement theory, collective identity and collective action theory, and the theory of framing. What follows the theoretical framework is the literature review, which highlights previous scholarly work involving Twitter, social movements, the Black Lives Matter movement, and social media as a form of journalism. Highlighting past academic research provides insight on the work that has already been completed, as well as indicating what gaps this thesis can fill in the field of journalism studies. The methodology section covers the details of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study, as well as limitations of using Twitter and ethical considerations. The thesis concludes with an analysis and discussion of the data, along with a conclusion.

### 2.1 Research Scope & Relevance

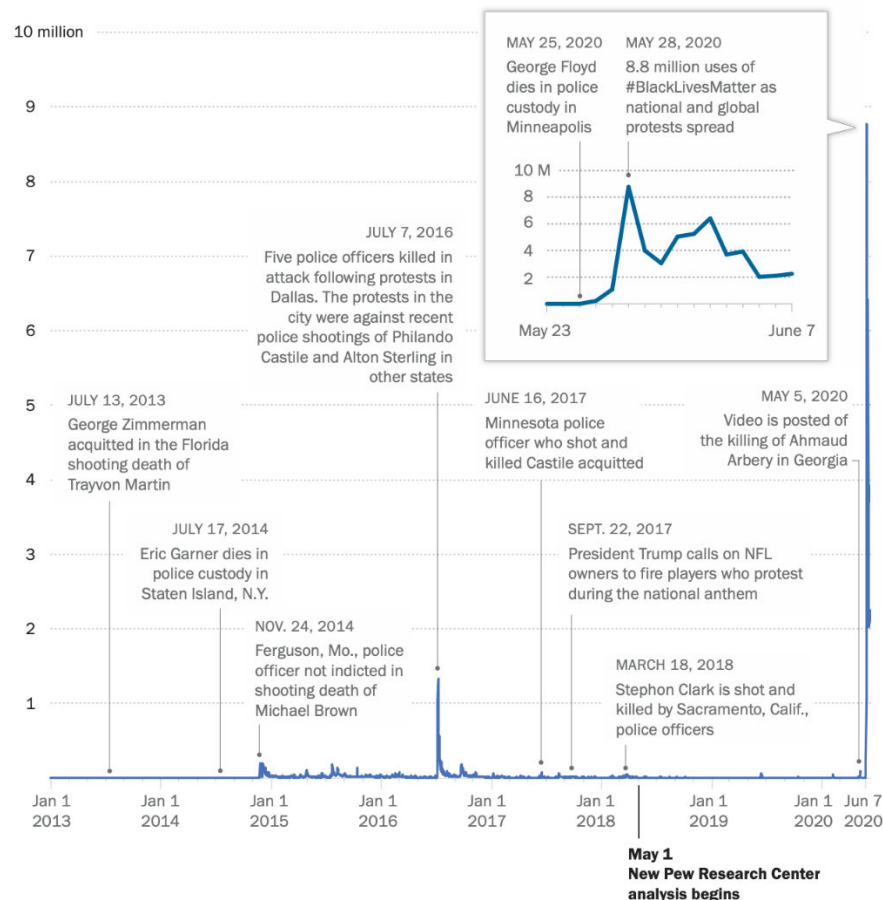
In terms of my personal motivation in pursuing this study, I found interest in this topic for multiple reasons. As an American student living and studying in Sweden, I have had to witness the BLM movement and protests from abroad—which was mainly done through the lens of Twitter. It appeared that more information was received on Twitter about the actors who were on the ground and at the protests in real time. Information was provided on where to receive resources such as water, repellent from tear gas, and free food stands for protestors. This also included face masks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, petitions to sign, and links of organizations to donate to.

In addition to my own personal interest in the BLM protests that happened in the United States last summer, it is important to stress the study's relevance in the domain of journalism. As previously mentioned, technological advances are changing the landscape of media. With the help of social network apps such as Twitter, citizen journalism is becoming more popular—especially during times of conflict. Journalists have also taken to using Twitter, to receive information as well as an additional platform to publish their content. This thesis aims to analyze how journalists, citizens, and other verified users utilized Twitter during the Black Lives Matter protests.

Two different studies done on the Black Lives Matter movement were examined prior to the beginning of this thesis. The first was from Pew Research Center (2020), and it covered the different peaks of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter over the course of 7 years, from 2013-2020. The Pew study pinpointed different incidents that happened with police officers and African Americans over the given period and correlated it with these hashtags' spikes. The newest data provided was shown after the death of George Floyd, reaching to its record level day of May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with 8.8 million tweets with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter (PEW, 2020). The following graph is from the Pew Research Center:

**Use of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag hits record levels amid global protests over George Floyd's death while in police custody**

*Number of public Twitter posts mentioning the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, Jan. 1, 2013-June 7, 2020*



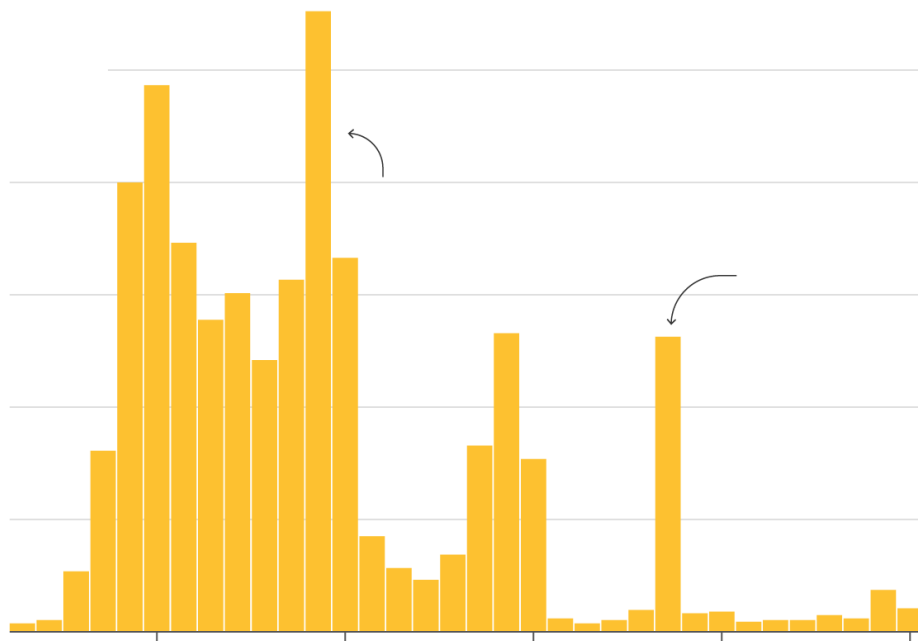
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets using Crimson Hexagon. Data for Jan. 1, 2013-May 1, 2018 collected in June 2018; data for May 1, 2018-June 7, 2020 collected in June 2020. The latter data collection phase was used for May 1, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Figure 2. Chart showing number of #BlackLivesMatter posts 2013-2020**

Resource: (PEW Research Center, 2020)

There was an additional source found from the 2020 BLM protests in the United States was from a New York Times article published on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. With the collaboration of Edwin Chow—an associate professor at Texas State University and Crowd Counting Consortium (data collector on crowd sizes of political protests), New York Times was able to analyze the number of attendants at the BLM protests. More specifically, the amount of present protestors were analyzed for over a month, and concluded that June 6<sup>th</sup> was the day with the largest number of protestors during the entire summer. This also concluded that the BLM movement may very well be the largest movement in US history (New York Times, 2020). The article discusses the different age groups and ethnicities of the Americans protesting, and included interviews with key actors including social movement professor at Stanford University Douglas McAdam. McAdam (New York Times, 2020) stated: “It looks, for all the world, like these protestors are achieving what very few do: setting in motion a period of significant, sustained, and widespread social, political change.” The article also gives credit to Black Lives Matter, claiming that through the use of social media to quickly share protest details to a wide audience, the organization is able to provide guidance, information on materials, and a framework of for new activists without necessarily directing each protest (Buchanan et al, 2020). The following figure is from the Crowd Counting Consortium provided for the NYT article:



**Figure 3. Graph showing the number of people attending BLM protests in 2020**



Source: (Crowd Counting Consortium for NYT, 2020)

While both studies cover the Black Lives Matter movement and the 2020 protests that happened across the United States, neither studies go over the topics in relation to journalism and media studies. In fact, there are multiple research studies done on both Twitter and the Black Lives Matter movement, however it appeared that most focus on the field of sociology. Where the two studies above end is where this dissertation begins. There is a research gap with the PEW research study. Although its methodology covers the number of tweets with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter during different racial incidents in the US, PEW does not go into detail about the specific tweets being made. The New York Times article provides the numbers and data of people attending the protests but does not include what type of framing is provided that may have influenced people to go out into the streets protesting. Considering there was a national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic adds an additional element to the time of the US protests. People were willing to leave their houses even with the government imposing a national lockdown to protest a social justice issue. The type of framing and mobilization presented on Twitter is something analyzed in this dissertation to assess if and how it influenced the Black Lives Matter movement. The two studies listed above stand as the background for the timeline and theories of this research. This leads into the research questions aimed to answer within this dissertation:

**RQ1: How was the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter utilized as a reporting tool during its highest peak, and who were the actors utilizing it—journalists, citizen activists, or celebrities?**

**RQ2: Were collective action frames utilized with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter during its highest peak? If so, how?**

### 3. Theoretical Framework

Social Movement Theory and Framing are used as a starting point for the appropriate theoretical framework. Within Social Movement theory, collective identity and collection action are also addressed. Framing is defined in its general concept, in relation to social movements, and where

it fits into collective action framing. Social movement theory will first be defined alongside its original characteristics. Next, a look into the critiques of Morris' theory over time and how social movement theory has evolved with technological advances. The term *resource mobility* is defined and discussed on how it relates to social movement theory. Two sub-categories will then be introduced: *Collective identity* and *collective action*. Both concepts are defined as well as characterized in relevance to journalism studies. Robert Entman's work is used as the framework for the theoretical background of framing. Next, framing will be defined within the field of media studies. Lastly, I will review how frames were utilized on Twitter and during the Black Lives Matter protests.

### 3.1 Social Movement Theory

#### 3.1.1 Defining Social Movements and Social Movement Theory

Social Movement Theory begins the theoretical framework of this dissertation. In his book *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, Morris focuses on how social movements generate and are affected by the construction of meaning (framing), collective identities, and conscious raising (Morris, 1992). Before going further, it is best to define a social movement itself. A **Social movement** is defined as a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities (Diani, 1992). Additionally, the social construction of protest takes place within and between groups and social categories within social networks (Morris, 1992). Within a social movement or a protest, there are different characteristics that come into play. This includes the actors, resources, and mobilizing structures. These are all terms that are addressed in the coming sections.

Morris readdresses Social Movement Theory several times over the years, to critique his previous work and add new elements and characteristics. Social movements were originally seen as nonrational, and were based heavily on emotion and unpredictability, which caused theorists to believe that collective behavior was only associated with nonrationality (Morris, 2000). This is not to say that emotions are a negative aspect to social movements. In fact, people need to feel distressed with a situation, and then need hope that collective action can help create a positive change (McAdam, 1996). Another aspect of the social movement theory that was not addressed

in the original literature was the impact of culture. Morris notes that *culture*—ideas, belief systems, rituals, and grievance interpretation—are indeed central to social movements (Morris, 1999). This notion proves true today, as most social movements that have occurred over the years have been shaped around specific cultural groups. For instance, the marches for the LGBTQ+ community, the Women’s March, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

A common focus of the social movement theory is the topic of resources. If a social movement is in fact going to be structured and organized, there are certain resources required. Two particularly important resources needed to orchestrate a social movement are time and money. Time is the ultimate resource for collective action in a social movement (Morris, 1992). Money is included in the cost of putting together campaigns, signs, resources, and most importantly, buying more time. Although this was a major concern for social movement theorists, with the modern technological advancements it does not pose as much of an issue. Twitter is a free social networking platform that anyone can use. The global reach social networks have with just the touch of a button on a cellphone or computer creates great advantages to social movements. Campaigning for an organization or social movement becomes both quicker and cost-free. Internet technologies lower communication costs, making it easier to recruit or organize social movements (Farrell, 2012). It has even been argued that digital technologies reduce the issue of cost so much that it renders them negligible (Gonzalez-Bailon et al, 2013). With the Black Lives Matter movement being created during a time when Twitter already existed and was well recognized across the globe, it helps to explain how the movement has seen so much traction since its birth in 2014.

Physicality and face-to-face presence are additional characteristics of social movement theory that need to be addressed. Morris had originally discussed how in person encounters were the most common unit of social constructions, including door-to-door campaigning and protests (1992). Technology advances and social networks such as Twitter have proven that digital protests can also be an effective way to protest a social issue. It is important to mention that the selected time frame analyzed for this thesis—the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests in the United States—took place during the initial lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic. One could argue that citizens who did appear on the ground at protests had to have had a strong collective action

pushing them to go against the rules and restrictions set by the nation. The impact of protesting during a global pandemic is an additional angle that would be interesting to investigate in further research.

### 3.1.2 The Actor, Resource Mobilization, and Mobilizing Structures

Next, the following terms covered in the Social Movement Theory will be defined and discussed on how they relate to the Black Lives Matter Movement: the actor, mobilizing structures, and resource mobilization. The *actor* that is addressed in the literature is “embedded” in terms of a group identity, usually based on nationality, race-ethnicity, gender, class, or religion (Morris, 1992). The actors are then the online users who create and post the content on Twitter. A hashtag is what is dividing actors into different sub-groups of information—focusing on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, etc.

When describing the different actors on Twitter, it is important to distinguish between the variations that Twitter has imposed on its users. Although anyone can create a Twitter account and post anything freely, Twitter has an additional verified option for its users. The ideology behind verification of certain Twitter users was met by demands of affirming authenticity and authority of the content sources. Verified accounts will have a blue check mark next to the Twitter username and is usually granted to accounts deemed important enough to be worth impersonating (Paul et al, 2019). This includes fields such as politics, celebrities, athletes, journalists, etc. Regarding media and journalism studies, the verified accounts would be beneficial in the dissemination of real-time or breaking news, whose arrival on such platforms precedes traditional media reportage (ibid, 2019). However, the issue lies within the algorithm, as Twitter’s process of verification remains a secret. It can sometimes be predicted what accounts can be trusted on content based on their verification status, however that is not always the case. This is limiting in analyzing what kind of actors are tweeting what content. Regardless of the verification itself, the Black Lives Matter movement on Twitter can be seen as an accurate example of how different actors are grouped into a collective identity where the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was used during a peak period, and potentially enforced collective action.

