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## Good Trouble – Protest Utilization of Black Teen and Adult Women’s Technical Capital

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### Abstract

This paper aims to extend the researcher’s initial findings of information and communication technology (ICTs) of a decade ago, with current cultural and technical capital as a framework for considering alternative approaches of empowering Black Women as our next technology leaders through current social justice movements. This study focused on protest movements led by three Black women; leading groups of different ages and social classes (most notably Black Lives Matter), and their frameworks in organizing protests. The analytics used were website traffic statistics, demonstration participant numbers, and similar dominant themes revealed between all three movements. In times past, these Black women’s ideas may have only been exchanged in spaces such as in family food-way meal preparation and health needs. Combined with current technological advances, these frameworks overlap with designing external performance spaces with designs by young Black girls in k-12 settings. The researcher claims that the deficit model provided by digital divide research phenomenologically captured the structure Black women efficiently used to articulate cultural capital and technology frameworks. These frameworks helped in organizing the George Floyd influenced protest marches during the challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** cultural capital, technical capital, black lives matter, foodways, digital divide.

### 1. Introduction

As computer functions become more accessible through television, radio, telephones, mobile phones, wi-fi, and the internet, some believed that the digital divide was becoming obsolete (Facer, 2007). However, since the recent COVID-19 pandemic, with people out of work and educational institutions “online”, recent federal funding initiatives towards closing the gap have lessened that theory. People benefiting from easy accessibility include those with jobs such as first responders and high-income computers for enjoyment and innovation (e.g. chat rooms, website design). Those not benefiting include a computer-scarce public who lack accessibility, education, and finances (Barzilai-Nahon et al., 2004). However, some steps are being taken to close the digital divide. One of these steps is the development of Information and Communications (ICT) programs over the last two decades.

Generally, ICT was known as a method of assisting the nonusers in attaining access to and utilizing available technology that will lead to a superior quality of living, like a job opportunity, or improved emotional stability, like learning basic technology skills (Heres, 2005; Gary, 2011). With today’s COVID-19 global climate, ICT sectors which now represent global manufacturing [many

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factory workers being women] conferences, and most financial institutions due to shutdowns have been financially hit harder more than any other time in history. This has generationally had a particular impact on women in our society.

In the early 2000s, the female population had less access and knowledge about technology and its uses for improved economic growth (Selwyn et al., 2006). Specifically, women attaining Bachelor's degrees in computer-related fields has dropped from 38 % in 1985 to 28 % in 2003, of which 17 % continue towards graduate-level work in the same field. Initially, the researcher discovered that reasons for these worsening numbers in academia include the –nerd factor perception by women students of those attaining a computer technology degree (Dean, 2007). Research implies that women need resocialization to train towards male occupations and support in sexist technology labor malpractices such as unfair pay and lack of maternity leave (Gary, 2011).

Today, only 20 % of computer technology professionals are women (Women in Computer Science, 2019). Furthermore, out of three million working Computer and Information scientists in the United States, 796,000 are women, of which 106,000 are Black women (44,000 Hispanic Latina). Similarly, out of 291,000 working Mathematical science professionals, 107,000 are women, of which 3,000 are Black women (5,000 Hispanic Latina). For Black women with disabilities (employment in science and engineering-related fields—a broader category), the report revealed 320,000 out of 33,516,000 in total (National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2019). Even with programs that teach school-aged Black girls technology design, according to Bryant, founder of “Black Girls Code,” more support is needed from technology companies at this moment to invest in opportunities for Black Women (Mamiit, 2020).

Although this computer divide dilemma affects more severely women in third world countries, in first world countries, it's more challenging for Black women. Two decades ago, Black women were still more likely to live in poverty and single care providers for their children (Community Technology Works, n.d.; National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 1999). With the pandemic unemployment rate, Black women-led households disproportionally lead that poverty list (New York Times, July 1, 2020). Still, these Black women are utilizing instinctive communicative skills (e.g. motherhood, cooking, and communication via social networks) that should be utilized during the pandemic and racial protesting to develop new ICT ecosystems (Mamiit, 2020).

