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Elizabeth Jordan Davies April 15, 2015

Politics, Protest, and Hashtag Activism:
The Political Participation of African American Youth on Social Media

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Abstract

Social media has been at the forefront of activism and social movements, but can Facebook and Twitter truly affect political behavior? Using a sample of students from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, this thesis asks whether social networking sites can increase the online and offline political participation of Black American youth, and whether social media influences feelings of linked fate, as well as internal and external political efficacy. OLS and logistic statistical regression models suggest that social networking sites do not have a significant effect on Black youth political behavior; rather political interest and a sense of efficacy are the most influential variables across these models. Finally, I perform an on campus mobilization experiment modeled after Green and Gerber’s 1999 get out the vote mobilization experiment. The experiment also suggests that interest and salient identities are the most important factors in participation.

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Table of Contents

Chapter **Page Numbers**

Introduction……………………………………………………………..…………..……1-4

Chapter 1…………………………………………………………………………………5-21

Chapter 2…………………………………………………………..…………………22-46

Chapter 3……………………………………………………………………………...…47-51

Chapter 4…………………………………………………………..………………52-56

Appendix…………………………………………………………..………………57-64

Works Cited…………………………………………………..…………………65-69

List of Tables

Figure	Title	Page
Table 2.1	Social Media Politics and Income Frequency Table	31
Table 2.2	Race and Income Frequency Table	31
Table 2.3	Likes and Posts	32
Table 2.4	Encourage to Vote and Share News	34
Table 2.5	Participation in Protest Activities	36
Table 2.6	Chi-Squared Test-Race and Participation in Protest Activities	39
Table 2.7	Social Media Use and Black Linked Fate	40
Table 2.8	Internal Political Efficacy and Race Frequency Table	41
Table 2.9	External Political Efficacy and Race Frequency Table	42
Table 2.10	External Political Efficacy and Income Frequency Table	42
Table 2.11	Social Media Use and Political Efficacy, Part I	43
Table 2.12	Social Media Use and Political Efficacy, Part II	44

List of Graphs

Figure	Title	Page
Graph 1	Race and Social Media Political Participation Frequency	30
Graph 2	Offline Political Involvement by Race	35
Graph 3	Involvement in Eric Garner Protests	37
Graph 4	Involvement in AEPi Protests	38

Introduction

Black Emory University students and allies gathered in Asbury Circle rhythmically chanting the mantra of the national movement, "Black lives matter! Black lives matter!" The students swirled around the circle, their momentum and anger growing. They proceeded boldly to the library and then to Clifton Road, where they lay in an intersection blocking traffic and making local and national headlines (McGrew 2014). Scenes similar to this one occurred on college campuses and in cities across the nation after a jury in New York decided not to indict a police officer accused of killing Eric Garner, an unarmed Black man. While Black protest and political organization is not a novelty, Black American youth are now adding a new tool to their political repertoire: social media.

The #BlackLivesMatter protests at Emory exemplified a local Black community at a predominantly white university standing in solidarity with a national concern about police brutality. Their protest was fueled and organized by interactions and news distributed via social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Not only were Black Americans across the nation making their voices heard, many were advertising their protests, rallies, and marches to their friends and followers on social media. These methods of organization for political outcry beg the question: is social media good for Black youth politics? That is, can social media increase Black youth political activity online, offline, or both?

Scholars have investigated the practice of African Americans to come together verbally on social media around common cultural or identity experiences, especially through interactions on "Black Twitter" (Florini 2013; Brock 2012). This study evaluates how participation and interactions on social media sites encourage young Black people, specifically youth from 18-29 years old, to participate in political activities. By viewing social media as an alternative political

space, I test Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's theory that the Internet may serve as a new frontier for political participation against their concern that the Internet purely replicates offline political patterns, especially regarding income, as those of the highest income categories are typically the most participatory both online and offline (2010). I specifically consider how social media can influence the political participation of Black youth. If social networking sites can serve as a comfortable space for politically marginalized or less traditionally participatory political communities to voice their opinions and become involved in politics, then perhaps the very nature of political participation and protest has changed. Political scientists should then consider social media as a new space for political expression that could include the spreading of information, contacting politicians via social networking sites, or online political mobilization.

This study uses Burns, Schlozman, and Verba's (2001) definition of political participation, as this definition includes activities that both directly and indirectly influence government (4). They write that the term refers to activities that have "the intent or effect of influencing government action…by affection the making or implementation of public policy, or…by influencing the selection of people who make those policies" (4). The focus in their 2001 study is on political activities or "doing" politics, and this thesis shall retain that focus as well; however, I will also consider political discussion as a form of low cost political participation that occurs both online and offline. The specific political activities this study is concerned with are (1) social media political participation (discussing politics or promoting political ideas on one's own social media site) and (2) offline political activities (voting, working for a candidate or party).

To measure online civic engagement activities I employ Thomas Ehrlich's definition of civic engagement. He writes that the term refers to citizens "working to make a difference in the

civic life of [their] communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference…both through political and non-political processes" (Ehrlich, 2000 vi). Civic engagement encompasses less explicitly political community organizing, such as attending meetings at schools and volunteering. This study is concerned with both online and offline civic engagement activities, particularly political protest.

Chapter 1 reviews the history of Black political participation and social movements, with an eye toward the influence of social networks and technology in Black politics. Chapter 1 additionally establishes the current sociopolitical context of Black politics and activism in the United States. I consider the combination of Black politics and social media specifically, and present the theory that Black youth social media use may increase online political participation due to the decrease in the cost of online politics and the presence of a Black digital community. However, I assert that social media may not significantly influence offline participation patterns due to the impersonal nature of social media mobilization and the remaining political costs of real life political participation. Even so, contact with and participation on social media may shape these websites as an alternative public sphere for young African Americans where their voices can be heard, which may theoretically increase political efficacy and a sense of linked fate.

To test these hypotheses, in Chapter 2 I survey a racially diverse sample of 690 students at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia from February 22, 2015 to March 15, 2015. The survey questions evaluate political participation patterns and social media use, as well as self-reported participation in two on campus protests. The protests include the on-campus response regarding the Eric Garner decision as well as an on-campus racial bias incident, wherein the Emory Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) fraternity house was defaced with swastikas. This incident was especially

jarring, as AEPi is a traditionally Jewish fraternity. I selected these events because they were both bias incidents and because Emory students had similar opportunities to become involved in the responses to these events—both protests occurred on campus and were widely publicized via social media. Comparison of participation in these events will demonstrate whether identity appeals are an effective way to get Black youth, or any youth, involved in politics or activism online and/or offline.

In addition to the self-reported survey, in Chapter 3 I conduct an experiment wherein I invite random groupings of survey respondents to on-campus events via Facebook, Twitter, and email. This experiment mimics the get-out-the vote mobilization experiments by Green and Gerber (1999), and demonstrates whether students are responsive or non-responsive to online invitations to participate in offline events that are racial or political in nature.

In Chapter 4, I discuss my findings and the significance of social media to Black youth political participation. I consider the importance of social media as a Black political space and whether online political participation can contribute to offline participation. Finally, I consider the limitations of this project and make suggestions for further study.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

With the advent of mass media, Jürgen Habermas claimed that a new public sphere had been born where non-elites had the opportunity to become informed and voice their opinions (Habermas 1974). In the same way, Facebook and Twitter have become a new type of public sphere, where any individual with Internet access, from a smartphone or a computer, can join large-scale political discussions and distribute information to their social networks. This new "access" to the public sphere suggests that populations that are traditionally less participatory due to social and political marginalization may now have a space where their voices can be heard. But what makes social media different? The idea that new technology can cause people to become *more* participatory challenges Robert Putnam's assertion that technology caused participation in political and civic engagement activities to decline significantly during the last thirty years of the twentieth century, since people became less inclined to engage with their neighbors (Putnam 2000). Additionally, the political mobilization literature suggests that without face-to-face contact, Internet mobilization (via email especially) proves to be ineffective for political participation (Green et al. 2003). However, social media's public sphere and social *connections* may forge a new space for political activity in a new era of Black politics and activism.

Black Politics: Alternative Methods for Alternative Movements

The uniqueness of the African American community and trends in Black political history make social networking sites an exciting new frontier in Black politics. New media and technology are now being utilized within the Black community to distribute information and politically mobilize Black people. The use of media to spread the news of the national Black community hearkens back to the Black media outlets of the Civil Rights Movements, such as

Black newspapers, which widely circulated information that mattered to Black people and their allies. More specifically, these newspapers spread information about lynchings, political repression, and civil rights violations across the country (O’Kelly 1982). As technology developed further, Black activists and organizations utilized phone trees and staged protests targeting the television evening news to spread the word about their political and economic interests in order to increase American citizens’ and governments’ awareness of the protest movements (Torres 2003, 23).

In addition to the political information distributed by Black news sources, social interaction and solidarity fostered through Black networks and institutions such as churches, schools, and civic organizations have proven to be important for Black political participation (Harris et al. 2008; Tate 1991). Black political groups, such as the NAACP, have especially encouraged and influenced Black political participation (Harris et al. 2008, 137; McAdam 1982). Historically, these groups, including the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) provided the social and communication networks necessary to spread political messages and rally support around the student protesters of the Civil Rights Movement (McAdam 1982, 46; Morris 1981, 764). As a result of the interest and solidarity invoked by Black newspapers, Black social networks, and community organizations, Black people had the information and the opportunity to get involved in politics and protest movements (McAdam et al. 1996; O’Kelly 1982).

Black media and community organizations continue to be significant to the Black political community today; however, as Black Americans gained their civil and political rights, more people have been able to affect policy via traditional political participation activities, such as voting for political leaders, rather than through political protest or alternative civic

engagement activities. Black protest and activism specifically has decreased over time due to a relative improvement of political conditions since the Civil Rights Movement, with African American politicians in office and an expansion in the protection of minority voters (Gillion 2013; Harris et al. 2006). As Bayard Rustin noted, Black activism shifted from "protest to politics" (Rustin 1965).

The traditional political participation literature has focused on the disparities between Black and white political participation without considering the potential for African Americans to act as a collective political group in response to the exclusionary, predominantly white American political and economic system (Harris et al. 2006, 132). We know that since the election of Barack Obama, the first Black President, African Americans have, in fact, had a national election turnout rate exceeding white rates—which suggests that Black Americans participate when they feel politically efficacious and believe their voices are being heard (McClain and Stewart 2014; Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Similarly, when Black people live in areas of high Black empowerment in local government, they participate at the same rate as or higher than whites of similar socioeconomic status. This is due to an increase in external political efficacy, which here refers to the feeling that politicians and the government care what one thinks (Bobo and Gilliam 1990).

The difference between internal and external efficacy is an important concept for this thesis. For African Americans, external efficacy and empowerment has been shown to be essential for participation; however, if social media were to increase internal feelings of efficacy, that is, make Black youth feel that they have all the necessary tools to understand and affect government, then perhaps their external feelings of efficacy and empowerment will increase as

well, and as a result, their online political participation. This idea divides from Bobo and Gilliam's (1990) finding that external empowerment is essential for Black participation. The government mistrust that characterizes a low sense external efficacy may still remain, however, for although social media may cover the cost of online political activity of Black youth, their sociopolitical reality remains offline.

