JMG – DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

#AIRBNBWHILEBLACK

A case study on the narrative character of hashtag activism on Twitter in 2016

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Bachelor's thesis:	15 hp
Programme:	Media- and Communication Studies
Level:	First Cycle
Semester/year:	St/2019
Supervisor:	Gabriella Sandstig
Course coordinator:	Malin Sveningsson

Abstract

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Supervisor:	Gabriella Sandstig
Course coordinator:	Malin Sveningsson
Pages:	78
Words:	18 083
Key words:	Narrative paradigm, hashtag activism, Airbnb, #AirbnbWhileBlack, critical consciousness

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Purpose: The aim of this study is to provide an understanding of the character of the communication conducted through the use of the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter.

Theory: Postcolonial theory will offer a contextual perspective on the issue of discriminatory hosts on Airbnb. An account of narrative agency in hashtag activism will be helpful in understanding the characteristics of hashtag activism. The Narrative Paradigm will provide assistance in understanding how an argument lacking in rationality can be conducted and accepted on the basis of good reason. Lastly, the theory of critical consciousness will be used to attain an understanding of how consciousness-raising–through its empowering of groups– can be a form of activism.

Method: The chosen method is a case study, qualitatively thematising the data and presenting it in the form of separate, co-constructed narrative themes and reactions.

Material: The data consists of 217 tweets collected from the time period 1 April 2016 to 31 August 2016.

Results: The character of the communication conducted through the usage of the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter is narrative in form and predominantly based on good reason rather than rationality. There are indicators of authors being aware of their group identity and conscious about the group's inferiority to other groups in society. The communication is invitational and characterized by solidarity.

Acknowledgements

Executive summary

Studies have shown that Black people systematically earn less when listing properties and are more likely to be denied by hosts when using the online peer-to-peer accommodation rental service Airbnb. In 2015 the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack gained spread on Twitter, a hashtag used by people sharing and discussing stories of encounters with discriminatory hosts on Airbnb. This paper is a case study on the character of the communication conducted using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter between 1 April 2016 - 31 August 2016.

The emergence of mass media and the Internet has enabled the possibility for citizens to inform themselves and others, mobilise and actively form public opinion. Anger is the trigger that engages a person in a cause, while fear is the emotion that will restrict that engagement. By communicating with others sharing these emotions, a person can overcome their fear. Online movements are characterised by being global and local at the same time and not in need of an identifiable centre. They are decentralised, lack a formal leadership and often result in a broad variety of demands. They are further characterised by togetherness: when people act together, they can challenge domination. The goal of Internet movements is to raise awareness and empower citizens at large. One way to raise awareness online is by sharing and discussing stories through the usage of certain hashtags. While some dismiss these conversations merely as a kind of "personal therapy", others argue that it in fact is a consciousness-raising practise which in itself functions as political activism.

One forum for communicating with others through the usage of hashtags is the micro-blog site Twitter. Studies have shown that the percentage of Black Internet users who use Twitter is larger than that of White and researchers have addressed a phenomenon referred to as "Black Twitter". Black Twitter can be considered a movement for consciousness-raising and social organising, spreading stories of marginalisation and forming public opinion. A further concept addressed by those studying Black Twitter is that of "Blacktags", hashtags engaging people in the sharing of narratives from the Black community. The hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack

shares a marginalised perspective of what it is like to be Black and use Airbnb. Due to protection under the Communications Decency Act, stating that websites are freed from liability of user-generated content, Airbnb cannot be held liable for violations of the Fair Housing Act or Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In spite of this, Airbnb responded to the critique voiced through #AirbnbWhileBlack by hiring a third-party source to help them fight discrimination and build inclusion. A report on the progress presented multiple changes within the company's policy that were introduced to fight the issue of discriminatory hosts. As the communication conducted using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack has elicited response from Airbnb, it can be argued that examining the character of that very communication is relevant when trying to understand the character activism can have today.

Previous research shows that Internet activism is an established form of activism that allows users to mobilise and spread ideas. Internet activism can evoke corporate response as corporations make efforts to protect their public image. Websites addressing Internet activism are set out to raise awareness of narratives that challenge those told by private and state-owned corporate news media. By doing so, consumers can become informed and join in numbers to use their power as citizens. Hashtag activism is characterised by narration and *can* but does not *need* to be confrontational. It can further be characterized by solidarity as users identify with and support others. Literature on Internet studies and race addresses issues of equality as it is concluded that the Internet was created- and is still predominantly operated by White people. Meanwhile, the Internet is essential to minorities as it provides the opportunity of sustaining communities where culture, experiences, values and ideas can be shared. Studies conducted on the topic of Airbnb are mainly conducted in the research fields of business, economics and hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism. A mere 5% of studies conducted on paid online peer-to-peer accommodation focused on unequal access and none examined political activism. The few studies that have been conducted on unequal access when using Airbnb do however show that properties listed by African-Americans are priced at an average of 12% less and that users with African-

American sounding names are 16% less likely to have their rental request accepted. The scientific contribution of this study is a further understanding of the character of hashtag activism in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack. The field of research on Internet activism and race lacks literature on race, racism and Twitter. Studies have been conducted on the subject but there is still a lack of literature describing the character of content qualifying as hashtag activism when addressing race. Furthermore, research conducted on paid online peer-to-peer accommodation is lacking in the communication field, especially in addressing political communication in the form of activism. In fact, there are no studies mentioning Airbnb addressing political activism.

The theoretical framework of this study includes post colonialism, the narrative paradigm, narrative agency in hashtag activism and critical consciousness. Post colonialism offers a perspective on the context in which the issues voiced through #AirbnbWhileBlack can be understood. The narrative paradigm is used to analyse the argumentative character of the narratives shared on the hashtag, more specifically it is used to discuss narratives argued and accepted out of *good reason* rather than *rationality*. Good reason is based on a narrative's probability and fidelity, i.e., if it is coherent and ringing true to what the author or audience knows to be true in their lives. Narrative agency in hashtag activism offers a categorisation and understanding of hashtag activism. Finally, the three processes involved in developing a critical consciousness and how consciousness-raising can function as activism are introduced. A person *identifying* with a group, then becoming *conscious* of the group's positioning in society and lastly developing *self and collective efficacy* where they believe in their ability of achieving desired change–has attained a critical consciousness. Indicators of authors of tweets having gone through these processes are identified in the analysis.

The aim of the study is to provide a further understanding of the narrative character of what others previously have referred to as *hashtag activism* and the significance consciousness-raising has for participation in such activism. The empirical questions asked are:

- What themes can be identified among the narratives shared through the usage of the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack and how?

- What tweeted reactions do the narratives evoke?

A case study is conducted to answer these questions. A case study is an examination of a certain event, person, program, phenomenon, institution or social group that is chosen due to its importance or other quality making it interesting for studying. The method is rooted in real life situations and therefore result in rich and holistic descriptions of a phenomenon. Another benefit of the method is that it provides enlightenment and insight to a case, often resulting in hypotheses that can offer suggestions for future research. However, the researcher conducting a case study needs to have an understanding of their impact on the finished product as they are the main instrument of data inquiry and interpretation. I.e., the study is limited to the researcher's sensibility and integrity. The period for the sampled data stretches from April 1st 2016 to August 31st 2016–a period of five months. The collection of data includes in 217 tweets.

The results show that the main narrative shared by people using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter between 1 April 2016 - 31 August 2016 is that of those sharing their own experience of being subjected to discrimination on Airbnb. People sharing the main narrative, authors promoting alternative accommodation services, those identifying with the main narrative and, finally, people addressing the political, historical and cultural context of the issues voiced through the main narrative–constitute the co-constructed narrative themes in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack. The tweeted reactions are voiced by those claiming that they themselves are Black and have used Airbnb without encountering discriminatory hosts, people who disregard the issues of the main narrative due to the fact that everyone has a right to decide whom they let into their home and, lastly, those reacting by demanding or suggesting ways in which Airbnb should change. Furthermore, the shared narratives received tweeted reactions from Airbnb, journalists and those addressing legal action.

Based on the results and analysis, it can be stated that the character of the content posted on the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack is narrative in form and predominantly argued based on good reason rather than rationality, requiring the audience to share the author's understanding of the world in order for it to be convincing. There are indicators of authors co-constructing narrative themes being aware of their group identity and conscious of the group's inferiority to other groups in society. The communication is further characterised by solidarity as authors identify with- and support others, blaming the system rather than setting out to discredit the individuals who share their experiences of encountering discriminatory Airbnb hosts. Lastly, as stated, the communication encourages participation and is of an invitational character rather than a confrontational one.

In many cases, the narratives' lack of rationality in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack could arguably be caused by the restrictions that a tweet sets, allowing the author only 140 characters. Under such circumstances, details and even fundamental parts of a story might be compromised to fit the format. It could therefore be suggested that narratives argued with *good reason* are accepted more easily on Twitter since the restriction of words prohibits the storyteller from telling the whole story. The lack of rationality could more easily be overlooked since the audience is aware of- and used to stories being abridged. If a narrative is shared on another social media platform where the author could elaborate but chooses not to, the audience might react differently and demand more information before accepting the narrative as true. Therefore, I would urge researchers to conduct further studies on narrative probability and fidelity in hashtag activism but gather data from different social media platforms.

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Introduction

The movie *Green Book* was awarded for best picture and best original screenplay at the 2019 Academy Awards. The actor Mahershala Ali was further awarded for best supporting actor, portraying a talented, Black musician touring the United States in 1962. Set in a time when racism was not prevented by law and accommodation establishments were allowed to deny a person based on the colour of their skin, the musician hires an Italian-American troublemaker as a personal driver to keep him safe on the tour (Chow, 24 Feb 2019). The Green Book, which the title of the movie refers to, was a travel guide first published in the year of 1936. The book listed businesses that accepted African-American customers. In 1964 however, the Civil Rights Act prohibited businesses to discriminate based on race and the Green Book published its last issue in 1967 (Wallenfeldt, 2019). Many have probably left the theatres feeling relieved that the issues the Black musician faced in the movie are issues of the past. But are they, really? In 2015, the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack gained attention on social media, sharing stories of racial discrimination using the online peer-to-peer accommodation renting service Airbnb (Frenken & Schor, 2016).

This paper is a case study of Twitter posts using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack. The study aims to offer an understanding of the character of hashtag activism with the perspective of narration and critical consciousness. Narration serves as an appropriate theory for analysing the Twitter posts as it can offer a perspective on the argumentative quality of a narrative. Critical consciousness will add understanding to how group consciousness plays a role in hashtag activism. Perspectives of narrative agency in hashtag activism and post colonial theory will be used to provide further understanding of the character of the communication. A discussion will be held on the significance of the characteristics of the communication in relation to online movements and public opinion. The scientific contribution of the study is a perspective on the communication arisen from ethical issues within the sharing economy and a further understanding of the narrative character of hashtag activism. The study is set in an American context as

the literature review, background information and data predominantly is collected from American sources.

Background

The contextual aspects of hashtag activism will be presented in this chapter. First, an account of the public sphere is given to explain the arena in which public opinions are formed. Second, a description of social movements off- and online will be provided to offer an understanding of how the Internet is being used as an arena for the formation of public opinion. Third, social movements off- and online will be narrowed down to how Twitter provides an arena for the formation of public opinions.

The public sphere

The public sphere can be defined as "(...) the space of communication of ideas and projects that emerge from society and are addressed to the decision makers in the institutions of society" (Castells 2008:78). With this point of view as basis for our understanding of the public sphere, our society can be claimed to be organising its public sphere more efficiently than any previous society throughout history. This is due to the emergence of the mass media and Internet, leading to the enablement of communication networks that allow the public to organise itself (Castells, 2008:79). A quote by Roper (2002) is presented below to explain that the Internet has impacted activism in a way that benefits citizens more than it does corporations:

  While new communication technology, in particular the Internet, has served to increase corporate power, it has simultaneously served to increase the power of the activist groups that challenge corporate power. As Mike Dolan of the group Public Citizen commented: "The internet has become the latest, greatest arrow in our quiver of social activism. It benefits us more than the corporate and government elites we're fighting."

Social movements off- & online

Social movements emerge out of situations where people consider aspects of their living conditions unbearable. The distrust of the political institutions which manage society is often a significant factor when people call for social change. Some movements, however, are not triggered by political despair but rather the outrage against blatant injustice (Castells, 2012:218-221). According to the theory of affective intelligence in political communication, anger is the trigger that engages a person in a cause, while fear is the emotion that will function as a restrainer of the engagement. Through communicating with others that are experiencing the same emotions as oneself, a person can overcome his or her fear (Castells, 2012:219). According to Castells (2012:229), digital social networks provide excellent platforms for mobilisation, organisation, deliberation, coordination and decision making. As such, the Internet creates conditions for shared action, which enables the existence of online movements and their expansion. Some characteristics typical for online movements are that they are global and local at the same time, do not need an identifiable centre, are decentralised and horizontal as they do not depend on a formal leadership and furthermore often result in a broad variety of demands as motivations for participation are unlimited. Social movements gaining size online are furthermore characterised by togetherness; when people act together, they can challenge domination. The goal of Internet movements is to raise awareness and empower citizens at large (Castells, 2012:219-237). Presented below is a quote by Castells (2012:236-237) addressing how the growth of a movement impacts the involvement of politicians:

If the cultural and social influence of the movement expands, particularly in the younger, more active generations, astute politicians will address their values and concerns, seeking electoral gain. They will do so within the limits of their own allegiance to their bank rollers. But the more the movement is able to convey its messages over the communication networks, the more citizen consciousness rises, and the more the public sphere of communication becomes a contested terrain, and the lesser will be the politicians' capacity to integrate demands and claims with mere cosmetic adjustments.