### ***Black Women and ICTs***

Two decades ago, low-income and urban women in the United States spent their money on ICT products with such expensive purchases as cell phone/Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) devices and hair care products (Wei, Ven-Hwei, 2006). In Black women-led households, more was spent on telephone services than any other race or gender (Humphreys, 2006). Today, 54 % of Black families have lived during the digital age of technology. Therefore, emergent such as Black Twitter, COVID-19 emergents such Verzuz musical battles amongst black musicians, and DJ-NIceClub Quarantine (Instagram) have had millions of followers, including families led by Black women. Hence, Black women use those sites the most (Pallien, 2019).

For example, women draw on kinship networks in different ways that develop reciprocity and trust in ways men cannot facilitate. Also, women master different types of communication styles such as synchronous (simultaneous) talk/interaction (e.g. Zoom Meetings and social media comments sections). This skill is evident in our current world pandemic. Similar to the Village Phone Microlending program, where third-world women became the connectors of information for their families via a centralized cell phone (Yunus, 2005; Gary, 2011), so too are first-world Black women. They are often called upon for online health research for family members with COVID-19 (without insurance) disproportionally.

Similar to the village phone-ladies of Bangladesh, according to Fox (n.d.), more common social capital practices include women cooks from all around the world that use food-way (cooking traditions) to maintain family and community relationships while gaining income. Likewise, out of work Black families, with no income, suffering from food insecurities (no food) depends on the head of the household, often Black women, to use their mobile phone (if still on) to research food-banks to put together a family meal (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Evich, 2020). This expectation of Black women's responsibility is seen early with young Black girls.

### ***Adultification***

The first-world remnant of gender roles as it pertains to the traditional roles in social networking norms of women has been designated a term (although generationally present). Adultification is a study captured by “The Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality” that systemically reveals that k-12 Black girls are often “less nurtured, protected, supported, comforted, are more independent, [and too adult],” in comparison to their other classmates, including African American/Black Boys. These girls are often subjected to dominant paradigm images associated with social networking norms of the slavery south, which included aggressiveness, seductiveness, and self-sacrificing perceptions. These viewpoints are often implicitly assumed by both the student and the teacher.

Consequently, a trend in the Pandemic Zoom online school is for Black girls to be more adult than their White girl counterparts. Such is in the case of Grace, a Black k-12 student with ADHD who is currently on probation. Judge Mary Ellen Brennan defined the incomplete school assignments of the Birmingham Groves High student as a probation violation, resulting in two-month incarceration starting in May 2020. As said by an online retweet by “Black Lives Matter Los Angeles” matriarch Dr. Melina Abdulla, this is the “adultification of girls of Color” (See [Black Lives Matter Twitter Photo commentary-Provided in this Peer Review](#)). To reiterate, Brock (2010), the possibility of turning this cultural appropriation into a positive could transition through the use of technical capital. Furthermore, this researcher believes a new phenomenon is occurring that can transition young Black girls to effectively use their adultification nature of independence and mothering as skill-sets toward owning their identity (traits of Black Feminism) to organize large crowds of civil unrest on social websites and in person.

### **2. Methods and Materials**

For this article, this researcher selected a topic receiving major attention during the COVID-19 lockdown. On May 25, 2020, the George Floyd killing in Minneapolis, Minnesota received international attention. During the said event, the arresting White officer, Derek Chauvin, knelt on Floyd’s neck for approximately eight minutes and forty-six seconds. The reason for the arrest was for the alleged use of a counterfeit 20-dollar bill. Handcuffed and lying face down, Floyd repeatedly said “I Can’t Breathe” to the demise of onlookers. Officers J. Alexander Keung and Thomas Lane supported restraining Floyd, while Officer Tou Thao separated a crowd of onlookers who pleaded with Chauvin to remove his knee, even after Floyd remained motionless and cried out to his deceased mother.

### ***Participants***

This researcher analyzed three groups operated by Black women that responded to the event on their social media sites:

- Black Lives Matter International
- Teens 4 Equality-Nashville, Tennessee
- Orange County California (OC) Protests Community.

