BLM Movement Frames Among the Muted Voices: Actor-Generated Infographics on Instagram During #BlackoutTuesday

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Within the context of social movements, movement frames define social or political problems and guide movement participants to address those issues. As a decentralized movement, #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM) invited audiences to appropriate the hashtag and use it to illuminate numerous issues that affect Black Americans. This article focuses on the infographics that were generated and circulated in association with #BlackoutTuesday on Instagram to understand user-generated movement frames for the #BLM movement. Our theme analysis yielded four themes representative of user-generated movement frames, including (a) sharing antiracist information (e.g., information about police brutality, statistics illustrating racial disparities, portrayals of systemic racism, refutations of oppositional arguments, and defining and clarifying antiracist vocabulary), (b) amplifying Black voices, (c) tips for performing allyship, and (d) calls to action. We discuss how user-generated themes on Instagram work within the BLM movement and how visual texts support movements on social media more generally.

Keywords: #BLM, #Blacklivesmatter, Black Lives Matter, infographics, digital activism, Instagram, #BlackoutTuesday, social movement

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In early June 2020, the stream of alluring pictures and videos typically viewed on Instagram was replaced by an imageless sea of black tiles denoting participation in #BlackoutTuesday.[1] #BlackoutTuesday was part of the greater BlackLivesMatter (BLM) movement, which (as a decentralized movement) invited audiences to appropriate the hashtags #BlackLivesMatter and #BLM to illuminate various issues that affect Black Americans. The conversations, protests, and social media actions that were generated by audiences focused on racial inequality and have included issues such as police violence, prison reform, and healthcare disparities. Thus, the BLM movement provides a meaningful context to document how social media platforms support the frames with which its members define the movement's identity.

Within the context of social movements, movement frames define a problem and help movement participants to determine how to address the problem (Snow & Benford, 1988). In part, a movement's identity is shaped by movement frames. Traditionally, movement frames follow movement leaders and central activists (e.g., the 2017 Women's March). However, the structure of the BLM movement is grassroots and decentralized, which means a set of core values and a common purpose unifies the BLM movement, yet in practice, local groups implement their own techniques and strategies to bring about change. Thus, the decentralized nature of the BLM movement allows a broader base of actors to share in and define the movement.

A second element of the BLM movement, which highlights the potential for user-generated frames, is its heavy use of social media engagement. The BLM movement originated on Facebook by civil rights activist and writer Alicia Garza (2013). In her July 2013 Facebook posts, she called "a love letter to Black people," which stated: "black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter" (Anderson, 2016; Cobb, 2016). The term #BlackLivesMatter was created by Garza's friend, artist Patrisse Cullors, by amending the last three words to formulate a hashtag. The phrase reflects how Black Americans, as a result of police brutality, feel their lives "simply d[o] not matter" (BBC, 2020, p. 1).[2] Once the hashtag was created on Facebook, it was subsequently popularized on Twitter (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016) and has since spread to other social media platforms, including Instagram. For the BLM movement, social media outlets have been central for dispersing information, generating awareness, and providing support to the Black community (Freelon et al., 2016; Richardson, 2020; Schuschke & Tynes, 2016). Richardson (2020) argued that the success of the BLM movement, at least in part, is predicated on social media's ability to empower Black individuals to create content that challenges racism. Stated differently, individual members of the movement have helped give the movement meaning through content creation and discussion. Overall, the BLM movement's reliance on social media engagement illuminates a context within which user-generated frames shape the movement.

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[1] A similar, but distinct, movement to #BlackoutTuesday is #BlackoutDay. In 2015, #BlackoutDay was created to challenge the lack of Black representation on Tumblr and social media more broadly. During designated days, users were encouraged to post content that was created by and featured Black individuals. Similar to #BlackoutTuesday, #BlackoutDay received heightened attention following the murder of George Floyd.

[2] Of relevance, Garza (2014) argued that #BlackLivesMatter morphed from an inclusive movement, which at its center were queer Black women, to a movement with cis-Black men at its center. Due to this shift, hegemonic narratives about the killing of innocent and unarmed Black men, by the police, became synonymous with the movement, despite the more inclusive aims articulated at the outset of the movement.

A third feature of the BLM movement, that lends itself to user-generated frames, is its reliance on visual images (i.e., photos, videos, graphics, and infographics) created and generated on Instagram. As a social media site, Instagram is a predominantly visual platform that facilitates the sharing of pictures, videos, and infographics. Instagram is a mobile-first platform, although there is also a companion website with limited functionality. To interact on the platform, users post and share pictures with followers, search for, contextualize, categorize, and create conversations around content using hashtags, and discover new content through an "explore" feature aimed at providing the user with content they are likely to enjoy (Cornet, Hall, Cafaro, & Brady, 2017). With respect to the BLM movement, Instagram has been a popular tool for disseminating information and spreading awareness through citizen journalism (Aoun, 2021). Visual images affiliated with #BLM include infographics with various statistics about issues affecting the Black community and photos of marches, protests, victims of racism, and instances of police brutality (Aoun, 2021; Zuckerman, Matias, Bhargava, Bermejo, & Ko, 2019). In this article, we explore the movement frames perpetuated through infographics on Instagram as part of #BlackoutTuesday, a collective social media action aimed to support #BLM by designating a time and a space to reflect on racism and police brutality.