African Americans continue to rally nationally around instances of systematic racism such as police brutality, and many still experience interpersonal racism and microagressions, which I define here as "the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership" (Sue et al. 2007, 271). Black people have additional reasons to work together politically, as African Americans have consistently grappled with economic inequality even after the Civil Rights Movement. Many African Americans have gained a place in the middle class, but many others still struggle as "Black unemployment, rising prices in goods and services, and labor competition" persist (Harris et al. 2006, 14). These economic struggles mitigate the political access and inclusion of African Americans, and explain the decrease in African American civic engagement (outside of electoral politics) since the 1960s, as the Black poor and working class navigate increasingly difficult economic barriers to equality and a government they feel is not responsive to their needs.

Theory: Black Youth Political Participation on Social Media: A Low Cost Political Sphere?

The United States has made some racial strides, but many young Black Americans still do not enjoy greater access to economic and political opportunities. When compared to older Americans, young Black people (like young people in general) are typically less politically engaged in real-life civic activities, such as voting and campaigning due in part to a

disconnection to older, whiter political representatives and establishments that they do not feel adequately represents their interests and primarily focuses on the wealthy, white electorate (Cohen 2010). Due to the historical context of race in the United States, Black Americans pay close attention to their government representatives and institutions and calculate their trustworthiness and the benefit of political participation (Nunnally 2012, 24). In other words, Black youth may not see any tangible benefit to participating through traditional means (Cohen 2010). Many Black American youth especially still live in an environment where they must face racial hostility, a disproportionate incarceration rate, less education, and higher poverty rates (Cohen 2010, 8). However, Cathy Cohen finds that young Black people participate in political activities *more* when these activities move to the Internet, such as writing political blogs or sending political emails (Cohen 2010, 181). Why could this be, and could social media sites follow suit?

According to Schlozman, Verba, and Brady (2010) the Internet "has the potential to ameliorate the well-known participatory deficit" among less traditionally participatory populations, particularly youth, although they emphasize that socioeconomic barriers remain intact online due to the "digital divide" (487). The digital divide denotes the lack of Internet access of lower socioeconomic populations. For those *with* access, however, the Internet could theoretically decrease the typical cost of participating in politics. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's 1995 resource model of political participation lists the barriers of political participation as civic skills, time, and money (271). Excluding the cost of Internet access, social media could lower the cost of all of these barriers by giving young African American access to relevant political news, a vocal platform to share their thoughts and ideas, and a public sphere with a built in political community of their peers. Social media could be a space comparable to the Black

church and Black political groups which provided African Americans the chance to become involved in public life when Black involvement was not welcome.

Civic Skills and Social Media: Online Information Sharing and Black Digital Networks

Verba, Schlozman and Brady define "civic skills" as "those communications and organizational capacities that are so essential to political activities" (1995, 273). They point to being well spoken and being comfortable in meetings or discussions as indicators of effective civic skills, and note that these skills are developed in a school, work, or church setting, typically by those of a higher socioeconomic status (Verba et al. 1995, 273). Just as the Black church, Black political organizations, and the Black media outlets of the past fostered these civic skills in the Black community, social media could increase the civic skills of Black American youth by providing them with political information and a political community.

Social media bridges the information gap for Black youth, bringing them the knowledge they need to become involved in politics online and connecting them to larger political movements. Black digital networks that share information can answer the questions of *how* and *why* Black youth should become involved in political activities, making up for the lack of connection to "politics as usual" or the lack of engagement with traditional news sources. On Facebook and Twitter, Black youth are able to spread news stories and political information that is especially pertinent to the Black community, which is important for participation, as seeking news information via social networking sites has been found to be a positive predictor of people's political activities (Gil de Zuñiga et al. 2012). As we have seen with the deluge of political tweets, messages, and online protests surrounding Trayvon Martin or Michael Brown, social media can serve as a gateway to political protest and participation. The spread of information among Black social networks and between Black social media users is especially

important for increasing the likelihood of political participation and activism due to a shared identity and sociopolitical status (Passy 2003, 41; McAdam and Paulsen 1999).

The social connections forged on social media give identity group members the opportunity to come together and rally around a cause or a topic online and verbally signify their race or racial experience online (Sharma 2013; Gil de Zúñiga 2012, 341). Putnam (2000) emphasizes the importance of networks for civic engagement, as they strengthen identity and create norms for reciprocity and obligation, which establishes a sense of duty and responsibility to one's community. Additionally, these identity networks can activate a sense of trust, which increases the likelihood of political coordination and participation, as well as a sense of external political efficacy, as African American youth feel empowered and that their voices are being heard (Nunnally 2012, 26; Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Social media could encourage Black social interaction and facilitate contact with Black media, as well as Black political groups—acting as a "Black counterpublic" where African Americans can express their political ideas to each other in a safe, supportive environment with liked minded individuals, similar to the Black church or the barber shop (Harris-Lacewell 2004, 79; Squires 2002).

There may be a certain political identity formation enacted on social media. In her book, *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET,* Mellissa Harris-Lacewell asserts that the Black church and other social spaces are not *simply* social for African Americans. Rather these spaces serve as a gateway to the Black political world and are crucial for establishing Black ideology. The "everyday talk" that Black people engage in on social media can contribute to Black political socialization, especially if Black social media users are speaking of communal political and economic experiences (Harris-Lacewell 2004, 2). The debates and discussions that occur within Black

communities of social media users are important and necessary for young Black users' as they form political opinions and engage online.

The presence of a Black "community" network on social networking sites could intensify a sense of group consciousness via linked fate. A sense of group consciousness "arises from an awareness of similarity (identification) with other group members, and those who are race-conscious feel that their personal identity is inextricably linked with the group" (McClain et al. 2009). Feelings of group consciousness and linked fate have been found to encourage participation due to communal feelings of political mistrust and internal political efficacy, which is the feeling that one can influence the government (Nunnally 2012; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1988; Verba and Nie 1972). We can especially see linked fate at work in the protest responses to the death of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown: Black social media users poured out their sympathies online, posting messages of solidarity and understanding, seeing the young Martin and Brown as representative of racial profiling and police brutality against Black youth everywhere. This communal mistrust in political institutions (such as the police and the court system), the political efficacy fostered by Black consciousness, and the pertinent information circulated on social media may give Black youth the motivation, the confidence, and the civic skills to become politically active online.

Time and Money: Social Media Resources

Besides civic skills, time and money are the other two important resources necessary for political participation (Brady et al. 1995). Whether social media can close these gaps to political participation is a difficult question, as we understand that access to social media requires an Internet connection, which not every American has the money for, let alone every young Black American. This simple fact could indicate that online participation patterns simply reflect offline

patterns—with wealthier people participating more online just as they do offline (Verba et al. 2010). If we consider income more broadly, however, political participation melds with the question of time, and citizens must ask if they have the *money* to give up *time* to participate in political activities—a chance to take off work to go vote in an election, attend a political protest, or a community meeting. By asking this question, we can see how social media can begin to address the time and money gap in political participation.

Social media and the Internet can provide easy access into a political sphere, where one does not have to leave their home, work, or personal space to voice their opinions or take a stand. Social networkers can log on and speak their minds from wherever they have Internet access—and they can connect with others all over the world. Social media provides a great opportunity to become involved in politics online without having to take much time out of one's schedule to participate. Of course, social media users cannot *vote* on Facebook or Twitter, but they can contact politicians, sign petitions, donate money, or join online campaigns by reposting political messages marked by a "hashtag" that allows online users to follow a conversation online. Social media may not make up for the income gaps in traditional political participation or be "representative" as Verba, Schlozman and Brady suggest in their 2010 article; however, these websites could give people with less mobility and leisure time the opportunity to become involved where they are, as long as they have access to social networking sites. Still, this tradeoff of online participation over offline participation does beg the question of social media's ability to literally mobilize individuals for politics and the *value* of their political activities.

Social media platforms may provide a more expansive outlet for Black youth to voice their political opinions and take a stand on important issues, but we must ask: when does digital activism turn into offline action? Social media can be useful for *online* Black political

mobilization and information sharing, but little research has answered whether this mobilization directly results in political participation or advocacy *offline* (Obar, Zube and Lamp 2012). Social media protests and conversations may incite thousands of users to promote political messages with a "like" or a "retweet," while making headlines and gaining the attention of politicians, but the factors that enable civic engagement and political participation offline will still largely exist. Even as social media brings people together and allows individuals to be politically active without leaving their homes, those with more time, resources, and education will likely still be the most politically active overall.

Social media is widely used and popular among Black youth, and should give them a greater chance discuss politics online and develop the civic skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to become involved in politics online. However, social media users' political behavior online may not result in comparable political behavior offline, since the same barriers to political participation that fall away on social media still can still prevent offline activity. For Black youth, this means increased costs to participation and less interaction with the American political establishment. Additionally, connections forged on social media may not prove to be as strong offline; at least, not strong enough to warrant an increase in political activity in the real world. In fact, Internet mobilization (email specifically) has been found to be particularly ineffective concerning political mobilization and get-out-the-vote efforts, due to the impersonal nature of email invitations to become involved (Green and Gerber 2004).

Problems with Social Media Activism—Going Offline

Multiple scholars have considered the use of the Internet for political mobilization. New technologies such as "email, text message, [and] online social networking sites" provide direct lines of access to young voters (CIRCLE 2006). Get-out-the-vote studies include field

experiments to test what methods and forms of communication are most effective in encouraging voter turnout. The most effective tactics tend to be personal or familiar communication, which involves direct contact or communication from a friend, neighbor, or co-worker. Green, Gerber and Nickerson's 2003 canvassing experiment emphasizes the effectiveness of personal contact, as face-to-face contact was the most effective method for increasing voter turnout in their study. In a study on text messaging and political mobilization, however, a "noticeable reminder" has proven to be sufficient for the politically interested, or those who were already registered to vote (Dale and Strauss 2009). Still, in a large-scale Facebook experiment, wherein users were encouraged to vote and one group was able to see whether their friends had voted in an election and others were not able to see the political activity of their digital networks, the visibility of friends' political activity "exerted four times more influence" than the sole get-out-the-vote message on Facebook (Bond et al. 2012, 298). This study confirms once again that social networks and personal ties are important for political mobilization.

We could consider social media as simply the newest form technology in a long line of instruments used to increase political activity and mobilize citizens—from flyers to photocopies to pamphlets and church bulletins. Social media has been heavily utilized in recent political campaigns, and very famously in the Obama national election campaigns—and participation in political groups online as been found to correlate with propensity to vote (Conroy et al 2012). While the time and money costs of real life civic engagement remain, social media could act similarly to regular sources of media, which gives individuals the information necessary to participate.

However, the *social* component of social media makes this technology different. The social aspect could obviate the need for the face-to-face contact necessary for real life political

mobilization, which we find missing through other Internet channels, such as email or websites. On social media, invitations to offline political activity could come from a friend, colleague, or another trusted source—additionally, social media users can see the organizations, rallies, and political activities that their friends are involved in and join in these offline political events themselves. Still, when considering large-scale political activism or even opportunities to become involved in local political movements, we must ask: how "connected" are social media users, really?

Real Connections for Real Movements?

The very nature of social media's low cost activism may hinder the transfer of online political activity into offline action. Morozov (2011) writes that the outcomes of social media activism are hard to predict, since creating a group or campaign on social media is relatively simple and communication costs are low. Cathy Cohen specifies that young people seemed to be more participatory in Internet activism because of "the ease of participation [and] because of the solitary nature of such acts—they do not require direct coordination…and they allow young people to be engaged *where they are*, on their computers and their cell phones" (Cohen 2010, 181). As a result, thousands of people can join a group or promote a cause online without getting involved offline or being personally connected to the cause—which can be good for raising awareness and bad for enacting change. Additionally, the ease of becoming politically involved online masks the true cost of civic engagement offline, for if users believe that their political activity online is enough, they may not take the extra step to substantiate their online activities with additional offline actions and their public "token support" online may not indicate offline action (Kristofferson et al. 2014; Dean et al. 2006). A show of support for an online group or

cause may not mean much in the political world, if those with power do not pay attention to social media activists or if activists do not participate in traditional political activities.