As such, the successfulness of consciousness-raising affects the successfulness of a movement. People who previously have not considered their position in, or been unaware of a certain movement can feel the need to join as he or she becomes conscious of and then identifies with the involved group. While some dismiss the storytelling and discussions carried out on social media through the usage of certain hashtags merely as a kind of "personal therapy", others (e.g. Hanisch, 2000; Gunn, 2015) argue that it in fact is a consciousness-raising practise which in itself functions as political activism. The concept of sharing individual lived experiences as a form of political action is not new (Gunn, 2015:22). The Internet, however, has enabled the possibility of efficiently locating others who have had similar experiences and then forming online communities. By attaching a hashtag to a post, users add to the pool of content which shares the same specific hashtag. Thereby, hashtags function as connecting links between people and can be used to mobilise participators of social movements. They allow strangers addressing the same issue to interact with one another, e.g. as has been done in the cases of #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo and #JeSuisCharlie (Gunn, 2015:23f).

Twitter and race

Twitter is an online social networking platform where users can post "tweets", real-time messages consisting of a maximum of 140 characters. The site is also often referred to as a micro-blog (Gunn, 2015:21). One does not need an account to consume content from public Twitter accounts and feeds. A personal account is however necessary for writing and posting tweets. The communicative options offered are posting and reacting to tweets by liking or retweeting, sending private direct messages, sharing information and co-creating trends of topics that are "(...) bound by the use of a hashtag (#), a feature which works to consolidate dialogue surrounding a given topic or theme" (Gunn, 2015:21).

Studies have shown that the percentage of Black Internet users who use Twitter is larger than that of White (Smith, 2011; Brenner & Smith, 2012). Multiple

research papers conducted on Twitter and culture have addressed the phenomenon of "Black Twitter" (e.g. Brock, 2012; Sharma, 2013). Black Twitter can be considered a movement for consciousness-raising and social organising, spreading stories of marginalisation and forming public opinion (McDonald, 20 January 2014). Black feminist and Twitter figure Feminista Jones describes Black Twitter as "(...) a collective of active, primarily African-American Twitter users who have created a virtual community that participates in continuous real-time conversations" and then continues; "(w)hen they work together, this collective is proving adept at bringing about a wide range of sociopolitical changes. It doesn't take much effort to get users to rally together behind causes that may have an impact on their lives" (Jones in Gunn, 2015:25). In further reference to Black Twitter, some authors refer to racialized hashtags on Twitter as "Blacktags", hashtags engaging people in the sharing of narratives from the Black community. The Blacktags vary in content and intention, some are humorous (e.g. #IfSantaWasBlack) while others address serious issues (e.g. #Ferguson) but a common theme, applicable to both humorous and more serious Blacktags, is that of social commenting in the form of critique (Sharma, 2013).

The case of #AirbnbWhileBlack

Airbnb provides an accommodation marketplace where users can list and rent private housing for both shorter and longer periods of time. The company was founded in 2008 as a response to hotel room shortages and has since then grown to become the largest competitor to commercial housing services such as hotels and motels. Airbnb made a profit of $93 million on $2,6 billion in revenue in 2017 (Bort, 06 Feb 2018). The company offers over six million unique places to stay in 191 countries and more than 81,000 cities (Airbnb, 2019a). Airbnb's four core values are listed as following:

- We're united with our community to create a world where anyone can belong anywhere.
- We're caring, open, and encouraging to everyone we work with.
- We're driven by curiosity, optimism, and the belief that every person can grow.
- We're determined and creative in transforming our bold ambitions into reality.

(Airbnb, 2019b)

Airbnb operates within the sharing economy, where strangers can lend or rent products and services to one another without the direct involvement of a company. The sharing economy has been given credit for combining profit with people and planet (Böcker & Meelen, 2016). By sharing goods and services, communities can be formed and/or strengthened. Strangers who probably never would have met otherwise can initiate contact and build social networks. The sharing of goods can also reduce wasteful consumption and thereby contribute to a more sustainable society. However, many businesses within the sharing economy have been criticized for being unethical and in fact gaining profit at the *expense* of people and planet. Airbnb is one of those businesses, facing a variety of accusations of both ethical and legal character (Frenken & Schor, 2016). One issue is that of local residents in popular tourist locations facing property shortages. Another one is that jobs such as housekeeper, receptionist and concierge that employ many people in the hotel business decrease when Airbnb attains market shares. A further critique of the sharing economy is that it mainly benefits two groups of people; the providers of platforms for sharing, such as Airbnb, and those who own valuable assets (Frenken & Schor, 2016). I.e., the sharing economy is mostly profitable for the already wealthy.

Despite of one of Airbnb's core values being creating a world where anyone can belong anywhere, both academic studies and social media testimony report differently. User profiles on Airbnb show full names and often pictures of both host and renter when initial contact is made. Studies, which will be accounted for in the literature review, have shown that Black hosts earn 12% less than non-Black hosts when listing the same type of property (Edelman & Luca, 2014).

Furthermore, users with stereotypically African-American names are 16% less likely to have their rental requests accepted by Airbnb hosts (Edelman, Luca & Svirsky, 2017). Not only do statistics prove that there exists a structural disadvantage for persons of color when using Airbnb, but people have used the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack since 2015 to share stories of how they have been subjected to racism using the service (Frenken & Schor, 2016).

Is it legal?

The literature review and data in this study are predominantly gathered from American sources. Due to this, the following account of the legal framework of this issue will account for American law. Michael Todisco (2015) has reviewed the legal restrictions on discrimination for users of Airbnb. Even though in the eyes of many, discrimination is far from socially accepted, it *is* allowed and beyond governmental reach within the intimate-relationship sphere. The same does however not apply in the commercial sphere, where discrimination is strictly prohibited by law. Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing Act (FHA) enforce laws that seek to prohibit any such behaviour. One can argue that the service of renting private property through Airbnb would be considered somewhere in between the commercial and intimate sphere. While the law rules against all racial discrimination in any establishment that provides lodging to transient guests, the Communications Decency Act (CDA) states that websites are freed from liability of user-generated content. Furthermore, a person may refuse to rent their property to anyone if it contains less than five units and the host actually lives there. This further complicates a categorisation of Airbnb in regards to commercial and intimate spheres, as some users only advertise one room of their home or only put their property up for rent a short period of time but live there otherwise (Todisco, 2015).

Due to protection under the CDA, Airbnb cannot be held liable for FHA or Title II violations that users of the service are subjected to. Todisco suggests three options for the individual who seeks justice and change; bring enforcement actions against

individual Airbnb hosts, lobby congress to change the CDA to exclude housing violations, and/or pressure Airbnb to evolve. This evolvement could include increasing anonymity on the website and thereby decreasing opportunities for users to discriminate based on name and picture. Another option would be to develop a system for statistical analysis of hosts activity in an effort to identify possible cases of discrimination and thereby enable the possibility to perform tests on certain hosts (Todisco, 2015).

Airbnb's response

On September 8th 2016, a report conducted by a third party source hired by Airbnb was released. The report, *Airbnb's Work to Fight Discrimination and Build Inclusion* (Murphy, 2016), addresses the issues voiced through #AirbnbWhileBlack and the context surrounding it. The process of renting an accommodation through Airbnb was examined with the company's policies in focus. The report was conducted by Laura Murphy & Associates with help from a range of experts, advocates and organizations representing minority groups. The report concludes that there is no single solution that can eliminate bias and discrimination from Airbnb's platform, but rather that the company needed to implement workflows for addressing discrimination and that the nondiscrimination policy needed to be strengthened. The report resulted in multiple actions. First of all, a new nondiscrimination policy was implemented and reminders of it have been placed at key points during the hosting and booking process. Second, Airbnb addressed the issue of hosts claiming that dates are unavailable when they are not by implementing a feature that blocks claimed unavailable dates from the calendar. Third, Airbnb have made the option of reporting discrimination more available and clear. Fourth, a policy called *Open Doors* has been introduced, ensuring that anyone who tried to book a listing but failed to do so due to discrimination will receive direct assistance from the Airbnb team in finding an accommodation. Fifth, anti-bias training will be made available to all hosts and mandatory for all Airbnb employees. Sixth, a permanent, full-time product team will be implemented to fight bias and promote diversity. Lastly,

Airbnb have committed to creating a new, comprehensive plan to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. They will also hire a Manager for Supplier Diversity whose task will be to identify "(...) opportunities where Airbnb can more actively engage with and support minority-owned and -operated business (...) in the United States" (Murphy, 2016).

The rise of alternative services

As a result of the issues of discrimination on Airbnb, two competing services were started with the same business idea as Airbnb, only with a much greater focus on inclusiveness and community. The creator of Noirbnb, Stefan Grant, first got the idea in October 2015 after having an #AirbnbWhileBlack experience himself. The concept of Noirbnb is to "(...) create a better, safer experience for travelers of color" (Noirbnb, n.d.). Innclusive, or Noirebnb as it was first called, was started by Rohan Gilkes after having shared his story of being declined when trying to book an accommodation through Airbnb. Even though he had been flexible with the dates for the booking he was told the listing was unavailable. After a White friend had made the same request and been accepted immediately–Gilkes concluded that he was being denied due to his race. Gilkes' company, Innclusive, aims to provide a "(...) platform where people of all backgrounds can travel and stay with respect, dignity, and love" (Innclusive, n.d.). Both Noirbnb and Innclusive were launched in 2016 and still offer their services at the time of this study.

Societal relevance

As stated, we live in a time when society is organising its public sphere more efficiently than ever before. Due to the emergence of mass media and the Internet, information and communication channels enabling the possibility of mobilising are widely accessible. The Internet thereby creates conditions for shared action. Citizens with Internet access can inform themselves and come together to challenge dominating narratives offered by corporations and governments. One

form for such a movement is hashtag activism, a concept that will be explained further in the theoretical framework. Furthermore, within the sharing economy, critique is being aimed at the fact that those seemingly benefitting from it are the owners of platforms and those owning excessive, valuable assets. Since users of services within the sharing economy attain power over who gets access to their assets, further critique is directed at the abuse of power in terms of discrimination. Airbnb has addressed critique regarding unfair and unethical opportunities for using the service and made several internal changes. As the communication conducted using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack has elicited response from the company, it can be argued that examining the character of that very communication is relevant when trying to understand the character activism can have today.

Literature review

Airbnb

A study from Harvard University conducted by Benjamin Edelman and Michael Luca (2014) uses pictures from all New York City landlords on Airbnb to test for racial discrimination. By looking at rental prices and information about quality of the rentals, the study shows that listings by Black hosts are priced at an average of 12% less than corresponding non-Black hosts' listings. A follow-up field experiment (Edelman, Luca & Svirsky, 2017) shows that Airbnb users with African-American names are 16% less likely to have their rental request accepted than identical users with distinctively white names. The authors created user accounts that were identical in all aspects except for name and inquired roughly 6,400 Airbnb listings across five cities.

Sara Dolnicar (2019) has written a review of research into paid online peer-to-peer accommodation, conducting a knowledge map on the topic and identifying research gaps that require attention from the academic society. Among the studies mentioning "Airbnb", only 1,1% are contributions within field of communication.

Close to 60% of all studies mentioning Airbnb are written within the fields of hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism (29,4%), business (16,3%) and economics (13,1%). Among the studies on Airbnb, 5% regard unequal access using the service while none examine political activism. The review further highlights the fact that large platform facilitators such as Airbnb can have great impact on societal development since it creates networks capable of lobbying and engaging in political activism – both within and across national borders (Dolnicar, 2019). An example of how the Airbnb have used their community to engage politically is when they marketed and sold "the Belong Ring", a ring representing the bearer's support for marriage equality becoming law in Australia. One of Dolnicar's (2019:258) suggestions for future research is studying how the power of actors within peer-to-peer accommodation networks can be monitored and how the abuse of such power can be prevented:

How can we ensure the power of peer-to-peer accommodation networks platform facilitators is used for good? Airbnb has pioneered large-scale corporate political activism globally by lobbying against restrictive immigration laws and for marriage equality. These initiatives have demonstrated the power of large virtual networks of people. Such power could also be abused. Work into how the use of this power can be monitored and abuse prevented is needed.

Internet and race

Jessie Daniels (2012) has conducted a review and critique on race and racism in Internet studies. Daniels suggests that previous literature on Internet and race is categorised accordingly; design, industry, technology, identity and community, social control and laws in regards to race. Several researchers (Gajjala, 2004; Hossfeld, 2001; Pitti, 2004; Shih, 2006 in Daniels, 2012:697) have conducted studies on the topic of Silicon Valley employees with a focus on race within the industry. The studies show that the high technology industry is unequal, as it was created and is still predominantly led by white men and a few white women. Those occupied with the manual labor of cleaning offices and working at the most basic positions in assembling technology were immigrants or outsourced labor.

Other researchers, studying the field Internet and race with a focus on identity and community, have concluded that the Internet provides people with the opportunity to form and reaffirm individual racial identity (Byrne, 2008a, 2008b; Everett, 2004, 2008; Nakamura and Chow-White, 2011 in Daniels, 2012:698). Research shows that people are using the Internet to locate communities that share common understandings of the world, their background and their values. Online platforms allow people of different backgrounds to sustain communities where racial and ethnic identities can connect. The Internet plays an especially important role in sustaining these communities, as globalisation is resulting in people moving across national boundaries and thereby separating from their physical communities (Bernal, 2006 in Daniels, 2012:699). Furthermore, in her conclusion, Daniels (2012:711) highlights the lack of research on race and Twitter:

There are interesting conversations about race happening on Twitter (e.g., sometimes following hashtags such as #blacktwitter and #browntwitterbird). To date, there is no research in the peer-reviewed literature about race, racism and Twitter and this will surely change soon.

Internet activism

Marquis, Rose Luo and Zhang (2016) have studied how internet activism can draw a corporate response. The study examines the relationship between corporate donations made in the wake of the 2008 earthquake in the Sichuan Province of China and the internet activism connected to the happening. 600 firms and 26 financial institutions are included in the study. The results show that companies comparing unfavorably in online rankings by Internet activists had a 210% higher likelihood in donating than those who compared favorably (Marquis, Rose Luo and Zhang, 2016:5-13). Another result suggests that there exists a relationship between the number of online articles from 1300 Chinese newspapers written on corporate donation and the speed of donation; the more articles written, the more rapid the donations. Furthermore, the study shows that "(h)igh-reputation firms have an 88% higher likelihood of donation in a given time interval compared to firms without such a reputation" (Marquis, Rose Luo and Zhang, 2016:17). In

accordance with the study's hypotheses, the overall results show that through its threatening of a corporation's public image, Internet activism does elicit corporate response.