### ***Data Background***

All three groups are responding to police brutality and/or the excessive force used against a subject, particularly Black Americans. Historically, the patrols of enslaved Africans of the diaspora created a foundation of brutality and mistreatment that lay the foundation of continued injustices and discriminatory policing that continues to this day. In the United States, even after the passing of the 13th Amendment and the abolition of slavery, slave patrols were redesignated as policemen who often doubled as Klu Klux Klansmen (the United States “anti-black” hate group) that continued life-threatening treatment of black people in the United States, in particular during the reconstruction of America when forced labor was now defined as “free” ([Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.](#)). Albeit the Equal Rights Amendment passed in 1964, lawmakers (Democratic and Republican) found ways to criminalize Blacks, such as Nixon’s War on Drugs (1971) and Clinton’s Three Strikes Crime Bill (1994). The rate of such cases increased the Nation’s prison system from 500,000 (1980) to 2.2 million (2015) ([Georgetown, n.d.](#)).

**Table 1.** Black Victims of Racial Brutality

<b>Victim's Name and Age</b>	<b>Date of Brutality</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Event of Racial Brutality</b>
Trayvon Martin Age 12	February 5, 2012	Miami Gardens, Florida	Shot by Security Guard George Zimmerman
Eric Garner Age 43	July 5, 2014	Staten Island, New York	Chokehold, by police officer Daniel Pantaleo * "I Can't Breathe"
Michael Brown Age 18	August 9, 2014	Ferguson Missouri	Shot by police officer Darren Wilson
Ezell Ford Age 25	August 11, 2014	Los Angeles, California	Shot by police officers Sharlton Wampler (Asian) and Antonio Villegas (Hispanic/Latino)
Laquan McDonald Age 17	October 20, 2014	Chicago, Illinois	Shot by Police Officer Jason Van Dyke
Tamir Rice Age 12	November 22, 2014	Cleveland, Ohio	Shot by police officer Timothy Loehmann
Sandra Bland, Age 28	July 13, 2015	Waller County, Texas	Traffic violation, charged with assault of Officer Brian Encinia (Hispanic/ Latino) hanged herself in jail.
Philando Castile Age 32	July 6, 2016	St. Anthony, Minnesota	Shot by Jeronimo Yanez (Hispanic Latino)
Stephon Clark Age 22	March 18, 2018	Sacramento, California	Shot by police off Terrance Mercadal (African descent) and Jared Robinet (White)
Atantiana Jefferson Age 28	October 12, 2019	Fort Worth, Texas	shot by police officer Aaron Dean
Ahmad Arbery Age 25	February 23, 2020	Glynn County, Georgia	Shot by citizens Travis McMichael, Gregory McMichael
Breonna Taylor Age 26	March 13, 2020	Louisville, Kentucky	Shot by police officers' Jonathan Mattingly, Brett Hankison, Myles Cosgrove
Dreasjon Read Age 21	May 6, 2020	Indianapolis, Indiana	Shot by police officer Devoured Mercer (African descent)
George Floyd Age 45	May 31, 2020	Minneapolis, Minnesota	killed by "knee to the neck" for 8:46 seconds

Black Americans (primarily men) made up the majority of this inmate increase, making up 34 % of all inmates, accounting for 13 % of the population. As a result, several civil protests ensued, such as the Watts Riots (1965), the Rodney King Riots (1992), and more recently, some civil protests of more documented evidence of daily police brutality. This event started to reveal itself most notably in 2012 with the killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood watch coordinator (2014), the killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown (2018), and most recently, the killing

of 26-year-old Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky (March 13, 2020) and Ahmad Arbery (February 23, 2020). The following is a partial list of names of black men and women who have been killed in 10 years due to racial unrest from White men. These victims were doing nothing illegal (“The Longest List of Names Before Brianna Taylor and George Floyd”, 2020).

