

Hyperreality of #BlackLivesMatter Movement on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal how hyperreality is reflected in using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media. The death of an African-American, George Floyd, that involved white police, has sparked outrage and demonstrations in many U.S. states. Issues pertaining to racism sparked in relation to the event, and many people protested demanding justice. The demand for justice then went into a wave of massive global protests both in offline and online realities—the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag was widely used on social media when protests were held. The #BlackLivesMatter hashtag even became a trending topic on several social media platforms, as if everyone was concerned about the issue and aiming for the same purpose. However, we might find several posts that neither reflected nor were related to the case. Some social media users put the hashtag even though their content substance was not related. This phenomenon then led to a condition of hyperreality in questioning reality from a simulation of reality. The method used in this study is content analysis which measures the sentiment of comments on Twitter and Instagram. The study found that social networking sites mobilised online movements even though they were not directly related to the #BlackLivesMatter movement. On the other hand, hashtag activism reduced the true meaning of the social movement. Therefore, the hyperreality in #BlackLivesMatter could not be seen any longer as a form of massive protests demanding justice and ending violence, but merely to gain more digital presence on social media.

Keywords: *Black lives matter, movement, social media, hyperreality, hashtag activism.*

INTRODUCTION

The dark history of racism reappeared on May 25, 2020, in the United States. The death of African-American George Floyd sparked anger and demonstrations in many states of the United States. The wave of the protest movement that was once popular in 2013 (Yang, 2016), and emerged again in 2020 on social media, with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. This study aims to examine to what extent the hashtag activism on social media shifts to simulacra beyond real reality. As the #BlackLivesMatter movement on social media becomes blurry, this study aimed to discover the reality beyond the facts of basic ideologies of the movement that resist the idea of racism.

According to the data published by the Crowd Counting Consortium (2020), the scale of the crowd of protest is extraordinary. On June 6, 2020, at least 50,000 people appeared in Philadelphia, 20,000 at the Chicago Park Union, and 10,000 at the Golden Gate Bridge. There were more than 4,700 demonstrations throughout the United States or an average of 140 per day, since the first protests began in Minneapolis on May 26, 2020. Moreover, the protest of showing support for the #BlackLivesMatter movement also happened in several countries outside the United States, such as in Australia, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (Allam, Wahlquist, & Evershed, 2020; Takahashi & Johnston, 2020).

Furthermore, the massive global scale of protests reflected that it is more than just a movement to complain about dark Americans' injustice and racism. The #BlackLivesMatter movement in general aimed to end racial violence and racial disparities throughout the criminal justice system (Ghandnoosh, 2015). This study, therefore, examines the extent this protest movement dominates social media following its original purpose.

The discussion led to a question, what is the most critical problem that the #BlackLivesMatter issue brought up on social media? Since its first appearance, the Black Lives Matter movement has been aimed at fighting law enforcement. The problem has become widespread, involving racial issues, police brutality, and racial inequality in America. This was an urgent issue and deeply linked to the protest movement on social media. However, the movement is becoming more vocal and massive on social media than in the real world. The media plays a role in obscuring the initial reality of the movement, as it tends to do very little to produce actual and tangible social change, and is becoming a substitute for in-person activism (Cabrera, Matias, & Montoya, 2017).

The #BlackLivesMatter describes a whole series of representations of the protest movement's reality outside the "medium." According to Ghandnoosh (2015), social media is a media outlet that tends to represent black Americans' rights issues differently. People's awareness increases a massive number of followers through social media. Furthermore, Ghandnoosh (2015) said, through his article on the #BlackLivesMatter movement, put forward a very relevant point. According to him, the magnitude of black people's injustice in America is a driver of widespread injustice among them. According to him, racism for more than 500 years is still a major social problem in the United States.

Ultimately, this injustice resulted in the massive accumulation of protests sparked by the George Floyd events in 2020. The movement connected citizens and communities in the virtual world and through social media in which they gave their encouragement as well as support by using the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter.