The paper *Government, corporate or social power? The Internet as a tool in the struggle for dominance in public policy* by Dr. Juliet Roper (2002) studies 150 websites selected from the Google searches "internet activism", "internet activism globalisation" and "internet activism globalization". The study examines the type of material the websites contain, the objectives of the websites and how the sites' sponsors describe themselves. Roper sets out to demonstrate how activists use the Internet to challenge the liberalised global economy and suggests that monitoring and responding to public opinion is necessary for corporations. One way in which the Internet enables activism is by the spread of information, demonstrated in the following quote by Roper (2002:120-121):

More often than not, private and state-owned corporate news media tend to publish news stories that are told from the dominant political and economic perspective. In order to bypass corporate media news filters, alternative news can be disseminated directly to the public via the Internet.

Several of the examined websites had the aim of doing exactly this; sharing alternative news. Roper suggests that the neo-liberal model of corporate dominance–arguing that *governments* have power over *consumers* and that *corporations* are in a position of power over both *governments* and *consumers*–is challenged by the public sphere model of citizen determination–arguing that *governments* have power over *corporations* and that *citizens* are in a position of power over both *governments* and *corporations*. This due to the fact that *consumers* gain power when they get access to information and can then, by joining forces, reposition themselves as *citizens* in a position of power. The paper further concludes that most websites were set out to restore democratic authority over corporations (Roper, 2002:118).

Hashtag activism

Katherine Wolfe (2018) has conducted a study on the narrative form and agency in the online movement #MeToo. The paper examines the hashtag by studying to what extent its content is artful, communal, invented by authors, has narrative form, and is possible to pervert. The criterias mentioned are based on Yang (2016) and Campbell's (2005) definitions of narrative agency and form. Wolfe found that the hashtag #MeToo is an example of how online narratives have become a form of activism in today's society. Unlike Yang (2016) however, Wolfe argues that a hashtag narrative does not necessarily have to be confrontational. Instead she argues that there is an invitational character of narrative activism and refers to the findings of Foss and Griffin (1995) regarding invitational rhetoric, emphasising the narratives' relationship-creating character. Hashtag activism in the case of #MeToo welcomed the sharing of anyone's perspective rather than the domination of stories belonging to those with persuasive argumentative techniques. The activity on #MeToo did however lead to the much more confrontational initiative Time's Up, a legal defence fund founded as a response to the critique on *MeToo*'s lacking intersectionalistic perspective. The fund has raised over $13 million, offering financial support to people combating sexual harassment and assault (Wolfe, 2018).

Bonilla and Rosa (2015) have examined the on- and offline activity in regards to the hashtag #Ferguson. An unarmed African American teenager named Michael Brown was shot by a police officer in the summer of 2014, despite the fact that an eyewitness reported that Brown had his hands up in the air, surrendering and saying "don't shoot". Studying the activity following the first tweet, Bonilla and Rosa found multiple hashtags connected to the incident. #Ferguson, referring to the name of the town in which the killing took place, #MichaelBrown and #HandsUp were some of the general references to the incident, while some other hashtags referenced similar incidents. One of those, further accounted for by Bonilla and Rosa (2015), was the killing of another unarmed African American teenager named Trayvon Martin, an incident taking place two years prior to the Michael Brown killing. In the Martin case, the killer had pointed out in his 911

call that Martin had been looking suspicious, wearing a dark hoodie. This sparked a debate regarding the fact that hoodies become signs of criminality only when worn on racialized bodies. Bonilla and Rosa (2015) found that this then lead to the spreading of the hashtags #HoodiesUp and #WeAreTrayvonMartin, where African Americans posted pictures of themselves wearing hoodies, implying that it could have been any one of them. A similar hashtag emerging after the killing of Michael Brown was #IfTheyGunnedMeDown, criticising the media for using a picture of Brown doing what some called a peace sign and others, a gang sign. #IfTheyGunnedMeDown was used by African Americans posting contrasting pictures of themselves, often followed by the question "which picture would they choose?". The #HandsUpDontShoot hashtag is a further example of people posting pictures of themselves to show support, holding their hands up in the air. The study shows that in the cases of Brown and Martin, hashtags have been used to raise awareness of and spark discussions on police brutality against Black people. Furthermore, the hashtags have been used to spread news on the incidents, connect with others and show solidarity towards the victims (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015).

Overview and relevance

Previous research shows that Internet activism is an established form of activism that allows users to mobilise and spread ideas. Internet activism can evoke corporate response as corporations make efforts to protect their public image. Websites addressing Internet activism are set out to raise awareness of narratives that challenge those told by private and state-owned corporate news media. By doing so, consumers can become informed and join in numbers to use their power as citizens. Hashtag activism is characterised by narration and *can* but does not *need* to be confrontational, in the case of #MeToo the narratives were invitational and relationship-creating. In the cases of #Ferguson, #WeAreTrayvonMartin and hashtags relating to both cases, the hashtags, again, had narrative character. These were further characterized by solidarity as users identified with and supported the victims. Literature on Internet studies and race addresses issues of equality as it is

concluded that the Internet was created- and is still predominantly operated by White people. Meanwhile, the Internet is essential to minorities as it provides the opportunity of sustaining communities where culture, experiences, values and ideas can be shared. Studies conducted on the topic of Airbnb are mainly conducted in the research fields of business, economics and hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism. A mere 5% of studies conducted on paid online peer-to-peer accommodation focused on unequal access and none examined political activism. The few studies that have been conducted on unequal access when using Airbnb do however show that properties listed by African-Americans are priced at an average of 12% less and that users with African-American sounding names are 16% less likely to have their rental request accepted.

The reviewed studies have predominantly been gathered from American institutions and publications as a result of the lack of relevant studies issued by Swedish counterparts. Studies examining different phenomenon with race and ethnicity as variables are common in America and as a result, the literature review presented above, setting the framework of this study, positions the research in an American context.

Scientific contribution

The field of research on Internet activism and race lacks literature on race, racism and Twitter. Studies have been conducted on the subject but there is still a lack of literature describing the character of content qualifying as hashtag activism when addressing race. Furthermore, research conducted on paid online peer-to-peer accommodation is lacking in the communication field, especially in addressing political communication in the form of activism. In fact, there are no studies mentioning Airbnb addressing political activism. As stated in the review of literature addressing peer-to-peer accommodation, there exists a need for research on how the monitoring of power and prevention of abuse of peer-to-peer accommodation networks' platform facilitators can be assured. By combining the three research areas listed in the literature review above (paid online peer-to-peer accommodation, Internet and race and Internet- and hashtag activism), this paper

will examine activism in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack by studying content posted on Twitter, with a focus on narration and empowerment through consciousness-raising. The scientific contribution of this study is a perspective on the communication arisen from ethical issues within the sharing economy and a further understanding of the character of hashtag activism, specifically in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is conducted with the aim of gaining an understanding of the character of content posted on Twitter using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack in 2016. First, post-colonial theory will be presented to offer a perspective on the historical and social context from which the issues voiced through #AirbnbWhileBlack stem. Second, the narrative paradigm will be introduced, arguing that people act on the basis of what they believe to be *good reason* rather than necessarily always behaving rationally. What qualifies as good reason depends on a narrative's structure and the values and truths the receiver of the narrative believes in. Third, narrative agency in hashtag activism will be briefly accounted for, as it can offer guidance in the connection between narration and activism in social media. Lastly, the theoretical framework will describe how consciousness-raising through narration functions as an empowering process for groups. The theory offers an explanation to how people through group identification and consciousness can develop self and collective efficacy.

Post colonialism

Since the late 20th century, the theory of how western perspectives dominate society has been formulated through *post colonialism*. The theory covers both a historical and a contemporary view of how accepted views on morality and ethics are saturated by the values of White people. "White culture was regarded (and remains) the basis for ideas of legitimate government, law, economics, science, language, music, art, literature–in a word, civilization" (Young, 2003). Post

colonialism presents a conceptual reorientation towards perspectives and knowledge belonging to societies outside the west (Young, 2003).

The narrative paradigm

The narrative paradigm by Walter Fisher (1999) deviates from theories of rhetoric claiming that human communication must be argumentative and will be evaluated on the basis of rational standards. Instead, the narrative paradigm claims that a narrative can be entirely based on *good reason*, and then accepted or denied depending on what a person might consider to be good reason (se figure 1 below). Good reason is judged on the basis of *narrative probability* and *narrative fidelity* (Fisher, 1999:272). Narrative probability is considered good when a story is regarded as coherent, while narrative fidelity depends on whether the receiver finds the story credible, i.e.; if it rings true based on what the receiver considers to be true in their life. Fisher offers a broad definition of a narrative in claiming that "(b)y 'narration,' I refer to a theory of symbolic actions–words and/or deeds–that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them" (Fisher, 1984:2). Arguably, this definition includes most human communication. As a theory, the narrative paradigm offers a perspective on how communication can be considered rational in various ways.

The narrative paradigm does not disregard the concept of rationality, but rather implies that it functions as a complementation (Fisher, 1999:268). For example, the narrative paradigm can offer an explanation to why a person that is struggling economically still might buy an expensive t-shirt from a fashion brand. Even though the rational thing to do would be to spend the money on perhaps food or rent, they might be so convinced by the idea of them looking good in the t-shirt and being accepted by people they consider admirable, they would spend their money on the garment instead. The person would then have based their decision on what they believed to be a *good* reason, rather than a necessarily rational one.

Figure 1: Fisher's comparison of rationality and narration

Rational	Narrative
Humans are essentially rational beings.	Humans are essentially storytellers.
The paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communication is argument-clear-cut inferential structures.	The paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communication is "good reasons" which vary in form among communication situations, genres and media.
The conduct of argument is ruled by the dictates of situations—legal, scientific, legislative, public, and so on.	The production and practice of good reasons is ruled by matters of history, biography, culture and character (...)
Rationality is determined by subject matter knowledge, argumentative ability, and skill in employing the rules of advocacy in given fields.	Rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings––their inherent awareness of *narrative probability*, what constitutes a coherent story, and their constant habit of testing *narrative fidelity*, whether the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives.
The world is a set of logical puzzles which can be resolved through appropriate analysis and application of reason conceived as an argumentative construct.	The world is a set of stories which must be chosen among to live the good life in a process of continual recreation.

(Fisher, 1999:268;272)

A further concept within the narrative paradigm is that by telling stories, people persuade their audiences to take action. Furthermore, the persuasive nature of a story is completely bound to the culture in which it is created. The design of a story reveals how the author expects the audience to receive it. The communication can thereby mirror relevant social and cultural ideals. Thus, when studying a author's choices within a narrative, one can find signs of what the author expects the beliefs of his or her audience to be, societal values—and how these have been formulated to influence the audience into taking action.

Narrative agency in hashtag activism

Yang (2016) defines hashtag activism as occurring "(...) when large numbers of comments and retweets appear on social media in response to a hashtagged word, phrase, or sentence". Content qualifying under the definition of hashtag activism has been identified as having a narrative character since people share personal stories that appear in temporal order on the same page, where all posts sharing a particular hashtag are gathered. Hashtag activism usually spans over days, weeks or months with a beginning, a crisis/conflict and an end. During this period, narrative themes are co-produced by individuals sharing personal thoughts, emotions and stories. Hashtags qualifying under hashtag activism often contain verbs, with some examples being #BlackLives*Matter*, #WhyI*Stayed*, #This*Is*aCoup and #*Bring*BackOurGirls. Furthermore, they often offer a challenging narrative to what is presented in mainstream media and express objections and refusals. A further characteristic is that the activity on these hashtags encourage audience participation through likes, retweets, responses and posting new tweets using the same hashtag. Through this activity, a larger narrative is co-created (Yang, 2016).

Empowerment through consciousness-raising

There are three psychological processes involved in developing a critical consciousness. The first process is *group identification*, where a person relates to and gains a sense of community with people who have similar lived experiences and share the same values, culture and norms. The person then develops a *group consciousness*, understanding how different groups have varying levels of status and power and how those variations affect a groups' positioning in society. For a person belonging to an oppressed group, "(...) this leads to feelings of relative deprivation, power discontent and a tendency to blame the system for problems related to group membership. This understanding can draw connections between personal problems and social structure" (Gutiérrez, 1995:229-230). The third

process, *self and collective efficacy*, is when a person develops a belief of being capable of achieving desired change by working to change social order (Gutiérrez, 1995:229-230). In reference to Bandura, 1982, Gutiérrez (1995:230) states that critical consciousness contributes to empowerment:

How can critical consciousness contribute to empowerment? Individuals and groups that believe in their ability to effect change are more likely than others to make efforts to increase their power (Bandura, 1982). For individuals and communities to understand that their problems stem from a lack of power, they must first comprehend the structure of power in society. An understanding of how group membership can affect life circumstances is crucial for identifying powerlessness as a source of problems.

This study will be descriptive in format and thereby *not* attempt to provide answers to *why* someone has used the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack or *why* someone identifies with a narrative. Instead, expressions of the different stages of a critical consciousness will be the examined. The process of how the theory will be identified in the collected data will be discussed further in the methodological chapter of this paper.

Purpose and empirical questions

This study will analyse content from the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter. The aim is to provide a further understanding of the narrative character of what others previously have referred to as *hashtag activism* and the significance consciousness-raising has for participation in such activism. Previous research has shown that hashtags are effective in gathering people eager to discuss the same topics and that by doing so, pressure can be put on large corporations or others responsible for exploitation of power. The theoretical point of view, as presented previously in this paper, is that narratives can be considered just as valid as rhetorical arguments, as long as the audience finds the narratives coherent and ringing true to what they consider to be true in their lives. By taking part of different narratives, people can gain a critical consciousness and then, by sharing

their own narrative, further engage in consciousness-raising to involve others belonging to the same groups as themselves. The study will combine theories on the context of post colonialism, formation of *narrative* themes, creation and functions of *consciousness-raising* and features of *hashtag activism* in order to understand the character of content posted using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack. By tying these theories together, a discussion can be held on the character of hashtag activism.

