

DID YOU SEE THAT POST?:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF INSTAGRAM TO RACIAL INJUSTICE & REBELLIOUS
COMMUNICATION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
IN
COMMUNICATIONS
MARCH 2022

By
Justine Kuna Sison

Thesis Committee:
Dr. Rachel Neo, Chairperson
Dr. Wayne Buente
Dr. Hanae Kramer

Keywords: Rebellious Communication, Racial Injustice, Instagram, Protests, Racial Equality

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Rachel Neo, for her constant support and direction. Her wisdom and patience have been a great asset to me and were essential to the achievement of this thesis.

I also want to express my gratitude to Dr. Wayne Buente and Dr. Hanae Kramer for serving as members of my thesis committee and offering insightful comments and recommendations. Their expertise and insights greatly influenced my study and the outcome of this thesis.

I am appreciative of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for giving me the opportunity to perform my study and for all of the tools and assistance they offered.

I must express my sincere appreciation to my family and friends for their unwavering support and never-ending encouragement during my years of study and during the process of researching and writing my thesis. Without them, this achievement would not have been possible.

Lastly, I want to thank everyone who participated in my study for providing their time and willingness to talk about their experiences. Without their participation, this thesis would not be feasible.

Abstract

For many years, social media platforms have been utilized as tools for political advocacy and social activism, particularly by people who have experienced racial injustice. This was made apparent once more in 2020, when George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, was killed by a White Minneapolis police officer, culminating in massive protests that illustrated the influence and strength of these platforms. Using a close-ended survey, this study aims to examine how Instagram contributes to rebellious communication and social movements against racial injustice. Specifically, this study augments the current understanding of rebellious communication through the following theoretical lenses: Stuart Hall's Theory of Message Reception (Hall, 1993), Situation Theory of Problem Solving (Kim et al., 2021), Social Identity of Model of Collective Action (Van Zomeren et al., 2008), and Contact Hypothesis (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). One of the major findings from this study was that the number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice predicted high levels of engagement in rebellious communication on Instagram, participation in protests against racial injustice, and support for laws and policies that promote racial equality. This finding is somewhat in line with previous research that direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice are a learning experience for individuals. However, another significant finding that ran counter to expectations is that the level of exposure to racial injustice content was not a major influence.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| Abstract | iii |
| Table of Contents | iv |
| CHAPTER.1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| CHAPTER.2 LITERATURE REVIEW | 3 |
| Social Movements of Racial Injustice | 3 |
| Defining Rebellious Communication | 7 |
| Physical Protests | 8 |
| Support for American Legislation Against Racial Injustice | 10 |
| Social Movements Against Racial Injustice Before the Digital Era | 12 |
| Social Media’s Role in Social Movements Against Racial Injustice | 13 |
| Instagram’s Role in Racial Injustice Social Movements | 14 |
| <i>The Platform Affordances of Instagram</i> | 15 |
| Communication Theories and its Relation to Social Media Movements Against Racial Injustice | 17 |
| <i>Stuart Hall’s Theory of Message Reception</i> | 17 |
| <i>Situation Theory of Problem Solving (STOPS)</i> | 20 |
| <i>Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA)</i> | 22 |
| <i>Contact Hypothesis</i> | 24 |
| CHAPTER.3 METHODS | 28 |
| Sample | 28 |
| Measures | 30 |
| <i>Level of Exposure to Racial Injustice Posts on Instagram (Independent Variable)</i> | 30 |
| <i>Number of Direct Encounters with People who Have Experienced Racial Injustice (Independent Variable)</i> | 30 |
| <i>Engagement in Rebellious Communication (Dependent Variable)</i> | 31 |
| <i>Participation in Protests Against Racial Injustice (Dependent Variable)</i> | 31 |
| | iv |

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Support of Racial Equality Laws and Policies (Dependent Variable)</i> | 31 |
| <i>Demographic Controls (Control Variables)</i> | 32 |
| CHAPTER.4 RESULTS | 33 |
| Zero-Order Correlations | 33 |
| Linear Regression Analyses | 34 |
| CHAPTER.5 DISCUSSION | 39 |
| Limitations | 43 |
| Future Research | 43 |
| Conclusion | 45 |
| References | 47 |
| Appendices | 55 |
| Appendix A: Recruitment Email (Non-SONA Participants) | 55 |
| Appendix B: Informed Consent (Non-SONA participants) | 56 |
| Appendix C: Recruitment Email (SONA participants) | 58 |
| Appendix D: Informed Consent (SONA participants) | 59 |
| Appendix E: Complete List of Survey Questions | 61 |

List of Tables

| |
|--|
| Table 1. Zero-Order Correlation Matrix Between Instagram Content Exposure, Social Interactions, Rebellious Communication, Physical Protests, and Legislation Support |
| Table 2. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Independent Variables on the Rebellious Communication Dependent Variable |
| Table 3. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Independent Variables on the Participation in Protests Dependent Variable |
| Table 4. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Independent Variables on the Support for Legislation Dependent Variable |

CHAPTER.1 INTRODUCTION

From recording and posting unfiltered photographs and videos of police abuse to personal accounts of people interacting with ‘Karens,’ Instagram’s role in provoking and fostering social movements against racial injustice cannot be overstated, and it underscores the need for keeping an unrestricted and transparent digital arena. As social media users become more comfortable and empowered to address racial discrimination issues, it is important to address how Instagram has given them that platform.

With over 2 billion users, Instagram is one of the most popular social media networks in the world (Statista Research Department, 2022). It is primarily a visual platform, focusing on sharing user-generated photographs and videos with captions. As a result, social media users frequently disclose various elements of their lives on Instagram, including engagements, political ideas, new employment, and photos from parties they have been to. Although there is considerable overlap in what people share on social media, recent research reveals that some subjects are more likely to be discussed by some people than others. According to Anderson and Hitlin (2016), “Fully 68% of black social media users say that at least some of the posts they see on social networking sites are about race or race relations, including 24% who say this describes most of the content they see on social media.” The transformation in the social movement paradigm is unavoidable as the era changes, which includes communication technologies. The collective movement characterized the model of social movement in the past. The concept of a network society has emerged since the advent of social media, which allows everyone to communicate more intensely (Castells, 2005).

Although most social media posts are only seen by those in the user’s online social circle, there are times when an individual’s social media account and posts are viewed by others outside their online social circle. In either instance, what an individual posts online has been

demonstrated to have an impact on how others see them. For instance, human resource (HR) employees are progressively turning to social media platforms for knowledge that can assist them in assessing whether or not to hire someone (Becton et al., 2019). According to recent research, organizations utilize an applicant's social media to generate perceptions about their dispositional attributes, which determine judgments of the applicant's employability (Scott et al., 2014). Currently, no research has looked into whether people face bias during the hiring process due to their posts on social media concerning racial prejudices.

Ultimately, the influence Instagram has on rebellious communication, and social movements against racial injustice are revolutionary, and it is important to fully grasp and comprehend how this phenomenon was developed. As the digital age continues to expand, various methods to participate in rebellious communication against racial injustice continue to expand, specifically through digital manners. It is crucial to understand what predominantly motivates Instagram users to partake in such actions, regarding their circumstances, concepts, or personal experiences. It is vital to articulate how platforms like Instagram have given social media users the confidence and authority to speak out about issues of racial prejudice.

To further explore how Instagram has served as a venue for social activism against racial injustice through its message reception and communicative affordances, this study augments the current understanding of rebellious communication through the following theoretical lenses: Stuart Hall's Theory of Message Reception (Hall, 1993), Situation Theory of Problem Solving (Kim et al., 2021), Social Identity of Model of Collective Action (Van Zomeren et al., 2008), and Contact Hypothesis (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005) and examines whether exposure to racial injustice posts on Instagram and direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice will predict.

CHAPTER.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide a framework for the examined research topic, it is paramount to examine the body of previous research. The literature review tackles the following research areas: rebellious communication against racial injustice before and after the digital era, the communicative affordances of Instagram that users employ to participate in social movements for racial justice, and the analysis of communication theories and their relation to social media activism.

Social Movements of Racial Injustice

According to Johnston (2014), “social movements are typically resisted by forces that favor the status quo, which imparts fundamental contentiousness to movement actions. But the defining characteristic of all movements, big and small, is that they move history along, sometimes in significant ways” (p.1). For example, race is a concept that humans established to classify and group people into different social categories according to traits like skin color, facial features, and genetic makeup. While race is not a biological classification that can be used to provide or deny rights and privileges, it is a genuine social construction. Early in its development, American society created the idea of race to defend its new model of capitalism (Thompson, 2006).

In the early 1600s, the first Africans were held captive and transported to the American colonies as slave labor. Africans held in slavery during this period in colonial America were simply one form of labor. The English colonists used indigenous people as enslaved people and European indentured servants as additional forms of forced labor. These groups of forced and enslaved laborers frequently collaborated on initiatives and interacted socially (Andrews, 2016). Throughout the 1600s, enslavement as a concept evolved. Enslavement was not a certainty during this early time, nor did it equally extend to all Africans and those of African descent.

While the lines separating different groups were less rigid, they started to change over the following few decades and eventually became enshrined in legislation (Andrews, 2016).

The history of chattel slavery in Virginia demonstrates how anti-blackness—hostility or opposition to persons of color—and the chattel slavery system were established in colonial America. Employment status was neither fixed nor exclusively based on race. However, in 1662, a crucial turning point occurred when Virginia passed a statute establishing hereditary slavery, meaning that a child's status depended on the mother's rank (Mitchell, 2008, p. 83-34). This law differed from English common law, which determined a child's legal standing based on their father's and gave children of enslaved women the legal status of "slave." *Partus sequitur ventrem*, a doctrine that established the groundwork for the expansion of slavery in the Americas, also gave white plantation owners and other men the right to take advantage of enslaved women (Mitchell, 2008, p. 83-34). The legitimacy of slavery and the use of the concept of freedom would come to symbolize America. As African colonists embraced the notion of independence and the British outlawed slavery within their borders, slavery-related problems started to emerge alongside the democratic notions of freedom and equality. By the start of the 19th century, being 'white' was a status symbol for a privileged, land-owning, mostly male status. In society, being 'white' meant having unambiguous rights, whereas not being white meant your liberties, rights, and possessions were uncertain (Sappol, 2002).

By the 1850s, antislavery opinion had reached its peak, partly due to the vigorous efforts of white Southerners to defend slavery, preserve their political hegemony, and propagate the peculiar system to newly conquered American areas. Representatives for slavery justified their stance by downplaying the humanity of the people they owned as property (Meer, 2005). To define precisely what rights black people in the country may possess, the federal government added new facets to the concept of race as the conflict between America's ideals of equality and

freedom and the reality of millions of enslaved people intensified. The Supreme Court heard the Dred Scott v. Sanford case, one of the most significant in American history, in this academic setting. Dred Scott and his wife argued for their release because they were now free people since they had lived in a free state (Allen, 2010). The Supreme Court concluded that the U.S. Constitution did not consider Black people to be citizens. Thus, Scott could not file a lawsuit in federal court. The court's discriminatory ruling and declaration was that African descendants were no more than property, contributing to significant harm to the cause of black equality and fueling anti-black prejudice for years to come.

Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, numerous towns, cities, and states passed laws and established social customs that restored the dominantly white social structure. Through the Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision, the United States legalized segregation practices. According to the statute, Americans were permitted to legally discriminate against Black Americans based on their race and segregate people in society (Hoffer, 2012). The "separate but equal" ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson legalized white supremacy in America and the de facto segregation already taking place outside the South. It led to the adoption of numerous new racist laws and behaviors, the effects of which are still felt in the nation today. During the 20th century, the definition of 'white' evolved or expanded to encompass a variety of groups of people, including immigrants from Italy and Eastern Europe. Black people, Indigenous peoples, and other groups would continue to exist outside of the domain of whites (Winston, 2020). Consequently, they would have difficulty obtaining the same rights as white people, such as the right to vote, an education, citizenship, and a portion of the country's riches. Whiteness assimilation was intimately related to acceptance into American culture, which led to an unintentional association between whiteness and what it means to be an American.

In every type of political system throughout history, activism has existed. Action that deviates from the usual or customary is referred to as activism. The action could be fasting, public gatherings, demonstrations, alternative radio, or door-to-door canvassing (Laverack, 2012). Mair (2002) states, “. . . it is instead more accurate to describe these events as social gatherings of concerned people who are attempting to re-frame the conditions within which economic, social, and political decisions are made” (p. 218). The abolition of slavery, the overthrow of dictatorships, the defense of workers against abuse, the preservation of the environment, the advancement of gender equality, the fight against racism, and many other significant concerns have all been made possible because of activism (Laverack, 2012). Aims like undermining minorities or inciting conflict are also possible with activism. For instance, one of the first significant protests started in Montgomery, Alabama, in December 1955. As authorized by the city’s segregation rules, Rosa Parks, a black woman, refused to yield her bus seat to a white passenger (Glennon, 1991). Parks was a longtime, active member of the NAACP, despite frequently being portrayed as a worn-out older woman who was too exhausted to get up and move. She decided to remain stationary because she is a devoted civil rights activist. She was detained and imprisoned for her daring and ‘rebellious’ deed. Another example is in February 1960, when four black college freshmen respectfully requested service at a segregated Woolworth’s food counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. They remained sitting till the counter closed despite being ignored. The following day, they returned with other students, who were patiently waiting to be serviced at the counter (Pinkney, 2010). They were engaging in civil disobedience without resorting to violence. The food counter-protests in Greensboro were referred to as “sit-ins.” As their knowledge of them circulated, other students in southern cities began organizing sit-ins (Pinkney, 2010).

There are many different types of activism, from one-on-one interactions to large protests, from honorable conduct to corrupt behavior, from courteous pleas to unacceptable interference, and from nonviolent protests to violent attacks. Since activism is not narrowly outlined, various people frequently have slightly varied notions about what it entails.

Defining Rebellious Communication

The concept of rebellious communication can be defined as “media which pose challenges to existing power structures, empower diverse communities and classes, and enable communities of interest to speak to each other” (Stein, 2001, p. 2). The advanced material, reformist ethos, and democratic production and dissemination methods of these media set them apart from traditional mainstream media (Downing, 2000). Supporters of the alternative and opposing viewpoints on the media contend that mainstream media sources are politically biased in both their creation and dissemination (Lievrouw, 2011). In *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*, rebellious communication is described as being “generally small-scale and in many different forms, that express an alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities, and perspectives” (Downing, 2000, p. 5). Thus, the concept classifies many progressive, reformist, and post-materialistic kinds of alternative media. Communal media, student media, strategic media, ethnocultural media, social movement media, citizen media, and unconventional journalism are examples of media that fall under the category of rebellious communication. Groups that fall under such communication stress democratic channels typified by participatory, action-driven, prefigurative, and peripheral activities that challenge traditional forms of communication.

For instance, journalists have long accepted the idea that the press is a vehicle for freedom, a place where the people may discuss policy, acquire the information they need to be productive citizens, and subject the ‘powerful’ to some accountability. Early newspaper editors

envisioned themselves as moderators of a public conversation where they could influence discourse by choosing the essential reports or reprinting incredibly persuasive arguments. However, all citizens were exposed to information beyond tangible newspapers (Ettema, 2007). Working-class newspapers provided their communities with platforms where they could discuss the critical issues affecting their communities, establish a shared perspective, and increase their engagement in society at large. They also fulfilled informational demands that would not otherwise have been supplied. They served as building blocks for a public sphere that may no longer exist. This political process impliedly acknowledged the diversity of interests and offered forums for them to interact while concurrently conserving their distinctive identity and allowing them to participate in the larger polity (Bekken, 1997).

Physical Protests

A physical protest would generally take the appearance of a planned public manifestation of opposition to or disagreement with a position or course of action. According to Lanza (2019), “Physical protest is a form of individual or collective action aimed at expressing ideas, views, or values of dissent, opposition, denunciation, or vindication. . . any intentional and temporary congregation of a group of people in a private or public space for a specific purpose” (p. 5). Protests can be viewed as cooperative actions when many participate by attending and sharing the associated costs and dangers (Larson, 2021). Protests can manifest themselves in many diverse ways, from lone speeches to large-scale rallies. To affect public opinion or governmental policy, protesters may choose to organize a physical protest, or they may choose to engage in direct action to bring about the desired changes directly. When protests are part of an organized, nonviolent campaign with a specific goal and incorporate pressure and persuasion, they go beyond simple demonstrations and are more accurately referred to as civil resistance or nonviolent resistance (Roberts & Ash, 2009).

Protests can be effective in the near term because they can intimidate authorities into altering their actions. The purpose of protests is to draw attention to themselves and start a discussion about the issue they are bringing up. Streets do not miraculously possess any special abilities beyond the potential to initiate that discussion and pose issues for a larger society. For example, in August 1963, a large-scale protest march known as the "March on Washington" took place in Washington, D.C., when around 250,000 people congregated in front of the Lincoln Memorial (Sandage, 1993). The Kennedy administration responded to the upheaval in Birmingham and other Southern cities. It suggested a civil rights law forbidding workplace discrimination and racial segregation in public places. Members of Congress from the South fiercely opposed the bill. Civil rights leaders organized a tremendous march in retaliation (Sandage, 1993). Civil rights leaders sought equitable employment opportunities and the complete execution of constitutional rights for racial minorities during a rally that marked the conclusion of the nonviolent march. The renowned "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King was delivered. It motivated thousands of people to step up their activism while inspiring thousands to become active in the civil rights struggle for the first time. The March on Washington received extensive press and television coverage (Sandage, 1993).

Physical protesting involves not just the freedom to assemble but also citizens who are aware of their rights and have access to public locations where they can do it. In "Choreographies of Protest," Foster (2003) states, "By using the body to resist and respond to violence and social injustice, protesters, literally embody their cause." Foster (2003) concludes that during times of protest, "bodies operate with what is at hand," connecting with and learning from other bodies. Protesters figuratively represent their cause by using their bodies to oppose and react to social injustice and acts of violence. The idea of a social 'movement' so potent is how the body creates and experiences agency via the physical act of protest. Rebellious

communication has evolved to provide access to previously unattainable levels of connectedness, but it has also raised concerns about its role in eroding the principles of democracies established by and for the people. As people traverse through a new period of the human relationship with technology, the practicalities of face-to-face interaction and physical mass protests—the tactics of resistance for full citizenship and fundamental freedoms become even more crucial to anchoring society. Combining modern rebellious communication’s simplicity and speed with the kind of protracted, face-to-face organization that gives physical protest its strength and endurance will be a crucial skill for new protest movements (Deibert, 2003).

Support for American Legislation Against Racial Injustice

The civil rights movement brought racial inequality to the forefront in several ways, including the Montgomery bus boycott, sit-ins, Freedom Rides, the Birmingham demonstrations of 1963, and the March on Washington. This was undoubtedly salient when neighborhood whites and local police employed violence against nonviolent protestors, and the media reported on it (Rosenberg, 2004). According to Rosenberg (2004), “The 1964 Civil Rights Act is the most important and potentially powerful anti-discrimination law ever enacted by the U.S. Congress” (p. 1147). With the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the federal government contributed enormous authority to the fight for a more equitable and inclusive society in the United States. However, civil rights advocates believed they had more to achieve beyond the act. To secure civil rights for African Americans, further grassroots activism, legal precedent, and legislative action would be required (Zietlow, 2004). Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was quickly passed by the U.S. Congress in response to subsequent protests (Zietlow, 2004). The act primarily addressed eradicating historical barriers to voting amongst African Americans. The laws were promptly challenged in court and ultimately confirmed in several rulings starting in 1964 by the Supreme Court. These accomplishments have inspired

other marginalized groups to fight for their rights. Disempowered Americans have employed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to fight harassment and discrimination based on race, national origin, religion, gender, and other factors ever since it was passed (Zietlow, 2004).

Discrimination is illegal under federal law because of national origin, race, color, religion, disability, sex, and familial status. In addition, discriminating against someone based on their country of birth, heritage, culture, or language is prohibited by law. As a result, people cannot be denied equal opportunity because they are married to or interact with people of a particular national origin, have a name or accent that is associated with that group's origin, practice certain cultural practices that are associated with that group, or are from a different country than they or their family (The United States Department of Justice, 2015). In “The COVID-19 Hate Crime Act: Anti-Chinese Sentiment and Xenophobia in Time of Austerity,” Li analyzes the efficacy of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act and its influence on American society. She emphasizes how the Act simply served as a “symbolic wake-up call” for Americans exerting racism and discrimination towards Asians since the start of the coronavirus pandemic but questions its adequateness within the actual root of the racism. The article reveals, “. . . although the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act is a step towards achieving a systemic change towards a more harmonious society in the United States, the failure and its inability to address the root cause of the rising hate crimes perpetrated against the Asian communities in the United States acutely impair its efficacy” (Li, 2022, p. 453). A critical first step in recognizing the racism surrounding the pandemic is the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act. One of the main reasons for the large increase in COVID-19 cases is addressed by dispelling the myth that Asian Americans are somehow responsible for the disease’s great spread. However, the U.S. government should not only address reported hate crimes but also help ensure that there are more resources accessible for people to report hate crimes in the first place because hate crimes are persistently underreported. The

mistrust between victims and law enforcement is a significant problem with reporting hate crimes. Future policy should focus on reducing this gap through knowledge and communication.

Social Movements Against Racial Injustice Before the Digital Era

People had to wait until the next day's newspaper to learn about local and global events. The public relied on newspapers, television, or radio for various information and updates. However, due to the widespread use of computers and smartphones, the general public is now more connected to the rest of the world. As communication techniques have advanced significantly, it has been simpler to establish connections with family members, coworkers, friends, and other community artists (Karamat & Farooq, 2020, p. 381). In "The Social Media Revolution: Exploring the Impact on Journalism and News Media Organizations," Harper (2010) explores how sharing information and news has significantly evolved, especially with the rise of social media. She states, "In the traditional world, newspapers, corporations, governments, or other types of leading organizations simply had to give out information, and people would consume it by reading or looking at it." Since the seventeenth century, journalism has developed from a private intelligence-sharing system to a system that utilizes a variety of media, including print, radio, television, and the internet, to disseminate information to the general public. The earliest printed news dated back to the sixteenth century and was, in many considerations, a record of the informal sharing of information characterized as gossip or rumor. Before the invention of the printing press, the news was transmitted orally and through written manuscripts (Rubery, 2010).