Frame Theory and Social Media Use

In 1988, Snow and Benford introduced the term *movement frame* to elucidate how activists interpret problems and are moved to act on those problems. By extension, social movements engage in meaning construction by framing a social issue in a specific way (Freelon et al., 2016). In principle, movement frames serve to unify participants to facilitate collective action.

Traditionally, movement frames were filtered through movement leaders of centralized movements. However, Ince, Rojas, and Davis (2017) suggested that wider publics can interact with and ultimately construct movement frames that meet their interest rather than following movement frames relegated by movement leaders (see Weber, Dejmanee, & Rhode, 2018). Furthermore, social media platforms, including Instagram, provide a decentralized channel for message content generation and distribution, which allows movement members to interact with and co-construct movement frames (Ince et al., 2017). Because the content on social media platforms is created and distributed by the users of the medium, the use of social media allows movement members to have autonomy over the creation and circulation of movement content.

Per BLM and other activist movements, hashtags are used to quickly disseminate information to the public to spur actions and outcomes, rapidly mobilize marginalized communities, provide counternarratives to mainstream media framing, and allow "the direct communication of raw and immediate images, emotions, and ideas and their widespread dissemination" (Jackson, Bailey, & Fourcault Welles, 2020, p. xxx). In doing so, larger collective conversations can be sustained on social media, allowing publics to create, index, and search content about the movement. More to the point, by using hashtags, the public can interact with and influence movement frames within social media.

As a "hashtag activism" movement (Tombleson & Wolf, 2017), BLM activists on Twitter and Instagram used the hashtag to share personal experiences with discrimination and police brutality and to express criticisms of institutions and social practices. However, as the hashtag, and therefore the

movement, began to spread, users employed the hashtag to coordinate action outside of online spaces. Various protests, marches, and fast-food strikes were orchestrated via social media platforms under #BlackLivesMatter (Langford & Speight, 2015). Not only does this demonstrate the capabilities of social media to perpetuate movement frames, but it also demonstrates how movements that are developed and maintained in online spaces can potentially cultivate action in physical spaces.

#BlackoutTuesday and the Use of Infographics

On Tuesday, June 2, 2020, the hashtag #TheShowMustBePaused began as a call by two Black women in the music industry, Jamila Thomas and Brianna Agyemang, to reflect on the ways the industry exploits Black talent. In particular, the call was generated in response to the killing of George Floyd as a moment for the music industry to consider its role in broader conversations about racial injustice. Businesses were encouraged to refrain from releasing products, and Black Americans were asked to show their economic strength by not buying or selling products on that day. Some television and music channels went off air for eight minutes and 46 seconds, which was the length of time police officer Derek Chauvin was originally reported to have compressed Floyd's neck. Because their aim was to disrupt the workweek, as their friends and colleagues spread the word about the collective action, some supporters began calling the event "Blackout Tuesday."

Out of solidarity, users on Instagram posted black tiles to support the reflective nature of the action. Although visually scrolling through thousands of black tiles on Instagram was a powerful image, the action was quickly criticized by other movement members for three reasons. First, many individuals who used the #BlackoutTuesday hashtag also included #BlackLivesMatter (or #BLM), drowning out other posts under the hashtag that included meaningful information about the BLM movement (e.g., information about protests, how to donate, how to be an effective ally). Second, replacing (potentially meaningful) content with a black tile was interpreted as an act of self-imposed voicelessness or silence, which was a questionable mode of allyship in response to police brutality (Locker, 2020; Noman, 2020; Willingham, 2020). Third, many who had posted the black tiles were accused of "performative activism" by other members of the movement (Noman, 2020). In response, some influencers and celebrities elevated these criticisms through their social media channels, questioning the posting of black titles while calling for more active and informational approaches to be utilized in support of the movement. Figure 1 (Kehlani, 2020; Nope, 2020) provides example posts that critiqued the use of blank, black squares and offered followers alternative actions such as donating money, signing petitions, and serving as support for one another (Welk, 2020). Given these criticisms, some users began to post relevant resources in place of solid black tiles.

Figure 1. Example critiques of the use of blank black squares on Instagram (Kehlani, 2020; Nope, 2020).

Although the #BlackoutTuesday posts took several forms, this article focuses on the infographics that were generated and circulated in association with the hashtag. The main aim of an infographic is to translate complex data into meaningful information that can be easily understood (Smiciklas, 2012). Infographics often include numerical data, network diagrams, flowcharts, metaphorical images, photos, or illustrations (Hart, 2013; Lee & Kim, 2016). Research indicates that infographics can be an effective approach to sharing information visually (Trumbo, 2000).

Social media platforms such as Instagram have facilitated the widespread diffusion of visual artifacts, including infographics. Cornet et al. (2017) argued that activists employ infographics on Instagram to provide informational and/or supportive imagery for the movement, thus having a significant impact on activism. Likewise, prior research has substantiated that protest signs, banners, posters, and digital materials all contribute to the meaning of protests and social movements (Diverlus, 2018; Weber et al., 2018). More to the point, so-called *visual activism* provides insight into the activists' ideologies, behaviors, and practices (Chalabi, 2016). In other words, visual artifacts such as infographics provide evidence for the movement frames generated by wider publics involved in the movement.