According to the article written by Burton (2015), this movement was not only seen as a social movement, but also saw the sophisticated practices of self-representation by the active participants. Ghaffari (2020) makes the same point, claiming that digital media may be used to portray extreme self/other representation. The demonstrators in the field used the power of their observations and descriptions. A concrete analysis informs their tactics of the historical situation. Coleman (2021) also asserted that when the social and physical are combined, physical descriptions of locations are inextricably linked to people and events. Users (re)placed narratives of relocation and loss using self-portraits set in historically and culturally significant contexts. They mobilise audiovisual technology, social media, and e-mail dissemination to document and circulate their narratives. They reflect on the strengths and limitations of their actions, and when some people on social media participate in enlivening action posts, this then becomes a question. The participation of social movement in social media is also related to the concept of social imagining as a collective process that brings a movement into being through a narration made by people involved in the movement, societal institutions, and public reactions (Jenzen, Erhart, Eslen-Ziya, Korkut & McGarry, 2021). Therefore, the practice of social movements participatory in social media is seen as a symbolic part that provides the visualised possibility of imagining the movement (Jenzen, Erhart, Eslen-Ziya, Korkut & McGarry, 2021).

Furthermore, what the cyberspace movement is trying to show is far from the spirit of action fighting for racism. Most hashtag activism is a simulation produced by each social media account to affirm "presence" in a movement. This research argues that there is a leap

in reality that is blurred from the purpose of the actual protest even though it could increase awareness of resistance.

As previously mentioned, the "#BlackLivesMatter" and "Black Lives Matter" movements are different. Twitter hashtags were made in July 2013 by activists Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi after George Zimmerman releases the second-degree murder of a black teenager named Trayvon Martin (Freelon, McIlwain & Clark, 2016). For more than a year, #BlackLivesMatter has only been a hashtag, and not a very popular one. It was used only in 48 tweets in June 2014 and 398 tweets in July 2014. But in August 2014, the number increased to 52,288, partly because slogans are often used in Ferguson's protests (Bonilla & Rosam, 2015).

There is some overlap between #BlackLivesMatter and the way Black Lives Matter organisational members use hashtags. Freelon, McIlwain and Clark (2016) explain, at the same time, these two terms are sometimes used to refer to the third idea: the sum of all organisations, individuals, protests, and digital spaces dedicated to raising awareness about and ultimately putting an end to police brutality against black people. In further discussion, this paper will use the term "Black Lives Matter" to refer to official organisations; "#BlackLivesMatter" to refer to hashtags, "BLM" to refer to the overall movement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Hashtag Activism

The Internet has become an essential facet of modern existence. Our life's progressive cyberisation seamlessly bridges the divide between the online and offline worlds (Dijck, 2013). As the Internet seems to mediate more egalitarian interactions among its user, some might predict that the disentanglement of identity from the physical self will usher in a post-racial utopia. However, in reality, the Internet is where race continues to wield deep significance (Fang, 2016). Tracing back to 2002, the Internet's earliest digital activists were college students of colour (Fang, 2016). Asian American college activists used social media platforms to coordinate the clothing brand's protests, Abercrombie and Fitch, for their anti-Asian T-shirts (Schlund-Vials, Wong & Chang, 2017; Fang, 2016). Today, the popularity of the Twitter hashtag is a watershed moment for online activism. The hashtag has been repurposed to share user's ideas in digital spaces that, and at some points, may also become a form of resistance. However, to a further extent, popular hashtag activism does not necessarily mean that a user supports a certain issue. Hence, they "borrow" the popular hashtag to gain more awareness and likes to their social media posts. For them, hashtag activism is merely seen as a game number instead (DeArmas, 2018).

The study was inspired by Harlow's (2012) research regarding the Black Lives Matter hashtag activism. According to Harlow (2012), his content analysis study shows the framing, topics, and functions of online comments encourage offline action by emphasising protests and asking others to participate and spread the news. The research showed that comments are framed in such a way as to motivate others to engage in the movement and participate in offline activities, whether attending a protest or signing a petition. According to this finding, online and offline actions are seen as typically closely integrated. Online activism is seen as a bottom-up mobilisation that occurs when calls to action flow among interconnected users in personal networks (Greijdanus, Fernandes, Turner-Zwinkels, Honari, Roos, Rosenbuch & Postmes, 2020). Moreover, this finding also opposes previous research conducted by Gerhards and Ruchts (1992), which said online activism is unlikely to trigger offline action.

Therefore, social media users with prior participation experience will be more likely to be active online and offline, indicating that citizens who are already active offline are also more likely to be active online, and vice versa.