**Resource mobility** is another characteristic of Social Movement theory that needs to be defined and discussed. Resource mobilization is one of the dominant theoretical frameworks to analyze social movements. Resource mobility is the variety of ways resources must be mobilized within a social movement (McCarthy & Zald, 1997). This means the dependence of external support for success. Although it is typically covered within the field of sociology, it is also relevant within journalism studies. Resource mobilization relates to ideology on a specific topic. Similar to culture, ideology encompasses beliefs, values, and meanings that help to motivate people to participate in social movements. According to Buechler, ideology can perform multiple functions. It can transform dissatisfaction into politicized agenda, providing a sense of collective identity, and serve movement resources (Buechler, 1993).

McCarthy and Zald explain that it is crucial to receive involvement from individuals outside of the represented collectivity of a social movement, and in some cases supporters who provide labor, facilities, and money may not even be associated with the underlying values of a movement (1977). Using social media as a mobilizer for resources is an advantage for social movements. With the use of Twitter's hashtag tool, anyone can look at the sub-group of #BlackLivesMatter, regardless of being a member of the organization or not. Links for donations and external resources shared via Twitter also highlight how the medium can reach people across collective groups—let alone the globe. Twitter is helping to cut the time and cost of organizing social movements in half, which leads to mobilizing structures. It is also noteworthy to mention how mobilizing structures work in the creation and organization of social movements.

**Mobilizing structures** are defined as the collective vehicles—both informal and formal—through which people mobilize and engage in collective action (McAdam, 1996). The mobilizing structure can recruit participants, assemble resources, and coordinate collective action. Twitter is then the digital media source, with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter as the mobilizing structure or organizing agent to create collective action.

There is also the concept of Social Movement Community addressed in Buechler's work, which helps to designate organized networks of activists in movements (1993). Though the initial use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was just on social networks, Black Lives Matter formed a community where the official website and organization was created. This example showcases the

correlation between the social movement and the social movement community. However, both are actively working as resource mobilizers. In addition, major forms of collective action have evolved from being viewed as spontaneous or “irrational” into movement activities with concrete goals, articulated general values and interests, and rational calculations of strategies (Stekelenburg et al, 2009).

The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter is the space online for citizens to give public opinion, publish their own media, and provide information on protests. The organization of Black Lives Matter is the website where people can find all the formal information, sign petitions, and donate to various causes within the movement. Social Movement Theory combines all these different terms to understand how social movements are created and what drives them to continue pursuing success. The case of Black Lives Matter shows how technology and social networks such as Twitter have modernized and enhanced the original concepts and outlooks of Social Movement Theory. Next will be defining collective identity and collective action and how they relate to social movements.

## 3.2 Collective Identity & Collective Action

### 3.2.1 Collective Identity

The literature referenced to discuss collective identity comes from Ryfe (2019) in the *Handbook of Journalism Studies*. It is important to mention this theory within the theoretical framework section since it is specifically addressing media and journalism studies. The theory of collective identity is focusing on a group-centered account of political practice. This means that groups and group identities—along with information, reason, and truth—are at the center of democratic politics (Ryfe, 2019). Further, a group-based understanding of democratic politics may help scholars understand how new media can change journalistic practices and the place of journalism in the communities it serves (ibid, 2019). One of the main points Ryfe argues is how citizens are not rational, but social people. Individuals take on the values, social norms, and behaviors of preferred groups (Turner, 1991). Additionally, group identities shape attitudes towards issues, events, and other social groups. Ryfe further argues that people are more likely to make political choices not on their self-interest, but according to how the “people like me” think (2019).

In a previous study covering movement social learning, researchers analyzed the congregation of a common political outlook on Twitter. The study found that although Twitter users were being exposed to multiple types of posts on their timelines, users holding similar values to one another were more likely to take on an in-group identity (Mercea & Yilmaz, 2018). It can then be argued that the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter is a form of collective identity. The citizens and verified actors alike who use the hashtag on Twitter have created a group identity, and a space where politics and democracy can be discussed. A hashtag is more likely to shape a collectively similar response from users and create a resilient national identity as an expression of solidarity (Pond & Lewis, 2019). If this is true, then the Twitter users who are posting with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter are creating a collective identity amongst each other and expressing their solidarity with the movement.

### 3.2.2 Collective Action

The next term to be defined within social movements is collective action. **Collective action** are the actions taken by individuals in pursuit of a shared common goal or collective good (Bimber et al, 2005). This is relevant to politics and social action, which defines clear parameters and mechanisms for enacting change required by mass numbers of citizens (Pond & Lewis, 2019). With that being defined, *connective action theory* is an attempt to rethink the established logic of collective action for an age of hyper-mediated, personalized, political expression (ibid, 2019). According to Bennett and Segerberg, motivation for action is realized individually, and the mechanisms for action reflect that individualism (2012). This contradicts Ryfe's collective identity theory mentioned above, to which I would disagree with Bennett and Sergerberg in regard to this aspect. When considering the use of hashtags on Twitter, users are already being grouped together within that specific sub-group. Whether Twitter users are using the hashtag in solidarity or against the movement, they are still being grouped together in one respect. In order to incite collective action, whether it be sharing petitions, donating money, or going to a protest, I would argue that this begins not individually but in a group mindset based on the sub-grouped hashtag #BlackLivesMatter.

However, the two also state that at the core of connective action logic is the "recognition of digital media as organizing agents" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p.752). Social networks such as

Twitter are credited with enabling a new form of connective action, in which political movements mobilize around hashtags, memes, and personalized action frames (Pond & Lewis, 2019). The mechanisms utilized to enhance collective action through digital media include organization connectors (web links), event coordination (protest calendars), and information sharing (ibid, 2019). This form of connective action is addressed again during the analysis section, after examining how the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was utilized during its top peak on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Moving on, framing is the next theoretical framework to discuss, and how it relates to Twitter and the Black Lives Matter movement.

### 3.3 Framing

#### 3.3.1 Framing in General

Framing is the final theory being included in the theoretical framework. Although there is countless research done on framing in various aspects of media studies, it is beneficial to begin by defining what framing is in a general context. Secondly, a discussion on framing in the context of social movements and describing collective action frames. Lastly, framing within the constraints of Twitter will be addressed, and then related back to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Beginning with Entman's *Framing: Toward Clarification of a fractured paradigm*, **framing** is defined as describing the power of a communicating text (1993). Framing works to shape and alter interpretations and preferences, and they introduce the importance of certain ideas that encourage a target audience to think, feel, and decide in a particular way (Entman, 2007). Additionally, it is the process of selecting elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation (ibid, 2007). One aspect of framing is *agenda setting*, which can be seen as defining problems worthy of public and government attention. Agenda setting can shine a light on social conditions, world events, or character traits of a political candidate. One could argue that in relevance to social movements, agenda setting can take place in the form of an organization trying to recruit members, obtain resources, or incite change.



### 3.3.2 Framing Social Movements

When it comes to instilling a commitment to the cause of a social movement, influence is critical in the motivation (Diani, 2012). Framing would then act as the representation of influence. One major difference noted between social movements and social media based social movements is the concept of an “iconic leader” (Leong et al, 2019). In the past, social movements have had well-known faces on the branding of a movement or movement organization. Martin Luther King Jr. and Ghandi are just two examples of leaders who help to frame the movement’s message. When referring to social movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement on Twitter, they are unique for their leaderless structures (Hardt & Negri, 2011). The idea that anyone can post about the movement and potentially go viral through Twitter’s algorithm constitutes advantages for social movements via social media. Additionally, social media makes framing more feasible for grassroots activists who do not possess the finances or connections that a famous leader or social media organization would have (Carty, 2010).

Benford and Snow (2000) argue that frames help render events meaningful and function to organize experience and guide action. Their work covers a specific type of frame: *collective action frame*. Collective action frames perform an interpretive function by simplifying and condensing topics in a way that is intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists (ibid, 2000). The study of collection action frames already exists, and now framing processes have been recognized as a central dynamic in understanding the course and character of social movements. From here will be provided a definition and discussion on the collective action frames, referred to now as (CAF).

CAF’s are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire campaigns of a social movement organization (Benford & Snow, 2000). CAF’s are constituted by two main sets of characteristics: the action-oriented function or “core framing tasks”, and the interactive, discursive processes that attend to these core framing tasks and are thus generative of collective action frames. With CAF’s to be effective, there needs to be a shared understanding of problematic conditions or a situation in need of change. Attributions are made regarding who or what is to blame, and an alternative set of arrangements need to be articulated. In addition, there needs to be an urge for others to act to affect change (ibid, 2000).

The core framing tasks within CAF's will be presented and used in this study. The core framing tasks are as follows: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing (Benford & Snow, 2000). **Diagnostic framing** is also viewed as "injustice framing" or movements that identify the victims of a given injustice. The initial conceptualization of injustice frames as a mode of interpretation—collective noncompliance and protest—are generated and adopted by those who define the actions of an authority as unjust. Further, if social movements are seeking remedy to a specific issue, directed action is contingent on identification of the sources of causality, blame, and culpable agents, all focusing on blame or responsibility (ibid, 2000).

**Prognostic framing** proposes a solution to the problem itself. There is a plan of attack addressed by those participating or using the collective action frame. In the case of the Black Lives Matter movement, one of the prognostic frames can be identified as the proposal to defund the police in the United States to eliminate the issue of police brutality on African Americans. **Motivational framing** is a "call to arms" or rationale for engaging in collective action, with four generic vocabularies of motive that emerge in the interaction of movement activists: severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety (ibid, 2000). These terms provide adherents with compelling accounts for engaging in collective action and sustaining their participation. By pursuing these core framing tasks, movement actors attend to the interrelated problems of action mobilization. Action mobilization fosters action itself and gets people "from the balcony to the barricades" (ibid, 2000). This discourse on CAF claims that more research needs to be done to assess the relative impact on social movement participation, collective identity processes, and other movement framing activities. Below in Figure 2 is a graph representing the different layers of a collective action frame.



**Figure 4. Collective Action Frame layers of characteristics**

Resource: (Benford & Snow, 2000)

According to Benford and Snow's (2000) literature on CAF:

The scheme proposed in Fig. 2 summarizes the elaboration of collective action frames through social movement discourses. The innermost circle reproduces the linguistic features of textual content aimed at framing a movement's collective action. This content provides – in the mid circle – the three primary framing tasks required for a collective action frame to be formulated. Finally, these framing tasks are functional to generate the sustained frame components running in the external circle. In other words, this scheme shows the two-step journey to move from discourses to cognition in social movement framing.

### 3.3.3 Framing on Twitter with Black Lives Matter

There is an apparent need for studying framing in the contexts of social media networks. For it is a more interactive and 'bottom-up' model of framing where everyday citizens rather than traditional journalists and traditional, hierarchical media organizations produces content (Nisbet, 2010). Twitter specifically adds an interesting element to framing, as there is a character limit of 140 with each individual tweet. There is different scholarship on the topic of tweet length and how it effects the diffusion and engagement of tweets. One of the fundamental elements of information processing must be added by external links (Lahuerta-Otero, 2018). Given this

limitation of space, actors on Twitter must be selective of what they are framing and how. As regular citizens become active contributors, creators, commentators, and archivers of digital news content, new possibilities arise for framing research. For framing is an unavoidable reality of the public communication process (Nisbet, 2010). On Twitter's platform, users are framing tweets whether they are even aware of it or not. Further, hashtags can be seen as a way to organize specific frames, depending on the sub-group identity the hashtag belongs to. Within the Black Lives Matter movement, different frames that can be analyzed are those focused on providing resources, placing blame on police officers, victimizing the lives lost, or something unrelated altogether. The qualitative study in this study aims to highlight what kind of frames were used with the most frequency during the peak day of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The CAF frames will act as the base for this part of the study.

#### 4. Literature Review/Previous Studies

The aim of the literature review is to highlight previous studies completed on the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as studies done on other social movements using the help of Twitter. The idea is to show how the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter is just one example of how social media can help create viral campaigns to promote social change. Among the studies reviewed will include a case study done on the protests and counter protests of #BlackLivesMatter and #AllLivesMatter (Gallagher, 2018). Next, a look over the study on the 2011 UK riots (Pond & Lewis, 2019). After that will focus on the examination of movement mobilization within the #MeToo movement (Lindgren, 2019). The use of hashtag activism with the #FreeYouth protests in Thailand will also be looked at (Sinpeng, 2021). The idea with this section is to give insight on the work that has already been completed revolving around the topics of social movements, Twitter, and Black Lives Matter, and where this study comes in to fill the gaps of research.

The study completed on the hashtags #BlackLivesMatter and #AllLivesMatter analyzed all protest sentiments during specific time frames over the course of several different incidents relating to the Black Lives Matter movement. It was stated that this was the first work to engage a data-driven approach to the hashtag #AllLivesMatter (Gallagher, 2018). By retrieving data

from Twitter's algorithm based on the hashtags, the research team was able to analyze the discourse around both hashtags, and sub talking points. The main findings within this study were that the Black Lives Matter movement was able to avoid being derailed by counter-protest opinions on social media by relegating discussion of opinions to the counter-protest, rather than the movement itself (ibid, 2018). Reviewing this study was a helpful starting point to see how quantitative research had been completed with a Twitter API, along with the topic of #BlackLivesMatter.

The study completed on the 2011 UK riots uses a comparative study of hashtags, treating them as genre-defining signifiers. For the methodology, the three elements for the hashtag discourse included identifying the dominant hashtags during the relevant period, differentiating between hashtags in a way to support critical analysis, and providing clues as to why some discourse energizes group mobilization and others do not (Pond & Lewis, 2019). One of the findings was that the collective group "broom armies" created on Twitter appeared to be models of connective action—where events were discussed on social media, and hashtags were central to the coordination and collectivism of personalized action frames.

