

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Analysis

In our analysis, we argue that while BLM activists take action to grow the movement, they also employ rhetorical, identity and technological resources to advance and defend disadvantaged-group control of the movement. Our first point is that hashtag users promoted different, and often competing, definitions of the issues that the movement represents. Given the contention over growing the movement and defining and preserving the movement's focus, different rhetorical and identity strategies were used to advance inclusive definitions that focus on racism. There were instances in which hashtag users also address alternative definitions of movement actors and issues. Here, representations of Otherness were used to characterise the proponents of these definitions as being in opposition to the movement. Finally, our analysis illustrates that one way of resolving the tension between growing the movement and maintaining disadvantaged group control was by using identity and technology resources, both to define how different groups can be movement advocates, and to define action strategies for social change.

The issues the movement represents

We begin our analysis by illustrating how movement issues were contested. There were three points of contention when hashtag users define the issues that the movement represents; namely, (1) who is responsible for the injustice, (2) the disadvantaged groups that the movement represents, and (3) the nature of the problem. Although referring to different objects, what is common across these themes is the tension between more vs. less inclusive definitions of movement actors and issues. However, given the role of inclusive definitions in facilitating mobilisation among broader groups of participants (e.g., Batel & Castro, 2015;

Bennett & Sergerberg, 2016; Subašić et al., 2008), what is surprising about this tension is that rather than endorsing boundless and universal definitions of disadvantaged group membership and the problem itself, movement activists police other users' characterisations of the issues that the movement represents, and only endorsed definitions that focus on racism.

The perpetrators of injustice. In terms of who the movement stands against, a number of different categories were deployed. Some categories are very inclusive and general, such as America (7 codes). For example:

- (1) #RememberRenisha and whose lives amount to so much strange fruit in
#Amerikkka #RenishaMcBride #BlackLivesMatter <https://t.co/oZhpPPKIEY>

Other categories are more specific. For example, the American Government (2 codes) and penal system (1 code) are also mentioned, as demonstrated in two separate Tweets:

- (2) RT @[user31]: State sanctioned ethnic cleansing. Where's the fucking humanity?
#Ferguson #blacklivesmatter #whatfuckingyearisthis
- (3) The view that folks who benefit from the prison industry have of #black bodies is
#expendable. rip #mikebrown #blacklivesmatter

Nevertheless, the most prominent category in the time period is the police, which is the category on which we focus here.

The perpetrators of injustice in general, and police in particular, are defined on an inclusive level when they are represented in intergroup rather than interpersonal terms. For example, one user Tweeted:

(4) Eric Garner's death & exasperation with police violence <http://t.co/D33DTB0qJh>
[#BlackLivesMatter](#) #Justice4EricGarner @thenation @mychalsmith

Alongside the main text, the author also includes a link to an article in thenation.com. The article has the same title as the Tweet text. The Tweet itself refers to Eric Garner, a Black man who was killed by the police. Although the extract references a specific example of police violence, namely Eric Garner's death, the word "exasperation" characterises the concern as a pervasive issue rather than discrete occurrence. Moreover, the author does not define specific guilty individuals, instead attributing guilt at the group-level "police violence". This characterisation implicitly defines the whole police group as perpetrators. Together these definitions characterise police violence as a pervasive and intergroup concern, which functions to mobilise action (e.g., Iyer & Ryan, 2009; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). The representation of the police as deviant also functions to delegitimise the police group.

Nevertheless, inclusive and group-based definitions of the perpetrators of injustice were not universal; more exclusive and interpersonal representations were advanced at times. For example, on a separate occasion one user wrote:

(5) Shameful. Good cops should take these men to task. RT @[user15]
[#BlackLivesMatter](#) #BrownLivesMatter #MikeBrown #Ferguson

The extract includes a number of hashtags, one of which is "#MikeBrown", who was killed by police. In this extract, the guilt for Mike Brown's death is located within a specific subsection of the police; rather than criticising the whole group of police, police violence is constructed as an individual problem. In other words, the author defines the issue as a 'rotten apple' (as opposed to a 'rotten barrel') problem. This definition has implications for both the perceived prevalence of the issue and the proposed solutions. The juxtaposition between

“good cops” and “these men” distinguishes between different types of police officer, firmly locating the problem within a subset of deviant individuals rather than the whole group. This functions to rarefy the issue of police brutality, downplaying its prevalence and importance in society, and as a consequence the need for large-scale collective action. The author also suggests that good police officers could take the guilty individuals “to task”, therefore implying that the police can regulate and reform themselves. This representation places the catalyst for change within the hands of the police, which functions to reduce the need for public engagement in collective protest.

Thus, the conceptualisation of the police as a homogenous and dangerous outgroup serves mobilising and prefigurative functions. However, it is also evident that this representation is neither automatic nor uncontested. Rather, activists did work on Twitter to explicitly define the outgroup in this way:

(6) If I know some1 did a crime & don't tell, I can get arrested. "Good cops" know abt dirty ones, say nothing then what? Smh #BlackLivesMatter

In this extract, the notion of the “good” police officer is directly contested and discredited. The author is explicit in stating that there are no good police officers; even the individuals who are not directly responsible for the deaths are characterised as corrupt for protecting follow guilty officers. In this extract, the construction of an indirect responsibility for violence broadens the inclusiveness of the perpetrator outgroup; by drawing a parallel between this behaviour and criminal behaviour, the author paints the whole organisation as criminal, but not subject to the confines of the law. Thus, by explicitly challenging other users’ representations of the police as a heterogeneous and largely good organisation, the Tweet serves a policing function, to suppress – as well as discredit – alternative conceptualisations of the outgroup.

