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#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10

Social media, online activism and 10 years of #BlackLivesMatter

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How we did this

This report studies the evolution of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on Twitter and explores how the American public engages with political and social issues on social media. It uses a mixed-methods approach, including a survey of U.S. adults and an analysis of publicly available tweets.

The Twitter findings are based on an analysis of over 44 million publicly available tweets containing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag from the last 10 years. Researchers from the Center used the Twitter API to collect tweets with this hashtag that were publicly available on the site as of spring 2023. Using this dataset, we analyzed how often Twitter users post and retweet the hashtag; whether these tweets express support or opposition to the Black Lives Matter movement; whether they mention policing or police violence; and the other hashtags that are mentioned alongside #BlackLivesMatter. For more details on how these tweets were identified and sampled, read the [methodology](#).

The survey findings in this report are based on a survey conducted May 15-21, 2023, among 5,101 U.S. adults. Everyone who took part in the survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way, nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP's methodology](#).

Here are the [survey questions used for this report](#), along with responses, and its [methodology](#).

#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10

Social media, online activism and 10 years of #BlackLivesMatter

In July 2013, activists first used the [#BlackLivesMatter hashtag to spark conversation](#) about racism, violence and the criminal justice system following George Zimmerman’s acquittal in the [shooting death of Trayvon Martin](#) in Sanford, Florida.

Ten years later, Black Lives Matter stands as a model of a new generation of social movements intrinsically linked to social media. The enduring power of the hashtag itself is clear: More than 44 million #BlackLivesMatter tweets from nearly 10 million distinct users currently exist on Twitter today, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets from July 2013 through March 2023.¹

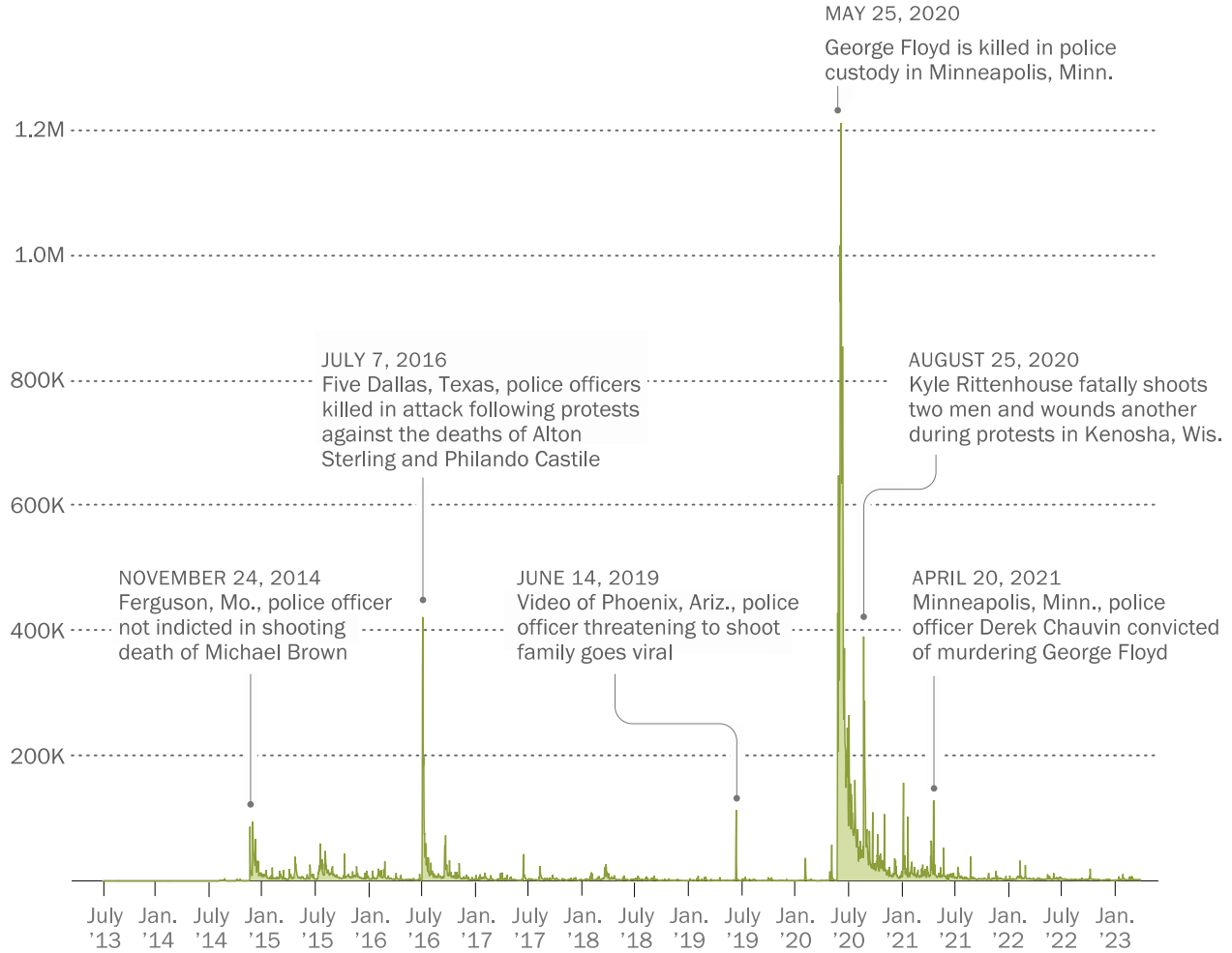
Use of the hashtag has fluctuated over the years, often in response to instances of police violence against Black Americans. And perhaps no event is more directly tied to the use of the hashtag than the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin on May 25, 2020.

Over half of all existing tweets that include the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag were posted from May to September 2020. And of the nearly 10 million distinct users who have tweeted the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, 6.8 million of them – most of whom had never used the hashtag previously – posted it during that five-month period.

¹ Pew Research Center has previously analyzed the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag through two data collection efforts. One covered the period from Jan. 1, 2013, to May 1, 2018, and a second covered the period from May 1, 2018, to June 7, 2020. Both used automated coding software developed by Crimson Hexagon, a social media analytics firm now part of [Brandwatch](#). This new analysis uses data collected directly from the Twitter API using Twitter’s integrated search tools. Due to differences in how these tools provide access to archived Twitter data and the fact that our analyses were performed at different points in time, the findings in these studies may not be directly comparable. However, each has broadly similar findings – such as that the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag has periodic increases in daily use, often in response to news of fatal encounters between law enforcement and Black Americans. Please read this report’s full [methodology](#) for more information.

Use of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag reached its peak in summer 2020 following the killing of George Floyd

Daily number of public Twitter posts using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, July 2013-March 2023



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets from July 2013 through March 2023. Data collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API.
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Summer 2020 marked a high point in the number of tweets mentioning #BlackLivesMatter. But the hashtag remains an ongoing presence on Twitter to this day. Since October 2020, it has been used in nearly a quarter-million tweets per month.

Here are some of the key findings of this analysis of a decade of #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter:

- **Most #BlackLivesMatter tweets express support for the Black Lives Matter movement.** Some 72% of all #BlackLivesMatter tweets have expressed clear support for the movement or its broader objectives. Just 11% have expressed opposition, with the remainder not expressing clear opposition or support.
- **Policing and police violence have been a consistent topic of focus in these tweets.** One-third of all #BlackLivesMatter tweets over the last decade have mentioned police, victims of police violence or violent confrontations between civilians and law enforcement. Despite the many changes in the political and social landscape that have occurred during that time, policing has been a consistent focus of the #BlackLivesMatter conversation since 2013.
- **Over the years, #BlackLivesMatter has been associated with a diverse set of other hashtags and causes.** Some 55% of all #BlackLivesMatter tweets also include other hashtags. In the movement's early years, the most common of these other hashtags referred primarily to specific instances or victims of police violence against Black Americans. More recently, they have expanded to include a variety of issues and causes.
- **Much of the #BlackLivesMatter historical record is no longer available.** Black Lives Matter is one of the most prominent social movements to develop and evolve entirely within the social media era. But our analysis indicates that around one-third of all #BlackLivesMatter tweets that were known to be posted from 2013 to 2021 – and as much as 40% of those posted during the summer of 2020 – are no longer accessible on Twitter.

Survey results: Black Lives Matter and social media activism

Along with this analysis of tweets, the Center also fielded a survey of 5,101 U.S. adults from May 15 to 21, 2023. It asked about Americans' political activity on social media, and their views on social media's role in national conversations about race and racial inequality.

The survey finds that exposure to Black Lives Matter on social media is widespread. Fully 77% of social media users say they have come across content related to Black Lives Matter on these sites. And this is true for majorities of users across most demographic groups.

Americans are much more likely to see posts related to Black Lives Matter than they are to *personally post* or *share* their views on the subject. And when they do choose to post, they are more likely show their support:

- 24% of social media users say they have ever posted or shared things in **support** of Black Lives Matter;
- 10% of users say they have done so in **opposition**.

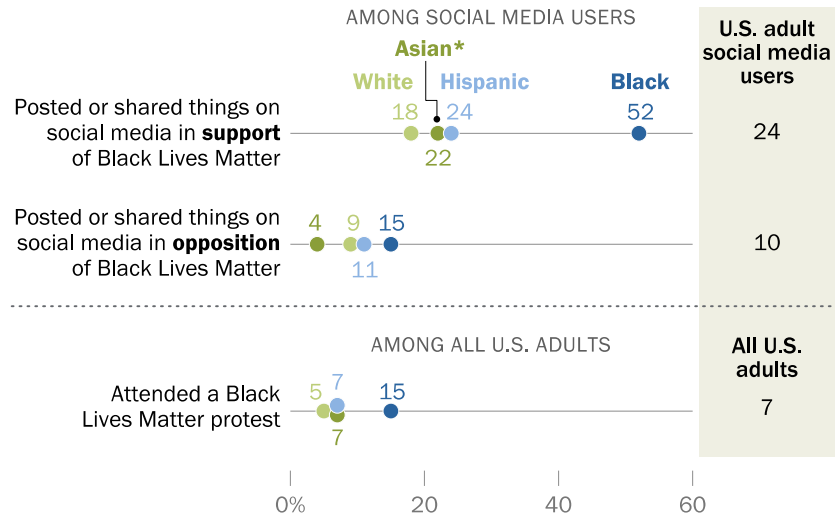
Black social media users stand out for showing their support: 52% say they have posted or shared things in support of Black Lives Matter on social media. That share drops to about one-in-five each among Hispanic, Asian and White users.