**Ethos**

Different groups of Black women developed the three sites that were examined. Based on audience age demographic, financial backing, perspective on womanhood, and ethos, the groups have slightly different perspectives of the George Floyd incident. The following investigates the ethos of each group, which will lend itself to understanding how each group draws its social networking following and thematically designs its content.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a global organization founded in 2013 by three Black women in response to the murder of Trayvon Martin. Its goal is to build local chapters that will intervene in the “violence inflicted” upon Black people of all orientations, gender identities, nationalities, abilities, and religions at the hands of local law enforcement and hate groups. Moreover, the three founders are extremely educated, captivating public speakers, and well-published authors. One member identifies as a Black Feminist. There are currently 40 chapters globally, 16 of them alone in the US. The organization is currently operating as a 501(c) (3) non-profit since 2016. The website features a news link, a web channel, a store, and links to many social programs. All three founders are between the ages of 35 to 40 (Home, Blacklivesmatter.com, n.d.).

On June 1, 2020, OC Protests was founded by two 20-year-old White women college students, Megan Santagata and Skylar Shaffer, who via Instagram asked black activists to join. Zoe-Raven Wianeck, a 23-year-old bi-racial Black woman, responded. Ms. Wianeck, who described herself as being denied of her “blackness” by her parents, took her GED early, moved to California from the Midwest as a teenager, and started discovering her “blackness” in college. On June 4, she responded to their Instagram. By June 20, the following grew from 1,000 to 20,200. Wianeck is now The CEO of the organization. Since then, several other Black Female activists have joined. Their mission is to “[get] people to Board of Supervisors meetings, City Council and school district meetings to activate policy change” (Atwell, 2020).

Teens 4 Equality (Nashville, TN), a national organization, was launched after Zee Taylor, a 15-year-old Black girl who, on June 4, 2020, with the help of other 14 and 16-year-old girls, five Black/women of color, one White, galvanized a local march of thousands of people. Taylor was disillusioned that Nashville did not have the same response to the killing of George Floyd as other protesting cities. Therefore, via Twitter and in less than five days, the group galvanized 28,000 Instagram followers to create the march. Since then, they have been developing the local branch of Teens 5 Equality (Hineman, Bartlett, 2020).

**Procedure One**

The researcher examined the three social network rankings as a way to measure audience interaction.

**Data Analysis**

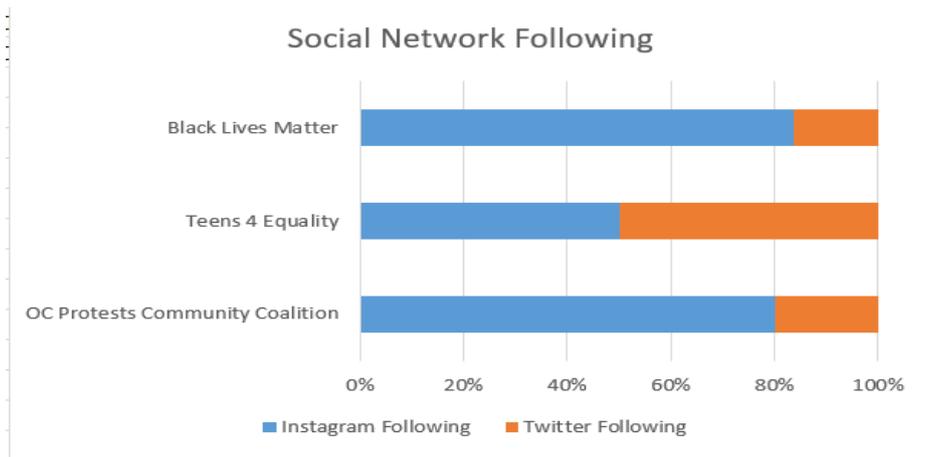
The table below lists the organizations’ rankings of Instagram and Twitter, along with several comments per social networking site.

**Table 2.** Social Network Followings

Organization	Instagram Following	Twitter
Black Lives Matter	3.8m	935k
Teens 4 Equality	30k	30k
OC Protests Community Coalition	20k	3,937k

Figure 1 compares the social networking following of all three social networking sites.

For OC Protests and Black Lives Matter, it reveals that the majority of their followings are from Instagram. “Teens 4 Equality” reveals a stronger Twitter following.