A concern with social media movements is that they will stay in digital form and that real connections between participants will not be forged in real life and result in offline organizing. Social media users who join a group or like a political post will not necessarily have to answer to anyone for their political stance or ever face pressure to become politically active in a cause offline. Further, the number of hashtags or likes surrounding a topic, or even the number of people in a political Facebook group may not be indicative of meaningful political contributions. For example, in Malcolm Gladwell's *New Yorker* article, "Small Change--Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," he observes that many Facebook pages dedicated to "saving Darfur" have thousands of members, but these members typically on average give tiny amounts to the cause. He writes that the biggest Darfur charity Facebook page at the time was the Save Darfur Coalition and had 1, 282,339 members, but members had only donated on average nine cents per person. Gladwell argues that Facebook motivates people to do online what they are not motivated enough to do offline (Gladwell 2010, 46).

Depth of Knowledge

While Jürgen Habermas asserts that media creates a new public sphere, he also expresses a fear of the "weakening of the public sphere," where everyone has the space to speak their mind and share their opinion without any depth of expertise or understanding (Habermas 1974, 55). His fears may prove to be founded, for although social media provides a space for alternative news that may encourage Black youth political activity and activism, Facebook and Twitter are notorious for spreading incorrect news sources and causing people to become involved in meaningless movements or advocate in ineffective ways. A prime example is the 2012 campaign

by Invisible Children, whose viral video of Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony went absolutely viral. The video tugged at the heartstrings of social media users, and as a result, has been viewed over 100 million times and the hashtags #stopKony and #Kony2012 circulated widely on Facebook and Twitter (Lee and Hseih 2013). Still, according to Invisible Children's website, Joseph Kony has not been arrested. According to multiple news media and political sources, however, he is no longer a major threat to Uganda and was not at the time of the posting of the video—which was ultimately misleading for online audiences and did not provide truly tangible ways for interested social networkers to truly assist in the capture and arrest of Kony (Keating 2012).

Similarly, the #BringBackOurGirls trending topic gained worldwide attention on Facebook and Twitter. The phrase is both a message to Boko Haram, the terrorist group and kidnappers of 326 Nigerian schoolgirls, and a signal to people and governments everywhere to assist in any way possible. So far, the Western digital world has helped primarily by posting the hashtag over one million times (Taylor 2014). Critics of this movement are quick to note that although the "Bring Back Our Girls" hashtag has raised awareness of the issue to politicians, 214 of the kidnapped girls have not in fact been returned. In this case, the people involved in the campaign cannot literally help return the girls from the terrorist group holding them, although social media users have assisted in bringing attention to this tragedy for a time.

What shall we make of social media movements, such as #Kony2012 and #BringBackOurGirls? These movements certainly have value, as they demonstrate compassion for such causes—but ultimately, the lack of tangible outcomes and the *ease* with which social media users can take a stance on these complex human rights issues indicates that social media may be mostly "fanfare" and not engaging social media users in offline political activities in which they can actually participate. Very often, trending topics and popular hashtags that make

the evening news elude the depth necessary for political activism and can even overshadow tangible offline political participation activities. The protests of the Arab Spring and similar movements project an image of quick and effective social media mobilization and organization. However, as Lim notes, the entrenched socioeconomic and oppressive political environments of these nations strongly united a large number of citizens over time in single-issue activism and prompted political mobilization against the government (2012). The organizing efforts in places like Tunisia, Egypt and Libya had been occurring offline for years before any protest was advertised on Twitter or on social media, and activists (Lim 2012; Ghanam 2011). The successful and effective online political and activism campaigns are likely centered on more local issues and are promoted by committed activists who are already active offline.

Online versus Offline Advocacy: Value and Tangible Outcomes

Turning our attention back to Black political activism and participation activities in the United States, we must ask: what were *tangible* political outcomes of the social media activity surrounding the Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner cases? Political organizations and advocates have arisen in response to these offenses, such as the Dream Defenders and Black Lives Matter advocacy groups (Skibell 2015; National Public Radio 2014). The Dream Defenders particularly has adamantly protested for the end of Florida's "Stand your Ground" laws since the acquittal of George Zimmerman, joining with the NAACP to lobby to the Florida government (Cadet 2013). This law protected Zimmerman, who claimed that he felt threatened by the presence of Martin and was therefore within his rights to defend himself. Additionally, the national attention surrounding Ferguson likely resulted in the Justice Department's investigation of the Ferguson Police Department—a very important, very tangible outcome of these protests that has resulted in the affirmation of activists' claims of police brutality and injustice

(*Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department* 2015). Social media conversations may have initiated activist group formation, and in the case of Ferguson, government action, by first spreading the news of the injustices committed, and second by connecting people interested in organizing around issues of police brutality. Thus, we may find social media power in fostering the space and connections for advocacy networks, online and offline, while continuing to question social networking sites' ability to change or strongly influence individual offline political participation.

Political activists and organizations on social media are able to widely spread their message and inform the public about events or issues that may not be adequately covered by traditional news sources. As we have seen with activist utilization of Facebook and Twitter to organize protests and send messages during the revolutions of the Arab Spring, the trial of George Zimmerman, and after the murder of Michael Brown, social media has powerful potential to mobilize people and promote political activity (Guo and Saxton 2013; Lim 2012). But can social media *itself* encourage Black youth activism or political participation? As we have previously suggested, by theoretically lowering the cost of participation and by creating an alternative space for political participation, one should see a higher level of Black youth participation in social media political activities than other groups. Still, this does not absolutely guarantee that offline organization attempts will materialize from online rallying of support, even in the networks of the Black digital community.

Why does social media matter?

Despite the problems with social media political participation, there is still political value in online discussion, advocacy, and connections on social media. Black youth political participation on social media has the potential to spur important offline political movements and

draw national attention to the issues that Black American youth face every day. Social media may not largely change the offline political participation patterns of African American youth; however, these websites undoubtedly give Black youth a space where they feel their voices can be heard. If social media is truly providing a networked, alternative space for this marginalized political community, then political scientists would do well to consider and investigate the political activities of Black youth online and resulting offline political participation. Social media's power to forge connections brings Black youth into the fold politically, connecting them with the political establishment in brand new ways. Facebook and Twitter provide a space for Black youth that both provides information that is important and relevant to them and connects with peers all over the nation that are living the same racial experience. Social media can empower Black youth to do politics in ways that traditional spheres do not.

Chapter 2: Social Media and Black Youth Politics Online and Offline

Black American youth face political and economic antagonism—continued inequalities in income and education marginalize Black youth and disempower them from participating in traditional political activities, such as voting or working for a political candidate (Cohen 2010). Still, social networking sites can *cover* the costs of political activity for Black youth, giving them exactly what they need to become involved—that is, a low-cost, time efficient way to voice their opinion, gain access to information and connect with like-minded peers. The ease of social media politics may assist in forging advocacy networks for offline civil society movements. However, the time, money, and civic skill barriers to participation still remain for the typical Black youth, even as Black youth become more participatory online. In this chapter, we will briefly review the theoretical basis of social media as an alternative political space for Black youth, and why this online political activity does not result in similar offline participation rates. We will then test the resulting hypotheses using a survey administered to students at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

We begin with Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's (2010) claim that the Internet and social media breaks down barriers to political participation for traditionally less participatory groups. The study specifically focuses on youth political participation—but concerns remain about socioeconomic status and Internet access. Participation on the Internet could simply reflect typical participation patterns, with wealthier, whiter social media users being the most participatory. However, as we observe the national rallying cry around Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, as well as the cultural phenomenon of "Black Twitter" we know that social networking sites exist as a popular and widely used space for Black youth, and Black youth politics (Florini 2013; Pew 2012). The marginalized status of Black youth make their

participation important—as they are advocating for their political rights and interests at higher rates on the Internet (Cohen 2010 181). What are the theoretical underpinnings of this extra-participatory space?

Understanding the sociopolitical reality of Black American youth, we see that social networking sites can serve as an alternative public sphere for Black youth to express their political opinions and gain a sense of community and efficacy through online social networks. Due to the solidarity norms fostered by these Black digital networks, Black youth social media users will report high feelings of political efficacy (internal and external) and linked fate (Putnam 2000; McClain and Stewart 2014). As a result, Black youth will report higher levels of online political discussion, circulation of relevant news stories, and will be likely to encourage their friends and followers to become informed or participate in politics or activism. However, this social media activity will not transfer into significant offline civic participation due to the remaining cost and barriers of offline political activity. These possibilities produce the following hypotheses:

H1: Participation on social networking sites has a positive relationship with Black youth political participation online.

H2: Participation on social networking sites will not have a significant relationship with Black youth offline political participation.

H3: Participation on social networking sites has a positive relationship with feelings of Black youth political efficacy and linked fate.

If my hypotheses are *incorrect*, Black youth involved in social media will report less political engagement on social networking sites, will not have a strong sense of efficacy or linked fate, and will participate significantly in offline political activity.

Methods: Identity and Social Media Survey and Social Media Mobilization Experiment

I test these hypotheses in this chapter using an original survey. With assistance from the Emory Residence Life office, I distributed (to Emory email addresses) a survey invitation to all residential graduate and undergraduate students at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. The surveys were distributed to people of all races in order to evaluate whether young Black social media users use social media differently than their peers in other racial and ethnic groups. The surveys were anonymous and included questions about respondent age, race, ethnicity, political affiliation, family income, and level of education. The survey also asked respondents if they participate in a series of political activities online, such as following politicians, repost political news articles, and discuss politics with other social networkers on Facebook and/or Twitter. A copy of this survey is available in the Appendix on page 51.

Keeping in mind the recent campus protests surrounding the death of the unarmed Eric Garner by police, the survey asks students about their level of participation in these protest activities and exactly how and why they got involved. I also ask students if they were involved in recent protest events on campus that occurred after Alpha Epsilon Pi, a historically Jewish fraternity, was vandalized with swastikas. The answers to these questions will substantiate my arguments about participation in digital identity networks, as well as participation in online and offline political activities. Accordingly, I predict that Black youth will report *more* participation in the Eric Garner protests than any other student group, since this event relates with their racial identity—just as Jewish students will report more participation in the AEPi protests. Social media networks will likely be important for both of these protests, with Black and Jewish students both participating in their online identity networks to learn and spread the news about these protests. Lastly, I asked survey respondents for their Facebook or Twitter information and

let them know that I might contacting them. This allowed respondents to "opt in" to the experimental portion of my project, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Survey Coding and Values

The survey included 35 questions and was directed to 690 residential undergraduate and graduate students at Emory University, ages 18-29 years old. The survey asks questions about social media use and political participation to understand how young people and young Black people use social media for politics both online and offline and to assess their typical political participation patterns. The survey also asks students how they participated in the on-campus responses to the non-indictment of the Staten Island police officer who placed the unarmed Eric Garner in a lethal choke hold, the "wear blue" in solidarity with the Emory Jewish community campaign, and Emory's Tam Institute for Jewish Study's Teach-In event that occurred on October 15th after the Emory AEPi fraternity house was vandalized with swastikas (Emory Report 2014). I will use logistic and ordinary least squares regression models to analyze the statistical relationship between my variables.