The background, previous research and theoretical framework conclude that Internet, and more specifically hashtag-, activism exists and often has a narrative character. Narratives can be argumentative in themselves and lead to a rise of critical consciousness. With these ideas at the base of our understanding, the study takes a descriptive approach towards content published on Twitter with the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack. The empirical questions conducted to answer this read as following:

What themes can be identified among the narratives being shared through the usage of the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack and how?

By analysing the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack, the study will distinguish the character of the communication conducted on Twitter in terms of *who* are saying *what* and *how*? The data will be analyzed with Fisher's (1999) perspective on *rationality vs good reason,* of which the latter is based on a narrative's probability and fidelity. Theories of post colonialism and critical consciousness will be applied to attain a further understanding of how authors of narratives relate to and gain a sense of empowerment from their group belonging. The aim is to study narratives shared by citizens, not corporations or organisations.

What tweeted reactions do the narratives evoke?

By analysing the reactions of the narratives, an account will be made of how the tweets are being accepted or denied by their audiences. Do the narratives seem to ring true to people? Or is there much contradiction in the responses? Again,

theories of narrative agency and critical consciousness will be applied to understand the character of the communication.

Methodology

This chapter will account for the methodology of the study. The sections will explain the characteristics of a case study, transparency and validity, sampling of data, limitations, ethical data inquiry, thematisation and application of theories.

The case study

A case study on the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter is conducted in this paper. More specifically, a qualitative content analysis will be produced with the approach of a case study. A case study is an examination of a certain event, person, program, phenomenon, institution or social group that is chosen due to its importance or other quality making it interesting for studying (Merriam, 1994:22-24). Some key characteristics of case studies are that they have a flexible design, are descriptive, specific, qualitative, interpretative, highlight signification and result in- rather than stem from hypotheses. The method is rooted in real life situations and therefore result in rich and holistic descriptions of a phenomenon. Another benefit of the method is that it provides enlightenment and insight to a case, often resulting in hypotheses that can offer suggestions for future research (Merriam, 1994:46). As with any method however, the case study has disadvantages as well. The researcher conducting a case study needs to have an understanding of their impact on the finished product as they are the main instrument of data inquiry and interpretation. I.e., the study is limited to the researcher's sensibility and integrity. In addition, there is no set framework for the design of a case study, leaving the responsibility on the individual researcher. This can be problematic as an unethical researcher conducting a case study can point to practically anything (Merriam, 1994:47). According to some scientists, a further limitation of a case study is that it produces results that cannot be empirically generalised. Others, however, argue that a study of qualitative nature is not

lacking in its inability to produce generalisable results of a population, but rather that it is the sciences that have failed to produce a proper term for generalisation within qualitative studies (Merriam, 1994:48). This argument is based on the fact that not all studies aim to draw conclusions that can be applicable to larger populations. Anthropologists argue that studies with non-probability sampling are logical as long as the researcher is aiming to discover, understand and/or connect phenomenon rather than answer questions such as "how much" or "how often" (Merriam, 1994:61). The case study is a part of what can be referred to as interpretative science. Interpretive research is especially favourable when aiming to achieve a comparative understanding that goes beyond the immediate indicators of a particular situation (Merriam, 1994:176). Most people who have heard of or used Airbnb can attain a basic understanding of the issues that are being voiced through the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack. However, since no study has been conducted on the character of the content shared on the hashtag, and especially with the perspectives of narrative agency and critical consciousness, a deeper understanding is provided.

The case is set in an American context since, as previously mentioned, the literature review and background is based on information from American sources. Furthermore, based on data inquired from accounts stating country of residence, the tweets appear to be authored predominantly by American citizens.

Transparency & validity

An exact measurement of people's attitudes or understandings cannot be produced and as such there are no set directions for conducting a completely reliable study free from interpretation when studying human behavior (Merriam, 1994:181). The term reliability is relevant to address here as it regards the extent to which a study can be repeated with the same results. In social sciences, the term reliability poses as problematic since human behaviour is inconsistent (Merriam, 1994:180). This is especially accurate for qualitative studies. There are no guarantees that researchers will interpret data similarly or that subjects of analysis will react

consistently. Since the term reliability is problematic in qualitative research, Merriam (1994:182-183) argues that instead of aiming for conducting a study that can be 100% accurately replicated, the researcher conducting a qualitative study should aim for producing results that are meaningful, consistent and dependable. When attempting to provide an *understanding* of a phenomenon, the criteria for considering the study to be reliable will be different than when attempting to discover a correlation or try a hypothesis (Merriam, 1994:176). For this study, the consideration of reliability results in transparency in what data will be sampled, how it will be inquired, how the results will be thematised, how the theoretical framework will be applied and by providing the reader with quotes from the data to exemplify the results.

The term validity addresses how accurately the results of a study represent the actuality of the studied phenomenon. Internal validity is the extent to which researchers really capture the phenomenon they intend to and are studying what they believe they are (Merriam, 1994:178). In this study, the attempt is to only study what actually *can* be studied in a content analysis. Intentions, underlying emotions or motivations have not been assumed and *only* documented when the author of a tweet explicitly shares that information. In general, assumptions beyond what can be claimed as evident based on the content of a tweet have been disregarded. For example, authors documented as writing in the experience of a Black person have clearly identified themselves as Black in their tweet. A further attempt in achieving a good internal validity is the account of how indicators of theories will be identified. This will be described later in the methodology under "Application of theories and strengths and weaknesses in internal validity". External validity is the extent to which the results of a study will be applicable to other situations (Merriam, 1994:183). The results and the contribution of this case study will be discussed in relation to previous research in the section "Putting the results into perspective" in the analysis. The difficulties with generalizability of qualitative studies have been mentioned in the section above and will be discussed further under the section "Limitations".

Sampling of data

There are two alternatives for sampling data; probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling offers specific suggestions for how likely any person is to be included in the sampling. Non-probability sampling cannot offer any such suggestions, nor can it guarantee that any person has *any* chance of being included (Merriam, 1994:61). When conducting a case study, the data sampling needs to be small, non-random and theoretical (Merriam, 1994:32). This due to the fact that a specific case is being studied and not the population at large. Therefore, the sampling method for this study will be non-probable and non-random. Furthermore, the sampling will be purposeful. Purposeful sampling is when data is selected based on its "(…) anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to a study's research questions" (Yin, 2011:311).

If a source of data contains information and knowledge that is relevant to the empirical questions, and if satisfactory data practically and systematically can be inquired from the source, Merriam (1994:118) argues that there is no reason for using another source of data in a case study. Personal documents are reliable sources of information for people's opinions, attitudes and understandings of the world (Merriam, 1994:124). As such, in this study, data is collected from content attaching the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter. A benefit of collecting already existing data is its stability and the fact the the researcher does not have an impact on the subjects of the study. However, since the material has not been conducted for the sake of the study, it can be difficult to understand and widely interpreted. The material can be difficult to apply to certain models or theories, but this does however not pose as an issue when it is used to inductively build categories or theoretical definitions (Merriam, 1994:118-119). In this study, the latter functions as the area of application as data will be inquired and then categorised into different narrative themes and reactions. This will be further described under "Thematisation".

The hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack was first used in 2015. However, content from the hashtag between the first tweet and the end of March 2016 is not accessible

through Twitter's search function at the time of this study. This will be further discussed in the section labeled as "Limitations". The period for the sampled data stretches from April 1st 2016 to August 31st 2016–a period of five months. The collection of data includes in 217 tweets. Due to the fact that this study aims to describe content produced by citizens, tweets that appear to be authored by anyone in their experience of an employee or professional rather than a citizen will be disregarded when inquiring data for the first empirical question, "what themes can be identified among the narratives shared through the usage of the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack and how". Based on name and the user's Twitter bio, a categorisation will be made of the author of the tweet. If the tweet is made by an account belonging to a company, journalist, organisation or any other non-private actor, the tweet will be disregarded. In cases where the perspective from which authors are writing is unclear, the tweets will be disregarded. When collecting data for the second empirical question, "what tweeted reactions do the narratives evoke" however, reactions from all accounts will be noted. This due to the fact that reactions from journalists, Airbnb themselves and those taking legal action provide a relevant material for the discussion in terms of the response hashtag activism can elicit. These reactions will however not be analyzed since they do not provide answers relevant to the purpose of this study.

Other studies conducted using Twitter content as data, consumed for the purpose of methodological inspiration for this study, have mainly used third-party sources for collecting data from Twitter. These services are however not free and for economical reasons this study will use a different method for gathering data. According to researchers P. Dahlgren (personal communication, April 9th, 2019) and U. Hedman (personal communication, April 10th, 2019), when conducting a Twitter-based content analysis of a narrower character, data can be collected by using Twitter's own search function. There does not exist a function showing the amount of Tweets a hashtag has been attached to, nor is it possible to find *all* data by using the search function on Twitter. It is, however, possible to access a great share of the content using a specific hashtag. This can be done by using the

function *advanced search,* where posts using a specific hashtag during a set
period of time can be located.

Limitations

There are limitations to gathering data from Twitter. With time, data loosely falls
off the search systems and thereby decreases the reliability of any gathered
historical material. Gaffney and Puschmann (2014:65) observe that "(...) there is
no way of checking how completely a given data set captures what flowed
through Twitter at the time it was compiled. Without firehose access, researchers
rely entirely on Twitter to provide a representative sample of what is there."
Furthermore, when examining data collected from tweets, the researcher
overlooks the activity of those who read tweets but do not interact by writing their
own tweets, retweeting others' or liking anything. Meanwhile, too much focus
might simultaneously be put on highly vocal users. Due to this, attempting to
make generalisations about populations, even when restricting them to Twitter
populations, becomes difficult (Gaffney & Puschmann, 2014:64-65). Worth
mentioning however, is that studies aiming to produce generalisations about
populations at large are often conducted with a quantitative approach, collecting
thousands of tweets and then categorising them by keywords or terms to then
provide results that are quantifiable. By instead taking a qualitative approach, the
fallout of tweets does not necessarily have to impact the overall results as the aim
of this study is not to make generalisations of *all* communication conducted using
the particular hashtag but rather to provide an understanding of the character of
that communication. As previously mentioned, being able to make generalisations
about populations are not necessarily crucial when the researcher is aiming to
understand or describe phenomenon. However, possible theoretical
generalisations in regards to previous research will, as mentioned, be presented in
the section "Putting the results into perspective" in the analysis.

Although Twitter legally cannot do much to prevent data inquiry and the use of it
in research once it leaves its servers (Beurskens, 2014:131), researchers need to

take people's privacy into consideration when conducting qualitative studies on content from Twitter users (Gaffney & Puschmann, 2014:65). The ethical controversy of Twitter data inquiry will be considered in the following section.

Ethical data inquiry

The Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) have conducted a guide of recommendations on ethical decision-making for Internet research (Buchanan & Markham, 2012). Internet users have strong perceptions or expectations of privacy even though they are operating in public spaces when posting on social media with open accounts. Some users are aware of the fact that the content they post is public but still have expectations of how it will be handled by other parties. This due to the fact that the different platforms have terms & conditions that apply to all users. This view on private/public in terms of intention is important to consider when studying user generated content, as it may be public but not intended to be used in a greater circumstance, such as research. The AoIR emphasizes that "(t)he greater the vulnerability of the community / author / participant, the greater the obligation of the researcher to protect the community / author / participant" (Buchanan & Markham, 2012:4). It is however important to consider the balance between the protection of people's right to privacy and "(...) the social benefits of research and researchers' rights to conduct research" (Buchanan & Markham, 2012:4). Since this paper is examining a concern expressed by–and arguably caused due to them being–a minority, caution needs to be taken to ensure that the paper is not based on or enforces stereotypes and prejudices or endanger any subjects of research. A further factor to take into consideration is that informed consent has not been given explicitly. As a result, the study will not attempt to distinguish gender, ethnicity, age or any other such factor when collecting data as it could be done only by interpreting a person's Twitter profile based on name, picture and use of language. I.e., whether the person posting content with the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack in fact *is* Black will not be considered. Instead, it will be noted whether the content seems to agree with or contradict the core message of the hashtag; that discrimination against black users of Airbnb is occuring.

Additionally, even though it has been concluded that anonymised data sets do not always conceal enough information to make individuals unidentifiable (Buchanan & Markham, 2012), usernames will be excluded from the study in an effort to keep research subjects more anonymous. Instead, tweets will be referenced by a code, starting with Tn for the number of the tweet (e.g. T1 for tweet number one) and followed by An for author number (e.g. A1 for author number one), followed by the date of the post. If two different tweets from the same author are referenced, the code An will be the same for both posts. A table is attached in the appendix, referencing the tweets by tweet number, author number, the first few words of the tweet and the date. The tweets will still most likely be possible for anyone to find through Twitter's search function, however the authors will remain anonymous in this paper. If an author chooses to delete their tweet, there will be no way of tracing that author through this paper and as such, they will remain anonymous.

Thematisation

A thematisation is conducted through reviewing the documented descriptions of the inquired narratives. Each tweet is regarded as a singular narrative. The decision to regard it as such is based on the broad definition of a narrative provided by Fisher (1984:2) that is accounted for in the theoretical framework of this paper. Due to the broadness of the definition, the decision to consider each tweet as a narrative is further anchored in previous studies mentioned in this paper (Wolfe, 2018; Yang 2016). This section of the paper will account for the process of thematising narratives. It should, however, first be noted that since there exist multiple interpretations of events, there cannot exist a universal interpretation of a material. The aim of this section is to provide transparency in how the data will be interpreted and thematised.