Within the context of #BlackoutTuesday, the user-generated and decentralized nature of the BLM movement is unearthed through an analysis of user-generated infographics. Specifically, the shift of #BlackoutTuesday posts from black squares to infographics highlighting that there are various, differing, and sometimes conflicting opinions between activists within the movement. This shift in content offers a counternarrative to #BlackoutTuesday's initial content and provides insight about movement member-generated meaning. Thus, because #BlackoutTuesday's content was generated by its users and in response to a specific call to elaborate on their aims during this action on Instagram, evaluating these messages provides insight into user-generated movement meaning communicated through visual images (i.e., infographics). Stated formally as a research question:

RQ1:   What user-generated movement frames are communicated through infographics on Instagram during #BlackoutTuesday?

In the next section, we describe a study of user-generated infographics circulated in conjunction with #BlackoutTuesday on Instagram to address our research question about the meaning of movement member–generated frames.

Methods

Sample of Infographics

CrowdTangle is a tool used to track and observe public content on social media, including text posts, images, videos, and interactions (likes, reactions, comments, shares). It was used to search for Instagram posts published between May and September 2020 featuring the text "#BlackoutTuesday" and "infographic." This date range was selected to include posts generated throughout the period from George Floyd's killing at the end of May 2020 as well as the substantial protests that took place in the months after. The search returned 160 infographics, the vast majority of which were produced in June 2020, the period coinciding with the #BlackOutTuesday action. Infographics included posts that used visual imagery to represent information and data (as opposed to text-based posts, lone pictures, or videos). Posts were ordered by CrowdTangle to reflect posts with higher interactions (which is a function of the number of likes and comments). The Instagram posts ranged in their number of likes from 3 to 191,722 ($M = 4,937.1$). The number of comments ranged from 0 to 3,307 ($M = 64.15$). Infographics that were not in English and that were duplicates were removed from the sample. In total, 83 Instagram infographics were analyzed.

Analytic Approach

Once the data was cleaned, the three lead authors reviewed the set of 83 Instagram Infographics to explore user-generated movement frames (Johnson, 1995). Consistent with Corbin and Strauss's (1990) constant comparative method, we compared the raw data with developing themes through an iterative process. We began with the aim of grouping conceptually similar phenomena together (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Then we identified the features unique to each theme in an effort to delineate themes from one another. Throughout all stages of the analyses, we engaged in memoing to identify, organize, elaborate on,

and draw connections between themes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Inconsistencies across themes were resolved through open dialogue within the iterative thematic development process. Moreover, by analyzing the Instagram posts of movement members, we were able to capture the user-generated material created for and circulated in association with #BlackoutTuesday. This iterative process resulted in four main themes.

Results

Findings from the thematic analysis yielded in four main themes representative of movement member–generated frames, including (a) sharing antiracist information, (b) amplifying Black voices, (c) tips for performing allyship, and (d) calls to action. Each theme is discussed in turn, as are the categories within each theme.

Antiracist Information

The majority of infographics focused on providing antiracist information. Kendi (2019) defines antiracists as individuals who support "antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea" (p. 13). Stated differently, antiracist work focuses on identifying and working to eliminate racism that is embedded within systems, structures, policies, practices, and attitudes. As the name of this theme implies, these infographics functioned to inform audiences about the prevalence of racism, identify specific systems of oppression, and clarify key terms relevant to antiracist work. Using infographics, in this way, is consistent with research on the function of infographics, which is to inform (Trumbo, 2000), and with research documenting that informing broader audiences about racial injustice on social media is a step toward effective allyship work (Clark, 2019; Melaku, Beeman, Smith, & Johnson, 2020). Within this broad theme, clear categories of information presented themselves, including informing others about (a) police brutality, (b) statistics illustrating racial disparities, (c) portrayals of systemic racism, (d) refutations of oppositional arguments, and (e) defining and clarifying antiracist vocabulary. Each of these categories is discussed in turn.