Survey Results

From February 25 to March 8, 2015, 690 Emory students responded to the Identity and Social Media survey. This section will provide an overview of the survey results, a coding and percentage breakdown of the variables of interest, and a statistical analysis of the relationships between the variables of interest.

The survey was only fully administered to students who indicated that they met three qualifications. Respondents had to fully consent to taking the survey, be between 18 and 29 years old, and use social networking sites more than "Never." These questions excluded 19 respondents from the survey, leaving a total n=671. However, respondents were allowed to exit

the survey or skip some questions, giving varying but comparable answers to unrequired questions. The n-size will be indicated in each statistical regression.

Respondents represent a highly participatory sample of youth—with 78% reporting that they use social networking sites more than once a day. The sample was also overwhelmingly female at 72%. Racially, the sample was relatively divided and semi-representative of the racial distribution Emory student body: 53% of respondents identified as White, 18% as Black, 17% as Asian, 6% Latino, and 6% as biracial. Less than 1% of respondents indicated that they identified as either American Indian or Pacific Islander. Asian and Latino students are underrepresented in this study, as they represent 31% and 9% of the Emory population respectively. Black youth, however, are overrepresented in this study, as they only represent 10% of the Emory population. This oversampling will be useful to the study, since Black youth are the population of interest.

The respondents in this sample are very politically engaged—voting, volunteering, and generally participating in politics at a much higher rate than typical American youth. Nearly 60% of students reported voting in a local or national election in the past year (in 2014, a midterm election year), and 55% reported working with citizens to solve a community problem. Typical political engagement numbers report that only 21.5% of youth nationally voted in the 2014 midterm elections, which suggests that this group of students is highly engaged in politics (CIRCLE 2014). Around 43% of students had attended an organized protest and 28% had attended a political rally or speech in the past year. Survey respondents reported a 32% participation rate in the Eric Garner on campus protests and a 61% participation rate the AEPi vandalism protests.

Most respondents reported that they practiced Christianity and Judaism, at 24% and 13%, respectively. The next highest categories were Non-spiritual at 11% and Catholic at 10%. The

religion variable will be used in the AEPi protest model, as Judaism is a salient identity in this protest activity. The income categories in this survey are split into four categories: students from families that make below $50,000 annually; students from families that make between $50,000 and $149,000 annually; students from families that make between $150,000 and $250,000 annually, and students from families making above $250,000 per year. Students in the sample are distributed in the categories as follows: 22% are in the below $50,000 category, 37% are in the $50,000 through $149,000 category, 14% are in the $150,000 to $250,000 category, and 25% are in the above $250,000 category.

Emory University provides a sample of young people who theoretically have the means to engage in political activism and will be representative of elite, predominantly white institutions in the United States. Clearly, according to demographic distributions, alone this sample size is not representative of the average youth in the United States. I chose this population because of its accessibility and the social capital I have as a current Emory student to garner participation in this study. As a result, the findings in this study may not be representative of typical youth political participation patterns, as these youth likely have the time, means, and civic skills to participate in politics both online and offline. Nevertheless, the hypotheses have been rigorously tested and evaluated against the survey results. The implications and findings of this study may still contribute to research about Black youth political participation and social media.

Variable Coding

In this study, I coded gender as a categorical variable, with male as the baseline. I also coded income as a categorical variable, split into 4 dummy categories, with above the $250,000 and above category as the baseline. I divided religion into 5 categories, with the Catholic

category being the baseline. Religion is combined as follows: Catholic, Protestant (including nondenominational, Orthodox Christian, Christian, and Seventh Day Adventist), Judaism, Atheist/Agnostic/Not Spiritual/Not Religious, and Other categories (including Spiritual, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam). The religion categorical variable will particularly allow us to examine the participation of Jewish students in the AEPi protest model. More religious categories were included in the survey (Native American, Jehovah's Witness and Christian Scientist), but no survey respondents indicated that they practiced these traditions, therefore they were not coded.

I coded the variable "social media use" as a categorical variable, with "Never," "At least once a month," "At least once a week," and "At least once a day" at zero and "More than once a day" as 1. Participation in digital identity networks was evaluated by asking respondents if they primarily followed people on social media who did or did not share their racial or ethnic identity. The answers to this question are coded categorically, with "Do share my racial or ethnic identity" (1) as the baseline. Most respondents to this question were evenly split between the answers "Do share my racial and ethnic identity" and "Don't know," making the answers to this variable less useful, since there was little difference in respondent answers to the yes and don't know options. However, the coefficient on this variable could be informative, since a negative coefficient will indicate online social networks were not important for the dependent variable to occur.

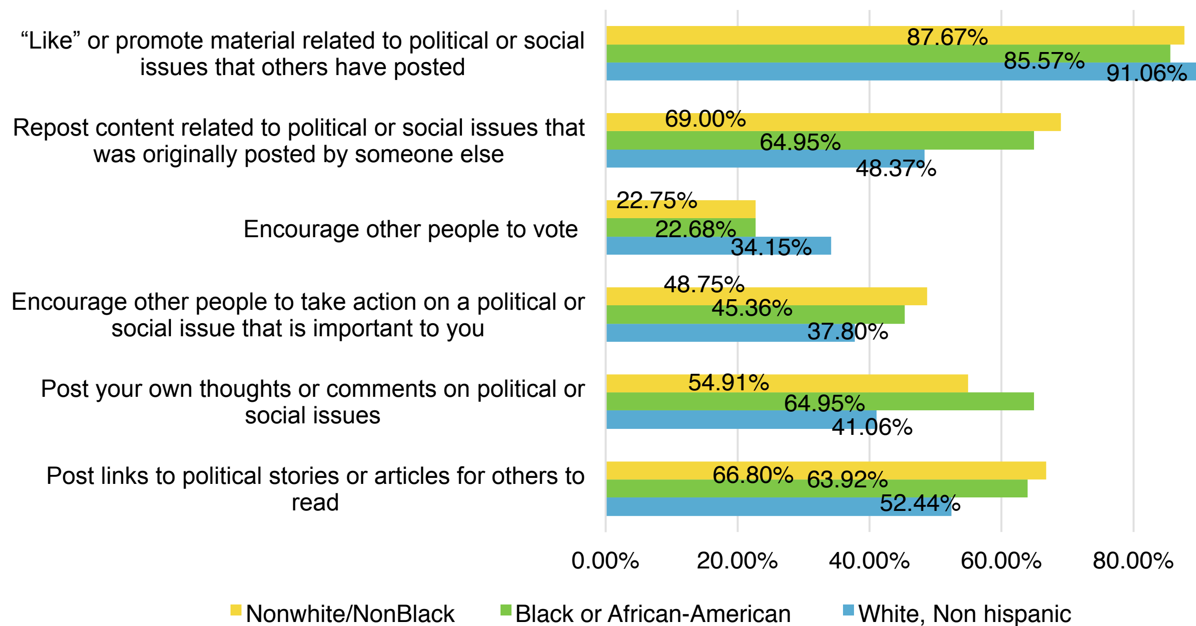
I code ideology as an interval variable from -2 to 2, with very conservative being -2, very liberal being 2, and moderates being coded as 0. I code the discuss politics variable in a similar manner, from "Never" valued at -2, "Less than once a month" at -1, At least once a week at 0, and "Every day" at 1. Efficacy is an important variable in this study, and is split into two variables. One variable measures internal political efficacy, or the feeling that one can affect

what the government does. This variable is coded on an interval scale, and answer choices are "Not at all" (1). "A little" (2), "A moderate amount" (3), "A great deal" (4) as the second category. External efficacy is coded the same, with answers to the question "How much does the government care about what people like you think?" coded as Not at all (1), A little (2), A moderate amount (3), and A great deal (4). Race is coded as a categorical variable, with white as the baseline. The other categories are "Black or African American" and "Other nonwhite/nonblack" categories (which include Latino, Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander).

Regression Models and Results

Hypothesis 1: Social Media Political Participation of Black Youth

Graph 1 shows that Black youth are consistently participatory in political activities on social media. Black youth report that they share news, discuss, and encourage action on social media at a higher rate than whites, consistently. Black youth are the most likely to voice their opinions online, at a rate of 64%.



According to this social media politics scale, income also does not mirror offline political participation patterns. Table 2.1 below demonstrates score frequencies across income categories. This table measures social media activity on a scale from 1 to 6, since respondents could select as many of these activities as they choose. Those in the lowest family income categories score the highest on the social media politics index 21.88% of the time, and that percentage decreases as income categories increase. This indicates that survey respondents from lower income categories report higher participation in social media politics.

Table 2.1: Social Media Politics Index and Income Frequency Table					
Social Media Politics Index Score	**Income: Below $50,000**	**Income: $50,000 to $149,000**	**Income: $150,000-$250,000**	**Income: $250,000 or above**	**Total**
1	10 10.42%	43 25.90%	21 34.43%	30 29.13%	104 24.41%
2	16 16.67%	27 16.27%	9 14.75%	15 14.56%	67 15.73%
3	14 14.58%	21 12.65%	14 22.95%	11 10.68%	60 14.08%
4	18 18.75%	20 12.05%	4 6.56%	19 18.45%	61 14.32%
5	17 17.71%	28 16.87%	6 9.84%	20 19.42%	71 16.67%
6	21 21.88%	27 16.27%	7 11.48%	8 7.77%	63 14.79%
KEY: *Frequency* *Column percentage*	96 100%	166 100%	61 100%	103 100%	426 100%

To further understand how income and race behave in these models, Table 2.2 displays income frequencies across racial categories. We see that the wealthiest students in the sample are white, with 72% of those in the highest income category identifying as white. Additionally, Black and Nonwhite/ NonBlack students are concentrated in the lowest income categories, although about half of the students in the $50,000 to $149,000 category are white. Therefore, we can concede the lower income categories as a relatively mixed population of students; however, the lowest is definitely predominantly students of color and the higher categories are overwhelmingly white.

Table 2.2: Race and Income Frequency Table					
Race	**Income: Below $50,000**	**Income: $50,000 to $149,000**	**Income: $150,000-$250,000**	**Income: $250,000 or above**	**Total**
White	24 28.81%	97 48.26%	54 70.13%	100 72.46%	285 53.37%
Black or African American	42 35.59%	42 20.90%	5 6.49%	7 5.07%	96 17.98%
Nonwhite, NonBlack	42 35.59%	62 30.85%	18 23.38%	31 22.46%	153 28.65%
KEY: *Frequency* *Column percentage*	118 100%	201 100%	77 100%	138 100%	534 100%

A regression will help us further understand the relationship between race and social media use. I test my hypotheses using ordinary least squares and logistic regression models, according to the

dependent variable. Table 2.3 has two logistic regressions since the dependent variables, "Like Political Material on Social Media" or "Post Political Opinions On Social Media," vary according to amount of online political activities respondents selected from a list.

