Crowdsourcing the Reputation of Martin Luther King:

Twitter as a Place of Memory

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Abstract

This dissertation develops the idea of "crowdsourced memory." The term captures three important developments in the conceptualization, technological delivery, and analytical study of public memory. In terms of conceptualization, a crowdsourcing approach recognizes that the remembering of the past is an inherently collective and often competitive enterprise in which the public participates in the co-construction of memory and the meanings of memorial landscapes and places. A crowdsourcing approach also recognizes the growing influence of the Internet and social media as not just a means of communication, but also a system of cultural and place representation, as well as, a memory technology—a way of expressing views about the past, but also a way of recording the history of place experiences at places devoted to the past. The posting of experiences and opinions through platforms, such as, Twitter have dramatically expanded public expression and contribution to the project of remembering, interpreting, and re-interpreting the past. Finally, a crowdsourcing approach represents a new methodology that recognizes social media posts provide an important source of not only quantitative, but also meaningful qualitative data for scholars to understand how the legacy and reputation of individuals and organizations are communicated, consumed, and co-constructed by the public. This dissertation also employs qualitative geographic information sciences to examine the locational variation of the themes associated with each Tweet. This dissertation applies a crowdsource approach based on critical race theory to understand the reputational politics that surround the annual holiday dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Crowdsourced Memory

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop and apply the idea of "crowdsourced memory" to understanding the processes and politics of heritage formation through participatory practices and activities carried out on and through digital social media. The term "crowdsourcing memory" captures important advancements in the conceptualization, technological delivery, and analytical study of public memory. In terms of conceptualization, a crowdsourcing approach recognizes that the remembering of the past is an inherently collective enterprise in which a wide array of stakeholders engage in the co-construction of memory and the meanings attached to people, places, and events associated with the past or historical commemoration (Said 2000; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004; Till 2005). This is a counterpoint to traditional treatments that have tended to emphasize the production of memory by a small class of state or economic elites, often ignoring the important ways that ordinary people from a variety of social and spatial positions interpret, represent, and even resist these visions of history (Hobsbawm and Rangers 1983; Alderman 2003; Bosco 2004; Desforges and Maddern 2004).

From a technological perspective, a crowdsourcing approach also recognizes the growing influence of the Internet and social media as not only a means of communication but also as systems of cultural representation, commemorative technologies, and places of memory (Bond, Craps, & Vermeulem, 2017). Social media posts are collections of first person accounts that are based within and structured by a broader politics of place that geographers are especially equipped to develop and analyze (Alderman 2009; Muzaini and Yeoh 2015). These online expressions exist below and apart from official, sanctioned narratives while also providing a way of recording the history of vernacular experiences (Al-Ani, Ban, et al. 2012; Briggs and Feve 2013). The posting of experiences and opinions through social media platforms have

dramatically expanded the speed, volume, and interactivity of public contribution to the project of remembering the past and commenting on conventional modes and places of commemoration (Bond, Craps, & Vermeulem, 2017).

Finally, a crowdsourcing approach represents a new methodology that recognizes that social media posts provide an important source of data for scholars interested in moving beyond the physical world of traditional museums, monuments, and other material memorials to study online commemorative cultures (Hoskins 2011; Bond, Craps and Vermeulem 2017). Yet, such a perspective also recognizes that online and offline forms of heritage expression co-evolve with each other rather than being completely separate activities or spheres of life (Alderman 2009). The Internet has spatial attributes and it is not limited to a physical location (Alderman and Good 1997; Alderman 2009). The place that social media holds in contemporary life is particularly extensive and meaningful (Kraut, et al. 1998; Rheingold 1993; Warschauer 2003; Zhao and Rosson 2009). The Internet works to locate identity, serving as a place for politicizing those identities, and transforming those politicized identities into places of contest that affect the perceptions and reputations of physical space and place (Alderman 2009). Thus, online crowdsourced expressions of memory can be projections and reaffirmations of social tensions and inequalities found in physical places of commemoration and heritage while also being moments for constructing new frames of memory and challenging traditional meanings attached to people, places, and themes related to the past.

As way of empirical case study, this dissertation applies a crowdsourcing approach, supported by critical discourse and content analysis, to a large dataset of social media posts, specifically those available through Twitter—one of the more popular platforms in social media culture. A critical analysis of this platform is used to document and understand the range of

meanings attached to the commemoration of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK). In particular, I am interested in Twitter as a set of analytical moments for thinking about how the meaning of King's reputation as a historical figure is being crowdsourced, that is, defined in multiple and potentially competing ways by vernacular audiences. In other words, in what ways does social media offer a new place for exploring the politics that surround the public's interpretation and co-construction of King's legacy, memory, and identity?

In this dissertation, I seek to illustrate the capacity of posting messages on Twitter (called Tweets) in exposing and exploring the construction of Martin Luther King's reputation by lay communities. In exploring the online crowdsourcing of King's reputational legacy and those ways of commemorating him, I focus on what people are saying through their Tweets associated directly with the MLK holiday observed every January in the United States. By utilizing qualitative GIS to explore and analyze geotagged Tweets the reputational politics that surround Dr. King's legacy are being studied in a spatialized fashion. Past research on reputational politics has been aspatial, thus this aspect of my research serves as an important contribution and path forward for future research about reputational politics.

The general purpose of this dissertation is to examine and understand the online reputation of Dr. King's holiday and the spatial variation of that reputation across the United States and around The World, via geotagged Tweets. More specifically, the purpose of this dissertation is threefold: conceptual, theoretical, methodological. Conceptually, this dissertation serves to advance and employ the concept of "crowdsourced memory" to examine the processes and politics of heritage formation through individuals' online activities within and through social media. Theoretically, this dissertation presents the argument for social media platforms as geographic places. Methodologically, this dissertation provides an initial example for examining

reputational politics spatially, using a crowdsourced approach that employs mixed methods based on critical theory and qualitative GIS.

The mixed methods used for this dissertation include critical discourse and content analyses, along with qualitative location analyses. Critical discourse analysis was used for this study because it is complimentary, in that, it is suitable when answering the basic questions, 'why' and 'how,' while contributing the added value of being able to study changes in society by examining relevant discourses and the inherent power relations conveyed by text, which, speaks to the larger power dynamics that are at play. Critical content analysis was used for this research, because it is also appropriate when answering the basics questions of, 'who,' and/or 'what' while also seeking to illuminate patterns within text to identify and discuss the social, economic, and political systems that shape power dynamics. Qualitative location analysis was used for this dissertation because it provides geographically explicit visualizations of the quantity and content of the sampled Tweets, illuminating the spatial variation of reputational politics and allowing comparative analyses. Critical theory and qualitative GIS serve as fundamental bases for this research, because they support the analyses of societal power dynamics and the triangulation of the mix-methods used for this dissertation (discourse, content and location analyses), respectively.

This research is significant theoretically and methodologically. This research is theoretically significant because it makes a clear and pertinent argument that social media platforms are indeed places worthy of geographic research. This is an important advancement in the study of online geographies, as this argument has never before been made so strongly and succinctly. This research is methodologically significant because it applies a new methodological crowdsourced approach that recognizes the fact that statements made and

conversations had, on and through social media are an essential source of data for scholars interested in commemorative cultures. This methodological significance is made even more robust by the use of qualitative GIS to spatially examine reputational politics.

The basic arrangement of this dissertation is as follows: two chapters on theoretical background, one chapter on research perspectives and objectives, one chapter on methodologies, one chapter of results and discussion, and a final chapter containing conclusions and recommendations. Chapter 2 provides a complete discussion of geography, memory, and social media, explaining the significance of place and memory, as well as, the interwoven nature of social memory and social media that leads to the argument for social media being a place of memory. Chapter 3 delivers an in-depth explanation of the reputational politics approach taken by this research, a discussion on the importance of reputational politics when remembering the past and understanding present, as well as, an explanation of spatialized reputational politics. Chapter 4 describes the theoretical and methodological perspectives of my research and outlines my research objectives. Chapter 5 comprehensively describes the data and methods used for this research. Chapter 6 contains the results and necessary discussions that came from this research. Lastly, Chapter 7 states the conclusions I have come to, the lessons I have learned, and recommendations for future research.

Before I move forward explaining the and presenting the research I have done for this dissertation I will first share my positionality, my position, the position of who is being studies, and how those positions effect the ways I critically interpret my findings. I am an adult female, with white skin and blonde hair, who was raised in a nuclear family in northern Wisconsin. I became interested in the Civil Rights Movement when I attended the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire and participated in their alternative spring break trip, *The Civil Rights Pilgrimage*. I

enjoyed myself and my curiosity was peaked, so much so, that I helped lead the trip for the remaining three years of me undergraduate education. Over those four years I developed a passion for the geographical exploration of justice and equality, mainly aiming to understand why racism and inequality persists despite the enormous amount of work that has gone into eradicating them. This interest is what lead me to my research about Dr. King. The positionality of those who this research have examined are anonymous Twitter users, so they are unaware of my interest and my intentions in doing this work and in it can be assumed that it will probably remain that way. I have interpreted my results based on critical theory and critical race theory, both of which have guided me to present this positionality so that my interpretation of the power dynamics at play within my research can be more holistically understood.

Chapter 2: Geography, Memory, & Social Media

The objective of this chapter is to review geography and memory literature and introduce social media as a place of memory. It begins with a complete discussion of place and memory, which, covers social and political geographies of memory, the role of geography in remembering, geographers' conceptualization of landscapes and their analyses. It concludes with a description of how social memory and social media are entwined, the role of social media as a memory technology, building up to the argument for social media being a place of memory.

Place & Memory

Originally, the concept of memory was exclusively studied within the discipline of psychology (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). Since then, the conceptual curiosity surrounding memory has spread across a variety of social sciences, including: "anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, literary studies, communication, history, and increasingly, to geography" (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, pg. 347). Pierre Nora, a French historian, has been instrumental in geographic memory studies using the concept of 'sites of memory,' which can be both physical and/or non-material (ceremonial) sites of commemoration (Nora, 1989). 'Sites of memory' include: "geographical places, monuments and buildings, historical figures, public displays, and commemoration" (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, pg. 349). An anthropologist, Nathan Wachtel, contributed to the study of memory within geography by submitting: being affixed spatially is critical to the perpetuation of memories (Wachtel, 1986). Thus, the fact that memorial landscapes inform social memory has been well established.

Over the past few decades, geographers have built upon these early understandings of place and memory to establish the fact that memorial landscapes and social memory mutually inform and construct one other (Lowenthal 1975; Hayden 1997; Foote 2003; Till 2005). Pierre

Nora's concept of 'sites of memory,' has been crucial to the development of geography's memory studies (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). These 'sites' can be physical and/or non-material (Nora, 1989). Physical 'sites of memory' are built, such as a burial marker, place of worship, conflict monument/marker, or a place-based museum (Nora, 1989). Non-material 'sites of memory' are ceremonial, such as, public celebrations, rituals, festivals, commemorations, and more generally, public performances (Nora 1989). What is most important about Nora's concept of 'sites of memory' is the explicitly spatial nature of memory presented, constraining publicly demarcated places of memory. In 2004, Hoelscher & Alderman identified six nonexclusive central themes of memory and place in geography,

> The continually unfolding nature of memory; the importance of forgetting in every act of remembering; the pressures of the marketplace and commodification of the past; the unpredictability of group memory and its centrality in the maintenance and contestation of political identity; the fact that memory is often both particular and universal; and the inextricable link between memory and place. (pg. 348)

Considering these six themes, it is clear that geography and memory have mutually advanced our understanding of both, remembering and forgetting. I would also like to address resistance to forgetting, which I see as an emerging seventh theme. A typology of forgetting has been developed that identifies seven types of why we forget collectively and individually, they include: "repressive erasure; prescriptive forgetting; forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity; structural amnesia; forgetting as annulment; forgetting as planned obsolescence; forgetting as humiliated silence" (Connerton P., 2008, pg. 59). It is the first two types, 'repressive erasure' and 'prescriptive forgetting' that are used by "states, governments, or ruling parties," to purposely forget people or events in their entirety, in the case of 'repressive erasure,' and to purposely forget aspects of people or events in the case of 'prescriptive forgetting' that are unsettling or hurtful for a society (Connerton P., 2008, pg. 69). These two

types of forgetting highlight the role of power dynamics within a society, because what is considered unsettling or hurtful by some (governments and those in power), could be seen as a way for the future and hopeful by others (revolutionaries and the disenfranchised). Recent research on resisting forgetting focuses on the contested nature of memory. In addition to how this resistance manifests itself on physical and cyber landscapes, I think the theme of resisting forgetting has a special place within geography, because it speaks to the social and political nature of memory landscapes. While deciding who will be remembered, and who will be forgotten, speaks volumes about societal values, cultural norms, and state strategies; all of which when analyzed in a contextual manner have the power to address the state of resistance to dominate master narratives.