The study on the 2011 UK riots argued that different types of tweets—and the way they are framed—contribute to discourse in different ways. Under a specific hashtag tweets can advocate for or against a particular position, be purely informational, or link to external media that is either dialectic or informational, or not be topical at all (Pond & Lewis, 2019). Pond and Lewis explain the importance of differentiating between hashtags and action frames, stating that hashtags are genre defining discourses through which action frames may be contested and negotiated (ibid, 2019). Another aspect of the 2011 UK riots study worth noting is the topic of 'prestige users' and how Twitter has a disproportionate influence on the stream of tweets. For instance, a user with a large following such as a celebrity or influencer will adhere to a power curve due to the distribution of followers. This makes some discourses more prominent than others. This topic is analyzed in this dissertation as well. Since part of the methodology is analyzing the top retweeted tweets using #BlackLivesMatter, it is important to make note of who the actors are, if they are verified or not, what that means in terms of popularity and virality, and

how that can influence mobilization. All of these characteristics are addressed in the analysis section.

The study covering the #MeToo movement analyzes how it was successful in mobilization and awareness raising with the help of social media. The #MeToo movement is a prominent case of hashtag activism, and a ‘hashtag-mediated’ public sphere (Rambukkana, 2015). The study argues that hashtags are not only referents but also tools of activating certain interpretive frames. The frames used in this study to analyze the hashtag #MeToo is movement/change, victimization, public figures, sharing stories/speaking up, movement origins, and sex crimes (Lindgren, 2019). These frames provided initial bias for how the campaign was carried out through Twitter. Lindgren claims that without such frames, it would be hard to realize any kind of mobilization (2019). This methodology provided good background on how to differentiate frames from hashtag activists.

Two issues that Lindgren poses is the interception of hateful comments and trolling, as well as the “noise” that lives on social media (2019). It is important to note that although social networks such as Twitter can gain traction and attention for a social movement, the way certain tweets are framed can effect its mobilization power. Benford and Snow (2000) argue that with greater contradictions comes less resonance within the framing, and makes it harder for a mobilization to sustain focus. Another cause of loss of focus with the frames for mobilization through Twitter is the noise. As found in the study on #MeToo, by the time the discourse started to become noisier the issue that the campaign was pushing for had already traveled into mainstream media. Then the same logic applies for both pre-digital news cycles and social media, where brief and intense bursts of focus on topics tend to evaporate and are replaced by the next thing (Rosenberg & Feldman, 2009).

A recent study on hashtag activism researched the #FreeYouth protests in Thailand (Sinpeng, 2021). The study covered how a Facebook group created as a safe place to discuss democracy turned into one of the largest youth-led anti-government protests in contemporary history (ibid, 2021). The hashtag #FreeYouth exploded on Twitter in 2020 and became the second most trending hashtag that year (ibid, 2021). The #FreeYouth study discusses how social media

platforms can increase civic political participation, activate inactive citizens, challenge political actors, and hold governments accountable for their actions. If Sinpeng's claims are true, it holds a solid argument for how social movements on social media are considered within journalism studies. The youth activists from the #FreeYouth protests are another example of how citizens can take on the characteristics of a journalist by acting as a watchdog and holding their government accountable during a time of conflict.

## 5. Method

This dissertation will use a mixed methodology—the main data comes from a quantitative study of analyzing tweets; however, there is also a qualitative aspect used by analyzing the messages and frames within the selected tweets. Content analysis is the research technique applied to the sample of data. Content analysis is the approach to analyze documents and texts, and to make inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Bryman, 2012). This study uses content analysis to gain an analysis of the tweets using the specific hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. The specific time frame of the data for this research comes from the date May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The reasoning behind this chosen date comes from the PEW research study mentioned in the background section—the day with the largest number of tweets with the use of #BlackLivesMatter. Where that research concludes is where this one will begin, using that date as a starting point to analyze how the hashtag was utilized during the day it reached its highest number is virality.

To retrieve the data, the Mecodify database was used to pull tweets from Twitter's API system. Mecodify is an open-source tool built for the purpose of providing a simple and effective way to explore, analyze and visualize data obtained from social media on various topics (Al-Saqaf, 2016). Mecodify can extract large numbers of tweets within a specific time frame and organize it according to different factors. These categories include likes, comments, retweets, and whether the Twitter user is verified. Additionally, one can isolate a specific date or time to view tweets, separate tweets by languages, and even break down the different source types used to send out tweets (tweets posted via web versus iPhone, Android, or iPads). It can help answer questions on the use of Twitter in connection to particular incidents or conflicts. Mecodify was built for everyday users to utilize without any previous knowledge of coding or any technical fields.

Mecodify can be used to extract and analyze data in the form of tables and graphs with timelines, including features of overlays and flags. One can compare real events with Twitter activity and can identify influential tweeters involved in a particular subject. This is done by the visualization of Twitter users' verification. If a Twitter user is marked as verified, there is an additional link provided where one can go to the direct Twitter page and investigate if the verified user is a political figure, celebrity, journalist, or individual citizen. Although Mecodify has been in several published works and Bachelors' theses, it is still a relatively new tool, and this is the first Masters' thesis to be completed using the tool. This thesis aims to be a point of departure in the field of journalism studies on quantitative analysis of Twitter and hashtags using Mecodify.

The time frame to pull selected tweets was from 0:00:00 up to 23:59:59 in UTC on May 28<sup>th</sup> 2020, utilizing the entire day as a form of reference. The total amount of tweets pulled using the signifier #BlackLivesMatter on 05/28/20 was 524,273. The only specification made to narrow down the search was to gather tweets that were only posted in English. Changing this setting narrowed down the number of tweets using #BlackLivesMatter to 338,271. To focus on the virality, the tweets were then organized by the number of retweets they had. This ranking system gave a visualization of the most popular tweets from May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 based on Mecodify's algorithm. The tweets listed were able to visualize the number of tweets, the total of retweets, the number of replies, and the types of tweets posted (images, videos, links). The Twitter users—or actors—were also displayed on Mecodify, as well as listing whether they are a verified Twitter user. For the sampling method, this study is dependent on Mecodify's algorithm of top tweets and top retweets. The open-source tool is used to filter the results used in this research. I selected the top 150 tweets to create a codebook using the following indicators:

- Amount of retweets
- Amount of comments
- Pictures
- Videos
- Links
- Verified

The codes listed above are meant to help analyze the top tweets using the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter based on Mecodify's algorithm for May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The top 150 tweets were



individually coded for the initial results, then the top 10 were coded again under the framing coding manual for RQ2. Different aspects of the data that have been analyzed are the actors—who is tweeting? Who are the key actors within the top 10-20 retweeted tweets? Who has used #BlackLivesMatter the most over the course of the day? What are the conversations underneath the top tweets? Are other Twitter users agreeing with what the original tweet says? What are the overall themes—are people responding in solidarity? Providing resources for the movement? Arguing against the movement? By breaking down each of the top retweeted tweets with the above characteristics, the representation of data is aimed to answer RQ1.

**RQ1: How was the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter utilized as a reporting tool during its highest peak, and who were the actors utilizing it—journalists, citizen activists, or celebrities?**

For the qualitative section of the study, Benford and Snow's model of collective action theory (2000) is used in the methodology (for RQ2). A content analysis of frames—specifically the collective action frames—has been conducted with list of top 10 retweeted tweets using #BlackLivesMatter. These top 10 tweets came from the initial 150 coded tweets. For the sake of time and resources, it was the top 10 retweeted tweets that were coded again for the different categories of collective action frames. The text—or content—of the tweet is analyzed in a qualitative manner to help assess if collective action can be measured with retweets. The three core collective action tasks construct a movement's internal and external mobilizing discourse and provides participants with elements for social identification and identity sharing (Vicari, 2010). The three specific frame components shaping collective action frames are **diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational**. An analysis will help determine if collective action was supported through the top retweeted tweets during the peak date of May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. The sample set for the qualitative study comes from the same set of tweets sampled from Mecomify. However, only the top 10 tweets are placed into a separate codebook based off the following codes:

- Diagnosis frame
- Prognosis frame

- Motivational frame
- Other/unrelated frame
- Links
- Pictures
- Videos
- Verified User

In addition to the codebook, the table listed below is used as a reference for the meanings of the framing tasks:

Table 1  
Central frame concepts.

Element	Value	Meaning	Authors
<i>Framing task</i>	Diagnostic	Problem identification	Snow and Benford (1988, 2000)
	Prognostic	Proposed solution	
	Motivational	Call for action	
<i>Frame component</i>	Injustice	Moral indignation	Gamson (1992a,b)
	Agency	Potential of action	
	Identity	Self-recognition	

**Figure 5. Concepts of Central Frames**

Resource: (Snow and Benford, 2000)

The aim of the qualitative portion of the study is to analyze if collective action was supported using retweets based on the top retweets of the peak date #BlackLivesMatter was posted on Twitter. For each type of collective action frame a tweet from the data set will be highlighted as an example. The content analysis of the top 10 retweeted tweets aim to show what themes emerged from the data set, and help answer RQ2:

**RQ2: Were collective action frames utilized with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter during its highest peak? If so, how?**

## 5.2 Validity & Reliability

In terms of validity, what is produced into the dataset is reliant on Mecodify and its functions. Mecodify's algorithm of calculating the top retweeted tweets is the main indicator of the dataset. With the retweets, it is a matter of how many times a tweet had been checked or clicked on. This is also driven by and relies on Twitter's own API and algorithm. There is some scholarship on Twitter's specific algorithm, and how the algorithm of top tweets and retweets are kept secret. In reference to the margin of error, the sample size has been checked through the online calculator of "surveymonkey." With the current population of 338,271 of tweets gathered from Mecodify and a sample size of 150 selected tweets, there is a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 8%.

For reliability, it is not so much of an issue since most of the analysis will come from the data itself and what it represents. There are no formulas to be followed or equations to double check. An intercoder reliability test has been completed for this study. Another scholar has tested the created codebook and cross referenced the findings to ensure that it is a reliable source to analyze.

## 5.3 Methodological Considerations

In trying to answer RQ1, there are various aspects of data that need to be looked at from the Mecodify retrieval. First, when deciding what aspect of a tweet to analyze, the top retweets seemed to be the best option for this study for multiple reasons. Retweets are the best method of measuring popularity and virality. There is scholarship that argues that retweets are the best representation of popularity on Twitter, instead of other variables such as likes or quoted tweets. Considering the usage of Twitter, the benefit of retweeting is that it requires minimal effort—just a single mouse click. When a user retweets a message, they give it veracity, which shows after having processed the information they make a conscious decision to share it (Liu et al, 2012).

It is also smart to discuss the value of a message itself. Content that contains information that is unusual, extraordinary, or violates expectations is more likely to be shared and talked about (Berger, 2013). Emotions also play a key factor in sharing messages. In fact, research shows that individuals are more likely to share messages that are appealing to high-arousal emotions

(Berger, 2011). Berger further relates public visibility to encouraging imitation and forming a ‘herd mentality’, and that behavior is based on learning by observing others (2013). The concept of observational learning has been reviewed in the decision-making process in terms of social influence, which is defined as a change in an individual’s thoughts, feelings, attitudes, or behaviors that result from the interaction of another individual or group (Rashotte, 2007).

The message itself plays a fundamental role in forming a critical judgement. Users who use a systematic strategy to process information will make behavioral decisions (by retweeting) based on their assessment of the quality of information received within the context of the message (Zhang & Watts, 2008). Users should analyze the messages received and have sufficient motivation, ability and cognitive resources to process the information (ibid, 2008).

#### 5.3.1 Limitations of Twitter

One of the limitations of basing an analysis off the number of retweets is that we do not necessarily know what the intention is behind a Twitter user’s choice of retweeting a tweet. Is it in favor of what is being said? Or is it against the tweeted message? It is limiting in the fact that one cannot say for certain if the person behind the retweets is agreeing with the context of the tweet posted. In addition, it is also difficult to determine what the motivation behind a retweet is without more context on the actor, or Twitter user. For the purpose of this dissertation, it is assumed that the used function of a retweet is adding to the tweet’s popularity—in agreeance with that tweet. A further analysis of the comments, quoted tweets, or reviewing the actors’ profile page is a way to attempt to gather a better understanding of the meaning behind the retweet.

#### 5.3.2 Ethical Concerns

Although Twitter is a free and public platform that anyone with internet can gain access to, there is still an issue regarding privacy. Dealing with personal information on Twitter was something that needed to be considered throughout the study. To uphold ethical values and not give out any private information, names and Twitter usernames of individual users have been redacted. However, any Twitter user from the dataset who holds a verified symbol—meaning they are a public figure—is shared with the username visible. Twitter’s help center has a detailed page explaining the different types of verified accounts and how to obtain the title. The notable part of

holding a verified account is that one must represent or be associated with a widely recognizable individual or brand. The “badge” of verification proves to the Twitter public that the account is authentic, and able of sharing for outside of Twitter’s platform (Twitter Help Center, 2021).

## 6. Findings and Analysis

A thorough analysis of the data representation pulled from Mecodify aims to answer **RQ1: How was the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter utilized as a reporting tool during its highest peak, and who were the actors utilizing it—journalists, citizen activists, or celebrities?** The data presented covers the different hashtags used alongside #BlackLivesMatter, including a list of the top 10 retweeted tweets and actors behind them, and the top tweeters using #BlackLivesMatter most frequently on its peak day. Additionally, a more in-depth analysis of the actors tweeting, and the conversations around the top retweeted tweets are analyzed to uncover any common themes. My hypothesis for **RQ1** is that 1. The #BlackLivesMatter hashtag received the most virality of retweets from top verified actors such as journalists and celebrities, instead of citizen activists and 2. Tweets using #BlackLivesMatter acted as a mobilizing structure by sharing useful resources about the ongoing BLM protests.

