BLACK LIVES MATTER AND SAY HER NAME:

HOW INTERSECTIONAL SOLIDARITY STRENGTHENS MOVEMENTS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Abstract:

What happens when members of a movement call out inequality within activist ranks? How do social movements address internal divisions and inequalities? While some commentators believe that recognizing difference can lead to fragmentation within social movements, ultimately weakening them, advocates for intersectional solidarity believe that it strengthens movements. We address this debate by using Twitter data to examine the impact of the #SayHerName campaign, which called attention to the intersectional marginalization of Black women, on the #BlackLivesMatter network. We find that the introduction of #SayHerName created denser #BlackLivesMatter networks, and that even after #SayHerName declined, the #BlackLivesMatter network was denser and more connected that it was previously. We conclude that intersectional solidarity strengthens movements, and that failing to pay attention to the concerns of marginalized groups is a missed opportunity for ensuring movement persistence in the long run.

Introduction: Solidarity and Intersectionality in Social Movements

Movements for social justice in the U.S. and elsewhere are often dogged by conflicts among activists that mirror broader social struggles for equality and liberation. Women's movements frequently face criticisms that they emphasize the concerns of White women, elite women, and straight women at the expense of women of color, working class women, undocumented, immigrant and refugee women, and sexual minorities (Davis 1998; hooks 2000; McKane and McCammon 2018; Roth 2004). For instance, reproductive rights movements have been criticized for speaking only to the concerns of White women, ignoring reproductive justice for women of color (Luna 2017; Luna and Luker 2013). Similarly, movements for racial justice have been accused of sexism and classism (McAdam 1988; Robnett 1997), and labor movements have been castigated for racism and sexism as well (Frymer 2011; Simien 2004; 2005; Weldon 2011). How should activists in these broader movements respond to such well-founded concerns? How can movements for social justice maintain a united front while dealing with such internal conflict?

In this paper, we ask what happens when those within a movement recognize and call out inequality—especially intersectional marginalization or privilege—within activist ranks. Intersectional analysis and organizing reveals problems of injustice that create contradictions for activists who aim to organize against all forms of oppression, problems that cannot be ignored (hooks 1999; Tungohan 2019). Yet, highlighting internal problems and injustices can seem to weaken movements and undermine their legitimacy (Echols 1989; Gitlin 1995; Harvey 1996; Tarrow 1998; Taylor and Whittier 1999). In the past, some observers have used this point to argue that progressives are preoccupied with an impossible goal of inclusiveness while those less

concerned with inclusion reap the benefits and grow stronger politically—as some say, the Left is marching on the English Department while the Right "Takes the White House" (Gitlin 1995).

These old debates, largely from the 1990s, have new relevance today. In the aftermath of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, commentators have once again picked up the refrain that emphasizing the specific instances of group marginalization and oppression, or what is sometimes characterized as "identity politics," weakens social movements and political campaigns, and is a prime culprit for diminished solidarity on the Left (e.g., Lilla 2017). The resurgence of this line of criticism—and its apparent enduring appeal—revives longstanding popular criticism of the movements for the liberation of various peoples, shaped by race, class and gender (e.g., Gitlin 1995; for a discussion see Weldon 2006). For instance, movements and campaigns for racial justice (like #BlackLivesMatter) and feminist movements are often explicitly or implicitly invoked as examples of so-called "identity politics." Politically, such language can be used to diminish the claims of marginalized groups, falsely portraying them as primarily or only focused on symbolic characteristics, and as having selfish goals (Gutmann 2003).

Against this view, others have argued that campaigns highlighting the oppression and marginalization of specific groups and problems engage new groups politically by speaking to their identity-based experiences, thereby *broadening* political engagement and participation. These scholars see diversity and difference as a political resource (Simien and Clawson 2005; Tormos 2017; Weldon 2006; 2011; Young 1990; 2002). This line of argument posits that a strategy of intersectional solidarity, one that recognizes and seeks to address multiple lines of oppression and inequality, actually strengthens, rather than weakens, social movements (Cohen 1997; Chun et al. 2013; Fisher et al. 2017; Terriquez et al. 2018; Tungohan 2019). Indeed, many

contemporary movements invoke the idea of intersectionality explicitly as a strategy for organizing (Heaney 2018). Further, an intersectional analysis of social movements helps explain who participates and who responds to such movements, helping us understand the important role of such movements in democratic representation (Fisher et al. 2017; Stout et al. 2017; Weldon 2011).

We explore this debate empirically by looking at contemporary feminist activism relating to the Black Lives Matter movement. We use an analysis of on-line relationships on the social media platform Twitter between activists in two on-line campaigns that are part of the movement contesting police violence against people of color—the #BlackLivesMatter movement and the #SayHerName campaign—to explore the impact of such identity-specific social justice claims-making on solidarity projects. We use an original tool (called GeeViz) that we developed to analyze Twitter data to map the network of relationships between users who participated in the on-line campaigns for #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName. We are specifically interested in the degree to which the emergence of #SayHerName might have affected relationships within the #BlackLivesMatter networks. Did it make these networks more dense? Or did the emergence of a group that could be seen as critical of the broader campaign weaken ties between activists, and even divide or balkanize those participating in the campaign? How was the structure and density of the network of activists involved in the BlackLivesMatter campaign affected by the emergence of a challenging campaign? And how well were #SayHerName activists integrated into BlackLivesMatter networks?

Using #SayHerName as a proxy for organizing related to specific social groups (e.g., Black women) within a broader social movement or campaign (e.g., the movement for Black Lives, and/or against lethal police violence against African Americans) our analysis finds no

evidence that mobilization invoking the concerns of particular identity groups weakens social movement networks. Instead, our work reveals patterns more consistent with the view that highlighting and seeking to counter internal relations of oppression can *strengthen* social movements. In other words, by taking steps to counter intersectional marginalization, identity groups can reinforce solidarity and affirm network ties. If this is true, then failing to pay attention to the concerns of marginalized groups is a missed opportunity for strengthening social movements and ensuring their persistence, and likely weakens movements of marginalized groups in the long-term. Based on our analyses, we conclude that it is likely that intersectionally marginalized groups depend vitally on solidarity with broader publics.