Table 2.3 Likes and Posts

	Model A: Like Political Material		Model B: Post Political Opinions	
Independent Variable	**Coefficient (Standard Error)**		**Coefficient (Standard Error)**	
Constant	1.09 (.938)		**-1.327* (.651)**	
Female	**-1.11*** (.349)**		**.625* (.263)**	
Family Income Below $50,000	-.526 (.524)		.435 .358	
Family Income $50,000-$149,000	-.152 (.465)		.108 .288	
Family Income $149,000 to $250,000	.413 (.657)		-.599 .376	
Social Media Use	.705 (.399)		.089 (.291)	
Participation in Digital Identity Networks	-.469 (.345)		**.453* (.229)**	
Ideology	.362 (.198)		**.300* (.133)**	
Discuss Politics	.305 (.256)		**.608*** (.175)**	
Sense of Internal Efficacy	.161 (.234)		**.348* (.163)**	
Sense of External Efficacy	.307 (.265)		-.280 (.173)	
Race				
Black or African American	-.266 (.465)		**.980** .326**	
Nonwhite/NonBlack	-.285 (.422)		**.712* (.279)**	
p ≤ 0.05*, p ≤ 0.01**, p ≤ 0.001***	p=0.000 n=394	pseudo r^2=.093	p=0.000 n=394	pseudo r^2=.135
	Log Likelihood= -125.041		Log Likelihood=-236.221	

The findings in Model A does not support Hypothesis 1—being African American does not have a positive relationship with political participation on social media. The relationship between race and the propensity to like and promote political material is not significant, however. The only significant variable in Model A is the likelihood that respondents are female,

which may simply be a reflection of the (predominantly female) sample. This model indicates little variation in the dependent variable, which is reasonable, since over 80% of all respondents reported "liking" political material online. As for Model B, we see more distinguishing factors when we consider which respondents are posting their own political opinions on social media. Being Black is significant in this model and positive—indicating as Graph 1 did that Black youth are the most likely to post their opinions on social media. The Nonwhite/NonBlack variable is also significant and positive, as well as having a sense of internal efficacy, and discussing politics frequently. Females and students who identified as liberals are significantly more likely to post news online, as well as students who reported participating in digital identity networks.

The second test of social media political activity will be respondents' propensity to encourage others to vote online. This activity seemed to be the "hardest" to do on social media, for, as shown in Graph 1, low numbers of respondents in all racial categories encourage their social media connections to participate in voting. Black respondents were the least likely to encourage others to vote on social media and whites were the most likely. To study participation in this activity further, I use a logistic regression model, since our dependent variable (encourage others to vote online) is dichotomous {0, 1}. Model C (Table 2.4) predominantly reflects Model B—as the tendency to discuss politics and a sense of internal and external efficacy are also significant in this model. Being in the nonwhite category was also significant and negative in this model—with these students being less likely to encourage others to vote online than white students. Model B does not support my general hypothesis about Black youth being more political online.

Model D (Table 2.4), which measures the likelihood that a respondent would share news online, continues to confirm our findings. Model D is also a logistic model, and internal efficacy

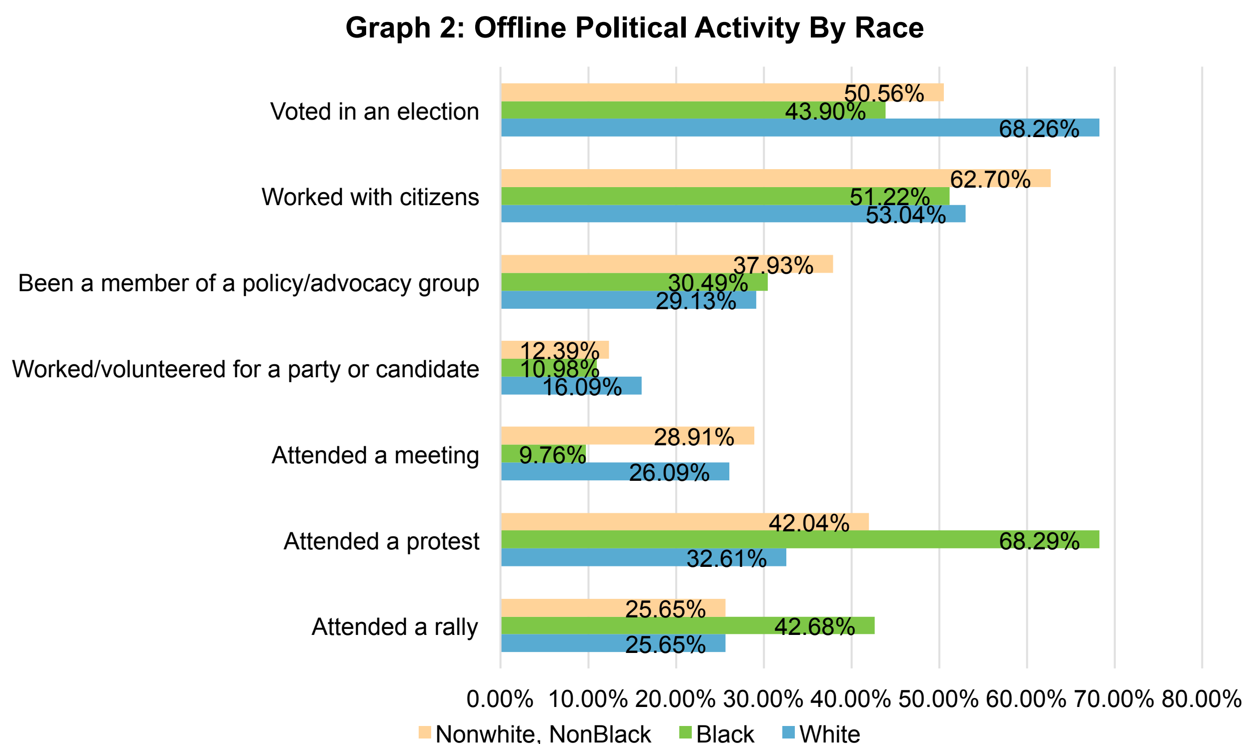
and discuss politics variables are once again significant. Race is positive, but not significant. Income, however, is a significant variable in this model—and the variable for those in the highest category is negative. Respondents in the lowest income category are the most likely to participate in posting news online, and likelihood to participate decreases significantly as income increases to the higher categories. Model D supports my hypothesis about race and social media, but more importantly offers a new finding that does not reflect offline patterns, where wealthier people are typically *more* participatory.

Table 2.4: Encourage the Vote and Share News Online

	Model C: Encourage People to Vote Online		Model D: Share Political News/ Stories Online	
Independent Variable	**Coefficient (Standard Error)**		**Coefficient (Standard Error)**	
Constant	**-4.32*** (.789)**		**-2.01** (.657)**	
Female	.288 (.284)		.052 (.261)	
Family Income Below $50,000	.381 (.400)		**.771* (.367)**	
Family Income $50,000-$149,000	.641 (.333)		.173 (.285)	
Family Income $150,000-$250,000	.668 (.409)		**-.107* (.356)**	
Social Media Use	.301 (.345)		.459 (.287)	
Participation in Digital Identity Networks	.085 (.252)		.348 (.226)	
Ideology	**.337* (.151)**		**.360** (.132)**	
Discuss Politics	**.995*** (.212)**		**.563*** (.173)**	
Sense of Internal Efficacy	**.362* (.179)**		**.428** (.161)**	
Sense of External Efficacy	**.715** (.198)**		.032 (.173)	
Race				
Black or African American	-.456 (.351)		.253 (.320)	
Nonwhite/NonBlack	**-.770** (.330)**		.488 (.281)	
	p=0.000 n=394	pseudo r^2=0.17	p=0.000 n=394	pseudo r^2=0.10
p ≤ 0.05*, p ≤ 0.01**, p ≤ 0.001***	Log likelihood=-198.59		Log likelihood=-239.319	

Hypothesis 2: Offline Political Participation

In this section, I test the second hypothesis that social media does not significantly influence the offline political behavior of Black youth.



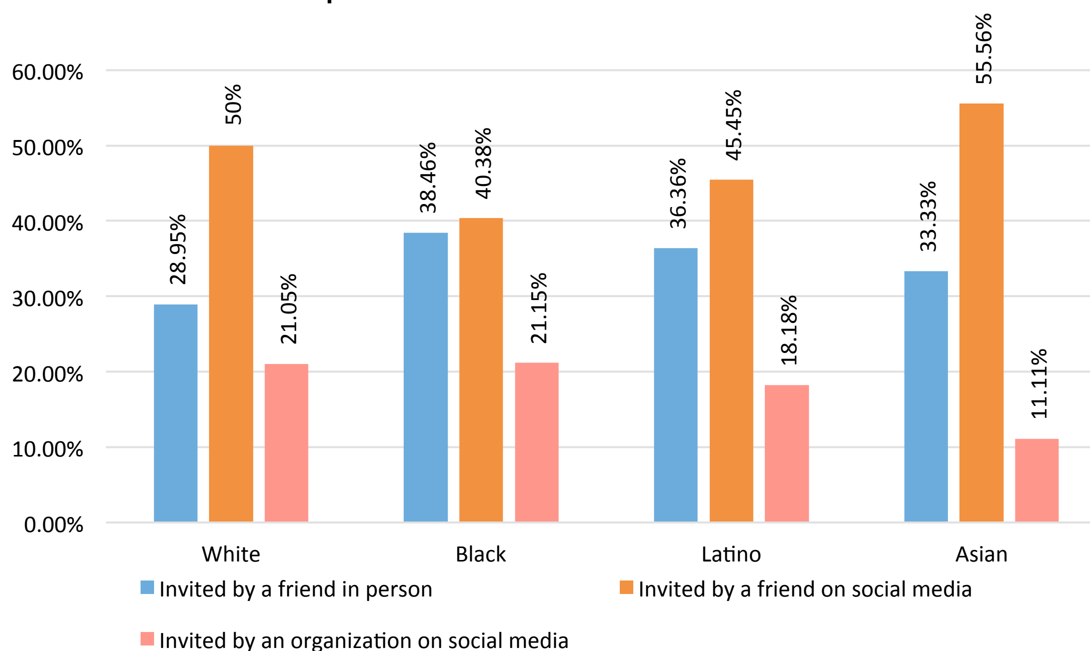
Graph 2 suggests Black youth offline political participation is centered on political protest, with 62% reporting have participated in a political protest. Although Black youth do not report encouraging people to vote online, as we saw in the last section, they do report voting in an election 44% of the time. Still, this percentage is lower than both Whites and Nonwhite/NonBlacks. While all of these participation frequencies are extraordinarily high across the board for youth political participation, especially regarding voting, whites are the most likely to participate in traditional political activities, such as voting or working for a candidate. We will examine Black participation in offline political activities further, with regard to protest.