### 6.1 Hashtags

Hashtags are meant to help Twitter users process information more easily with contextual inferences (Gul et al 2016). It is argued that for a tweet to reach maximum diffusion, it should contain hashtags for the sorting and processing of information (Lahuerta-Otero 2018). Using a proper combination of hashtags can help users achieve information flow to increase public attention (ibid 2018). The hashtag that is the source of data and analysis in this dissertation is #BlackLivesMatter. Mecodify has provided a large set of data with the common use of #BlackLivesMatter. However, there are also additional hashtags that were used on Twitter alongside #BlackLivesMatter. The hashtag cloud created by Mecodify is a helpful illustration to highlight the additional hashtags used with #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020:

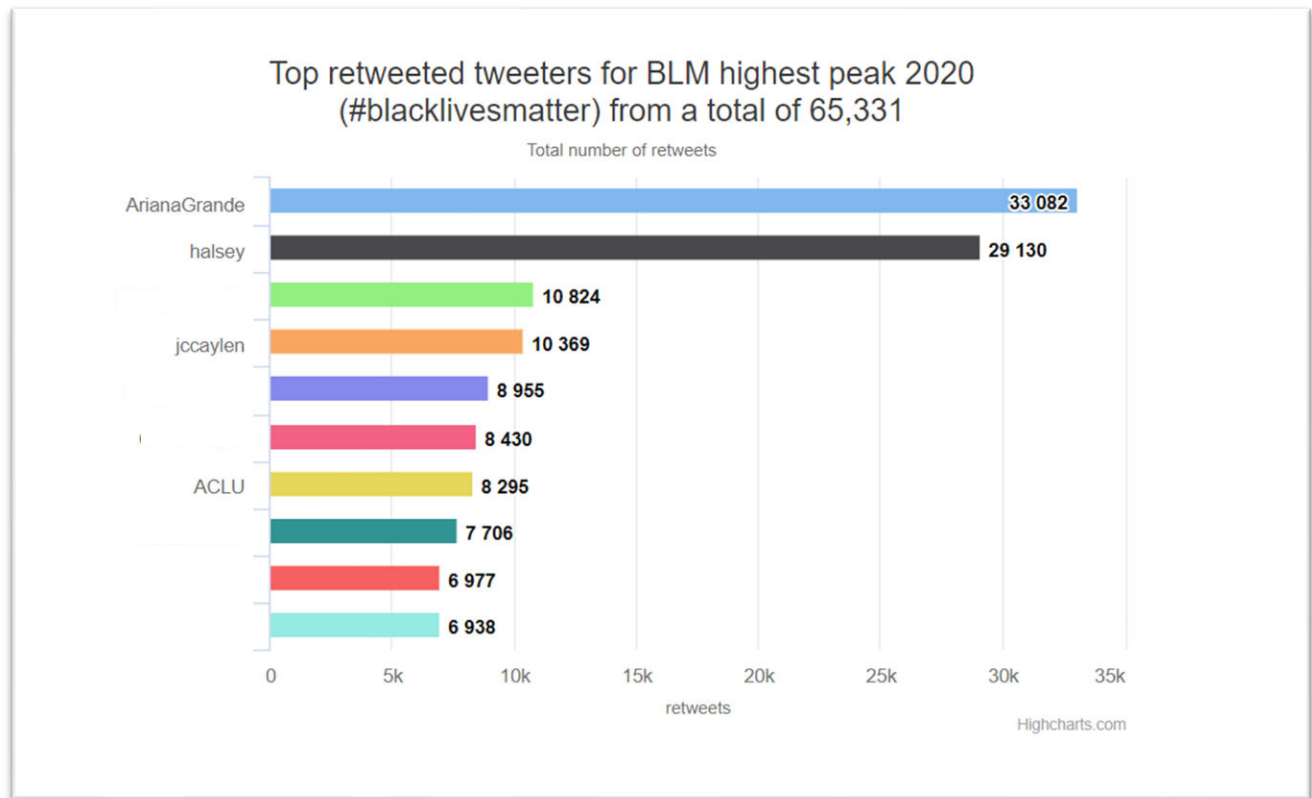
**#blacklivesmatter** #justiceforgeorgefloyd #georgefloyd #minneapolisriots  
 #georgefloydwasmurdered #acab #alllivesmatter #icantbreathe #justiceforfloyd #blm #minneapolis  
 #nojusticenopeace #ripgeorgefloyd #blackout #racism #tonymcdade #settlematter #icantbreath  
 #breonnataylor #covid19 #justiceforregis #riots #justiceforgeorge #blacktwitter #sayhisname #truth  
 #ahmaudarbery #policebrutality #justiceforgeorgefloyd #blackvoicesheard #thursdaythoughts #children  
 #minneapolisriot #justiceforahmaudarbery #weareone #sins #stopprotesting #stoprioting #stopsinning  
 #godspunishment #iuic #wakeup #saytheirnames #minnesotafreedomfund #covid\_19  
 #minneapolispolicemurderdhim #alllivesmatters #humanitymatter #kashmirilivesmatter  
 #menstruationmatters

Image 1. Hashtag Cloud from Mecomify data retrieval of 05/28/20, Mecomify (May 4, 2021)

Most of the hashtags included within the cloud are similar in context to #BlackLivesMatter, by showing solidarity in the movement. Such hashtags include #justiceforgeorgefloyd, #acab, #icantbreathe, and #blm. These hashtags are used by actors on Twitter who are agreeing with the movement and are somehow continuing the conversation, whether it be by posting in solidarity or sharing useful resources for the protests and movement. However, there are also hashtags within the cloud that show the opposition to the Black Lives Matter movement. These hashtags include #alllivesmatter, #riots, and #stopprotesting. An analysis of two verified Twitter users who are in opposition to the movement are also analyzed for this study and are addressed further on. In addition to the hashtags that are in support or against the movement, there are several hashtags that are unrelated to the Black Lives Matter movement altogether. These hashtags include #Thursdaythoughts, #children, #wakeup, and #menstruationmatters. When grouped together for more context, some of these hashtags can relate to the Black Lives Matter movement. However, on their own they do not directly correlate with the message of the movement. Reviewing the additional hashtags used in tweets help to indicate what kind of messages were being posted. It also gives insight on the specific actors or Twitter users who are posting specific hashtags. Similar hashtags used in a tweet along with #BlackLivesMatter also provides evidence that a hashtag is more likely to shape a collectively similar response from users, resulting in creating a collective identity.

## 6.2 Top Retweeted Tweets

After separating the gathered tweets from Mecodify and listing them in order of top retweets, there are several different findings to note. Graph 1 below illustrates the top 10 retweeted tweets gathered from Mecodify:



**Figure 6. Top 10 retweeted tweeters with #BlackLivesMatter on 05/28/2020.** Non verified usernames have been redacted for privacy purposes.

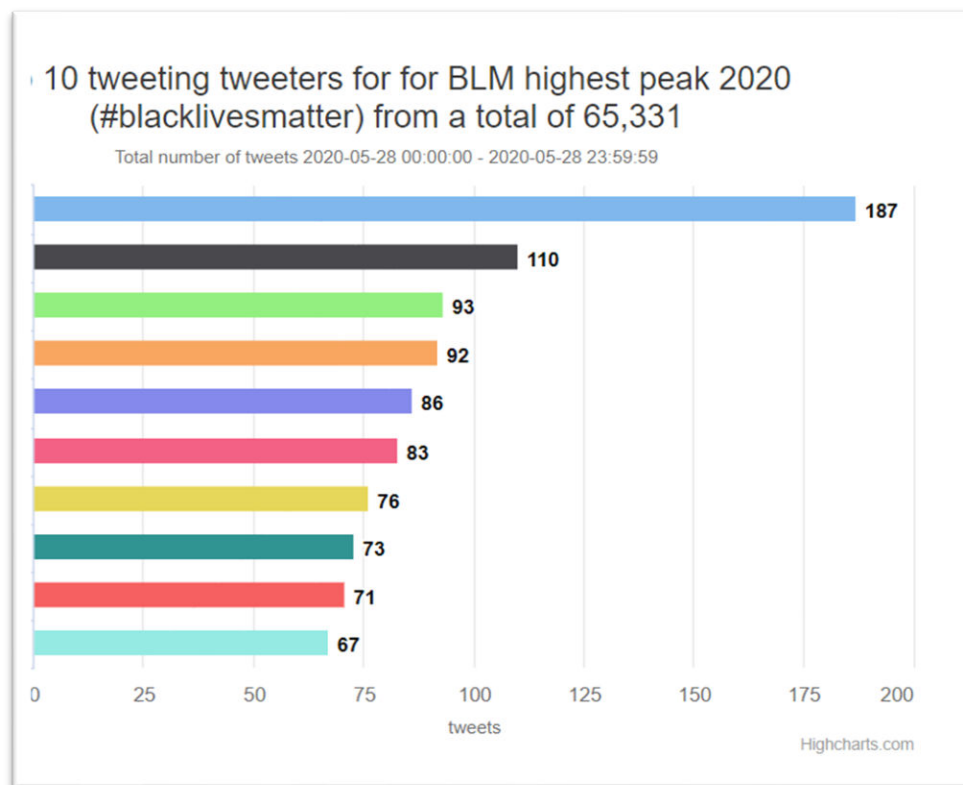
Resource: (Mecodify, 2021).

The total number of retweets within the top 10 listed above is 130,706. By isolating the top two Twitter users, it accumulates 62,212 retweets—with the remaining eight Twitter users producing a collective 68,494 retweets. This means that 48% of the top retweeted tweets come from the top two actors. Why is that? Analyzing the actors themselves, the first two Twitter users on the list of top 10 are two globally known American singers, Ariana Grande and Halsey. Ariana Grande’s verified Twitter account has over 83 million followers, and the verified account for Halsey has over 14 million followers. It would then make sense that their tweets would get a lot of traction and popularity on Twitter, considering so many Twitter users already receive all their tweets on

Twitter's feed. In addition to the #1 and #2 spots in the top 10 list, #4 and #7 are also verified Twitter accounts. The rest of the Twitter users in the list of top 10 are not verified according to Twitter's standards. Of the four verified accounts in the list of top 10, there are 80,877 retweets collected. This means that 62% of the retweets from the top 10 retweeted tweeters are produced by verified Twitter accounts, or well-known actors. A more detailed look into the actors and their role in the diffusion and popularity on Twitter further on.

### 6.3 Top Tweeters

It is also noteworthy to look at the top Twitter users in terms of the number of tweets posted during #BlackLivesMatter's largest peak. It was interesting to isolate not only the top retweets, but also the Twitter users who utilized the hashtag the highest number of times within one day. None of these Twitter users were verified, and therefore the usernames have been redacted in the graph. Graph 2 highlights this second dataset of the Top 10 tweeting Twitter users for the #BlackLivesMatter highest peak on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020:



**Figure 7. Graph of the Twitter users with the highest number of tweets using #BlackLivesMatter on 05/28/20.**

Usernames have been redacted for privacy purposes.

Resource: (Mecodify, 2021)



By looking at the graph above, one can see that the Twitter user in the #1 spot of most tweets with #BlackLivesMatter posted the hashtag 187 times within one day. After reviewing the Twitter user's list of tweets with #BlackLivesMatter, it showed every tweet posted was just the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter itself, in a response to other tweets regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. This could be examined as an example of showing solidarity without adding to the conversation. The top Twitter user did not provide any resources or information on the movement in the form of links to petitions or donations.

The Twitter user in the #2 slot of the graph used the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter 110 times within the one day. After further analysis, it was found that every post was the exact same tweet, in the form of a response to different verified Twitter users. The tweet that was posted 110 times was providing a link to a specific website, encouraging the original tweeters to go view the page. After further investigation, this website listed Black owned restaurants and businesses, along with providing information and resources about how to keep Black Americans safe from harm. Although this is related to the Black Lives Matter movement in the way that it has similar values as the BLM organization, the particular use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter showcases how people attempted to promote their own organizations, causes, or even businesses.

6.4 The Actors – Who were the top Twitter users utilizing #BlackLivesMatter? The actors—the individuals posting tweets—play an important role in the content that is posted on Twitter. As previously mentioned, possessing a verified status on Twitter symbolizes enhanced credibility in the eyes of the platform audience (Paul et al 2019). Actors can have an advantage over the conversation about a social movement, depending on their popularity and reach. This visibility can come from the number of followers they have on their profile. Lahuerta-Otero explains that the author of a post has different attributes on Twitter: their popularity within the network, their level of commitment, and their level of activity (2018). These combined characteristics project a sense of credibility, giving trustworthiness to the content of the message without needing to process it in a systematic way (ibid 2018). If this is true, it is not necessary for a journalist to be tweeting for people to retweet and share the

message. It could be just as valid to have a large following for users to retweet a tweet. Next, the different types of actors that were utilizing the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter will be analyzed.

#### 6.4.1 Verified Twitter Users

When looking at the top 10 retweeted tweets and the actors behind them, we see that there are four verified Twitter accounts and six non-verified accounts. Of the four verified users, two are American singers, one is a Youtube star, and one is a civil liberties organization. This shows that there are variations in the top verified accounts that can go viral. It is important to note that although there are four popular figures within the top 10, none of them are journalists. It is also notable that the two actors with the largest number of retweets also have the largest number of Twitter followers. Below are the four verified actors' tweets from the list of top 10 retweets:



Image 2. Tweet from #1 actor, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)



Image 3. Tweet from #2 actor, *Twitter*, (April 10, 2021)



Image 4. Tweet from verified actor, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)



Image 5. Tweet from verified actor, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)

There are several different analyses that can be made from the tweets posted from the top verified actors. The tweet with the most retweets posted by @ArianaGrande (Grande, 2020) had a link attached to it that had been seen various times across the data pulled from Mecodify. It is a link with information on petitions to sign and organizations to donate to. Although this link was commonly tweeted amongst many Twitter users, one could argue that @ArianaGrande's post received the most virality due to her verified status as a celebrity. Further, the link's traction on

Twitter could have been increased due to a big-name celebrity posting it. The tweet from @Halsey (Halsey, 2020) is interesting because there are no links contained within the original tweet, but instead she has posted a thread of tweets listing different sources. She used the commenting function on her original post to create a “thread” of posts all within the same conversation. When only observing the main tweet, however, it appears as though the only reason it received as many retweets or popularity as it did was because of @Halsey’s verified status. The other two verified users @ACLU and @jccaylen’s tweets are a combination of tweets placing blame. They do not add any additional information or sources to link to the movement itself. This acts as an example of how it does not exactly matter what is being posted by high ranked verified users. If the posted tweets are grouped within the collective “group” or collective identity formed by the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, the verified accounts with high numbers of followers are beneficial in reaching a high volume of diffusion. In addition, the results show that citizens do not necessarily need to receive information from verified journalists in order to retweet the post. Even though journalistic ethics include providing reliable information to the public, the platform of social media creates a space where information is shared not solely based off the journalistic background, but instead the amount of virality from a user and their posts.