Intersectionality and Solidarity: Analytic, Political and Epistemic Dimensions

This study takes an intersectional approach to the analysis of social movements. Intersectionality refers to the ways that gender, race, class and other social structures combine to create a matrix of domination that constructs the experience and organization of inequality and oppression in ways that cannot be reduced to any single axis of oppression alone (Combahee River Collective 1982 [1977]; Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins 2002; Collins and Bilge 2016). But intersectionality is not just an ontological thesis, that is, a claim about how reality is structured. It is also has political and epistemological implications (Alexander-Floyd 2012, Hancock 2016; Mugge et al. 2018). Politically, intersectional scholars have argued that social groups defined by gender, race and the like do not share essential experiences, and are best thought of as political categories akin to a kind of coalition (Crenshaw 1992; Mohanty 2003). Such political intersectionality points to the importance of building solidarity in the context of different experiences and conflicting interests. Epistemologically, intersectionality points to the

importance of grounding analyses of particular social groups in their own accounts of their experiences (Alexander Floyd 2012). Together, these arguments point both to the importance of questions of solidarity for the political enactment of intersectionality and also to the importance of scholarship that amplifies the voices and perspectives of the marginalized as they seek their own liberation. In this sense, intersectional scholarship extends the long tradition of critical social theorists in undertaking scholarship that reveals relations of domination and enables the dismantling of oppression (Young 1990). In *analytic* terms, this study takes an intersectional approach to the study of social movements by examining the ways that gender and race combine to shape on-line activism. Our study takes up questions of *political* solidarity in foregrounding questions of coalition-building within and across intersectionally-defined identity groups. In *epistemic* terms, our analysis centers campaigns by and for African American women as they mount a sustained challenge to state authority, seeking to uncover challenges and solutions for new social movements seeking to advance social justice. The elements of intersectionality should become evident in the sections below.

How Intersectional Solidarity Can Strengthen Social Movements

Most contemporary social movements reflect the broader societal inequalities that divide the social context in which activism takes place, such as structured inequalities defined by race, class, gender, age, immigration status, sexual orientation, and so on) (Irvine et al. 2019; Milkman 2017). Organizing around even one axis can be quite complex, given that these dimensions are cross-cutting or *intersectional*. Even in the context of such complex inequalities and deep divisions, broad-based coalitions can emerge relatively quickly, especially in response to a shared threat (McCammon and Campbell 2002; McCammon and Van Dyke 2010; Van Dyke

2003). But divisions stemming from inequalities *within* movements can be difficult to address and solidarity across such difference can be difficult to maintain—especially when segments of the movement contest their marginalization (Einwohner et al. forthcoming; Tungohan 2019). To take just one example, studies of the Occupy Wall Street movement have noted that despite seeming efforts at inclusivity through various structures, such as General Assemblies at which anyone could speak, conversations were often dominated by white men, which led other, marginalized activists to form separate groups within the movement (Hurwitz and Taylor 2018; Montoya 2019). Similarly, Tungohan (2019: 3) shows that the Filipino migrants' movement in Canada faced many contradictions in its efforts to "grapple with issues of allyship, social movement praxis, and intersectionality."

In some sense, the challenge of inclusion presented by marginalized groups in social movements is not new, in that it can be seen as one type of challenge presented by diversity more generally. Indeed, social movement scholars have long pointed to the challenges of diversity, arguing that diversity causes fragmentation or balkanization (Gitlin 1995; McAdam et al. 2001; Tarrow 1996). We contend that the problems of *intersectional marginalization* in social movements go beyond the challenges associated with mere difference to raise issues of power and empowerment, challenges to what some scholars call *critical* diversity. Moreover, though many social movement scholars agree that diversity can be a challenge, there is less agreement about precisely how movements should respond, both to these intersectional challenges and to diversity more broadly (Tungohan 2019; Einwohner et al. forthcoming).

Some have argued that the best strategy for social movements with challenging internal divisions is to emphasize universal elements of actors' identity, or to avoid identity politics altogether (Lilla 2017). Social psychological research has shown that appeals to more universal

identities can strengthen political support for social solidarity in the form of support for social programs (Huddy and Khatib 2007). Others have argued that a sort of strategic essentialism—a collective identity that emphasizes similarities over differences— may strengthen social movements and magnify political influence in certain circumstances (Gitlin 1995; Rupp and Taylor 1999; Spivak (in Landry and McClean), 1996).

However, democratic theorists and activists argue that if emphasizing universality requires repressing difference, it may backfire as a strategy of strengthening solidarity. "Dealing" with diversity by stressing universal identities does little to address power imbalances. Normatively, such an approach worsens relations of domination among groups, as the views of the privileged are asserted as universal perspectives that crowd out or silence the marginalized voices (Young 1990; 2000). Indeed, without formal measures to ensure their voices are heard, the issues confronting marginalized groups tend to fall through the cracks of social movement organizations as part of the "tyranny of structurelessness" (Freeman 1972; Polletta 2004; Strolovitch 2008). When members of marginalized groups do not see themselves represented among movement leaders or spokespeople, and when their ideas and concerns repeatedly fail to attract the attention of the broader movement, members of marginalized groups may feel alienated and excluded (Davis 1998; Hurwitz and Taylor 2018). They may exit the organization rather than continue to exercise voice (Hirschman 1970). In this view, the "problem of diversity" is actually a problem of power differentials and a failure to address them, not a problem of diversity in itself (Davis 1998; Tungohan 2019).

The extant research therefore suggests two different arguments about how social movements address internal diversity: they either recognize difference within their ranks as part of a strategy of mitigating the marginalization and powerlessness that stems from such

difference, or they downplay difference by emphasizing what all movement members have in common. In a similar application of these ideas, Bernstein (1997) examines how movements shift their "identity deployment" strategies over time and in response to different political circumstances, varying whether they "celebrate" or "suppress" their differences from the mainstream. Our inquiry is different yet complementary to hers. Instead of asking why movements emphasize similarity with or difference to some majority, we ask about difference *within* social movements. Can movements divided by structural inequalities stay together, or are they doomed to fragmentation? And are there benefits to the strategy of emphasizing diversity for those movements that can keep diverse coalitions together?

An emerging body of research suggests that emphasizing diversity likely brings significant, perhaps underappreciated, resources to social movements. Some scholars argue that diversity is a political resource, providing a wider set of experiences on which to base political decisions and creating a broader set of groups who can potentially be drawn into political action (Chatelain and Asoka 2015; Simien and Clawson 2005; Tormos 2017; Weldon 2006; Young 1990). Parallel research from the business world shows that diverse groups are better at problem-solving and are more innovative (Page 2007) and associated with greater profits (Herring 2009). Marginalized groups have distinctive perspectives and concerns, and these points of view are unlikely to be articulated in the absence of separate organizing by marginalized groups (Mansbridge 2001; Morris and Mansbridge 2001; Ture and Hamilton 1992; Weldon 2011). The benefits of diverse perspectives and greater legitimacy can only be enjoyed, however, if the organizational practices of the movement ensure that diverse groups are included symbolically and substantively, and are able to articulate their views as part of movement deliberations (Cohen 1997; Einwohner et al. forthcoming; Weldon 2006; 2011; Young 1990; 2002).