Table 2.5: Participation in Protest Activities

	Model E: Participation in Eric Garner Protests		Model F: Participation in AEPi Protest Activities	
Independent Variables	**Coefficient (Standard Error)**		**Coefficient (Standard Error)**	
Constant	**-3.21*** (.682)**		-.876 (.573)	
Female	.133 (.257)		**-.607** (.226)**	
Family Income Below $50,000	.635 (.354)		.160 (.317)	
Family Income $50,000-$149,000	**.807** (.306)**		.003 (.265)	
Family Income $150,000-$250,000	.229 (.391)		.423 (.344)	
Judaism	----------		**1.33** (.446)**	
Social Media Use	.100 (.232)		**.847*** (.259)**	
Participation in Digital Identity Networks	.369 (.232)		-.211 (.210)	
Ideology	**.672*** (.140)**		.113 (.117)	
Discuss Politics	**1.00*** (.181)**		.153 (.146)	
Sense of Internal Efficacy	**.556*** (.163)**		**.289* (.143)**	
Sense of External Efficacy	-.234 (.168)		.059 (.152)	
Race				
Black or African American	**1.44*** (.319)**		**-.621* (.296)**	
Nonwhite/NonBlack	.271 (.282)		-.442 (.252)	
$p \leq 0.05$*, $p \leq 0.01$**, $p \leq 0.001$***	p=0.000, n=493	adjusted r^2=0.231	p=0.000 n=469	adjusted r^2=0.089
	Log Likelihood: -240.901		Log Likelihood: -285.225	

I test Hypothesis 2 by measuring student participation in the Eric Garner on campus protests (Model E) and the AEPi vandalism on campus protest (Model F). Both of these models are logistic regressions, since the dependent variables are binary. The typical political activity indicators continue to be significant in Model E, with ideology, propensity to discuss politics, and a sense of internal efficacy being the most significant variables in this model. Race is very significant in this model, demonstrating that the more likely that a respondent identified

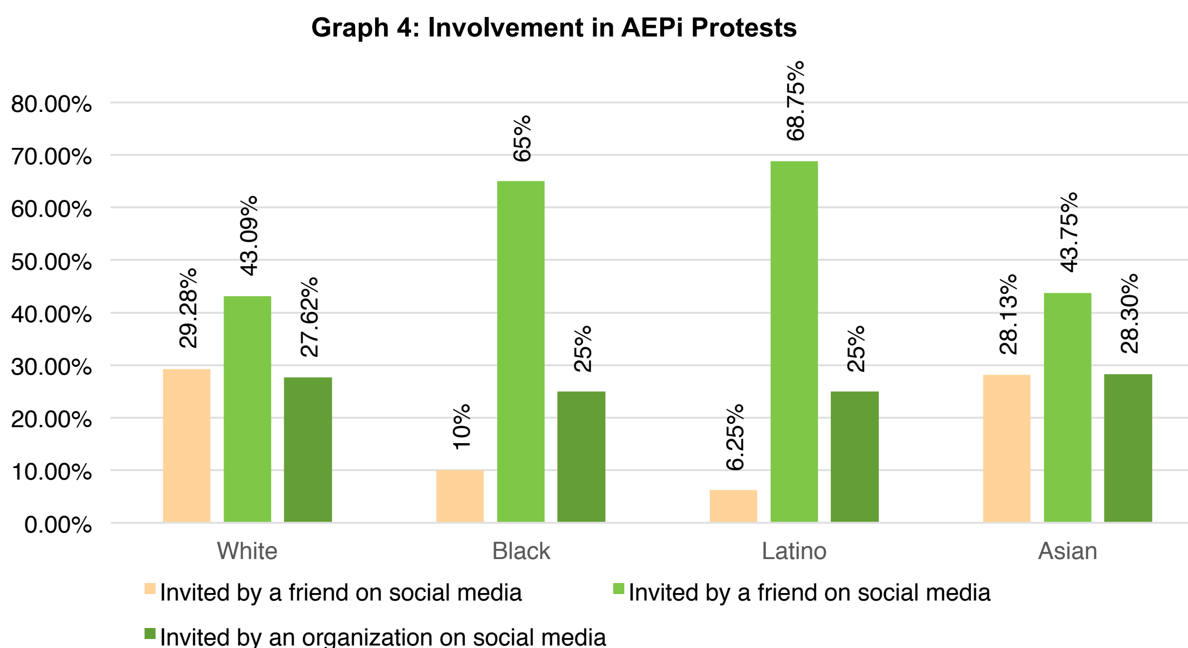
as Black, the more likely he or she were to participate in the protest. Income is significant in this model, and respondents in the $50,000 to $149,000 category of income were the most likely to participate. Model E largely supports the hypothesis that social media does not significantly influence Black youth offline political activity, with political interest variables being the most significant indicators in this model and social media use not being significant at all. Graph 3 further explains how students got involved.



The difference between learning about the protest online or from a friend in person is small among Blacks, which indicates that friends were inviting them in person as nearly often as they learned about the event on social media. Whites and Asians were the most likely to learn about the protests from their online social networks than people in their real life circles, with Latinos following closely behind.

As for the AEPi protests, in Model F identity is once again important, with practicing Judaism being a significant predictor of participation in the protests. Identity may need to be

further broken down among Whites in this model, especially to attain the differences between white ethnic participation. Further, according to this model social media use was also main predictor of participation, as the variable is both significant and positive in this model. Graph 4 further explains how students became involved in the protests.



Similar to the Eric Garner protests, real life social networks helped those who were more likely to have salient identities get involved in the AEPi protests at nearly twice the rate of students with less salient identities, who were much more likely to be recruited via social media, with the exception of Asian students who were recruited similarly to whites. However, social media seemed to matter much more for involvement in this protest across the racial categories—even more so than in the Eric Garner protest. Therefore, we cannot claim that race is a major factor of involvement here. Model F does not support Hypothesis 2. Table 2.6 further examines the importance of racial identity for involvement in these protest activities. I employ Pearson's chi-squared test to evaluate the relationships between the dependent (participation in each protest) and independent variables (racial category).

Table 2.6: Chi-Squared Test- Race and Participation in Protest Activities

Race	Not involved in Eric Garner Protests	Involved In Eric Garner Protests	Total	Not Involved in AEPi Protests	Involved in AEPi Protests	Total
White	228 59.38%	81 43.32%	309 54.12%	93 43.62%	210 61.58	303 54.50%
Black or African American	42 10.94%	58 31.02%	100 17.51%	48 22.33%	49 14.37%	97 17.45%
Nonwhite, NonBlack	114 29.69%	48 25.67%	162 28.37%	74 34.42%	82 24.05%	156 28.06%
TOTAL	384 100%	187 100%	571 100%	215 100%	341 100%	556 100%
$p \leq 0.05$*, $p \leq 0.01$**, $p \leq 0.001$***	**p=0.000*** **	Pearson's Chi-squared=35.65		**p=0.0000*** **	Pearson's Chi-squared=17.96	
KEY: *Frequency Column Percentage*						

The results in this table assert the importance of a salient identity for these protests—although measures are less clear with the AEPi protest model, since racial categories do not include white ethnics. Both of these chi-squared tests are significant, therefore the differences between the racial categories are significant. We see that Black students respondents were 31% of participants in the Eric Garner protests, compared to 43% of whites, and 14% of participants in the AEPi protests. Whites and nonwhites reported not participating in these protests at higher rates than African American students, and both categories participated in the AEPi protests at higher rates than Black students. Although both chi-squared tests are significant, the chi-squared statistic for AEPi participation is lower, meaning a weaker relationship between the variables than in the Eric Garner protest chi-squared tests.

Hypothesis 3: Social Media Use and Linked Fate

Hypothesis 3 states that social media increases the feeling of Black linked fate and feelings of internal and external efficacy. These feelings are fostered by the presence of an online Black community, or Black digital identity networks. Model G in Table 2.7 tests Black linked

fate specifically. Race could not be included in Model G due to collinearity, as 92% of Black respondents affirmed that they had feelings of linked fate, 3% responded that they did not, and 5% said that they did not know.

Table 2.7: Social Media Use and Black Linked Fate

	Model G: Black Linked Fate	
Independent Variables	**Coefficient (Standard Error)**	
Constant	**1.03*** (.075)**	
Gender	.024 (.029)	
Family Income Below $50,000	.017 (.051)	
Family Income $50,000-$149,000	.041 (.051)	
Family Income $50,000-$149,000	.061 (.076)	
Social Media Use	-.031 (.0312)	
Participation in Digital Identity Networks	.030 (.031)	
Ideology	-.023 (.015)	
Discuss Politics	.028 (.017)	
Sense of Internal Efficacy	.012 (.015)	
Sense of External Efficacy	-.021 (.018)	
Race	----------------	
Black or African American	----------------	
Nonwhite/NonBlack	----------------	
$p \leq 0.05$*, $p \leq 0.01$**, $p \leq 0.001$***	p=0.621 n=87	r^2=0.10 adjusted r^2=-.02

Model G is not a good predictor of Black linked fate. No variables in this ordinary least squares regression are significant, and the adjusted r-squared suggests that the model does not explain the variance in the dependent variable—likely because there was so little variance in the dependent variable, as only 8 respondents of 106 Black respondents did not answer affirmatively to the linked fate question on the survey. However, the coding of the linked fate variable could prevent the modeling of this variable—as the question only allowed for students who did, did not, or did

not know whether they felt a sense of linked fate to express themselves. There could be a range of feelings of linked fate that are not represented by this variable. As a result, most of the coefficients in the model suggest a positive relationship with Black linked fate, except for income and political discussion, although again, these relationships are not significant.

Social Media Use and Political Efficacy

Black students report having similar feelings of efficacy as white students in this sample, with 43% suggesting that they can affect the government a moderate amount as compared to 45% of white respondents, and nearly twice as many suggesting that people like them can affect what the government does "a great deal," as demonstrated in Table 2.8. Clearly, Black youth at Emory have great confidence in their own abilities to affect government. On the other hand, Black youth do not report high feelings of external efficacy, as demonstrated in Table 2.9.

Table 2.8: Internal Political Efficacy and Race Frequency Table

How much can people like you affect what the government does?	White, Non-Hispanic	Black or African American	Other, Nonwhite	Total
Not at all	24 7.62%	3 2.88%	17 10.18%	44 7.51%
A little	118 37.36%	35 33.65%	61 36.53%	214 36.52%
A moderate amount	140 44.44%	45 43.27%	71 42.51%	256 43.69%
A great deal	33 10.48%	21 20.19%	18 10.78%	72 12.29%
Total	315 100.00%	104 100.00%	167 100.00%	586 100.00%
KEY: *Frequency* *Column percentage*				

Table 2.9: External Political Efficacy and Race Frequency Table				
How much does the government care about what people like you think?	**White, Non-Hispanic**	**Black or African American**	**Other, Nonwhite**	**Total**
Not at all	34 10.86%	21 20.19%	21 12.65%	76 12.04%
A little	126 40.26%	85 55.77%	84 50.60%	268 45.97%
A moderate amount	133 42.49%	22 21.15	56 33.73%	211 36.19%
A great deal	20 6.39%	3 2.88%	5 3.01%	28 4.80%
Total	313 100.00%	104 100.00%	166 100.00%	583 100.00%
KEY *Frequency* *Column percentage*				

In Table 2.9, race is oppositely distributed, with 48% of white respondents feeling that the government had moderate to high levels of care for them, whereas Black respondents held the same views 23% of the time. Divided into income categories in Table 2.10, we see that an increase in income increases feelings of external efficacy, with most respondents in the highest income category feeling that the government cares about them "a moderate amount." Students in the highest income category were also the most likely to say that the government cared a great deal about what they think.

Table 2.10: External Political Efficacy and Income Frequency Table					
How much does the government care about what people like you think?	**Income: Below $50,000**	**Income: $50,000 to $149,000**	**Income: $150,000-$250,000**	**Income: $250,000 or above**	**Total**
Not at all	26 22.22%	14 6.97%	8 10.53%	18 13.24%	66 12.45%
A little	58 49.57%	100 49.75%	40 52.63%	47 34.56	245 46.23%
A moderate amount	28 23.93%	82 40.80%	24 31.58%	60 44.12	194 36.60%
A great deal	5 4.27%	5 2.49%	4 5.26%	11 8.09	25 4.72%
Total	117 100.00%	201 100.00%	76 100.00%	136 100.00	530 100.00%
KEY: *Frequency* *Column percentage*					

I begin the tests between social media use and political efficacy with Model G and Model H (Table 2.11), which are two basic ordinary least squares models that evaluate the relationships between feelings of internal and external efficacy and the most frequent category of social media use, respectively.