In addition to challenging the representation of the police as a heterogeneous organisation, work is done to challenge the idea that a police-led solution can be successful. For example, one user Tweeted:

(7) Modified assignment??? Enough is ENOUGH #ChangeTheNYPD
 #BlackLivesMatter #JusticeforEricGarner <http://t.co/qc7cVqGSw7>

Included within the Tweet is a link to an ABC news article entitled, “NYPD Cop in Chokehold Death Loses Gun, Badge”. The Tweet text refers to the penalty that Officer Daniel Pantaleo received for killing Eric Garner. “Modified assignment???” expresses horror and outrage at the ostensible punishment that was handed down by the police department to the officers directly responsible for Eric Garner’s death. Not only does this characterise police-led solutions as inadequate, it also represents the police as an organisation that is unable to serve just punishment to their ingroup members, further characterising the police as a corrupt group. In this way, the Tweet functions to police and discredit popular notions that change can come from within the police, further accentuating the need for collective action, and disempowering the police outgroup as leaders of change.

It can be seen, then, that Twitter talk about “who the movement stands against” functions to construct the perpetrators of injustice in a certain way. It is also apparent that characterising the perpetrators of injustice at an interpersonal vs. intergroup level serves mobilising functions to different extents. Inclusive and group-based definitions are employed strategically by BLM activists to advance instrumental and prefigurative social change goals. However, it is also clear that exclusive and interpersonal constructions can be used by movement opponents to downplay movement concerns. Unsurprisingly, there are also examples of activists using Twitter to police and counter less-exclusive representations of the perpetrator group. Nevertheless, Twitter talk does not only focus on who the movement is

fighting against: the problem itself and the individuals that the movement represents are also defined through Tweets.

The targets of injustice. The second subtheme involves defining the disadvantaged group at varying levels of inclusivity. In very general terms, a limited but inclusive definition of the target group is presented, with Black people represented as the disadvantaged group. This is explicit within the hashtag itself “#BlackLivesMatter” and also within the large majority of Tweets within the corpus, which represents specific concerns in racial terms (26 codes) or define the targets of injustice by race (56 codes). For example, one user wrote:

(8) Thinking of Michael Brown and all the other unnamed black boys killed by police violence. #BlackLivesMatter #racism #JusticeForMikeBrown

This Tweet could be read as defining the issue in racial terms with the hashtag “#racism”; the targets of violence are also explicitly defined as Black people. This rhetorical strategy is evident in a number of other Tweets. For example, in a separate Tweet:

(9) @[user32] A white policeman murders an unarmed black child again.... This has happened a dozen times! #racism #BlackLivesMatter

Here the author of the Tweet used specific rhetorical strategies to define an inclusive group of Black people as the disadvantaged group. For one thing, they construct asymmetries between the target of injustice and the perpetrator in terms of guilt. The use of child vs. murderer imagery represents the target as an innocent party and places full guilt upon the police. This works to construct the injustice as indiscriminate, in that any Black person – irrespective of their age or guilty status – could be a target of police violence. This serves to mobilise action by promoting feelings of injustice and moral outrage, which are key antecedents of collective action (e.g., van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; van Zomeren,

Postmes, & Spears, 2011), and by characterising the threat as personal to Black audiences (van Zomeren & Lodewijckx, 2005).

The Tweet also constructs racial asymmetries between the target and perpetrator. By defining Black people – rather than all people – as the targets of police violence, movement concerns are characterised in racial terms more generally. A historical reference (“This has happened a dozen times”) is further used to cement this construction, which speaks to the prevalence of the issue. Rather than being an isolated incident, police violence is defined as frequent in occurrence, which functions to increase the imperative for action. Finally, the hashtag “#racism” is used to make an explicit claim of racism. The framing of the concern as an issue about race places a limit on the inclusivity of the target group, this functions to increase public attention – a key resource for social movements (Tufekci, 2013) – on injustice within the Black community.

Nevertheless, a limited definition that represents Black people as the disadvantaged group does not go uncontested. For example, on a separate occasion one user Tweeted:

(10) **Don't all matter?** RT @[user11]: Follow @[user33] for the minute by minute update on what's happening in #Ferguson #BlackLivesMatter

Here the author used Twitter’s Quote Tweet function to repost another user’s content to their own followers (in roman), with their own text added (bold added). This Tweet could be read as disputing the legitimacy of #BlackLivesMatter. More specifically, directly challenging the limited definition of the target group as Black people, instead suggesting an inclusive definition, unbound by race.

Although it could be argued that this is an attempt to increase the inclusiveness of the movement, it also functions to divert attention away from racial inequality and delegitimise

the movement by providing alternative definitions of its aims and activists. For one thing, the author represents race as irrelevant to the issues being discussed. This functions to discredit the aims of the movement by denying the importance of race-based injustice, and absolve the perpetrator group of racism. However, implicit within the Tweet is the characterisation of BLM as a movement that ignores White people. This functions to define movement activists as the real deviant and racist group. They are characterised as a group that both unnecessarily highlights race within a ‘post-racial’ society, and excludes White targets from the movement. In sum, as a whole, a universal construction of the targets of injustice defines racial disparities as irrelevant, and in doing so positions movement activists as a deviant perpetrator group. This functions to delegitimise the movement and thereby limit the use of the hashtag for protest. It also works to centre Whiteness and marginalise Black people within the social movement; reproducing the power inequalities the movement is fighting against.