The act of remembering and the concept of memory are significant to the study of people and places, because they inform how and why people interact physically and socially within their surroundings. Many memories are unique to an individual, but there is also a collective form of memory, more recently referred to as social memory. Making each individual's perspective unique and subjective while at the same time collective and indicative of various social power relations and struggles. Thus, the way we remember, individually and collectively, plays a significant role in the way we interact with the world around us, how we identify ourselves as individuals within a group, and commonly, how the 'others' are recognized. For instance, there is a collective memory that circulates within contemporary U.S. pop culture, that recalls Chris Rock's MLK Street joke,

> You know what's so sad, man? Martin Luther King stood for nonviolence. Now what's Martin Luther King? A street. And I don't give a fuck where you are in America, if you on Martin Luther King Boulevard, there's some violence going down. It ain't the safest place to be. You can't call no body and tell them you lost on MLK. 'I'm lost, I'm on MLK,' 'Run, Run, Run!... Sad, Sad Sad!" (Rock, 1996).

This joke and its pervasiveness in contemporary pop culture reinforces the stereotype that streets named for Dr. King are blighted, unsafe, and violent; in spite of the fact that Chris Rock was attempting to shed light on the disappointing nature of that assumption. No matter his reasoning for telling this joke, it reminds and fortifies some people's presumed distaste for 'that' part of town, in some cases effecting how they move through their city, where they choose to live, and where they send their children to school.

The Geographies of Memory – Social & Political

In memory's most basic form it "is the process of maintaining information over time" (Matlin, 2005). Memory in a contextual form "is the means by which we draw on our past experiences in order to use this information in the present" (Sternberg, 1999). The 'nature of memory,' is becoming more apparent the more we research it. It is individual and collective; it is highly subjective, it affects daily life practices, and it plays a formative role in the loftier aspects of life: social, economic, and political. The goals associated with memory work in geography are both social and political, in nature. The 'Geography of Memory' was defined by Derek Alderman.

> A commemorative landscape that: (1) serves as a symbolic representation of a collective memory that is constructed and reconstructed through social control, conflict, and negotiation; (2) serves as a site of social struggle over the meaning of the past; (3) serves as a source of political and cultural identity for social groups (both dominant and subordinate); and (4) serves as an example of the socio-spatial dialect, i.e. where the politics of creating space structure the politics of commemorating the past. (Alderman, 1996, pg.66).

From this definition, it is clear that geographers are predominantly interested in the social (collective) form of memory. This is not to say that individual experience is disregarded, rather it is seen as a key to creating, maintaining, and resisting the collective form.

The Social Nature of Memory

Memory is inherently social in nature. Memory has been identified as a social activity that is seen as an expression of group identity that actively binds individuals (Halbwachs, 1992[1951]; Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004; Dwyer, 2000; Till, 2001). In the twentieth century, the social activity of remembering has taken on a collective form, as group identities associated with state, religion, or other large-scale collectives, seemingly because it stabilizes one's identity to be within a group (Said, 2000; Hoelscher & Alderman 2004). The geography of memory is social, because the social act of remembering combined with social production of space provides, "the context for modern identities – and the often – rigorous contestation of those identities" (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, pg. 348). Symbolic resistance is when a subordinate social group appropriates new values and presents alternative readings of commemorative landscapes institutionalized by the dominant social group (Cosgrove & Jackson, 1987). Memory is also a social process that requires negotiation that is often racialized and gendered (Dwyer, 2000). The re-naming of a street for Dr. King is an example of how memory, as a social process, can be a racialized negotiation, where a subordinate social group, Black Americans, have symbolically resisted the dominant social group, White Americans' material culture and challenged their collective memory, via street signs (Alderman, 1996).

The Political Nature of Memory

Memory is, also, inherently political in nature. The geography of memory is political, because the socioeconomic aspects of memory and the realities associated with contemporary collective memory lend themselves to examinations of, "domination and uneven access to society's political and economic resources" (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, pg. 349). The

‘politics of memory’ is the struggle over who and what will be remembered and how (Alderman, 1996; Alderman & Dwyer, 2011). To study the ‘politics of memory’ we must consider the context of the landscape, including: origin, purpose, scale, and its placement within space (Alderman, 1996). The commemorative landscape can, in these research instances, be read as cultural text that have the potential to illustrate societal struggles of power, economic, and political (Alderman & Dwyer, 2011). Social/collective memory has been employed by dominant social groups throughout history as a primary method to assert power and control over conquered populations, at every scale from local to international (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). The power of rhetoric and officially produced collective memories is immense; it can direct and redirect economic, political, and social agendas (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). Historically, this method of memory conquest has been utilized by those already in power, but this is changing as under-represented social groups are acquiring the practical knowledge necessary to politically challenge their place within the social hierarchy and the hierarchy itself (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004).

What has become more apparent about the ‘nature of memory’ due to the developing research, is more often than not, there are political struggles and negotiations over who will be remembered and how. In many instances, this struggle is between elites and marginalized social groups, but these struggles don’t just happen between that binary, they also happen at smaller local scales between equally subordinate groups. For example, the Madres de Plaza Mayo (mothers of people who ‘disappeared’ during Argentina’s Dirty War) was originally formed in 1977 as a single activist group, but in 1986 they split into two separate activist groups (Bosco, 2004). The two groups strategically place memory on the landscape in different ways, one with

the intention of peacefully uncovering the truth of their past injustice, while the other is more confrontational and calls for a 'revolutionary democracy' (Bosco, 2004).

The Role of Geography in Remembering & Forgetting

The fact, that geography has been integral to the development of the state system and the functionality of governments since their inception is well established in political geography (Brenner, et al. 2003; Agnew, Mitchell and Toal 2003). It has also been established that states and local governments often play a key role in producing and maintaining their citizens' collective memory (Till, 2005) and presumably their tourists' and visitors' collective memories of their travels. In every act of remembering, there is inevitably something that is forgotten, this is the duality of memory. The Birthplace of Martin Luther King, in Atlanta, GA is a site that captures the duality of memory (Inwood, 2009). The neighborhood surrounding Dr. King's birthplace has been developed into a national historic site that includes: the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church where he grew up, two other churches, a library, his and his wife, Coretta's final resting place, and a visitor center with a museum, shop, and educational film theater. The MLK National Historic Site has been appropriated, by the federal government to convey support for the U.S.'s current neo-liberal political, economic, and social structure, and celebrate individual freedoms and success (Inwood, 2009). By spreading this sanitized narrative of Dr. King this site ignores, and encourages visitors to disregard, the current struggles of race and racism in the U.S. because it places the struggle in the past (Inwood, 2009). This research demonstrates how social hierarchies are preserved through state sanctioned collective memories by subverting the temporality of political and social struggles.

In the post-genocide state of Cambodia, the politics of memory are at play with two officially commemorated sites of genocide and two unmarked sites (Tyner, Alvarez, & Colucci,

2012). The two unmarked sites, the Sre Lieu mass grave and the Kampong Chhnang Airfield, are unmarked, because the first marks the intense level of daily violence experienced by citizens, and the second signifies the aid China and other international actors gave to Khmer Rouge for the genocide (Tyner, Alvarez, & Colucci, 2012). Whereas, at the two marked sites, a museum created from the Khmer Rouge's security center and a mass grave turned memorial site, follow the official narratives that claim the Khmer Rouge acted alone and limit the interpretation of the true scale of the violence (Tyner, Alvarez, & Colucci, 2012). Thus, the new government in Cambodia used these two landscapes to advance a collective memory that is finite and controlled, rather than nation-wide and something to be conscious of as a possible future (Tyner, Alvarez, & Colucci, 2012). This research led by Dr. Tyner demonstrates how political power is preserved through state sanctioned collective memories by applying memorial text and material to select places.

The government and state actors are not the only ones to consider when analyzing memory. There are non-state remembrances that affect how the public collectively remembers the past and where it is placed in the landscape (Cook & van Riemsdijk, 2014). For example, in Perak, Malaysia there are non-state remembrances of the Second World War that allow space for remembering daily lived experiences and subversive narratives at a small local scale (Muzaini, 2012). These normative subversive memories are not shared at a larger scale due to social norms, fear of reprisals, and distrust of the government in representing their citizens (Muzaini, 2012). This instance shows that even if an official national narrative selectively silences certain historical perspectives, what is forgotten can be remembered in a variety of other spaces and scales. Dr. Muzaini's research demonstrates how political narratives can be subverted by individual and local preservations of past. But what about those who wish to forget and actively

do so? Muzaini, in later research, showed how victims from the same area actively forget the past to cope with the present and that for some, memories return uninvited. This illustrates how forgetting can be just as active as remembering, as well as, how emotions are strongly tied to individuals' unique and collective memory (Muzaini, 2015). The concept of rectification proves further that forgetting can also be collective. Rectification refers to a location's transition from a site of tragedy to a site of use, the tragic memories are cleaned away and no significance is attached, this is what happens to the majority of locations with a tragic past (Foote, 2003). The collective forgetting of the past is just as important to geography as collectively remembering something, because a collective forgetting speaks to commemorative processes that simply didn't or couldn't take place at that location.

The contestation of official collective memories and resistance to forget is an aspect of geographic memory work that provides deep insight into the social value of memories locally, domestically, and internationally. Israel's balance between public planning and historic preservation is an excellent example of a subordinate social group's (the Palestinian's) struggle to be remembered on a landscape controlled by a politically and economically dominant social group, the Israelis. City planning has the power to determine which parts of the landscape will be officially acknowledged and accepted as legitimate, and which parts will be condemned and rejected (Fenster, 2004). In terms of the Israeli government, the "plans to Judaize the Galilee continue" (Fenster, 2004, pg. 413). However, at a smaller local scale, Israeli citizens recognize that the commemoration of the area's past is important and work to negotiate how a space will be used for new belonging and old memories (Fenster, 2004). Thus, commemoration and resistance to forget the past at different scales can take on contradictory purposes, from nation building to community building.

Geographers' Conceptualization of Landscapes of Memory

How geographers have conceptualized landscapes of memory can be understood by examining the key metaphors and the major turns that have shaped the ways geographers think about memory. Geographers have conceptualized "memorial landscapes through three conceptual lenses that may be understood via the metaphors of 'text,' 'arena,' and 'performance'" (Dwyer & Alderman 2008, pg. 165). These three lenses are not mutually exclusive, they can be used in partnership with one another to appropriately conceptualize the holistic nature of various types of memorial landscapes. Memory geographers have contributed to our understanding of all three metaphors through major turns within the research from material to representational to emotional. The conceptualization of material memories and the metaphor of 'text' coincide with one another, in that, they both function as a base for understanding what is being officially remembered on the memorial landscape and how those memories are being materialized. The conceptualization of the representational aspects of memory and the metaphor of 'arena' coincide with one another, since they both speak to the power of identity and the contextualization of struggles that surround sites of memory. The conceptualization of memories as inherently emotional and the metaphor of 'performance' coincide with one another, in as much as, they both recognize the significance of the individual body and the value of feeling in remembering. These metaphors used for conceptualizing memorial landscapes also serve as analytical frames for the research of geography and memory and thus inform the various methodologies.