The literature on the organizational benefits of diversity emphasizes that the benefits of diversity depend on the ways that organizations are structured. For example, Page (2007) shows that these benefits depend on group processes that allow diverse members to contribute to discussions and share their ideas. When some groups are silenced or excluded, or if collaboration is merely formal with dominant people unilaterally making all the decisions, the benefits of diversity will not be realized. Going further, proponents of the idea of critical diversity emphasize that not all diversity matters equally from a political standpoint. The most important axes of social difference are those that systematically advantage some groups and disadvantage others; that empower some and disempower others (Herring and Henderson 2011).

Proponents of intersectional solidarity similarly emphasize the importance of enacting an approach to solidarity that promotes intersectionally marginalized groups in a movement by prioritizing their presence, leadership and concerns (Crenshaw 1991; Tormos 2017; Strolovitch 2008; Weldon 2006). The arguments for such solidarity are primarily normative, or value-based, arguing that justice demands that activists claiming to fight for social justice must attend to those in their midst whose concerns would otherwise fall through the cracks (Cohen and Jackson 2017; Combahee River Collective 1982 [1977]; Hancock 2011; Strolovitch 2008). Other arguments for solidarity are more practical, emphasizing the connections between different forms of oppression and rejecting approaches that seek to establish the primacy of one "axis" as the most foundational or worthy of attention—not just because such a focus is indefensible normatively but also because it fails to address important dimensions of oppression in practice. For example, some Black queer feminists have long argued that achieving Black women's freedom would entail destroying all systems of oppression (Combahee River Collective 1982 [1977]).[1] In addition, some scholars also argue that intersectional approaches to building solidarity are

beneficial for movements in terms of their political impact and organizational persistence: Movements that are more inclusive, that work hard to coordinate with and secure the participation of secondarily marginalized groups, will be more sustained and impactful because of the greater legitimacy and innovative political discourse and tactics that accompany inclusion (Tormos 2017; Weldon 2006; 2011). They may also inspire solidarity and responsiveness from those democratic representatives for whom the specific constituencies identified hold particular significance (Stout et al. 2017).

The example of the Black Lives Matter movement allows us to explore these dynamics empirically (Ray et al. 2017). In what follows, we examine the movement during a time at which some voices within that movement called for more attention to the experiences of a distinct segment of the Black community at risk of abuse by police violence: namely, Black women. The introduction of the "Say Her Name" campaign, which emerged to highlight Black women who died in police custody, represented an important moment that allows us to examine how movements address internal diversity and seek to introduce intersectional perspectives. Further, we inquire about the outcomes of this "identity work" (Reger, Myers, and Einwohner 2008) for movements themselves.

We examine two hypotheses derived from the extant research. The *intersectional solidarity* argument suggests that amplifying and seeking to remedy the exclusion and elision of secondarily marginalized groups should strengthen social movements, bringing new adherents and more intense engagement with their campaigns. Against this view, some theorists equate *universality with sameness*, expecting that highlighting similarities will bring greater engagement. We apply these arguments to an analysis of the relationship between Say Her Name, a campaign that raised the concerns of a secondarily marginalized group (Black Women)

in the context of a movement for racial justice in matters of police violence (Black Lives Matter). With this inquiry, we take seriously the idea of intersectionality and apply it toward an understanding of how movements stay unified over time.

Black Lives Matter and Say Her Name: Background and Context

Black Lives Matter provides a timely and compelling case for an examination of these two competing hypotheses. The movement, which has been called the "new civil rights movement," is often dated from the 2012 killing of seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida by neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman (Jackson 2016; see also Ray et al. 2017).[2] Martin was killed while walking on his way to buy some candy. Initially, Zimmerman was not charged by police, but a public outcry led to his being charged with second degree murder and manslaughter. His acquittal sparked protests which are seen as marking the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement, a campaign to protest the lack of attention to or concern about lethal police violence against African Americans (Hooker 2016). This campaign, which was the result of the work of three Black women organizers, Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza, and Patrisse Khan-Cullors, has drawn attention to the killing and deaths of many African Americans in police custody. These high-profile killings include the 2014 killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and the lethal police choking of Eric Garner in New York City. Activists took both to the streets and to social media, using the hashtags such as #blacklivesmatter and #icantbreathe in the case of the latter. Black Lives Matter is frequently categorized both as a movement itself and as a campaign that is part of broader movements for racial justice and intersectional feminism and against police violence (BlackLivesMatter 2018; DeChoudry et al. 2016; Hooker 2016; Stewart et al. 2017). It is situated in the tradition of the

Black Freedom movement but is also an instantiation of the Black radical tradition (Ray et al. 2017).

Some three years into the activism of BlackLivesMatter, a new campaign was launched, one focusing on lethal police violence against African American women. Say Her Name is a campaign that dates from the July 16, 2015 killing of 28-year-old political activist Sandra Bland, who died in police custody in Waller County, Texas. Bland was arrested on July 10, 2015 for a traffic infraction and was accused of assaulting an officer. She was then found dead—hanged—in a jail a few days later. The phrase that defines the campaign appears to have been first coined by the African American Policy Forum in a May 2015 report (predating Bland's death) entitled *Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women* (AAPF 2015). Nevertheless, in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement against police violence, #SayHerName sought to remind Americans that Black women can also be victims of police violence. Concerned that the media tended to portray the victims of lethal police violence against African Americans as solely a problem afflicting Black men, organizers aimed to raise awareness of the many African American women who had also died at the hands of the police (Brown et al. 2017). They used the hashtag #SayHerName to highlight the many instances of such violence that involved African American women, from Renisha McBride to Mya Hall to Alexia Christian (AAPF 2015; Alter 2015). This campaign therefore took an intersectional approach to the problem of police violence against African Americans, highlighting Black women's experiences (Brown et al. 2017).

Examining the relationship between these two campaigns affords us the opportunity examine the theses outlined above about identity politics and intersectional solidarity: how did the introduction of a campaign highlighting violence against Black women affect the Black Lives

Matter movement? The *intersectional solidarity* hypothesis leads us to expect that #SayHerName would strengthen #BlackLivesMatter and contention against police violence. In contrast, the *universality as sameness* argument predicts that campaigns like #SayHerName undermine and weaken the Black Lives Matter movement, balkanizing the social movement into hostile subgroups and weakening connection and cooperation. To test these hypotheses, we ask: Did calls to include Black women in BlackLivesMatter activism strengthen movement networks, inspiring closer engagement? Or did they divide and weaken the movement, manifesting in looser, less dense activist networks? We answer these questions by examining the relationships between those using the on-line platform Twitter to participate in the Black Lives Matter movement before, during and after the emergence of #SayHerName.