**Fig. 1.** OC Protests, Black Lives Matter, and Social Network Following

**Procedure Two**

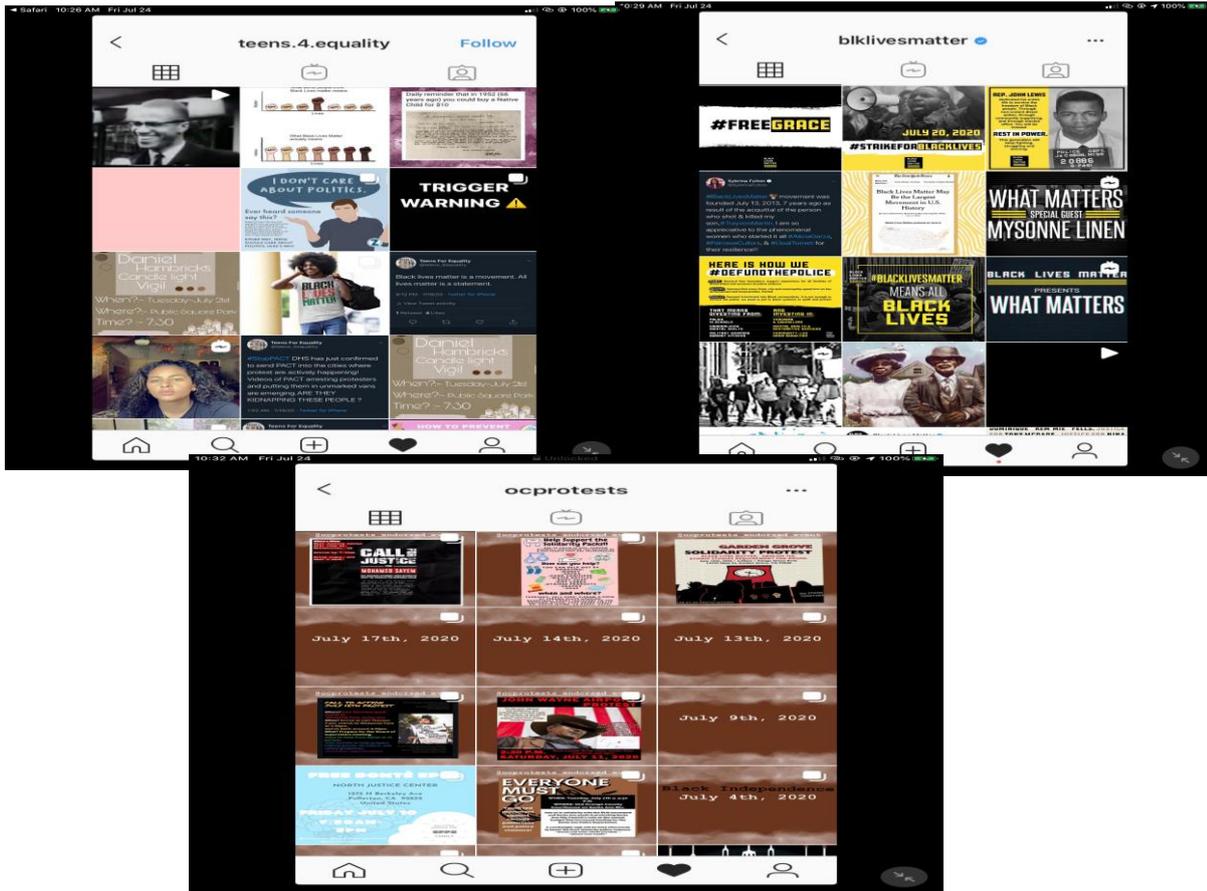
The researcher also examined the social media website design of the social networking Instagram and Twitter sites as a way to measure organizational themes to identify similarities and differences. Instagram is a free online photo-sharing application that allows participants to edit and upload videos, while Twitter combines social networking with blogging in which registered users can post and interact with messages known as Tweets (Robarts, 2018). This researcher focused on the first pages of these sites only.