In relation to the non-verified users in the top 10 retweeted tweets, I found a mixture of content posted. Some of the tweets contain resource links of petitions to sign or places to donate to. Other tweets showcase artwork that had gone viral. Some users posted with the hashtag, but the tweet had nothing to do with the movement. The issue with actors who are not verified is that it is hard to predict exactly why their tweet reached the level of virality it did. In most cases, however, it was more common for non-verified Twitter users to provide resource links, pictures, videos, or a combination of all three within their tweet if it produced many retweets. This doesn’t necessarily mean that it is always an act of citizen activism, but just a case of an unverified user gaining a large amount of traction on a specific tweet.

#### 6.4.2 Journalists

It is relevant to analyze any of the top retweeted users that fall into the category of journalists or journalist organization, considering this thesis is meant for the field of journalism studies.

Although there were none listed in the top 10 retweeted tweets, there are two Twitter accounts in the top 150 coded tweets that should be highlighted. The first is AJ+, which is a Twitter page for the journalist organization Al Jazeera. According to their website, AJ+ is a global digital news brand dedicated to human rights and equality, publishing videos and texts on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to reach a millennial audience (AJ+ website, 2021).

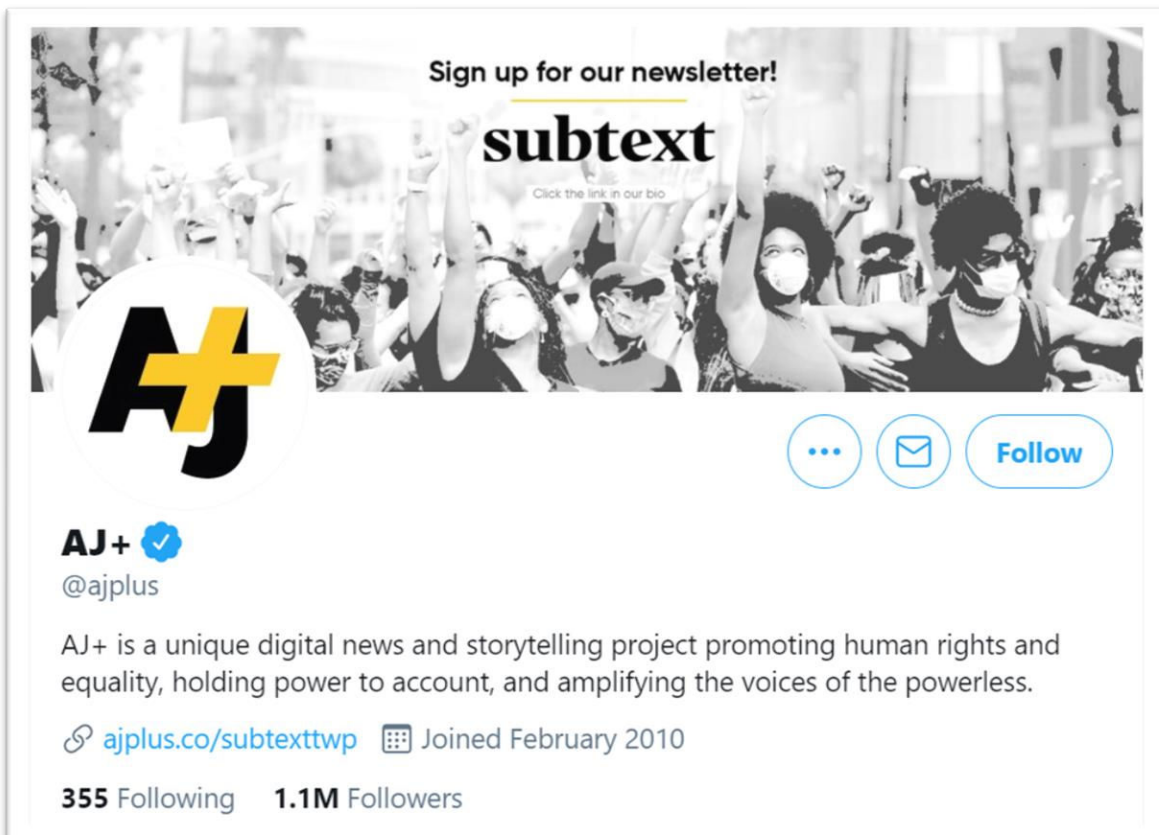


Image 6. AJ+ Twitter bio, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)



Image 7. AJ+ tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)

Highlighting AJ+'s contribution on Twitter with the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag helps to show how media organizations utilized the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. AJ+'s tweet being grouped within the top 150 coded retweeted tweets also shows that there is a place for journalists and journalism organizations within the collective identity of #BlackLivesMatter. In addition, Twitter users can potentially feel a stronger sense of validity after seeing a big media organization grouped within the Black Lives Matter collective identity. However, the fact that there were only

two instances of journalists' tweets within the top 150 shows that it is not as important of a factor. This could be an argument against using Twitter as a platform for news.

Another example of a journalist utilizing the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter is Andy Ngo. Listed on Twitter as @MrAndyNgo, this is only one of two Twitter users in the data sample that were clearly against the Black Lives Matter movement. His Twitter bio and tweet listed within the top retweets is shown below:



Image 8. Journalist Andy Ngo's Twitter page/bio, *Twitter*, screenshot, (April 10, 2021)





Image 9. Andy Ngo's tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot, (April 10, 2021)

Although framing is discussed in more detail further on, the tweet that is shown above from @MrAndyNgo uses the word “looting” accompanied by a video of people running into a torn apart store (Ngo, 2020). This is important to note since he is still incorporating the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, along with the hashtag #GeorgeFloyd. The meaning behind this choice could be that he wanted to still be in the sub-group on Twitter based on the common hashtag, but he wanted to get his point of view out towards the public. This can also show how journalists want to be a part of the collective identity of a hashtag to promote their own work and framing of the coverage of a social movement.

There is another verified account that can be mentioned from the dataset, and that is another Twitter user who was against the Black Lives Matter movement. The verified Twitter user is American actor and comedian Terrence K. Williams, with the Twitter handle @w\_terrence. His bio along with the tweets from the top retweeted tweets are listed below:



Image 10. Terrence William's Twitter page/bio, *Twitter*, screenshot, (April 10, 2021)

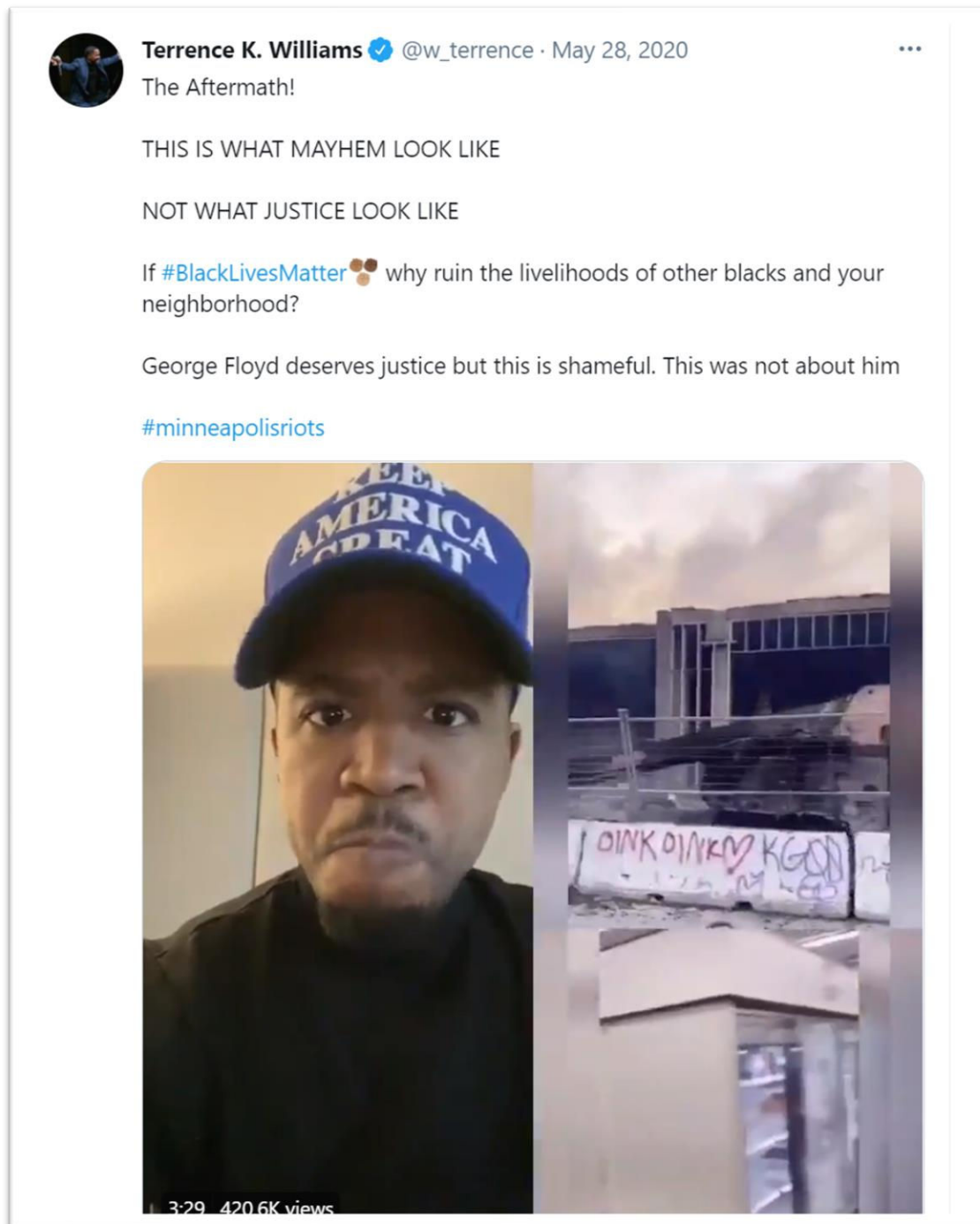


Image 11. Terrence William's tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot, (April 10, 2021)

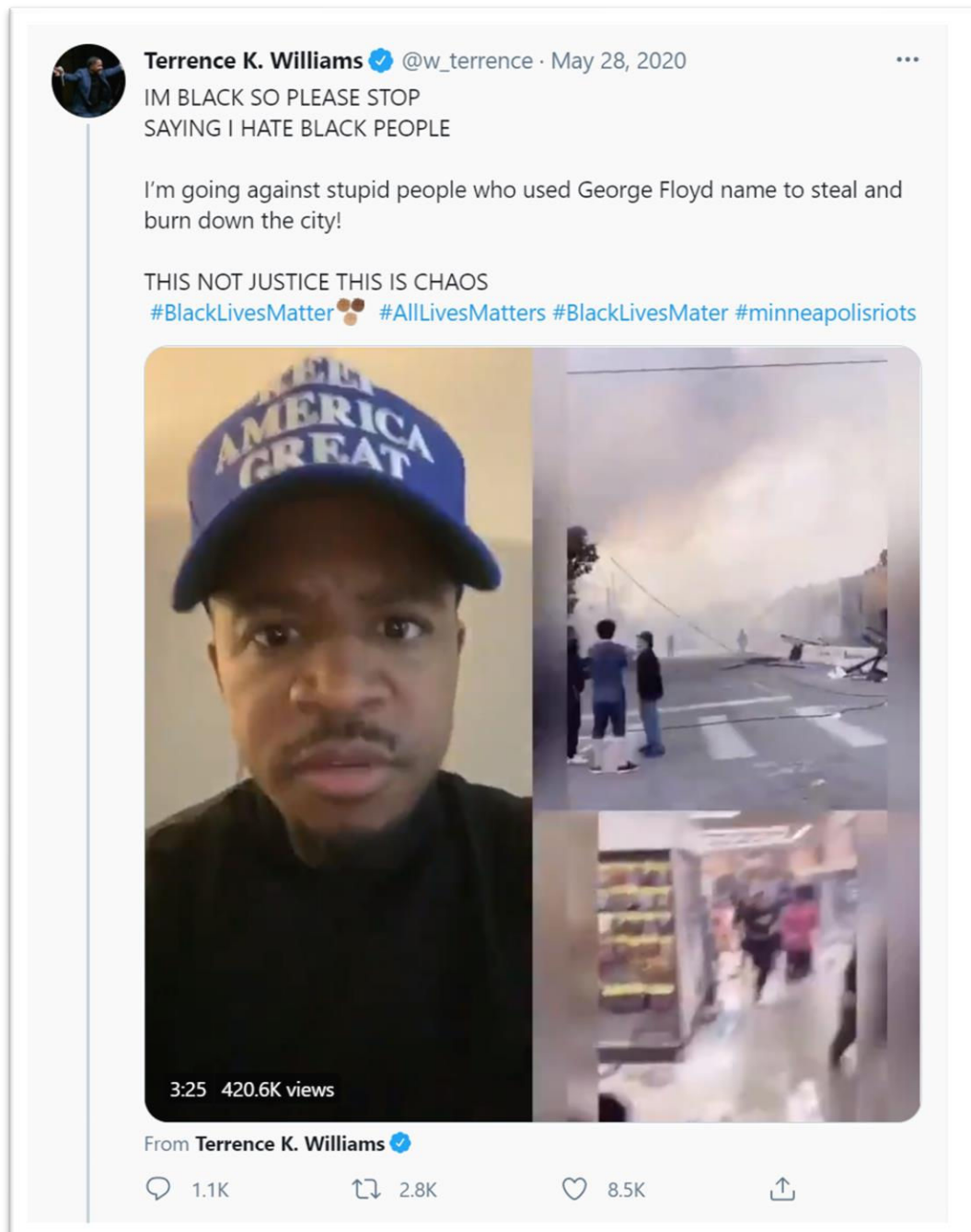


Image 12. Terrence William's tweet pt 2, *Twitter*, screenshot, (April 10, 2021)

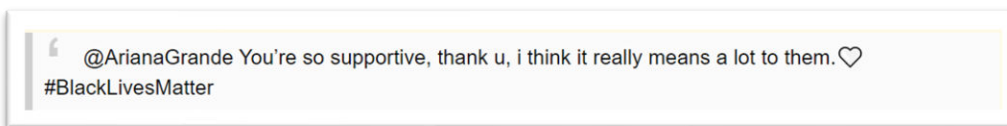
The two tweets from @w\_terrence are another example of how actors can use the common hashtag to add their opposing opinion to a topic. Based on the text within the tweet and the linked video posted, @w\_terrence is against the protests involved with the Black Lives Matter movement (Williams, 2020). In terms of collective identity, there are several ways to look at

Terrence's use of the hashtag. The first would be to assert himself into the ongoing conversation about BLM. Instead of providing resources or showing solidarity, he is instead commenting on his disagreeing viewpoint of the protests. This could also be an attempt to create his own anti-collective identity. If Twitter users are scrolling through the sub-group of #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter and come across his opposing posts, they might start to agree with the ideas he is posting. Again, by following Ryfe's theory of collective identities, this would mean that an opposing identity is made for those who share the same opposition. Next, is an analysis of the comments and discussions with the top tweets.