Sandoval and Gil (2013) presented a study on social media use for activism in cyberspace. Sandoval and Gil proposed an analytical model to understand social media users in the case of "YoSoy132" in Mexico at that time. Their findings highlighted the emergence and evolution of the cyberspace movement, as well as a shift in the power of traditional media. They also believe that the study is useful for understanding the social and political elements built narratively in an online movement through social media platforms.

Sandoval and Gil (2013) asserted that social media has a role in driving political behaviour with a large amount of information available, has the potential to support the opinion of each individual, create awareness, accountability, and openness of the government to the issues of e-movement and e-democracy. All of them are a long road that must be understood and supported for improving democracy through technology, especially social media. Sandoval and Gil's (2013) study has contributed further to the issue.

Further research from Yang (2016) showed that those who believe in hashtag activism had created a movement based on hashtags, phrases, sentences, and words, accompanied by political and social ideas. This process creates interrelated temporary effects in every upload in cyberspace and contributes to each agent's narrative action. By referring to these arguments, of course, this article wants to show the role of agents and narratives built in the hashtag activism #BlackLivesMatter through narrative structures and content into their social context. Agents play a role in creating a variety of content, creatively and communally.

However, all of the studies or researches carried out by Gerhards and Ruchts (1992), Harlow (2012), Sandoval and Gil (2013), and Yang (2016), left a loop related to the aspect of reality. These studies have not been looked at from the possibility that the activism hashtag might have shifted from its actual reality. Therefore, this study tried to enrich the perspective by offering the concept of hyperreality (Wolny, 2017). To be specific, this study aimed to explore how the participation of social media users in cyberspace's realm does not consistently represent the reality of the movement itself.

b. Black Lives Matter Movement

The Black Lives Matter movement firstly emerged in 2013 after George Zimmerman was sentenced to be free after previously being accused of the murder case of Trayvon Martin, an African American adolescent in Florida. After that, Black Lives Matter started to organise several movements in different chapters across countries. Black Lives Matter's initial core objective is to stop systemic racism and oppression in the United States. Black Lives Matter's transformation started from merely a hashtag and grew into an international social movement.

In July 2013, Alicia Garza, one of the founders of Black Lives Matter, responded to the acquittal of George Zimmerman and started using the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM) in her Facebook account. The posting was then responded to by a netizen who shared their experience on why Black Lives Matter. The stories shared how many individuals felt that their lives did not matter in the eyes of all their fellow Americans (Faust, Johnson, Guignard, Harlos, Fennelly & Castaneda, 2019). According to their website, #BlackLivesMatter is aimed to be an online forum intended to build connections between Black people and their allies to fight anti-Black racism, to spark dialogue among Black people, and to facilitate the types of connections necessary to encourage social action and engagement (BLM, 2018). Black Lives

Matter facilitates an honest and open discussion among Black people worldwide to connect their stories and shared experience. In general, most Black communities across the United States have similar stories about marginalised and excluded feelings. The hashtag #BLM somehow could help them to feel that they could create a collective voice.

At the beginning of the movement, it wasn't easy to see the impact of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Some people questioned whether Black Lives Matter was merely a trending hashtag, a fad, or a budding social movement. As a social movement, Black Lives Matter has fulfilled all criteria mentioned by Tilly (2017) about the composition of a social movement. Tilly argues that social movements combine several aspects. First, it is a sustained, organised public effort making collective claims on their target audience. Second, it employs the combinations of several forms of political action. And third, participants concerted public representations of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment to themselves or their constituencies. However, seeing the dynamic of the use of hashtag #BlackLivesMatter in social media since the death of Trayvon Martin in 2013, Michael Brown in 2014, and the latest George Floyd in 2020, it could be concluded that the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter became a motto, symbol, and name for a social movement against police brutality, but also functioned to express demands for dignity and social justice for all Blacks (Faust, Johnson, Guignard, Adechoubou, Harlos, Fennelly & Castaneda, 2019).