Data can be categorized chronologically or thematically. Since this study focuses on the co-construction of narrative themes, data will be categorized thematically into different themes. The tweets will be collected in an excel sheet, documenting

the tweet itself, date, username, a short description of the narrative, an answer to if the tweet addresses anyone in particular and what reactions the tweet evokes. Possible reactions are new tweets, likes, retweets and replies. When all data has been collected as such, the next step is to sort the narratives into different themes. Based on the nature of a narrative, an even shorter account of what it conveys is documented. Parameters relevant for this process are e.g. if authors state whether they are victims of discrimination themselves or observers of the phenomenon and if they explicitly express acceptance or denial of the case. Only information that can be found explicitly in the tweet will be regarded. If a narrative can be described in the same way as a previous one, they will be regarded as part of the same theme. If a narrative deviates from previously reviewed narratives, it will be documented as a new theme. However, a few narratives are completely unique and deviate from all other narratives. These unique narratives do not co-construct larger themes and are therefore not be presented in the results. When the narratives have been thematised, the reactions will be put through the same process. The process is called convergent thinking, where the researcher decides which data belongs to which, i.e., how a narrative converges towards a certain category or theme. Data within a certain category or theme must display similarity, while the different categories or themes should be different and clearly distinguished. I.e., data within a category should be homogeneous while the categories should be heterogenic. Both convergent and divergent thinking is required when creating categories. Divergent thinking translates into the process of adding to the designated categories (Merriam, 1994:146-147).

A category or theme does not need to be common for it to be relevant. In fact, Guba & Lincoln (in Merriam, 1994:147) argue that themes that deviate from others should be considered valuable for their uniqueness. For this study, this means that a unique narrative does not necessarily have to be less important. Therefore, the results will account for narratives based on their analytical quality rather than their frequency. All unique narratives within the 217 tweets can however, with regards to the magnitude of this paper, not be presented individually and as such, the thematisation will be impacted by interpretation and

sensibility. Both the advantages and disadvantages of this have been presented in the section addressing reliability/transparency.

Application of theories and strengths and weaknesses in internal validity

Postcolonial theory will be used to understand the historical and cultural context of the issue of discriminatory Airbnb hosts. The theory of narrative agency in hashtag activism is accounted for in the theoretical framework mainly to offer a qualification of hashtag activism and its basic characteristics. The theory of critical consciousness and the narrative paradigm will be used to analyse results from the inquired data. Indicators and methods for the application of the two latter theories will be suggested in this section.

Is it possible to identify signs of critical consciousness in the narratives provided by people using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack? First of all, by interacting with the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack, people who at some point in their lives have been discriminated against based on the color of their skin are arguably likely to relate to the shared narratives. On the contrary, a person who strongly believes that people are allowed to freely decide whom to let into their home, regardless of what their judgement might be based on, might feel connected to the hosts accused of discrimination or others sharing those values. Regardless of what perspective one has, it is likely that one will *identify* with one group or the other. Second, the very notion of using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack to share an experience is in itself a sign of *group consciousness*. The person using the hashtag has recognized that other people who share the same values, culture and/or norms have been subjected to a similar experience as themselves and put those experiences into a perspective of status and power. Even if a person never used Airbnb they might still feel like "this is happening to *us*", just like the #WeAreTrayvonMartin hashtag where people emphasised their togetherness in implying the killing could have happened to any Black person. The killing of Trayvon Martin was implied to be due to his group identity rather than his actions

as an individual. Lastly, by addressing actors in position of power, e.g. Airbnb or government, directly and pressuring them to evolve, a person would show signs of *self and collective efficacy*. Encouraging or demanding evolvement would be indicators for working to change social order and having a belief in one's capability of achieving desired change.

Fisher (1999) disregards the notion that communication *must* be argumentative in order to be persuasive. Instead, his narrative paradigm offers an explanation to why some stories are accepted even though they lack rationality. The reason, Fisher argues, is that stories can be conducted and accepted out of *good reason* which is based on a narrative's *probability* and *fidelity*. By considering the argumentative structure–or the lack thereof–when analyzing tweets, an understanding can be attained of the argumentative character of narratives shared through the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack. By interpreting a tweet that is lacking in rationality as being conducted based on what the author considers to be coherent and true in regards to what they know to be true in their life, a perspective is offered of what authors regard as truth. I.e., if the communication is dependant on the audience's shared understanding the world and its truths, then analyzing the narratives will provide a further understanding of authors' perceptions of truth. For example, if an author shares a narrative where they claim to have been subjected to racism using Airbnb but does not share *how*, then the author's argument could be that it is true because of what they know to be true for other Black Airbnb users. Furthermore, the narrative paradigm can be applied when studying the tweeted reactions to narratives as well. If narratives are being accepted even when potentially lacking in rationality, then they are arguably being accepted out of *good reason*. In a similar way as when studying authors, the audience's acceptance or denial of a narrative lacking in rationality can imply something about their acceptance of what is coherent and true in their lives.

Results & analysis

Results from the data inquiry will be presented and analysed in reference to the theoretical framework. Post colonial theory, Fisher's narrative paradigm, narrative agency in hashtag activism and the three processes of attaining a critical consciousness will be considered when reviewing the material. First, the question of *what* narratives are being shared and *how* they are being shared will be accounted for by presenting five narrative themes and their character. Second, the tweeted reactions to those narratives will be analysed with a focus on group consciousness and narrative quality in relation to rationality.

What themes can be identified among the narratives being being shared through the usage of the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack and how?

The theme that will be presented first and from here on out referred to as the *main theme* is co-constructed by people sharing their own experience encountering what they consider to be discriminatory behaviour on Airbnb. Second, as a result of the main theme, the services Noirbnb and Innclusive were launched. The promotion of these platforms forms a theme in itself. Third, an informative theme that is based on the main theme will be presented. This theme is co-constructed by those telling the story of how others are being discriminated against using Airbnb. Furthermore, people identifying with the people who share their stories of having been discriminated against, co-construct the fourth theme. Lastly, a theme focusing on the political, historical and cultural context of racism will be accounted for. Common for all themes is that they rarely address anyone specific but rather any person who may stumble upon the tweet. However, when narratives are more directed, it is mainly towards the Black community.

I have been subjected to discrimination using Airbnb

Among those who share stories of having been subjected to discrimination themselves using Airbnb, most have either been denied or cancelled when trying to book a listing. A common theme among these tweets is the lack of what the author of the tweet considers to be a legitimate reason for the rejection. The complete lack of a response attached to the cancellation is frequently recurring as well.

T200, A176 - 1 Aug 2016

  The room is still available for the dates that I requested smh. #AirbnbWhileBlack

In accordance with this tweet, some users being rejected find that the dates remain available in the host's Airbnb calendar, implying that the accommodation was in fact available, just not to them. In cases like these, even though it is impossible for anyone but the hosts to know the real reason for the rejections, authors of the tweets present an argument, suggesting they have reason to call the action discriminatory. They were rejected but the dates left available, *therefore* they were rejected on the basis of what the host knew about them from their profiles; their names and appearances. The argumentative quality of such a narrative shows signs of *rationality* (Fisher, 1999:268). However, not all stories were conducted in such a rhetorical manner.

T181, A160 - 16 Aug 2016

  Yesterday I booked a place in Grant Park , Atlanta with Airbnb, today the host

  cancelled my Instant book. Racism is alive #AirbnbWhileBlack

The tweet above shows an example of a user sharing an experience they label as racism. This is done without providing the audience with any material that proves or even suggests that the cancellation was due to skin color. Based on what the author of the tweet shares of the experience, there is no way of knowing if the host gave a reason for the cancellation and if that potential reason was legitimate or not. I.e., the audience does not know if the dates in fact were unavailable and

removed from the host's Airbnb calendar after the author of the tweet had been rejected. Arguably, tweets like these are constructed with what Fisher (1999) regards as *good reason*. Good reason, as explained in the theoretical framework, is based on narrative probability and narrative fidelity; is my story coherent and seemingly true, based on what I consider to be true in life? One way to understand the tweet is through the application of postcolonial theory. The author could have found their conclusion–that they were rejected due to race–to be true in itself, even without the context of #AirbnbWhileBlack. This due to the fact we live in a postcolonial society where Black people are subjected to discrimination based on the color of their skin. However, as the author seemingly *is* aware of the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack and its context, it is likely that they have taken part of others' stories and found their realities to coincide. The design of a narrative reveals indicators of how the author expects the audience to receive it (Fisher, 1999:270f). The lack of context presented in the tweet above and similar tweets within the theme suggests that the audience is expected to understand the connection between having your Airbnb booking cancelled and being subjected to racism.

🐦 *T54, A47 - 5 May 2016*

#AirbnbWhileBlack gave me the courage to report someone who canceled a

reservation because of "repairs" yet still kept those dates open.

The consideration of a narrative being conducted based on good reason can be further understood by involving the theory of critical consciousness. The tweet above involves the same series of events as the two previous examples, where the authors of the tweets claim to have been subjected to discrimination by being rejected by Airbnb hosts. The author of the tweet above claims that the content posted on #AirbnbWhileBlack has given them the courage to report a host. By doing so, the author implicates that they have gone through all three psychological processes involved in developing a critical consciousness. By recognising that people active on the #AirbnbWhileBlack hashtag share similar lived experiences, the author has *identified* with them. The fact that the author then assumes that the rejection they got from an Airbnb host potentially was caused by the author's

group being subordinate in society shows signs of *group consciousness*. By then reporting the host, the author of the tweet displays *self and collective efficacy*. They have found what they believe is a possible way to change social order and the courage to actually act on it.

One user sharing his story is the creator of one of the platforms challenging Airbnb's market shares, *Innclusive.* The author (T47, A40) tweets a link to an article (Gilkes, 25 May 2016) where he shares his experiences trying to book an Airbnb in Idaho. His booking for 4th of July was first rejected, with the host saying that they were going to use the accommodation themselves that weekend. The author of the tweet then made a new request and responded that anytime in June would work as well, asking the host when the accommodation would be available. Again, he was cancelled and the host ignored all future messages from him. The rejected user then had a White friend make the same request, which was immediately accepted. The article has received close to 700 comments and the tweet was liked by 53 people and retweeted 41 times. Furthermore, the author embeds a tweet (T81, A68) of another user with a similar experience in the article. After first being rejected by a host, the author of the linked tweet had made the same request from a fake account using a picture of a White man on his profile and had then been accepted immediately. This tweet has received 2642 likes and 3846 retweets. The author of the article, also presented here as the creator of Innclusive, has recognized the need for an accommodation service free from the behavior he and others had encountered on Airbnb. The author displayed indicators of having gone through the three processes of gaining a critical consciousness. He recognises there exists a group of people sharing or empathising with his experience, acknowledges their disadvantage being caused by their group belonging and then acts on his belief that he/they could make a difference. This narrative in itself then turns into a widely shared theme, which will be presented in the following section.

Support Black business, use the alternative: Noirbnb/Innclusive

As presented in the background of this paper, two businesses sharing the same concept as Airbnb launched after the hashtag's emergence. The major difference between Airbnb and the new *Noirbnb* and *Innclusive* is that the latter were founded with diversity in focus.

T143, A127 - 28 Jul 2016

I can't wait for @Innclusive & @Noirbnb to launch. I dont wanna go through #AirbnbWhileBlack looking for a place to stay in Amsterdam

T209, A184 - 19 Aug 2016

@Innclusive is the best thing ever! Bye bye @Airbnb. I've notified ALL of my friends and we travel often #airbnbwhileblack

The tweets above convey the same sentiment; we have been heard, there is an alternative. Narratives within this theme argue that since Airbnb would not and, according to some, could not change, the solution would be to stop using their service altogether.

T102, A87 - 5 Jun 2016

For anyone who's been discriminated against using #AirbnbWhileBlack, there is now a better way: @Noirbnb Support the hell out of them!!

T148, A131 - 17 Jul 2016

Yes! No more #AirbnbWhileBlack, folks. No need. Take your money where you're Wanted.

T120, A105 - 4 Jun 2016

Support the movement @Noirbnb . Really looking forward to its launch #AirbnbWhileBlack

As stated by Yang (2016), a characteristic of hashtag activism is that it encourages participation. A common theme for the tweets addressing Noirbnb and Innclusive is, as illustrated above, that they encourage their audiences to act. "Support", "check out", "use" and "sign up" are a few of the forms of participation that people are recommended to do in regards to the launches of Noirbnb and Innclusive. As Wolfe (2018) points out in her study on the online movement #MeToo, hashtag narratives can have an invitational character rather than, as argued by Yang (2016), a necessarily confrontational one. The co-constructed theme in this case, promoting Innclusive and Noirbnb, supports Wolfe's finding as it is encouraging and invitational in its character. The theme offers less focus on the vilifying of Airbnb and more on the invitational process of allowing others to join in the discovery of an alternative.

I want others to know that Black Airbnb users are being discriminated against

All those who share stories of discrimination on Airbnb have not been directly subjected to it themselves. Narratives within this theme have an informative character, where users summarize, retweet or link stories conveying what has happened to others when using Airbnb. This is done without the authors of the tweets revealing their position in the matter, i.e. indicators of group identification are not evident. The tweets do not indicate whether the author has/has not been, or can/cannot be subjected to discrimination using Airbnb. As the tweets within this theme forward another theme–that of those who themselves have been subjected to discrimination using Airbnb–they contribute to the co-construction of a larger theme.

T63, A52 - 6 May 2016

Guests w/names like Lakisha r less likely to be accepted than those w/names like Kristen. #AirBnbWhileBlack

T147, A130 - 2 Jul 2016

Airbnb has a #discrimination problem. Ask anyone who's tried to #Airbnbwhileblack.

T177, A156 - 1 Jul 2016

@Airbnb is sadly looking pretty bad right now since racist home hosts are declining

Black travelers. #Airbnb #AirbnbWhileBlack

The tweets above are examples of narratives within the informative theme. By briefly accounting for the context of the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack, authors of such tweets contribute to a consciousness-raising practice. Together, tweets within this theme received over a thousand retweets and a thousand likes, spreading awareness beyond their own pools of followers. As such, the ethical controversy of Black people being discriminated against using Airbnb gains attention and is spread to different communities on Twitter.

I have not necessarily been subjected to discrimination, but identify with and support those who have

The forwarding of the main theme, i.e. that of those who themselves have been subjected to discrimination using Airbnb, is not limited to those simply informing others without positioning themselves.