**Data Analysis Two**

The Format of Instagram reveals a change for a “systemic racism” theme from all organizations. Also, all three groups control their narratives. However, their themes are presented differently. Black Lives Matter – controls the narrative through its site administrator to largely concentrate on images of notable Black leaders important to this moment, such as John Lewis (desc.), important “call to action dates” (e.g. strikes), and systemic restructuring such as “defunding the police”. Similarly, “Teens 4 Equality”-Nashville focus on historical images, but more so from a multicultural perspective, including an image of Malcolm X, as well as information First Nation Indigenous people, meeting times, and teaching words including slogans such as “Trigger Points.” Lastly, “OC Protests Coalition” Orange County, California focuses mainly on times and dates of meetings. Both Teens 4 Equality and OC Protests Coalition reveal both were newly established sites. For photos of sites, see Figure 3.



**Fig. 2.** Similarities and differences between the three organizations’ main Instagram websites  
 This Venn Diagram in Figure 2 demonstrates theme similarities and differences between the three organizations’ main Instagram websites (for photos of sites, see Figure 3).



**Fig. 3.** Photos of Instagram websites (retrieved July 24, 2020. Images subject change).  
 Source: <https://www.instagram.com/blkivesmatter/?hl=en>;  
<https://www.instagram.com/teens.4.equality/?hl=en>;  
<https://www.instagram.com/ocprotests/?hl=en>

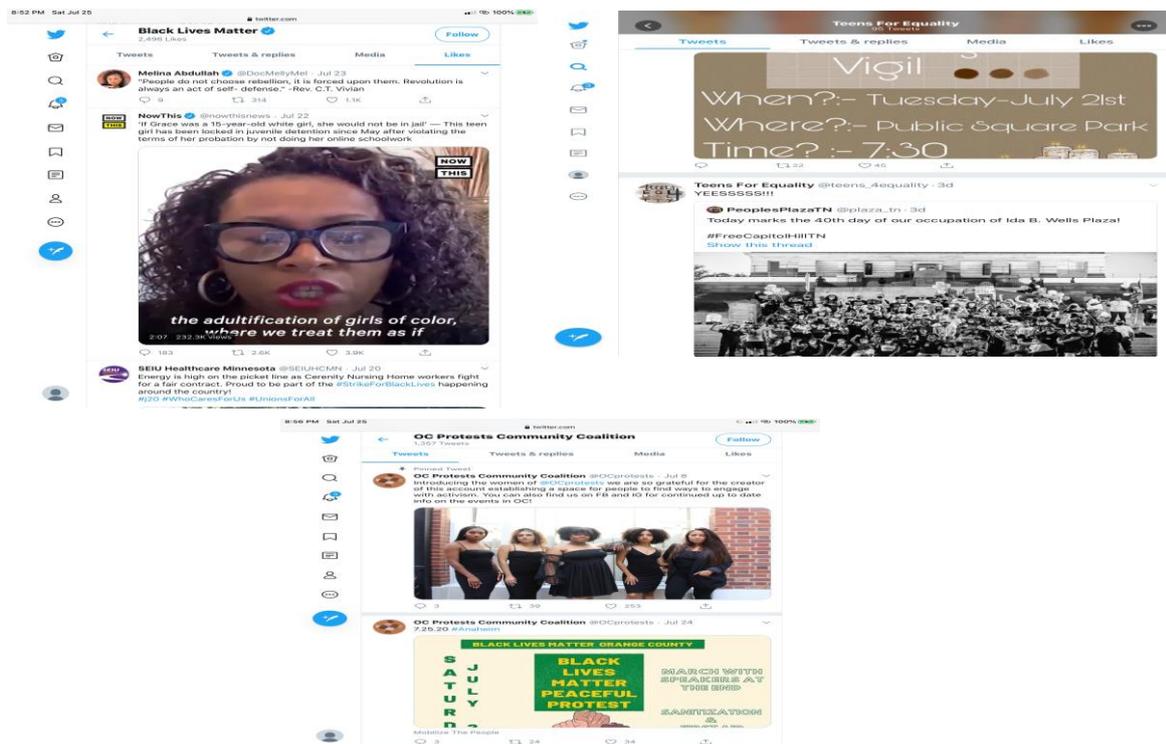


**Fig. 4.** Similarities and differences between the three organizations main Twitter websites

Similar to Instagram, Twitter reveals a protest of “systemic racism” theme from all organizations. Secondly, these sites are controlling their first page narratives from outside influences. These sites also mimic Instagram visually. However, and possibly due to differences in

age, experiences, and resources, planning and policy are more aggressive with the older group. Tweets for Black Lives Matter included specific up to date black issues, including supporting news for individuals (e.g. Grace, a student held in juvenile detention for not turning in her homework online), and groups (e.g. SEIU Union).