'Text' & Material

The metaphor of 'text' brings attention to the inscription of text on the landscape, emphasizing the critical reading of memorials that remember select versions of history and the

(re)inscriptions of silenced histories within space (Dwyer & Alderman 2008). The textual and material conceptualization of memory can be seen in a variety of studies that include but are not limited to: statues celebrating individual achievements (Till 1999; Leib 2002; Dwyer 2004), monuments commemorating specific events (Foote 2003; Sidaway & Mayel 2007), historical markers (Alderman 2012), and commemorative street naming (Alderman 1996, 2000, 2003; Rose-Redwood, 2008). These studies bring attention to the textual and material aspects of memory on the landscape, examining who and what are officially remembered. The critical examination of text in studies, such as these, are necessary because it is the inscribed words and ideas that define the parameters of what is being officially remembered. The examination of the material used to commemorate is also equally significant, because it speaks to the place and scale of memory within the larger landscape. The conceptualization of 'text' and the turn to material analysis build on one another to inform the struggles over who and what is remembered.

'Arena' & Representational

The metaphor of the 'arena' extends the conceptualization of memorials to frame them as spaces in which groups can actively dispute contested histories and their meanings as part of larger identity defining debates, focusing our conceptualization on the process of commemoration, itself (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008). Street naming and renaming has been a prosperous sub-field of exploration into and analysis of geographically contested landscapes of memory, 'arenas'(Alderman, 2002). Street names tie specific memories to locational indicators, and this explicitly, and sometimes controversially, displays meaning on the political landscape (Azaryahu, 1996). Memorials, both give meaning to and take meaning from the landscape in which they are placed (Alderman & Dwyer, 2004). Where a memorial is placed, for what reason, and by who, speaks volumes to the political environment locally, regionally, and nationally

(Alderman, 2003; Alderman & Dwyer, 2004). Place names have the capacity to perform as 'cultural arenas' where social groups dispute, discuss, and negotiate for the privilege to affect the landscape (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahi, 2010). Naming and renaming streets for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has been shown as a cultural arena by which Black Americans and activist struggle to claim political spaces on local landscape for memory (Alderman, 2000, 2002). These studies of street names inform the representational turn in studies of memorial landscapes, because they focus on collective action and the power of scale, which representationally speak to the feelings associated with remembering and the identity defining aspects of space and place. The representational turn in memorial landscape studies can also be seen in the conceptualization of 'commemorative atmospheres', thus highlighting the fact that the feelings associated with remembering are akin to the feelings associated with belonging (Sumartojo, 2016). The memorial site, itself, the events that have happened to create it, the gatherings that happen at it, along with the culmination of identity forming experiences all tie together to define a 'commemorative atmosphere'(Sumartojo, 2016). It becomes a place that represents the power of certain identities and subsequently the lack of power associated with other identities (Sumartojo, 2016). The conceptualization of 'arena' and the turn to representational analysis build on one another to inform the struggles over who and what will be remembered as significant and the role that power plays in that representational process.

'Performance' & Emotion

The metaphor of 'performance' highlights individuals' bodies as sites of memory, by emphasizing the fact that ritual, ceremony, and protest enacted by social groups and individuals construct and attribute meaning to memorials (Dwyer & Alderman 2008). Daily life performances can reveal cultural values and norms, but it is also the communal performances,

such as: public ceremonies, festivals, rituals, and other pageantry that help embed collective memories, because where any public performance is given matters to questions associated with centrality of political and/or economic power (Connerton, 1989). The performance of black women as Southern Belles at Civil War reenactments is prime example of individual bodies coming together to collectively remember multiple and competing aspects of history that challenge ideas of race, gender, and class (Davis 2012). Black Southern Belles are not a typical image or idea that comes to mind when people remember the Civil War era, their historical existence brought to light by contemporary portrayals expose a site of resistance to hegemonic narratives of the that era, and the nostalgia associated with southern whiteness (Davis 2012). These performances are emotional acts that encourage inclusive feelings of belonging and individualistic understandings of identity, resisting the conflation of unique identities (the enslaved, the freed people of color, the black male, and the black female) into a single hegemonic identity (slave) through performance (Davis 2012).

Sites of official memory, such as, monuments or memorials, typically endorse and substantiate collective societal memories, but at the same time they invite unique interpretation from individual visitors (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, pg. 349-350). Museums are actively producing and circulating memory (Desforges & Maddern, 2004). When analyzing the evolution of museums and their activities it is essential to consider all stakeholders because there is never a single narrative (Desforges & Maddern, 2004). The evolution of museums illustrates strategies for remembrance that institutions and individual stakeholders use to maneuver around one another, in order to share their versions of the past (Desforges & Maddern, 2004), illustrating clearly, that unique memories and collective memories exist together. In some cases, reinforcing the collective, and in others, challenging it. Plantation museums host multiple examples of how

performance constructs the meanings and feelings associated with remembering; from the tour guides' performances as an interpretive force that changes day-to-day and tour-by-tour (Potter 2016) to the tourists themselves engaging with the narratives by moving through the plantation landscape, asking questions, and handling material artifacts (Alderman & Campbell, 2008). The tour guides at plantations are the interpreters of that history and they present different narratives based on their own personal biases, the racial make of the tour groups, and how they feel that day; their decisions about how to convey specific aspects of history take 'emotional labor' in that it takes thought and energy to share a story and place themselves within that story (Potter, 2016). The plantation tourists are actively participating in the performance of history by engaging with the tour guide, the landscape, and the artifacts; the tourists' individual emotions tie them to certain aspects of the plantation's narrative and thus help to construct and shape the significance of various aspects of that history (Alderman & Campbell, 2008). The conceptualization of 'performance' and the turn to emotionally aware analysis build on one another to inform the bodily struggles over who and what will be remembered as politically significant and emotionally meaningful.

Geographers' Analyses of Landscapes of Memory

There exists a methodological challenge when analyzing memory and landscape, "if memory and landscape are socio-spatial processes to explore and chart – as opposed to things readily dissected and possessed – how are we to make sense of their potent yet ambiguous intermixture" (Dwyer & Alderman 2008, pg. 165). The methodological approaches to the analyses of memorial landscapes within geography have used methods such as: text analysis (Alderman & Modlin, 2008; Alderman 2012), content analysis (Alderman, Butler, Hanna, 2015), participant observation (Alderman, Butler, Hanna, 2015), archival analysis (DeLyser 2004,

2014), interviews (Alderman, Butler, Hanna, 2015), discourse analysis (Dwyer 2004) and many more. The analysis of memorial landscapes has evolved over time from using basic qualitative methods to utilizing mixed methods; this evolution can be seen clearly in the study of place-names. Traditionally, place-name studies have analyzed maps and gazetteers using content and analysis to further their understanding of toponymic practices, this was problematic because toponyms are more than text, they are also performative (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010). A mix-methods approach is now recommended, one that utilizes ethnographic methods, archival research, participant observation and interviews because it provides a more holistic frame for understanding toponymic practices (Myers, 1996). For example, Hoelscher used a mix of ethnographic field notes and archrival materials to study the relationship between race and place in Natchez, Mississippi (2003). Thus, in order to see the memorial landscape as a process, rather than an unambiguous thing, mixed methods and contextualized analysis are necessary to continue building and advancing this avenue of research.

Social Memory & Social Media

Social memory and landscapes of memory are integral to the geographies of race, inequality, and social justice, because together they constitute and display the status of social, economic, and political power, as well as, contain clues to the historical and future fluctuations of that power. The collective and social aspects of space and memory work together culturally to host the framework within which competing identities are negotiated and determined (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, pg. 348). Landscapes of memory are seen as both products of power and tools to create and maintain authority for the struggle over, “whose version of ‘reality’ will appear to matter socially” (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010). What is remembered and what is forgotten, individually, and more so collectively, have everything to do with the

ways in which contemporary society conceptualize and actualize justice (Bakiner 2015; Ghoshal 2015; Misztal 2005; Rigney 2012). The study of memory in geography is intricate to understanding how spaces and places are presented, negotiated, and manipulated by a variety of stakeholders (Winter, 2006). The significance of memory work can be extended all the way up to national identity and states' place in the world, an identity, that is formed out of social memory on national scales (Said, 2000, pg. 179). Those in power today, the classes at the top of our social hierarchy have shaped social memory in order to get there and stay there (Hobsbawm & Rangers, 1983). Hence, if memory work is to foster a more equitable and just society, paying attention to social memory and landscapes of memory is necessary.

Memory Technology

The expansion of social media as a memory technology has complicated the analysis of social memory and places of memory in three key ways: framing social media as a place of memory, democratization vs. colonization of social memory via access to advancements in technology, and an increased complexity in regard to the temporality of memory. Framing social media as a place of memory complicates the analyses of social memory and place of memory, considering it expands the notion of place to include digital locations; arguing that all aspects of place, when modernized, can be seen within digital landscapes and those places matter greatly to the contemporary forms of social memory. Access to new technologies that advance mobility and increase access to the Internet serve to complicate analyses of social memory. In view of the fact that, it requires considerations of the digital divide and further reflection on the power of the Internet to dually democratize social memory while at the same time serving to re-colonize social memory. The temporality of memory has always complicated notions of social memory,

however, when we frame social media platforms as places of memory the temporality of memory demands further consideration due to the indexed/searchable nature of the Internet.

The technological practices we utilize to record and talk about the past have a noteworthy influence over our personal and collective memory (Van House and Churchill, 2008). The digital age of communication and instant imagery has made it the easiest way for many Americans to share ideas, photos, and videos (documenting their previously, private experiences) through email, blogs, and social media platforms dedicated to sharing experiences and ideas, both publicly and privately (Van House and Churchill, 2008). There does exist a social divide that characterizes access to and participation in social media and Internet-based communication and culture. This has been explored in past research concerning the *digital divide*, a term that describes the varying levels of access different social groups have to information and communication technologies (Norris 2001; Selwyn 2004). This divide informs concerns about how social media as a place of memory, does not simply reflect inequalities in the physical word, but can serve to advance and deepen them. Van House and Churchill's investigation into how the characteristics of digital memory technologies affect personal and collective memory concluded with a warning about the possible colonization of memory; referring to the idea that vernacular knowledge, under-represented populations, and counter-cultural viewpoints that go un-digitized will not have the privilege of being remembered (Van House and Churchill, 2008). An example of the colonization of memory within Cyberspace can be seen when considering African Americans who in the late 1990s and early 2000s experienced a, "reconcentration [rather than a redistribution] of power along class and racial lines" (Beckles 2001, 311). Cyberspace is more than, "an extension or mirror of politics in the physical, offline world, but also a medium for redefining (and even intensifying) lines of social struggle" (Alderman 2009, 267). Though

cyberspace has the power and potential to colonize memory and disregard underrepresented/minority stories and struggles or reframe them to sanitize or alter their message; this same power and potential can be used by individuals and groups to democratize communication and information, with increased access and accessibility, counter-narratives can prove to be formidable competition for the colonization of memory.