The survey also finds that 7% of Americans overall say they have ever attended a Black Lives Matter protest. And that share rises to 15% among those who are Black.

Younger Black people are especially likely to be vocal supporters of Black Lives Matter on social media. Some 61% of Black social media users ages 18 to 49 say they have posted or shared things in support of Black Lives Matter. This group also stands out for attending Black Lives Matter protests, with 17% of Black Americans in this age range saying they have been to one.

Black Americans stand out for supporting Black Lives Matter on social media, attending protests

% who say they have ever ...



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Survey question did not specify whether “Black Lives Matter” was the name of an organization or a broader movement. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

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Views of social media and the press as tools for bringing attention to police violence against Black people

Three years since [nationwide protests and debates following the murder of George Floyd](#), an 81% majority of Americans believe police violence against Black people in the U.S. is a problem. But while 85% of Black adults describe it as a *major* problem, that share falls to 56% among Hispanic adults and 50% among Asian adults.² An even smaller share of White adults feel this way (36%).

But how effective are social media or news organizations for bringing awareness to this issue? Among those who agree that police violence against Black people is a problem in the U.S., social media holds a modest edge:

- 43% say **social media** is an extremely or very effective way of bringing attention to this issue;
- 32% say **news organizations** are extremely or very effective.

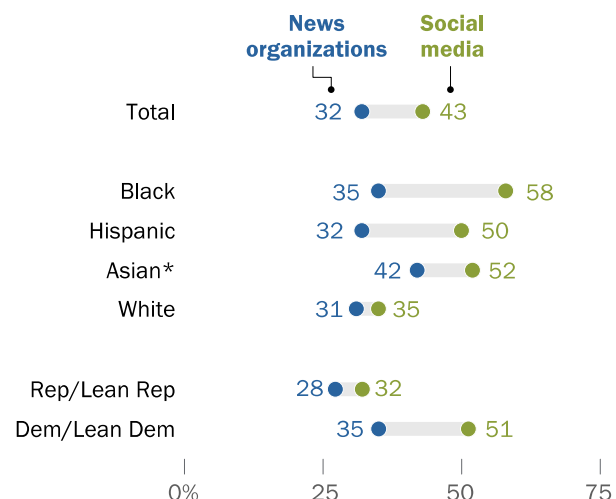
The degree to which people view social media as an effective tool for spreading awareness varies by race and ethnicity, as well as by political attitudes.

About half or more Black, Asian and Hispanic adults describe social media as an extremely or very effective way to bring attention to police violence against Black adults, compared with a much smaller share of White adults (35%) who say this.

And Democrats and Democratic leaners who view police violence as a problem are more likely than their Republican counterparts to say

Social media seen as a more effective way to shed light on police violence against Black people than news outlets

Among the 81% of U.S. adults who say police violence against Black people is a problem in the U.S. today, % who say ___ is/are an **extremely or very effective** way to bring attention to the issue



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

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² Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

social media is an extremely or very effective way to shed light on police violence against Black people (51% vs. 32%).

By comparison, views of news organizations' ability to bring attention to these issues do not vary as greatly by race or ethnicity or by political party.

At the same time, the survey shows the public has complex views of the impact of social media on political engagement more broadly. Many Americans acknowledge how social media can be helpful in raising awareness, saying the following statements describe social media very or somewhat well:

- 67% say “social media highlights important issues that might not get a lot of attention otherwise;”
- 67% say “social media helps give a voice to underrepresented groups;”
- 47% say “social media make it easier to hold powerful people accountable.”

But larger shares believe these platforms can be a distraction and are ineffective:

- 82% say “social media distracts people from issues that are truly important;”
- 76% say “social media makes people think they’re making a difference when they really aren’t.”

Value users place on social media for finding like-minded people, sharing political views

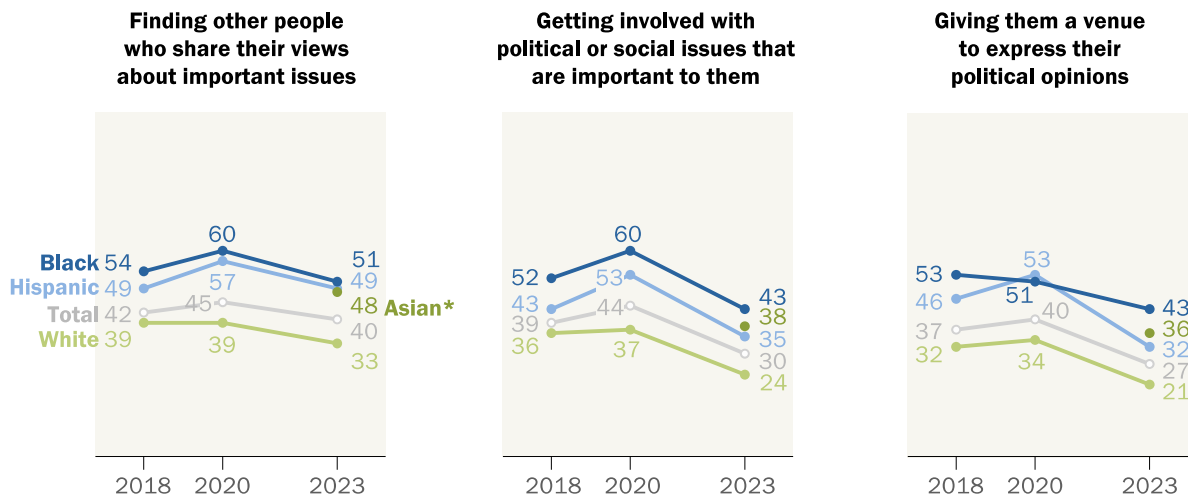
Overall, four-in-ten social media users say these platforms are very or somewhat important to them personally when it comes to finding others who share their views about important issues. Smaller shares place high importance on using social media to get involved with political or social issues (30%) or express their political opinions (27%).

But the level of importance users place on these sites for their own political engagement has declined over time.

The share of social media users who describe these sites as very or somewhat important to them for getting involved with issues they care about dropped from 44% in 2020 to 30% today. This decline is also present in views about social media being personally important for expressing their political views or finding like-minded people.³

Since 2020, decline in social media users saying these sites are important to them for engaging with issues, political expression; racial differences remain

*% of U.S. social media users who say these sites are **very or somewhat important** to them personally when it comes to ...*



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.
 Note: Due to small sample size, responses for Asian adults were not reported separately in 2018 and 2020; Asian adults are still included in the total. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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As was [true in previous Center surveys about social media activism](#), the value users place on social media for their own political engagement varies by race and ethnicity.⁴

About half each among Black, Hispanic and Asian social media users say these sites are important to them for finding others who share their views about important issues, compared with one-third

³ It is important to note that the Center’s last survey was conducted in June 2020 in the weeks following the killing of George Floyd which was a particularly active time for both online and offline activism.

⁴ Due to small sample size, responses for Asian adults were not reported separately in 2018 and 2020; Asian adults are still included in the total.

of White users. A similar pattern is present when asked about getting involved with issues or expressing their political beliefs on social media.

Other key survey findings:

This survey also asked about five specific activities people may have recently participated in on social media, and it finds that some activities are more common than others. Among U.S. social media users, in the past year:

- 34% say they have taken part in a group that shares an interest in an issue or cause;
- 26% have encouraged others to take action on issues that are important to them;
- 14% have looked for information about rallies or protests happening in their area;
- 14% have changed their profile picture to show their support for a cause or issues;
- 12% have used hashtags related to a political or social issue.

In total, 46% of social media users have done at least one of these activities. Certain groups – particularly those who are Black – are more likely to report recently using social media for these purposes.

1. Ten years of #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter

Along with fielding a survey of public attitudes toward Black Lives Matter, political engagement and activism on social media in general, Pew Research Center also conducted a separate analysis of activity around #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter.

The phrase “Black lives matter” [first appeared in a July 2013 Facebook post by activist Alicia Garza](#), following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin. Use of #BlackLivesMatter as a hashtag quickly spread to other social media sites such as Twitter.

Over the ensuing decade, the Black Lives Matter movement has been a consistent and substantial topic of conversation on Twitter. We collected all publicly available tweets containing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag going all the way back to 2013 – more than 44 million tweets in total.⁵

We then examined these tweets to understand:

- How the volume of tweets tagged with the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag has changed over time;
- Whether these tweets express support or opposition to the movement as a whole;
- How often these tweets mention policing or police violence;
- How audiences engaged with and amplified these tweets;
- What other hashtags are included alongside #BlackLivesMatter.