On February 18, 1965, peaceful protesters in Marion, Alabama, were attacked by white segregationists. An Alabama state trooper tragically shot a young African American protester named Jimmie Lee Jackson during the ensuing turmoil (Mollin, 2004). Following Jackson's passing, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC)

organized a significant protest march from Selma to Montgomery, the state capital. The Selma to Montgomery March was one of many civil rights demonstrations in 1965 in Alabama, a state in the South with pervasively racist laws. In an endeavor to register Black voters in the South, demonstrators marched 54 miles from Selma to the state capital of Montgomery in March of that year. Along the way, they encountered deadly violence from local law enforcement and white vigilante organizations (Dailey, 2004). The protesters did not get very far when Alabama state troopers attacked them at the Edmund Pettis Bridge and forced them back to Selma with whips, nightsticks, and tear gas. In addition, many Americans were outraged by the graphic footage that was shown on television, which led to a protest in Selma by civil rights and religious leaders of many religions (Aham, 2004). Thus, multitudes of clergy members, rabbis, priests, and social activists left for Selma to participate in the march for voting rights and racial equality.

Social Media's Role in Social Movements Against Racial Injustice

People have shifted away from using traditional media like television, newspapers, and radio in preference for more modern ones, including text messages, emails, Facebook, blogs, Snapchat, Twitter, and other abrasive information platforms that allow for instantaneous communication and cross-sections of opinion (Karamat & Farooq, 2020, p. 381).

People have found innovative new methods to interact and work together through social media. Social media platform features like feeds, profiles, and groups give organizations access to a global audience, allowing them to network, share, and advertise their products and services. Social media can amplify voices, instantly disseminate information, and foster greater collaboration across various groups of people. For example, following the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer in 2013, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Alicia Garza assisted in establishing an international network of organizers and activists utilizing the slogan #BlackLivesMatter (Ince et al., 2017). This hashtag prompted the Black Lives Matter movement that is currently taking

place. The movement has grown beyond any one organization or hashtag over the last ten years due to an increase in the number of Black people killed by police, including Mike Brown, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, and many others (Ince et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it has depended on social media to raise awareness and provide information about the injustice and racial discrimination that exist throughout American history. In “We Face, I Tweet: How Different Social Media Influence Political Participation through Collective and Internal Efficacy,” the authors analyze how social media platforms, specifically Twitter and Facebook, can influence one to participate in political activities. They study the different purposes of the platforms and their effect on collective and internal efficiencies. It states the following:

. . . political sharing of content on social media activates users’ sense of personal and collective agency, which boosts their likelihood of political participation. . . the study reinforces the finding that social media has the potential to organize networks as a collective actor, and increase users’ shared belief in the ability to act individually and collectively (Halpern et al., 2017, p. 330).

Social media can serve as an open venue for idea sharing. People who are frequently kept out of spheres of power and access, such as academia or politics, can participate in public discourse because of social media. Politicians, international leaders, and other decision-makers can be quickly contacted by someone without any personal or professional connections.

Instagram’s Role in Racial Injustice Social Movements

Instagram has typically been the social media platform where most people go to escape real-world problems and present a selected highlight reel of their lives. However, in recent years, this is not the case anymore. It has become a more political platform during nationwide Black Lives Matter marches. In the United States, Instagram has become the focal point for broad discussions on racism and how to counteract it. Rebellious communication within social media

platforms can be defined as having strong feelings of disagreement with people from different perspectives and cultural contexts. In “‘Glowing Up Ain’t Easy:’ How #BlackGirlMagic Created an Innovative Narrative for Black Beauty Through Instagram,” Parris (2020) examines how numerous Black women experience self-hatred and internalized racism as a result of their inability to embody White women’s ideals of beauty properly. It states, “ #BlackGirlMagic reveals how Black women showcase positive images to uplift themselves while resisting the negativity associated, for years, with their hair texture, complexion, and body image” (Parris, 2020, p. 51). Western beauty ideals are harmful to all women in a patriarchal and racist society. However, in a world where the White male gaze can define what is attractive, having features comparable to White women have become the norm. These beauty ideals perpetuate family, classmates, and the mainstream media and can negatively affect women’s lives. Because their phenotypic traits differ the most from those of White women, Black women are severely affected (Parris, 2020, p. 50). Therefore, curating #BlackGirlMagic provides a venue for meaningful communication and allows Black women to express themselves and interact with other Black women worldwide openly.

The Platform Affordances of Instagram

In conjunction with platform use and rebellious communication, the perceived affordances of Instagram play a vital role. According to Norman (1999), affordance is the design characteristic of an object. In this case, either the visual application of Instagram or the social convention of rebellious communication indicated how the object should be utilized. Therefore, an affordance must be recognized, discovered, and turned into a functional characteristic to be effectively employed (Norman, 1999). In “Aesthetics of Otherness: Representation of #migrantcaravan and #carvanamigrante on Instagram,” Rosa and Soto-Vásquez (2022) investigate how the migrant caravan has been represented on Instagram, demonstrating how

aesthetics of otherness has emerged. The interplay between platform users' preferences and platform affordances creates an aesthetics of otherness that establishes a divide between the marginalized other and the user (Rosa & Soto-Vásquez, 2022). It asserts the following:

Beyond picture sharing, Instagram provides several other features that must be considered, as they comprise a total set of platform affordances. The primary non-visual aspects are hashtags, captions, tags, and algorithms. All these affordances are highly relevant to studying representation on the platform, especially as we will show, of marginalized people and social justice movements (Rosa & Soto-Vásquez, 2022).

Hashtags have been investigated as a means of building political counter-publics on social media, where networked protests against dominance can be voiced. Jackson et al. (2020) highlight hashtags like #blacklivesmatter as instances of Twitter movements, which generally start by minority users in opposition to the dominant public. Furthermore, captions are user-generated comments that can add context, satirical context, or even politicize a post. For example, Instagram users can use captions to describe their communicative intention for photographs or videos (Rosa & Soto-Vásquez, 2022).

During the summer of 2020, protests against police brutality were underway, sparked by the murders of George Floyd and other Black Americans months before. Individual rights, racism, white supremacy, and police violence were all discussed online, offline, and in the mainstream media simultaneously. Business industries and companies were prompted to address strategies for diversification, equality, and inclusivity for their businesses and employees. Several used social media to advertise their commitments and avoid controversy (Frier, 2021). When intertwined with the concept of racial injustice, it can be defined as social movements against the “systemic privileges of whites over people of color, or unconscious racial stereotyping” (Coker, 2002, p. 869). In “Black Squares for Black Lives? Performative Allyship as Credibility

Maintenance for Social Media Influencers on Instagram,” Wellman delves into memefication of social justice activism, specifically through the hashtags: #BlackLivesMatter and #BlackOutTuesday. It asserts, “. . . this movement awakened white allies to realize they were not doing enough with their privilege to support Black creators and other creators of color in the industry, and they needed to decide if and how they were going to move forward while maintaining relationships with their audiences” (Wellman, 2022). Wellman delves into ‘performative activism,’ which can be understood as individuals partaking in a social movement without knowledge or comprehension. Within his study concerning #BlackLivesMatter, he found that white allies’ show of solidarity failed miserably because of their lack of understanding of the campaign and grasp of their position (Wellman, 2022). Furthermore, people can engage in online and offline discussions about issues of race, and people on social media who address racial issues or racial inequality more regularly are more inclined to acknowledge and share postings about racism on social media. Race-related content is a more prevalent aspect of social media interaction for black users than for white users, irrespective of how frequently or infrequently they talk about racism in their daily lives (Anderson, 2016).

Communication Theories and its Relation to Social Media Movements Against Racial Injustice

Stuart Hall’s Theory of Message Reception

In the communication process, there is a coding mechanism comprising receiving, digesting, and interpreting the message among the audience (Yuliarti, 2020, p. 182). This is critical because reciprocal comprehension between the sender and the receiver of the message is at the center of effective communication. The message’s receiver should have the absolute exact comprehension of the matter as the message’s sender. In “Encoding/Decoding,” Hall (1993) states the following:

. . . the senders encode meaning in their messages according to their ideals and views and the messages are decoded by the receivers according to their own ideals and views, which may lead to miscommunication or to the receiver understanding something very different from what the sender intended (p. 91).

According to Hall, audiences employ three distinct orientations to decipher the contents of cultural texts: the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated position, and the oppositional position (Hall, 1993, p. 101). Within the dominant-hegemonic position, the spectator is situated within the dominating perspective (Hall, 1993, p. 101). This position has less miscommunication and misinterpretation, as both the sender and receiver operate under the same series of norms, preconceptions, and cultural prejudices. In the negotiated position, the spectator can comprehend the sender's message within the framework of dominant societal and cultural beliefs (Hall, 1993, p. 102). The messages are primarily understood, but not in the same manner as the dominant-hegemonic viewpoint. The recipients in the negotiated position are not inherently functioning from a hegemonic perspective. However, they are acquainted enough with the dominant society to decipher cultural texts sufficiently in a philosophical sense. Lastly, in the oppositional view, a spectator can interpret the information in an intended manner but sees another, unanticipated meaning inside the message due to their cultural ideas. This specific orientation of message reception can be applied to the social movements against racial injustices on the Instagram platform.

Social movements are the foundation of global social change. Social movements are distinctive because a group of individuals works collectively to accomplish a similar goal, notably those who are beyond the domain of political influence (Agustin & Josephine, 2020). In "Network Society and Social Movement: Message Reception among Instagram Users," it states, "Stuart Hall holds out the possibility that the powerless may be obstinate by resisting the

dominant ideology and translating the message in a way that's more congenial to their own interests" (Yuliarti et al., 2020, p. 182). Rebellious communication on Instagram can be interpreted from the dominant-hegemonic position of Stuart Hall's theory.

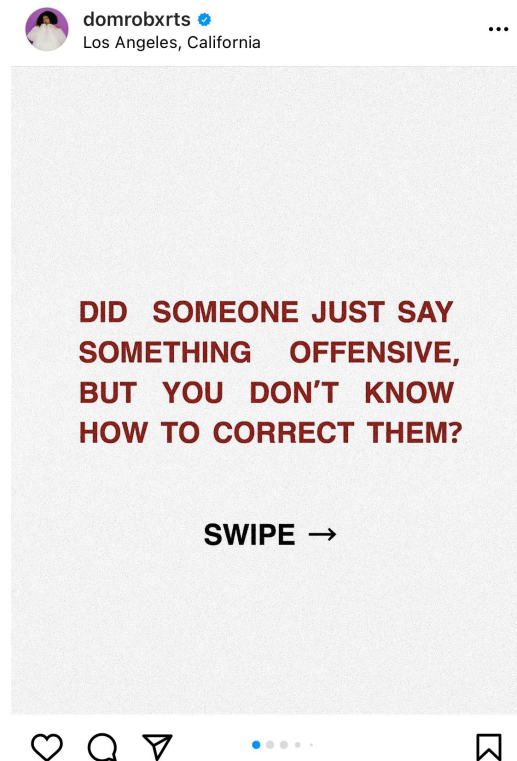


Figure 1. Post “Did Someone Just Say Something Offensive”

Source: @domrobxrts

This form of encoding for the message above is a message for acknowledging feelings of discrimination and discomfort. (Figure 1). Receivers of this message are likely to ‘swipe right’ if they obtain the same norms, values, and perspectives of the sender, @domrobxrts. As receivers engage with this post, they continue to engage in rebellious communication. In another example, Instagram users, such as @andresitoguzman, utilize the platform to encourage people to engage in protests against racial injustice. (Figure 2). With her caption, @andresitoguzman encourages receivers of her message to utilize her art and provides them with direct access to it in support of

George Floyd. This Instagram post is interpreted from the negotiation position within Stuart Hall's Theory of Message Reception.