While there is certainly privilege associated with technological training and access to many types of social media platforms, I submit that with the rapidly evolving smartphone industry (seamlessly linking image capture technologies with Internet access for sharing) the making, sharing, and archiving of digital memory has become more affordable and thus increased the availability of this technology to under-represented populations, and those with alternative points of view. With the increasing availability of collaborative technologies (though somewhat limited to developed/privileged areas), it is possible to capture vernacular knowledge and further understand the contemporary online, oral and visual traditions by examining and analyzing these collective places of memory. Silberman and Purser (2012, pg. 13) go as far to suggest that digital technologies can potentially be used by a community to reflexively identify and construct a more fluid, "people-centered cultural heritage." While social media use varies by age, income, race/ethnicity, and location, which, must be addressed in every study that utilizes social media data, the technology provides a fertile area for socially and geographically expansive understandings of memory and heritage expression that is not possible when researchers rely upon official commemorative expressions or talking with the public at conventional, physical sites of commemoration. Essentially, social media, as a place of memory, can be used in analyses of social memory even though it is complicated by the access or lack thereof people have to new and improved technologies.

Individuals across the United States are actively pursuing the past and making it part of their everyday lives (Rosenzweig and Thelen, 1998). Individuals choose to engage and construct a relationship with their past in a variety of different ways. The history hobbyists among us will go so far as to search out and examine historical documents and artifacts/antiques; however, many more Americans participate in the past by visiting museums and viewing historical documentaries (Rosenzweig and Thelen, 1998). The most common way for Americans to engage with their past is by sharing and looking through old family photo albums, as well as, by taking photos or videos themselves to construct their past and preserve their memories (Rosenzweig and Thelen, 1998). Americans' need to memorialize their past is a social reaction to change, sparked by economic and political angst (Lowenthal, 1996). Doss (2010) would encourage us to recognize that our ongoing "memorial mania," which has been seen across social media, as well as, the physical landscape, is part of a movement among the public to use commemoration to make citizen claims on the past, the right to remember, and as a need for expressing intense public feeling and opinion.

The demand to preserve the past is also made more urgent by the speed at which change is occurring today (Lowenthal, 1996). The increasing curiosity and dependence on social (collective) forms of memory (and in some cases collective disillusionment) did not spark until the late nineteenth century, due to unfathomable change, increasingly normalized diaspora of societies, and the crumbling building blocks of community (Said, 2000). The advanced speed of change can be largely attributed to advances in technology and increased mobility (Lowenthal, 1996). Advances in Internet and social media technology have certainly increased the number of individuals who create digital messages, images and videos, together with, the increasing volume for storage and speed of sharing memorialization (Van House and Churchill, 2008). It has been

shown that how individuals and groups communicate via social media and the platforms they use are in many ways indicative of how they create spaces and places to memorialize their experiences and remember others (Kelly, 2014). With mass individual-access to constantly advancing online sharing platforms and camera technologies, such as Twitter and YouTube, there are many individuals using short messages, images, and home-made videos as a tool for advocating for change. These online videos work to archive activism, host sites of commemoration, and serve as visual evidence that individuals and groups use camera technologies and social media platforms together as tools for change (Askanius, 2012).

The collective nature of social memory and the social production of space have worked to challenge geographers' classical understanding of the interplay between space and time (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, pg. 348). One of the biggest challenges associated with studying the geography of memory is that it is temporally unique in three veins, when it is constructed, how it is maintained, and how it is interpreted based on an individual's age and generation (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). Given the facts that the technological practices we utilize to record the past have a noteworthy influence over our personal and collective memory (Van House and Churchill, 2008) and that social memory is temporally unique based on its construction, maintenance, and interpretation (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). It is clear that social media as a place of memory complicates how social memory within social media can be understood temporally. Fundamentally, the use of social media technology to construct and maintain memories, as they can be indexed and searched at will, affects the temporality of interpretation, because fractured memories can be recalled, in their original entirety, instantly, allowing access to a greater quantity of detailed memories that increases their agency in applying meaning to the past.

Social Media as Place of Memory

Social media as a place of memory, means that social media platforms function as places in which individuals, groups, and institutions can come together to engage with and co-construct memories; provide insight into competing narratives over political legacies; and generally, communicate about the past and passing-present. Places of memory have traditionally been limited to museums, monuments, street names, and physical material spaces that, "function as nodes of collective politics at and through which notions of identity (such as race, class, gender, and the nation) are preformed and contested" (Till 2003, 297). Social media platforms can be seen as places, since they meet a modernized definition of John Agnew's three aspects of place. Agnew (1987) argued that there are three aspects that make a place: 1) a locale – a setting for social interaction, 2) a location – a geographically defined space, 3) a sense of place – the attachment, dependence, and identity people have for a specific place. I argue that social media platforms demonstrate all three aspects of space. Social media platforms have a locale, as they are settings for social interaction (in which collective memories can be constituted). Social media platforms have a location, as they have domain names, which Alderman (2009) argued were equivalent to place names because they function in much the same ways, identifying, directing, and structuring patterns of movement and communication. Adams (1998) went as far to assert that cyberspace is made up of "virtual places" that are defined by varied flows of communication that open or close opportunities for social interaction, much like physical places. Social media platforms also have a sense of place, as they incorporate domain-based concepts of attachment, dependence and identity; all of which can be demonstrated by examining an average internet user, from deciding which platform to create a profile on (attachment), to visiting the platform to get information, share ideas, or exchange messages (dependence), and of course by deciding

what to post and how to represent themselves to the public (identity). Shelley (2003, pg. 606) in response to Agnew's *aspects of place* argued that considering globalization and ever-advancing social technologies of what *place* is must be reconsidered; people are communicating with people who are not accessible spatially, via the web, so peoples' sense of place is "less directly dependent on location than has been the case traditionally." I submit that the place of memory within cyberspace is, not only the social media platforms themselves, but the connectivity between the users who contribute to the formation of our contemporary collective memory. This emphasis on the place-defining interaction between social media users is especially relevant to ongoing (re)theorizations of memory, which as of late, have focused on the mobility, transnationalism, and connectivity of memory and memorial expression (Bond, Craps, & Vermeulem, 2017). The argument that social media platforms serve as places of memory does not detract from the power of physical landscapes of memory, but advances arguments about that power to include new and developing cyber landscapes. Primarily, social media, as a place of memory, complicates our understanding of places of memory, whereas it expands the concept of place to locations that are not geographically definable on physical landscape and opens memory studies up to a plethora of new genres of social memory.

Twitter is a unique place of memory, different from Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc. Each social media platform should be seen as its own genre of social memory. Social memory or collective memory has many genres in the physical world such as museums, location/event markers, street names, etc. Thus, Twitter as a place of memory occupies its own genre of social memory that has inherent limitations and natural strengths. Twitters limitations as a genre of social memory include but are not limited to: character limitations that limit expression, functionality as echo chamber, that perpetuates confined communities that are insulated by who

they ‘follow,’ difficulty of acquiring and gathering followers as an average user means messages are going out to the same people, and the use of internet jargon makes it difficult for new and/or older users to understand what is being said. Twitter strengths as a genre of social memory include but are not limited to: ability for anyone with an internet connection to communicate with other people, share freely what is on their mind, unstructured narratives that can encourage free thought, and it speed of sharing allows for news and ideas to spread quickly. Twitter can be insularly but it can also be a platform for great exploration, as a genre of social memory it can encourage the building of shared narratives that can be seen as anecdotal commemorative storytelling, while at the same time allowing some users to overshadow and colonize certain narratives and stories based on their celebrity and number of followers.

Thus, places of memory, such as, a geotagged Tweet, image, or video, represent narratives, in which individuals document their interaction with the landscape and share it online. With the possibility that there may be more than one Tweet, image, or video of the same place, geographically overlapping social media can be seen as participating in symbolic accretion, by adding layers of meaning and memory to a specific place at a specific time (Dwyer, 2004). Georeferenced Tweets that reference or comment on Martin Luther King or the holiday named for him capture specific messages produced in a defined location, which can speak to the pervasiveness of MLK’s legacy and provide valuable qualitative insight into how individuals are interpreting and mutually defining said legacy. An interactive message sharing platform such as Twitter, makes the messages into more than just static statements, offering agency and insight regarding the online representation and reputation of the holiday in honor of MLK. It has been shown that war memorials, posted as videos to YouTube, provide a democratized environment for remembering and discussing competing political narratives (Knudsen & Stage, 2012). The

platform of Twitter allows individual users extensive agency, in terms of what they view, what they upload, and how they interact with other users in the interactive signifiers such as: replies, likes, and retweet counts. Collectively, these messages (Tweets) convey general and specific ideas and in some cases images that dominate the online reputation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., this content will, in turn, expose the extent to which the Tweets themselves reproduce or challenge the competing narratives associated with Dr. King.

Chapter 3: Reputational Politics & Remembering Dr. King

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an in-depth explanation of the reputational politics approach taken by this research. Within this chapter, Dr. King's contested legacy is discussed by employing reputational politics to highlight the importance of how remembering the past effects how society understands the present and looks to the future. Remembering the Civil Rights Movement as a whole is also discussed, because Dr. King did not stand alone in his quest for racial equality and economic equity. The goal of this chapter is to justify and explain the value of spatializing reputational politics.

A Reputational Politics Approach

The term 'reputational politics' when applied to social memory acknowledges key advancements in the conceptualization and analytical study of social memory. In terms of conceptualization, "'reputational politics' is an approach that focuses on the socially constructed and contested nature of commemorating historical figures and the discursive rivalries that underlie the memorialization of these figures" (Alderman 2002, 100). Reputations of historical figures, in contemporary society, are often framed to serve a political purpose, how they are remembered and for what purpose are defined and redefined by those who invoke their names and legacies (Alderman 2002). These invocations of historical figures do not all follow a singular, master narrative, rather they often branch out into multitudes of narratives that disagree and compete with one another for recognition and respect. Sociologist Gary Fine (1996) referred to 'reputational politics' as "the struggle to define an individual's memorial legacy" (Alderman, 2002, pg. 103). By interpreting and shaping the legacy of certain historical figures, social groups participating in the memorial process can shape the moral context of historical events (Fine, 1999) and presumably current events, as they relate to the past. Thus, conceptually, a

‘reputational politics’ approach to social memory research acknowledges that how historical figures are remembered informs how we socially construct and understand the past and that those understandings are often sites of contestation.

From an analytical perspective, a ‘reputational politics’ approach to social memory recognizes that there are methodological challenges to remembering key historical figures, which coincide with the methodological challenges of analyzing memory and landscape, “if memory and landscape are socio-spatial processes to explore and chart – as opposed to things readily dissected and possessed – how are we to make sense of their potent yet ambiguous intermixture” (Dwyer & Alderman 2008, pg. 165). Thus, analytically, a ‘reputational politics’ approach to social memory research recognizes that methodologically, to understand how historical figures are remembered, creativity, reflexivity, and deeply interpretive practices must be utilized.

Memory is a social activity that binds together communities and expresses collective, as well as, individual identity (Till, 2001). Collective memories are tools to constitute, or in some cases misinform, individuals’ proclaimed identities (Said 2000). “If geographies of memory circulate both in material form and through the bodily repetition of performance and cultural display, they are frequently called upon to support the specific kind of conquest and domination associated with colonialism” (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, pg. 350). In pursuit of power, colonialism invents and constructs spaces within the landscape that promote the colonizers’ ‘imaginative geographies’ of geographically explicit conquests while ignoring locally-lived and historical realities (Said 1978 & 2000). Said, uses the construct of the Orient in Western culture to demonstrate how colonialism ignores indigenous truths, to achieve colonial goals of their ‘imagined geography’ of a future (Said 1978 & 2000). Whether state actors, or large social groups create collective memories, they are the formative basis for how people assert and

articulate their identity as citizens of a state, and thus their place in the world (Said 2000). An example of a struggle over collective memories, identity, and 'reputational politics' is that of Richmond, Virginia's Monument Avenue with its various well-known Confederate monuments; it became a site to contest a racialized public landscape (Leib, 2002). When a proposal came to the Richmond council to build a statue of Arthur Ashe, a deceased African American tennis star, civil rights activist, and native of the city, a debate arose over where it would be placed (Leib 2002). Many residents did not want to 'integrate' Monument Avenue; the debate was less about the placement of this statue and more about preserving the political and racial hierarchy associated with the local identity of what it meant to be white (Leib, 2002). The political identity of the town and its white citizens was the underlying key contestation, in integrating Monument Avenue. This symbolic political and racial landscape was so intricate to collective local identity, that one council women shamed a debating crowd for turning out in such high numbers and with enthusiasm for a monument, when few show up to debate safety and infrastructure issues (Leib, 2002) showing the deep emotional nature of this particular memorial's placement as a racial 'arena' for racial identity within the cityscape. The conceptualization of the representational aspects of memory and the metaphor of 'arena' coincide with one another, in that, they both speak to the power of identity and the contextualization of struggles that surround sites of memory (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008).