With the emergence of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, some people believed an ideology that Americans have lived in a post-racial society. This belief emerged since the election of President Barack Obama in 2008 as the first African American U.S. president (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). However, this belief failed to see the violence towards the Black community based on the stigma and stereotyping of their race as part of American history and contemporary lives.

c. The Techno-Optimistic and Techno-Pessimistic

The discussion could be further elaborated on social media's role in affecting the Black Lives Matter movement. Social media's role in affecting the Black Lives Matter movement could be viewed from two perspectives, the techno-optimistic and techno-pessimistic (Mundt, Ross, & Burnett, 2018; Kidd & McIntosh, 2016). Techno-optimistic perspective believes that social media can advance, expand, and support a social movement. Meanwhile, techno-pessimistic perspectives advocate that the impact of social media is negative and over-hyped.

According to the techno-optimistic perspective, the prime advantages that social media offered to the Black Lives Matter movement included resource-mobilisation, coalition-building, and message framing (Mundt, Ross, & Burnett, 2018). Resource mobilisation could be formed in two types. The first is to build networks and connections between movement leaders in various regions that are geographically far. The second is resource mobilisation that could be formed in external support and funding. The support and funding itself should not be understood merely as financial support. Still, even the simple "likes" and "shares" commonly found on any social media platforms are included. The online nature of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter also helped in coalition-building among groups and communities conducting a movement across regions. It could help the group and communities to maintain coherence in the overall movements. The argument is closely related to the role of social media in framing issues. Wijers, Kroon, Ke-leigh, Westerhof and Pappas (2016) term the message-framing in the movement as "addressivity," which indicates the tailoring of a

message to resonate deeply with a targeted audience. Therefore, it could evoke certain emotions that persuade them to participate in the action.

On the other hand, the techno-pessimistic perspective considers that not all social media use is positive in terms of the social movement. Morozov (2012) and Brown (2020) note the concept of "slacktivism." The concept outlines a gap between the online and offline behaviours of activists, who would be proactive on social media, but not on actual on-ground action. Mundt, Ross and Burnett (2018) further explained the concept that slacktivism is detrimental to the purpose of a social movement. It could lead to a feeling of satisfaction within activists that they have taken some form of action. Still, because of their absence in actual protests, the scale of impact is diluted.

Furthermore, Mundt, Ross and Burnett (2018) also feeds the critique of social media use to enable accessible information via social media; hence, the same platforms could potentially hinder or misdirect the movement's agenda, purpose, and vision. As social media enables access to every user to voice their stories, it is also difficult to monitor and control the nature of the content that would appear with the hashtag. Some content might not be aligned with the movement's vision at all. Thus, the focus of a movement and the message it conveys may get lost.

d. Hyperreality and Social Media

This study attempts to use Baudrillard's (1988) concept of hyperreality presupposes how the virtual world or cyberspace transcends reality for individuals as users. Considering that the objective of this research, the concept of hyperreality will be utilised is to examine the extent to which the #BlackLivesMatter movement has shifted from actual reality.

Disneyland is a perfect model of the simulation process described by Baudrillard (1988). An illusion and fantasy game becomes a boundary with the world of real reality. But it becomes interesting when the boundary is not realised, even believed to be a new reality for individuals. The imaginary world is understood and recognised by children as a genuine reality beyond the real reality itself. Every individual and most people abandon the values of their belief in the real world in an imaginary place like Disneyland. Panegyric values have idealised the transposition of contradictory realities to both ensure and obscure the actual reality. Baudrillard (1988) called it an "ideological blanket," which functions to cover truth at the level of simulacra. Disneyland exists to hide the fact that we have a real life. As with social media, that covers that there is real life where presence is considered more valuable.

Social media presents an illusion to make us believe that reality outside social media is not a reality that matters to us. Social media is considered the only meaningful reality because it presupposes the presence and existence of individuals who have the most value. Social media becomes hyperreality, no longer a level of simulation or false representation of reality, but reality itself is completely different. The hyperreality is closely related to simulacra because simulacra are what produces hyperreality or "beyond reality." According to Baudrillard (Barroso, 2019), hyperreality is the most obvious characteristic brought or created by simulacra through social media. Baudrillard added that simulacra indicate that social life is considered over. People are trapped in simulacra, and their social life ends due to the simulacra. They cannot distinguish between reality and fiction in life. Clearly, social media has an essential role in forming simulacra that trapped an individual's social life.

The simulacrum is an instrument that can change abstract things into concrete and vice versa. The simulacrum manifested in text, visuals (images), and events (Baudrillard, 1988). Digital media is one of the media that often produce simulacra. Social media can

transform abstract things into something concrete. Likewise, the real world can change reality into abstract when it enters social media. Thus, digital platforms, such as social media, can be an instrument of simulacra.