T89, A75 - 1 May 2016

The #AirbnbWhileBlack hashtag is heartbreaking & just another example of how

difficult it can be for us to do things that should be simple.

T48, A41 - 18 May 2016

No one in my family uses AirBnB. It's a shame because we travel a lot.

#AirbnbWhileBlack

The examples above illustrate narratives of those who have not necessarily encountered racism on Airbnb but identify with those who have. In many cases, this is done by referring to the group by using words such as "we" and "us". In addition to identifying with the main theme, authors within this theme show indicators of accepting the main narrative by not questioning it. Users contributing

to this theme have *identified* with a group and in recognising that the reported discrimination is caused by group belonging and status, they display *group consciousness*.

Similar to the case of #WeAreTrayvonMartin (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015), which has been accounted for previously in this paper, users are emphasising their togetherness when sharing narratives within the main theme; if it happened to you, it could just as easily happen to me. People using the hashtag #WeAreTrayvonMartin implied that the killer was triggered by Martin belonging to a certain group rather than his actions as an individual. The same applies for this theme, where people are accepting and identifying with the narratives of those sharing what they have experienced using Airbnb, rather than questioning their rationality. I.e., they are accepting the narratives out of *good reason*, finding the stories to be coherent and true in regards to what they know to be true in their own lives.

This is simply what it is like to be Black

A theme with a commentary character was created by those putting #AirbnbWhileBlack into its political, historical and cultural context.

T78, A65 - 5 May 2016

You're asking Americans to act w/o racial bias. This is the same country where a Trump presidency is possible. #AirbnbWhileBlack

T79, A66 - 5 May 2016

What? The #sharingeconomy didn't suddenly cure centuries of racial oppression?#AirbnbWhileBlack

T99, A84 - 1 May 2016

#AirbnbWhileBlack has issues in America because media criminalize African Americans so much. That tag is prime example. hope it changes

These tweets illustrate how users position the narratives of those being discriminated against on Airbnb in a political, historical and cultural context. As quoted in the theoretical framework, a person identifying with an oppressed group attains "(...) a feeling of relative deprivation, power discontent and a tendency to blame the system for problems related to group membership" (Gutiérrez, 1995:229-230). Arguably, tweets contributing to this theme are displaying this very feeling. The narratives lack indicators of authors thinking *they* have the ability to achieve desired change. Thereby, it can be argued that narratives within this theme belong to those who are *conscious* of the contextual aspects that are causing Black people's inferiority in society but do not display a sense of *self and collective efficacy*.

What tweeted reactions do the narratives evoke?

The documented reactions evoked by narratives within the themes accounted for above can be divided into two categories; direct replies to tweets and independent tweets functioning as commentary on narratives within the main theme. An observation applicable to both categories is that the narratives were accepted by the audience in general. As concluded, a prevailing aspect of stories belonging to those who themselves have been subjected to discrimination using Airbnb, is that they lack in rationality and rely on the audience's shared understanding of racism as a structural problem. The fact that most stories receive sympathetic reactions that do not question nor contradict the author's narrative arguably aligns with Fisher's (1999:268;272) theory that people judge a story based on its narrative probability rather than necessarily its rationality. That being said, three themes based on the responsive narratives are identified in this section. First, a theme consisting of narratives from Black people who have not been discriminated against using Airbnb will be presented. Second, a theme appearing when studying the narratives of those who argue that everyone has the right to decide whom they let into their home will be presented. Lastly presented is a theme identified through studying narratives belonging to those who urge Airbnb to change.

Authors of the first and second theme show indicators of not accepting the main theme.

Following the three reactive themes, replies by Airbnb, journalists and lawyers will furthermore be addressed. The theoretical framework is however not used to analyse the reactions from these actors as they do not belong to authors writing from the perspective of a citizen but instead from the perspective of an employee or a professional. The reactions from these authors will be presented mainly for the sake of a representative result of the reactions and used as material for further discussion.

I am Black and have not been discriminated against when using Airbnb

Narrative fidelity has been explained as how a narrative seems credible in relation to what a person finds to be true in their life. A theme generated from narratives shared through #AirbnbWhileBlack is that of Black people who have used Airbnb without being discriminated against.

🐦 *T7, A7 - 29 Apr 2016*

I've used airbnb in 3 countries, multiple cities and i host... not in the best

neighborhood. I never ran into a problem. #AirbnbWhileBlack

Both independent tweets such as the one displayed above and tweets that were in reply to others', expressed hesitance toward the hashtag. Arguably, these authors do not find the stories they consumed to be consistent with what they have experienced themselves. I.e. these authors find the stories to lack narrative fidelity.

🐦 *T57, A50 - 7 May 2016*

I'm down for the #AirbnbWhileBlack convo, but if you're a black traveler dnt let it deter

you.Used Airbnb in Paris,Berlin & London w/o issue

However, it should be noted that there are authors within this theme who express an understanding for those who claim to have been discriminated against. As illustrated above, the author is open for discussing the issues expressed via #AirbnbWhileBlack but points out that it is not necessarily the reality for every Black person using Airbnb.

Everyone has the right to decide whom they let into their home

A theme disregarding claims of inequality voiced through #AirbnbWhileBlack consists of narratives authored by those who state that when considering letting a stranger into their home, an individual is allowed to base their decision on whatever they want. It does not matter if the decision is based on prejudices and results in a retention of structural inequalities; no one can claim to have the right to rent another person's accommodation.

Response to T53, A46 - 6 May 2016

People choose who they are comfortable having in their homes. This isn't like getting a hotel room.

Response to T192, A150 - 23 Aug 2016

Instant Book isn't the answer. Allowing someone to sleep in your home—esp. while you're there—should be 100% discretionary.

As illustrated above, authors within this theme do not claim that the stories shared through the hashtag are illegitimate or even untrue. They do however argue that ultimately, it does not matter since the act of denying a person access to one's home *is* allowed.

Response to T12, A12 - 27 Apr 2016

Everyone has unconscious bias that causes many unintended consequences. Another name for it is gut instinct.

T86, A72 - 1 May 2016

So now that #AirbnbWhileBlack is a thing. How do #SJW types plan to police this?

Create a quota system for temp renting? Just curious.

Furthermore, the tweets above capture another concern within the theme; how would the problem even be possible to solve? As concluded when accounting for the theme consisting of narratives authored by those who have been subjected to discrimination using Airbnb, the predominant claim of discrimination is that of hosts denying users due to the listings being "unavailable". I.e., the problem is mainly that racial bias is steering the decision-making process for many hosts. Again however, the act of choosing who gets to rent one's home *is* open to the host and additionally, as argued by one of the authors above, bias can be unconscious. Therefore, it poses as difficult to expect the situation to change. Narratives within this theme are highly based on rationality as they disregard the emotional quality of narratives within the main theme and instead argue that the only thing that matters is what is legal.

Airbnb needs to change

An opposing theme to the one identified above is formed by narratives belonging to those urging Airbnb to change. This is done both directly and indirectly as only some tweets actually tag Airbnb's Twitter account. Common for both direct and indirect tweets qualifying under this theme however, is that they do not just imply that a change is needed but actually firmly demand it and/or suggest in what way Airbnb should change.

T73, A46 - 6 May 2016

At this point, @Airbnb might as well change their name to AirKKK.. Unless they change

their photo policy, I'm done. #AirbnbWhileBlack

🐦 T2, A2 - 29 Apr 2016

#airbnbwhileblack what about hosts accepting or rejecting before they can SEE their guests.

🐦 T22, A17 - 29 Apr 2016

Seems like there's no compelling non-racist reason not to hide profile pic till after deal is sealed. #AirbnbWhileBlack

People demanding or suggesting ways in which Airbnb should evolve propose that a person's profile picture should be unavailable to a host until they have accepted a rental request. In that way, a person will be able to have a conversation with a host and check if the dates requested are in fact available before being denied based on their picture. As a result, it should become more difficult for hosts to lie about why they decline a request, as they will have already clarified if the dates are open or not. For a Black user being denied, it will further result in attaining a better material to present when reporting a host for discriminatory behaviour. A claim of having been discriminated against is arguably legitimate if a person can provide material of a conversation where the host explicitly communicates that the dates are available, only to then cancel the booking when the profile picture becomes accessible to the host. The last tweet (T22, A17) is revealing a *rational* character of the argument, stating that there does not seem to exist a compelling non-racist reason not to hide Airbnb users' profile pictures until after being accepted by hosts. I.e., the author cannot find a counter argument that seems valid and therefore, their argument is legitimate.

Reactions from Airbnb, journalists and lawyers

In some cases of people sharing their encounters with discriminatory hosts on Airbnb, Airbnb responds through their Twitter account. The message is similar; they state that they do not condone discriminatory behaviour, link to their policies and then ask the author of the tweet to send them their contact information so that Airbnb can follow up. Journalists, too, are replying to some authors claiming to

have been subjected to discrimination. The journalists ask to get in touch to discuss the author's tweet further and ask for contact information.

The Twitter account of Lawyers for Civil Rights Boston replied to a tweet belonging to the "I want others to know that Black Airbnb-users are being discriminated against"-theme with a link to a scanned letter addressed to Brian Chesky, CEO of Airbnb. The letter is signed by the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, two non-profit legal organisations. The letter states that both organisations have become aware of the fact that Black people are being discriminated against on Airbnb. They do not explicitly mention the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack but write that in addition to taking part of the study showing that users with African American sounding names are 16% less likely to be accepted by hosts, they "(...) have reviewed complaints from other African American Airbnb users who indicate that they were told a property was unavailable only to later discover that a non-minority user was told the same property was, in fact, available" (Clarke & Espinoza-Madrigal, 2016). I.e., they have reviewed what in this paper has been referred to as the main theme of #AirbnbWhileBlack. The authors of the letter recommend Airbnb make swift changes and urge Chesky to contact them in order to receive suggestions of such changes.

Summary and conclusions

The main theme shared by people using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter between 1 April 2016 - 31 August 2016 is that of those sharing their own experience of being subjected to discrimination on Airbnb. People sharing the main theme, authors promoting the alternative services Noirbnb and Innclusive, those identifying with the main theme and, finally, people addressing the political, historical and cultural context of the issues voiced through the main theme– constitute the co-constructed themes among the shared narratives in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack. The tweeted reactions are predominantly positive, but some challenging reactions are voiced by those claiming that they themselves are Black

and have used Airbnb without encountering discriminatory hosts, people who disregard the issues of the main theme due to the fact that everyone has a right to decide whom they let into their home and, lastly, those reacting by demanding or suggesting ways in which Airbnb should change. Furthermore, the shared narratives received tweeted reactions from Airbnb, journalists and those addressing legal action.

Among the different narratives, both *rational* arguments and stories argued out of *good reason* have been identified. In general, the narratives are accepted by their audiences and the reactions are sympathetic. For some people reacting to the main theme however, the lack of rationality is causing them to disregard the stories. For some others, a lack of good reason is caused by questions regarding the main theme's probability and fidelity. Regardless of group belonging, all those who authored a narrative on the #AirbnbWhileBlack hashtag recognised that Black people are being subjected to what they in their narratives would label as discrimination/racism. Making the connection between group belonging and structural oppression suggests that authors of tweets have undergone two of the three processes involved in developing a critical consciousness; *group identification* and *group consciousness*. Narratives within some themes furthermore displayed indicators of authors having gone through the third process, where an individual conscious of their group and its inferiority to other groups, develops a belief in their ability to make a change.

To summarize, the aim of the study was to provide a further understanding of the character of what others previously have referred to as hashtag activism. Based on the results and analysis, it can be stated that the character of the content posted on the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack predominantly is argued based on good reason rather than rationality, requiring the audience to share the author's understanding of the world in order for it to be convincing. There are indicators of authors sharing the narratives which co-construct the different themes presented above being aware of their group identity and conscious of the group's inferiority to other groups in society. The communication is further characterised by solidarity

as authors identify with- and support others, blaming the system rather than setting out to discredit the individuals who share their experiences of encountering discriminatory Airbnb hosts. Lastly, as stated, the communication encourages participation and is of an invitational character rather than a confrontational one.

By authoring narratives and thereby contributing to the co-construction of above presented themes expressed through #AirbnbWhileBlack, people contribute in raising awareness of an issue. By raising awareness, even more people who identify with the group join in the co-construction of themes and as such, raising awareness leads to the raising of critical consciousness. As stated in the background, anger is the trigger that engages a person in a cause, while fear is the emotion that will function as a restrainer of the engagement. However, through communicating with others experiencing the same emotions as oneself, a person can overcome his or her fear (Castells, 2012:219). A result of the raising of consciousness is that it can aid people in overcoming their fear of engaging in a cause. In the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack, indicators of people having overcome that fear and then gaining a sense of self and collective efficacy have been identified. As such, the theory that the activity of raising consciousness leads to empowerment (Gutiérrez, 1995) aligns with the result of this study.

Putting the results into perspective

An account of the difficulties of attaining empirically generalisable results is given in the methodology of this paper. However, as stated, when conducting a qualitative case study, the attempt is *not* to gather data through probability sampling and find results that are applicable to larger populations. The results of this case study will however be put into perspective by comparing them to the results of other studies presented in the literature review of this paper. In cases where the results align with those of others', indicators of possible theoretical generalisations can be identified. Doing so adds to the external validity of this study.

Wolfe (2018) found that hashtag activism in the case of #MeToo had narrative character and was invitational rather than, as argued by Yang (2016), confrontational. In the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack, and especially within the theme "Support Black business, use the alternative: Noirbnb/Innclusive", the results align with the findings of Wolfe. Authors encourage others to participate and engage in the launch of the new services. As such, the communication was invitational rather than confrontational. However, results analysed from data collected for the second empirical question identified reactions that arguably were of a confrontational character. These included reactions from authors disregarding the main theme as it lacked in rationality since denying a user access to one's home *is* in fact legal regardless of it being discriminatory or not. Another confrontational reaction belonged to those demanding a change from Airbnb and tagging them in their tweet to confront them directly. As such, the findings show that narratives were of an invitational character but some reactions posed as confrontational. This does however not contradict the finding of Wolfe (2018), as she argues that narrative activism does not *necessarily* have to be confrontational– implying that it *can* be.