Figure 2. Post “Justice for George Floyd!”

Source: @andresitoguzman

Despite @andresitoguzman being translucent with her messaging, various users within the comment section of the post do not carry the same exact values and beliefs as her.

Situation Theory of Problem Solving (STOPS)

With social media, people can discover numerous amounts of information efficiently and instantaneously. Social media has been used to highlight movements around the world for the past couple of years. Social media activism may establish a welcoming environment for dialogue between activists, policymakers, and anyone who wants to be acknowledged. According to the situational theory of problem-solving (STOPS), communication is a purposeful process that is epiphenomenal to problem resolution. It borrows the premise that communication is not merely

what senders do to influence recipients' attitudes and behaviors but also what people do to confront difficult life circumstances from the situational theory of publics (STP) (Kim et al. 2021). In "Problem Solving and Communication Action: A Situational Theory of Problem Solving," Kim and Grunig examine STOPS and analyze the reasoning behind why individuals become involved in communicative behaviors. Two traditional ideas of publics and public opinion were improved, modified, and codified by the situational theory of publics. Publics are essential elements of the democratic process because they identify issues that concern them, organize to address them and act in unison. Kim and Grunig (2011) assert, "... people *seek* information as they become more motivated to solve a problem. People also *select* certain kinds of information as they solve problems." Social media activism allows people to absorb information about various political and social movements that are happening around the world. The previous two years have seen unparalleled political and social unrest. Every crisis, from the discussion of anti-abortion laws to police brutality, has highlighted the significant flaws in the American government. The general public has paid significant attention to these controversies, particularly on social media. Following previous political or social issues, various artwork, images, and trends appeared on social media, which many people felt driven to repost. Users frequently repost these problems to raise awareness or deliver a particular message.

This model uses motivation to describe a person's willingness to post online. Early studies suggested that people used media for knowledge, amusement, social interaction, or to maintain their identities (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000), while more recent studies suggest that social media use is mainly about socializing (Brandtzaeg & Heim, 2009). In "Disclosing the Undisclosed: Social, Emotional, and Attitudinal Information as Modeled Predictors of# MeToo Posts," Diane Jackson delves into the viral social movement hashtag, #MeToo, as well as social media users concerned with social influence and digital information exchange. She explicitly

highlights STOPS and states, “This theory is helpful in understanding the processes individuals move through when they consider why and to what extent they want to be involved with a social movement or issue” (Jackson, 2019, p. 31). The aspects presented in the situational theory of problem-solving (Kim & Grunig, 2011) provide an adequate foundation for comprehending the social aspect of participating in rebellious communication on social media. As a result, the connection between personal relevance and acknowledgment of engagement in the issue is strengthened when people feel more personally linked to those engaging in the subject. Additionally, the stronger their desire to solve the issue, the more in-depth their issue alignment is expected to be, and as a result, the more motivated they will be (Jackson, 2019). Therefore, through augmented engagement with the social movement, individuals’ motives to post online, per the situational theory of problem-solving, would be heightened.

Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA)

The social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) proposes that social identity can both, directly and indirectly, influence collective action through the determinants of injustice and efficacy. In “Toward an Integrative Social Identity Model of Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Three Socio-Psychological Perspectives,” the authors develop an integrated social identity model of collective action, comprising three socio-psychological perspectives on collective action (Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Van Zomeren et al. (2008) assert, “Social identity underlies injustice because it provides the basis for the group-based experience of injustice. Hence, it can positively buffer group members against the negative consequences of low group status and emotionally gear them up for collective action” (p. 511). Furthermore, social identity drives efficacy since it gives those who lack power a greater sense of themselves. In other words, SIMCA’s claim that social identity serves as a theoretical connection between the two is foreshadowed by the fact that social identity influences group members’

perceptions of group-based injustice and efficacy (Van Zomeren et al., 2008). According to the SIMCA, identification, injustice, and efficacy offer distinctive justifications for collective action. Social identity—as it anticipates interpretations of both—serves as a connection between the injustice and efficacy explanations of collective action. Therefore, social identity serves as the psychological link between injustice and efficacy, in addition to being a distinctive determinant of collective action (Van Zomeren et al., 2008)

Recently published research and media discussion on the internet and political engagement have emphasized the critical roles that social media play in igniting protests. In “Media Use and the Social Identity Model of Collective Action: Examining the Roles of Online Alternative News and Social Media News,” it investigates how alternative and social media could encourage the fundamental motives of protest involvement. According to Chan (2016), “the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) points to three core antecedents of collective action that lead to protest: psychological attachment with the in-group (identity), perceived injustice experienced by the in-group leading to certain emotional states (anger), and the perception that one has the agency to influence society (efficacy).” According to the SIMCA, individuals classify themselves according to the social groupings they identify, such as ethnicity, gender, political party, and activist organization (Chan, 2016). Therefore, protests can be viewed as interpersonal competition when the in-group works together to benefit from reputation, power, or other advantages to the detriment of the out-group (Chan, 2016). Furthermore, since protests aim to cease the destruction caused by perceived injustices, anger can be a significant protest motivator. Therefore, anger has a crucial role in political engagement. Numerous components could make individuals angry, like violating laws or activities that prevent someone from achieving their objectives and goals. When this occurs, the “approach motivational system” kicks in and tries to fix the disruption. Similarly, media content

has the power to arouse strong emotions like anger (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009). For instance, videos of the police physically assaulting nonviolent protestors or government officials denying the assertions of the social movement and its leaders may stir up intense feelings that motivate action to participate in protests or rebellious communication on social media. With this, I hypothesize that:

H1a: The level of exposure to racial injustice posts on Instagram will be positively associated with the likelihood of engaging in rebellious communication.

H1b: The level of exposure to racial injustice posts on Instagram will be positively associated with the likelihood of participating in protests against racial injustice.

H1c: The level of exposure to racial injustice posts on Instagram will be positively associated with the likelihood of supporting laws that promote racial equality.

Contact Hypothesis

The contact hypothesis is a long-standing line of study that intends to eliminate prejudice among opposing parties. The hypothesis, which Gordon Allport, PhD, developed in the 1950s, asserts that interaction between two groups can foster acceptance and tolerance but solely under specific circumstances, such as when the groups have similar rights and shared objectives (Allport et al., 1954). Since the theory's origin, psychologists have expanded the list of requirements for groups in order for "contact" to be effective. In *On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years After Allport*, it states, "Reduced prejudice will result, he held, when four positive features of the contact situation are present: (a) equal status between the groups, (b) common goals, (c) intergroup cooperation, and (d) the support of authorities, law, or custom" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005, p. 264). People with negative perceptions of particular groups act in ways that contradict those attitudes, such as when they interact socially positively with people who belong to those groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). According to researchers, increased degrees of

intergroup contact were frequently correlated with decreased levels of bias, and more thorough studies showed higher associations between contact and reduced prejudice. The meta-analysis revealed that the composition of the groups, such as age, sexual orientation, disability, and mental illness, dramatically influences the significant benefits of contact on socialization, with the interaction between heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals having the most extensive contact effects (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). Thus, through these meta-analyses, it is seen that there is a high correlation between intergroup contact and reduced prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). However, not all of Allport's conditions need to be present in order for prejudice to be reduced. In "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," it was found that while Allport's optimal contact circumstances show that interaction under these conditions generally results in an even higher reduction in prejudice, the results of the meta-analysis suggest that not all of the conditions are necessary for prejudice reduction (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

According to numerous research, social media influences participation in social movements. In "The Ties that Mobilize Us: Networks, Intergroup Contact, and Participation in Black Lives Matter Movement," it implies that social connections outside of activist organizations might be crucial for social movement participation, and intergroup contact can have a positive impact by stimulating collective action. Hong and Peoples (2020) state the following:

. . . more recent research argues that advantaged group allies (AGAs) "likely make meaningful contributions to the movements they support" (Droogendyk et al., 2016, p. 315) as long as said contact is supportive—in other words, self-aware concerning (white) privilege, recognizes minority group autonomy, avoids cooptation of marginalized identities, and vocalizes support for social change (p. 544).

The fact that opinions of Black people influence opinions of the movement is one factor for the racial disparities in attitudes regarding BLM. This is one of the most straightforward interpretations and follows the movement's name, which implies that Black lives are not equally valued by all Americans (Drackulich et al., 2021). According to research on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), positive contact between individuals from distinct groups leads to positive intergroup relationships (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Aversive relationships frequently fail to bridge racial boundaries due to high degrees of segregation, particularly in residential neighborhoods (Drackulich et al., 2021). In this straightforward sense, a higher sympathy for Black people among Black people might account for their more substantial sympathy for the Black Lives Matter movement. Drackulich et al. (2021) affirm, "Persistently high levels of racial segregation in the residential, professional, and social lives of Americans insulate many white Americans from the treatment many Black Americans receive at the hands of the police" (p. 230). People may privilege their perspectives in the nonexistence of direct knowledge of the understanding of Black Americans. However, they also endure some culpability, given the decisions that prevented them from having direct contact with Black Americans or finding information about their personal experiences in the media. Even when individuals come to account for the unfavorable treatment of Black people by police, they may decide not to trust them (Drakulich et al., 2021). Therefore, if an individual obtains a lack of experience in being subjected to racial discrimination and a lack of contact with others who have been subjected to racial discrimination, it results in a lack of education in racial disparities, decreasing their likelihood to engage in social movements concerning race. I hypothesize that:

H2a: The number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice will be positively associated with engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram.

H2b: The number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice will be positively associated with engaging in protests against racial injustice.

H2c: The number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice will be positively associated with the likelihood of supporting laws that promote racial equality.

CHAPTER.3 METHODS

A close-ended survey was conducted to test the hypotheses on how Instagram influences an individual's participation in rebellious communication and social movements. My study examines the relationship between the exposure of social movements of racial injustice posts on Instagram, the direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice, one's personal experience with racial injustice, and the willingness to engage in social movement. A close-ended survey is best suited for this study because it is able to test the relationship between various types of self-reported communication and media uses. Furthermore, closed-ended questions are more probable to verify that data gathered is effectively compared across participants, statistically significant, and reflective of the general population that a researcher is aiming to evaluate in surveys.

Sample

A non-probability online survey created and managed with Qualtrics was used to gather data for this study from +100 students. This study used an online survey format because it is convenient and economical. Online polls also assist in maintaining compliance with the social isolation that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of sampling techniques, participants was found using two methods: 1) a combination of purposive and snowball sampling strategies, which are two non-probability sampling methods; and 2) participant recruitment using the Communicology unit's SONA participant pool. Non-probability sampling methods are suitable because they contribute to the achievement of the study's objective, which is to analyze predictors generated from current literature and theoretical frameworks.

Graduate and undergraduate students were eligible to participate in this study as participants who were selected using the purposive and snowball sampling approaches.

According to Statista (2022), the highest groups of Instagram users within the United States are aged between 25-34 years old at 27.5% and 18-24 years old at 25.5%. Therefore, it was preferred that these participants are students as most of them will fit within the age range of being the most frequent Instagram users. Additionally, participants were allowed to engage regardless of their gender, socioeconomic status, or first language. These originally chosen qualified participants are probably drawn from sizable beginning undergraduate courses, core graduate programs, and both undergraduate and graduate student organizations. In order to implement snowball sampling, the initially chosen student participants were required to share the survey link with as many of their other friends or classmates who are also enrolled in U.S. universities. A total of 7 respondents took the non-SONA version of the survey.