Data and Analysis

Our study employs Twitter data. While Twitter has well documented limitations (see Cihon and Yasseri 2016; Tufekci 2014), studies have repeatedly shown that Twitter data can provide valuable insight into the ways social movements organize and communicate (Earl et al. 2013; Gaffney 2010; Juris 2012; Tremayne 2014; Tucker et al. 2016). On-line activism, and activism on Twitter in particular, has been linked to other forms of participation in social movements and political behavior, and "social media have become integral tools for those wishing to provoke social change" (Dumitrica and Felt 2019: 2; see also DiGrazia et al. 2013; Stout et al. 2017). Social media provides a vital platform for solidarity and framing among contemporary activists (Anderson 2016; DeChoudhury et al. 2016; Papacharissi 2015; Stewart et al. 2017; Twyman, Keegan, and Shaw 2016). This is especially true for socially excluded or marginalized movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement, which originated as an on-

line hashtag and used digital spaces like Twitter to drive visibility (McLaughlin 2016) and to create its own "networked counter-public" (Jackson and Welles 2015, 2016).

Our data comprises all the tweets using common BlackLivesMatter[3] and SayHerName[4] hashtags from May 2015 to April 2016, a database of approximately 8 Million tweets. This time period begins before the emergence of #SayHerName, which began as an on-line movement after Sandra Bland's death on July 16, 2015, and ends about nine months after the emergence of #SayHerName. We therefore argue that these data are useful for examining the effects of #SayHerName on intersectional solidarity within the Black Lives Matter movement (as it exists on-line).

We use network analysis to map the communicative engagement between Black Lives Matter and Say Her Name online discursive spheres, using Twitter data. Another advantage of our data is that they can offer some measures of social movement strength. We operationalize social movement strength in terms of network density. As social movement networks become more dense, participants engage in more frequent interaction and interactions are more reciprocal. Greater density therefore reflects greater discursive engagement, which can be seen as an indication of greater strength and vitality. More connections between networks suggest more robust, integrated networks. Conversely, declining density can be seen as a decrease in strength and vitality. Fewer connections suggests a more tenuous relationship, dependent on a single individual for connection, liable to be disrupted if anything happens to that person.

Empirically, we base our analyses of social movement strength on networks of retweets. While retweets are only one of several possible ways to examine relationships on Twitter, we use them because they are well suited to capturing our concepts of engagement and solidarity within activist networks. As Bild et al. (2015:12) see it, "the retweet graph more closely models the

real-world social and trust relationships among users, because it derives from a more forceful action—not just listening to others' ideas, but actively forwarding them to one's own friends."

A final advantage of our data, which describe on-line relationships, is that they are public and observable in a way that interpersonal relationships are not. Using data that document such relationships allows us to go beyond self-reported perceptions of movement strength to get at actual relationships, something that is critical when asking about something as fraught as solidarity across lines of gender and race. In addition, prior work on Black Lives Matter using Twitter data has found that on-line relationships can be important for the development of collective identity (DeChoudhury et al. 2016) and, further that on-line activism is linked to face-to-face political mobilization, and that hashtags can be used to "to mark participation, assert individual identity, promote group identity, and support or challenge a frame" (Stewart et al. 2017: 1).

Results

Using a platform/tool called GeeViz, developed specifically for this purpose by computer scientists Aviral Mansingka, Ammar Husain and Dan Goldwasser, we generated directed network graphs for the most active users for each hashtag (defined as the top K users) showing which users retweeted each other's tweets (that is, which users sent the content along to their own followers). Each node represents a Twitter account, and arrows on the edges or ties show the direction of the retweets. These graphs represent a network of the on-line relationships between the most active participants in the on-line campaigns—that is, the users whose tweets most frequently employed the hashtags specified. Focusing on the most active users allowed us to analyze significant relationships of engagement between identifiable users, thus avoiding

"bots" or fake accounts (Varol et al. 2017). While our data allowed us to identify the user names for each account, the nodes are left unlabeled in this paper in order to protect the identity of the participants.

The results are displayed in the Figures 1 - 9. We begin with descriptions of Twitter activity with hashtags related to BlackLivesMatter and SayHerName. We present the activity for each campaign separately. Figure 1 shows the tweets associated with BlackLivesMatter over the entire study period (excluding the tweets that only use SayHerName hashtags). The two large spikes correspond to two well publicized events relative to the Black Lives Matter movement: the shutting down of I-70 by Black Lives Matter activists in Ferguson on August 10, 2015, the first anniversary of Michael Brown's death (about 25K tweets) and the decision not to indict the police officer who killed Tamir Rice (Dec 28, 2015, about 32Ktweets). Figure 2 shows the SayHerName tweets, excluding the BlackLivesMatter tweets, over the study period. The first spike, May 18, 2015 (about 18,765 tweets) corresponds with the release of the "Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women" (AAPF 2015) and the second spike, on July 20, 2015 (about 246,288 tweets) corresponds with the death of Sandra Bland. Finally, the last spike we see on December 21, 2015 (about 31,824 tweets) is related to the decision not to indict the officers responsible for Sandra Bland's death.

[Figures 1 and 2 around here]

We turn now to analyses that address our research questions. Given our interest in exploring how the introduction of the SayHerName campaign affected the BlackLivesMatter movement, we examine the strength of the movement networks before, during, and after the SayHerName campaign. These findings are represented in Figures 3 through 5. Figure 3 shows the network linking the most active users of the BlackLivesMatter twitter hashtags in May and

July of 2015, before the emergence of SayHerName. During this period the movement was of average density, with ten hubs that are loosely connected to each other. Network density during this period was 0.016. Yet as Figure 4 shows, when SayHerName first emerged, the connections between activists became tighter and denser, reflecting more mutual interaction. Network density in this period increased to 0.024 (a 50% increase). This suggests that in the period when SayHerName first emerged, the Black Lives Matter network became much denser and more tightly connected. The activists were more deeply enmeshed in the movement at this time, suggesting that they were more engaged with each other—an indicator of movement strength.

How did SayHerName activism continue to shape the Black Lives Matter network? As Figure 5 shows, in the nine months after the emergence of SayHerName, the on-line BlackLivesMatter network declined in density by 22% (from .024 to .0186). Some SayHerName activists became absorbed (or reabsorbed) into the BlackLivesMatter campaign (network maps not shown in order to protect names of participants). Even with this decline, however, the BLM network is still denser than it was *before* SayHerName (0.0186, up from the initial 0.016, or 16% percent denser). This increase may not be as dramatic as the increase in density that occurred in the thick of the SayHerName campaign, but it is still an increase, and it is certainly not evidence of a weakened network.