Layesa's dissertation (2017) mentions the distinction is "social distance" caused by taste choices. For example, the construction of a white supremacy movement with the hashtag #whitelivesmatter (Ostertag, 2019) appeared on social media as a counter-movement. It will indirectly have implications for the #BlackLivesMatter group's assessment, which considers the #whitelivesmatter movement as having a different ideology. The distinction that occurs on social media between the two groups arises because of the choices to defend different tastes (races). Both of them seemed to want to strengthen their respective glories on social media through a hashtag war.

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to examine hashtag activism on social media concerning the #BlackLivesMatter movement. This study starts with a literature review followed by analysing the content from posts and comments on Instagram and Twitter platforms. A literature review was conducted to examine all matters relating to information and initial ideas from the previous #BlackLivesMatter movement used social media platforms. This certainly serves to limit this study to the scope of the hashtag movement in social media. Next is content analysis. Beginning with data scraping steps using Media Tool Kit software, this study attempts to identify and analyse posts and comments on Twitter and Instagram. The next is the reporting step, which showed content's meaning one by one in the #BlackLivesMatter movements featured in the results and discussion chapter. The content analysis is used to check comments posted on Twitter, Instagram and comments that appear on the web in the span of 1 Month (May 29 to June 29, 2020). These pages were chosen due to the beginning #BlackLivesMatter movement is on May 25, 2020. Samples were collected from Twitter and Instagram because both meet the research criteria. Features such as hashtags, images, captions, and comments are considered, following the research questions in this study.

This study examines tweets and comments using the hashtags #BlackLivesMatter on social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram using the Media Tool Kit software. The process of categorizing, prioritizing, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting, and conceptualizing is then carried out on each meaning relation that exists in the codes for subsequent analysis (Saldaña, 2021). These stages are designed to produce a complete analytical framework from the start. It is critical to determine which social media comments and postings have significance in relation to the #BlackLivesMatter campaign.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using the Media Tool Kit for data scraping, we successfully obtained impressions, total conversations on Twitter and Instagram, and sentiments towards #BlacklivesMatter. As previously explained, the data collection was taken from May 29 to June 29, 2020, as an event increased the number of posts with #BlackLivesMatter since May 26, one day after the incident. The first showed 142,566,563 (Figure 1) conversation impressions and hashtags discussing the Black Lives Matter. In the end, those total impressions describe what will be seen by a net citizen or usually called netizen about the Black Lives Matter movement on their social media feeds.

BlackLivesMatter

142,566,563

Figure 1: Total of impression (source: www.mediatoolkit.com)

The second is shown in Figure 2, which compares the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag percentage on Twitter and Instagram. 63% of the #BlackLiveMatter hashtags were mentioned on Twitter, while 37% were mentioned on Instagram. Following the research of Isa and Himelboim (2018), it is illustrated that Twitter is more dominantly used in online social movements. While Instagram is more widely used because of its association with visual power, its function has a simulacra effect on users (Borges-Rey, 2017).

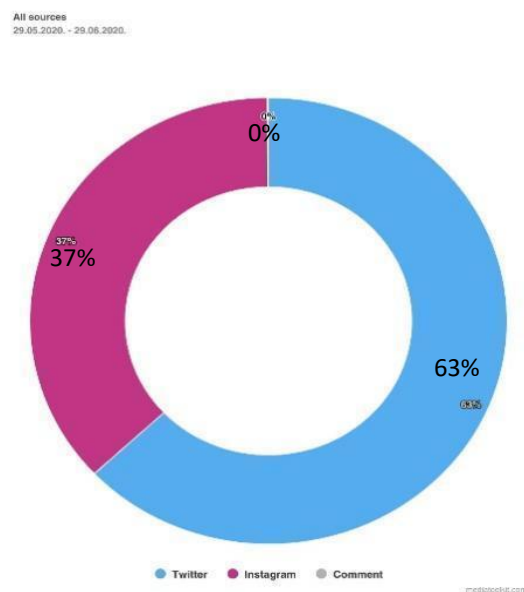


Figure 2: All sources of conversation on Twitter and Instagram (source: www.mediatoolkit.com)

Next is about the #BlackLivesMatter conversation sentiment ratio. In Figure 3, it seemed that the conversation is dominated by negative sentiment with 52%. Meanwhile, positive sentiment was 48%. Referring to the Black Lives Matter protest agenda (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016), this action reflected protests and resistance to racism that strengthened in 2013. So, it is not surprising that this movement is filled with negative sentiments that are in line with the spirit of resistance protesters.