Unsurprisingly, movement activists were proactive in policing such universal constructions (5 codes); other users Tweet in direct response to extract 10. For example, one user wrote:

(11) .@[user10] your retort is basic. has there ever been any doubt about the value of white life? Ergo, #BlackLivesMatter

Here, the @mention function was used, which would notify the author of extract 10 that they have been mentioned in the Tweet. Along with a direct criticism of extract 10 (“basic”, which defines the Tweet as unintelligent and uninteresting), a rhetorical question was used to make clear why White lives are not the focus of the movement: White lives are already valued by society. Thus, by policing and rejecting universal constructions of the target group, the Tweet denounces the associated demobilising representations of movement aims and activists. This functions to restore legitimacy to the movement and advance its

instrumental aims. Extract 11 also works prefiguratively. Examining Twitter profile information, it is apparent that the author of extract 10 is a White individual, while the author of extract 11 is a Black person. In extract 11, as a disadvantaged group member enacting power over advantaged group domination, the act of contestation itself advances disadvantaged group empowerment and control. The policing of an ‘all lives’ construction more specifically, re-centres Black people within the social movement.

It can therefore be seen that activists work to define the targets of injustice on the inclusive, but limited level of all Black people. However, there are also instances where more exclusive definitions are advanced. For example, one user Tweeted:

(12) Black & Unarmed in America. Our men, we must remember their humanity. We must love & protect them. #BlackLivesMatter [broken link]

In this extract, the author explicitly defines the prototypical target as male, characterising police violence as predominantly affecting a narrower category of Black men. In contrast, those outside of this target group are delegated the task of protecting Black men. The Tweet uses an interesting discourse of love and humanity, rather than one of fighting to protect Black men. Additionally, it does not draw on the “child” construction evident in extract 9. There are also some implicit characterisations within the Tweet. There is the characterisation of the author themselves; the use of the phrase “our men” suggests that the Tweet is not written by a man, and an examination of the author’s profile information supports the idea that the author is a woman. On a latent level, the Tweet can be read as suggesting that different sections of the community (women, men) should mobilise differently due to their different experiences, with women as protectors. Nevertheless, this comparatively narrow representation of the target group potentially functions to marginalise disadvantaged group members who are not male. It also functions to conceal the gender-

specific ways that non-male individuals and groups are affected by anti-Black violence, in a manner that echoes gender-based power asymmetries.

However, there was also some effort to counter this male-centred representation, and advance a more inclusive definition of the target group that includes cis women and trans folk (80 codes). One user Tweeted:

(13) Marlene was assaulted by CA highway patrol. @[user34] honors her
#IAmMarlene #BlackLivesMatter [URL1]

Several hashtags are used in the Tweet including “#IAmMarlene”, which refers to Marlene Pinnock who was assaulted by a highway patrol officer. In addition to the Tweet text, a link is included to a Facebook post. The Facebook post contains the text:

“Because Marlene [Pinnock] Still matters #blackwomenmatter #iammarlene”

Below the text are four photographs; each photograph is of a different Black woman holding a hand-written sign, with “I am Marlene #BlackWomenMatter” written on the sign. The substitution of “Lives” with “Women” in the hashtag “#BlackWomenMatter” serves a strategic function to bring attention to female victims of police violence, increasing the inclusivity and intersectionality of the movement. “#IAmMarlene” is not only an expression of solidarity with the victim, but also constructs the sense of fungibility – that this could have happened to any Black woman.

Likewise, while specific hashtags and Tweets were created to bring attention to Black women in general, there are also instances where Twitter is used to highlight violence against trans women in particular. As in the case for #BlackLivesMatter and Black men, although conversations about Black women – and the often accompanying “#BlackWomenMatter”

hashtag – are ostensibly about women as a whole group, trans women are often marginalised in these discussions. For instance, there are examples where Tweets have referred to women in general, but only explicitly named cis women (5 codes), which functions to exclude trans women and reproduce gender-based inequality. In order to counter this, there are instances where users centre the stories of trans women in particular (13 codes). For example:

(14) Spontaneous show of support and memory for Mia Henderson and Kandy Hall
#BlackTransAdvocacy #BlackLivesMatter [URL2]

In this extract, the user named Mia Henderson and Kandy Hall, two trans women who were killed in Baltimore. The post also includes a photograph of activists protesting outside Baltimore City Hall. The user strategically uses the hashtag “#BlackTransAdvocacy” and names two trans women to counter the marginalisation of trans women as a group in conversations about anti-Black violence, thereby increasing the inclusiveness of the movement.

There was also some evidence of attempts to further increase the inclusivity of the target group to include other people of colour (8 codes):

(15) #BlackLivesMatter #BrownLivesMatter #MikeBrown #Ferguson

Here the user used the hashtag “#BrownLivesMatter” alongside the original #BlackLivesMatter. #BrownLivesMatter was created by activists to highlight racist violence against Latinx individuals (Akokou Thompson, 2015). In extracts 14 and 15, the authors of the Tweets use intra-group differentiation as a strategy to make the movement more inclusive. Interestingly, in our dataset, there was no evidence of other users pushing back, or policing against, intra-group differentiation of this kind; for example, arguing that the movement should concentrate on one issue at a time. These extracts – in particular extract 15

– can also be contrasted to extract 10, where the attempt to increase the racial inclusivity of the movement worked strategically to absolve the perpetrator group of racism. In the present extract it instead highlights the multifaceted ways that racism operates to affect communities of colour; it still acknowledges different racial identities and experiences, so it is perhaps a claim for solidarity rather than equivalence. Thus, while the inclusive definition in extract 10 functions to demobilise action, the inclusive definition in extract 15 works to increase the imperative for action, as well as the base of core movement participants.

In sum, it is evident that Twitter talk constructs the targets of injustice at varying levels of inclusivity. Characterising the disadvantaged group members at more vs. less inclusive levels serves to affect change in different ways. Inclusive definitions of disadvantaged groups promote mobilisation by broadening the base of participation, while universal definitions have the potential to undermine movement aims. Unsurprisingly, there are examples of activists using Twitter to push back against exclusive and universal representations, as both have the capacity to overshadow the concerns of marginalised identity groups.