Police Brutality

Not surprisingly, given hegemonic narratives about the BLM movement's focus on the killing of innocent unarmed Black men by the police, some of the infographics addressed this issue. These racial injustices have their roots in slavery, lynchings, and atrocities committed by the KKK and other White supremacist groups. Perhaps because of this long history, Figure 2 (Sageusc, 2020) provides an infographic that elucidates a history connecting present-day prison systems with slavery and the 1960s Jim Crow Laws, a discussion of how policing is inherently discriminatory is presented, and an argument for why abolishing the police system is preferable to reforming it is made. Additional infographics clarified topics, such as, what police brutality is, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the media's involvement in perpetuating police violence against innocent unarmed Black men. As a set, this category focused on the racial injustices associated with policing in the United States, which has been a prominent frame in the BLM movement. Outcomes of sharing this information include, elevating underreported narratives within the Black community and providing more balanced reporting of the abuse Black Americans experience, at the hand of police officers (Kilgo, 2021; Sodhi et al., 2020).
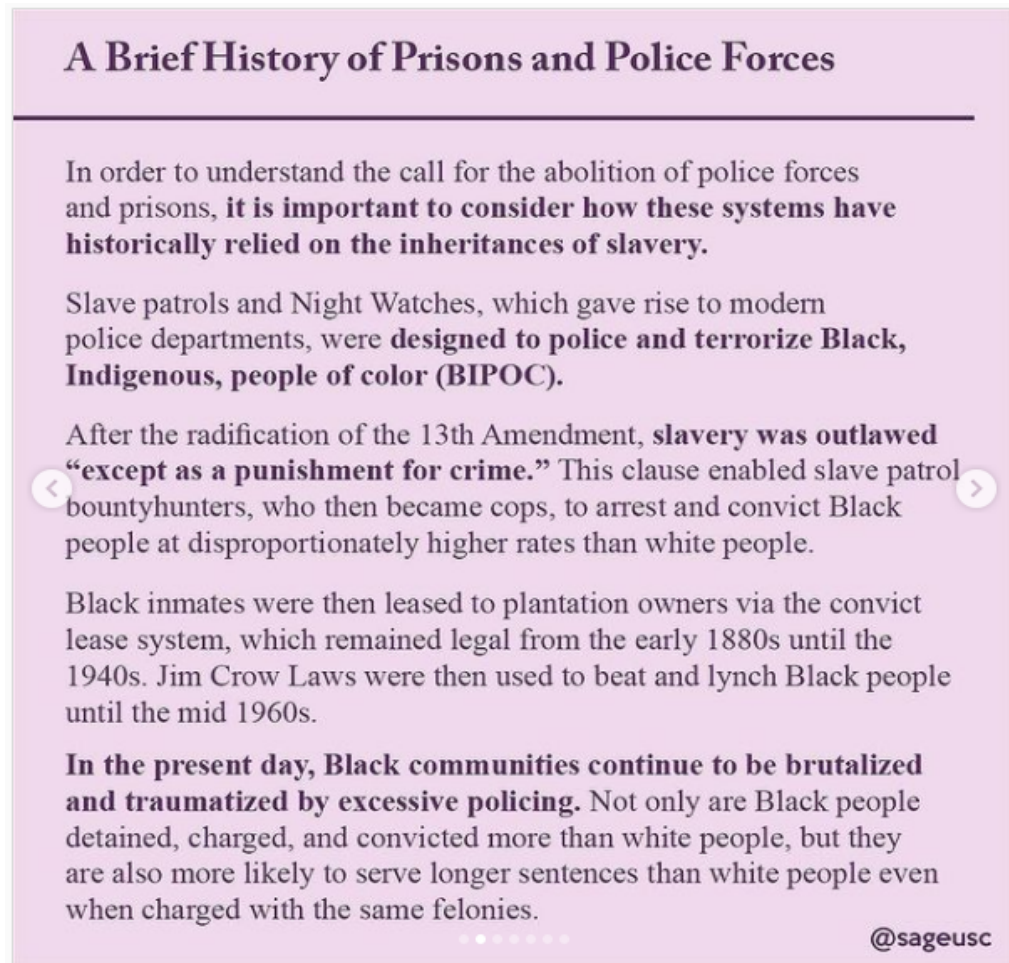
Figure 2. Example infographic elucidating the history of police brutality (Sageusc, 2020).

Statistics Illustrating Racial Disparities

A second category within the information theme, provided statistical evidence delineating experiential differences based on race. Research indicates that using infographics is an effective modality for communicating complex data (Albers, 2015), such as those illuminating racial injustice. For example, one actor (Black Health Commission, 2020) posted an infographic that used black dots and white dots to illustrate disparities related to infant mortality and prenatal care; within the educational, health care, and judicial systems; and with respect to housing opportunities. A second user (Francheska, 2020) offered a colorful infographic illuminating racial disparities regarding retirement savings (see Figure 3).
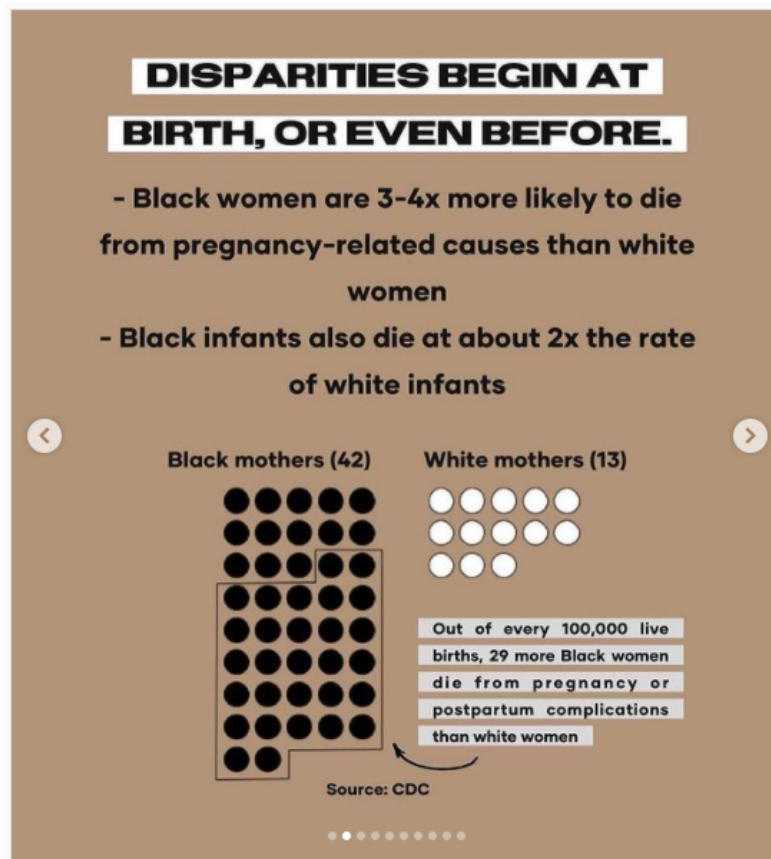
***Figure 3. Example infographics illustrating racial disparities (Black Health Commission, 2020;
Francheska, 2020).***

Not only does the presentation of statistical evidence illustrate racial disparities but it also offers counternarratives to widespread racial stereotypes and racist messages perpetuated through social media (Cisneros & Nakayama, 2015). In particular, a number of the infographics we analyzed contained specific arguments aimed at refuting common racist narratives, thereby providing meaningful information to various publics on Instagram.