How use of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag has changed over time

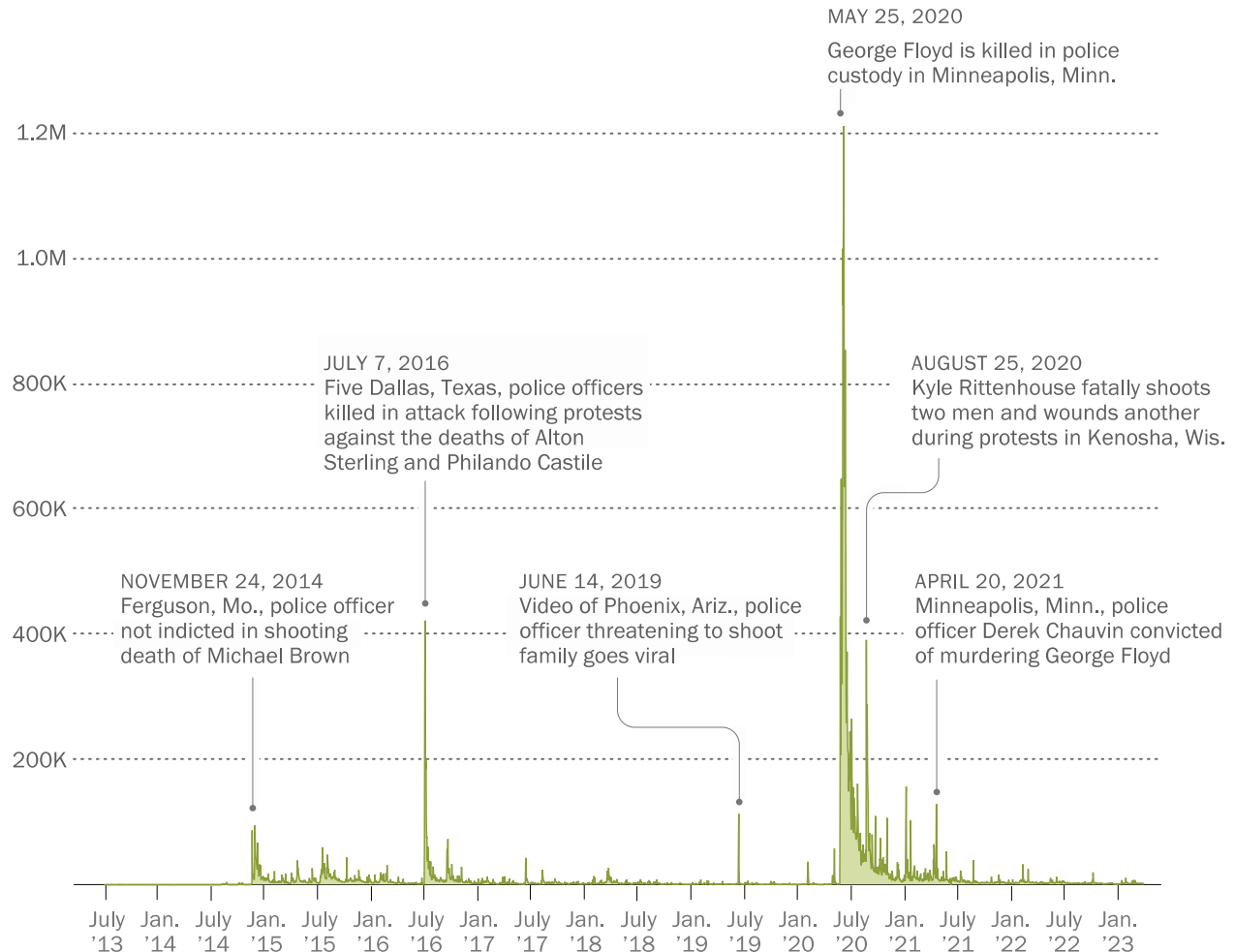
Over the last decade, the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag has appeared in 3,024 tweets on a typical (median) day. However, its use has surged well above this baseline around major news events – often those involving incidents where Black Americans were killed by police.

Use of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag [increased dramatically](#) in November 2014, to a peak of more than 95,000 times in a single day. This increase followed the announcement that Ferguson, Missouri, police officer Darren Wilson would not be indicted in the fatal shooting of Michael Brown.

⁵ Pew Research Center has previously analyzed the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag through two data collection efforts. One covered the period from Jan. 1, 2013, to May 1, 2018, and a second covered the period from May 1, 2018, to June 7, 2020. Both used automated coding software developed by Crimson Hexagon, a social media analytics firm now part of [Brandwatch](#). This new analysis uses data collected directly from the Twitter API using Twitter’s integrated search tools. Due to differences in how these tools provide access to archived Twitter data and the fact that our analyses were performed at different points in time, the findings in these studies may not be directly comparable. However, each has broadly similar findings – such as that the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag has periodic increases in daily use, often in response to news of fatal encounters between law enforcement and Black Americans. Please read this report’s full [methodology](#) for more information.

Use of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag surged following the death of George Floyd

Daily number of public Twitter posts using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, July 2013-March 2023



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets from July 2013 through March 2023. Data collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API.

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Another notable spike – to a peak of more than 422,000 tweets in a single day– occurred in July of 2016. [Alton Sterling](#) was killed by police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on July 5 of that year. [Philando Castile](#) was killed the next day by an officer outside St. Paul, Minnesota. During the protests following these deaths, multiple police officers in both [Dallas, Texas](#), and [Baton Rouge, Louisiana](#), were shot and killed.

But the most active period by far for #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter was summer 2020, following the [murder of George Floyd](#) by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. During this period, the hashtag was used more than 160,000 times a day, on average, and peaked at over 1.2 million uses in a single day.

Of the 44 million tweets from the last decade using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag that were still available at the time of this study, more than half – 24.5 million – were posted between the beginning of May and the end of September 2020.

Summer 2020 marked a new high point for references to #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter

In addition to being the most active period for #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter, summer 2020 also marked a shift in how frequently the hashtag would be referenced on the platform moving forward. Prior to May 2020, #BlackLivesMatter appeared in around 151,000 tweets per month, on average. From October 2020 through March 2023, it appeared in nearly 236,000 tweets per month – an increase of 56%.

How many users have tweeted about #BlackLivesMatter

Nearly 10 million distinct users posted or retweeted a tweet containing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag between 2013 and 2023. But [similar to tweeting behavior among the general public](#), #BlackLivesMatter tweets are highly concentrated among a smaller subset of users. More than half of the users who have posted a tweet containing the hashtag only did so one time and never again subsequently. And of the 44 million tweets examined for this analysis, 77% – or 34 million – were shared by just one-quarter of the users who ever posted the hashtag.

Summer 2020 was also a high-water mark for the number of distinct users participating in the #BlackLivesMatter conversation on Twitter. Some 6.8 million distinct users shared a tweet with the hashtag between May and September 2020, and of those, 85% – or 5.8 million users – had never used the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag before.

When Twitter users do share a tweet with #BlackLivesMatter, they are more likely to be using someone else's words rather than their own. Of the over 44 million total tweets collected for this analysis, 56% are retweets. Quote tweets, replies and original tweets together make up 44% of the collection.

One-quarter of users produce around three-quarters of #BlackLivesMatter tweets

% of all public tweets with the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag posted July 2013-March 2023 by ...



Note: Includes all users who posted tweets containing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag in original tweets, retweets, quote tweets and replies.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API. “#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10”

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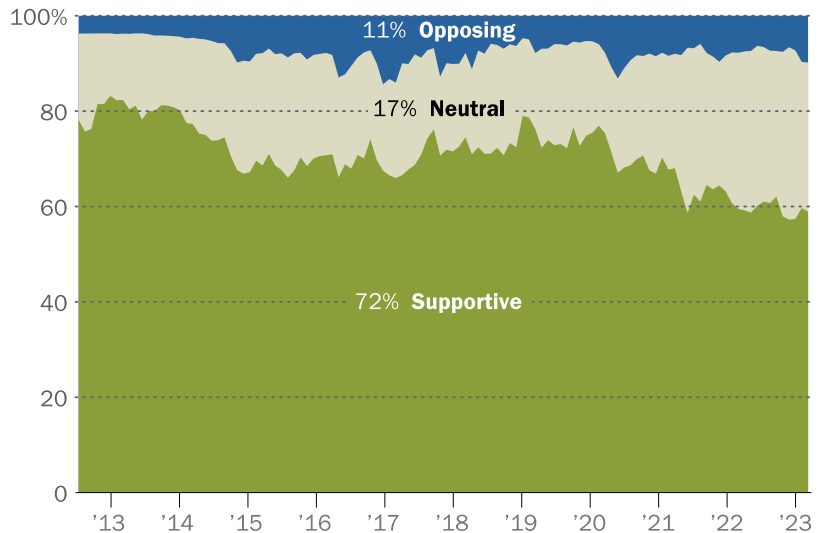
Expressions of support and opposition to the #BlackLivesMatter movement over time

The vast majority of #BlackLivesMatter tweets posted in the last decade have taken a stance – typically a positive one – toward the broader social movement the hashtag represents. Cumulatively since 2013, 72% of #BlackLivesMatter tweets have expressed clear support for the wider movement and its objectives. Conversely, 11% of these tweets have expressed clear opposition for the movement. The remaining 17% of tweets do not state a clear position.

The share of tweets with a neutral stance has increased slightly in recent years. But overall, the broad distribution of opinions in these tweets has remained relatively consistent in expressing support for the movement as a whole.

Majority of #BlackLivesMatter tweets express support

% of public tweets using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag from July 2013-March 2023 that express a ___ stance toward Black Lives Matter



Note: Overall shares for each stance are cumulative from 2013 to 2023. Stance identified using machine learning model.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API.

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Language used in tweets that support and oppose the broader movement

Supportive and oppositional tweets often use different words to frame the Black Lives Matter movement and major events surrounding it.

Supportive tweets are frequently characterized by words like:

- Together
- Justice
- Change
- Fight
- Brutality
- Murder

By contrast, opposing tweets often use words like:

- Riot, looting (when discussing Black Lives Matter protests)
- Assault
- Defacing
- Criminal, violent, Marxist, terrorist, antifa (when describing Black Lives Matter supporters)

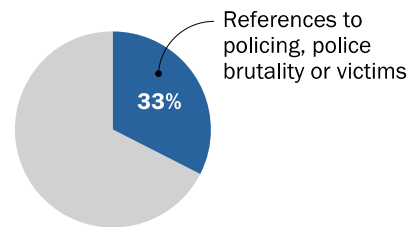
One in three #BlackLivesMatter tweets since 2013 mention police violence or its victims

The Black Lives Matter movement and hashtag first grew to prominence in response to the killing of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri. Issues of policing and its impact on Black Americans remain at the forefront of discourse around the hashtag. Our analysis finds that one-third of tweets using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag have included references to policing, police brutality, or have included the names of Black people killed by police.

This share has remained remarkably consistent over the course of the last decade. Despite all the changes in the technological and political landscapes that have occurred during this time, racialized policing has remained at the core of the online discourse surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement.

One-third of #BlackLivesMatter tweets mention police or police violence

% of public tweets using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag from July 2013-March 2023 that include ...



Note: References to policing identified using machine learning.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API.
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The most common hashtags used in #BlackLivesMatter tweets

This analysis is based on tweets containing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag. But 55% of these tweets over the last decade also included other hashtags alongside #BlackLivesMatter. Particularly in the early years of the movement, the most popular of these “co-occurring” hashtags included references to victims of police violence or the circumstances surrounding those events.