The nature of the problem. In addition to representations of the targets and perpetrators of injustice, there is a suntheme that describes what the movement represents by defining the problem itself. Different users define the problem at different levels of inclusivity. This is an important representation, as different definitions have different implications in terms of how the problem should be managed and addressed. In the analysed Tweets, *exclusive* definitions of the problem are constructed through a narrow focus on specific issues. Concerns such as private citizen violence and police brutality are presented as the primary concerns of the movement. For example:

(16) Police brutality is out of control. No one should fear being shot 10 times when walking down the street #BlackLivesMatter #RipMikeBrown

In this extract, the author explicitly defined police brutality as a problem the movement should be addressing, representing the violence as in total violation of moral standards (“being shot 10 times”), and also as unpredictable, with the potential to happen at any stage in one’s everyday life (“when walking down the street”). Implicit within this representation is the juxtaposition of the victim as an innocent and ordinary individual, and the perpetrator as an immoral deviant. This representation increases the perceived injustice of the act, which functions to mobilise action and disempower the police. Rather than providing exclusive definitions of the perpetrator and victim, there is a level of universality in these constructions that functions to mobilise broad patterns of participation (e.g., Bennett & Segerberg, 2016); “out of control” defines police brutality on a general and widespread level, while “no one” indicates that it could happen to anyone. Thus the representation of a narrow movement concern as highly unjust and universal functions strategically to mobilise action around that specific movement issue.

There were also Tweets that represented other narrowly-defined issues as relevant to movement aims. Examples include breastfeeding (1 code), individual fundraising attempts (1 code) and rape (2 codes) among others. This indicates that the hashtag was used by some to try to integrate a wide range of societal problems into the movement’s agenda. There were also individual Tweets that promote inclusive definitions of movement issues. For example:

(17) Question for me is how can we stop the criminalization of our people?
#JusticeForEricGarner #RememberRenisha #BlackLivesMatter #every28hours

In contrast to extract 16, this Tweet provides a more inclusive definition of movement concerns. Rather than focus on a single problem, such as police brutality or private citizen violence, this Tweet represents a variety of issues and defines them as interrelated. The author achieves this in two ways. For one thing, different hashtags are used to represent different problems including “#every28hours”, which refers to the claim that in the United States, every 28 hours a Black person is killed by the police; #RememberRenisha, which refers to Renisha McBride who was killed by a private citizen; and #JusticeForEricGarner who was killed by police. In addition to the hashtags, the Tweet explicitly defines the problem as “criminalization”, which alludes to a number of smaller injustices working together to transform individuals into criminals (Michalowski, 1985). In this way, alongside the inclusive representation of movement issues, the author characterises the perpetrator group as highly inclusive, as the process of criminalisation would involve a number of individuals and institutions. This inclusive definition of the perpetrator group functions to mobilise action by demonstrating the pervasive nature of the issue. In general, a broad definition of problems and perpetrators functions to increase mobilisation around a variety of movement issues; the characterisation of a variety of state institutions as illegitimate also works in the present to disempower the state. However, the construction of the victim group is more exclusive: the use of the phrase “our people” and the “#every28hours” hashtag defines the victim ingroup as Black people in particular, which functions to focus attention on Black issues resulting from criminalisation.

In turn, though, activists placed restrictions on social issues that are accepted as part of the movement. For example:

(18) Don't tell me how many blacks kill other blacks. It was WHITE cops who killed #MikeBrown. Tonight we mourn #Ferguson. #BlackLivesMatter

Although it is unclear precisely who or which statement the Tweet responds to, by defining intragroup crime within the disadvantaged group as not relevant to movement aims, the author of the Tweet delimits boundary conditions for the problems that the movement represents. In order to justify this exclusion, the author highlights the race of the individuals responsible for Mike Brown's death, thus defining the scope of the movement – or the problems that it is concerned with – as of an intergroup and race-based nature. This exclusive representation of the problem functions to focus public attention on issues of racism, thereby advancing movement aims for the end of anti-Black racism. It should further be noted that the Tweet also performs a policing function, in that the author reprimands those who use intragroup crime as a response to the movement. This representation, where the response of intragroup crime is defined as in opposition to the movement, is one that will be examined more fully later in the analysis. Nevertheless, while intragroup crime is placed outside the remit of the movement, the author does not characterise the resulting deaths as irrelevant. Rather, by defining a time for the period of mourning (“Tonight we mourn #Ferguson”) the author recognises that these are issues, but defines it as an issue that does not need to be dealt with in the first instance. It also communicates collective suffering and collective coping within the movement.

On the whole, it can be seen that the discourse about what the movement represents constructs movement concerns at varying levels of inclusivity, with activists using inclusive definitions to increase the need for action, disempower the state, and bring attention to a variety of issues. At the same time, in order to focus public attention on Black issues and to prevent the marginalisation of Black people within the movement, hashtag users place boundaries on the issues that are considered legitimate concerns for the movement, which are represented as concerns about racism. Thus, as with characterisations of the targets of

injustice, hashtag users endorse an inclusive, but limited definition of problems the movement represents, bound by a focus on racism.

To summarise, the definition of *what the movement represents* characterises the problem, perpetrators, and targets of injustice at varying levels of inclusivity. Representations of race and racism are used as rhetorical resources to justify what and who is included in the movement. Moreover, hashtag users actively police other groups' and individuals' constructions of movement actors and issues, to delegitimise definitions that undermine the movement's prefigurative (e.g., the location of Black vs. White people in the movement) and instrumental (e.g., public attention) aims. As the following analysis will show, this policing activity involves representations of Otherness, which are used to characterise the proponents of these 'illegitimate' definitions – as well as the definitions themselves – as in opposition to the movement.