The presentation of statistical information through visual elements is known as data visualization. For many, the visual representation of data makes information more digestible (Kosminsky et al., 2019) and leads to more effective communication (i.e., attention, comprehension, recall, and adherence; King, Jensen, Davis, & Carcioppolo, 2014). Given these findings, using infographics aids in understanding explanations addressing multifaceted and complex issues such as racial disparities, and enhances visual literacy more generally (Matrix & Hodson, 2014).

Portrayals of Systemic Racism

Whereas statistical illustrations of racism reviewed data pointing to disparities faced by Black Americans, examples within this category utilized narratives to describe systemic racism. Evidence from prior research on information acquisition has found that narratives are particularly effective forms with which to learn information (Lawrence & Paige, 2016). As with other categories, these infographics fought the fallacious notion that the United States is a "post-racial" society (Bell, 2019). In one infographic, a user provided a descriptive chronology of how the regulation, styling, and commercialization of Black hair has

been symbolic of the oppression of Black Americans, as seen in Figure 4 (From Where She Sits, 2020). Other example systems of racism discussed include representation in art museums, the invisible load of Black motherhood, environmental injustice linked to race, mental health disparities, and long-term care disparities. As a set, these infographics brought forward accounts that provided information about oppressive experiences.

Some of these infographics approached systems of racism through an intersectional lens. Intersectionality describes social identity by examining the overlapping systems of oppression, including those related to race, gender, sexuality, social class, age, ethnicity, nationality, and more (Collins, 2020). Importantly, an intersectional lens directs attention to those who are marginalized within already marginalized social categories (Crenshaw, 1991). Infographics that took an intersectional perspective constructed more complex narratives about Black identity and argued that there is no homogenous Black experience. One infographic discussed how Black transgender individuals experience unique discrimination as compared with those who identify as Black or as transgender. Although this infographic provided statistical information, other images in the infographic told the stories of those who experienced this discrimination. Within these narratives, the creators sought to demonstrate the complexity of identity politics.

As a set, the infographics portraying examples of systemic racism sought to illuminate the nuanced and complex ways in which racism and oppression are experienced as a Black person. In general, when narratives are utilized, the author shared a specific experience on a topic to reinforce a particular perspective. Many authors sought to provoke an emotional response by way of connecting the viewer with the storyteller. By appealing to pathos, narratives can be an effective rhetorical tool. Visual elements, such as the inclusion of photographs, help the viewer connect the narrative to a real human being. These visuals humanize the narrative and, therefore, strengthen the cogency of the argued perspective (Edrington & Gallagher, 2019).

***Figure 4. Example infographic illustrating the use of narratives to explain systemic racism
(From Where She Sits, 2020).***

Refutations of Oppositional Arguments

Although many of the infographics provided substantial information for educational and awareness purposes, other infographics approached these same topics with the aim of refuting salient arguments of

those opposed to the BLM movement. The infographics, that actively refuted salient oppositional arguments, sought not only to equip allies with the knowledge and the arguments necessary to engage in these debates but also to expose viewers to how those underlying assumptions have yielded the widespread racial injustices experienced today (Bailey & Leonard, 2015). Therefore, these infographics offered more substantial, sophisticated, and explicit arguments. By way of example, an infographic (Simmi, 2020) titled "It's Time for S[outh] Asians to Rewrite Their Narrative on Black Lives Matter" (as seen in Figure 5) constructed a hypothetical conversation between a South Asian ally and a South Asian skeptic, personifying and articulating both hegemonic and oppositional positions on the BLM movement in a way that demonstrates their differences but also, by the end of the infographic, the potential to convert skeptics to allies through dialogue. Other infographics, by contrast, were much more explicit in their intentions to refute oppositional arguments. One such infographic (Char, 2020), titled "Helpful Rebuttals for Racist Talking Points," addressed common oppositional statements and gave well-reasoned refutations to these claims.

"Cops kill more white people than Black people."

There are an estimated 5.7x more white people in America than black people–so yes, by sheer numbers, white people are killed by police more. But cops don't kill white people simply because they're white, and Black people are killed by cops at a rate 3X HIGHER than white people, often when unarmed. That's a glaring inequality, and it exists because of race. And hey, consider this: the fact that police brutalize and kill people is a problem IN GENERAL, which is why we should all be against police brutality. Yes?

Demographics: cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html
Statistics: mappingpoliceviolence.org

"The problem is Black people commit more crime."

Correction: crimes committed by Black people are more reported, and/or over-attributed in a corrupt system that values arrest quotas. As part of gentrification, there is often a higher police presence in diverse neighborhoods than in white neighborhoods. This means there is more police surveillance in general, AND more instances of new white residents calling law enforcement on people of color for perceived misdemeanors. (Like noise complaints, "behaving suspiciously," etc.) More "crimes" being attributed to Black and Latinx people is more reflective of excessive police presence and white people making the calls, not "proof" POC actually commit crimes more frequently.

theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/12/the-criminalization-of-gentrifying-neighborhoods/548837/

GOOGLE DOC VERSION: tinyurl.com/HelpfulRebuttals
MADE BY: @CHARCUBED · INSPIRED BY: @SIMMI_SHAH

GRAPHIC **2** OF 9

Figure 5. Example infographic explaining refutations to oppositional arguments (Char, 2020; Simmi, 2020).