In addition, most of the participants in this study are students from Communicology courses, who are typically undergraduates. Participants recruited through the SONA participant pool system of the Communicology unit will earn an additional 0.5 SONA points for taking part in the study. A total of 120 SONA respondents participated in the study.

After collecting my data, I deleted responses that reported the participant was not an Instagram user, spent less than 117 seconds completing the survey, and were less than 50% completed, leaving a total of 106 usable responses. The average time taken to complete the survey was 6.63 minutes. In terms of sample demographics, 72.6% were female, and 27.4% were male. 96.3% were undergraduate students, and 2.8% were graduate students. The respondents' average age was 19 years of age ($M = 19$, $S.D. = 2.76$). As for race, 51% of the respondents were Asian, 30.2% were White Caucasian, and 5.7% were Hispanic or Latino. 50% of the respondents reported at least one of the parents' highest level of education was high school. 49% reported at least one of the parents' highest level of education was a Bachelor's. 21.7% reported at least one

of the parents' highest level of education was a Master's. 6.6% reported at least one of the parents' highest level of education was a Ph.D or higher.

Measures

Level of Exposure to Racial Injustice Posts on Instagram (Independent Variable)

In order to measure the level of exposure to racial injustice posts on Instagram, a total of eight Likert scale items were utilized to gauge the independent variable, the individual's exposure to racial posts on Instagram. Examples of such question items are as follows, "How often do you look for photos of racial injustice on Instagram?", and "How often do the Instagram accounts that you follow post content about racial injustice?" Their responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Less Often, to 5 = Several times a day). These items were summed up to form a scale (M = 1.99, S.D. = 0.86; Cronbach alpha = 0.88). These items were adapted from "Social Media Use in 2021" (Auxier & Anderson, 2021).

In addition, two separate items asked respondents to estimate: 1) how many Instagram accounts *they followed* promoted justice for marginalized racial groups (M = 17.1, S.D. = 41.3), and 2) how many of their *Instagram followers* promoted justice for marginalized racial groups (M = 40.4, S.D. = 78.4). Given that these two items asked for numerical estimates, they were not combined together with the other eight Likert-scale items above but analyzed separately in subsequent regression analyses.

Number of Direct Encounters with People who Have Experienced Racial Injustice (Independent Variable)

In order to measure the number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice, a total of four items were utilized to gauge the independent variable, the individual's direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice. The statements included questions such as, "To what extent have you interacted with close friends who have

experienced racial discrimination from others?” The statements were measured on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all to 4 = A great extent), and summed up to form a scale (M = 2.63, S.D. = 0.756; Cronbach alpha = 0.82).

Engagement in Rebellious Communication (Dependent Variable)

In order to measure how people are influenced to engage in rebellious communication, a total of four items were utilized. Participants were asked questions such as, “How often have you expressed disagreement with others who try to downplay racial inequality issues on Instagram?”, and “How often have you posted Instagram content urging people to take action against racial injustice?” These 4 items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always), and summed up to form a scale (M = 2.14, S.D. = 1.09; Cronbach alpha = 0.90).

Participation in Protests Against Racial Injustice (Dependent Variable)

Two survey items, “How likely are you to take part in an in-person protest, strike, or movement for racial injustice in the near future?” and “How likely are you to donate money or material resources to a racial justice movement in the near future?” gauged the likelihood of participants taking action against racial injustice. These items were measured on a 7-point 1 = Extremely Unlikely to 7 = Extremely Likely scale, and summed up to form a two-item scale (M = 5.13, S.D. = 2.01, $r(106) = 0.65$).

Support of Racial Equality Laws and Policies (Dependent Variable)

In order to measure how likely people are to support laws of racial equality, a total of four items were utilized to gauge the dependent variable. Participants were asked, “How likely are you to support laws making hate crimes against racial minorities illegal?”, “How likely are you to support laws promoting preferential hiring of racial minorities?”, “How likely are you to support laws that help improve the economic status of racial minorities?” and “How likely are

you to support laws that help improve the social status of racial minorities?” Their responses will be based on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Extremely Unlikely, 2 = Unlikely, 3 = Somewhat Unlikely, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Somewhat Likely, 6 = Likely, 7 = Extremely Likely). These items were adapted from the American National Election Survey (ANES, 2022), and summed up to form a scale (M = 5.82, S.D. = 1.23; Cronbach alpha = 0.85).

Demographic Controls (Control Variables)

In terms of controls, five questions were asked to record gender, year of study, age, race, parents’ highest level of education obtained, and Instagram general use frequency (see Appendix E).

CHAPTER.4 RESULTS

Zero-Order Correlations

Table 1

Zero-Order Correlation Matrix Between Instagram Content Exposure, Social Interactions, Rebellious Communication, Physical Protests, and Legislation Support

| | Exposure to Instagram Content | Number of Instagram Followers | Number of Instagram Accounts Followed | Direct Contact | Rebellious Communication | Physical Protests | Legislation Support |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Exposure to Instagram Content | -- | | | | | | |
| Number of Instagram Followers | 0.22* | --- | | | | | |
| Number of Instagram Accounts Followed | 0.32** | 0.37*** | -- | | | | |
| Direct Contact | 0.42*** | 0.17 | 0.36*** | -- | | | |
| Rebellious Communication | 0.39*** | 0.04 | 0.36*** | 0.46*** | -- | | |
| Physical Protests | 0.20* | 0.19 | 0.22* | 0.45*** | 0.49*** | -- | |
| Legislation Support | 0.14 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.29** | 0.29** | 0.64*** | -- |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

First, I ran zero-order correlations between the four independent variables and the three dependent variables. From Table 1 above, the zero-order correlational analyses showed that Instagram content exposure was positively correlated with rebellious communication, $r(106) = 0.39, p < .001$, and physical protests, $r(106) = 0.2, p < .05$. Also, the number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice was positively correlated with rebellious communication, $r(106) = 0.46, p < .001$, with physical action, $r(106) = 0.45, p < .001$, and with legislation support, $r(106) = 0.29, p < .01$.

Linear Regression Analyses

Next, I ran three separate sets of linear regression analyses in Jamovi to test my hypotheses. The four variables—exposure to Instagram content, number of Instagram accounts followed, number of Instagram followers, and direct contact—were specified as independent variables, and rebellious communication, physical protests, and legislation support served as the respective dependent variables in the analyses. The following variables frequency of Instagram use, gender, year of study, age, race, and parents' highest level of education also served as demographic controls in all three analyses.

Table 2*Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Independent Variables on the Rebellious**Communication Dependent Variable*

| | Dependent Variable: Rebellious Communication (N = 88) |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Demographic Controls | |
| Frequency of Instagram Use | - 0.05(0.10) |
| Gender | 0.61(0.23)** |
| Year of Study | 0.05(0.12) |
| Age | 0.02(0.05) |
| Race | - 0.04(0.06) |
| Parent #1 Highest Level of Education | - 0.03(0.08) |
| Parent #2 Highest Level of Education | 0.03(0.08) |
| Independent Variables | |
| Exposure to Instagram Content | 0.22(0.13) |
| Number of Instagram Accounts Followed | - 0.002(0.003) |
| Number of Instagram Followers | 0.004(0.001)** |
| Direct Contact | 0.41(0.15)** |
| R^2 | 0.37 |

Note. ** $p < .01$

From Table 2 above, regression analyses showed that the perceived number of Instagram followers promoting justice for marginalized racial groups in the United States had a significantly positive association with participants' frequency of engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram, $b = 0.004$, $SE = 0.001$, $t(77) = 2.64$, $p = 0.01$. However, regression analyses showed that the perceived number of Instagram accounts followed promoting justice for marginalized racial groups in the United States had no association with participants' frequency of engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram. Furthermore, the data showed that the level of exposure to racial-related content on Instagram had no significant association with participants' frequency of engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram. Therefore, H1a was partially supported.

From Table 2 above, regression analyses showed that the number of participants' direct

encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice had a significantly positive association with participants' frequency of engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram, $b = 0.41$, $SE = 0.15$, $t(77) = 2.69$, $p < .01$. H2a was supported.

Table 3

Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Independent Variables on the Participation in Protests Dependent Variable

| | Dependent Variable: Participation in Protests (N = 88) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Demographic Controls | |
| Frequency of Instagram Use | - 0.16(0.20) |
| Gender | 1.41(0.44)* |
| Year of Study | 0.007(0.24) |
| Age | - 0.011(0.10) |
| Race | - 0.027(0.11) |
| Parent #1 Highest Level of Education | - 0.009(0.16) |
| Parent #2 Highest Level of Education | 0.012(0.15) |
| Independent Variables | |
| Exposure to Instagram Content | 0.006(0.25) |
| Number of Instagram Accounts Followed | 0.008(0.005) |
| Number of Instagram Followers | 0.002(0.003) |
| Direct Contact | 0.98(0.30)** |
| R^2 | 0.322 |

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

From Table 3 above, regression analyses showed that the level of exposure to racial-related content on Instagram had no significant association with participants' frequency of participating in protests against racial injustice. The more people were exposed to racial justice content on Instagram, the more likely they were to engage in physical protests. H1b was not supported. However, regression analyses showed that the number of participants' direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice had a significantly positive association with participants' frequency of participating in protests against racial injustice, $b = 0.98$, $SE = 0.30$, $t(77) = 3.3$, $p < 0.01$. The more direct encounters people have with others who

have experienced racial injustice, the more likely they were to engage in physical protests. H2b was supported.

Table 4

Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Independent Variables on the Support for Legislation Dependent Variable

| | Dependent Variable: Support for legislation (N = 88) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Demographic Controls | |
| Frequency of Instagram Use | 0.03(0.12) |
| Gender | 1.12(0.27)*** |
| Year of Study | - 0.085(0.15) |
| Age | - 0.02(0.06) |
| Race | - 0.06(0.07) |
| Parent #1 Highest Level of Education | 0.064(0.010) |
| Parent #2 Highest Level of Education | - 0.013(0.09) |
| Independent Variables | |
| Exposure to Instagram Content | 0.12(0.15) |
| Number of Instagram Accounts Followed | 0.0027(0.003) |
| Number of Instagram Followers | - 0.001(0.002) |
| Direct Contact | 0.38(0.18)* |
| R^2 | 0.287 |

Note. *** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

From Table 4 above, regression analyses showed that the perceived number of Instagram followers promoting justice for marginalized racial groups in the United States had no significant association with participants' likelihood to support laws that promote racial equality. In addition, the perceived number of Instagram accounts followed promoting justice for marginalized racial groups in the United States had no significant association with participants' likelihood to support laws that promote racial equality. Furthermore, the data showed that the level of exposure to racial-related content on Instagram had no significant association with participants' likelihood to support laws that promote racial equality. H1c was not supported.

By contrast, from Table 4 above, regression analyses showed that the number of

participants' direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice had a significantly positive association with participants' likelihood to support laws that promote racial equality, $b = 0.38$, $SE = 0.18$, $t(77) = 2.14$, $p < .05$. The more direct encounters people have with others who have experienced racial injustice, the more likely they were to support laws that promote racial equality. H2c was supported.