The most common hashtags mentioned alongside #BlackLivesMatter have often referred to victims of police violence

Top 10 co-occurring hashtags in public tweets using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag in ...

2013 - 2015	2016 - 2019	2020	2021 - 2023
ferguson	racism	georgefloyd	blackhistorymonth
icantbreathe	thisisamerica	justiceforgeorgefloyd	blacktwitter
ericgarner	phoenixpd	icantbreathe	georgefloyd
sandrablend	altonsterling	breonnataylor	sayhername
alllivesmatter	philandocastile	antifa	racism
mikebrown	alllivesmatter	portland	tigraygenocide
blacktwitter	blacktwitter	alllivesmatter	blackexcellence
sayhername	resist	acab	defundthepolice
tamirrice	stephonclark	sayhisname	asianlivesmatter
shutitdown	trump	blacktranslivesmatter	tigray

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API.
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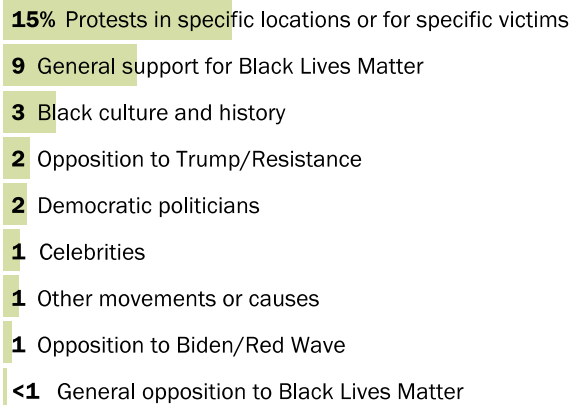
Other hashtags that commonly occur alongside #BlackLivesMatter include an expanded range of issues and concerns. These include general references to Black history and culture (#BlackHistoryMonth, #BlackTwitter, #BlackExcellence); broader social movements and issues, both in the United States and abroad (#TigrayGenocide, #DefundThePolice, #AsianLivesMatter); and other issues related to politics and current events (#Trump, #resist, #antifa). Additionally, #AllLivesMatter – a hashtag frequently used to critique or oppose the Black Lives Matter movement – also appears somewhat commonly in these tweets.

As a broader look at how other hashtags are used to link #BlackLivesMatter tweets to expanded audiences and conversations, we identified several common topical hashtag groupings that appear consistently in these tweets. And as is true of the most common individual hashtags discussed above, the most common grouping refers to the location of specific protests (such as #Ferguson) or individual victims of police violence (such as #GeorgeFloyd). Hashtags from this group have been mentioned in 15% of #BlackLivesMatter tweets over the last decade.

Other somewhat common hashtag groupings offer general support for the broader movement or reference Black culture and history. Smaller shares refer to U.S. politicians or politics, celebrities, or non-Black Lives Matter movements and causes.

Other hashtags in #BlackLivesMatter tweets often mention protests, victims, support for the movement

*% of public tweets using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag from July 2013-March 2023 that **also** contain hashtags related to ...*



Note: Categories identified using co-occurrence cluster analysis. Percentages above are calculated over all public tweets, and 55% of all public tweets contain hashtags in addition to #BlackLivesMatter. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API. “#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10”

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Audience engagement with #BlackLivesMatter tweets

Retweeting is one of the primary ways that messages are “amplified” on Twitter: Tweets reach new audiences when they are shared by others, and these retweets are often shared again, and so on. Tweets containing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag over the last decade were retweeted an average of 18 times each.

But a majority of these tweets never traveled outside their original author’s network: 65% of these posts were retweeted zero times. Another 30% received 1 to 10 retweets.

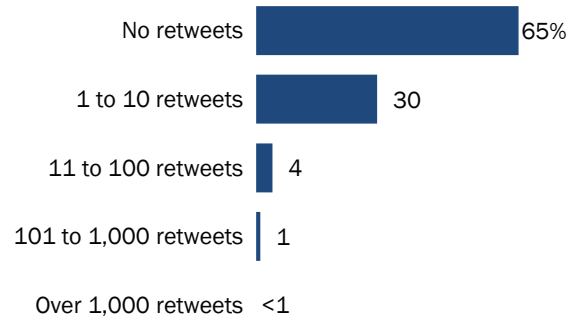
Only a small proportion (just 1%) of #BlackLivesMatter posts were retweeted more than 100 times. But this small group of high-engagement tweets accounts for the vast majority (90%) of all retweets of the hashtag over the last decade.

By far the most retweeted #BlackLivesMatter tweet from the last 10 years was a June 2020 post by the Korean pop group BTS, which at the time of writing had been retweeted over 831,000 times. Retweets of just this post represent nearly 2% of all publicly available tweets tagged with #BlackLivesMatter from the past decade.

Of those tweets that did rise to prominence, many came from activists, musicians or other celebrities. But some tweets that garnered hundreds of thousands of retweets were originally posted by individual users on their personal accounts.

Vast majority of all #BlackLivesMatter tweets have 10 or fewer retweets

% of public Twitter posts using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag from July 2013-March 2023 that have ...



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API. “#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10”

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And of the twenty most retweeted posts with the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, all are supportive of the movement. Some simply offer general support for the movement and its values, while others document protests or call attention to specific victims of police violence. Even in conversation about a serious social movement, a notable portion of the most retweeted tweets (4 out of 20) use humor to get their point across. The vast majority include a photo or video, but few include explicit calls to action.

Favorable #BlackLivesMatter tweets have wider reach on the platform

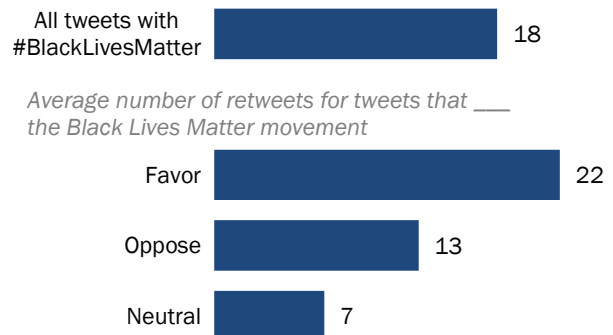
Much like the volume of tweets containing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, the volume of retweets has not been evenly distributed over time. June 8, 2020, was the day with the single highest volume of retweets for posts with the hashtag. And all of the top five days by retweet volume fell between June 5 and June 9, 2020, two weeks after George Floyd’s murder. Summer 2020 as a whole was the most active time for retweets related to Black Lives Matter in the last decade.

Sometimes spikes in retweet volume corresponded to many unique users tweeting about a widely publicized news event, such as Floyd’s murder. Other times, one viral tweet was primarily responsible for a daily spike. For example, an increase in retweets on June 15, 2019, was largely due to a video tweeted by media outlet Occupy Democrats of a police officer in Phoenix, Arizona, threatening to shoot a Black family. That tweet was then amplified through retweets by Meek Mill, YG, Jemele Hill and other celebrities, and accounts for 97% of all retweets of the hashtag on the day it was posted.

Tweets supporting the Black Lives Matter movement received more retweets on average than tweets opposing the movement. Supportive tweets were retweeted an average of 22 times, while opposing tweets were retweeted 13 times on average. Neutral tweets had the lowest average retweet count (7). But the majority of tweets, regardless of stance, were not retweeted at all, with 63% of supportive tweets, 72% of oppositional tweets and 71% of neutral tweets receiving zero retweets.

Tweets that favor Black Lives Matter amass more retweets on average than those that oppose it

Average number of retweets for public Twitter posts using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag from July 2013-March 2023



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets collected March 1–May 12, 2023, using Twitter API. “#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10”

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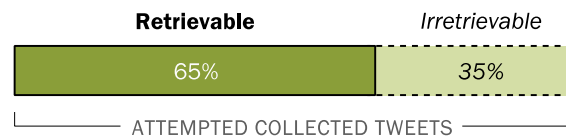
Many #BlackLivesMatter tweets can no longer be viewed on Twitter

Conversation around the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter has been a consistent and culturally impactful presence on Twitter over the past decade. However, data on Twitter can be impermanent – Twitter users can delete tweets they previously posted, they can deactivate their account or make it private, or they can be suspended by the platform itself. When any of these things happens, tweets that were previously available to view publicly can disappear from the record entirely.

The Center’s new analysis is based on tweets tagged with #BlackLivesMatter that were publicly available as of spring 2023. But we were also able to reference [past data collection efforts](#) to estimate the share of #BlackLivesMatter tweets that have been deleted or otherwise become inaccessible over the years. According to this comparison, 35% of #BlackLivesMatter tweets created between 2013 and 2021 are no longer available on the platform. That share is even higher when looking at tweets created in summer 2020 – the highest peak of activity for the hashtag. Out of all the #BlackLivesMatter tweets posted between May and September 2020, fully 40% are no longer accessible.

Many #BlackLivesMatter tweets are no longer publicly accessible on Twitter

Share of public tweets using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag from Jan. 2013-Dec. 2021 that are ...



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets collected March 1-May 12, 2023, using Twitter API, compared to tweets previously collected in real time.
“#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10”

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2. Americans' views of and experiences with activism on social media

From posting hashtags to finding like-minded communities, social media has transformed where, when and how people engage with civic and political activities. This chapter uses survey data to explore online activism on social media, including the ways people are engaging with issues they care about and the value they place on these platforms when it comes to building community and sharing their views.

This work also explores the online and offline ways people have engaged with one of the most recognizable topics in online activism in the last decade: Black Lives Matter.

Political and civic engagement on social media

Some people are turning to social media to engage with the political and social issues they care about. This survey asks about five activities related to causes or issues that people may have done on social media in the past year.