The social memory work associated with remembering an individual historical figure using a 'reputational politics' approach requires the researcher to examine three unique socio-spatial processes that work to constitute one 'arena'. First being, the historical figures' life and major events as they took place; then the remembering of that life by other individuals and groups; and lastly, the ways in which that person's life and legacy are memorialized on various

landscapes. The ‘arena’ metaphor emphasizes sites of contestation and manifestations of those contests on the landscape, which provoke researchers to ask new questions that explore the processes and relationships that underlie those sites of contestation (Dwyer & Alderman 2008). Dwyer and Alderman (2008, pg. 173) have developed analytical questions that can work to further our understanding of those underlying relationships and processes, what follows are the questions that speak directly to the ‘reputational politics’ approach I’ve described above.

> 2. To what extent does a memorial silence certain accounts of the past while giving voice to others? What does the differential treatment of histories indicate about power relations and patterns of inequality within society? In what manner do commemorative silences perpetuate these unequal power relations into the future?
>
> 3. Who claims responsibility for this memorial? Were they the winners or losers of the conflict in question? Was it designed to commemorate loss or achievement? In light of the memorial’s core themes, what did they want their audience to remember? Is there anything they apparently wish to forget?
>
> 5. From what source(s) does this memorial’s authority issue? How did its authors seek to persuade the audience that their account of the past remains credible? What about this site is designed to persuade?
>
> 6. To whom did the memorial’s designers direct their message? Does the memorial’s orientation relative to the city provide any clues? Does the memorial issue a summons to the city’s power brokers, or does it celebrate their efforts? Does it offer inspiration to the poor and downtrodden, or ignore them? Does it look beyond the city altogether, perhaps toward the country or humanity as a whole? Does it claim international importance? Or, is the memorial’s reputation wholly local?
>
> 8. Similarly, was this memorial designed to issue definitive answers or raise questions? Is this memorial the beginning or end of a struggle? What kind of ‘ending’ have the designers given this memorial? What, if anything, is left unfinished?

The questions above can be applied to further our understanding of the ‘arenas’ that surround Dr. King’s legacy using a ‘reputational politics’ approach to social memory. The answers would most likely change based on which memorializations one is investigating, but when conceptualized together, has the power to speak loudly about how the reputation of Dr. King has been used by numerous stakeholders to advance unique political agendas at every scale, from hyper-local to worldwide. The caveat that should not be easily forgotten is, what is

commemorated is not the same as what happened (Dwyer & Alderman 2008). That is the reason why it is so important for anyone using this approach to have a solid and complete understanding of historical facts and background knowledge of the years associated with their chosen historical figure(s), because without the previous knowledge it would be difficult to find the nuances within others' interpretations and portrayals.

Remembering King

Foundational to my approach is a recognition that King's legacy is anything but set and/or universally embraced, but is instead met with opposition and co-option along with widespread support. These larger reputational forces do not occur on the head of a pin, but are intimately tied to a broader place politics. A growing number of scholars have called on us to analyze the role of space and place in the narrating of memory, in general and in the context of civil rights heritage (Ryan, Foote and Azaryahu 2016; Dwyer and Alderman 2008; Johnson 1995). Although the Civil Rights Movement was a wide-ranging freedom struggle characterized by a variety of leaders and workers, ideologies, and campaigns of resistance, MLK is the most popular and well recognized symbol in the history of Black America. King's memory is especially relevant to a study of the multiple and competing meanings that civil rights heritage can convey to people.

Until the past few decades, the USA memorial establishment had paid limited attention to the identities and historical contributions of African Americans and their struggles for racial equality. Moreover, the Civil Rights Movement has just begun to receive mainstream interest among the wider American public, sparking as of late a growing array of museums, monuments, historic trails, festivals and reenactments, and educational programs and curriculum, not to mention, a national holiday. Yet, the remembering of King and the Movement remains

controversial, and this politics of memory speaks to some of the unreconciled tensions that America faces in coming to terms with its history of white supremacy and black resistance. The development of civil rights heritage, while ostensibly about celebrating a history of social revolution and change in the name of anti-racism and justice, represents a field of continuing struggle between and among white and black Americans (Baker 1994; Bruyneel 2014). Members of the public hold competing views on how best to remember King and which aspects of his words, teachings, and ideas to emphasize over others (Inwood 2009; Dagbovie 2010; Caliendo 2011).

Some have been critical of how public schools, national monuments, and the media have tended to represent Dr. King in sanitized ways that fail to capture the radical nature of his political views and his vision for the Movement (Alridge 2006; Alderman and Dwyer 2009; West 2016). Others have suggested that while King's commemoration is receiving broad attention nationally, the ways, in which, he is honored does not do full justice to his importance (Turner 1996; Bostdorff and Goldzwig 2005). In the words of sociologist Gary Fine (1996), a "reputational politics" surrounds how King's legacy will be evoked and employed not only in remembering him as a specific African American historical figure, but also in defining a wider social and political agenda that his memory inspires (Alderman 2002). I argue that the 'reputational politics' of remembering King is not limited to the struggles that surround his personhood, but also extends out to the different and perhaps conflicting reputational assessments and views of the major ways he is memorialized institutionally through the marking of time and physical, material space. The MLK holiday is one of the most prominent ways that the civil rights leader is publicly honored and remembered, although these memorial practices began and remain embroiled in debate and contestation (Bostdorff and Goldzwig 2005;

Alderman 2003). These struggles speak to the still unresolved place that race and discussions of racism and racial resistance have in American memory, discourse, and social action.

A Contested Legacy

The reputational politics that surround the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are becoming somewhat mainstream, considering the recent attacks on civil rights brought on by Trump's Presidency. One of the more popular political Podcast commentators, whose leanings are strongly progressive and liberal, discussed MLK's reputational politics, "It's worth saying on Martin Luther King Day, that Martin Luther King and people in the Civil Rights Movement were not seen as legitimate, they were seen as radicals, they were criticized, they were called trouble makers, I saw somewhere today that Strom Thurman after King was assassinated called him an outside agitator bent on stirring things up… think right now we look back on Martin Luther King Day and think it must have been so popular and embraced to be in the Civil Rights Movement, you know because history becomes whitewashed about that, but in reality it was extraordinarily hard to be part of those protests because you were seen as anti-American and outside the mainstream" (Favreau, Pfeiffer, Lovett, & Vietor, 2017). The commentator went even further to discuss the contradictions and competing narratives that some United States politicians made on MLK Day, "I see those Republican members of Congress who endorse Donald Trump, Tweeting how much we have to honor Martin Luther King, supporting Donald Trump you might as well be Tweeting that while peeing on Martin Luther King statue. Give me a break, give me a break, today we celebrate the virtues of Martin Luther King, which, is why I endorse Donald Trump and am tearing this country down to back a racist so he can cut marginal tax rates from my wealthy buddies…YOU GOONS! (Favreau, Pfeiffer, Lovett, & Vietor, 2017)" This podcast has been at the top of the iTunes chart since Trump's inauguration, and though podcasts are not the

most popular form of media, their popularity within this realm of media is telling of the type of dissatisfaction the majority of Americans are experiencing with recent politics. These quotes also illuminate the fact that Twitter is a main form of communication within politics today.

As the previous podcast commentary suggests, commemorative references to King are efforts to define and control his reputation and legacy, which remain unsettled and contested even though the civil rights leader has risen to the status of a national icon. Celebrated by the federal government since 1984, the King holiday, itself, is a product of a campaign strongly resisted for several years by a conservative white establishment, and to this day it is not universally embraced. The dedication of a federal holiday to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., has contested meanings. On November 2nd, 1983, then President Ronald Reagan reluctantly established the national holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and then subsequently framed him as a civil rights leader who supported color-blind conservatism (West, 2016). This sanitization and de-radicalization of King's legacy helped to frame civil rights as an issue of the past and encouraged the public to forget King's more radical political and socioeconomic ideologies (West, 2016). It has been asserted that those who attempt to frame Dr. King's legacy as one that supports colorblindness are overgeneralizing, twisting, and/or excluding King's color-aware consciousness and activism (Turner, 1996). This has happened within the black community, as well as, across the wider society. Those who frame Dr. King's legacy as one of colorblindness are actively forgetting his support for: affirmative action, black business interests, income equality, and validation of the Black Power Movement (Turner, 1996). *Ebony Magazine*, in the 1980s, was the most popular magazine for black Americans. While much of the magazine supported the homogenization of King's legacy, articles written by the senior editor, Lerone Bennett Jr. and a few others situated MLK within a 'radical living history' that encouraged

readers to not forget his more radical ideologies and to continue fighting for true equality (racial and economic) (West, 2016). It has been further asserted that President Reagan's color-blind appropriation of King's legacy was politically motivated; by Reagan honoring the slain civil rights leader, he framed it as an issue of the past and used that to influence the present and future by discouraging federal civil rights laws and social welfare programs that would continue to address social inequality and racial disparities (Bostdorff & Goldzwig, 2005). This deracialized view of Dr. King as a colorblind advocate can be found in American history textbooks. This master narrative taught to children is overgeneralized, uncontentious, and conceals King's desire for radical political and economic reform (Alridge, 2006). The homogenized and sanitized nature of the MLK master narrative in students' textbooks encourages the continuation of a sanitized reputational legacy into future generations, making it more difficult for those same students to conceptualize the civil rights realities of their present (Alridge, 2006).

By illustrating the contested legacy of Dr. King, via the MLK Holiday and textbooks portrayals, two key contestations are illuminated: radical racial and socioeconomic justice vs. colorblind conservative and a historical Civil Rights Movement vs. a continuing Civil Rights Movement. Though, the choice to evoke master narratives that de-radicalize King and place his work in history, have sanitized his legacy for the general public, they, at the same time, invite those who truly understand King's legacy to rebuff these ideas with counter-narratives more publicly than they would otherwise. These public assertions of counter-narrative that serve to re-radicalize King's legacy encourage those who hear the counter-narratives to think more broadly about what else they think they know about history as it has been fed to them by those in power, generating a larger 'arena' with more players, allowing the contestations to grow, and subsequently bring more and more truth to the surface of our memorial landscape. Essentially,

subverting King's legacy to such an extent has worked as a doubled-edged sword, convincing the masses and calling to arms the activists.