CHAPTER.5 DISCUSSION

This research was an attempt to offer new insights into one of the most popular social media platforms in the world: Instagram (Green et al., 2018), and how it contributes to social activism against racial injustice. Specifically, this study examined the level of exposure to racial injustice on Instagram and the number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice as influencers of increased engagement in rebellious communication, participation in protests against racial injustice, and support of racial equality laws and policies among university students. The findings revealed that the number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice contributes to increased engagement in rebellious communication, participation in protests against racial injustice, and support of racial equality laws and policies among students. By contrast, the level of exposure to racial injustice on Instagram only partially contributed to the increase in engagement in rebellious communication. Furthermore, the level of exposure to racial injustice content on Instagram did not have any significant associations with increases in the participation of protests against racial injustice and support of racial equality laws and policies. Further explanations of those findings are provided in the section that follows.

The level of exposure to racial injustice content on Instagram (H1) received partial support. The perceived number of Instagram followers promoting justice for marginalized racial groups in the United States had a significant positive association with participants' frequency of engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram. Within social media, users frequently alter their conduct in the direction of a social norm as a result of comparisons with others (Brown, 2022). Wellman (2022) asserts while the Black Lives Matter movement was at its height, several influencers intentionally used performative allyship by posting black squares to establish and preserve credibility with followers. Meaning, people may feel more inclined to engage in

rebellious communication because their Instagram followers are doing so. On the other hand, it is also entirely plausible that peer norms on Instagram serve as a powerful driving force for change by getting people to pay attention to societal inequalities around them and *genuinely* realize that something is wrong with the established societal structure. Furthermore, it also could be alleged that the imagined audience could serve as a predictor of rebellious communication on Instagram because when people believe that the majority of their followers support racial justice, they are more emboldened to post in front of an audience that shares similar beliefs. In “The Imagined Audience on Social Network Sites,” Litt and Hargittai (2016) indicate a target audience frequently comes to mind when users use social networking platforms as a means to reach specific audiences, focusing on an end-receiving audience with preferences and reactions. As the perceived number of Instagram followers promoting justice for marginalized racial groups in the United States significantly predicts participants’ frequency of engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram, it is also plausible that Instagram users could post about racial injustice issues to maintain their follower count. In order to maintain or increase their follower count, Instagram users may feel inclined to post content that their followers are interested in, such as racial justice.

However, the perceived number of Instagram accounts followed promoting justice, and the level of exposure to racial-related content on Instagram had no significant association with participants’ frequency of engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram. As a result of their use of social media in general, their participation in online racial justice civic interaction, and their engagement with or awareness of posts by people of different racial groups, an individual’s susceptibility to racially biased messaging and content from others outlining their experiences being the victims of social media racial discrimination may increase (Hope, 2018). In “Social Media Posts about Racism Leads to Evaluative Backlash for Black Job Applicants,”

Howard et al. (2020) revealed that Black individuals' posts regarding racism were viewed less positively than Black individuals' posts that were race-neutral. Black individuals who post about their encounters with racism may suffer the same adverse effects throughout the hiring process as people who share images of themselves overly drinking large amounts of alcohol (i.e., reduced likelihood of being interviewed) (Howard et al., 2020). In addition, it is possible that posting about their verifiable encounters with racial bias may make employment discrimination worse. Given these factors, it is thus plausible that people who pay a lot of attention to racial injustice content on Instagram might not necessarily be inclined to engage in rebellious communication on Instagram.

In addition, the level of exposure to racial injustice on Instagram (H1) had no significant association with participants' frequency of participating in protests against racial injustice and the likelihood of supporting laws that promote racial equality. One plausible explanation could be that perceived social norms in the form of the perceived number of Instagram followers promoting justice for marginalized racial groups are a more powerful driving force for engaging in racial justice activities, such as rebellious communication on Instagram, as opposed to a self-reported estimate of mere Instagram content exposure. Furthermore, theories such as the two-step flow model of communication have argued that there is a tenuous direct link between media content exposure and behavioral action (Lazersfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948). Given this, it is also possible that *vicarious exposure* to racial injustice content through Instagram, as opposed to direct contact with individuals who have experienced racial discrimination, is a much weaker predictor of racial justice activism.

Despite significant correlations in the correlation matrix, the exposure to Instagram content ultimately did not predict the participants' likelihood to participate in physical protests and support legislation for racial equality. This could be due to other controls, such as political

interest, explaining the variance. In “Insta-Politics: Motivations for Following Political Leaders on Instagram,” Parmelee and Roman (2019) demonstrate the motivations for following political leaders on social media, as well as how such motivations are related to followers’ demographics and political interests. A user’s interest in politics frequently determines their motivations for gathering political information online as well as the kind of sites they visit. In other words, a strong interest in politics predicts a *strong motivation* to use social networks for political purposes. Furthermore, Instagram content exposure could be assumed to be a high bar for offline action, such as physical action or support for legislation, because these two are ‘bigger asks’ than online activity, such as rebellious communication on Instagram. The Internet has an influence on conventional activism, often by making it more inexpensive and accessible. Also, the consequences of participating in physical protests—getting arrested or possibly physically injured—may cause users to de from offline action and prefer to engage in online activity instead.

The number of participants’ direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice (H2) as an influencer of engaging in rebellious communication on Instagram, participating in protests against racial injustice, and supporting laws that promote racial equality was supported by the study findings. The strongest remedies for eradicating fear are knowledge and familiarity (Brownlee, 2022). Fear is frequently the source of discrimination. When one does not directly know members of that minority group and is fully unaware of their culture, it is much simpler to fall prey to prejudice and misconceptions (Brownlee, 2022). Ellefsen et al. (2022) conducted qualitative interviews with young Black people and how they counter racism. Although marginalized individuals appreciate comfort and support from others who have experienced racism, it is more important to receive support from those who have not experienced racial discrimination firsthand (Ellefsen et al., 2022). In line with the tenets of the contact

hypothesis, which predicts that contact with marginalized groups can increase positive attitudes toward such groups (Allport, 1954), direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice are a learning experience for individuals, as the knowledge obtained from these people's experiences can influence them to post content about racial injustice on Instagram, partake in racial injustice protests, and support racial equality laws.

Limitations

Although offering an intriguing summary of the factors influencing engagement in rebellious communication and racial injustice, this study has certain limitations. Using a close-ended survey with convenience sampling is the first limitation. Closed-ended surveys significantly affect responders based on the choices they have. This sample cannot be regarded as indicative of all university students since convenience sampling reduces the generalizability of the results.

Another limitation can be the time period during which the data were gathered. The level of exposure to racial injustice content on Instagram would have been more extensive during the peak of the Black Lives Matter Movement in 2020, as compared to the latter of 2022. Furthermore, this would have also affected individuals' inclination to participate in physical protests against racial injustice, as there was a multitude of protests in 2020 as well.

As a control variable, the major type was not taken into account in this study. It is conceivable that certain significant majors, e.g. political science students, could have higher levels of exposure to racial injustice content on Instagram and more direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice.

Future Research

In terms of potential future study areas, it could be intriguing to look at these influencers qualitatively, particularly with regard to the number of direct encounters with people who have

experienced racial injustice. The context of these social interactions places more emphasis on how it could influence people to engage in rebellious communication and racial injustice.

Therefore, it is essential to examine further social interactions and their effect on higher levels of support systems against racial injustice. Furthermore, it is also important to investigate how other popular social media platforms can influence people's inclination to engage in rebellious communication. It might be interesting to examine TikTok, a social media platform currently on the rise for many avid social media users (Xu et al., 2019). It would be intriguing to compare these social media platforms to decipher which platform gauges the most rebellious communication and participation against racial injustice from its users.

Furthermore, future studies can examine other variables as mediators of the relationship between Instagram content exposure and activism against racial injustice. For example, variables such as interpersonal discussion (McLeod, 2001) and message elaboration (Shahin, Saldana, & Gil De Zuniga, 2021) have been cited as important mediators of the relationship between content exposure and political action. It is plausible that exposure to racial justice content on Instagram could have an indirect effect on these aforementioned mediators.

It would also be interesting for future studies to research rebellious communication as another independent variable to predict offline action, such as participation in physical protests or support for laws against racial inequality. As social media allows regular individuals to interact and organize themselves at little or no expense, it would be intriguing to further examine social media as a tool for changing the agendas of social movements and facilitating collective action, specifically offline action.

Also, research has suggested that intentional exposure to online content is a more powerful and consistent predictor of political action than incidental exposure to online content (Shahin et al., 2021). Thus, future studies can examine whether intentional exposure to racial

justice content on Instagram might be a better predictor of engaging in racial justice activities than incidental exposure to racial justice content on Instagram. In addition, research has shown that social engagement indicators on social media platforms predict behavioral action (Yoon et al., 2018). As such, future experiments can be conducted to gauge the effects of various Instagram platform features, such as comment valence or social engagement indicators, on intention to participate in racial justice activities.

Additionally, another future research direction could be examining other types of discrimination people might have encountered, such as gender, religion, national origin, or disability, as a predictor to engage in rebellious communication, participate in physical protests or support legislation against racial injustice. As the feelings of being discriminated against can be mutual across anyone being the victim, it is important to research any type of discrimination contributing to any individual's sense of being ostracized from most of society.

Conclusion

Social media platforms have been used for political advocacy and social activism for a number of years, especially by those who have personally experienced racial injustice. The discussions, demonstrations, and social media activities that were sparked by audiences were centered on racial inequity and covered topics including police brutality, jail reform, and healthcare inequities. As a result, the study was an attempt to offer a useful background for examining how social media platforms facilitate the frameworks used by its participants to define movements against racial injustice. The level of exposure to racial injustice on Instagram and the number of direct encounters with people who have experienced racial injustice were examined as influencers of engaging in rebellious communication, participating in physical protests against racial injustice, and supporting laws and policies for racial equality.

Overall, this study accorded to the general understanding of Instagram and its

contributions to rebellious communication and racial injustice. There are a few inferences to be made here. Despite the fact that the level of exposure to racial injustice on Instagram was not fully supported, it cannot be assumed that social media platforms cannot influence systems for rebellious communication against racial injustice. Daily social media users are more likely to engage in rebellious communication on other social media platforms. TikTok operates on an attention graph, which means that submitted content is sorted algorithmically in line with how the user interacts with the platform (Eriksson & Akerlund, 2022). Meaning, TikTok's algorithm emphasizes the most fascinating content, whereas Instagram's algorithm prioritizes top creators and influencers (Abidin, 2021).

References

- Abidin, C. (2021). Mapping internet celebrity on TikTok: Exploring attention economies and visibility labours. *Cultural Science Journal*, 12(1), 77-103.
- Acham, C. (2004). *Revolution televised: Prime time and the struggle for Black power*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Agustin, S. M., & Josephine, A. (2020). WOMEN'S RECEPTION ON SOCIAL SUPPORT IN INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT@ GETHAPPY. ID. *WACANA: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi*, 19(1).
- Allen, A. (2010). *Origins of the Dred Scott Case: Jacksonian Jurisprudence and the Supreme Court, 1837-1857*. University of Georgia Press.
- Allport, G. W., Clark, K., & Pettigrew, T. (1954). The nature of prejudice.
- Anderson, M., & Hitlin, P. (2016). Blacks more likely than whites to see—And post-race-related content on social media. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewinternet.org/2016/08/15/blacks-more-likely-than-whites-to-see-and-post-race-related-content-on-social-media>.
- Andrews, G. R. (2016). *Afro-Latin America: Black Lives, 1600–2000*. Harvard University Press.
- ANES. (2022). *ANES TIME SERIES CUMULATIVE DATA FILE 1948-2020*. ANES | American National Election Studies. Retrieved October 26, 2022, from <https://electionstudies.org/>
- Auxier, B., & Anderson, M. (2021). Social media use in 2021. *Pew Research Center*, 1, 1-4.
- Bekken, J. (1997). The Chicago newspaper scene: An ecological perspective. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74(3), 490-500.
- Blood, R. (2000). Activism and the Internet: From e-mail to new political movement. *Journal of Communication Management*.