Movement Opponents

As well as defining the groups and the issues that the movement represents, rhetoric on Twitter is used to define those who are in opposition to the movement. Two separate representations of Otherness are identified in representations of movement opponents: specifically, as a undermining system and as immoral groups of people. These representations perform different strategic functions.

Undermining actions and ideologies. This subtheme describes particular ideologies and actions that are in opposition to the movement. For example:

(19) Even if #MikeBrown did sag his pants, only in a world of white supremacy is that punishable by death of 10 bullets! #BlackLivesMatter

In this Tweet, the author defines a particular school of thought as opposed to movement aims. Although it is unclear the precise statement to which this Tweet responds, it addresses attempts to portray Mike Brown as less-than-innocent and therefore blame him for his own death: “Even if #MikeBrown did sag his pants”. The idea under criticism is an example of a victim-blaming discourse that suggests that victims are responsible for their own fate, for example through their behavioural conduct or style of dress (e.g., Crawford, 1977). These narratives function to demobilise collective action by suggesting that the target in some way received what they deserved. The author delegitimises this line of thought by representing it as irrational and racist, positioning those who adhere to it as aligning with white supremacy.

Here the user characterises the ‘punishment’ of death as excessive for the supposed ‘crime’ of wearing a particular style of clothing. The author further denounces this line of thinking by defining those who promote it as racist. Although not directed at a particular individual or example, as a public micro-blog, Twitter enables the sentiment to be directed towards the public in general. The characterisation of victim-blaming discourse as being in opposition to the movement serves a policing function to control how movement issues are represented; limiting the dissemination of similar narratives and promoting definitions that advance instrumental aims.

In addition to victim-blaming narratives, ideologies that state that disadvantaged groups must earn the respect of the majority through their behaviour are also characterised as being in opposition to the movement. For example::

(20) Here comes the idiots who say "until we stop killing each other they won't respect us". B*tch u heard of Slavery, right? #BlackLivesMatter

Although the group membership of the individuals who hold these ideas is not explicitly stated, the use of the first person plural pronouns “we” and “us” defines the offenders as fellow disadvantaged group members. The particular form of reasoning under criticism in the Tweet is an example of respectability politics, which suggests that marginalised groups can minimise discrimination by demonstrating that their own values are compatible with those of the majority group; this ideology has historically been used as a strategy by marginalised groups to police their own members’ behaviour (Higginbotham, 1993). When used as a response to BLM, this ideology functions to divert attention from the conduct of perpetrator groups to the conduct of the disadvantaged group, thus blaming Black people as a group for experiences of anti-Black violence. In this way, the politics of respectability is a powerful ideological strategy to inhibit social change; by redefining Black people as responsible for their own situation it reduces the onus for change among advantaged and authority group members.

The author of the Tweet uses several rhetorical strategies to discredit this line of thought and define it as in opposition to the movement. For one thing, they draw a parallel between the issues that the movement is protesting and slavery. This defines anti-Black violence as racist in nature, driven by the actions of the majority group and unrelated to the actions of Black people. More specifically, it contains a claim that anti-Black violence pre-dates so-called ‘Black-on-Black’ violence in the United States, and also surpasses it in scale. This functions to place the responsibility for change among perpetrator group members, rather than individuals within disadvantaged group, and derogates and dismisses those who argue otherwise.

In addition to victim blaming and respectability politics discourses, a ‘colourblind’ ideology (e.g., extract 10) – which suggests that society can end racism by ignoring race – is

also represented as being in opposition to the movement. Colourblind ideologies function to divert attention away from racial inequality, prioritise White people and their concerns, and delegitimise movement aims and activists (Langford & Speight, 2016). Unsurprisingly, there are several examples of movement activists directly challenging this line of thinking and placing it in opposition to the movement (5 codes). In one example a user writes:

(21) Black folks be like: #BlackLivesMatter. Indignant white folks retort with "don't all lives matter?" Word? I didn't get the memo.

Although there are a number of representations within this Tweet, for the purpose of this analysis we have focused on one specific characterisation: that colourblind definitions are an angry and intergroup response to the movement. By defining the advocates of a colourblind approach as “indignant”, the author presents the ideology as a retaliation against the movement. Moreover, the author characterises the prototypical colourblind advocate as White, and juxtaposes their identity against that of Black activists. In this way, the author represents colourblind ideology as an intergroup response of racist origins, rather than a legitimate attempt to end racism, thereby characterising the proponents of the ideology as racist. This characterisation functions to limit the expression of such notions that can undermine collective action and change. This extract also functions to advance the movement’s prefigurative aims for Black power by challenging attempts for White dominance over movement issues.

In addition to ideologies that function to subvert the aims of the movement, hashtag users also represented specific behaviours as contrary to the movement; particularly, inaction or silence in response to police violence was characterised as oppositional to the movement (8 codes). For example:

(22) @[user28] @CNN @msnbc @ABC @CBS @nbc #BlackLivesMatter Why Are You Not Covering #Ferguson #MikeBrown #FergusonShooting

(23) Why isn't #MikeBrown trending? Why isn't #Ferguson trending? Remember #blacklivesmatter Not one more #TrayvonMartin not one more #MikeBrown

In these two separate Tweets, hashtag users target traditional media organisations (extract 22) and Twitter, as a platform (extract 23), for their silence around Ferguson. Turning first to examine extract 22, specific news organisations are criticised for not reporting the shooting of Mike Brown and subsequent events in Ferguson. The use of Twitter's @mention function directs the Tweet to the offending organisations, thus calling them to account for their actions. Likewise, extract 23 criticises Twitter for not including #MikeBrown and #Ferguson in its 'trending topics', which is a list of words or phrases mentioned at a greater rate than others that Twitter provides for its users. Going further than extract 22, the latter half of the extract 23 implicitly defines silence around these issues as a contributing factor to the continuation of anti-Black violence and therefore in opposition to movement aims. Although directed at different objects, by defining silence as a movement opponent – and putting pressure on offending parties to change their practices – these Tweets function to demarcate allies from opponents on the basis of active engagement with the movement, defining inaction as tacit support for police violence.