#### 6.4.3 Comments & Discussions with Top Tweets

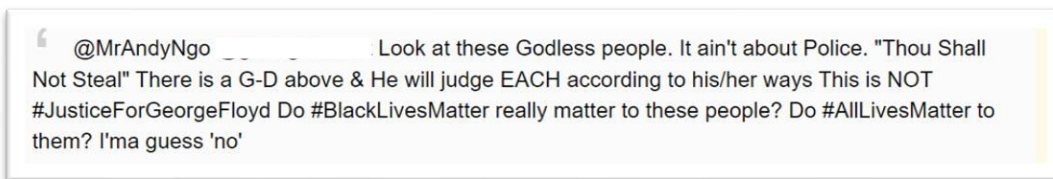
Coinciding with the actors and top Twitter users, the comments section underneath the tweets also has an impact. For it is within the discussions where a deeper analysis can be made on the collective identities and if they are formed through the actors of the tweet.

Here is one example of a comment to @ArianaGrande's top retweeted tweet using #BlackLivesMatter:



**Image 13. Commented response to Ariana Grande's tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot, (April 10, 2021)**

Here are examples of comments on @MrAndyNgo's tweet:



**Image 14. Commented response to Andy Ngo's tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)**





@MrAndyNgo I already said it wouldn't solve anything but neither does starting a peaceful movement #blacklivesmatter was met with disdain and followed with all and blue lives matter... we can't win either way so if that's what helps them get through the day...

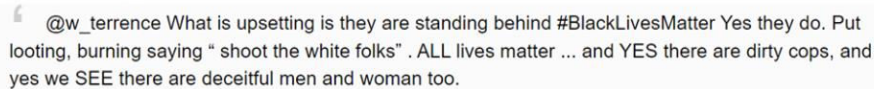
**Image 15. Additional comment to Andy Ngo's tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)**

Here are examples of comments under @w\_terrence's tweet:



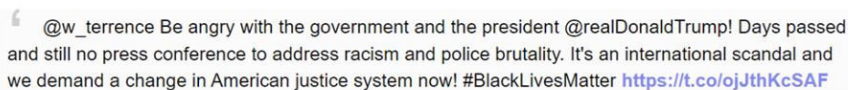
@w\_terrence #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter

**Image 16. Comment to Terrence Williams' tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)**



@w\_terrence What is upsetting is they are standing behind #BlackLivesMatter Yes they do. Put looting, burning saying "shoot the white folks". ALL lives matter ... and YES there are dirty cops, and yes we SEE there are deceitful men and woman too.

**Image 17. Additional comment to Terrence Williams' tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)**



@w\_terrence Be angry with the government and the president @realDonaldTrump! Days passed and still no press conference to address racism and police brutality. It's an international scandal and we demand a change in American justice system now! #BlackLivesMatter <https://t.co/ojJthKcSAF>

**Image 18. Third comment to Terrence Williams' tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)**

Overall, the common themes found within the comments sections were that it did not seem to matter if the top actors were verified journalists, celebrities, or citizen activists, most of the responses were in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. This solidarity was shown with a combination of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter along with other words of encouragement, pictures, or videos. If it was a verified Twitter user—like the top user on the list @ArianaGrande—the overwhelming response were Twitter users thanking her for using her platform to post about the movement. This is an interesting observation, because it does not seem likely that users would have the same type of response just for a verified journalist. Again, the status of being a big-name celebrity seems to hold a lot of weight in terms of traction or

validity. This brings up the idea of “opinion leaders” that could be viewed in further research. As mentioned previously, most social movements have had someone as the face or “branding” of the movement. Although it would seem like Twitter’s vast interface would not have a single person branding a movement, one could argue that verified users (celebrities or otherwise) with large followings take on the role of an opinion leaders and can potentially affect the opinion of individual users. When it came to the Twitter users posting against the Black Lives Matter movement—such as @w\_terrence—the responses were divided. Some of the comments seemed to be agreeing with @w\_terrence, commenting with additional hashtags such as #alllivesmatter and #riots. There were also comments coming from Twitter users who disagreed with @w\_terrence’s opposition. These Twitter users would state that the protests were valid and respond with the main hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Again, the data showed that the verified actors played a significant role in the published tweets.

### 6.5 #BlackLivesMatter & Collective Action Frames

One of the constraints with framing on Twitter for a social movement is regarding the message itself. It is difficult to measure feeling and emotional involvement of tweets in just 140 characters. One way to influence message diffusion is to try and express emotiveness through different types of frames. This makes it easier for followers to process messages and make valid judgements on a topic. Retweeting a tweet would then indicate if the Twitter user was agreeing with the message. A set of 10 tweets from the top retweeted list were placed into a codebook to see what type of collective action frames they belonged to. The results from the codebook aim to answer the **RQ2: Were collective action frames utilized with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter during its highest peak? If so, how?**

As previously mentioned, a **diagnosis frame** is a frame that identifies a problem. A diagnosis frame is used when there is responsibility or blame placed on the authority or opposing side. Of the 10 tweets that were placed in the codebook, 5 of them framed tweets with the characteristics

of a diagnostic frame. Here are two examples of diagnosis frames from verified accounts:



**Image 19.** Claudia Webbe’s tweet, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)

The tweet from @ClaudiaWebbe (Webbe, 2020) is placing blame specifically on the police when tweeting, “we cannot ignore yet another death of a Black man in police custody.” She then adds the phrasing “regulation and control of Black people” –these words are framed to place the responsibility of the regulation and control on the police.



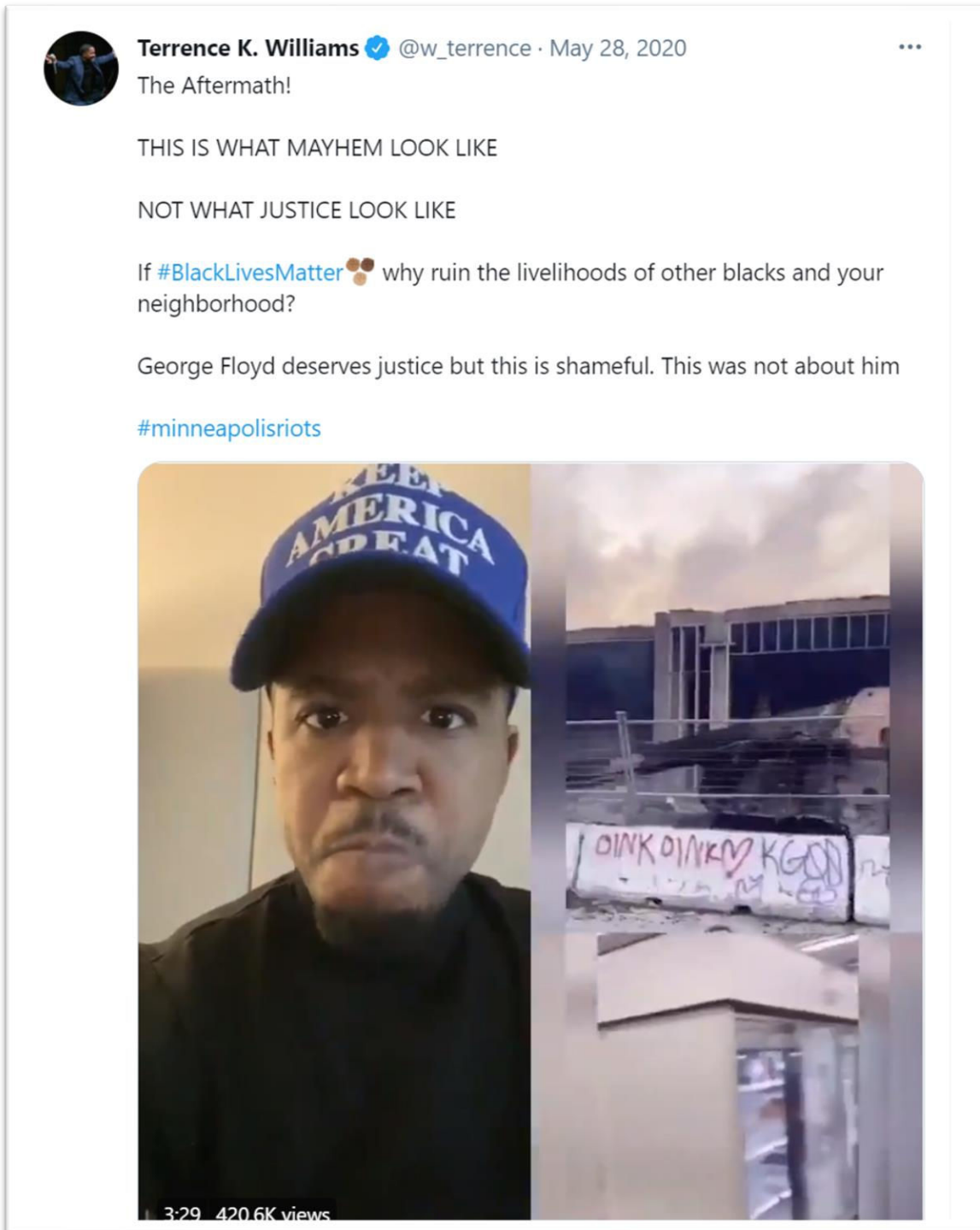


Image 12 (again). Terrence William's tweet pt 2, *Twitter*, screenshot, (April 10, 2021)

Although it has already been addressed that @w\_terrence is against the Black Lives Matter movement in previous sections, his tweets are framed in a diagnostic manner. However, instead

of placing blame on police officers like @ClaudiaWebbe, he is framing his tweet to make his followers believe that the protestors are the ones responsible for the so called “mayhem” he is tweeting about. Addressing his audience directly when posting, “If #BlackLivesMatter why ruin the livelihoods of other blacks and your neighborhood?” In addition to the accusatory framing of the text @w\_terrence tweeted, the linked video of him reacting to protestors causing vandalism in businesses further pushes his tweet into a diagnostic frame. The words he chooses, the tone he speaks in all indicate that he is using a diagnostic frame.

A **prognosis frame** poses a plan of attack, as well as a solution. Within the 10 coded tweets there were no cases of a prognosis frame. One example of a prognosis frame could be how the Black Lives Matter movement has presented the solution of defunding the police. However, it is difficult to address this in detail as it was not directly found within the codes created in this study.

A **motivational frame** is the “call to arms”, or engaging citizens to participate in action. Here are two examples of a motivational frame:



Image 20. Tweet from verified actor, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)

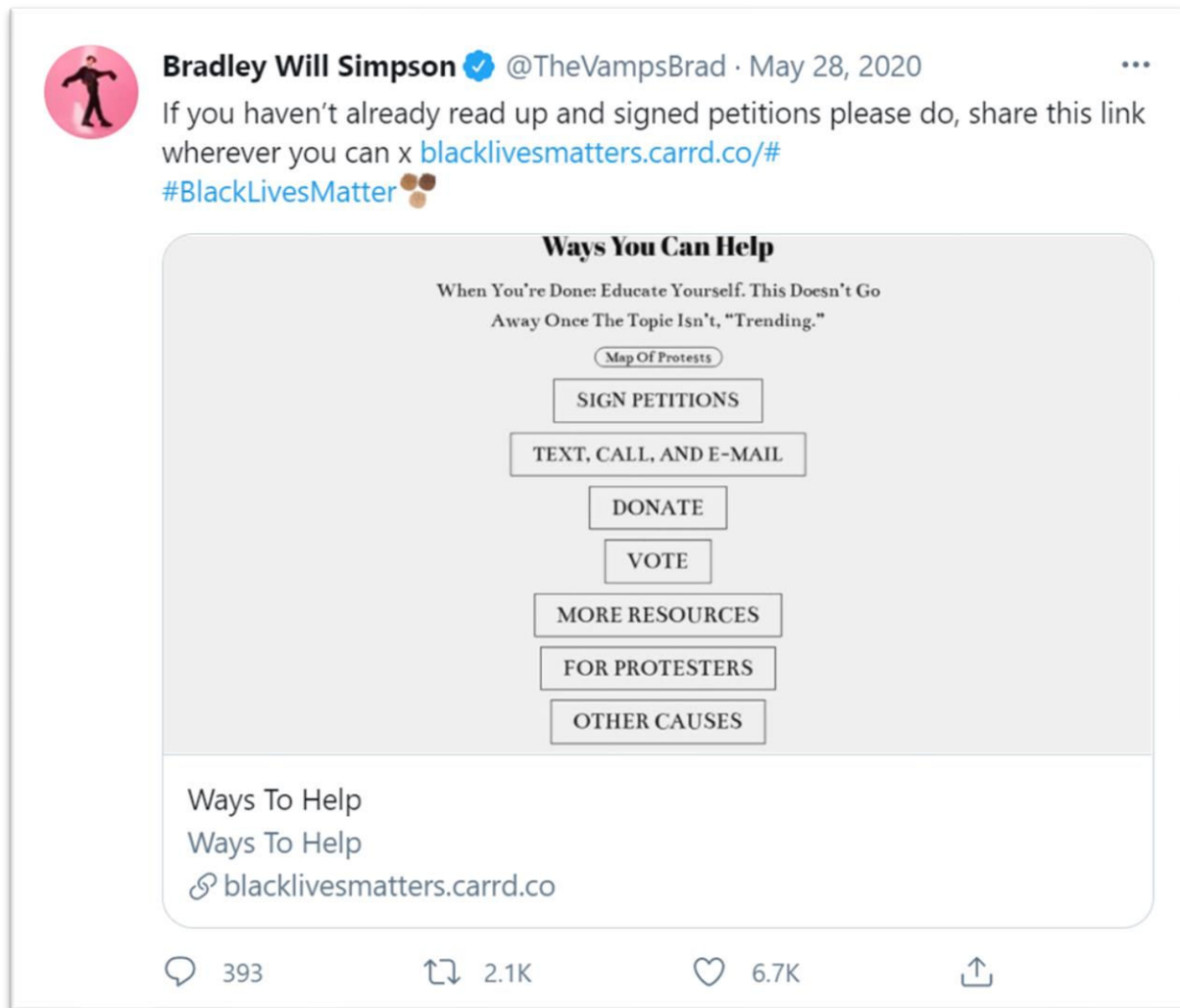


Image 21. Tweet from verified actor, *Twitter*, screenshot (April 10, 2021)

The specific wording of the tweets such as “Keep tweeting about it...EVERYONE needs to be talking about this” and “If you haven’t already read up and signed petitions please do, share this link” (Simpson, 2020) is trying to entice action from the actors’ Twitter followers. Out of the coded tweets there were 5 tweets that were framed with motivational framing. These types of tweets were more likely to come from verified accounts and contain links to resources such as petitions to sign or organizations to donate to. There seemed to be a correlation to the verified actors and motivational frames. It goes back to an earlier note of how celebrities are applauded for using their platform during social movements. Holding a larger following and potentially being in a role model position for their followers means that verified actors create an influence

on topics. Further, it helps the argument that there is a collective identity not only within the group #BlackLivesMatter, but also with the followers of verified actors.