Reputational Arenas

The 'arenas' associated with remembering King move beyond the framing of his legacy in a national holiday and students' textbooks to the physical landscape via memorial, museums, and the naming of public buildings, parks, and in particular streets. An area's practices for public naming can be telling of an area's value of heritage, when consideration is given to a name's historical significance and purpose (Dwyer and Alderman 2008). The meaning behind signs and symbols, the practices of different governments, and varying forms of justice and resistance are all included in the critical studies of place names (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010). Place names, street names, and building names all work together, individually and collectively, on maps to form and displace a 'city text' that are written and rewritten over the prolonged history of a place (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010). The choices associated with writing a 'city text' is typically performed by officials and sanctioned committees, and their decisions display approved versions of the past along with a trajectory for the future based on their social and political priorities (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010). 'Toponymic resistance', a subsidiary of symbolic resistance, can be applied to place naming because those naming processes serve as channels for introducing alternative cultural identities and narratives, that contest dominant ideologies (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010). 'Toponymic resistance' is the struggle to be, "remembered publicly and officially" and is typically performed through everyday practices (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010, pg. 463). Public naming, when analyzed, has the power to unveil an area's history of political privilege and economic power, by looking to what is quite literally written on

the landscape and who has the power to write these geographies (Dwyer and Alderman 2008). Street names, in particular, have the potential to reach a relatively large audience due to their passive and practical nature (Azaryahu 1996). Street names are consciously and unconsciously stored into memory; their historic significance and future relevance are reinforced with each passing car (Azaryahu 1996).

Streets named for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are memorial arenas, in which, reputational politics are at play, actively interpreting the past and its value to the present; ultimately defining historical reputations (Alderman, 2000, 2002). Streets named for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are usually the product of community activism, aimed at reclaiming political space in the landscape and in the publics', collective memory (Alderman 2003; Alderman and Inwood 2013). Streets named for Dr. MLK are also used to honor and share his legacy of social justice. By placing his memory in state sanctioned landscapes, it is suggested that, his work for racial and economic equality is historically significant and relevant for everyone's future, and is ideally internalized by all who pass by, however, this is rare (Alderman 2002). Places, such as, Danville, Virginia, have experienced political struggles over where memories are placed within their landscape; the local government denied local activists the ability to rename a major roadway for Dr. King and rather named a bridge for him (Alderman & Dwyer 2004). The placement of Dr. King's name in Danville shows that the scale and location matter; a bridge is finite and rarely recognized by name, whereas a major street is used and referred to daily, and thus conveys a higher level of importance and prestige (Alderman & Dwyer 2004). Though memorials and monuments to Black American heritage are appearing more frequently on the landscape, their placement typically resides in segregated and underprivileged communities (Alderman & Dwyer 2004). In Eatonton, Georgia, an intra-racial contest took place over the placement and scale of a street

named for Dr. King (Alderman, 2003). The placement and scale of this street can work in two ways, if it is a small street in a segregated community it could reinforce that segregation and alienation felt by the black community member, while if the street was a prominent thoroughfare is could represent their increased equity and influence on the landscape (Alderman 2003). The struggles over naming and renaming are a clear window into how geographic agency is processed and utilized by individual, collective, and state actors (Alderman 2003). In Eatonton, specifically, the geographic agency of the black community is used to reinterpret and redefine their social and political identity (Alderman 2003). Consequently, it is necessary to explore the placement of memories within the contextual space of a landscape, because the location and scale give and take meaning, and express social and political value.

The virtual landscape also hosts 'arenas' for the contestation of King's legacy. The virtual reputation of landscapes associated with streets named for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. can represent revisionist histories and the contemporary creation of counter-memory in America (Doss, 2010). Cyberspace is more than, "an extension or mirror of politics in the physical, offline world, but also a medium for redefining (and even intensifying) lines of social struggle" (Alderman 2009, 267). In the case of www.martinlutherking.org , a website dedicated to spreading misinformation about Dr. King and racial hatred, the misdirection used by those white supremacists was so convincing that a city (with a historically racists reputation) posted the link to their webpage dedicated to educating residents about Black History Month; though the link was removed when the actual content was pointed out to them, it only enflamed and exacerbated the racial tensions within the city (Alderman, 2009). There is limited social memory work that has focused on Internet 'arenas', as well as, how they apply to 'reputational politics,' yet, scholars are beginning to address these issues and I plan to contribute to that body of knowledge.

While these initial investigations online are extremely insightful and motivational, the increase in time people spend on the Internet demands that these 'arenas' need much more attention.

Informing the Past & the Present

Remembering Dr. King is a process riddled with contestations, these struggles over the political landscape inform the present as much as the past, if not more so. By actively interpreting the past, the value the present gives to certain aspects of history is made clear; due to the decisions that stakeholders make and the debates they have over those interpretations and the final product of memorialization. "Commemorative figures function as cultural systems; serving both as 'models of society' that reflect how society shapes the past to serve its present interests and needs, and 'models for society' that guide how society shapes its actions and attitude through a comparison with the past" (Alderman, 2002, pg. 103, citing Schwartz, 1996). Streets named and re-named for Dr. King is one example of memorial arenas in which the reputational politics of the past and present are at play, actively interpreting a 'model of society' and informing its value to the present; ultimately defining his historical reputation as a 'model for society' (Alderman, 2000, 2002; Schwartz, 1996). Where the street is placed and its scale reveal the space and scale at which that present society values King's reputation and where he should function as a model of and for contemporary society.

Post's (2015) five-step framework for interpreting memorial landscapes illustrates the association between the past and present by explaining how to conceptualize the processes of memorialization. The five-step framework for interpreting memorial landscapes go along with the common questioning of the Five-W's (Who, What, Why, Where, When) and are as follows: 1) 'Identify the community' (What); 2) 'When was the landscape produced?' (When); 3) 'Where

within the community is the memorial located?' (Where); 4) 'Who produced the landscape?' (Who); 5) 'What text can be found on the memorial?' (Why?) (Post, 2015, pgs. 196-199). Each step when dissected illustrates how memorial landscapes speak to the past realities of a community and inform their present values. When a researcher selects a community's memorial landscape for further investigation (step 1) that choice alone reveals the value that contemporary societies place on their history, and it informs the past, because the researcher has found evidence/proof of some historical event/figure that is documented in archives (Post, 2015). When the memorial landscape was produced (step 2) informs the past, because it speaks to the past processes of heritage formation within the community, and it informs the present because it serves as a counterpoint to more contemporary memorialization processes (Post, 2015). Where the memorialization(s) is within the community (step 3), speaks to the past because it denotes value through location and scale, this also speaks to the present, because what that landscape looks like today reflects contemporary value (Post, 2015). Who paid for and designed the memorialized landscape (step 4) speaks of the past, because it shows who the original stakeholders were, their purpose and potentially their biases, along with why they chose to memorize a certain event or person; it also informs the present, because the ways in which the community has degraded, maintained, or enhanced the landscape can be observed and investigated (Post, 2015). Critically reading the text found at and on the memorialization (step 5) itself, informs the past by overtly dictating select histories, as well as, the present because it reinforces the historical hierarchy of power (Post, 2015).

To further illustrate how the struggles associated with remembering Dr. King inform the past and present, what follows is an application of Post's (2015) five-step framework for interpreting memorial landscapes to the MLK Holiday. Though Post's example used a physical

local landscape the same steps can be applied to the temporal national landscape. The community is the entire United States (step 1), this reveals contemporary interest in large scale/ national investigations and past value in preserving King's legacy country-wide. The national holiday was designated in 1983 and first celebrated in 1984 (step 2), however, the push to create a holiday for King began after his assassination in 1968, and more formally in 1979, when Michigan Congressman John Conyer Jr. introduced a bill that failed to pass (Rothman, 2015). Soon after, Stevie Wonder released a song called "Happy Birthday" that makes a case for why the holiday should become a reality (Rothman, 2015). When Ronald Reagan entered the presidential office in 1981 there was pressure on his administration to be more inclusive and by 1982 the bill had been reintroduced by Indiana Congresswomen Katie Hall (Rothman, 2015). This time they had the political support to pass it, so directly before the next presidential election Reagan put aside his reluctance and honored King with a holiday, hoping to swing some black voters that he knew did not support him (Rothman, 2015). This informs the past because the struggle to get a holiday designated for MLK, at that time, is indicative of the continued struggles for racial equality. It also informs the present, because it serves as a point of comparison for contemporary struggles to designate memorializations for minority groups and the larger political atmosphere they must still wade through. The fact that he conceded to granting a minority leader national honors on his specific birthday (step 3) symbolizes the historic significance of his personhood, his life, and the fact that it is now celebrated all over the world speak to the immense value that contemporary society has in his enduring legacy of equality and justice. The fact that a few states in the U.S. celebrate Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Day, on the same day, also speaks to the historic reluctance to honor a black leader and the contemporary struggles to eliminate or change this co-occurrence speaks to the present's

continuing struggle for racial equality. Those who lobbied the federal government for the creation of the MLK Holiday (step 4) speaks to the past, because it shows a joint effort between politicians and celebrities (and certainly activists) that eventually persuaded the federal government to designate his birthday to honor his life. The present prominence of the holiday, especially in predominantly black neighborhoods, speaks to the continued efforts to publicly celebrate this day with community parties, parades, and rallies organized by various individuals and groups. Though there cannot be a critical reading of text on a temporal memorial there are plenty of articles written about the holiday in the past and present (step 5); the articles in *Ebony* that are previously discussed in this chapter are examples of how past activists fought to preserve the radical nature of King's legacy in the face of Reagan's sanitized narrative, struggling to destabilize the power hierarchy of that time. Critical readings of contemporary interpretations and understanding of the holiday can speak to contemporary struggles over that same hierarchy of power, whether that text is from a textbook or Tweet. This application of Post's (2015) five-step framework for interpreting memorial landscapes to the MLK Holiday clearly illustrates how the struggles associated with remembering Dr. King inform the past and present and how steps used to analyze physical memorial landscapes can be applied to temporally specific memorializations.

Remembering the Civil Rights Movement

Thinking more broadly about remembering African American heritage and the Civil Rights Movement, the public fixation and emphasis placed on a single historical figure, Dr. King, blocks out, oversimplifies, and de-radicalizes the remembering of other key figures in African American and civil rights history. The enormous role that women played in the Civil Rights Movement is the most overt and significant example of those who were and are

disenfranchised by the emphasis placed on Dr. King's role as the eminent leader and champion of the Movement. Rosa Parks, who is publicly remembered across the United States for refusing to give-up her seat on a bus in the Jim Crow south, is an example of an activist whose legacy has been oversimplified and de-radicalized. The SPLC has shown that there is an uneven and incomplete coverage in the United States of the Civil Rights Movement in K-12 curriculum, which, plays a heavy hand in shaping patterns of social memory (SPLC, 2011).

Rosa Parks began her life as a radical feminist and militant black activist. Long before she fought for racial equality on buses, she was investigating horrific rape cases, such as Recy Taylor's in 1944, in which, she was brutally gang raped by six white men who she identified to the police, and who were never called in for questioning. Though Rosa Parks, with the help of E.D. Nixon, Rufas A. Lewis, and E.G. Jackson (prominent male leaders of the Civil Rights Movement who are also dismissed from the mainstream history of the Civil Rights Movement) got Recy her day in court, the all-white, all-male jury dismissed the trial after five minutes of deliberation (McGuire, 2010). Three years later in 1947, Rosa Lee Ingram, a black sharecropper in Georgia, was sentenced to death for defending herself against a white man attempting to rape her (McGuire, 2010). Two years after that in 1949, Gertrude Perkins was kidnapped and raped by two Montgomery police officers who the courts refused to indict (McGuire, 2010). Ten years later in 1959, Betty Jean Owens was gang raped by four white men, this case helped to change precedent by getting them all sent to jail for life. Then in 1965, Rosa Lee Coats was kidnapped and raped by a white man who also was sentenced to life in jail (McGuire, 2010). Though Owens and Coats saw their attackers put in jail, which showed forward progress from the past cases of Taylor, Ingram, and Perkins whose attackers walked free, these life sentences highlighted a "racial double standard" in that any black man accused of raping a white woman was sentenced

to death, with far less evidence (McGuire, 2010). Almost a decade later in 1974, Joan Little killed a police officer, who was attempting to rape her while she was imprisoned, and though she escaped the jail, she was arrested short after and put on trial for murder (McGuire, 2010). This sparked the 'Free Joan Little' campaign, which the *New York Times* framed as a case that was "putting the southern system of justice on trial" (McGuire, 2010, pg. 265). Her story was heard across the nation and brought to light a small instance in the century long tradition of black women testifying about their lack of bodily freedom (McGuire, 2010). Black women's testimony is seen as a form of direct action and radical protest (McGuire, 2010). Understanding their seemingly endless history of rape and abuse is crucial to those who wish to fully understand the origins of the Civil Rights Movement and African American heritage more broadly, because it speaks to the social, political, and economic realities of their existence in the United States (McGuire, 2010). All of the women named above represent a small handful of the women who went through equally disgusting traumas, and who's stories were never heard, nor justice ever sought (McGuire, 2010). It is easy to see these women as victims, but through their testimony, public and private, they acted as the original freedom fights, struggling for the right to control and protect their own bodies. These women's lives and stories are prime examples of those who are blocked out of mainstream U.S. history.