Defining and Clarifying Antiracist Vocabulary

As definitions are created, collected, and spread by actors within a movement, shared meaning is bolstered, which helps to solidify movement frames (Snow & Benford, 1988). Without the explanation of key terms, mixed meanings may arise, potentially leading to a lack of unity among the movement and a failure to accomplish the movement's objectives. To that end, a main aim of many of the infographics was to teach viewers about meaningful antiracist terms. These infographics defined and explained terms such as systematic versus systemic, White privilege (Ahn, 2020), Black Lives Matter versus All Lives Matter (ALM), microaggressions, trauma porn, modern-day lynching, Juneteenth, intersectionality, and problems with not "seeing" color (Coke, 2020; see Figure 6). Given that understanding is a first step toward ending racial injustice (Clark, 2019), these infographics offered viewers language and definitions for discussing relevant antiracist-related information.

Figure 6. Examples of infographics defining antiracist terminology (Ahn, 2020; Coke, 2020).

Although the use of shared definitions functions to solidify movement frames generally, user-generated definitions offer an example of how movement members directly impact movement frames. These choices, whether intentional or not, shape the meaning of the movement. For example, the phrase "police crime" continues to circulate throughout the BLM movement and is considered antiracist vocabulary. As explained by Stinson (2015), police crime is "the criminal behavior of sworn law enforcement officers" (p. 1). However, police crime, as defined in Figure 7, includes "various misconduct, corruption, and/or civil rights violations committed by police organizations and police officers" (Jax Community Action Committee, 2020). The definition provided in Figure 7, an infographic that populated Instagram during #BlackoutTuesday, varies from the formal definition provided by Stinson (2015). Whereas Stinson's (2015) definition encompasses law enforcement as a whole and directly equates it with criminal behavior, Figure 7's definition directly and specifically references police, and it includes not only direct criminal behavior but also other harmful violations. The discrepancy between these definitions supports the decentralized, user-generated nature of Instagram and the BLM movement because it illustrates how actors shape the meaning of the movement by choosing how movement terms are defined and what definitions and terms circulate throughout the movement.

Figure 7. Example infographic revealing an actor-generated definition (Jax Community Action Committee, 2020).

In sum, the antiracist information theme served two primary functions. First, these infographics were designed to foster awareness of systemic racism. Statistics about health, educational, and economic

racial disparities coupled with narratives by those personally impacted by said disparities sought to reify this reality for those outside of the movement. In addition, providing the history of these injustices combined with the definitions of prominent antiracist terms further contextualized how the movement was framed and what it sought to accomplish. In sum, a primary aim of these infographics was to build knowledge and educate those unfamiliar with or misinformed about the BLM movement. A second function was to craft compelling arguments to demonstrate the necessity of the movement. By providing well-sourced, substantiated information in a concise, organized manner, actors attempted to effectively combat prominent oppositional narratives. These infographics aimed to equip activists with the necessary information and arguments to reinforce their allyship and to engage in debates with those opposed to or apathetic toward the movement. Thus, many of these infographics were simultaneously informative and persuasive in nature.

Infographics within this theme also displayed information in a distinctly visual manner, which had the marked advantage of formatting information in an interesting and easy-to-digest fashion (Albers, 2015; Kosminsky et al., 2019; Trumbo, 2000). To inform the public about systemic injustices, the array of unique visuals (graphs, tables, flow charts, timelines, etc.) allowed viewers to obtain substantive information without requiring intense elaboration. For a platform such as Instagram, where users scroll through posts quickly, these visual elements are particularly beneficial. These visual elements helped bolster the persuasive appeals made by actors; for example, the visual representations of statistics reinforced appeals to logos, whereas images of those personally affected by injustices made strong appeals to the viewers' pathos. Without the inclusion of these visual elements, the salience of the information provided, and the persuasiveness of the arguments made may have been significantly hindered.

Tips for Performing Allyship

In addition to the antiracist information theme, some actors focused on encouraging effective allyship. Allyship is a tool to help fight injustice through relationships and direct action in various settings (Tsedale, Beeman, Smith, & Johnson, 2020). Much of the allyship discussed in the infographics posted on #BlackoutTuesday aimed at a general, if not implied White audience. This focus may have been in part because of the noticeable shift from overwhelmingly Black supporters of #BLM to more racially diverse supporters (Freelon et al., 2016). Some noted traits of a White ally included educating oneself, being open to diverse experiences and ideas, consuming various information, creating change, and helping other White individuals see their role in oppression and how they benefit from it (Tischauser, 2019; Tsedale et al., 2020).