Other acts that are represented as opponents to the movement include nominal punishment for the perpetrators of injustice (2 codes; see extract 27 for example) and the act of silencing movement activists (1 codes), for instance:

(24) Wow--I've lost FIFTEEN followers since I started tweeting abt #MikeBrown being MURDERED in #Ferguson.Sorry you don't think #blacklivesmatter

Although there are a number of interesting points that could be considered in this Tweet, for the purpose of the present analysis we have focused on the representation of the act of unfollowing on Twitter as an indication of movement opposition. Here the author suggests that they were unfollowed because they Tweeted about Mike Brown's death. In this way, unfollowing is represented as an act that functions to silence legitimate consciousness-raising activities. The latter part of the Tweet ("Sorry you don't think #blacklivesmatter") locates this act as being in opposition to the movement, indicating disagreement with movement aims. Although the individuals who have unfollowed the author are unlikely to ever see the Tweet, it is a public condemnation of the action and therefore operates to dissuade the action in others. This works to preserve attention on movement issues and activists, and thereby advance instrumental aims.

Immoral groups of people. In addition to particular ideologies and actions, hashtag users also represent specific groups of people as movement opponents. These groups are characterised as immoral and are represented as both the perpetrators of violence themselves, and those who support these racist institutions. For example, one user wrote:

(25) If he was an animal, please believe justice would've been served in a hurry...smh
#BlackLivesMatterToo #MikeBrown

In this Tweet, the author presents a criticism of the justice system in general, characterising it as an entity that values the lives of animals above Black people. Implicit within this Tweet is the idea that the justice system is in opposition to the movement as it is failing to do justice upon the perpetrators of violence. Although some of the Tweets define movement opponents on a general, system-level, other characterisations are more specific in defining who is an opponent of the movement.

Regarding those who perpetrate violence, many of the groups who are represented as perpetrators of injustice are explicitly defined as in opposition to the movement. For example, one user Tweeted:

(26) While #MikeBrown 's body laid in a pool of blood. 15 police depts militarized the area against protesters in #Ferguson . #BlackLivesMatter

In the first half of the Tweet, the author characterises the police as apathetic towards the death of Mike Brown. By highlighting their disinterest in properly caring for the body, they are characterised as a group that both evades professional responsibility transgress basic moral standards. The author furthers this characterisation by juxtaposing this inactivity against a representation that paints the police as eager to mobilise against movement activists. The inclusion of a large number of police departments and the description of the action in military terms functions to characterise the police's response as excessive, violent and unethical. This further constructs the police as an immoral perpetrator group, as they are willing to use military-like force against their country's own people. Nevertheless, this definition goes further than earlier extracts, as it presents the police in opposition to movement activists and, as an extension, the movement. This serves several strategic functions. For one thing, it presents the group of police as unwilling to work with activists for change, which furthers the need for large-scale collective protest rather than a police-led solution. Moreover, given the police's position as a powerful and authoritative group, it is likely that they will generate and endorse definitions of movement issues and actors that preserves their own reputation. Thus, the definition of the police as inherently opposed to the movement limits their influence and authority on these issues, which in turn empowers activists relative to the police.

Beyond immediate perpetrator groups, movement activists also define the supporters of these institutions as opponents to the movement. For example:

(27) All his murderers get is a #PAID #VACATION from the government!!
#BlackLivesMATTER [URL3]

In addition to the text, the Tweet contains a link to an Instagram post that includes a picture of John Crawford who was killed by the police. Above the picture is the text,

(27.1) “John Crawford, a 22 yr-old father was shot + killed in a Ohio Walmart for holding a toy gun → <http://bet.us/X7vbg0> When will it end?”

This text refers to John Crawford who was killed by police. The link within the Instagram post is to an article by BET entitled,

(27.2) “Update: Walmart Video Shows John Crawford Shot ‘On Sight’ From Behind”

Extract 27 represents the Government as a group that supports the police. The author juxtaposes the crime of “murder” and the Government’s response of a “paid vacation” for the perpetrator. By representing the Government’s response as a reward, the authors characterise this group as corrupt. This works to locate the Government in opposition to the movement, implicitly characterising them as unwilling to support the movement’s aims for justice. As with the construction of the police in extract 26, this representation of the Government functions to give activists power, as it positions activists as a (relatively) credible authority on movement issues. In contrast, the state as a system is presented as acting in its own interests, and therefore untrustworthy in how it defines the movement. In this way the powerful groups and institutions who are defined as either perpetrators of violence or supporters of these

institutions are also defined as opponents to the movement; this functions to advance the need for collective action and gives activists authority over movement issues.

In sum, the representation of *movement opponents* consisted of two subthemes; namely, opponents as immoral groups of people and opponents as oppressive systems. These subthemes enabled hashtag users to attempt to manage contested representations of the movement, and to promote actions that advance movement aims. The act of challenging these forms of resistance to BLM itself advances prefigurative aims, as it actualises disadvantaged group power in the present. Nevertheless, only defining movement opponents risks alienating certain groups who may be sympathetic to movement aims, which could damage the pursuit of instrumental goals. As the following analysis will illustrate, one way that hashtag users balanced the social change needs of growing the movement and maintaining control is by constructing representations of legitimate movement advocates, encompassing both disadvantaged group members and advantaged group allies. These representations characterise specific actions and attributes as integral to movement aims.