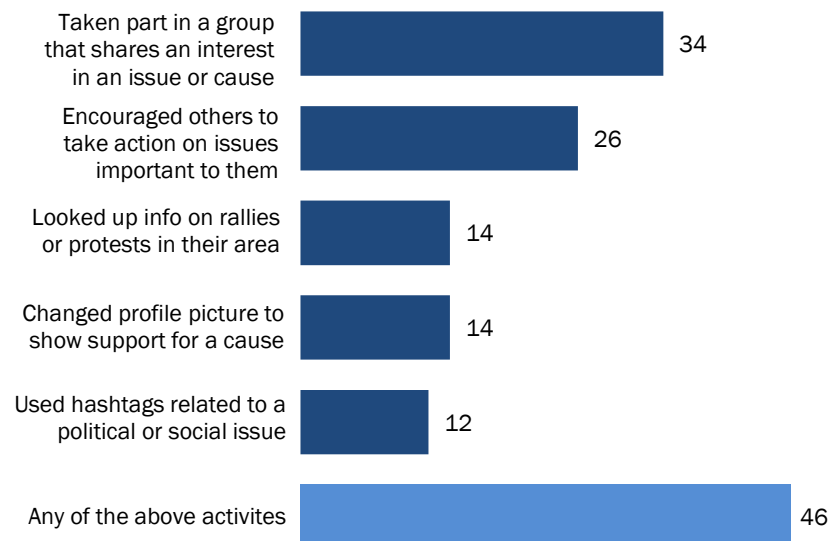
About one-third of social media users (34%) say they have taken part in a group that shares an interest in an issue or cause, while a smaller share (26%) say they have encouraged others to take action on social media in the past year.

Smaller shares have looked up info on protests or rallies happening in their area (14%),

changed their profile picture to support a cause (14%) or used hashtags related to a political or social issue (12%) in the past year.

Nearly half of social media users have been politically active on social media in the past year

% of U.S. social media users who say they have done each of the following activities on social media in the past year



Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

"#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10"

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Taken together, 46% of social media users say they have done at least one of these activities in the past year.

Black users stand out for their activity on social media, with a majority (58%) saying they've participated in at least one of these activities in the past year, compared with less than half each among White (45%) and Hispanic (40%) users. Asian users do not significantly differ from their Black, White or Hispanic counterparts: 49% say they have done at least one of these activities in the past year.

In particular, Black users are more likely to have changed their profile picture to support a cause: One-quarter of Black social media users say they have done this in the past year, while smaller shares of Hispanic (15%), Asian (15%) and White (11%) users say the same.

Democrats and Democratic-leaning users are also more likely than their Republican counterparts (53% vs. 41%) to have engaged politically on social media in any of these five ways. One of the largest gaps is in finding information about rallies or protests happening in their area: 20% of Democratic social media users have done this in the past year, compared with 9% of Republican users.

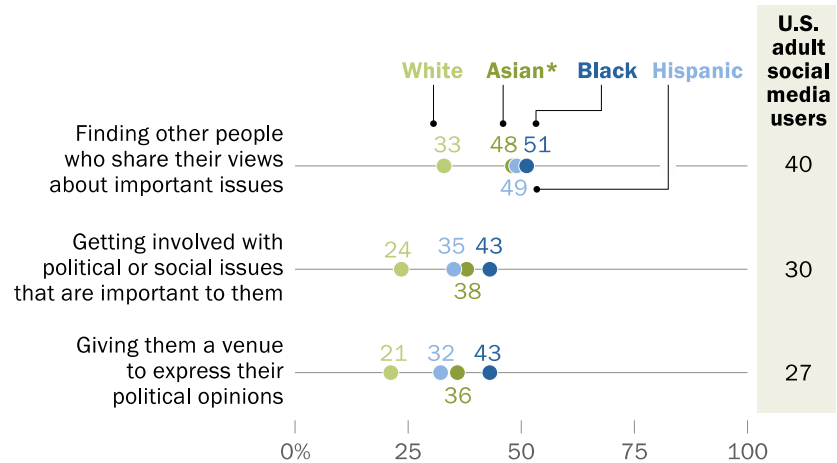
Personal importance of social media for political action

Four-in-ten social media users say these platforms are very or somewhat important to them personally when it comes to finding others who share their views about important issues. Smaller shares say the same for getting involved with political or social issues that are important to them (30%) or giving them a venue to express their political opinions (27%).

The share of social media users who say online platforms are important for each of these reasons has decreased since [the last time the Center asked this question in June 2020](#), following massive protests after the killing of George Floyd. For example, the share of users who said social media is an important venue for expressing their political opinions has declined from 40% in 2020 to 27% today.

Black, Hispanic or Asian users are more likely than their White counterparts to say social media is important for finding others who share their views

% of U.S. social media users who say social media is *very or somewhat important* to them personally when it comes to ...



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

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As was true in previous Center surveys, the level of importance that users place on these platforms for their own political engagement continues to vary by race and ethnicity.

Roughly half of Black, Hispanic and Asian users say social media is very or somewhat important for finding other people who share their views about important issues, compared with one-third of White users who say this. Black, Hispanic and Asian users also place a higher level of importance on social media than White users when it comes to getting involved with issues they care about or giving them a place to express their political views.

There are also differences in the personal importance of social media by age and political party, which are displayed in [the appendix](#).

Positive and negative impacts of social media on political discourse

The survey also sheds light on how Americans overall – not just those who use social media – think about these platforms’ impact on society and civic life. The public offers up a mix of criticism and praise for these sites.

On the more negative side, clear majorities of Americans overall – including those across racial and ethnic groups - say the statement that “social media distracts people from issues that are truly important” (82%) or “makes people think they’re making a difference when they really aren’t” (76%) describes social media very or somewhat well.

Black, Hispanic or Asian adults more optimistic than White adults about social media’s power as a political tool, but skepticism present across all racial groups

*% of U.S. adults who say each of the following statements describes social media **very** or **somewhat** well*

	Black	Hispanic	Asian*	White	U.S. adults
POSSIBLE POSITIVE IMPACTS					
Highlights important issues that might not get a lot of attention otherwise	81	77	74	61	67
Helps give a voice to underrepresented groups	77	77	79	61	67
Makes it easier to hold powerful people accountable for their actions	60	61	60	39	47
POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMPACTS					
Distracts people from issues that are truly important	77	75	82	85	82
Makes people think they are making a difference when they really aren’t	64	70	77	80	76

*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

“#BlackLivesMatter Turns 10”

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Still, the public broadly agrees social media can be a helpful tool for shedding light on underrepresented stories or communities. Two-thirds each say social media “highlights important issues that might not get a lot of attention otherwise” and “helps give a voice to underrepresented groups,” while roughly half (47%) believe the statement “social media makes it easier to hold powerful people accountable for their actions” describes these platforms well.

People's assessment of social media's impact varies widely by race and ethnicity. While about six-in-ten each among Black, Hispanic and Asian adults say social media helps hold the powerful accountable, that share drops to 39% among White adults.

Views of social media highlighting important issues that might otherwise go unnoticed or giving a voice to underrepresented groups follow a similar pattern – with Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans more likely to agree with this statement than their White counterparts.

White Americans are more negative than Black or Hispanic Americans about the impact of these platforms on political engagement. White adults (80%) are more likely than Black (64%) or Hispanic adults (70%) to say the statement “social media makes people think they are making a difference when they really aren't” describes these sites well.

Asian adults (77%) are more likely than Black adults to say social media creates a false sense of changemaking, but do not differ significantly from Hispanic or White adults.

For differences by age, political party and social media use, [see the appendix](#).

Support for and opposition to Black Lives Matter on social media

In addition to measuring Americans' views about online activism more broadly, the survey also focused on people's engagement with content directly related to Black Lives Matter.

While most social media users (77%) have come across content related to Black Lives Matter, far fewer have shared their personal views – whether positive or negative – about this on social media.

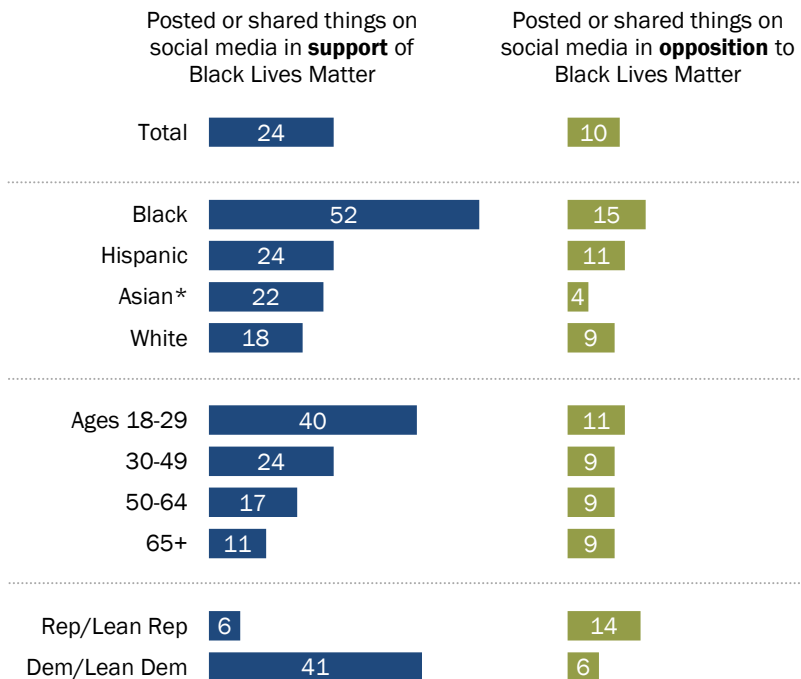
Overall, 24% of social media users say they have ever posted or shared things on these sites in support of Black Lives Matter, while a smaller share (10%) say they have posted things in opposition. But both actions vary widely by race and ethnicity, age, and political party.

Roughly half of Black social media users (52%) say they have posted or shared things in support of Black Lives Matter, compared with smaller shares of Hispanic (24%), Asian (22%) and White (18%) users.

Racial and ethnic differences are more modest when looking at those who have voiced their opposition on social media. Still, Asian users are less likely than Black, Hispanic or White users to share content opposing Black Lives Matter.

Social media users more likely post their support rather than opposition to Black Lives Matter, but this varies widely by race, age and political party

% of U.S. social media users who say they have ever ...