[Figures 3-5 around here]

Our analyses thus far show that the BlackLivesMatter network was strengthened by the introduction of SayHerName—but what can we learn by focusing on the network of SayHerName users? The effects on the SayHerName network, especially over the longer term, may be more mixed. Figures 6 and 7 show that while the SayHerName network emerged as a very dense network compared to BlackLivesMatter (density=.045), a few months later, network

density had declined by 13% (from 0.045 to 0.039). Thus, the on-going relationship with BlackLivesMatter did not appear to strengthen SayHerName. Of course, we cannot conclude that it weakened SayHerName (since many other factors may have intervened), but we may conclude that the benefits of engaging other networks, at least given the dynamics of the period in which these outcomes diverged, seem different for BlackLivesMatter and SayHerName.

[Figures 6 and 7 around here]

Finally, having examined each network of users on their own, we now examine them together: When we look at the users for both hashtags together (Figure 8), initially, we see what appears to be balkanization and comparatively lower levels of mutual support (which is to be expected to some degree since two distinct groups are being combined). Indeed, initially, the connection between BlackLivesMatter and SayHerName seems to hinge on a single user. As Figure 9 shows, though, a few months later, there were four or five points of connection between the networks. The levels of interaction reflected in the density measurements decline slightly over time: the network density in July-September is 0.016 and in February to April is 0.014, a decline of about 12 or 13%.[5]

[Figures 8 and 9 around here]

In the initial period surrounding the emergence of SayHerName, then, BlackLivesMatter activists took up and retweeted SayHerName tweets, and some SayHerName users became seemingly new, active participants in BlackLivesMatter. By February, the two campaigns were more robustly connected (with more points of connection), but it appears the overall retweet network was less dense. Importantly, though, it does not appear to be more balkanized or divided: if anything, the connection between the new campaigns was more diffuse.

The dropping off of overall network density appears to have coincided with a drop-off in network density and participation in both hashtags. As noted earlier, participation in SayHerName declined between July - September 2015 and February - April 2016. The same is true for BlackLivesMatter. However, it is important to note that in spite of the drop-off in density for Black Lives Matter, the density returned to a higher level than before the introduction of SayHerName. Before SayHerName, the density level of the on-line network was about 0.0161, whereas afterwards it was 0.0186. There is no evidence from our analysis that SayHerName reduced density or weakened the movement. In fact, it appears to have strengthened the movement, if anything, even if the benefits of mutual support were not sustained. SayHerName, however, may have been weakened by the interaction, though we cannot rule out the possibility that other factors triggered the declining density. We can say, though, that any apparent benefits from the initial engagement with Black Lives Matter were not sustained for SayHerName.

These findings suggest that campaigns to raise issues affecting secondarily marginalized groups, like SayHerName, likely strengthen movements by engaging users in these on-line campaigns, as prior research suggests (DeChoudhury et al. 2016; Stewart et al. 2017). In addition, a campaign like SayHerName offers new insight and understanding that enables broader movements to be more effective. Chatelain and Asoka (2015) argue that #SayHerName strengthens movements against police violence by documenting Black women's experience of police violence, expanding our understanding of social and political world. In the absence of such movements, they contend "we fundamentally fail to grasp how the laws, policies, and the culture that underpin gender inequalities are reinforced by America's racial divide." The question of whether the benefits accrue equally to the group characterized by secondary marginalization as they do to the broader movement is trickier to answer from our data. It does

appear that the trajectory of the campaigns between the broader group and the marginalized diverge.

Conclusion and Implications

This study suggests that in the short term, emphasizing difference, and highlighting the particular problems of secondarily marginalized groups that would otherwise be overlooked, strengthens social movement campaigns. The work of intersectional solidarity engages new users and encourages more active participation, as one would expect if one sees difference as a political resource. Black Lives Matter appears to have been strengthened by the emergence of SayHerName in the short term, and increased density was sustained several months out. There is no visible increase in balkanization: if anything, the two movements were more connected. In other words, the patterns here are more consistent with theoretical expectations derived from an approach that emphasizes intersectional (or "active") solidarity (Einwohner et al., forthcoming; Hancock 2011; Tormos 2017) and less consistent with an approach that expects any emphasis on secondary marginalization to weaken and balkanize movements.

The longer-term picture may be more mixed, especially for the intersectionally marginalized. Nine months out, the network density declined somewhat for both campaigns. At the same time, both movements may be strengthened by the more robust connections between them. Black Lives Matter seems to have seen more sustained benefits, in the form of higher levels of density than before the emergence of SayHerName. In contrast, the SayHerName network did not enjoy increased density.

What does the slight decline in network density suggest for SayHerName as a campaign? On the one hand, it may indicate to autonomous campaigns of marginalized groups that

engagement with broader campaigns will divert resources from their specific issues to more general ones, and therefore dilute their impact. This implication may be correct to some degree, especially if more extensive data beyond our study period were to show that this decline continued and support from the broader BlackLivesMatter movement eroded. In the shorter term, however, it seems that the SayHerName users benefitted from the support of the BlackLivesMatter users. The links to BlackLivesMatter became broader over time. Prior research suggests that secondarily marginalized groups can benefit from coordination with broader movements (Weldon 2011). Further research could explore whether counterpublics are depleted by closer connection to dominant publics, or strengthened by such connection, overall (Fraser 1990; Young 1990).

Our discussion is based on an analysis of on-line activism, but it is clear that on-line activism may be driven by events outside the digital world, and also that on-line activism shapes those real-world events. It is possible that the declines in network solidarity are unconnected to the broader relationship between SayHerName and BlackLivesMatter, reflecting instead some other developments. Given the important role of on-line activism in sparking and maintaining both movements (Brown et al. 2017; Ince, Rojas, and Davis 2017), however, this seems unlikely. Still, the evidence presented here undermines the idea that "identity politics" divides and weakens movements, at least in the short term. It also raises questions about the expectation that collective identity only increases over time, and that on-line participation necessarily always deepens collective identity. More generally, this finding is consistent with evidence that affirming gender identity deepens racial solidarity and supports an intersectional approach to building solidarity in social movements.