Those who were totally blocked out of the public history of the Civil Rights Movement also include women whose legacies were not defined by personal stories of rape and violence (subjects that mainstream histories tend to stray from because talking about them is seen as taboo). Women, such as, Mary Fair Burks, who founded the Women's Political Council (WPC) in 1946, and JoAnn Robinson who lead the group after 1950, and acted as the true leader of the Montgomery Improvement Association and the Montgomery Bus Boycott (McGuire, 2010).

These women were prominent middle-class black female activists who go largely unmentioned in the telling of the Civil Rights Movement (McGuire, 2010). Daisy Bates who ran the Arkansas State Press with her husband from 1941-55 used the paper as a blow horn for demanding justice for women and voting rights and led the Little Rock Nine in 1957 to desegregate Little Rock High School along with the entire Little Rock NAACP (McGuire, 2010). Fannie Lou Hamer is also a woman whose legacy of testifying about the awful realities of black womanhood is left out of mainstream histories of the Civil Rights Movement, and this exclusion is fairly surprising one, as it was her story that was aired on national television from the 1964 Democratic National Convention and helped inform that true meaning behind the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that was passed just a month and a half before (McGuire, 2010). All of these women and many more were the fighting backbone that stabilized, maintained, and advanced the Civil Rights Movement through their long history of back-breaking labor and heartfelt testimony. All of them have been blocked out, over simplified, and/or de-radicalized by the mainstream, hegemonic narrative of the Civil Rights Movement that focuses its attention on a sanitized version of Dr. King's legacy as the champion of racial equality. Understanding the reputational politics of remembering the Civil Rights Movement is essential to this research, because Dr. King did not stand alone in his quest for racial equality and economic equity, there were so many other leaders and exponentially more foot soldiers who worked with, for, alongside, and away from him. To be clear, Dr. King cannot be fully understood without understanding and recognizing those who worked around him.

Reputational Politics & Space

Reputational politics varies spatially. The idea of spatializing reputational politics acknowledges key advancements in the conceptualization and analytical study of contemporary

social memory. Reputational politics in the past has been studied in an aspatial manner, that has conceptually focused on how the memorialization of historical figures has been socially constructed and contested over time. Over time the reputations of historical figures have been framed and reframed to serve political purposes, spatializing reputational politics is a necessary new direction for the field of inquiry, because it has the power to show where these legacies have been defined and redefined by location. Understanding the spatial variation that exists concerning the legacies of historical figures is important, because they do not all follow a singular, master narrative, over time or space, rather they often branch out into multitudes of narratives that disagree and compete with one another for recognition and respect. Arguments have been made for the need to study the politics of cultural diffusion (Alderman, 2012). Historically, cultural diffusion has meant the spread of things like historical artifacts, landscape features, or technological advancements at the macro and micro scale through the use of landscape analysis and statistical modeling (Alderman, 2012). Understandings of cultural diffusion advanced as critical theory spread through the academic field of geography, defining diffusion as,

> …how much one cultural way of thinking will influence and potentially change another way of thinking…Diffusion is a social encounter, and it produces what Mary Louise Pratt (1991) has called 'contact zones.' These contact zones are social spaces where cultures meet, merge, or even clash with each other. (Alderman, 2012, pg. 126)

To study the politics of cultural diffusion the concept of cultural contact zones serves as a useful lens through which to view the, often, uneven power dynamics at play within social interactions, processes, and results (Alderman, 2012). Given the contemporary widespread use of social media, domestically and globally, the platforms themselves can be seen as cultural contact zones. By examining how historical figures' legacies are being interpreted and shaped within these contemporary cultural contact zones and spread across space the social groups participating in

the memorial process and the moral context can be more holistically understood. Thus, conceptually, by spatializing reputational politics, social memory research acknowledges that how historical figures are remembered can be influenced by social media platforms and still change by location, which, informs how we socially construct and understand the past spatially and that where those understandings differentiate are potential cultural contact zones.

From an analytical perspective, spatializing reputational politics recognizes that there are methodological challenges to determining how remembering key historical figures varies by location, due to the ambiguous nature of these socio-spatial memorialization processes. When Forest, Johnson, and Till compared Russian and German modes of public memory, they illustrated that there are distinctly different ways in which states perform memory work to redevelop and reimage national identities (2004). In Germany, the debates about how to memorialize their totalitarian past have been open and generally productive in validating multiple histories, encouraging civil engagement and democratic processes (Forest, Johnson, & Till, 2004). In Russia, however, elites have blocked and manipulated public input making clear that their totalitarian past is not worth revisiting, discouraging open democratic debate and understanding (Forest, Johnson, & Till, 2004). The different paths Russia and Germany have taken in reimaging their national identities conveys the relationship between political identity and social memory, in that, it is a process that includes many actors, and it is geographically and culturally unique. Thus, analytically, when spatializing reputational politics, social memory research recognizes that methodologically, to understand the spatial variation of how historical figures are remembered, deeply interpretive practices must be utilized in creative and reflexive ways, such as, qualitative GIS.

Chapter 4: Research Perspective & Objectives

This chapter describes the theoretical and methodological foundational perspectives of my research and outlines my research objectives. The analytical foundations to my research are critical theory, critical race theory, and qualitative GIS. This chapter begins with an insightful account of my critical perspective, which, is backed by critical theory and critical race theory. I then provide an in-depth description of qualitative geographic information sciences, its rise within geography, major innovators, and the relationship between qualitative research and digital humanities; I write about qualitative GIS at length because I see it as the key perspective from which to methodologically approach spatializing reputational politics. I conclude this chapter by defining my broad research objectives and specific research questions.

A Critical Perspective

The critical perspective I apply in this research is informed by critical theory, critical race theory (CRT), and qualitative GIS (which is a form of critical GIS). To start, I will quote Norman Denzin and Yovanna Lincoln's definition of critical perspectives.

> Critical perspectives are located in the continuous alliance (and attempts at solidarity) with countercolonial positions and bodies and with the always/already historical acknowledgment of intersecting forms of privilege/oppression with contemporary contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, pg. 82).

The critical pedagogy is a lens through which scholars can develop critical ethics that have the potential to transform educational and community spaces (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). A critical perspective encourages the researcher to continually reexamine the purpose of their study and to always remain focused on shifting and overlapping power relations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The essence of the research is the investigation of current forms of power and control, paired with the researcher's imagination for a socially just future and the creative paths they forge toward that future (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Throughout my scholarship, I maintain this critical perspective, because in every act of scholarship, activism, and even daily life there are power dynamics that are out of individuals' immediate control, these power dynamics effect the ways in which people think about places, move through space, and more broadly, conceptualize the world. It would be irresponsible for me, as a scholar (and as a person), to not acknowledge those continually evolving dynamics and take them into consideration in this dissertation and all subsequent research. My imagination for a socially just future is always expanding to include new ideas and points of view, that I become aware of, as I continue my education and move through the world.

Critical Theory

Critical theory is a philosophical approach to understanding society, that challenges social, historical, and ideological power dynamics and their effects (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This theory is based on historical realism, which, is an ontology that acknowledges that,

> Human nature operates in a world that is based on a struggle for power. This leads to interactions of privilege and oppression that can be based on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, mental or physical abilities, or sexual preference. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, pg.102)

Throughout my research project, I regularly consider the power dynamics of society, and attempt to critically position myself in a way that allows me to readily recognize the various forms of privilege and oppression. Critical theory is reliant on transactional/subjectivist relationships, which, is an epistemology that positions research about power dynamics of social structures, as an opportunity to empower those who are marginalized and effect positive change through knowledge production (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, pg. 103). Though my research is not explicitly participatory, the data I utilize was posted for public consumption, and through analyses of the data, I will focus on how to present my results in a way that address the power dynamics at play and attempt to broadly share a salient visualization with the public. Critical

theory utilizes dialogical and dialectical approaches to methodolgies. I utilize the dialogical approach in my methods, because it allows ideological flexibility if/when selected strategies do not work within the context of the research, where as, the dialectical approach has a specified goal to merge counterpoints by examing the tension between them and from there developing a reasonable compromise (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). A key aspect of critical theory is that it is informed by the researcher's perspective of a reflexive voice; which, animates both the researcher and that which is being researched, and encourages the researcher to present findings from their positionality and consider the sensitivity of the audience (Bernal, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This will be a key aspect of my reseach, considering the fact that I am analyzing social media data that can been seen publicly. Quoting specific Tweets is problematic, as they can be easily searched on any web browser, and thus, I have incorporated anecdotal collective storytelling.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory is focused on examining and transforming the interconnected relationships between and among race, racism, and power within the context of society, economics, history, and politics (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Critical race theorists employ a variety of interpretive strategies including, but not limited to: storytelling, autoethnography, case studies, textual analysis, narrative analysis, traditional field work, and various forms of participatory research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). I employ text analysis from this critical perspective: I examine social media Tweets in the context of domestic and global racism within society, economic power struggles, the history of race as a social construct, and racialized politics. Critical race theory inquiries are always driven by the desire for social justice and their research is often seen as a moral responsibility. These theorists study issues of "race, gender,

law, education, and racial oppression in daily life" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, pg. 92). Critical race theorists believe that for social justice and equality to come to fruition "the academy must change; it must embrace the principles of decolonization" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, pg. 92). The most important tenet of critical race theory is the call for collective and participatory action-based research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Critical race theorists heed this tenet in every aspect of their scholarly work as they are dedicated to social justice and a revolutionary framework (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Critical race theorists are interested in analyzing the moments, in which, "people of color are reminded that they are locked into a hierarchical racial structure" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, pg. 92).

An aspect of critical race theory that I hope to engage heavily is that of critical race consciousness, which is a consciousness that is primarily concerned with social change, and the development of an anti-aesthetic or postmodern (cutting-edge) aesthetic that is cross-disiplinary and counter-hegemonic, both politically and ethically; encouraging social criticism of the status quo and resistance to it, not in protest but in an effort to develop, "new forms of representation that create the space for new forms of critical race consciousness" (Denzin, 2002, pg. 182; cited by, Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). By developing such a consiousness, one is able to implement critical race theory (Denzin 2002; cited by, Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Though Denzin (2002) considered the aesthetic of films in his work, I am going to explore geospatial applications of developing a critical race consciousness. My application of qualitative GIS will potentially be able to help me develop such an aesthetic.

The pairing of critical race theory with qualiative GIS is appropriate because two of the key characteristics of qualitative GIS are integral to critical race theory. First, is its drive to expose and give voice to previously hidden and silenced narratives (Pavlovskaya, 2009). Second,

it is a hybrid form of GIS that encourages mixed-methods and creativity (Elwood and Cope, 2009). The commingling of three similar critical theories and a critical methodological approach encourage me to be highly aware of my positionality, the context and consequences of my research, and influential societal power structures within which I and others generate.