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Survey question did not specify whether "Black Lives Matter" was the name of an organization or a broader movement. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

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Younger adults are more likely than their older peers to voice their support of Black Lives Matter on social media. Four-in-ten users ages 18 to 29 say they have done this, compared with 24% of those 30 to 49 and an even smaller share of those 50 and older. However, there are no meaningful age differences among those who post disapproving content.

Partisan differences are also present. Much larger shares of Democratic rather than Republican users say they have posted things in support of Black Lives Matter (41% vs. 6%). More modest gaps exist when asked about posting things in opposition: 14% of Republican users report sharing content opposing Black Lives Matter on social media, compared with 6% of Democratic users.

Racial and age differences in being politically active on social media

Younger Black social media users consistently stand out for their higher levels of political engagement on social media and the importance they place on that engagement.

In this survey, we ask whether users have done each of five issue-based actions on social media in the past year, including taking part in a group related to a cause and encouraging others to take action on issues. Roughly two-thirds of Black social media users ages 18 to 49 (64%) have done at least one of these activities in the past year, compared with fewer than half of White or Hispanic users under 50 and 48% of older Black users.

Younger Black users especially likely to engage in political activities on social media, including posting support for Black Lives Matter

% of U.S. social media users who say ...

	Ages 18-49			50+		
	Black	White	Hispanic	Black	White	Hispanic
They have done each of the following on social media in the past year						
Taken part in a group that shares an interest in an issue or cause	43	35	31	30	35	27
Encouraged others to take action on issues that are important to them	37	26	24	30	22	23
Looked for information about rallies or protests happening in their area	23	14	19	15	8	15
Changed their profile picture to show support for a cause	26	12	16	22	11	11
Used hashtags related to a political or social issue	30	11	14	13	7	11
They have ever posted or shared things on social media ...						
In support of Black Lives Matter	61	25	26	35	11	15
In opposition to Black Lives Matter	20	8	10	7	9	11
Social media is very or somewhat important to them personally when it comes to ...						
Finding other people who share their views about important issues	59	36	48	38	30	53
Getting involved with political or social issues that are important to them	48	25	33	34	24	45
Giving them a venue to express their political opinions	49	21	30	33	20	40

Note: Survey question did not specify whether “Black Lives Matter” was the name of an organization or a broader movement. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

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This pattern is also true when looking at activities that amplify Black Lives Matter. While 61% of Black social media users under 50 say they have posted or shared things in support of Black Lives Matter, that share drops to 35% among older Black users and even is smaller among White and Hispanic users, regardless of age. Notably, a somewhat similar pattern is also seen for sharing opposition, with one-fifth of younger Black users having posted their opposition to Black Lives Matter on social media.

Social media also holds a high personal importance for many younger Black users. A majority of Black users ages 18 to 49 (59%) say social media is very or somewhat important to them for finding other people who share their views about important issues. Some 48% of younger Hispanic users say this, as do smaller shares of Black users 50 and older (38%) and younger White users (36%). The same pattern holds when looking at the shares of each group who say social media is important to them for getting involved with political or social issues and giving them a venue to express political opinions.

Attending Black Lives Matter protests

Massive [protests and demonstrations have been a mainstay](#) of the Black Lives Matter movement – often swelling around high-profile killings of Black Americans by law enforcement.

This survey finds that 7% of Americans say they have ever attended a Black Lives Matter protest, and those who have done so are more likely to be younger, Black and identify with the Democratic party.

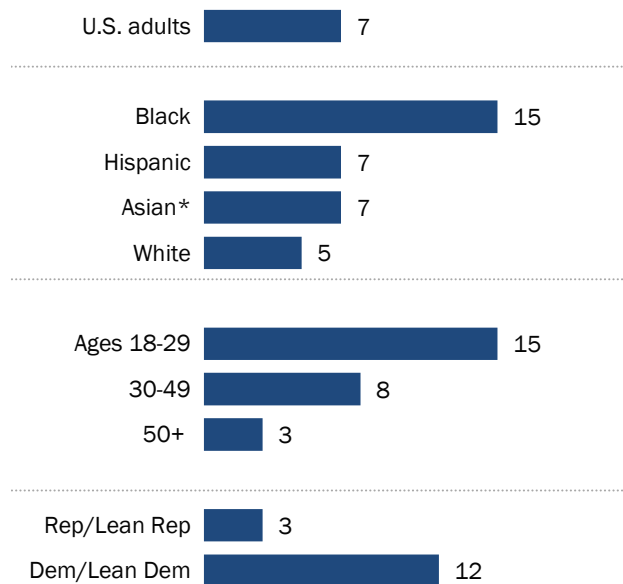
Black Americans (15%) are more likely than those who are Hispanic (7%), Asian (7%) or White (5%) to say they have attended a Black Lives Matter protest.

Age differences on this question are also pronounced: 15% of Americans ages 18 to 29 say they have attended a Black Lives Matter protest, compared with 8% of those 30 to 49 and 3% of those 50 and older.

And Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they have attended a Black Lives Matter protest (12% vs. 3%).

Black Americans more likely than other racial groups to have attended a Black Lives Matter protest

% of U.S. adults who say they have ever attended a Black Lives Matter protest



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Survey question did not specify whether “Black Lives Matter” was the name of an organization or a broader movement. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023
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Views on police violence against Black people

One of the [central discussions around criminal justice](#) in recent years focuses on the relationship between policing and racial bias – particularly the violent and fatal encounters that Black people have with law enforcement.

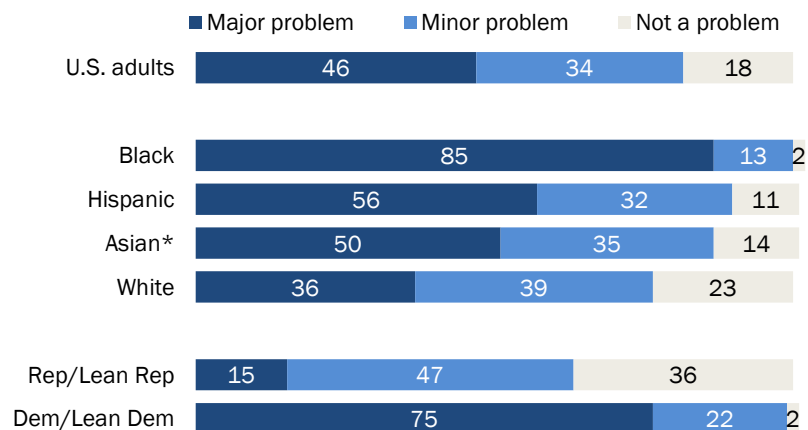
This survey finds that roughly eight-in-ten Americans say police violence against Black people in the U.S. is a major (46%) or minor (34%) problem. Another 18% say this is not a problem in this country.

While majorities say police violence against Black people in the U.S. is a problem, groups differ over how big of an issue it is. For example, 85% of Black adults describe this as a *major* problem, compared with 56% of Hispanic adults, 50% of Asian adults and 36% of White adults.

There are also striking partisan differences. Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to describe police violence against Black people as a major issue in the U.S. (75% vs. 15%).

Wide racial, partisan gaps in views about the severity of police violence against Black people in the U.S.

% of U.S. adults who say police violence against Black people is a ___ in the United States today



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

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How effective are social media and news organizations in bringing awareness to police misconduct?

About four-in-ten Americans who view police violence against Black people as a problem (43%) say social media is an extremely or very effective way to bring attention to the issue, while a smaller share say the same about news organizations (32%).

Views on the effectiveness of social media in shedding light on this issue differ by race and ethnicity. Among White adults who view police violence against Black people as a problem, 35% say social media is extremely or very effective in bringing attention the issue, that share rises to half or more among those who are Black (58%), Asian (52%) or Hispanic (50%).

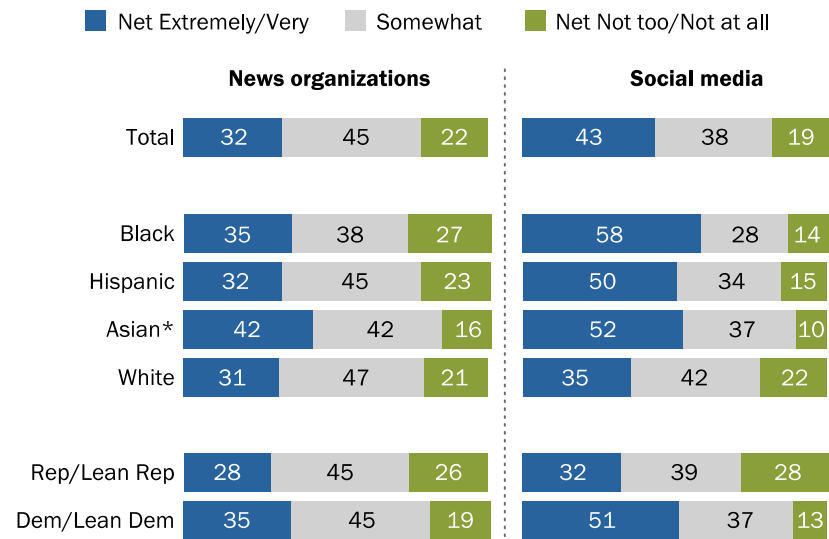
By comparison, racial and ethnic differences on news

organizations' ability to bring attention to this issue are somewhat more modest. Still, Asian adults (42%) in this group are more likely to say news organizations are extremely or very effective in bringing attention to police violence against Black people than White (31%) or Hispanic adults (32%). Black adults do not meaningfully differ from other groups.

Political party is also a factor. Democrats who think police violence against Black people is a problem are more likely than their Republican counterparts to say social media is extremely or very effective way of bringing awareness to these issues (51% vs. 32%). And while there are

Black Americans especially likely to view social media as highly effective for bringing attention to the issue of police violence against Black people

Among the 81% of U.S. adults who say police violence against Black people is a problem in the U.S. today, % who say news organizations or social media are a ___ effective way to bring attention to the issue



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.
 Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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partisan gaps in views about news organizations' ability to bring attention to this topic, they are far more modest.

