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Political identity in contemporary South Africa: a study looking into the construction and articulation of gender on the online phenomenon of Black Twitter

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Abstract

This study examines the new online phenomenon called Black Twitter and the *publics* that have been formed on this platform in regards to issues affecting black lives. Specifically, it not only introduces to the reader the South African Black Twitter market, but more importantly, it looks at how Black Twitter users construct and articulate their gender identities online. This is done through analyzing trending topics, particularly, through a specific hashtag (#IFApartheidDidntHappen) and accounts (@blak_terrorist and @KasiMlungu) which offer rich insight around racial identities and enables one to analyze the content and possible discourses that come into play on this Black Twitter platform. This paper also contributes to the growing literature on the growing black middle-class by exploring how Black Twitter is providing a voice to groups that were historically excluded from the mainstream media discourse. The key purpose of this paper was to explore, as has been suggested, Black Twitter as a public platform and how its young group of users are moving into spaces to challenge the status quo and change historically dominant discourses.