Table 2.11: Social Media Use and Efficacy, Part I

	Model G: Internal Efficacy and Social Media Use		Model H: External Efficacy and Social Media Use	
Independent Variables	**Coefficient (Standard Error)**		**Coefficient (Standard Error)**	
Constant	**2.55*** (.073)**		**2.611*** (.070)**	
Social Media Use	.064 (.824)		**-.178* (.078)**	
p ≤ 0.05*, p ≤ 0.01**, p ≤ 0.001***	p=0.431, n=586	adjusted r^2= -0.0006	p=0.2699 n=583	adjusted r^2=0.005

Frequent social media use is not a significant predictor of a high sense of internal efficacy. However, frequent social media is use is significantly and negatively associated with feelings of external efficacy. Therefore, we can conclude that those who feel strongly that the government cares about what they think do not frequently use social media.

I will further test the relationship between a sense of internal efficacy and social media use with Model I, an ordinary least squares regression (Table 2.12). In this model, we find that once again, primary predictors are political interest variables—such as political discussion and external efficacy. Higher income students are less likely to report feelings of internal efficacy than their counterparts in the lower income brackets, but this feeling is not significant. Race is significant in this model, further demonstrating the positive relationship between being Black and having a high sense of internal efficacy. In the final ordinary least squares regression, Model J in Table 2.12 measures external efficacy. Model J does not support our hypothesis that social media use increases external efficacy. In fact, this model suggests the opposite: Black youth do

not have high feelings of external efficacy and social media use decreases as feelings of external efficacy increase—suggesting those who are not Black and do not use social media very often have a high sense of external efficacy. Income is significant in this model in the below $50,000 category—although all categories experience less external political efficacy than the baseline above $250,000 category. This model suggests that wealthy, white students experience the most external political efficacy, and social media does not have much to do with this feeling.

Table 2.12: Social Media and Efficacy, Part II

	Model I: Internal Efficacy		Model J: External Efficacy	
Independent Variables	**Coefficient (Standard Error)**		**Coefficient (Standard Error)**	
Constant	**1.64*** (.166)**		**1.95*** (.148)**	
Gender	-.093 (.073)		-.026 (.069)	
Family Income Below $50,000	.155 (.101)		**-.235* (.095)**	
Family Income $50,000-$149,000	.075 (.083)		-.052 (.079)	
Family Income $150,000-$250,000	-.007 (.104)		-.153 (.099)	
Social Media Use	.158 (.083)		**-.232** (.078)**	
Participation in Digital Identity Networks	-.003 (.067)		-.012 (.063)	
Ideology	-.047 (.037)		-.059 (.035)	
Discuss Politics	**.200*** (.046)**		.018 (.044)	
Sense of Internal Efficacy	--------------------------------		**.326*** (.040)**	
Sense of External Efficacy	**.363*** (.044)**		---------------------------	
Race				
Black or African American	**.276** (.094)**		**-.383*** (.062)**	
Nonwhite/NonBlack	.023 (.080)		-.107 (.075)	
$p \leq 0.05$*, $p \leq 0.01$**, $p \leq 0.001$***	p=0.000, n=495	r^2=0.17 adjusted r^2=0.15	p=0.000, n=495	r^2=0.18, adjusted r^2=0.17

Results: Identity and Social Media Survey Analysis

With these results, we can accept Hypothesis 1, that social media use has a positive relationship with Black youth political participation online. We must note, however, that this relationship is not significant, and only applies to particular online political activities. Black youth are less likely to encourage others to vote online and more likely to participate in political discussion and share political news.

Hypothesis 2 is more complex. Black youth were very likely to participate in the Eric Garner protest without the influence of social media. They were significantly less likely to participate in the AEPi protests, but when Black youth did get involved, they were very likely to have been invited by a friend on social media, rather than by someone in their real life networks. We see similar results with whites regarding the Eric Garner protests—White youth were much more likely to be invited online than offline, with smaller gaps between being invited in person and being invited online to the AEPi protests. With these results, we can partially accept Hypothesis 2, that social media does not have a significant relationship with increasing or encouraging offline political activity. Interest and identity seem to be the most influential factors regarding offline participation, although social media use was significant for the AEPi model. This study does suggest that social media is useful for involving individuals who are not *personally* connected with a movement via their identity.

Hypothesis 3 similarly has some supported and some unsupported elements. According to this study, Black youth have linked fate without the influence of social media. The survey results suggested very little variance in this variable. Therefore, social media use cannot be said to increase or cause feelings of linked fate among Black youth, and we further cannot make a strong claim about Black consciousness on social media. Concerning efficacy, however, I did

find positive correlations between internal efficacy and whether or not a respondent identified as Black. A causal claim cannot be made here since social media use is not significant, but this relationship suggests that Black youth in this sample feel that people like them can affect the government. As for external efficacy, we find low feelings that the government cares across the board, and respondents were much more likely to be white if they *did* feel that the government cared.

The findings that Black youth are politically active and feel internally efficacious, even when they do not feel externally empowered are important—for they contradict Bobo and Gilliam's (1990) study that asserts the importance of external efficacy for Black participation. Additionally, the unexpected income findings, where those of a lower income were more participatory in online political discussion challenges Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's (2010) article concerning online participation and the digital divide. With the assumption of Internet access, those of a lower income tend to share political news at a higher rate on social media.

Chapter 3: Hypothesis Testing—Social Media Mobilization Experiment

With the survey findings in mind, we now turn to the social media mobilization experiment. We know that personal contact from a familiar source is the most effective political mobilization tactic and social influence of familiar people, such as friends or neighbors, are the most powerful influence for political mobilization on social networking sites (Green and Gerber 2004; Bond et al. 2012). But what effect does racial solidarity also have on social media political turnout? Could Black youth be more participatory when the event they are invited to over social media appeals to their race? Of course, the existing costs and barriers to offline political participation still exist—but if Black youth are reminded of their race and invited to an event via the Internet or social networking sites, where they have the space and information to voice their opinions and to become involved, then perhaps social media can in this way increase offline activism. In order to test whether social media can actually "cause" offline political participation and to fully address Hypothesis 2, I must attempt to mobilize Black youth with social media. This experiment will be an email, Facebook, and Twitter replication of Green and Gerber's (1999) voter turnout experiments and will test whether social media and email are useful for youth political mobilization, and whether racialized political causes are more successful on social media than non-racialized political events.

In this section, I will use survey respondents who provided their email, Facebook, or Twitter information to test whether invitations to political events centered upon racial justice encourage Black youth to turnout. To test this question, a random selection of one third of the respondents will receive messages via email or social media inviting them to a discussion group about police brutality against young African Americans. Another third of those that opt-in will receive messages about applying for financial aid and understanding student loans. Students will

be invited to attend an on campus group discussion centered on this topic. This issue is sufficiently "political" without being racialized and will appeal to both liberal and conservative respondents. The Financial Aid Group Discussion will allow me to compare responses to a nonracialized political issue with the responses to a racialized issue, which will be the Black Lives Matter Discussion. I can then evaluate which issue Black respondents were more responsive to and in what ways they responded to each issue. Finally, the last third of the group will be a control group that I will not send any email or social media message in order to understand the difference in turnout when respondents have and have not been contacted.

Experimental Model

This study will use Gerber and Green's 1999 experimental model to test whether a racialized political event invitation over email, Facebook, or Twitter will increase turnout. Green and Gerber use the following equation to measure the treatment effect on experimental groups:

$$\frac{V_E - V_C}{\frac{N_1}{N_E} - N_C}.$$

The term V_E stands for the percentage of turnout among the group and the term V_C represents the turnout rate of the control group. The term N_1 is the number of individuals contacted and N_E is the number in the treatment group, and N_C is the percent of individuals inadvertently contacted in the control group (Gerber and Green 1999, 10940). This equation will tell us exactly how successful the Internet is for Black youth turnout.

Results: Black Lives Matter Discussion

I received a list of 300 email addresses, Facebook names, and Twitter addresses as the optional answer to the final question of my Identity and Social Media Survey. Respondents offered any of or all three of this contact information and were randomly divided into groups. I placed the list of emails, Facebook, and Twitter information into Microsoft Excel sheets,

randomly assigned a number to each and split them into groups by ordering the numbers (Green and Gerber 2004). I invited 99 people to both events (66 emails, 10 Twitter addresses, and 23 Facebook invitations), and 95 remained in the "No Contact" group—as some addresses were randomly assigned from the No Contact group to account for inactive Facebook, email, and Twitter accounts, or to prevent an individual respondent from being contacted for an event through multiple channels.

I hosted Event 1, the Black Lives Matter Group Discussion on Sunday, March 22, 2015. I sent every respondent exactly one message inviting them to the event—although Facebook users received an automated reminder an hour before the event due to the nature of the "Event" invite service on the website. Since I am an Emory student, I knew a few of the respondents personally, and so was careful not to discuss the event with them outside of their Internet invite, whether that be an email, a Tweet, or a Facebook invite. However, a few people did mention to me personally that they received my invitation and would attend the event. Still, not one person attended the Black Lives Matter Discussion. I believe this has many implications.

First, the invitees were a mixture of people I knew personally and people whom I did not know. The fact that no one attended either suggests that I have very little social capital among my friends or that an Internet invite is simply not personal enough to persuade a schedule change—which reinforces Green and Gerber's face-to-face contact claim (2000). Further, the students could simply have been uninterested in the event, busy, or unable to attend. The total lack of attendance supports this study's second hypothesis that social media use will not have a significant effect on offline political participation—and neither does email, as Gerber and Green suggest (2004). Race could not be a factor in this experiment, as no students attended at all.

Therefore we still cannot determine whether social media specifically increases Black youth turnout.

Results: Financial Aid Discussion

The second event was nonpartisan, political, and non-racialized. I invited 99 students to attend a discussion about financial aid and student loans in the same style and manner of the Black Lives Matter discussion. This time, exactly one student attended the meeting. I briefly interviewed the student, and she told me that she was attending due to her interest in the topic and the topic's relevance to her own financial situation as a first year college student, trying to find ways to pay for her time in school and ease the financial burden on her mother. Additionally, when asked how she heard about the event, the student reiterated that she had *initially* been contacted via email to take the first survey. She was then invited to the event via Facebook. Therefore, she felt that she had a double reminder about her involvement in this project. Of course, we can draw no major conclusions from this single attendee, but this experiment does suggest that social media and Internet mobilization proves largely ineffective at increasing political turnout. We can represent the results of this experiment with the following equation from Gerber and Green (1999):

$$\frac{1-0}{\frac{99}{99}-0}$$

In this formula, we take a 1% turnout rate minus a 0% turnout from the control group and divide that number by the number of students contacted (99), which itself is divided by the number of individuals in the treatment group (99) and then we subtract the percent of those that that were inadvertently contacted in the control group (0%). By this formula, the Internet mobilization, and Facebook specifically, produces a 1% turnout effect.

This experiment has produced null findings; however, questions remain about the results. No respondent was able to see exactly who was invited or who would be attending the event, thus had no information about whether their online or offline social networks would attend this event. We must then consider the role of real life social networks in online mobilization. Perhaps if respondents knew who would be attending, they would have been more likely to turnout at these events. Green and Gerber highlight the necessity of personal contact when mobilizing voters—this experiment could suggest that social media contact alone has no power, especially without the "social" component. Additionally, I must also acknowledge that race and racial solidarity had no effect in this model, and thus also has a 0% effect here. Considering the experiment with the survey results, we especially see how offline social networks and *interest* are the most important factors in mobilization.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Limitations

The results of the statistical models and the experiment produce findings that we should consider. Race was not ultimately a significant variable in our social media politics models, although we know that Black students do participate in online politics at a slightly higher rate than white students. Black youth tend to focus on resistant political activities, such as protest and advocacy, rather than voting or working for a party or politician. Political interest variables, such as feelings of internal and external efficacy and regular participation in political discussions tended to be the most significant predictors of whether respondents participated in politics online—and internal efficacy significantly correlated with being Black and frequent social media use. Ideology was often significant, and more liberal students tended to participate in politics online, while conservative students experience more internal and external political efficacy.