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Figure 1: BlackLivesMatter Tweets, 05/2015-04/2016

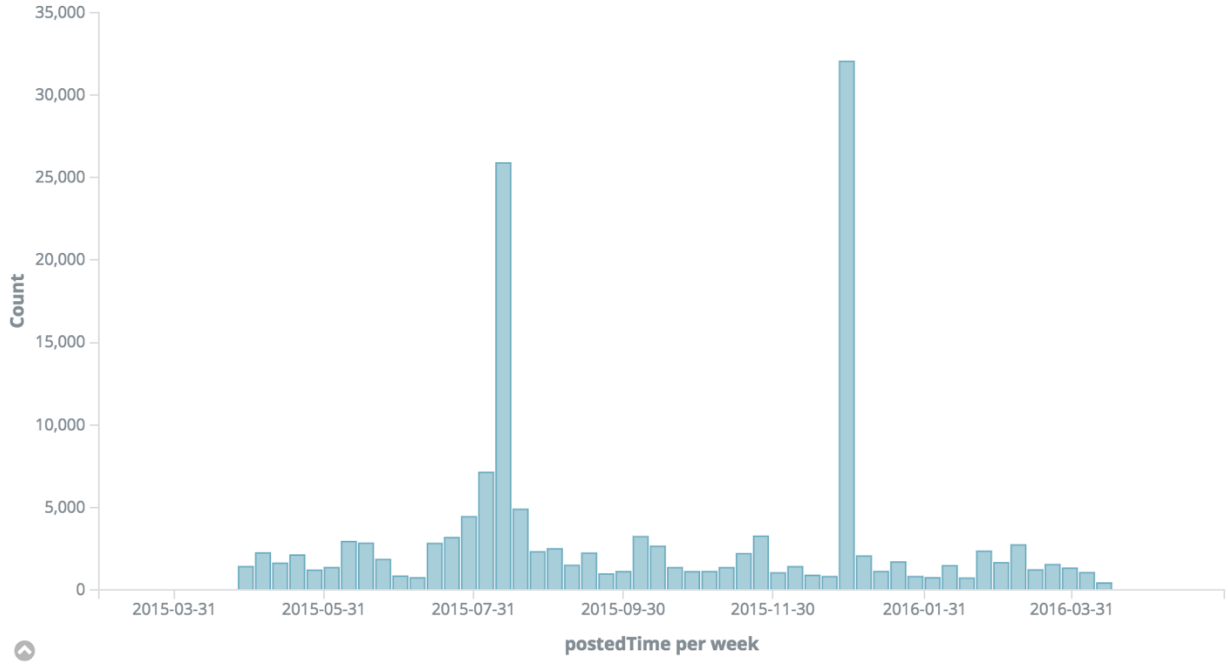


Figure 2: SayHerName Tweets, 05/2015-04/2016

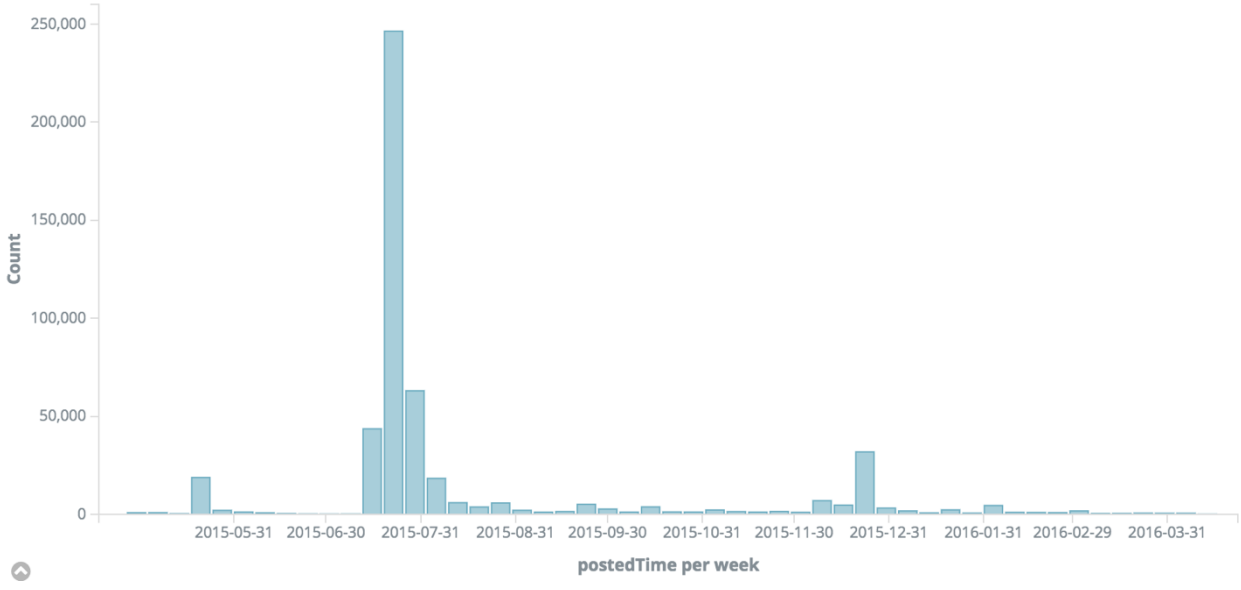


Figure 3: Network Graphs, Users of BLM Hashtags, May and July 2015

(Nodes=users, edges=retweets)

BLM Before SHN (May 1-July 1 2015)

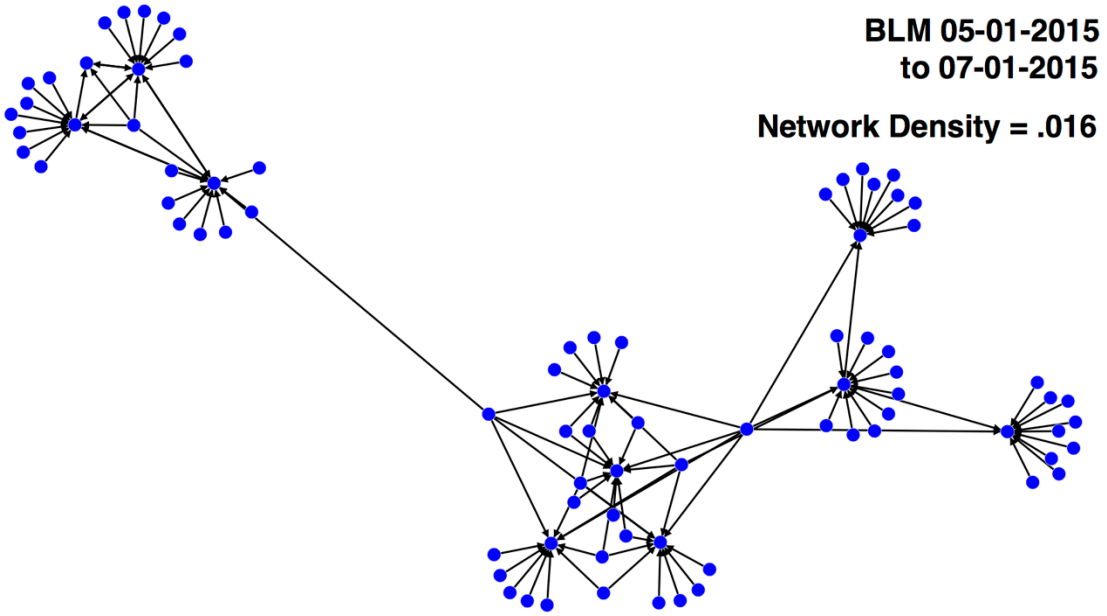


Figure 4. BLM During SHN (July 15-Sept 15 2015)