Some of the infographics advanced allyship by asking questions that functioned to encourage deeper, personal reflection about one's involvement with the BLM movement and its causes. Drew (2011) found that racism can be reproduced through a lack of questioning, which in turn ignores the subtle rationale behind societal practices that allow harmful, oppressive, discriminatory, and prejudice practices to circulate. Questioning and engaging in self-reflection, especially about issues surrounding racism, can expose the root causes of the dominant group's motives and actions. For example, through the questioning of institutionalized and personal practices, one can discover how their social location within society shapes how they view reality (Drew, 2011). These actions lead individuals to recognize their biases, which can be addressed before engaging in allyship. For example, Figure 8 (Camacho, 2020) begins with the self-reflective question "Where do you fall?" relative to the racism scale provided. The infographic subsequently offers

explanations of various forms of racism, ranging from terrorism to abolitionist. The question, paired with the successive descriptions, encouraged the viewer to ask and answer questions aimed at discerning one's type of allyship.

Figure 8. Example infographic asking viewers to consider their own biases (Camacho, 2020).

A noteworthy number of these infographics spoke specifically to an Asian American audience and called for their involvement in the BLM movement. The infographics directed at Asian Americans may, in part, have resulted from a desire to advance cross-racial coalitions and achieve change that permeates racial and ethnic lines (Merseth, 2018). For example, many Asian Americans have faced a surge in violence and harassment including racially motivated murder, hate speech, and discrimination as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Gover, Harper, & Langton, 2020) sparking the Stop Asian Hate movement, a series of anti-Asian-violence rallies across the United States. This example demonstrates the potential for infographics to tailor information to specific communities while building networks with a larger racial justice movement (see Figure 9; Traktivist, 2020).

Figure 9. Example infographic calling for Asian American allyship (Traktivist, 2020).

Amplifying Black Voices

Although few posts comprised this theme, amplifying Black voices aligned closely with the original intent of #BlackoutTuesday to amplify the voices of Black artists. Amplifying Black voices includes making statements in support of the BLM movement, hiring and promoting Black artists, promoting conversations about racial injustice, highlighting Black businesses, and illuminating Black voices (Talbot, 2020). One of only a few examples of amplification that was circulated included a picture of a Black-owned ice cream business, King of Pops (see Figure 10; King of pops, 2020).

Figure 10. Example infographic amplifying awareness of a Black-owned business (King of pops, 2020).

One reason relatively few posts utilized amplifying Black voices may have been because of the complexity of doing so. Posting a black tile was negligible in terms of effort. Similarly, creating an infographic that defined an antiracist term could be achieved with relative ease given that type of information is widely available in books and on the Internet. Amplifying Black voices, however, required a poster to have knowledge of an unknown artist or business owner, which is a reflection of established network relationships. Perhaps for this reason, some of the original momentum focused on amplifying Black voices faded.

Another reason a relatively smaller number of infographics focused on amplifying Black voices could be credited to the foundation of Instagram as a platform. Other social media platforms, such as Twitter, integrated the amplification of information through retweets only three years after it was founded (Pabman, 2019), making the sharing of information and amplification of posts a more standard practice on the platform. Instagram, however, was popularized by photos of individuals and their personal lives and only recently integrated the act of reposting other's work in 2018, eight years after it was founded (Perez, 2018). Because amplification of information is relatively recent to Instagram and further removed from the app's creation, it is possible that amplification was a less popular theme among the infographics on Instagram for that reason. As a theme, amplification proved to be a less common form of engagement for users.

Calls to Action

The last theme aimed to encourage action among viewers. Although calls to action were less frequent, they offered the potential for a different type of change when compared with informative infographics (Clark, 2019). Despite the smaller number of infographics that made calls for action, the ones that did outlined clear paths for action such as identifying places to donate, government officials to call or text, and information about how and where to protest (see Figure 11; Que, 2020; Robinson, 2020). Given social media is a global platform, calls to action were not limited to citizens and legislatures in the United States. For example, citizens in Vancouver, Canada, made an explicit call to action to the City of Vancouver demanding the elimination of Black marginalization, police brutality, and economic oppression (BlackLivesMatterVancouver, 2020). This call to action included a list of actions to be taken by the City of Vancouver and contact information for various government officials and decision-makers.

Figure 11. Example infographics with specific actions viewers can take (Que, 2020; Robinson, 2020).

Given a frequent call to action was to participate in protests, one subtheme included safety tips. These infographics (a) gave instructions as to how to safely and effectively protest, (b) provided information about COVID-19 safety and testing, (c) offered advice about how to competently communicate with police officers and those in positions of power, (d) listed the particular weapons being used by law enforcement in protests, and (e) provided other safety-based considerations. One meaningful takeaway from this theme is the interconnected nature of online and offline activism that drives and unifies a social movement.

The third category of action took the form of apologies or restorative actions. Apologies and movement toward reconciliation can be a restorative process after acts of injustice or trauma. Apologies are important to interpersonal, group, and societal relationships. Pivotal to these actions is recognition, regret or sadness, and the offer of reparations (Bippus & Young, 2020). As seen in Figure 12 (Gaston, 2020), it is not uncommon for actors within the BLM movement to apologize for past and present discriminatory acts of racism, oppression, prejudice, and violence against members of the Black community. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa was crucial to validating the hardships citizens faced during apartheid by giving marginalized group members a voice and allowing them to share their experiences and help make decisions about preventative measures (Verdoolaege, 2009). Verdoolaege (2009) found that the presence and work of the commission had a positive impact on South African society. A commission, such as this, may be worthy of consideration when reflecting on many of the injustices that contributed to the formulation of the BLM movement.

Figure 12. Example infographic with a restorative action (Gaston, 2020).

