

# #MakingRoom

A study of Twitter's Influence on the Social Justice Advocacy of Women of Color

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## Overview

Background → Findings → Discussion

## Background

- ▷ Social justice is always evolving (Larson & Murtadha, 2002)
- ▷ Cause-oriented activism is causing intra-group rifts (Norris, 2007)
- ▷ Societal image of "female" is a straight, white, cis-gendered woman. (Lampen, 2016)
- ▷ WoC experience, at the least, "double jeopardy." (Gutierrez, 1990)
- ▷ Social media is an effective means of promoting political participation. (Effing et al., 2011)
- ▷ Twitter as a vehicle for social justice
  - (campaigns like #metoo, #blacklivesmatter)

## Method

- ▷ Method: In-depth interview
- ▷ "The data collected are considered by many who conduct this type of research to be more reliable" (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2015)
- ▷ Participants were found on Twitter
- ▷ Criteria:
  - Identify as a woman of color
  - Have an active Twitter account
  - Tweet about social justice
  - Have a strong following

## Identified Themes

- ▷ "Speed as an Ignitor"
- ▷ "A Voice to the Silenced"
- ▷ "Building Community"
- ▷ "Twitter's Necessity for Relevance"

## Research Question # 1

Why do women of color want to use Twitter for social justice advocacy?

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*I can think of the #NMOS14 vigils in which I organized in four days. We were able to organize 119 vigils in forty-two states and five countries and we were able to coordinate all of that within a matter of four days. To organize something like that back in the 60's would have taken at least a year and we were able to do it a few days. I think that's probably the biggest impact.*

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*I think for women of color who have been repeatedly silenced, the opportunity to freely express yourself is powerful. I think as much as we deal with harassment, you're still being heard.. People are hearing directly from us what life is like for us.*

**Research Question # 2**

How do women of color use Twitter to gain traction on their social justice advocacy?

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*I think that you're not going to be able to be a part of politics without being very much connected to social media or at least have people in your staff doing that, that's the best way to reach people.*

- Discussion
- Social justice is ever evolving
  - The image of "female" is beginning to expand
  - Integration of social media is undeniable
  - Twitter has helped incorporate the voices of WoC into the equation

➔ **Conclusion**