- Brandtzæg, P. B., & Heim, J. (2009). Why people use social networking sites. In *International conference on online communities and social computing* (pp. 143-152). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.
- Brown, G. D., Lewandowsky, S., & Huang, Z. (2022). Social sampling and expressed attitudes: Authenticity preference and social extremeness aversion lead to social norm effects and polarization. *Psychological Review*, *129*(1), 18.
- Brownlee, D. (2022). *Dear white people: Here are 10 actions you can take to promote racial justice in the workplace*. Forbes. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danabrownlee/2020/06/01/dear-white-people-here-are-10-actions-you-can-take-to-promote-racial-justice-in-the-workplace/?sh=2b6316e34a92>
- Carver, C. S., & Harmon-Jones, E. (2009). Anger is an approach-related affect: evidence and implications. *Psychological bulletin*, *135*(2), 183.
- Chan, M. (2017). Media use and the social identity model of collective action: Examining the roles of online alternative news and social media news. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *94*(3), 663-681.
- Coker, D. (2002). Foreword: Addressing the real world of racial injustice in the criminal justice system. *J. Crim. L. & Criminology*, *93*, 827.
- Dailey, J. (2004). Sex, segregation, and the sacred after Brown. *The Journal of American History*, *91*(1), 119-144.
- Deibert, R. J. (2003). Deep probe: the evolution of network intelligence. *Intelligence and National Security*, *18*(4), 175-193.
- Dixon, S. (2022, October 21). *U.S. Instagram users by age group 2022*. Statista. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from

- <https://www.statista.com/statistics/398166/us-instagram-user-age-distribution/#:~:text=In%20September%202022%2C%2027.5%20percent,aged%2018%20to%2024%20years.>
- Downing, J. D. (2000). *Radical media: Rebellious communication and social movements*. Sage.
- Drakulich, K., Wozniak, K. H., Hagan, J., & Johnson, D. (2021). Whose lives mattered? How white and black Americans felt about black lives matter in 2016. *Law & Society Review*, 55(2), 227-251.
- Droogendyk, L., Wright, S. C., Lubensky, M., & Louis, W. R. (2016). Acting in solidarity: Cross-group contact between disadvantaged group members and advantaged group allies. *Journal of Social Issues*, 72(2), 315-334.
- Ellefsen, R., Banafsheh, A., & Sandberg, S. (2022). Resisting racism in everyday life: from ignoring to confrontation and protest. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 45(16), 435-457.
- Eriksson Krutrök, M., & Åkerlund, M. (2022). Through a white lens: Black victimhood, visibility, and whiteness in the Black Lives Matter movement on TikTok. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1-19.
- Ettema, J. S. (2007). Journalism as reason-giving: Deliberative democracy, institutional accountability, and the news media's mission. *Political Communication*, 24(2), 143-160.
- Federal protections against national origin discrimination*. The United States Department of Justice. (2015, August 6). Retrieved September 4, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/crt/federal-protections-against-national-origin-discrimination-1>
- Frier, S. (2021). Marketers are underpaying black influencers while pushing black lives matter. *Bloomberg*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-11/marketers-are-underpaying-black-influencers-while-pushing-black-lives-matter>.

- Glennon, R. J. (1991). The role of law in the Civil Rights movement: the Montgomery bus boycott, 1955–1957. *Law and History Review*, 9(1), 59-112.
- Green, D. D., Martinez, R., Kadja, A., Evenson, L., MacManus, L., & Dirlbeck, S. (2018). In a World of social media: A case study analysis of instagram. *American Research Journal of Business and Management*, 4(1), 1-8.
- Hall, S. (1993). Encoding/Decoding. S. During. *The cultural studies reader*, 90-103.
- Halpern, Valenzuela, S., & Katz, J. E. (2017). We Face, I Tweet: How Different Social Media Influence Political Participation through Collective and Internal Efficacy. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22(6), 320–336. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12198>
- Harper, R. A. (2010). The social media revolution: Exploring the impact on journalism and news media organizations. *Inquiries Journal*, 2(03).
- Hoffer, W. H. (2012). *Plessy v. Ferguson: race and inequality in Jim Crow America*. University Press of Kansas.
- Hope, E. C., Velez, G., Offidani-Bertrand, C., Keels, M., & Durkee, M. I. (2018). Political activism and mental health among Black and Latinx college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 24(1), 26.
- Howard, S., Kennedy, K., & Tejeda, F. (2020). Social media posts about racism leads to evaluative backlash for Black job applicants. *Social Media+ Society*, 6(4), 2056305120978369.
- Ince, Rojas, F., & Davis, C. A. (2017). The social media response to Black Lives Matter: how Twitter users interact with Black Lives Matter through hashtag use. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(11), 1814–1830. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1334931>

- Jackson, D. L. (2019). *Disclosing the Undisclosed: Social, Emotional, and Attitudinal Information as Modeled Predictors of #MeToo Posts*. pdf (Doctoral dissertation, Purdue University Graduate School).
- Jackson, S. J., Bailey, M., & Welles, B. F. (2020). *#HashtagActivism: Networks of race and gender justice*. Mit Press.
- Johnston, H. (2014). *What is a social movement?*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Karamat, A., & Farooq, D. A. (2020). Emerging role of social media in political activism: Perceptions and practices. *South Asian Studies*, 31(1).
- Kim, & Grunig, J. E. (2011). Problem Solving and Communicative Action: A Situational Theory of Problem Solving. *Journal of Communication*, 61(1), 120–149.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01529.x>
- Kim, J. N., Tam, L., & Chon, M. G. (2021). 24 A conceptual genealogy of the situational theory of problem solving: Reconceptualizing communication for strategic behavioral communication management. In *Public Relations* (pp. 471-486). De Gruyter Mouton.
- Kitzmilller, E. M., & Burton, E. (2021). The Threat of Visibility and State-Sanctioned Violence for Rural Black Lives Matter Youth Activists. *Journal of Research in Rural Education (Online)*, 37(7), 57-66.
- Lanza, E. (2019). Protesta y derechos humanos. *Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. Protest and human rights*. (OAS. Official records).
- Larson, J. M. (2021). Networks of conflict and cooperation. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24, 89-107.
- Laverack, G. (2012). Health activism. *Health Promotion International*, 27(4), 429-434.
- Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B., & Gaudet, H. (1948). The people's choice: How the voter makes

- up his mind in a presidential campaign. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Li, C. (2022, June). The COVID-19 Hate Crime Act: Anti-Chinese Sentiment and Xenophobia in Times of Austerity. In *2022 8th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2022)* (pp. 448-454). Atlantis Press.
- Lievrouw, L. (2011). *Alternative and activist new media*. Polity.
- Litt, E., & Hargittai, E. (2016). The Imagined Audience on Social Network Sites. *Social Media + Society*, 2(1), 205630511663348–. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116633482>
- Mair. (2002). Civil leisure? Exploring the relationship between leisure, activism and social change. *Leisure = Loisir*, 27(3-4), 213–237.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2002.9651304>
- McLeod, M. S. J. M. (2001). Values, communication behavior, and political participation. *Political Communication*, 18(3), 273-300.
- Meer, S. (2005). *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s*. University of Georgia Press.
- Mitchell, A. B. (2008). Self-Emancipation and Slavery: An Examination of the African American's Quest for Literacy and Freedom. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 2(5).
- Mollin, M. (2004). The Limits of Egalitarianism: Radical Pacifism, Civil Rights, and the Journey of Reconciliation. *Radical History Review*, 88(1), 112-138.
- Norman, D. A. (1999). Affordance, conventions, and design. *interactions*, 6(3), 38-43.
- Papacharissi, Z., & Rubin, A. M. (2000). Predictors of Internet use. *Journal of broadcasting & electronic media*, 44(2), 175-196.
- Parmelee, J. H., & Roman, N. (2019). Insta-politicos: Motivations for following political leaders on Instagram. *Social media+ society*, 5(2), 2056305119837662.

- Parris, P. (2020). 'Glowing up ain't easy' How #BlackGirlMagic Created an Innovative Narrative for Black Beauty Through Instagram. *Stacey Sriver and Carol Ballantine, 21*.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2005). Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis: Its history and influence. *On the nature of prejudice: Fifty years after Allport, 262-277*.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 90(5), 751*.
- Pinkney, A. (2010). *Sit-in: How four friends stood up by sitting down*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.
- Roberts, A., & Ash, T. G. (Eds.). (2009). *Civil resistance and power politics: the experience of non-violent action from Gandhi to the present*. Oxford university press.
- Rosa, F. R., & Soto-Vásquez, A. D. (2022). Aesthetics of Otherness: Representation of #migrantcaravan and #caravanamigrante on Instagram. *Social Media+ Society, 8(1), 20563051221087623*.
- Rosenberg, G. N. (2004). The 1964 Civil Rights Act: The crucial role of social movements in the enactment and implementation of anti-discrimination law. . *Louis ULJ, 49, 1147*.
- Rubery, M. (2010). Journalism. *The Encyclopedia of the Novel*.
- Sandage, S. A. (1993). A marble house divided: The Lincoln Memorial, the civil rights movement, and the politics of memory, 1939-1963. *The Journal of American History, 80(1), 135-167*.
- Sappol, M. (2002). *A traffic of dead bodies: Anatomy and embodied social identity in nineteenth-century America*. Princeton University Press.
- Shahin, S., Saldaña, M., & Gil de Zuniga, H. (2021). Peripheral elaboration model: The impact of incidental news exposure on political participation. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 18(2), 148-163*.

- Stein, L. (2001). Access television and grassroots political communication in the United States. *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements, Thousands Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 299-324.*
- Thompson, E. C. (2006). The Problem of “Race as a Social Construct.”. *Anthropology News, 47(2), 6-7.*
- Van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2008). Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: a quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives. *Psychological bulletin, 134(4), 504.*
- Wellman, M. L. (2022). Black Squares for Black Lives? Performative Allyship as Credibility Maintenance for Social Media Influencers on Instagram. *Social Media+ Society, 8(1), 20563051221080473.*
- Winston, A. S. (2020). Scientific racism and North American psychology. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of psychology.*
- Xu, L., Yan, X., & Zhang, Z. (2019). Research on the causes of the “TikTok” app becoming popular and the existing problems. *Journal of advanced management science, 7(2).*
- Yoon, G., Li, C., Ji, Y., North, M., Hong, C., & Liu, J. (2018). Attracting comments: Digital engagement metrics on Facebook and financial performance. *Journal of Advertising, 47(1), 24-37.*
- Yuliarti, M. S., Siagian, M., & Wardaningtyas, A. K. (2020). Network Society and Social Movement: Message Reception among Instagram Users. *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia, 5(2), 179-188.*
- Zietlow, R. E. (2004). To secure these rights: Congress, courts and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. *Rutgers L. Rev., 57, 945.*

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Email (Non-SONA Participants)

Recruitment Email (Non-SONA Participants)

Hello,

My name is Justine Kuna Sison, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the School of Communications. You are being invited to participate in a close-ended survey on rebellious communication against racial injustice on Instagram that is being conducted as part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree.