The themes revealed through our analysis of Instagram infographics include (a) sharing antiracist information, (b) amplifying Black voices, (c) tips for performing allyship, and (d) calls to action. These themes offer insight into the user-generated meanings of #BlackoutTuesday specifically and #BLM more generally.

Discussion

Our findings, about movement frames communicated through infographics in concert with #BlackoutTuesday, are consistent with the assertion that movement actors can influence the movement's frames (Clark, 2019). Our findings mirror research on the successful use of digital allyship within the BLM movement more generally and are consistent with previous literature. In the sections that follow, the four themes yielded by our analysis are discussed in light of broader literature on identity politics and social media activism.

Meaning Making and Movement Frames

The collective identity of #BlackLivesMatter is rooted in affirming Black humanity, contributions, and resilience because Black Americans have been historically ignored and oppressed while seeking racial and social justice (Kinloch, Penn, & Burkhard, 2020; Towns, 2018). Much of this identity is credited to the decentralized nature of the BLM movement and driven by the user-generated meaning provided by actors of the movement. Because the decentralized organization allows different users to form their own meaning and purpose for the movement, these actors also shape the movement's identity. Specifically, conclusions from the theme analysis resulted in four main actor-driven movement frames, including (a) antiracist information (i.e., information on police brutality, statistics illustrating racial disparities, portrayals of systemic racism, refutations of oppositional arguments, and defining and clarifying antiracist vocabulary), (b) amplifying Black voices, (c) tips for performing allyship, and (d) calls to action. These themes are consistent with Clark's (2019) work associated with social media–embedded, antiracist labor.

Notably, calls for action can impact policy and practices in ways that the aim of merely informing cannot. However, in our sample of infographics, many more of these visual artifacts focused on offering relevant information rather than making calls to action. In some ways, becoming informed is a formative step for effective change (Tsedale et al., 2020). Yet #BLM, as a social movement, cannot make the lives of Black Americans better without substantive action such as changes to policy. Future research may consider how movement frames map onto different types of movement actions, such as informing, compared with taking an action, like calling a senator.

One type of information that was noticeably absent from the infographics was information about the many specific innocent and unarmed Black men and women, such as George Floyd, who were murdered by police officers. In other facets of the BLM movement, this information was more widely referenced. For example, many protests adopted the phrase "Say their name" in reference to the Black victims of police brutality. Therefore, to have very few infographics referencing the specific names of these victims stands in contrast with other offline generated movement frames that were established for the BLM movement. This finding is perhaps one of the more compelling ones given it supports the main claim of this article, which is that movement members can influence movement frames in meaningful ways.

Social Media and Social Movements

The diffusion of innovations theory suggests that changes to belief systems within a society occur in a systematic way (Rogers, 2003). First, innovators take up the new belief systems, followed by early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. The key to the theory is that once a critical mass of the society's members has taken up the new belief system, the adoption of the belief becomes self-sustaining. These assumptions help explain how frames shift throughout a movement. As mentioned, #BlackoutTuesday began with the posting of black tiles on Instagram to express discontent with the treatment of Black talent in the music industry. The infographics emerged with new frames by which to address these and related issues. Future research might assess points of critical mass and subsequent shifts in movement frames in online arenas. Future research might also consider how critical mass can be reached regarding spreading information about the problem in comparison to encouraging movement members to take action. With respect to the use of social media, information about a problem can more easily be spread, yet there may be other challenges associated with the proscriptive actions that need to be taken to address the problem.

Social media may have become a particularly compelling force within the BLM movement, as opposed to other social movements, because of the age demographics of its activists and their social media usage. Research from Olteanu, Webber, and Gatica-Perez (2015) revealed that participants aged 18–29 were, on average, the most active age demographic using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag. This pattern is reflective of much of Generation Y and Generation Z's social media usage and participation in the BLM movement as a whole. Ninety-seven percent of the "iGen," defined as those aged between 5 and 22, use one or more social media platforms, and nearly half admit to being online "almost constantly" (Beck & Wright, 2019). Similarly, the broad exposure of the iGen to diversity has helped create a more socially aware age cohort (Beck & Wright, 2019). Therefore, the increased social awareness of Gen Y and Gen Z may be a contributing factor to their unparalleled participation in the BLM movement (Liou & Literat, 2020).

As a decentralized movement, BLM has made an undeniable impact on activists' involvement and communication. It has given everyday citizens the ability to unite through a common purpose and broadcast the injustices faced in their community through the use of citizen journalism. The documentation of discrimination allows participants to share their experiences and call attention to racial issues (Aoun, 2021). BLM's mediated nature also promotes the contributions of multiple perspectives on the same event. Whether posting about a rally, a protest, an incident of police brutality, or an example of racial inequity, the BLM movement has impacted the way broadcasted events are viewed by an audience by providing multiple perspectives, viewpoints, and locations through which to understand the occurrence (Aoun, 2021).

Conclusion

Through a qualitative thematic analysis of infographics posted and circulated with the hashtag #BlackoutTuesday, we were able to document the user-generated movement frames for the BLM movement. Furthermore, we were able to consider how infographics served as visual artifacts within the BLM movement. Specifically, we identified four main themes representative of user-generated movement frames, including (a) antiracist information, (b) amplifying Black voices, (c) tips for performing allyship, and (d) calls to action. Future research should continue to explore how visual artifacts, such as infographics, provide movement members with a means by which they can influence and shape movement frames.

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