Based on the literature, for collective action frames to be effective there needs to be a shared understanding of problematic conditions or a situation in need of change. This is apparent regardless of the actors' views of the Black Lives Movement. Those in favor of the movement share the understanding that there is the problematic condition of violence towards Black Americans. Those against the movement share an understanding that it is the protestors who are causing problematic conditions. The way that actors on Twitter frame their tweets has a direct correlation with how others view the movement, and potentially provide motivation and mobilization to act.

## 7. Conclusion

From the data gathered in this dissertation, there are several generalizations that can be made. On the day of its highest peak on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was retweeted most frequently when published from a verified actor. The diffusion of tweets with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was more prominent when the actor tweeting was a celebrity with a large following. The tweets that were posted with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter held various purposes. The number of top tweets coming from journalists was extremely low, and further pushes the argument that Twitter is not yet its own form of news. It does however add more instances of individual citizens utilizing Twitter to share information that is newsworthy.

Some tweets acted as mobilizing structures by directly providing resources—such as links for petitions and donations. Other tweets voiced the opinions of the Twitter user's views on the movement. Some tweets were just posted in solidarity with the movement by responding with nothing more than the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. There were also tweets that were using the virality of the hashtag to promote their own campaigns, organizations, and businesses. What this says about the hashtag utilization is that there is not really one type of tweet that is posted about social movements, or at least within the case of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Since verified actors were a reoccurring focus of this thesis, it is important to reflect on their purpose within social movements online. I would argue that it is much easier for verified actors to be retweeted. Due to the large number of followers, the content posted on a verified account is already shared from Twitter's algorithm to numerous Twitter feeds. It did not necessarily matter what was being tweeted from verified actors, it was more so reliant on the number of followers and twitter's algorithm. One could argue that almost anything a big named actor tweets about will see some sort of virality if they have a large enough following. What does this mean for social movements? I would argue that even though verified actors are not always journalists or government officials, they still play a big role in civilian discussions and activism on twitter. It also means that verified actors have control over the conversation about certain topics. It may not be intentional, just a matter of how tweets are spread based on following ratio and the platform's algorithm. How actors frame a tweet about a social movement can impact how regular citizens—or non-verified Twitter users—view a social issue. This goes back to Ryfe's theory of collective identities, where he claims that individuals take on the values, social norms, and behaviors of preferred groups (2019). Connecting this theory of journalism studies helps to show how the actor plays a role in creating collective identity. Further, if the Twitter user is verified, they are more likely to be impressionable to those following them and creating an influence on the collective group.

In terms of theory, the basis of social movement theory was prevalent within the study. The use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter grouped together citizens, journalists, and verified actors together in one connected, digital space to speak about the ongoing movement. Since Twitter is a free platform, it enhanced the original social movement characterizes of relying on time and money. There were cases of collective identities being created through the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter. The peak date of the hashtag is within itself proof that collective identities were present, because the conversation was bigger than it had ever been on Twitter. However, there are stipulations that come with this. For one, there could have been people still tweeting about the movement and the protests—including mobilizing resources such as petition and donation links—but had not been using the hashtag. This means there are potentially multiple collective groups, or just individual conversations about the movement floating through Twitter's platform. In addition, it is hard to analyze the effect of these created identities. The

expansive size of social media platforms such as Twitter make it difficult to get an overall generalization, since there are many different functions and ways that people can use the app. For instance, an alternative research method could try to analyze Twitter users quote tweeting about #BlackLivesMatter. Or focusing on what key actors of Black Lives Matter affiliated organizations were utilizing the direct messaging function of Twitter to create mobilization. To stay within the field of journalism studies, one could also choose to look at the key journalist actors and how they utilized Twitter during the weeks of protesting to publish to their own traditional formats of media.

In terms of things I wish I had done, I would have liked to have gone further with the qualitative methodology. If time and space were not a constraining factor, I would have liked to have found key actors from the Black Lives Matter protests to interview to see if and how Twitter effected their own campaigns. This could have helped to explain the how and why of the BLM movement mobilization, instead of just providing the basics of who and what. This study is not able to explain if the use of the hashtag itself promoted people to go out into the streets and protest. However, I believe this thesis is a good basis and starting point for further research into the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020. For further research, I would suggest a deeper qualitative analysis—interviewing key actors on the ground at the Black Lives Matter protests so see if and how the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter affected the turnout of protestors based on collective action. In addition, the BLM protests reached multiple different countries outside of the US, which could also be another interesting research point. Twitter is extremely popular within the US, so it might not have been as useful of a tool for the BLM protests in other countries. There could have also been different social media platforms used to help create collective identity or mobilization within a particular country protesting.

Overall, I would conclude that collective identity was gained using hashtags on twitter. These sub-groups of conversation—especially regarding social movements—not only create a discussion but form a collective “we” of likeminded people. It is through the development and diffusion of racial and ethnic ideology that these grievances turn into something politicized, and that there is a collective “we” formed through the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter. This is then re-interpreted from the social environment into movement resources.

During the time of the Black Lives Matter protests, Twitter users were utilizing the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter to provide information in forms of links, or to just show solidarity with the movement. In the cases of opposition like seen with Terrence's tweets, it can either be smaller sub-groups of people agreeing with the opposing stance, or people from the original collective group responding out of defense of the organization. While the collective identity can be created and obtained by anyone using the hashtag, there appears to be an advantage when it comes to verified actors. Even more so than a key actor of the organizations or top journalists, it is the verified actors with a higher following count that see the most virality. This could mean that celebrity verified actors have a responsibility when it comes to posting about social movements. The way they particularly frame their tweets about an issue or social movement can have an impact on how citizens view the situation. Framing is an important factor when it comes to the diffusion of news. This is especially important for social movements. In this study it was apparent that diagnosis frames—placing blame or victimizing, and motivational frames—trying to enlist action and getting people to act towards a certain goal—were utilized in the tweets using #BlackLivesMatter. The combination of tweet framing with the popularity of the actor tweeting can shape the conversation around a social movement. This goes back to the collective “we” from the collective identity theory. Citizens shaping their own ideologies and values off the ones around them—in this case, the people they follow on Twitter.

The Black Lives Matter movement is far from over, and there are still currently protests happening throughout the US and around the world. Even aside from the Black Lives Matter movement, it appears that social justice movements are on the rise. Across the globe people are coming together in an attempt to stand up and fight for a common goal. It continues to be an interesting research topic in terms of creating collective identities. Additionally, the modernization of technology and increasing use of social media platforms such as Twitter act as a helpful tool for citizens to contribute to the conversation regarding social movements, and potentially even creating mobilization to get people out protesting in the streets.

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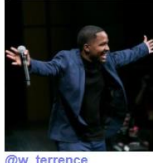


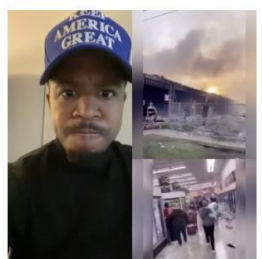




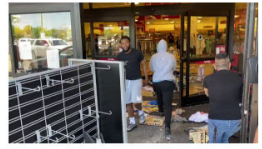
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## Appendix

#	Date & Time (GMT)	Tweeter's details	Tweet text	Retweets	Quotes	Favorites	Replies	Source	Lang	Verified user	Image (if any)
1	2020-05-28 20:10:44	 <p><b>@ArianaGrande</b> Ariana Grande Followers: 83108493 Following: 56531 Created: 2009-04-23 Tweets: 46872 Based in: ελε νοσηλευσι</p>	<p>please keep signing these petitions, making donations, having conversations w family and friends about it, reading and sharing links and resources... gentle reminder that this doesn't end today or tomorrow or after you post about it once.</p> <p>#blacklivesmatter</p> <p><a href="https://t.co/c6YJQC6p2">https://t.co/c6YJQC6p2</a> --- <a href="https://blacklivesmatters.carrd.co/#">https://blacklivesmatters.carrd.co/#</a> [Ways To Help Ways To Help]--- - (Link)</p>	33082	802	131513	2630	Twitter for iPhone	en	Yes	
2	2020-05-28 23:15:32	 <p><b>@halsey</b> h Followers: 14155100 Following: 3080 Created: 2009-06-08 Tweets: 16094 Based in: she/they</p>	<p>I have been trying to figure out how to help more directly so I have compiled a list of organizations. I've donated to a few, and you can too.</p> <p>#BlackLivesMatter - (Link)</p>	27755	1210	107302	703	Twitter for iPhone	en	Yes	
4	2020-05-28 19:32:44	 <p><b>@ACLU</b> ACLU Followers: 2010741 Following: 5650 Created: 2008-02-12 Tweets: 55625 Based in: 50 states, DC, &amp; Puerto Rico</p>	<p>George Floyd should still be alive.</p> <p>Breonna Taylor should still be alive.</p> <p>Michael Brown should still be alive.</p> <p>Eric Garner should still be alive.</p> <p>Sandra Bland should still be alive.</p> <p>Philando Castile should still be alive.</p> <p>#BlackLivesMatter - (Link)</p>	8295	160	25150	207	TweetDeck	en	Yes	
6	2020-05-28 23:58:55	 <p><b>@ccaylen</b> jc Followers: 6552290 Following: 24779 Created: 2010-05-02 Tweets: 40705</p>	<p>OUR SYSTEM IS CORRUPT, WE NEED CHANGE.</p> <p>I STAND WITH #BLACKLIVESMATTER NOT JUST TODAY, NOT TOMORROW, BUT FOREVER. - (Link)</p>	7112	47	33556	186	Twitter for iPhone	en	Yes	



16	2020-05-28 20:22:18	 <p><b>@w_terrence</b> Terrence K. Williams Followers: 1026245 Following: 606 Created: 2009-06-15 Tweets: 6542 Based in: United States</p>	<p>The Aftermath!</p> <p>THIS IS WHAT MAYHEM LOOK LIKE</p> <p>NOT WHAT JUSTICE LOOK LIKE</p> <p>If #BlackLivesMatter why ruin the livelihoods of other blacks and your neighborhood?</p> <p>George Floyd deserves justice but this is shameful. This was not about him</p> <p>#minneapolisriots <a href="https://t.co/MMDKFvhl8j">https://t.co/MMDKFvhl8j</a> - (Link)</p>	3026	373	8927	906	Twitter Media Studio	en	Yes	
17	2020-05-28 23:19:23	 <p><b>@w_terrence</b> Terrence K. Williams Followers: 1026245 Following: 606 Created: 2009-06-15 Tweets: 6542 Based in: United States</p>	<p>IM BLACK SO PLEASE STOP SAYING I HATE BLACK PEOPLE</p> <p>I'm going against stupid people who used George Floyd name to steal and burn down the city!</p> <p>THIS NOT JUSTICE THIS IS CHAOS</p> <p>#BlackLivesMatter #AllLivesMatters #BlackLivesMater #minneapolisriots <a href="https://t.co/MMDKFvhl8j">https://t.co/MMDKFvhl8j</a> - (Link)</p>	2532	361	8566	1110	Twitter for iPhone	en	Yes	
18	2020-05-28 20:29:39	 <p><b>@ClaudiaWebbe</b> Claudia Webbe MP Followers: 45562 Following: 9240 Created: 2009-06-26 Tweets: 13701 Based in: Leicester, England</p>	<p>Here in the UK we must show solidarity with the family, friends and community of #GeorgeFloyd in Minneapolis - we cannot ignore yet another death of a Black man in police custody. This is how racism works; the regulation and control of Black people #ICantBreathe #BlackLivesMatter - (Link)</p>	2488	51	8965	132	Twitter for iPhone	en	Yes	
20	2020-05-28 22:40:24	 <p><b>@ajplus</b> AJ+ Followers: 1182817 Following: 356 Created: 2010-02-01 Tweets: 91027</p>	<p>"If Black lives matter as much as white lives, Mr. George Floyd would still be breathing."</p> <p>@RepAlGreen is calling for a war on racism because #BlackLivesMatter. <a href="https://t.co/fZrWYTKzpp">https://t.co/fZrWYTKzpp</a> - (Link)</p>	2259	66	4326	28	Twitter Media Studio	en	Yes	
37	2020-05-28 20:07:50	 <p><b>@MrAndyNgo</b> Andy Ngo Followers: 821271 Following: 950 Created: 2014-09-29 Tweets: 20383 Based in: US, UK</p>	<p>Looting happening now in St. Paul, Minn.</p> <p>Video by @gabegutierrez. #BlackLivesMatter #GeorgeFloyd <a href="https://t.co/54co9Wd0PD">https://t.co/54co9Wd0PD</a> - (Link)</p>	1027	388	1983	559	Twitter for iPhone	en	Yes	