Appendix

Social media's importance for political engagement

*% of U.S. social media users who say social media is **very or somewhat important to them** personally when it comes to each of the following*

	Finding other people who share their views about important issues	Getting involved with political or social issues that are important to them	Giving them a venue to express their political opinions
Total	40	30	27
Ages 18-29	50	33	33
30-49	40	30	26
50-64	35	29	26
65+	31	26	23
Rep/Lean Rep	36	25	23
Dem/Lean Dem	45	37	32

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

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Attitudes about social media activism

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following statements describes social media *very or somewhat well*

	Distracts people from issues that are truly important	Makes people think they are making a difference when they really aren't	Highlights important issues that might not get a lot of attention otherwise	Helps give a voice to underrepresented groups	Makes it easier to hold powerful people accountable for their actions
U.S. adults	82	76	67	67	47
Ages 18-29	81	78	82	79	65
30-49	84	78	71	70	50
50-64	83	76	60	61	38
65+	79	71	54	56	35
Rep/Lean Rep	86	81	59	57	37
Dem/Lean Dem	80	74	74	76	55

Among those who ___ social media

Do use	82	77	71	71	49
Do not use	84	75	48	50	36

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from ATP Wave 127, conducted from May 15 to May 21, 2023, and includes an [oversample](#) of Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men and non-Hispanic Asian adults in order to provide more precise estimates of the opinions and experiences of these smaller demographic subgroups. These oversampled groups are weighted back to reflect their correct proportions in the population. A total of 5,101 panelists responded out of 5,841 who were sampled, for a response rate of 87%. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 2%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 5,101 respondents is plus or minus 1.7 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,498
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	881
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	432
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,115
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,466
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,541
May 29 to July 7, 2021; Sept. 16 to Nov. 1, 2021	ABS	1,329	1,162	785
May 24 to Sept. 29, 2022	ABS	3,354	2,869	1,691
	Total	42,894	30,283	12,409

Note: RDD is random-digit dial; ABS is address-based sampling. Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. In 2020 and 2021 another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that did not respond to the online survey were sent a paper version of the questionnaire, \$5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults who returned the paper version of the survey were invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults received a follow-up mailing with a \$10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the five address-based recruitments, a total of 23,176 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 20,341 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, one adult was selected and asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 30,283 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 12,409 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.⁶ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii. It featured a stratified random sample from the ATP in which Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men and non-Hispanic Asian adults were selected with certainty. The remaining panelists were sampled at rates designed to ensure that the share of respondents in each stratum is proportional to its share of the U.S. adult population to the greatest extent possible. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management

⁶ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling.](#)"

team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was May 15-21, 2023. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on May 15.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on May 15. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on May 16.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates, ATP Wave 127

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	May 15, 2023	May 16, 2023
First reminder	May 18, 2023	May 18, 2023
Final reminder	May 20, 2023	May 20, 2023

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Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center’s researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, five ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. These weights are then rescaled and adjusted to account for changes in the design of ATP recruitment surveys from year to year. Finally, the weights are calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanic and Asian adults	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2021 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2021 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	
<i>Additional weighting dimensions applied within Black adults</i>	
Age	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Gender	
Education	
Hispanic ethnicity	
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

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Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th

percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 127

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted percentage	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	5,101		1.7 percentage points
Social media users	3,944		1.9 percentage points
White, non-Hispanic	2,797		2.1 percentage points
Black, non-Hispanic	813		4.8 percentage points
Hispanic	902		5.0 percentage points
Asian, non-Hispanic	364		7.6 percentage points
Ages 18-29	626		4.8 percentage points
30-49	1,771		2.9 percentage points
50-64	1,456		3.1 percentage points
65+	1,227		3.2 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	2,267	45	2.4 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	2,618	47	2.4 percentage points

Note: This survey includes oversamples of Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, and non-Hispanic Asian adults. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

A note about the Asian adult sample

This survey includes a total sample size of 364 Asian adults. The sample primarily includes English-speaking Asian adults and, therefore, may not be representative of the overall Asian adult population. Despite this limitation, it is important to report the views of Asian adults on the topics in this study. As always, Asian adults' responses are incorporated into the general population

figures throughout this report. Because of the relatively small sample size and a reduction in precision due to weighting, we are not able to analyze Asian adults by demographic categories, such as gender, age or education.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions, ATP Wave 127

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	5,101
Logged on to survey; broke off	2.12	88
Logged on to survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	18
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	627
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	2
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		5
Screened out		0
Total panelists sampled for the survey		5,841
Completed interviews	I	5,101
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	738
Non-contact	NC	2
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		5,841
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		87%
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Cumulative response rate as of ATP Wave 127

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	71%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 127	48%
Response rate to Wave 127 survey	87%
Cumulative response rate	3%

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Twitter data methodology

This report contains three different analyses of Twitter hashtags: an analysis of the volume of tweets over time mentioning #BlackLivesMatter; a content analysis of the major topics mentioned in #BlackLivesMatter tweets using natural language processing and machine learning methods; and hashtag clustering of a specific subset of hashtags to identify other major themes mentioned in #BlackLivesMatter tweets. Each is discussed in greater detail below.

Data collection

To study the conversation around the Black Lives Matter movement on Twitter over the last 10 years (2013-2023), researchers compiled a collection of over 44 million publicly available tweets tagged with #BlackLivesMatter.

This data collection effort is based in part on previous research conducted by [Giorgi et al. \(2022\)](#), who used the Twitter Streaming API endpoint to continuously monitor and collect tweets tagged with #BlackLivesMatter, #BlueLivesMatter or #AllLivesMatter between 2013 and 2021. The final published data collection from that project contains the unique identifiers (but not the full tweet objects) of nearly 64 million tweets. Real-time data collection is ideal for social media analysis, so where possible, Center researchers used the tweet identifiers from this collection.

Center researchers compiled all these tweet identifiers collected in real time and used the Twitter GET statuses/lookup API endpoint to retrieve the full tweet objects for all tweet identifiers that were still publicly accessible on Twitter during the data collection period of March 1-May 12, 2023.

For analysis, these retrieved tweets were then filtered down to just those tagged with #BlackLivesMatter or containing “blacklivesmatter” in the tweet text field.

To fill in gaps in this collection and extend the original data collection to the present, Center researchers used the Twitter Full Archive Search API endpoint to collect the missing data retrospectively, similarly querying on the keywords “#BlackLivesMatter” and “blacklivesmatter.”

The result of these combined efforts is a collection of the full tweet objects for over 44 million #BlackLivesMatter tweets, including full texts, engagement metrics, media information, user information and more. This collection spans the decade between the beginning of 2013 and the end of March 2023, and represents the full set of tweets containing the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag that could be retrieved through the Twitter API during the data collection period of March 1-May 12, 2023.

Measurement

Researchers used several methods to identify characteristics of interest in the tweets used for analysis, including:

- Whether the tweet states a *favorable*, *neutral*, or *opposing* position toward the Black Lives Matter movement;
- Language that distinguishes tweets with a favorable stance toward the Black Lives Matter movement from those with an opposing stance;
- Whether or not the tweet references policing or police violence, or mentions by name a Black person killed by police;
- Hashtags that commonly co-occur with #BlackLivesMatter, as well as with one another.

Identifying stance in #BlackLivesMatter tweets

To identify whether tweets stated a favorable, neutral, or opposing stance toward the Black Lives Matter movement, researchers trained a custom transformer-based machine learning classifier.

First, researchers selected a random representative sample of 1,000 #BlackLivesMatter tweets to serve as a validation set, and hand-coded each tweet into one of the three categories: whether the tweet states a *(i)* favorable, *(ii)* neutral or *(iii)* opposing position toward the Black Lives Matter movement.

Coders used the following codebook to perform this task:

Concept	Description	Options
STANCE	Choose whether the text of the tweet primarily favors or opposes the Black Lives Matter movement. If the message is neutral toward the movements, is off-topic, or does not contain enough information to tell the stance, put it in the neutral category.	FAVOR NEUTRAL OPPOSE

Tweets were labeled by three coders independently, who achieved moderate levels of inter-annotator agreement with each other (pairwise percent agreement between 79% and 82%; pairwise Cohen’s Kappa score between 0.58 and 0.63; and Krippendorff Alpha score of 0.68).

Examining these agreement metrics further, researchers found that most disagreements between coders were a result of ambiguity between the favorable and neutral categories or the opposing and neutral categories. Very few disagreements existed where one coder categorized a tweet as favorable and another coder categorized it as opposing. Excluding neutral labels from the calculation resulted in extremely high levels of inter-annotator agreement (pairwise percent agreement above 97%; pairwise Cohen’s Kappa score above 0.87; and Krippendorff Alpha score of 0.88).

To account for the inherent ambiguity of the neutral category, all 1,000 tweets in the sample were coded by all three coders, and where any disagreement occurred, the ultimate label was decided using a [Dawid-Skene aggregation model](#). Researchers used this set of 1,000 hand-coded tweets with stance labels to validate the performance of the machine learning classifier explained below.

We then fine-tuned a task-specific machine learning classifier to replicate this labeling scheme across the rest of the collected data. This task was performed iteratively:

- First, researchers used OpenAI’s [gpt-3.5-turbo-0301](#) API endpoint to produce stance labels for a random sample of 20,000 tweets.
- Then, researchers fine-tuned a [DistilRoBERTa-base](#) transformer model on this set of 20,000 labeled tweets.

The fine-tuned DistilRoBERTa stance classifier achieved human-level performance when validated against the hand-coded set of 1,000 tweets.

Model	Task	Performance
distilroberta-base (fine-tuned)	Stance prediction	Accuracy: 80% F1 score: 0.79
distilroberta-base (fine-tuned)	Stance prediction (neutral category excluded)	Accuracy: 98% F1 score: 0.98

Finally, all tweets in the collection were assigned stance labels by this classifier.

Identifying “distinctive” language in supportive and opposing #BlackLivesMatter tweets

Researchers identified distinctive terms appearing in tweets that state a favorable or opposing position toward the Black Lives Matter movement using [pointwise mutual information \(PMI\)](#). This method compares the probability of a word appearing in a tweet that is supportive (or opposing) of the Black Lives Matter movement, to the probability of the word appearing in a tweet and a tweet having a supportive (or opposing) stance independently.