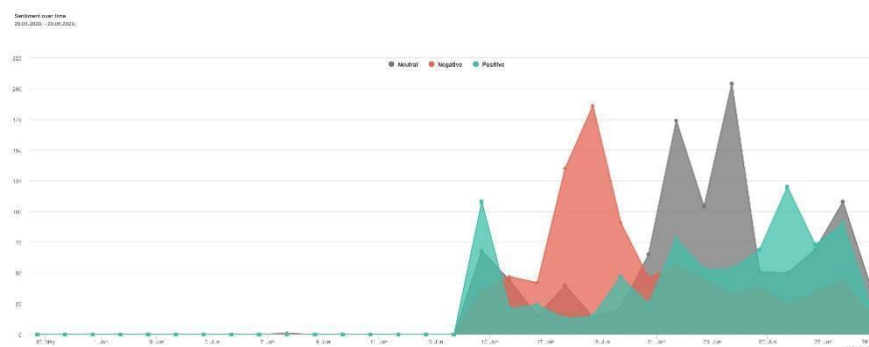


Figure 3: The sentiment of social media (source: www.mediatoolkit.com)

The proliferation of texts makes reality blurry and hard to believe. Through social media, we see the #BlackLivesMatter social movement becoming blurred with reality as the most significant protest movement in 2020. The virtual reality that appears in the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag is only simulacra that slowly conceals the facts. Thus, users of social media make a reality that transcends reality itself. Therefore, this study analysed data that has been categorised into Table 1. The #BlackLivesMatter hashtag results do not truly represent the protest movement through a content analysis conducted using the Media Tool Kit scraping tool.

These interpretations make the world seem more accessible through digital platforms, and users involved in the virtual movement feel they have participated in the fight for the same protest. The explosion of information makes the ability to understand the real world almost impossible. For example, the #BlackLivesMatter virtual movement found in this study through @aliipashaofficial's Instagram content displays images or visuals that are not directly related to the protest. The Black Lives Matter social action was reduced to narcissistic acts of Instagram users by presenting himself posing "dashing" between protesters' lines. That makes the actual event blurred, raising questions over the emergencies of a protest.

Table 1: Social media content data (source: www.mediatoolkit.com)

Twitter	Instagram
Elfantino Ananda 23.06.2020., 01:14 https://twitter.com/elfantinoa/status/1275205527115456513 #BlackLivesMatter #BlackOutTuesday https://t.co/bsqovgKOFL	bacongirlcara 27.06.2020., 06:02 https://www.instagram.com/p/CctFotSFIEs/ bacongirlcara's profile picture @caradelevingne & @kaiagerber at BLM protest. #caradelevingne #kaiagerber #blm #blacklivesmatter #losangeles
Siti yulianti ☐☐ 27.06.2020., 06:04 https://twitter.com/Styuli167/status/1276728197900414976 difference, both are adorable ☐☐☐☐👉☐ thank you for you speaking up, I STAN THE RIGHT GROUP ~~~ WITH THE PROUD I SAY: "LOVING THE BANGTAN ISN'T A MISTAKE, AND I'M PROUD OF THIS BIG FAMILY PART (ARMY)" #방탄소년단진 #BlackLivesMatter	__akeel_belim_143 27.06.2020., 05:50 https://www.instagram.com/p/CB7JBaYHRb #rigatoni #viral #jodhpur #india #world #quarantine #tiktok #goodvibes #photography #popular #☐☐☐☐ #shout_outshoutouts_ #oddcars #❤️❤️ #iloveyou #lookdodia #whatiwore #zodiacsigns #ptastudent #school #ringlight #j #o #stayhome #o#blacklivesmatter
PopBuzz 10.06.2020., 04:06 https://twitter.com/popbuzz/status/1270462344800460803 @popbuzz Influencer Kris Schatzel called out for staging Black Lives Matter photos and her response is even worse Flushed face #BlackLivesMatter	teepee_teess 23.06.2020., 01:20 https://www.instagram.com/p/CctE6HuHKAk/ November is coming quickly @teepee_teess #funnytshirtsayings #govote #politicaltshirts #politicalviews #blacklivesmatter #blm #fucktrump #whitehousedisaster #tshirts #masksforsale #wearamask #wearyourtruth #beyou #bethechange #democrats #saveamerica #teeshirts #tshirtstore #funnyquotes #wordsofwisdom #funnysayings #tshirtsforwomen #tshirtsformen #standup #dontbesilent #coronavirus #covid19 #makeachange #shopping #relevantshirts