Ultimately, income was the most interesting variable in this study. Students of lower income levels were consistently the most likely to participate in social media political activities and in the on-campus Eric Garner protests. The differences were very significant among income groups when respondents were asked how often they share news online. These findings support my theory, and suggest that social media does, in fact, serve as an alternative public sphere for traditionally less participatory communities, particularly those in lower income categories. Further study on this topic could reveal social media's place in increasing the political participation of those who cannot typically afford to volunteer or participate in politics offline.

Social media use or participation in digital identity networks were ultimately not very important variables in these models, although they tended to be positive. Social media use was negative in the external political efficacy model, which indicates that those who feel that the government cares what they think are less likely to use social media very often.

The survey results and experiment both suggest that identity and interest are the most important factors in political mobilization—and these results were in a small way confirmed by the experiment. Those with relevant identities were more likely to participate in the offline political protests, with African Americans being more likely to attend the Eric Garner protests and whites, especially those who identified as Jewish, being more likely to attend the AEPi protests events. Although the experiment did not produce strong, verifiable results, the student that attended the Financial Aid Group Discussion was strongly interested in the Financial Aid Program, due to her identity as a first year Emory student looking for more money for college.

These findings must make us reconsider social media as a Black counterpublic, or more broadly, as a space that reinforces existing identities and piques political interest (Harris-Lacewell 2004). Social media was not ultimately significant for identities that were already present, but helped people get involved in activities that they might not have normally participated in, as we saw with racial categories and the on campus protests. Social media may not have the political mobilizing power of the Black church or the barbershop, where discussion and solidarity increase participation, but social media may serve as the new Black newspaper—a space to inform and bring attention to political issues and grievances.

Implications

These findings have important implications, although the sample may not be representative. These findings largely confirm Verba, Schlozman and Brady's theory that the Internet encourages online political participation among young people, and Cathy Cohen's finding that Black youth are more likely to engage in politics online. This study does, however, take to task Verba, Schlozman and Brady's concern that politics on social media is economically stratified similar to offline political participation patterns (2010). The sample in this study is not

representative, but the unexpected finding that people of a lower income are more participatory in social media politics is a significant contribution to the literature, and requires further investigation to truly establish social media as a space for people of a lower income to express their political views. Still, the assertions in this study are important and demonstrative of the political possibilities of social networking sites.

With growing class antagonism in the United States, the political voice of those of a lower socioeconomic status is increasingly important. Internet access and free access to social networking sites could afford those with less time and income with the opportunity to make their voices heard in an alternative way—by expressing their thoughts and engaging in discussion or even by *directly* contacting politicians via social networking sites or through email. This paper does not take to task the issue of the digital divide, as this issue is beyond the scope of this project. These findings are important as political scientists consider the intersection of class and participation and indicate that people of a lower income are not less interested in politics but may need alternative paths to participation.

The findings in this study also take to task Bobo and Gilliam's (1990) findings about Black political participation and external efficacy. In this study, although African American youth did not feel that the government cared about them personally, they still believed that they could affect the government and were very participatory across political activities, both online and offline. These feelings and this political engagement may be a function of the education levels of these Black students and their awareness of themselves as a politically and economically deprived group, although further research is needed here to confirm these feelings. Importantly, however, with these findings we can know that Black youth at predominantly white universities may feel a strong sense of internal efficacy and political knowledge and a low sense

of external efficacy and still be very politically active. This demonstrates that even when Blacks are not necessarily empowered they may still participate if they retain a strong sense of internal efficacy.

Although this study finds that social media and Internet activism and mobilization may not transfer into significant offline political action, political scientists should not dismiss the political power of social media and we should consider the freedom that Internet access offers to voice one's opinions. If the politically marginalized, whether they be youth, those of lower incomes, communities of color, sexual minorities, or women, take to social media to express their frustration en masse, then we must consider social media as a viable political platform and access to such sites as a measure of free speech—a form of activism that everyone should be afforded. Daniel Gillion may consider civic engagement and minority protest to be on the decline; however, this study takes into consideration the value of online Black political participation while also acknowledging the intrinsic problems with activism that solely takes place on social media. The voices that are elevated via social media and the bonds that are forged on social networks may prove meaningful politically and socially as advocacy networks and protest groups are formed as a result.

Limitations

This study provides an overview of the political activity of Emory students, both online and offline. Although measures were taken to prevent the influence of the investigators, there is certainly a possibility of self-selection in this study by students who know or are aware of the investigators. Additionally, the sample is likely not representative of the general population of youth, as most American youth do not attend elite, private universities. Indeed, the youth in the survey sample are much more politically active than the average American youth, as seen by the

reported political participation frequencies in Graph 4 (page 37). If given the opportunity to repeat this study, I would certainly expand my sample to include a larger and broader selection of youth, in order to have a more representative sample. Still, the results found here will guide my future projects on social media, Black youth activism, and political participation.

Appendix

Survey: Identity Politics on Social Media

Consent to be a Research Subject

1. Do you consent to taking this survey AND are you between 18-29 years of age?

   Yes to both
   No, I do not consent
   No I am not between 18-29 years old

2. How often do you use social networking sites such as Facebook and/or Twitter?

   Never
   At least once a month
   At least once a week
   At least once a day
   More than once a day

3. Do you primarily follow people on social media who…

   Do not share your racial/ethnic identity
   Don't know
   Share your racial/ethnic identity

4. Do you ever use social media to…(select all that apply)

   Repost content related to political or social issues that was originally posted by someone else
   "Like" or promote material related to political or social issues that others have posted
   Post links to political stories or articles for others to read
   Post your own thoughts or comments on political or social issues
   Encourage other people to take action on a political or social issue that is important to you
   Encourage other people to vote

5. Do you currently...

   Belong to a group on a social networking site that is involved in political or social issues
   Follow any elected officials, candidates for office or other political figures on a social networking site or on Twitter

Demographics

6. What is your gender?

   Male
   Female

7. What is your age?
   ____

8. Which racial or ethnic category do you most strongly identify with?

   White, Non Hispanic
   Black or African-American
   American Indian or Alaskan Native
   Asian
   Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   Latina/Latino
   Biracial or multiracial

Linked Fate

9. Do you feel that what happens to White Americans affects you? (Only asked respondents who identified as white)

   No
   Yes
   Don't know

10. Do you feel that what happens to Black Americans affects you? (Only asked respondents who identified as Black)

    No
    Yes
    Don't know

11. Do you feel that what happens to Native Americans or Alaskan Natives affects you (Only asked respondents who identified as Native American)

    No
    Yes
    Don't know

12. Do you feel that what happens to Asians affects you? (Only asked respondents who identified as Asian)

    No
    Yes
    Don't know

13. Do you feel that what happens to Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders affects you? (Only asked respondents who identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander)

    No
    Yes
    Don't know

14. Do you feel that what happens to Latinas/Latinos affects you? (Only asked respondents who identified as Latina/Latino)

    No
    Yes
    Don't know

15. Do you feel that what happens to biracial or multiracial people affects you? (Only asked respondents who identified as biracial or multiracial)

    No
    Yes
    Don't know

Party Identification

16. In general, would you describe your political views as…

    Very conservative
    Conservative
    Moderate
    Liberal
    Very Liberal
    None of these

17. How much can people like you affect what the government does?

    Not at all
    A little
    A moderate amount
    A great deal

18. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent or something else?

    Democrat
    Republican
    Independent
    Something else

19. How much does the government care about what people like you think?

    Not at all
    A little
    A moderate amount
    A great deal

Offline Political Participation

20. How often do you discuss politics and public affairs with others in person?

    Never
    Less than once a month
    At least once a week
    Every day

21. Here's a list of activities some people might do. In the past 12 months, have you…(select all that apply)

    Attended a political rally or speech
    Attended an organized protest of any kind
    Attended a political meeting on local, town, or school affairs
    Worked or volunteered for a political party or candidate
    Been an active member of any group that tries to influence public policy or government, not including a political party
    Worked with fellow citizens to solve a problem in your community
    Voted in an election

22. Are you involved in any groups on campus that are based on/commonly discuss race/ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, religion, or politics?

    No
    Yes

23. Please specify what type of group you are involved in on campus. (Select all that apply)

I am involved in a group that is based on race or ethnic identity.
I am involved in a group that is based on gender identity.
I am involved in a religious group on campus.
I am involved in a group that is based on sexual identity.
I am involved in a political group on campus.

Eric Garner Protests on campus

24. Were you involved in any of the recent protests on campus surrounding the death of Eric Garner?

    No
    Yes

25. If yes, how did you get involved? (Only asked to respondents who said yes they were involved)

    Invited by a friend in person
    Invited by a friend on social media
    Invited by an organization on social media

    Other (please specify)
    ____

26. Why not? (Only asked to respondents who said no they were not involved)

    I was not aware of the protests occurring
    I was not invited to attend the protests
    I did not want to attend the protests
    I was busy (in class, at work, etc.)

27. If you were not aware of or not invited to the protests, would you have attended if invited or if you knew when the protests were occurring?

    No I was not interested in the protests
    Maybe
    Yes
    I don't know

Recent Protest Events on Campus

28. Were you aware of the vandalization of the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity house when swastikas were spray painted onto the house?

No
Yes

29. Were you involved in the Teach-In event on campus, did you wear blue in solidarity with students, or did you in **any other way** protest the vandalism?

No
Yes

30. If you DID participate, how did you get involved? (Only asked to students who indicated that they participated in the protest activities)

Invited by a friend in person to participate
Invited by a friend on Facebook, Twitter, or some other form of social media
Invited by an organization on Facebook, Twitter, or some other forms of social media

Other (please specify)

____

31. If not, why not? (Only asked to students who indicated that they were not involved in the protest activities)

I was not aware of the Teach-In or the wear blue campaign
I was not asked to attend the Teach-In or to wear blue
I did not want to attend the Teach-In or to wear blue
I was busy or could not participate (in class, at work, etc.)

32. If you were not aware of or not invited to the Teach-In or to wear blue, would you have participated if invited or if you knew when these events were occurring? (Only asked to students who indicated that they were not aware of the events)

No, I was not interested in these events
Maybe
Yes
I don't know

Demographic Information

33. Do you identify with any of the following religions?

Atheist
Agnostic
Not spiritual, not religious
Spiritual, but not religious
Buddhism
Catholicism
Christianity
Hinduism
Inter/Non-denominational
Islam
Judaism
Orthodox Christian
Pagan
Protestantism
Seventh Day Adventist
Christian Scientist
Jehovah's Witness
Native American

Other (please specify)

____

34. How much total combined income did all members of your family earn last year?

Under $25,000
$25,000 to $49,999
$50,000 to $74, 999
$75,000 to $99,999
$100,000 to $124, 999
$125,000 to $149,999
$150,000 to $174,999
$175,000 to $199,999
$200,000 to $250,000
$250,000 to $300,000
$300,000 to $350,000
$350,000 to $400,000
$400,000 to $500,000
$500,000 to $600,000
$600,000 to $700,000
$700,000 to $800,000
$800,000 to $900,000
$900,000 to $1,000,000
More than $1,000,000

35. May we contact you with additional information about this study in the future?

    Email ________________________________

    Facebook_____________________________

    Twitter_______________________________

Final Page

Thank you for participating in this survey!

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