After studying hashtag activism in the cases of #Ferguson and #WeAreTrayvonMartin, Bonilla and Rosa (2015) concluded that the hashtags were used to raise awareness of- and spark discussions on police brutality against Black people, spread news, connect with others and show solidarity towards the victims. Similarly, in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack, the hashtag has raised awareness of unjust opportunities for Black people using Airbnb and allowed users to connect with others using the hashtag. The latter was done by reacting to tweets through liking, retweeting, replying or conducting new tweets. The communication conducted through #AirbnbWhileBlack on Twitter was, as in the case of #WeAreTrayvonMartin, characterised by solidarity as narratives were accepted in general and authors sharing their stories were offered support. As such, the results of this study align with Bonilla and Rosa's findings, stating that hashtag activism is characterised by solidarity and used to raise awareness and

connect with others.

Marquis, Rose Luo and Zhang (2016) found that Internet activism elicits corporate response due to the fact that it can threaten a corporation's public image. The research conducted in this paper cannot supply answers to whether or not it was the threatening of Airbnb's public image that caused them to take the claims voiced through #AirbnbWhileBlack into consideration. However, the findings of Marquis, Rose Luo and Zhang offer support for such an implication. Airbnb themselves use the hashtag to locate and publicly respond to users sharing their experiences on Twitter. Additionally, representatives from the company have appeared in media, talking about working to make their platform free from discrimination. Regardless of whether Airbnb's motivation is to maintain a certain public image or not, the results suggest that hashtag activism can attract attention and elicit a response from a company. This will be further addressed in the discussion under "The informed citizen".

The conclusion above further aligns with the finding of Dr. Juliet Roper (2002), suggesting the neo-liberal model of corporate dominance–arguing that *governments* have power over *consumers* and that *corporations* are in a position of power over both *governments* and *consumers*–is challenged by the public sphere model of citizen determination–where *governments* have power over *corporations* and instead *citizens* are in a position of power over both *governments* and *corporations*. The latter model is dependant on the Internet's enablement of the possibility for citizens to inform themselves and others, mobilise and claim public opinion. The hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack was created- and is used by citizens who share information about discrimination taking place on Airbnb. The sharing of information has resulted in the co-construction of larger narrative themes. The activity has then attracted attention from Airbnb who have responded and made changes. As such, citizens have arguably exercised their power over a company in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack. Thereby, the results of this study aligns with the theory of the neo-liberal model of corporate dominance

being challenged by the public sphere model of citizen determination. Again, this due to the Internet's enablement of the possibility for consumers to mobilise and claim public opinion.

Discussion

The leaderless movement

As suggested by Todisco (2015) and accounted for in the case description of this paper, since Airbnb cannot be held liable for user-generated content, there are basically three options for the person seeking change; taking legal action against individual hosts, urging Airbnb to evolve or lobbying congress to review the CDA in regards to paid peer-to-peer accommodation platforms. Although some authors tag Airbnb's Twitter account in their tweets, the results show that the in general the actions suggested by Todisco do not correspond with the actual actions of those seeking change. One option that Todisco (2015) did not consider, however, is the option of creating or using a service that is challenging Airbnb's market shares. For two Airbnb users having been subjected to discrimination by hosts, the experience resulted in them starting the competitive services *Noirbnb* and *Innclusive*. One narrative theme then created by those using the #AirbnbWhileBlack hashtag was that of those promoting the launches of- and/or their commitment to those services. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the response from Airbnb can stop using their service and use one of the alternatives. This could have impacted the lack of clear suggestions for what Airbnb can do to change.

Arguably, the fact that the narratives largely did not correspond to Todisco's (2015) suggestions for action could be due to its form of activism, in this case hashtag activism. As presented in the background, Castells (2012) states that some key characteristics of online movements are that they do not depend on a formal leadership or an identifiable centre and often result in a broad variety of demands.

The goal of such movements is to raise awareness and empower citizens at large (Castells, 2012:219-237). The fact that the spread of #AirbnbWhileBlack is co-created by strangers but not lead by anyone in particular, arguably causes the narratives' lack of clear objectives. That people want change is clear, but for most tweets, the character of that change is unclear. As voiced by those contributing to one of the narrative themes, rules preventing people from having a choice of which guests they accept or deny would be difficult to implement due to the fact that everyone has the right to decide whom they let into their home. This rationality is disregarded by all other identified themes. The nature of most other narratives is emotional and built on good reason, often conducted in a way that requires the audience's shared understanding of the world for it to be convincing.

Had the #AirbnbWhileBlack movement had a leader and/or an identifiable centre, the communication could have been more directed and clear in what people wanted it to result in. First of all, a leader could have urged anyone identifying- or sympathising with those claiming to have been subjected to discrimination using Airbnb to lobby congress to review the CDA. Secondly, as mentioned in the literature review, a few individuals founded and promoted the Time's Up initiative as a response to the #MeToo movement. The initiative was a legal defense fund, providing people who combat sexual harassment and assault with financial aid (Wolfe, 2018). A similar action could have been relevant in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack since Todisco (2015) suggests one option for those seeking change is to sue hosts. If someone would have taken a leading role in the #AirbnbWhileBlack case, they could have steered people towards pooling their money to provide financial aid to anyone who encountered and wished to take legal action against a discriminatory host. Lastly, and perhaps most reasonably, the suggestion from Todisco (2015) to urge Airbnb to evolve could have been communicated far more clearly with a leader concretising the wishes of the people. One of the themes presented in the results consists of authors actually demanding or suggesting Airbnb should change. Among those co-creating this theme, one idea is recurring; an Airbnb user's profile picture should become available to a host *after* they accepted the request to rent. This suggestion has

argumentative quality in terms of rationality and poses a clear demand that Airbnb would be able to take into consideration.

The informed citizen

Even though the narratives expressed through #AirbnbWhileBlack lack clear objectives and generally fail to communicate explicitly *what* changes authors wish Airbnb would implement, the activism has received reactions from the company. The activity resulted in responding tweets from Airbnb, internal changes of the company and a revised policy. Furthermore, as presented in the results, journalists took an interest in the shared narratives and asked to get in touch with authors. Additionally, one tweet revealed that two non-profit legal organisations co-authored a letter to Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky, stating that it had come to their attention that Black users on Airbnb were being discriminated against by hosts and urging Chesky to take action. So how can we understand a leaderless movement that is lacking in objectives and suggestions, and yet is receiving response and effect?

Co-constructing narrative themes on Twitter through the usage of a hashtag is an awareness-raising practice that has been defined as hashtag activism in this paper. The Internet has enabled the possibility for such activism, as people can inform themselves and others, mobilise and form public opinion (Castells, 2012:229). As a result, people do not have to rely on traditional media for information. Narratives that are underrepresented in traditional media, such as those of minorities, can be voiced elsewhere. In the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack, the practise of sharing narratives functioned as activism as people raised awareness of the issue of discriminatory Airbnb hosts. This then lead to a rise in consciousness of the contextual factors causing those issues. As stated in the background under "Social movements off- & online", the size of a movement impacts the reactions of politicians. If a movement gains some cultural and social influence, politicians will address the concerns of that movement, first by making cosmetic adjustments due to them seeking electoral gain. As messages are spread through

communication networks and consciousness rises however, politicians will not be able to fake their involvement (Castells, 2012:236-237). Arguably, the same could apply to companies addressing criticism voiced by citizens. As such, the informed citizen gains power over a company through the ability to inform others and mobilise, threatening the company's public image. This could provide an answer to why Airbnb responded to the criticism voiced through #AirbnbWhileBlack even though the movement overall lacked clear objectives and suggestions.

What can the results say about the sharing economy?

As previously mentioned, the sharing economy has received critique for being beneficial mainly to the owners of platforms and those who own excessive, valuable assets. Studies, such as those conducted by Edelman, Luca and Svirsky (2014;2017), have shown that Black Airbnb users earn less when listing their property and are more likely to be rejected when requesting to rent accommodation. Furthermore, the results from this study show that people are using the hashtag #AirbnbWhileBlack to share stories of encounters on Airbnb that are being referred to as discriminatory/racist. By using the hashtag, enough pressure was put on Airbnb for it to cause a reaction and a change in their policies. However, the hashtag is still active and people continue to encounter hosts with discriminatory behavior. Arguably, the power provided to those listing items or services for rent on sharing economy platforms is being abused by those who let their racial bias impact their business. The platforms are not being held accountable due to the CDA freeing them of liability for user-generated content. If people came together with the clear objective of lobbying government into reviewing the CDA for platforms operating within the sharing economy, those platforms could be forced to make changes in their policies. As such, the sharing economy could become more beneficial to the great masses.

Research question for the future

In many cases, the narratives' lack of rationality in the case of #AirbnbWhileBlack could arguably be caused by the restrictions that a tweet sets, allowing the author only 140 characters. Under such circumstances, details and even fundamental parts of a story might be compromised to fit the format. It could therefore be suggested that narratives argued out of *good reason* are accepted more easily on Twitter since the restriction of words prohibits the storyteller from telling the whole story. The lack of rationality could more easily be overlooked since the audience is aware of- and used to stories being abridged. If a narrative is shared on another social media platform where the author could elaborate but chooses not to, the audience might react differently and demand more information before accepting the narrative as true. Therefore, I would urge researchers to conduct further studies on narrative probability and fidelity in hashtag activism but gather data from different social media platforms.

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APPENDIX

Tweet n	Tweet	Date	Author n
1	I suspect that many who ...	6:31 PM - 29 Apr 2016	1
2	#airbnbwhileblack what about ...	6:31 PM - 29 Apr 2016	2
3	The "sharing economy" was bui...	6:52 PM - 29 Apr 2016	3
4	"No ... *the ability to do racial...	6:43 PM - 29 Apr 2016	4
5	Airbnb could design a tougher...	6:17 PM - 29 Apr 2016	5
6	The fact that you even have to...	7:12 PM - 29 Apr 2016	6
7	I've used airbnb in 3 countries...	7:24 PM - 29 Apr 2016	7
8	(1/2) What if it worked like a....	6:26 PM - 29 Apr 2016	8
9	This. Is a thing...	6:29 PM - 29 Apr 2016	9
10	This is actually common for me...	12:15 AM - 27 Apr 2016	10
11	#AirbnbWhileBlack shows that….	6:49 PM - 29 Apr 2016	11
12	#AirbnbWhileBlack: How Hidde...	4:33 PM - 27 Apr 2016	12
13	It's heartbreaking to see friend...	7:06 PM - 29 Apr 2016	6
14	When you have to have the mo...	7:11 PM - 29 Apr 2016	6
15	#AirbnbWhileBlack: How Hidde...	8:27 PM - 28 Apr 2016	13
16	#AirbnbWhileBlack: Black...	5:21 PM - 29 Apr 2016	14
17	#AirbnbWhileBlack In the US...	7:49 PM - 29 Apr 2016	15
18	(2/2) Matched on location and….	6:26 PM - 29 Apr 2016	8
19	Hidden bias affects the...	6:35 PM - 29 Apr 2016	16
20	Privately-owned businesses tha...	6:33 PM - 29 Apr 2016	17
21	And yes, our futons and guests...	6:31 PM - 29 Apr 2016	17

22	Seems like there's no compelli...	6:45 PM - 29 Apr 2016	17
23	"Hidden Brain" is an amazing...	10:45 PM - 27 Apr 2016	18
24	Didnt eem know...	12:57 AM - 27 Apr 2016	19
25	Watch @AnnCoulter fight back...	7:06 PM - 29 Apr 2016	20
26	Have always thought it deserve...	6:53 PM - 29 Apr 2016	3
27	I've never ever ever considered...	6:31 PM - 29 Apr 2016	9
28	My experience with them last ye...	8:46 PM - 29 Apr 2016	21
29	watching #AirbnbWhileBlack...	7:06 PM - 29 Apr 2016	22
30	One of ways #SiliconValley...	7:01 PM - 29 Apr 2016	23
31	I think @will_coldwell makes a...	6:59 PM - 29 Apr 2016	24
32	Sooooo I hope someone at...	6:54 PM - 29 Apr 2016	25
33	all too familiar with this aspect o...	6:45 PM - 29 Apr 2016	26
34	@HiddenBrain My name is Ebo...	6:25 PM - 29 Apr 2016	27
35	Looks like @HiddenBrain +...	6:17 PM - 29 Apr 2016	28
36	"African American sounding...	5:34 PM - 29 Apr 2016	29
37	Listen to this week's...	6:02 PM - 27 Apr 2016	30
38	But people want to tell me I'm ju...	11:24 PM - 26 Apr 2016	31
39	Really great episode of...	5:37 PM - 26 Apr 2016	32
40	glad to hear this (well-research...	4:08 PM - 26 Apr 2016	33
41	Thanks @HiddenBrain team for...	3:23 PM - 26 Apr 2016	34
42	#AirbnbWhileBlack: How Hidd...	6:49 AM - 26 Apr 2016	35
43	New story on #NPR:...	6:18 AM - 26 Apr 2016	36
44	#AirbnbWhileBlack: How Hidd...	6:15 AM - 26 Apr 2016	37