□□

15.06.2020., 05:49

<https://twitter.com/batmanwink/status/1272556807899066369>

RT @AdibSolehin: Yang kata trendingkan #PalestiniansLivesMatter takkan ubah ape" ni, dulu korang viralkan #BlackLivesMatter ada ubah apa" tak?

aliipashaofficial

24.06.2020., 04:15

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBzPv1DAHQ3>

□#dubai□□ #blogger #newyear #2020 #artist #dxb #instagram #celebrity #tag #photooftheday #denim #uae #billionaire #viral #europe #enjoy #blacklivesmatter

New media technology is becoming a force that has the potential to obscure reality. Twitter was found to be the most responsible digital media because Twitter immerses everyone in their reality. The struggle continues to seize the public's attention by creating their version of new realities. Users are caught in an overflow of information and content curated based on the Twitter algorithm. Facts are increasingly debated, especially their status and function in politics. New media plays a significant role in fertilising the simulacra, often seen as truth rather than simulation. Several accounts have been scraped in this study's findings, such as @AdibSolehin, @aliipashaofficial, @teepee_tees, @Siti_yulianti, @Elfantino_Ananada, @bacongircara, and Kris Schatzel as social media influencers, show the controversy and contradiction of cases involving the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter especially on Twitter.

The data show that this symptom emerged in their response to this issue. However, what is not realised is the dominance of post-truth information instead of facts in the simulacra space. This is because Twitter is changing the way users engage with social and political issues and how new realities themselves are created and maintained. Based on the scraping data phase stated earlier, each user has their own way in explaining facts that they believe are real. They claim their actions are part of the protest movement. Meanwhile, what is being tried is far from the authentic meaning of the movement itself. These accounts have a way of communicating the issue with their respective versions, which encourages forming a post-truth simulacra space on social media.

With the concept of simulacra, Baudrillard (1988) stated that the cyber era is the era of the triumph of signs and symbols resulting in the explosion of images and meanings by social media and technological developments. Image and meaning are judged based on prestige and the ideas behind symbols, in contrast to Marx's exchange value. Exchange-value dominates use-value, according to Marx (1992). Only through commodities and money, will everything in society's reality benefit. However, according to Baudrillard (1988), the current era has changed the commodity in question. For Baudrillard, the values of signs and symbols are a reading framework for the current reality built by the desire for consumption and reproduction.

Twitter, for a long time, has been a dangerous simulacrum. A blurry picture of reality is scattered within it. It can be said that the content we consume, including narration, conversations, and hashtag wars, is easily mistaken for the real world. In general, in this study's findings, there is a bias towards cognitive-based processes and effects. Issues are produced, and reproduction becomes a strong belief for social media users. Unfortunately, the process of reproducing the message involves and focuses on one's emotions and affections.

The findings of this study showed that there is a process of reproduction and consumption, which is interpreted by each social media account to form an entirely new reality. The accounts of @popbuzz and @aliipashaofficial account, for example, both show a

reproduction of a reality that does not represent real reality, namely the #BlackLivesMatter protest. @pobuzz describes Kris Schatzel's post showing poses during protest activities that followers can interpret on Instagram as part of reality, beyond the original reality.

Baudrillard (1988) added that today's culture represents the simulated world, a world formed from the relationship of random signs and codes, without clear relational references. This relationship involves real signs (facts) created by the production process, as well as false signs (images) created through the reproduction process. In a simulated culture, the two signs accumulate and intertwine to form a single unit (Baudrillard, 1988). Thus, it makes it hard to recognise the real reality and the fake one. Everything is part of the reality that Western society lives and people's lives today. This unity is known as simulacra or simulacrum, and a world built up from the chaos of values, facts, signs, images, and codes. Reality no longer has any references, except for the simulacra itself. In the postmodern era, the principle of simulation has become the commander, where reproduction (with information technology, communication, and knowledge industries) replaces the principle of production (Lockwood, 1964). At the same time, the play of signs and images dominates almost all human communication processes.