Movement Advocates

Advocates of the movement are described in two types of representation: (1) as disadvantaged group members, and (2) allies who perform movement-endorsing acts. The *disadvantaged group* theme involved representations of Black people as the leaders and core participants of the movement. The *movement-endorsing acts* theme outlines how powerful and advantaged group members can be advocates of the movement, and functions to mobilise majority group action by representing collective action as integral to allyship.

Disadvantaged group members. In the same way that Black people are defined as the targets of injustice, on a general level, they are also constructed as the core members and advocates of the movement. For example:

(28) Then I realize that our blackness is beautiful & we must fight to protect our babies, our black men by any means necessary #BlackLivesMatter

In this Tweet, the author urges the audience to take action against anti-Black violence. The characterisation of “our babies” reflects the child imagery used in other extracts (e.g., extract 9); while “fight to protect” and “our men” can be compared to the rhetoric used in extract 12.

By using first person plural pronouns “our” and “we”, the author constructs a common category between themselves (as the author), the audience, and the individuals who have been killed, explicitly defining each of these actors as being part of the same group of Black people. This serves several strategic functions. At a general level, the construction of a common category increases the author’s influence (e.g., Hopkins & Reicher, 1997). By defining themselves as part of an ingroup with the audience (e.g., “we must fight”) the author gives themselves the legitimacy to speak on the audience’s behalf and direct them. Likewise, the creation of a common category between the author and the victim group (e.g., “our babies, our black men”) gives the author the authority to speak on behalf of the disadvantaged group and to tell others what the ingroup needs for change. However, the Tweet also contains a more specific claim: that the call to action has originated from a Black person and is addressed to other Black people in particular. This construction works prefiguratively to locate Black people in a dominant position in the movement as core members and activists. It also puts white people and other advantaged groups outside the circle of activism.

Other Tweets more explicitly address the role of Black people as activists within the movement, defining a key role for Black-led organisations. For example:

(29) #BlackLivesMatter, it's not a scary thing to say. In fact, the articulation comes from Black organizers. #BOLD

In this Tweet, the author defends the concept behind #BlackLivesMatter; specifically, they use the racial identity of the hashtag creators (and founders of Black Lives Matter) to legitimise the hashtag and what it stands for. They also use the “#BOLD” hashtag, which stands for “Black Organizing for Leadership & Dignity”, an American organisation that trains community leaders (boldorganizing.org). Taken together, this works to define Black leadership as integral to the movement. The location of Black people as movement leaders functions strategically to enable Black people as a group to retain control of the movement. For one thing, it gives Black people a dominant position in the movement, which prioritises Black-led narratives and constructions over those of advantaged group members. This provides a defence against other groups who may seek to re-define core issues or otherwise appropriate or dominate the movement.

The position of Black people as the core activists and leaders within the movement is further asserted through specific features of the technology, such as the videos and images of protest that are shared through Twitter, as well as the involvement of Black-led social movement organisations. For example, extract 13 includes photographs of Black women protesting against the violence against Marlene Pinnock. There are also instances of prominent Black-led organisations adopting key roles in the dissemination of news and information, for example:

(30) YES!! RT @BYP_100: BREAKING: Theodore Wafer found guilty on all charges in the killing of #RenishaMcBride #BlackLivesMatter

Here the author retweets a Tweet by the Black Youth Project 100, which is an activist member-based social justice organisation of Black 18-35 year olds. Although extracts 13 and 30 utilise different features within Twitter, the ability of users to share pictures and content created by other users are specific affordances conferred by social media. In this particular instance, these features were used by activists to share images of black activists, as well as news information from Black-led organisations; this functions prefiguratively to place Black leadership and participation at the centre of the movement. In this way, it can be seen how specific features of the technology are used to support the definition of Black individuals as core movement participants, actualising movement aims for the empowerment of Black people in the here-and-now.

There is also some evidence of allies acknowledging the primacy of Black actors in this context. For example:

(31) .@[user35] also not romanticized this. I am not Eric Garner and I stand fiercely and unwavering with those who are #blacklivesmatter

In this extract, the author constructs a distinction between themselves and disadvantaged group members (“I am not Eric Garner”); in this way, the author characterises themselves as advantaged relative to Black people who are the targets of violence. This can be contrasted against the construction of fungibility between the Black activists and the target of injustice used in extract 13, where the phrase “I am Marlene” was used. Nevertheless, in extract 31 the author does specify a place for themselves in the movement, as an ally to the disadvantaged group.

Movement-endorsing acts. The final theme that we identified characterised movement advocates in terms of performance of movement-endorsing acts, and functioned as the antithesis of the *undermining acts* subtheme. In particular, the requirement for collective action on behalf of the movement is defined as integral to legitimate movement support. It is comprised of two subthemes: the first of which addresses authority group members, while the second addresses the general public.

Authority group members. In addition to disadvantaged group members, hashtag users also characterise specific institutions and individuals within the state as advocates of the movement, or at least potential advocates. Importantly, their advocacy role is constructed in such a way that it is contingent on them performing acts to endorse the movement's aims. These authority group members are given the role of ending deviant behaviour and/or exacting justice for past wrongs, thereby helping to restore morality and change their group from within. For example:

(32) .@CommissBratton #LatinoLivesMatter #BlackLivesMatter and #WomensLivesMatter. Do the right thing! #JusticeforEricGarner

In this extract, the Twitter public mention function (“.@CommissBratton”) is used to publically challenge New York City’s Police Commissioner Bill Bratton. Implicit in this extract is the claim that Commissioner Bratton – as a police leader – could help to bring about justice for Eric Garner. Although this mirrors heterogeneous representations of the perpetrator group that advance the representation of “good” police officers (see extract 5), using an @mention to separate out a specific member of the police from the larger deviant group serves a strategic function in creating a moral bind for the mentioned individual. Specifically, Commissioner Bratton would be notified that a Tweet has been posted about him, and due to the public nature of the platform, if he fails to meet activist demands it

publically demonstrates that he is one of the ‘bad’ police officials. In this way, action to support the movement by Commissioner Bratton is integral to his characterisation as a movement advocate rather than opponent.