45	New story on NPR:...	6:18 AM - 26 Apr 2016	38
46	This #AirbnbWhileBlack...	6:36 PM - 19 May 2016	39
47	My #AirbnbWhileBlack story. Pic...	1:17 AM - 15 May 2016	40
48	No one in my family uses AirB...	1:29 PM - 18 May 2016	41
49	#AirbnbWhileBlack my new...	2:58 AM - 15 May 2016	42
50	Why do you think wifey makes a...	1:25 AM - 7 May 2016	43
51	The only color that matters in...	11:49 PM - 5 May 2016	44
52	When You #AirbnbWhileBlack...	4:21 AM - 11 May 2016	45
53	If you have to erase your...	6:28 PM - 6 May 2016	46
54	#AirbnbWhileBlack gave me th...	10:13 PM - 5 May 2016	47
55	Really not surprised by...	5:24 PM - 6 May 2016	48
56	I assume it's no coincidence tha...	3:06 PM - 25 May 2016	49
57	I'm down for the #AirbnbWhileBl...	12:11 AM - 7 May 2016	50
58	Glad to see the...	4:27 PM - 6 May 2016	51
59	Lol. Dude emails me from the...	3:09 AM - 21 May 2016	39
60	Haha! I already canceled this...	3:12 AM - 21 May 2016	39
61	I'm getting #AirBnBwhileblack-...	3:14 AM - 21 May 2016	39
62	My #airbnbwhileblack story:...	6:27 PM - 25 May 2016	40
63	Guests w/names like Lakisha r...	1:01 AM - 6 May 2016	52
64	speaking of #airbnbwhileblack...	10:15 PM - 10 May 2016	53
65	My article "Shut Out of Airbnb" i...	8:13 PM - 27 May 2016	54
66	Hey y'all did you know that this...	1:27 AM - 23 May 2016	55
67	I'm about to book an internation...	11:20 PM - 19 May 2016	56

68	#AirBnBWhileBlack means fakin...	4:56 PM - 5 May 2016	57
69	RT @_GSelden:...	11:17 PM - 14 May 2016	58
70	All my guy @_GSelden wante...	11:15 PM - 10 May 2016	59
71	Airbnb has a discrimination...	7:16 PM - 6 May 2016	60
72	Listening to #AirbnbWhileBlack...	6:08 PM - 6 May 2016	61
73	At this point, @Airbnb might as...	5:55 PM - 6 May 2016	46
74	If @Airbnb wants to actually...	6:04 PM - 6 May 2016	46
75	#AirbnbWhileBlack is literally...	4:07 PM - 6 May 2016	62
76	I'm lost for words. This is...	1:02 PM - 6 May 2016	63
77	Go read up on #AirbnbWhileBla...	10:30 PM - 5 May 2016	64
78	You're asking Americans to act...	9:31 PM - 5 May 2016	65
79	What? The #sharingeconomy...	2:44 PM - 5 May 2016	66
80	White trolls responding to the....	2:17 PM - 5 May 2016	67
81	#AirbnbWhileBlack made a fa...	9:58 PM - 4 May 2016	68
82	.@Mashable's @jessicaplautz...	8:34 PM - 2 May 2016	28
83	But the bias of the world. The...	9:59 PM - 1 May 2016	69
84	I'm reading the stories in the...	6:56 PM - 1 May 2016	70
85	I've decided to just stick to hotel...	3:10 PM - 1 May 2016	71
86	So now that #AirbnbWhileBlack...	2:25 PM - 1 May 2016	72
87	Racism is more subtle than in o...	10:10 AM - 1 May 2016	73
88	Is it really hidden though?...	8:51 AM - 1 May 2016	74
89	The #AirbnbWhileBlack hashta...	8:07 AM - 1 May 2016	75
90	If you haven't heard this podcas...	6:51 AM - 1 May 2016	76

91	Reading thru #AirbnbWhileBla...	6:50 AM - 1 May 2016	77
92	#ux folks:user empathy is part o...	6:34 AM - 1 May 2016	78
93	Via @NPR: #AirbnbWhileBlack:...	6:18 AM - 1 May 2016	79
94	No issues abroad (Accra, Ghan...	5:33 AM - 1 May 2016	80
95	Reading #AirbnbWhileBlack an...	5:25 AM - 1 May 2016	81
96	The time spent getting rejected...	4:26 AM - 1 May 2016	21
97	#AirbnbWhileBlack Shows the...	3:41 AM - 1 May 2016	82
98	This is what makes the...	3:41 AM - 1 May 2016	83
99	#AirbnbWhileBlack has issues i...	3:33 AM - 1 May 2016	84
100	2016, and racism still exists in t...	3:26 AM - 1 May 2016	85
101	Hey all ! @noirebnb changed th...	**11:17 PM - 15 Jun 2016**	86
102	For anyone who's been...	8:32 PM - 5 Jun 2016	87
103	Wow. I had no idea. To anyon...	4:32 AM - 15 Jun 2016	88
104	Yes! I'm here for all of this…	12:58 AM - 5 Jun 2016	89
105	My new sounds: Our Solution ...	4:43 PM - 27 Jun 2016	90
106	As Airbnb Grows, So Do Claim...	3:48 PM - 21 Jun 2016	91
107	Big up to @innclusive and...	11:44 AM - 25 Jun 2016	92
108	I personally love to support blac...	9:08 PM - 7 Jun 2016	93
109	If anyone has had an...	4:16 AM - 7 Jun 2016	94
110	#AirbnbWhileBlack, an example...	3:55 PM - 6 Jun 2016	95
111	#AirbnbWhileBlack is whack joi...	12:42 AM - 4 Jun 2016	96
112	When you realize that...	7:33 AM - 21 Jun 2016	97
113	. @AndyLalwani and I are in...	7:35 PM - 15 Jun 2016	98

114	Come thru, #Bajan & #Yardie...	12:41 AM - 14 Jun 2016	99
115	.@Airbnb focuses on #diversit...	1:24 PM - 11 Jun 2016	100
116	#AirbnbWhileBlack is a thing of...	12:25 AM - 11 Jun 2016	101
117	Here are the websites trying to...	12:11 AM - 9 Jun 2016	102
118	I'm pleased to support @noireb...	4:17 PM - 7 Jun 2016	103
119	No more worrying about...	5:12 PM - 4 Jun 2016	104
120	Support the movement @Noirb...	4:49 PM - 4 Jun 2016	105
121	Looks like #AirbnbWhileBlack i...	4:47 PM - 4 Jun 2016	106
122	#AirbnbWhileBlack becomes...	3:55 AM - 4 Jun 2016	107
123	Interesting. #travel | ...	2:08 AM - 4 Jun 2016	108
124	#AirbnbWhileBlack is what...	3:02 PM - 3 Jun 2016	97
125	Following that episode earlier th...	4:03 AM - 3 Jun 2016	109
126	Airbnb Removes Host For Racis...	1:37 AM - 3 Jun 2016	110
127	#AirBNBWhileBlack: Airbnb ban...	3:42 AM - 2 Jun 2016	111
128	When you bring up #AirBnBW...	4:02 PM - 1 Jun 2016	112
129	excellent, but practically what i...	10:33 AM - 1 Jun 2016	113
130	Episode 28: #AirbnbWhileBlack...	9:33 AM - 1 Jun 2016	114
131	@Airbnb Please take action. ...	7:45 AM - 1 Jun 2016	115
132	#AirbnbWhileBlack	6:07 AM - 1 Jun 2016	116
133	#AirbnbWhileBlack	6:01 AM - 1 Jun 2016	117
134	I'm 1 degree removed from the...	2:36 AM - 1 Jun 2016	118
135	See also: #AirbnbWhileBlack...	2:08 AM - 1 Jun 2016	119
136	V disappointed by #Racism on...	2:07 AM - 1 Jun 2016	120

137	If you were mad about #Airbn...	5:16 AM - 25 Jul 2016	121
138	I thought #AirbnbWhileBlack wa...	11:58 PM - 26 Jul 2016	122
139	"NoireBnB, An Entrepreneurs ...	2:50 AM - 2 Jul 2016	123
140	Just saw my first #AirbnbWhile...	3:48 AM - 29 Jul 2016	124
141	Phrasing 🙄 #AirbnbWhileBlack...	2:21 AM - 13 Jul 2016	125
142	Good read by @FarFlungPhil!...	8:12 PM - 15 Jul 2016	126
143	I can't wait for @Innclusive & @...	2:53 PM - 28 Jul 2016	127
144	10 things in #tech you need to k...	10:19 AM - 13 Jul 2016	128
145	Who funded this #AirBnBWhi...	3:48 AM - 28 Jul 2016	129
146	My video on #Airbnb's legal stat...	1:30 AM - 7 Jul 2016	54
147	Airbnb has a #discrimination pro...	5:41 PM - 2 Jul 2016	130
148	Yes! No more #AirbnbWhileBlac...	2:30 AM - 17 Jul 2016	131
149	We see you, Airbnb. @Share_B...	2:46 PM - 25 Jul 2016	132
150	Some travellers say Airbnb host...	12:52 AM - 22 Jul 2016	133
151	https://www.washingtonpost.c...	8:15 AM - 23 Jul 2016	134
152	Airbnb Hires Eric Holder for Ant...	5:29 PM - 21 Jul 2016	135
153	#BlackBusiness Alert: Noirbnb t...	5:57 PM - 9 Jul 2016	136
154	the 2nd #governance #innovatio...	5:39 AM - 22 Jul 2016	137
155	A great, important @AP @AP_...	11:26 PM - 21 Jul 2016	138
156	.@Share_Better--coalition vs. Ai...	11:16 PM - 27 Jul 2016	139
157	Airbnb Confronts Racism As It ...	6:41 PM - 13 Jul 2016	140
158	I love that @Airbnb has yet to fo...	5:57 AM - 1 Jul 2016	141
159	Ex US attorney general Holder ...	11:45 AM - 21 Jul 2016	142

160	#AirBnBWhileBlack is a serious...	12:13 AM - 29 Jul 2016	143
161	Never been declined on @Airb...	5:00 AM - 25 Jul 2016	144
162	Check out @Innclusive w/...	8:59 PM - 30 Jul 2016	145
163	Remember #AirBNBWhileBlack...	8:16 PM - 13 Jul 2016	146
164	It's 2016, and we deserve better...	2:17 PM - 26 Jul 2016	147
165	I am disturbed by reports of ...	5:46 PM - 25 Jul 2016	148
166	Yet another way @Airbnb prove...	4:56 PM - 25 Jul 2016	149
167	We are fighting w/ @LawyersC...	3:26 AM - 21 Jul 2016	150
168	Well i see @Airbnb is putting th...	1:22 AM - 21 Jul 2016	
169	We are working w/ @LawyersC...	9:28 PM - 20 Jul 2016	150
170	Some additional information ab...	11:40 PM - 14 Jul 2016	151
171	Here's an additional travel optio...	11:34 PM - 14 Jul 2016	151
172	Full comments from @bchesky ...	1:23 AM - 13 Jul 2016	152
173	Airbnb has a discrimination prob...	11:22 PM - 4 Jul 2016	153
174	Sharing economy and prejudice...	11:10 AM - 4 Jul 2016	154
175	#Innclusive has you next trip. N...	9:43 AM - 4 Jul 2016	145
176	Airbnb has a discrimination prob...	8:51 PM - 1 Jul 2016	155
177	@Airbnb is sadly looking pretty ...	4:50 PM - 1 Jul 2016	156
178	feeling anything but welcome ht...	4:30 PM - 1 Jul 2016	157
179	Check out Innclusive! THE ans...	2:49 AM - 1 Jul 2016	158
180	#AirBnBwhileblack support bla...	**11:58 PM - 19 Aug 2016**	159
181	Yesterday I booked a place in G...	4:20 PM - 16 Aug 2016	160
182	I am sure @Airbnb is going to ...	1:00 AM - 9 Aug 2016	161

183	Wow...even with instant booking...	8:34 AM - 17 Aug 2016	162
184	Got turned down by 15 host in S...	9:06 PM - 8 Aug 2016	163
185	#AirBnBWhileBlack .. Think im ...	7:10 PM - 9 Aug 2016	163
186	Looking for more options when ...	3:30 AM - 27 Aug 2016	164
187	Experienced #AirbnbWhileBlac...	4:15 PM - 23 Aug 2016	164
188	I just published "Ending #Airbn...	3:37 PM - 5 Aug 2016	165
189	The only remedy for this strain o...	7:16 PM - 23 Aug 2016	166
190	Support Black Business: Inncl...	11:44 PM - 19 Aug 2016	167
191	That #AirbnbWhileBlack thing? ...	7:39 PM - 6 Aug 2016	168
192	How @Airbnb can end discrimin...	3:05 PM - 23 Aug 2016	150
193	Does Airbnb Enable Racism? ht...	8:06 PM - 23 Aug 2016	169
194	Excited for @Innclusive to launc...	6:34 PM - 26 Aug 2016	170
195	Harvard ran a study on discrim...	11:51 PM - 6 Aug 2016	171
196	Only way around people being r...	6:02 PM - 15 Aug 2016	172
197	Coming soon!!!! @Innclusive is t...	6:15 PM - 26 Aug 2016	173
198	An important perspective on a c...	8:55 PM - 7 Aug 2016	174
199	Airbnb "good small idea but a te...	1:27 AM - 8 Aug 2016	175
200	The room is still available for th...	7:54 AM - 1 Aug 2016	176
201	We took action against #Airb...	7:42 AM - 25 Aug 2016	145
202	AirBnB's Instant Book option: us...	8:24 PM - 19 Aug 2016	177
203	#AirbnbWhileBlack is a thing. O...	10:15 PM - 9 Aug 2016	178
204	Pleasure to chat to @Innclusive...	9:15 PM - 28 Aug 2016	179
205	Can't wait to listen to @La_Cow...	6:01 PM - 26 Aug 2016	180

206	Could startups born out of the #...	9:37 PM - 24 Aug 2016	181
207	my article on @triplepundit: Cou...	2:34 PM - 24 Aug 2016	182
208	Behind that #airbnbwhileblack h...	7:26 PM - 23 Aug 2016	183
209	@Innclusive is the best thing ev...	6:19 PM - 19 Aug 2016	184
210	Is the "big idea" of #Airbnb - and...	5:51 PM - 10 Aug 2016	185
211	This, by @dgrobinson, on the #...	10:30 PM - 5 Aug 2016	186
212	Tech sector "disruption" is just r...	5:03 PM - 5 Aug 2016	11
213	Putting an end to #Airbn...	5:06 PM - 3 Aug 2016	165
214	On your way to work? @biene...	9:35 AM - 3 Aug 2016	187
215	Wow thought it was just me had...	12:45 PM - 1 Aug 2016	188
216	Complained to them about dis...	12:46 PM - 1 Aug 2016	188
217	The NEW edition of #PRBants: ...	10:05 AM - 1 Aug 2016	189