Approximately 30 minutes will be needed to complete this short survey. You will be one of about a few hundred survey participants. You are encouraged to share the survey link with as many of your friends or classmates who are also enrolled in US universities as possible.

Any questions you feel uncomfortable answering can be skipped. Participation is entirely voluntary. Other than what you could encounter on a regular basis, there are no substantial hazards associated with taking this survey. Participating in this survey will be advantageous to you because it may lead to fresh insights into the variables that influence people to engage in rebellious communication against racial injustice.

Data from the survey will be kept private on a password-protected computer or in a locked filing cabinet in a secured office. I will be the only person with access to the data, along with my advisor from the University of Hawai‘i. All survey findings will be presented in an aggregate form without any reference to specific respondents. To the degree permitted by law, I shall report my findings while maintaining your privacy and confidentiality.

For questions, concerns, or complaints you may contact Justine Kuna Sison, the principal investigator for this study by email at sisonjk@hawaii.edu. You can also contact her advisor, Dr. Rachel Neo at rneo@hawaii.edu or by phone at 808-956-3332.

Sincerely,

Justine Kuna Sison

School of Communications

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Appendix B: Informed Consent (Non-SONA participants)



University of Hawai'i Consent to Participate in a Research Project Justine Kuna Sison, Principal Investigator

Project title: The Contribution of Instagram to Racial Injustice & Rebellious Communication

Aloha! My name is Justine Kuna Sison, and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the School of Communications. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am doing a research project.

What am I being asked to do?

If you participate in this project, you will be asked to fill out a survey.

Taking part in this study is your choice.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you. Your choice to participate or not participate will not affect your status as a student at UH Mānoa.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of my project is to examine how Instagram contributes to rebellious communication and social movements against racial injustice. I am asking you to participate because you are an adult Instagram user.

What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?

The survey will consist of 47 close-ended survey questions. It will take approximately 30 minutes. The survey questions will include questions like, "How tired do you feel after video conferencing?" and "In the past 12 months, have you taken part in an in-person protest, strike, or movement for racial injustice?". The survey is accessed on a website to which I will provide you a link.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?

I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the survey questions. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop taking the survey or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

By choosing to participate in this survey, you will earn SONA credit based on the length of participation (0.50 SONA credit= 30 minutes). Also, the results of this project may further academic understanding of specific factors that predict Zoom fatigue among university students.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

No personal data or identifiers will be collected using the SONA system. All study data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a password-protected computer. Only my University of Hawai'i advisor and I will have access to the information. Other agencies

that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

Compensation:

You will be rewarded extra credit (approximately 0.50 SONA credit) in exchange for approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete this survey.

Future Research Studies:

Even after removing identifiers, the data from this study will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Questions: For questions, concerns, or complaints you may contact Justine Kuna Sison, the principal investigator for this study by email at sisonjk@hawaii.edu. You can also contact her advisor, Dr. Rachel Neo at rneo@hawaii.edu or by phone at 808-956-3332. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu to discuss problems, concerns and questions, obtain information or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit <http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd> for more information on your rights as a research participant.

To Access the Survey: Please go to the following web page:

[survey link]

You should find a link and instructions for completing the survey.

Please print or save a copy of this page for your reference.

Mahalo!

Appendix C: Recruitment Email (SONA participants)

Recruitment Email (SONA Participants)

Aloha!

My name is Justine Kuna Sison, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the School of Communications. You are being invited to participate in a close-ended survey on rebellious communication against racial injustice on Instagram that is being conducted as part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree.

Approximately 30 minutes will be needed to complete this short survey. You will be one of about a few hundred survey participants. You will receive extra credit for taking this survey, with 0.50 SONA credits equaling 30 minutes of participation. You are encouraged to share the survey link with as many of your friends or classmates who are also enrolled in US universities as possible.

Any questions you feel uncomfortable answering can be skipped. Participation is entirely voluntary. Other than what you could encounter on a regular basis, there are no substantial hazards associated with taking this survey. Participating in this survey will be advantageous to you because it may lead to fresh insights into the variables that influence people to engage in rebellious communication against racial injustice.

Data from the survey will be kept private on a password-protected computer or in a locked filing cabinet in a secured office. I will be the only person with access to the data, along with my advisor from the University of Hawai‘i. All survey findings will be presented in an aggregate form without any reference to specific respondents. To the degree permitted by law, I shall report my findings while maintaining your privacy and confidentiality.

For questions, concerns, or complaints you may contact Justine Kuna Sison, the principal investigator for this study by email at sisonjk@hawaii.edu. You can also contact her advisor, Dr. Rachel Neo at rneo@hawaii.edu or by phone at 808-956-3332.

Sincerely,

Justine Kuna Sison

School of Communications

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Appendix D: Informed Consent (SONA participants)

University of Hawai‘i
Consent to Participate in a Research Project
Justine Kuna Sison, Principal Investigator

Project title: The Contribution of Instagram to Racial Injustice & Rebellious Communication

Aloha! My name is Justine Kuna Sison, and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the School of Communications. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am doing a research project.

What am I being asked to do?

If you participate in this project, you will be asked to fill out a survey.

Taking part in this study is your choice.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you. Your choice to participate or not participate will not affect your status as a student at UH Mānoa.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of my project is to examine how Instagram contributes to rebellious communication and social movements against racial injustice. I am asking you to participate because you are an adult Instagram user.

What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?

The survey will consist of 47 close-ended survey questions. It will take approximately 30 minutes. The survey questions will include questions like, “How tired do you feel after video conferencing?” and “In the past 12 months, have you taken part in an in-person protest, strike, or movement for racial injustice?”. The survey is accessed on a website to which I will provide you a link.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?

I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the survey questions. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop taking the survey or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

By choosing to participate in this survey, you will earn SONA credit based on the length of participation (0.50 SONA credit= 30 minutes). Also, the results of this project may further academic understanding of specific factors that predict Zoom fatigue among university students.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

No personal data or identifiers will be collected using the SONA system. All study data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a password-protected computer. Only my University of Hawai‘i advisor and I will have access to the information. Other agencies

that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

Compensation:

You will be rewarded extra credit (approximately 0.50 SONA credit) in exchange for approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete this survey.

Future Research Studies:

Even after removing identifiers, the data from this study will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Questions: For questions, concerns, or complaints you may contact Justine Kuna Sison, the principal investigator for this study by email at sisonjk@hawaii.edu. You can also contact her advisor, Dr. Rachel Neo at rneo@hawaii.edu or by phone at 808-956-3332. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu to discuss problems, concerns and questions, obtain information or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit <http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd> for more information on your rights as a research participant.

To Access the Survey: Please go to the following web page:

[survey link]

You should find a link and instructions for completing the survey.

Please print or save a copy of this page for your reference.

Mahalo!

Appendix E: Complete List of Survey Questions

Level of Exposure to Racial Injustice Posts on Instagram

**How often are you exposed to the following types of racial-injustice content on Instagram?
(1) Less Often; (2) Every Few Weeks; (3) A Few Times a Week; (4) About Once a Day; (5) Several Times a Day**

1. How often do you look for photos of racial injustice on Instagram?
2. How often do you look at Instagram reels or short videos on racial injustice?
3. How often do you read Instagram comments made in response to content on racial injustice?
4. How often do you look for Instagram 24-hour stories on racial injustice?
5. How often do you look at racial injustice content that other Instagram users are tagged in?
6. How often do you use Instagram hashtags to search for content about racial injustice?
7. How often do your Instagram followers post content about racial injustice?
8. How often do the Instagram accounts that *you follow* post content about racial injustice?
9. Approximately how many Instagram accounts that *you follow* promote justice for marginalized racial groups in the United States?
10. Approximately how many of your Instagram followers promote justice for marginalized racial groups in the United States?

Number of Direct Encounters with People who Have Experienced Racial Injustice

To what extent have you interacted with various contacts (i.e. friends, family, classmates, or co-workers) within your social circle who have experienced racial discrimination from others?

(1) Not at All; (2) Very Little; (3) Somewhat; (4) To a Great Extent

1. To what extent have you interacted with close friends who have experienced racial discrimination from others?
2. To what extent have you interacted with family members who have experienced racial discrimination from others?
3. To what extent have you interacted with acquaintances who have experienced racial discrimination from others?
4. To what extent have you interacted with co-workers who have experienced racial discrimination from others?

Engagement in Rebellious Communication

Thinking about racial injustice posts on Instagram, how often do you engage in the following activities on Instagram?

(1) Never; (2) Rarely; (3) Sometimes; (4) Often; (5) Always

1. How often have you expressed disagreement with others who try to downplay racial inequality issues on Instagram?
2. How often have you posted Instagram content urging people to take action against racial injustice?
3. How often did you post racial injustice posts on your Instagram story?
4. How often did you use the social movement Instagram hashtags (#BlackLivesMatter or #AsianLivesMatter)?

Participation in Protests Against Racial Injustice

Thinking about your participation in protests against racial injustice, to what extent are you likely to be involved in the following activities outlined below:

(1) Extremely Unlikely; (2) Unlikely; (3) Somewhat Unlikely; (4) Neutral; (5) Somewhat Likely; (6) Likely; (7) Extremely Likely

1. Take part in an in-person protest, strike, or movement for racial injustice in the near future?
2. Donate money or material resources to a racial justice movement in the near future?

Support of Racial Equality Laws and Policies

Thinking about racial equality laws and policies, to what extent are you to support laws and policies of racial equality with the following statements:

(1) Extremely Unlikely; (2) Unlikely; (3) Somewhat Unlikely; (4) Neutral; (5) Somewhat Likely; (6) Likely; (7) Extremely Likely

1. How likely are you to support laws making hate crimes against racial minorities illegal?
2. How likely are you to support laws promoting preferential hiring of racial minorities?
3. How likely are you to support laws that help improve the economic status of racial minorities?
4. How likely are you to support laws that help improve the social status of racial minorities?

Demographic and Questions about General Instagram Ownership

1. Do you use Instagram?
 - a. Yes, I use this app
 - b. No, I do not use this app
2. Thinking about the app, how often do you use or visit Instagram?
 - a. Almost constantly
 - b. Several times a day

- c. About once a day
 - d. Several times a week
 - e. Less often
 - f. Don't know/Refused
3. What is your gender:
- a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
4. What is your year of study:
- a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate Student
 - f. Not applicable
5. What is your age? _____
6. When describing your race, would you best describe yourself as:
- a. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Hispanic or Latino
 - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - f. White Caucasian
 - g. Something else, please specify: _____
7. What is the highest level of education completed by parent #1?
- a. Intermediate School
 - b. High school (GED)
 - c. Bachelor's Degree
 - d. Master's Degree
 - e. Ph.D or higher
 - f. Trade School
 - g. I don't know
8. What is the highest level of education completed by parent #2?
- a. Intermediate School
 - b. High school (GED)

- c. Bachelor's Degree
- d. Master's Degree
- e. Ph.D or higher
- f. Trade School
- g. I don't know

We have come to the end of this survey. Thank you for participating in our study!