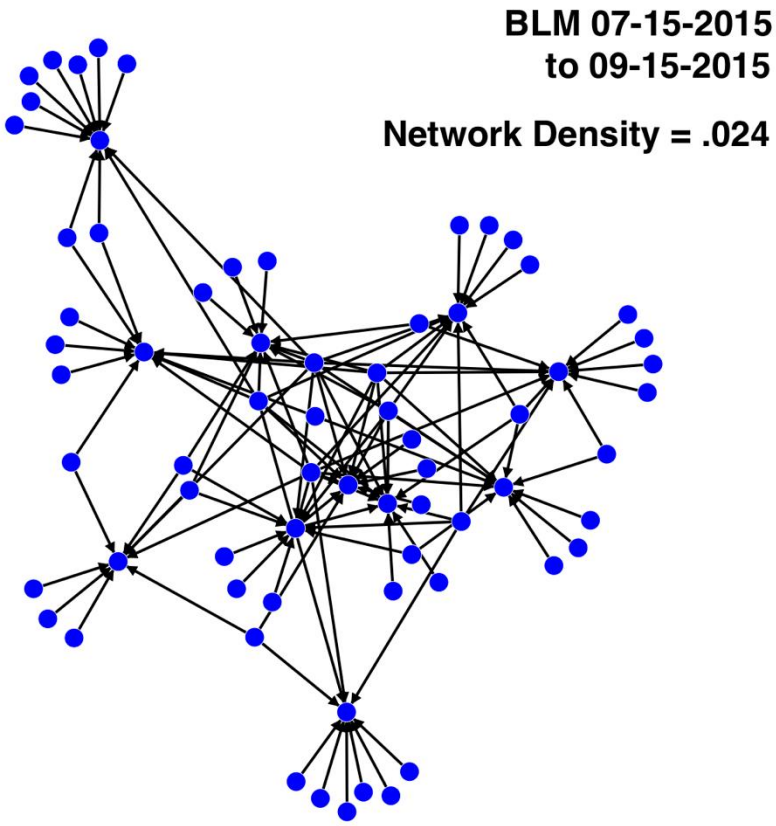


Figure 5. BLM After SHN Feb-April 2016

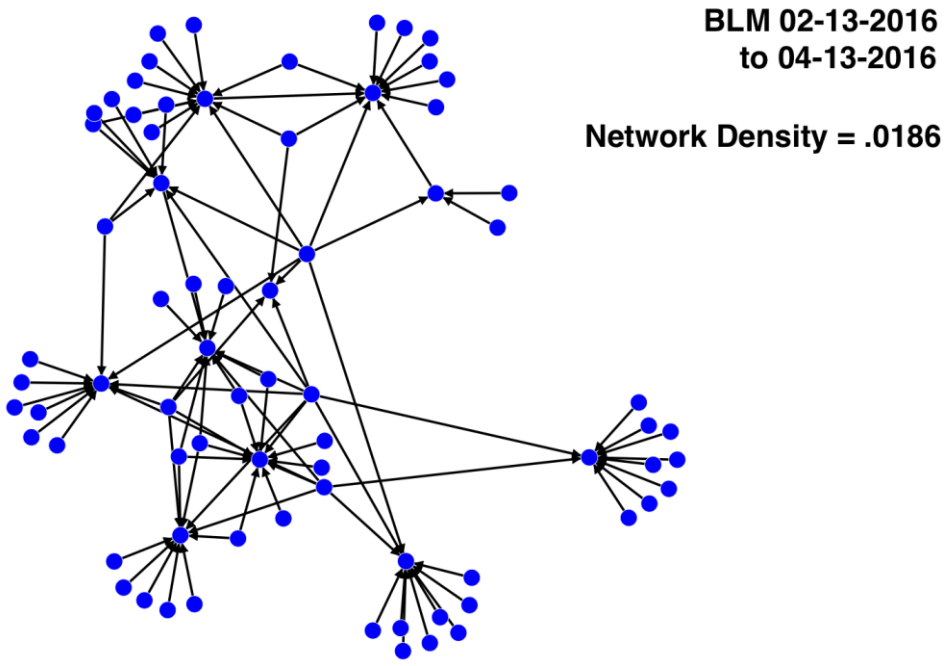


Figure 6: Network Graphs of Users of SayHerName Hashtags

(Nodes= Users, Edges=retweets)