Truth is attacked and abused. In the simulacra, space can make someone experience delusions to believe that something is true even though the truth is still questionable. This emotional response is of particular concern in the context of new media. Each truth can be reproduced into another truth in digital networks. Twitter is thought to have the character of the media capable of creating this process. Fast-moving conversations, keywords, and hashtags generate negative and positive sentiments at the same time.

In a simulation society, everything is determined by sign, image, and code (Hidayat, 2021). A person's identity, for example, is no longer determined by and from within himself. The identity is now more determined by the chaotic construction of signs, images, and codes that reflect how individuals understand themselves and their relationships with others. In the simulation mechanism, humans are created in a space they consider a real one when, in fact, they are fake. Because individuals project their illusions of power into the efficiency of the system, simulation societies become illogical and subjective, resulting in a condition of 'spectacular alienation.' Society has adapted to such a system at the expense of their capacity to make sense in public discourse (Campbell, 2021).

Each image (content) is raised, re-created, simulated for personal gain, and drives social media users' narcissistic desires. There are hundreds of texts (content) in the form of images, tweets, and hashtags created for followers. Twitter and Instagram operate on the same model. As a result, the line between reality and content is almost impossible to distinguish. Social media is used as an outlet for user accounts to keep people focused on their activities that are not directly related to Black Lives Matter's real action. Every text created by social media users only represents their interests.

Social media is constantly being flooded with fluctuating content as long as this social movement appears in America and other parts of the world. This is lifestyle manipulation, presenting access to pseudo truth as something aimed at producing meaning. That is why virtual celebrities and social media users like Kris Schatzel try to contribute to a protest, even though he is only producing content to be interpreted for followers on Instagram. Schatzel stood on the edge of the sea of protesters, as signs present and interpreted "a struggle" that must be consumed. In contrast, the real reality showed that Schatzel is not struggling. It

means that he sold promises and produced something beyond reality for his followers on social media.

Schatzel and Alii Pasha's accounts broadcast stories about actual events, but they are far from providing clear information for followers to access the actual facts. Social media plays a role in simulating events, while social media users create events that are reproduced through body poses, camera angles, captions, and hashtags. The simulation became easily consumed and believed by his followers on what Schatzel and Alii Pasha did as hyperreality. For Baudrillard (Wolny, 2017), they are involved in a protest movement and are willing to produce "falsehood." They consider their followers in cyberspace can be deceived, fooled, and diverted from the real reality.

Even arguments based on rational reasoning cannot deal with one's desires or beliefs. At this stage, the gap between truth and lies is difficult to distinguish. External stimuli such as Twitter play a significant role in sustaining certain emotional conditions. New media technology and globalisation make information more complicated because it means that information becomes more massive to be processed. Social media such as Twitter easily floods our consciousness with as much information and content as possible, ultimately distorting our perceptions of reality.

CONCLUSION

The rapid evolution of technology brings people into cyberspace, a space that believes in presenting a virtual reality. The virtual world's construction makes people drift inside, while the counterfeit social relation turns out to be the simulation of social relations. In the world of social media, users are no longer passive viewers. The users interact, create, and dictate events or reality with other social media users. They are screens, editors, reporters, and customers at the same time. The more intensive users connect virtually, the more engaged they are in the hyperreality world.

What could be seen from the Black Lives Matter movement is not different. Instead of genuinely representing a protest movement, the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag was more likely to be used to increase awareness of the user's social media posts that might not be related to the issue. The meaning of social movement was reduced merely to narcissistic actions. The underlying motivation behind it might be to obtain the numbers of "like" as the considered measurement indicator of self-existence in social media. Expressing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media could not be entirely seen as a form of concern or supporting a certain issue. Some social media users may use it to gain popularity as they might think that the virtual world is real. This condition might lead us to further discussion as hyperreality drifts us away from the real world and causes the death of reality.

NOTE

All Twitter and Instagram comment excerpts are translated from original Indonesian to English by the author.

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