In addition to specific police officials, Barack and Michelle Obama are singled out in their roles as national leaders and represented as authority group members who are potential advocates of the movement. For example, one user stated:

(33) #POTUS, @BarackObama & @FLOTUS @MichelleObama They're Killing Our Kids! R.I.P #MikeBrown [URL4] #BlackLivesMatter #Ferguson

In this extract, Twitter’s reply “@” function is used, making the Tweet visible to people who follow both the sender and the receiver. Similar to extract 32, the strategic use of this Twitter function creates a moral bind for the President and First Lady. Specifically, if they fail to take action against Mike Brown’s death they reveal themselves to be part of the Government group who are supporting immoral acts (e.g., extract 27). Thus, by putting pressure on powers in authority, the Tweets uphold the prefigurative aims of the movement for disadvantaged group empowerment by creating a moral imperative for authority group members in a manner that reverses traditional power inequalities in society.

However, extract 33 also contains some novel rhetorical features that should be acknowledged. While Barack and Michelle Obama are identified in their roles as President of the United States (POTUS) and First Lady of the United States (FLOTUS), “They’re Killing Our Kids” can be read as locating Barack and Michelle Obama as part of the target ingroup, rather than the outgroup. This representation is made possible due to their dual identities as both Black people and members of Government. This positioning functions to strengthen the case for action by the Obamas; inaction would not only demonstrate membership of the

deviant outgroup, but would also expose ingroup betrayal and ascribes to the Obamas – on a personal and professional level – the negative qualities associated with traitorhood.

Members of the public. The final subtheme characterises the public in general (35 codes) – and advantaged group members in particular (6 codes) – as movement advocates through movement-endorsing acts; similar to the authority group subtheme, requirement for collective action on behalf of the movement is defined as integral to legitimate movement support. For example:

(34) RT @[user36]: "**Ally is not an identity it's an action**" [URL5] #girlslikeus
#mfom14 #blacklivesmatter #translivesmatter

Although there are a number of representations in the Tweet that could be analysed, of particular interest here is the text in bold (bold added), which characterises action as integral to the definition of movement allies. Allies are typically perceived as advantaged group members, rather than members of the core disadvantaged group whose interests the movement aims to advance (e.g., Droogendyk et al., 2016; Montgomery & Stewart, 2012). Thus this representation works to dismiss claims of advantaged group allyship merely on the basis of shared opinions or values. This representation functions instrumentally to mobilise action among advantaged group members who want to be seen as legitimate allies to the movement.

While extract 34 provides a rather general representation of movement-endorsing acts, other hashtag users provide more specific definitions of acts that the general public can engage in that signal movement support. As the antithesis to the *undermining acts* subtheme, it is unsurprising that some endorsing acts are represented merely as the opposite of undermining acts; for example speaking out about/ protesting movement issues (20 codes) or

listening to others (8 codes). However, what is novel about this subtheme are examples where movement activists reach out via Twitter to correct the behaviour of (supposed) advantaged group allies to promote actions that advance movement aims. For example:

(35) If you are white & silent about police killings of unarmed blacks, ask why.
#blacklivesmatter. #MikeBrown was EVERYONE'S kid. #Ferguson

In this extract, the author engages in strategies to prevent inaction by defining standards of behaviour. For example, by asking the audience “why” they are silent about police brutality, the author defines inaction (silence) as abnormal in as much as it is something that should be questioned. In this way, the author constructs collective action as a normal standard of behaviour for the advantaged group. The author also distinguishes White people as a group from the broader spectrum of individuals who have not spoken about police violence. This characterises the White majority as potential movement opponents; implicitly it defines the difference in race between the victims and the audience as a factor contributing to the audience’s inaction. This creates a moral bind for the audience: if they continue to be silent in the face of anti-Black violence, it suggests that they are racist and opponents to the movement.

In addition to advantaged group members, hashtag users are keen for the participation of national social movement organisations. However, as with members of the public, these groups also receive criticism for failing to take action. For example:

(36) Because, #BlackLivesMatter. Yet, #TheseOrgsAintLoyal. #LGBT #QPOC
#CivilRights1964

Several hashtags are contained within this Tweet including: “#LGBT” which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender; and “#QPOC” which stands for Queer People of

Color. Of particular interest here is “#TheseOrgsAintLoyal”, which was a hashtag created to challenge conventional LGBT rights organisations who did not acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act (Rupert, 2014). By defining inaction in terms of loyalty, the author constructs LGBT organisations as betraying their commitments to Black people who have supported the LGBT movement in general, and Black members of the LGBT community in particular (“#QPOC”), thus constructing a moral dimension to their inaction. In addition to defining active allyship as a standard of behaviour for mainstream LGBT movement organisations, this serves a policing function to correct undesired behaviour.

In summary, the representation of *movement advocates* consists of two themes; namely, advocates as disadvantaged group members and advocates as those who perform movement-endorsing acts. These discourses function to grow the movement beyond the core group of disadvantaged members, but also maintain disadvantaged-group control in a context where there is an asymmetry of power between core group members and their (potential) allies. Core group members are represented as movement leaders and an ingroup audience for calls to actions, while members of authority and advantaged groups are represented as allies through movement-endorsing acts.

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