SHN Hashtags, July-Sept 2015

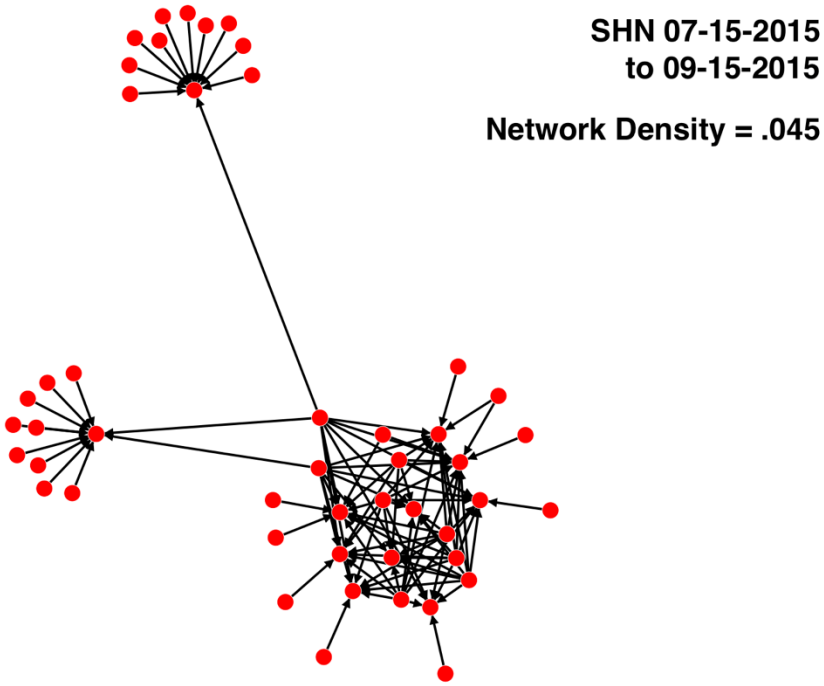


Figure 7. SHN Hashtags Feb-April 2016

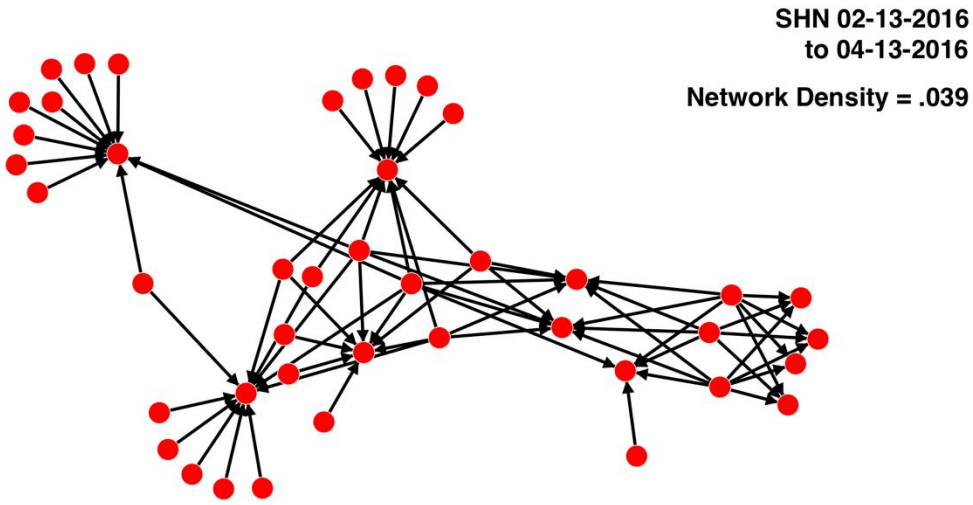


Figure 8: Networks of SayHerName and BLM Twitter Users

July - September 2015 (Blue =BLM, Red=SHN)

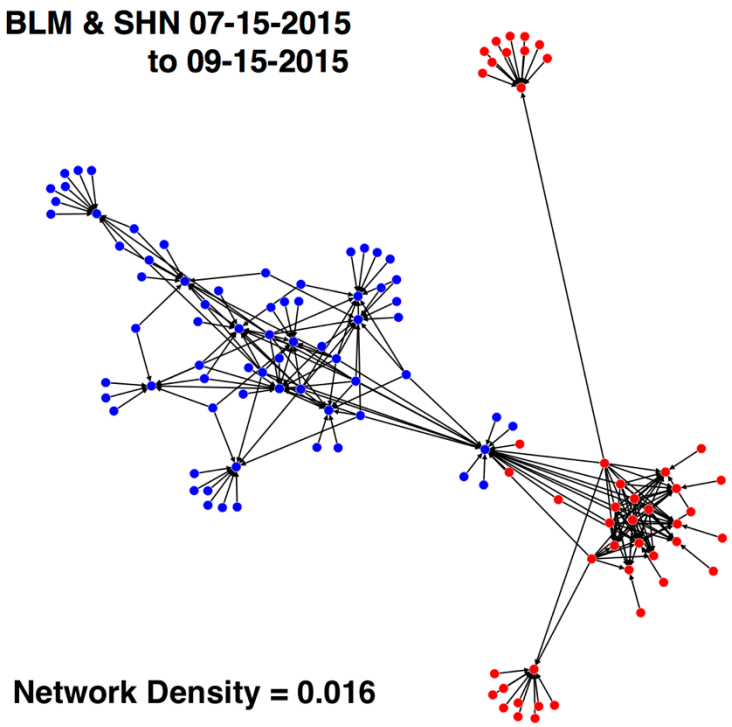
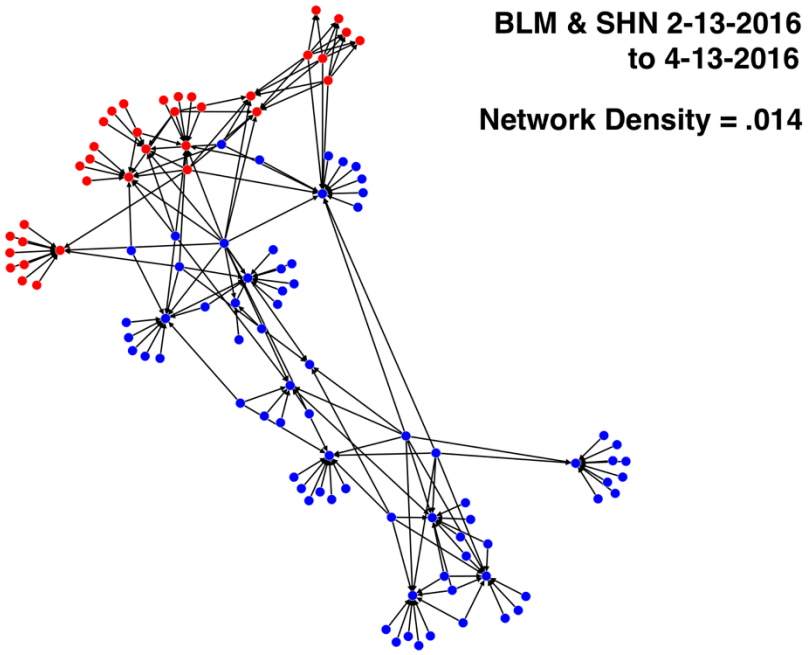


Figure 9: Networks of SayHerName and BLM Twitter Users

February-April 2016 (Blue =BLM, Red=SHN)



Notes

[1] The Combahee River Collective Statement, one of the earliest written articulations of intersectional forms of solidarity, states: "If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression."

[2] On the BlackLivesMatter movement more generally see the special themed section of *Ethnic and Racial Studies (Volume 40, 2017)*. For timelines of the BlackLivesMatter movement see ABCNews (2016) and Georgetown University Library (n.d).

[3] Hashtags for BlackLivesMatter include Blacklivesmatter, ICantBreathe, Ferguson, Handsupdontshoot, Justice4EricGarner, TamirRice, and MichaelBrown (capturing all uses without regard to case sensitivity)

[4] Hashtags for SayHerName include SayHerName, SandraBland, BlackWomenMatter, and *Anombrarlas*

[5] The question arises of whether the relationships for the core users that define the graph hold for the whole set of users. As one might expect, density for a larger graph of users (comprising most of the users in the graph, but likely including some with weaker ties to the network) is less dense, and it also declines over the period, by a slightly larger degree (about 20%). Thus, the pattern is in the same direction, but reflects the weaker ties of users who are less frequently involved in the network.