Seemingly, these are continuations from Instagram information. Tweets for OC Protest present its leadership and a date for a protest with a planned information share at the end. Tweets for “Teens 4 Equality” (Nashville) archives their accomplishment, as well as planning a candlelight vigil. **Figure 4** shows a Venn Diagram demonstrating the similarities and differences between the three organizations’ main Twitter websites (for photos of sites, see **Figure 5**).



**Fig. 5.** Photos of Twitter websites (retrieved July 25, 2020. Images subject to change)  
 Source: <https://twitter.com/Blklivesmatter?s=21>; <https://twitter.com/OCprotests?s=21>;  
[https://twitter.com/teens\\_4equality?s=21](https://twitter.com/teens_4equality?s=21)

### 3. Discussion

This researcher’s analysis revealed that Black women, representing three different age demographics, contribute to the Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilitation of the George Floyd protest movement (Gary, 2011). The Instagram and Twitter images above reveal discussions about how each group supported the recent protests. These groups employed their experiences based on age and audience reach to garner the support of current civil unrest. Systematically, these groups would have initiated during traditionalized social networking, which often includes family care and food preparation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Evich, 2020, Fox, n.d.). Historically and even to this day, young black girls are often introduced to these processes, known as adultification, seen as primal, and not foundational and contributory to technology-influenced social networking, which is often built and designed by White men (Brock, 2010). The researcher argues that these deficit models, port holed through technology, have ironically prepared Black women to house discourse and give direction on social sites such as Instagram and Twitter (Mamiit, 2020).

With slightly different focuses, these groups control their missions, which extend from black police brutality and systemic racism of Black Lives Matter; Black History and cross-cultural information such as from Teens 4 Equality-Nashville, and regional information, food drives, and

policing policies with OC Protests Coalition. Similarly, all three missions extend to technology skill sets being utilized. This researcher also discovered that these groups control their narrative on their social sites regarding outside influence by defining their own story and redirecting information not suitable for their mission (Mamiit, 2020). Black Lives Matter (BLM) focuses on recent systematic oppression, whereas OC Protests Coalitions sends out meetings and community services dates. Similarly, the Instagram account of BLM posted exemplars of photos, such as John Lewis, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, and directive posted reminders on how to “Defund the Police”.

Also, Teens 4 Equality Nashville posted Instagram teaching images such as “Trigger Points”, images of people in their movement, and historical icons such as Malcolm X. For their Twitter posting primarily, the confirmation thematically centered around “gaining understanding” for Black Lives Matter, who we support (beyond black people), and why Nashville is not very supportive as a city. Along with social networking control of social sites and having observed seventeen protests in Los Angeles, California, past external control over ICT via social networking and its deficit among Black women has impacted these women enough to lead groups during moments of civil unrest (Brock, 2010).

#### 4. Limitations

Due to time constraints and resources, the researcher only focused on the first page of the organizations’ social media sites for this secondary research analysis. Secondly, the researcher tracked statistics of the social networking websites from July 15-July 25, 2020, which is subject to change.

#### 5. Conclusion

On June 7, 2020, the Black Lives Matter LA Chapter led a march of 1000,000 people. The microphone was controlled by the three top officials of the chapter, all women. There were mainly Black women speakers and no arrest for civil disobedience during this protest. Through control of the technical capital of the microphone and their social networking ability without the microphone to direct people, these women created civil order during the biggest protest in Los Angeles, 2020 to date. Furthermore, even young Black girls stood strong and immovable, holding up signs amongst thousands of people, needing minimal direction. In conclusion, Black Women (because of historic objectification) were the best prepared to become the most effective modern-day social networking developers in times, what John Lewis would call “good trouble.”

#### 6. Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that there is no interest in conflict, and all reference materials were dully acknowledged.

#### 7. Funding

None.

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