Identifying references to policing, police violence and victim names

To identify references to policing, police violence and victim names, researchers used machine learning classifiers paired with keyword lookups. The machine learning component of this task used a transfer learning approach: Here, models initially trained on natural language inference (NLI) are adapted to classification on unseen texts and categories (an approach known as zero-shot classification).⁷ We used [bart-large-mnli](#), a large transformer-based language model as our classifier for this task.

Similar to the stance classifier, this police classifier was validated against a random representative sample of 1,000 tweets from the #BlackLivesMatter tweets dataset, independently hand-coded by three human annotators.

Coders used the following codebook to perform this task:

⁷ NLI models usually perform the task of “logical entailment,” where they are presented with a pair of documents – a “premise” and a “hypothesis” – and asked to determine whether or not the hypothesis follows logically from the information included in the premise text. NLI models can be adapted to serve as zero-shot topic classifiers by reframing the labels as a series of “true or false” questions to be applied to the text. For example, if the model is shown a premise such as “Joe Biden is the president of the United States” along with the hypothesis “This text is about politics,” it will return a true or false value which indicates the topic classification. (Read [Yin, Hay, and Roth \(2019\)](#) for more details.)

Concept	Description	Options
POLICE	Does the tweet mention the police, either as individuals or as an institution, or discuss actions taken by the police force?	YES NO
POLICE VIOLENCE	[Conditional on the tweet containing a reference to POLICE] Does the tweet discuss police actions that could cause harm, or victims of such actions?	YES NO

Coders achieved high levels of inter-annotator agreement on these tasks. For general references to the police:

- Pairwise percent agreement above 88%
- Pairwise Cohen’s Kappa score between 0.7 and 0.82
- Krippendorff Alpha score of 0.75

For more specific references to police violence:

- Pairwise percent agreement above 90%
- Pairwise Cohen’s Kappa score between 0.7 and 0.83
- Krippendorff Alpha score of 0.75

All 1,000 tweets in the validation sample were coded by all three coders, and where any disagreement occurred, the ultimate label was decided using a [Dawid-Skene aggregation model](#).

To identify tweets where Black victims of police killings were mentioned by name, researchers created a dictionary using two databases of police killings: [the Washington Post’s “Fatal Force”](#) database, which logs fatal shootings by U.S. police officers in the line of duty, and [Campaign Zero’s “Mapping Police Violence”](#) database, which takes a broader definition, and records any incident where civilians are killed by law enforcement officers (off duty or on duty) by any application of lethal force.

These databases were combined and filtered to the names of victims who were Black. Researchers then used regular expressions to check for matches to any victim names in the text or hashtags of a tweet.

The predictions of the bart-large-mnli classifiers on whether tweets contained references to either the police generally, or police violence specifically, were then combined with the victim names dictionary matches. Tested against the hand-coded set of 1,000 tweets, this ensemble achieved an accuracy level of 94% and an F1 score of 0.94.

Model	Task	Performance
bart-large-mnli (with names dictionary)	Identifying mentions of police, police violence or the names of Black victims of police killings	Accuracy: 94% F1 score: 0.94

Identifying co-occurring hashtags

More than half of #BlackLivesMatter tweets include other hashtags, and these hashtags bring different issues to Twitter users' attention. To explore these themes, we first identified the 100 most frequently used hashtags other than #BlackLivesMatter in each year from 2013 to 2023. We then measured how often each pair of other hashtags is used together, using Jaccard similarity across the 10-year timespan. Then, we used network analysis and community detection methods to group hashtags that commonly appear together in tweets in our dataset. We used [Clauset et al. \(2004\)](#)'s fast greedy modularity optimization algorithm to find the community structure.

This method resulted in 47 unique clusters, and researchers from the Center assigned one of 10 informative themes to these clusters: Black Lives Matter protests; General support for Black Lives Matter; Black culture and history; Opposition to Trump (the Resistance); Democratic politicians; Celebrities; Other movements and causes; Opposition to Biden (the Red Wave); General opposition to Black Lives Matter; and Miscellaneous. For example, a tweet cluster including #BlackCommunity and #BlackExcellence hashtags is categorized under the Black culture and history category, and another cluster with the hashtag #BTS is grouped under the celebrity category.

Estimating tweet deletion rates

Data on social media platforms – including Twitter – can be fairly impermanent. Users can delete their tweets, make their account private or deactivate it, or be suspended by the platform itself. When any one of these things happen, tweets that were previously publicly available become inaccessible, and researchers can no longer retrieve them through Twitter's API. Therefore, analyses of Twitter data such as this one typically represent a snapshot of what the platform looked like at the time of data collection.

In this case, since our data collection was based in part on #BlackLivesMatter tweets monitored and collected in real time, we had a unique opportunity to not just present a snapshot of what Twitter activity around #BlackLivesMatter looked like during the data collection period of March 1-May 12, 2023, but to also estimate the share of tweets that used to be available but no longer are (for one reason or another). To estimate these tweet attrition rates, we started with the total count of tweet identifiers in Giorgi et al.'s original dataset for each month between January 2013 and December 2021. We then compared each count with the count of tweets returned by the Twitter

API for that month when we attempted to retrieve all those tweets by tweet identifier in March 2023. These monthly differences were then used to calculate overall, monthly and period-specific attrition rates.

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2023 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 127 INTERNET TOPLINE
MAY 15-21, 2023
N=5,101

THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED BELOW ARE PART OF A LARGER SURVEY CONDUCTED ON THE AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL. OTHER QUESTIONS ON THIS SURVEY HAVE BEEN HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE.

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. THE PERCENTAGES LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). ROWS/COLUMNS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. adults	5,101	+/- 1.7 percentage points
U.S. social media users	3,944	+/- 1.9 percentage points

ASK ALL:

SM9

How well do you think each of the following statements describes social media? Social media... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**⁸

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Helps give a voice to underrepresented groups					
May 15-21, 2023	16	50	25	8	1
July 13-19, 2020	18	46	24	11	1
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	17	48	25	9	1
b. Distracts people from issues that are truly important					
May 15-21, 2023	39	43	14	4	*
July 13-19, 2020	38	41	15	5	2
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	35	42	16	5	1
c. Highlights important issues that might not get a lot of attention otherwise					
May 15-21, 2023	16	51	25	8	1
July 13-19, 2020	18	48	24	9	1
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	16	48	26	9	1
d. Makes it easier to hold powerful people accountable for their actions					
May 15-21, 2023	10	36	37	16	1
July 13-19, 2020	13	38	31	17	1
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	15	42	28	14	1
e. Makes people think they are making a difference when they really aren't					
May 15-21, 2023	28	48	19	4	1
July 13-19, 2020	32	44	17	5	2
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	28	43	21	6	2

⁸ In the July 2020 survey, the question wording was slightly different, reading: "How well do you think each of the following statements describes social media? Do you think social media ...?" In May 2018, question wording was: "Now thinking specifically about some of the ways that people use social media to engage with political or social issues that are important to them ... How well do you think each of the following statements describes social media?"

ASK IF SOCIAL MEDIA USER (SNSUSE=1) [N=3,944]:

SM10 Have you done any of the following activities on social media in the past year?
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

	Have done this in <u>the past year</u>	Have <u>not</u> done this in <u>the past year</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Changed your profile picture to show your support for a cause			
May 15-21, 2023	14	86	*
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	19	80	1
b. Used hashtags related to a political or social issue			
May 15-21, 2023	12	88	*
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	15	84	1
c. Taken part in a group that shares an interest in an issue or cause			
May 15-21, 2023	34	66	*
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	36	63	1
d. Encouraged others to take action on issues that are important to you			
May 15-21, 2023	26	74	*
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	33	66	1
e. Looked for information about rallies or protests happening in your area			
May 15-21, 2023	14	86	*
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	20	80	1

ASK IF SOCIAL MEDIA USER (SNSUSE=1) [N=3,944]:

SM11 How important is social media to you personally when it comes to the following things?
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]⁹

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not very important</u>	<u>Not important at all</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Finding other people who share your views about important issues					
May 15-21, 2023	10	30	30	31	*
June 16-22, 2020	14	31	28	27	1
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	13	29	30	27	1
b. Getting involved with political or social issues that are important to you					
May 15-21, 2023	7	23	33	37	*
June 16-22, 2020	14	29	27	29	1
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	12	28	28	32	1
c. Giving you a venue to express your political opinions					
May 15-21, 2023	7	20	30	43	*
June 16-22, 2020	15	25	27	33	1
May 29-Jun 11, 2018	12	25	27	36	1

⁹ In the June 2020 and May 2018 surveys, the question wording was slightly different, reading: "How important, if at all, is social media to you personally when it comes to the following things?"

ASK ALL:

SMBLM

Have you ever... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-b TOGETHER IN BLOCK, c-d TOGETHER IN BLOCK, RANDOMIZE BLOCKS]**

	<u>Yes, I have</u>	<u>No, I have not</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Attended a Black Lives Matter protest May 15-21, 2023	7	93	*
b. ASK IF SOCIAL MEDIA USER (SNSUSE=1) [N=3,944]: Seen content on social media related to Black Lives Matter May 15-21, 2023	77	23	*
c. ASK IF SOCIAL MEDIA USER (SNSUSE=1) [N=3,944]: Posted or shared things on social media in <u>support</u> of Black Lives Matter May 15-21, 2023	24	76	*
d. ASK IF SOCIAL MEDIA USER (SNSUSE=1) [N=3,944]: Posted or shared things on social media in <u>opposition</u> to Black Lives Matter May 15-21, 2023	10	90	*

ASK ALL:

POLPROB

How much of a problem do you think police violence against Black people is in the United States today?

May 15-21, 2023

46	Major problem
34	Minor problem
18	Not a problem
1	No answer

ASK IF THINKS POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE IS A MAJOR OR MINOR PROBLEM (POLPROB=1,2) [N=4,152]:

MEDPOLEFF

How effective do you think each of the following is for bringing attention to police violence against Black people in the United States? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS; RANDOMLY DISPLAY RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5 OR 5-1]**

	<u>Extremely effective</u>	<u>Very effective</u>	<u>Somewhat effective</u>	<u>Not too effective</u>	<u>Not at all effective</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Social media May 15-21, 2023	17	26	38	13	5	1
b. News organizations May 15-21, 2023	10	22	45	16	6	1