	Twitter Handle	URL to Tweet	# of Retweets	# of Replies	Pictures	Videos	Links	Verified
1	@ArianaGrande	https://twitter.com/A	33082		2630	1	0	1 Yes
2	@halsey	https://twitter.com/h	27755		703	0	0	0 Yes
3		https://twitter.com/C	8955		2098	3	0	0 No
4	@ACLU	https://twitter.com/A	8295		207	0	0	0 Yes
5		https://twitter.com/k	7706		296	1	0	0 No
6	@jccaylen	https://twitter.com/j	7112		186	0	0	0 Yes
7	@kurtisconner	https://twitter.com/k	6407		149	1	0	1 Yes
8	@OfficialMLK3	https://twitter.com/C	6034		86	0	1	0 Yes
9		https://twitter.com/t	5784		306	1	0	1 Yes
10		https://twitter.com/r	5192		266	0	0	0 No
11		https://twitter.com/t	4964		44	0	0	0 No
12		https://twitter.com/c	4346		378	1	0	0 Yes
13	@CrystalMethyd	https://twitter.com/C	3386		99	0	0	0 No
14	@jccaylen	https://twitter.com/j	3257		403	0	0	0 Yes
15		https://twitter.com/t	3090		37	1	0	0 No
16	@w_terrence	https://twitter.com/v	3026		906	0	1	0 Yes
17	@w_terrence	https://twitter.com/v	2532		1110	0	1	0 Yes
18	@ClaudiaWebbe	https://twitter.com/C	2488		132	0	0	0 Yes
19		https://twitter.com/c	2473		5	0	0	0 No
20	@ajpius	https://twitter.com/a	2259		28	0	1	0 Yes
21	@milkmakeup	https://twitter.com/r	2174		58	0	0	0 No
22	@TheVampsBrad	https://twitter.com/T	2080		393	0	0	1 Yes
23		https://twitter.com/l	2007		258	0	0	0 Yes
24		https://twitter.com/t	1809		14	0	1	0 No
25	@MarkRuffalo	<a href="https://twitter.com/h">https://twitter.com/h</a>	1793		73	0	0	1 Yes
26		https://twitter.com/t	1729		93	2	0	0 No
27		https://twitter.com/E	1615		14	1	0	0 Yes
28		https://twitter.com/r	1461		64	0	1	0 Yes
29		https://twitter.com/h	1375		83	0	0	0 Yes
30		https://twitter.com/k	1283		61	0	1	0 No
31		https://twitter.com/S	1210		252	0	0	0 No
32		https://twitter.com/h	1183		75	0	1	0 No
33		https://twitter.com/S	1072		8	1	0	0 No
34		https://twitter.com/c	1050		44	0	1	0 No
35		https://twitter.com/c	1042		85	0	1	0 No
36	@AttorneyCrump	https://twitter.com/A	1031	110	0	1	0	0 Yes
37	@MrAndyNgo	https://twitter.com/h	1027	559	0	1	0	0 Yes
38		https://twitter.com/t	1014	30	0	1	0	0 No
39		https://twitter.com/j	1001	107	0	1	0	0 No
40	@DamianHaas	https://twitter.com/L	993	98	0	0	0	1 Yes
41	@PalayaRoyale	https://twitter.com/F	946	133	0	0	0	0 Yes
42		https://twitter.com/t	944	76	1	0	0	0 No
43	@wallowsmusic	https://twitter.com/v	944	81	0	0	0	1 Yes
44		https://twitter.com/t	931	22	1	0	0	0 No
45		https://twitter.com/a	922	9	0	0	0	3 No
46		https://twitter.com/t	906	13	0	1	0	0 No
47		https://twitter.com/h	883	69	0	0	0	0 Yes
48		https://twitter.com/F	871	19	1	0	0	0 Yes
49		https://twitter.com/t	848	14	0	0	0	1 No
50		https://twitter.com/c	840	44	0	1	0	0 No
51		https://twitter.com/t	835	66	0	0	0	0 Yes
52		https://twitter.com/k	827	110	0	0	0	1 No
53		https://twitter.com/g	811	13	0	0	0	0 Yes
54		https://twitter.com/E	795	100	0	1	0	0 No
55	@IGGYAZALEA	https://twitter.com/h	789	181	0	0	0	1 Yes
56		https://twitter.com/t	784	25	1	0	0	0 No
57		https://twitter.com/j	744	253	1	0	0	2 Yes
58		https://twitter.com/S	718	72	0	0	0	0 No
59		https://twitter.com/t	691	10	0	1	0	0 No
60		https://twitter.com/S	685	18	0	0	0	0 No
61		https://twitter.com/t	682	27	0	0	0	0 Yes
62		<a href="https://twitter.com/c">https://twitter.com/c</a>	666	20	0	1	0	0 No
63		https://twitter.com/s	656	1	0	0	0	1 No
64		https://twitter.com/r	622	20	0	1	0	0 No
65	@MrAndyNgo	https://twitter.com/h	600	210	0	0	0	1 Yes
66		https://twitter.com/A	589	64	1	0	0	0 No
67		https://twitter.com/a	566	100	1	0	0	1 No
68		https://twitter.com/g	563	1	0	0	0	0 No
69		https://twitter.com/r	558	31	2	0	0	0 No

70	<a href="https://twitter.com/S">https://twitter.com/S</a>	543	26	0	1	0 No
71	<a href="https://twitter.com/J">https://twitter.com/J</a>	533	27	0	0	1 Yes
72	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	533	3	0	0	0 No
73	<a href="https://twitter.com/j">https://twitter.com/j</a>	530	1	0	0	1 No
74	<a href="https://twitter.com/v">https://twitter.com/v</a>	523	40	0	0	0 Yes
75	<a href="https://twitter.com/S">https://twitter.com/S</a>	512	100	0	0	0 Yes
76	<a href="https://twitter.com/J">https://twitter.com/J</a>	505	138	0	0	1 No
77	<a href="https://twitter.com/r">https://twitter.com/r</a>	504	16	0	0	0 No
78	<a href="https://twitter.com/r">https://twitter.com/r</a>	504	13	0	1	0 No
79	<a href="https://twitter.com/C">https://twitter.com/C</a>	499	9	1	0	0 No
80	<a href="https://twitter.com/4">https://twitter.com/4</a>	492	38	0	1	0 No
81	<a href="https://twitter.com/J">https://twitter.com/J</a>	483	46	0	0	0 Yes
82	<a href="https://twitter.com/e">https://twitter.com/e</a>	473	2	0	0	1 No
83	<a href="https://twitter.com/g">https://twitter.com/g</a>	461	23	2	0	0 No
84	<a href="https://twitter.com/k">https://twitter.com/k</a>	460	169	0	0	0 Yes
85	<a href="https://twitter.com/r">https://twitter.com/r</a>	459	8	2	0	0 No
86	<a href="https://twitter.com/c">https://twitter.com/c</a>	459	3	0	0	0 No
87	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	457	4	4	0	0 No
88	<a href="https://twitter.com/u">https://twitter.com/u</a>	455	2	0	1	0 No
89	<a href="https://twitter.com/s">https://twitter.com/s</a>	448	14	1	0	0 No
90	<a href="https://twitter.com/n">https://twitter.com/n</a>	434	78	0	0	1 Yes
91	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	428	60	0	0	1 Yes
92	<a href="https://twitter.com/F">https://twitter.com/F</a>	422	66	1	0	2 No
93	<a href="https://twitter.com/e">https://twitter.com/e</a>	422	5	0	1	0 No
94	<a href="https://twitter.com/f">https://twitter.com/f</a>	414	20	0	0	0 No
95	<a href="https://twitter.com/p">https://twitter.com/p</a>	414	13	1	0	0 No
96	<a href="https://twitter.com/l">https://twitter.com/l</a>	413	4	0	0	0 No
97	<a href="https://twitter.com/a">https://twitter.com/a</a>	411	10	1	0	0 No
98	<a href="https://twitter.com/C">https://twitter.com/C</a>	401	12	0	0	0 No
99	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	368	0	0	0	1 No
100	<a href="https://twitter.com/E">https://twitter.com/E</a>	379	37	0	0	0 Yes
101	@MrAndyNgo	375	161	0	1	0 Yes
102	<a href="https://twitter.com/r">https://twitter.com/r</a>	370	0	2	0	0 No
103	<a href="https://twitter.com/T">https://twitter.com/T</a>	369	1	0	0	0 No
104	<a href="https://twitter.com/E">https://twitter.com/E</a>	365	19	1	0	0 Yes
105	<a href="https://twitter.com/j">https://twitter.com/j</a>	363	93	0	0	0 Yes
106	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	362	8	0	0	1 No
107	<a href="https://twitter.com/s">https://twitter.com/s</a>	358	22	0	1	0 No
108	<a href="https://twitter.com/r">https://twitter.com/r</a>	336	14	0	1	0 No
109	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	335	5	4	0	0 No
110	<a href="https://twitter.com/s">https://twitter.com/s</a>	323	19	1	0	0 No
111	<a href="https://twitter.com/C">https://twitter.com/C</a>	322	4	0	1	0 No
112	<a href="https://twitter.com/C">https://twitter.com/C</a>	320	53	0	0	0 No
113	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	317	26	0	0	0 No
114	<a href="https://twitter.com/j">https://twitter.com/j</a>	316	7	0	0	0 No
115	<a href="https://twitter.com/a">https://twitter.com/a</a>	308	5	0	1	0 No
116	<a href="https://twitter.com/s">https://twitter.com/s</a>	302	5	4	0	0 No
117	<a href="https://twitter.com/L">https://twitter.com/L</a>	296	21	1	0	0 No
118	<a href="https://twitter.com/a">https://twitter.com/a</a>	295	12	1	0	0 No
119	<a href="https://twitter.com/r">https://twitter.com/r</a>	287	15	0	1	0 No
120	<a href="https://twitter.com/r">https://twitter.com/r</a>	386	1	0	0	0 No
121	<a href="https://twitter.com/J">https://twitter.com/J</a>	283	24	0	1	0 No
122	<a href="https://twitter.com/L">https://twitter.com/L</a>	282	14	2	0	0 No
123	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	281	20	0	1	0 No
124	<a href="https://twitter.com/r">https://twitter.com/r</a>	281	1	0	0	1 No
125	<a href="https://twitter.com/e">https://twitter.com/e</a>	280	3	0	0	1 No
126	<a href="https://twitter.com/l">https://twitter.com/l</a>	280	0	4	0	0 No
127	<a href="https://twitter.com/v">https://twitter.com/v</a>	279	6	1	0	0 No
128	<a href="https://twitter.com/F">https://twitter.com/F</a>	278	10	0	1	0 No
129	<a href="https://twitter.com/e">https://twitter.com/e</a>	275	2	0	0	1 No
130	<a href="https://twitter.com/s">https://twitter.com/s</a>	269	37	0	0	0 No
131	<a href="https://twitter.com/i">https://twitter.com/i</a>	267	10	2	0	0 No
132	<a href="https://twitter.com/e">https://twitter.com/e</a>	267	169	0	0	0 No
133	<a href="https://twitter.com/j">https://twitter.com/j</a>	264	3	1	0	0 No
134	<a href="https://twitter.com/t">https://twitter.com/t</a>	263	0	1	0	0 No
135	<a href="https://twitter.com/g">https://twitter.com/g</a>	262	9	0	1	0 No
136	<a href="https://twitter.com/e">https://twitter.com/e</a>	261	16	0	0	0 No
137	<a href="https://twitter.com/l">https://twitter.com/l</a>	255	14	0	0	1 No
138	<a href="https://twitter.com/k">https://twitter.com/k</a>	254	33	0	0	0 No
139	<a href="https://twitter.com/J">https://twitter.com/J</a>	253	11	2	0	0 No
140	<a href="https://twitter.com/p">https://twitter.com/p</a>	253	6	4	0	0 No

141	<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	250	26	0	0	1 No
142	<a href="https://twitter.com/t...">https://twitter.com/t...</a>	249	5	0	1	0 No
143	<a href="https://twitter.com/t...">https://twitter.com/t...</a>	247	33	1	0	0 No
144	<a href="https://twitter.com/T...">https://twitter.com/T...</a>	240	15	0	0	0 Yes
145	<a href="https://twitter.com/f...">https://twitter.com/f...</a>	238	11	0	1	0 No
146	<a href="https://twitter.com/s...">https://twitter.com/s...</a>	236	24	2	0	0 No
147	<a href="https://twitter.com/y...">https://twitter.com/y...</a>	231	5	0	0	1 No
148	<a href="https://twitter.com/s...">https://twitter.com/s...</a>	222	15	0	1	0 No
149	<a href="https://twitter.com/s...">https://twitter.com/s...</a>	218	78	0	0	0 No
150	<a href="https://twitter.com/t...">https://twitter.com/t...</a>	216	6	0	1	0 No
		227086	16434	69	39	34

<b>No</b>	Numbering system to organize collected tweets
<b>Twitter Handle</b>	The specific username of the Twitter actor
<b>URL to Tweet</b>	The link to Twitter to view the original tweet
<b># of Retweets</b>	The amount of retweets received on the particular tweet; here it is defining the virality or popularity of the tweet
<b># of Replies</b>	The number of comments/responses to the direct tweet
<b>Pictures</b>	Did the tweet have any pictures included? If so, how many? (Can only contain 4 per tweet)
<b>Videos</b>	Did the tweet contain a video?
<b>Links</b>	Were there any links (petitions, donation websites, organizations) added to the tweet?
<b>Verified</b>	Was the Twitter user verified with a blue check mark, meaning they are a public figure?

No #	Twitter Handle	URL to Tweet	Diagnosis Frame	Prognosis Frame	Motivational Frame	Other Frame	Links	Pictures	Videos	Verified
1	@ArianaGrande	<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
2		<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0
3	@twaimz	<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
4	@jccaylen	<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
5	@w_terrence	<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
6	@ClaudiaWebbe	<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7		<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
8	@TheVampsBrad	<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
9		<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
10	@MrAndyNgo	<a href="https://twitter.com/...">https://twitter.com/...</a>	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
			5	0	5	5	5	3	4	2

<b>No</b>	Numbering of tweets viewed
<b>Twitter Handle</b>	Username of the actor/person tweeting
<b>URL to Tweet</b>	Website link to the original tweet
<b>Diagnosis Frame</b>	Problem identification/injustice framing; "we must"; "they" ; focusing on blame or responsibility
<b>Prognosis Frame</b>	Proposed solution/plan of attack ; "we can" ; "we will" ;
<b>Motivational Frame</b>	Call for action/call to arms ; "we are" ; "we have" ; "we do" ; "we did"
<b>Other Frame</b>	Tweet is not related to any of the above frames/not related to anything potentially causing collective action
<b>Links</b>	Did the tweet include a link?
<b>Pictures</b>	Are there any pictures?
<b>Videos</b>	Are there any videos?
<b>Verified</b>	Is this actor/Twitter user verified?