Qualitative Geographic Information Sciences (GIS)

Qualitative GIS is important because it has been used in this research to spatialize reputational politics, thus, the foundations of it much be understood. The transformation of GIS from being largely understood as a purely quantitative tool known as Geographic Information Systems, to a theory and practice that can be utilized for mixed-methods, and highly qualitative inquiry has dramatically changed the meaning of the acronym to Geographic Information Sciences (Wright, Goodchild, and Proctor 1997, cited in Pavlovskaya 2009). The transformed wording of the acronym is largely indicative of the evolution the discipline of geography has gone through in decoupling methods from epistemologies. The conventional conceptualization of GIS is one that is tightly tied to scientific conservatism, positivist epistemologies, and quantitative methods that follow the traditional, non-reflexive scientific method (Pavlovskaya, 2009).

Qualitative GIS is defined as, "a powerful research strategy [for] exposing some of the silences that are produced by the prevailing narrative of 'GIS as a quantitative tool'" (Pavlovskaya, 2009, pg. 14); and more specifically it is defined by "its persistent critical reflection upon the contributions and silences of different ways of knowing, and the social and political power of different forms of representation and analysis" (Elwood and Cope, 2009, pg. 10), and more basically, "qualitative GIS is rooted in this hybrid understanding of GIS as technology, methodology, and situated social (and political) practice" (Elwood and Cope, 2009,

pg. 3). Another definitive variation that qualitative GIS brings to the table of conventional GIS is an underlying assumption that to explicitly fix meaning spatially is a process fundamentally loaded with power (Elwood and Cope, 2009).

> Qualitative GIS is in part defined by purposeful and critical engagements with different aspects of *fixity*…while some kinds of fixity are inherent and unavoidable in GIS, there exists a great deal of room for strategic deployments of this fixity, and for iterative adaptations of fixed representations or practices (Elwood and Cope, 2009, pg. 6).

Qualitative GIS examines the diverse applications of GIS beyond simply visualizing digital spatial data and analyzing it using purely quantitative methods.

Qualitative GIS can be seen as different from conventional GIS in its hybrid epistemologies, approaches to research questions, the data used, and the mixed methodological analyses that are employed. The hybrid epistemologies that accompany qualitative GIS work to highlight, "the infinitely creative and political possibilities of bringing together multiple ways of knowing and making knowledge," rather than the singular positivist epistemology of conventional GIS (Elwood and Cope, 2009, pg. 6). Qualitative GIS approaches to formulating research questions require framing the questions in integrative ways that give equal attention to the use of geospatial methods and qualitative methods; addressing how the spatial knowledge was produced and its sociopolitical impacts (Elwood and Cope, 2009). Conventional GIS does not concern itself with research questions that address social or political contexts and impacts; it is not about how the spatial pattern came to impact society, rather the conventional GIS approach is concerned with identifying and measuring spatial patterns and applying generalizations to them (Elwood and Cope, 2009). The data used in qualitative GIS is not strictly non-numerical, rather the data may be considered qualitative when it provides context for situations and interpretations of their meanings and impacts (Elwood and Cope, 2009). This differs from the

data utilized by conventional GIS scholars that is, typically, purely descriptive in nature, aiming to directly document material change (Elwood and Cope, 2009). The typical qualitative GIS approach to methodological analyses applies reflexively triangulated data sources that can, "enable researchers to examine the contradictions, commonalities, and nuances of data that are rich in context and process-based detail," (as the details are situated and interpretive) (Elwood and Cope, 2009, pg.4). Qualitative GIS uses mix-methods that allow "multiple forms of knowledge and the findings from various techniques" to coalesce and inform one another, encouraging a cycle of reflexivity for the researcher(s) (Elwood and Cope, 2009, pg.4). Conventional GIS methods are 'known' to be highly quantitative, dependent on data models for representation, data structures for storage, and software based location analysis that is informed by codes and equations, rather than context (Elwood and Cope, 2009), but when examined in the light of qualitative GIS, it is clear that much of what geographers assumed was quantitative is actually quite qualitative (Pavlovskaya, 2009) (I will discuss this in detail in the next section, *The Rise of Qualitative GIS)*. These four aspects of qualitative GIS (hybrid epistemologies, integrative research questions, triangulated data, and mixed-methods) systematically set it apart from conventional GIS.

Mix methods rest on three assumptions that are necessary for qualitative GIS scholars to understand and acknowledge (Elwood and Cope, 2009). These, also, highlight three key epistemological divergences from conventional GIS. First, knowledge is partial, there is no way to know the 'whole truth,' rather knowledge is situated, specifically dependent upon the situation and position of the researcher and their research (Elwood and Cope, 2009). This first assumption benefits qualitative GIS application of mixed methods, because it "can inform more robust understandings of complex processes or phenomena," which, is what many qualitative GIS

scholars are interested in, i.e. that complicated processes and phenomena that play out on the landscape that cannot be understood through more traditional approaches and methods (Elwood and Cope, 2009, pg. 5). Second, the relationship between epistemology and methodology is not fixed or singular, multiple epistemologies can be correctly used in concert with one another when the purposes and circumstances for using multiple methods is defined and justified (Elwood and Cope, 2009). Third, knowledge production is fundamentally political; political authority varies greatly between types of data, representation, and analysis, this is why qualitative GIS scholars must be critical of their agency when integrating several epistemologies with various forms of analysis and knowledge (Elwood and Cope, 2009). Some of the qualitative methods that have been integrated with typical methods in GIS include, but are not limited to: ethnography, interviews, sketch maps, mental maps, multimedia analysis, focus groups, and participatory action (Elwood and Cope, 2009). The methods used in conventional GIS are largely based on external statistical analysis, that is later imported into GIS and visualized, even the basic functionalities of GIS that have been seen as quantitative (i.e. overlay, nearest neighbor, linear distance, buffering) requiring qualitative logics and imagination (Pavlovskaya, 2009). This intersectionality of quantitative and qualitative methods within GIS will be explored further at the end of the next section.

The Rise of Qualitative GIS within Geography

The rise of qualitative GIS, within the discipline of geography, can largely be attributed to epistemological struggles in the discipline that were largely informed by critical geographers questioning the previously conceptualized quantitative nature of GIS (Elwood and Cope, 2009). In the early days of GIS, it was framed as a tool for quantitative research, to visualize and understand digital cartographic data, to support capitalist aims (Pavlovskaya, 2009). These

understandings were drawn from seeing their visualizations and their assumptions that their seeing was a primary and objective form of analysis (Pavlovskaya, 2009). Critical geographers have asserted the fact that seeing is anything but objective, it is "partial, embodied, and masculinist" (Pavlovskaya, 2009, pg. 15).

It was just a decade ago that critical GIS scholars had to argue for the existence and possibility of a qualitative form of GIS (Bell and Reed, 2004; Kwan, 2002; Kwan and Knigge, 2006; Matthews, Detwiler, and Burton, 2005; Pavlovskaya, 2002; cited in Pavlovskaya, 2009). These critical GIS scholars were supported by three emerging factors in the discipline of geography: 1) the resurgence of qualitative methods being used in geography, 2) the increased application of mixed methods, and 3) the amplified availability of digital spatial data (Pavlovskaya, 2009). The rise in qualitative research within the field of geography was due to more critical, feminist, and poststructuralist geographers highlighting the political nature of knowledge production and visualization (Pavlovskaya 2009). The awareness of the power differentials in knowledge production are especially relevant to qualitative GIS, first, because of the authority imbedded in spatial representations, and second, because it informs every aspect of the research from selecting your research subject and methodology, to the ways you engage with the participants and the public (Pavlovskaya, 2009). This is a consideration that is largely absent in conventional GIS, in which, knowledge production and visualization is still often seen as objective and value-free.

Critical GIS scholars made the space for qualitative GIS (Cope and Elwood, 2009). Qualitative GIS has, in fact, been situated as a critical GIS (Wilson, 2009). Critical GIS is a sub-discipline within GIS that is focused on critiquing the technology itself and the use of technical jargon by GIScientists, it can be seen as a direct critique that encourages GIS practitioners to

engage fully with the technology, while at the same time explaining it in a way that can be understood and utilized by those who may not fully understand the jargon (Schuurman, 1999; 2000). Qualitative GIS departs from critical GIS in two key ways: the focus of their critiques and their practiced positionality (Wilson, 2009). First, "qualitative GIS can be considered a political intervention," because it is more concerned with critiquing the explicit effects of creating and portraying spatial representations; rather than the implicit effects of the technology creating the spatial representations (Wilson, 2009, pg. 158). Second, the positionality of the researchers is different; in critical GIS, scholars are on the 'inside,' meaning they are familiar with the technicalities of GIS. Qualitative GIS has a hybrid positionality, one that understands how to use GIS and the basics of its technical make-up but is more focused in on conducting research with the technology, rather than about the technology (Wilson, 2009). This narrative about what GIS is and what GIS isn't or shouldn't be, has block-out some researchers that do not fit various specifications; but qualitative GIS is opening spaces left and right for future work using GIS in creative and unique ways (St. Martin and Wing, 2007; cited by, Pavlovskaya, 2009). The past debates about conventional GIS vs. critical GIS have not only worked to recently define what qualitative GIS is (described above), but also illuminates its rise through the discipline of geography as a viable avenue for research.

The accelerated rise of qualitative GIS, in the last decade, can be largely attributed to upwards of ten key scholars. Before I move on to outlining their contributions, I will describe Pavlovskaya's work (2009) that illuminated the inherent qualitativeness of what was previously seen as quantitatively conventional GIS, to conclude my discussion on the rise of qualitative GIS in geography. Pavlovskaya (2009) outlines seven openings in conventional GIS that help to refocus the originally quantitative arguments that she argues are founded in qualitative

approaches and ideologies. Firstly, the origins of GIS are essentially non-quantitative, in that they evolved from diverse fields of research, outside of quantitative geography (Pavlovskaya, 2009).

> That include: geography (mapping and spatial analysis), computer science (automation and computing), land use planning and census administration (handling the display of large datasets), remote sensing (image processing and land cover analysis), and geodesy and the military (spatial accuracy and georeferencing) (Flowerdrew 1998; cited by, Pavlovskaya, 2009, pg.18-19).

Secondly, the mechanization that permits GIS (computers) to develop spatialized digital information is not quantitatively geographical (Pavlovskaya, 2009). Thirdly, the functionality of GIS to spatially analyze landscapes is largely based qualitative rationales, such us: spatial imagination, logical thinking, and intuition; and more modestly on the quantitative techniques that are grounded in the rudimentary utilities of GIS, such as: overlay, linear distance, buffering, and summations of data (Pavlovskaya, 2009). Fourthly,

> Digital data have embedded histories; they are not neutral descriptions of the world but social constructs, that is they are products of those who create them, their purpose, and their approach…digital representation does not substitute for qualitative analysis (Pavlovskaya, 2009, pg. 20-21).

Fifthly, the fact that database management and querying of data doesn't necessitate qualitative analysis, rather digital attributes are more descriptive (numerically, but more so textually with naming and typologies) than quantitative, and thus, "require logical thinking and a spatial imagination rather than statistical or mathematical expertise" (Pavlovskaya, 2009, pg.21). Sixthly, quantitative modeling is largely done outside of GIS, within statistical packages, such as, SPSS, and then spatially visualized in GIS; though this has begun to change recently with innovators imbedding geostatistical methods within GIS platforms. However, this remains a niche subfield and the majority of quantitative analysis is performed separately (Pavlovskaya, 2009). Seventhly and finally, the main function of GIS is visualization, which, "is no longer a

means to represent analytical results but a means of analysis itself" that "depends upon emotions and other irrational sentiments (Kwan, 2002; 2007) that run counter to the dry logic of quantification" (Pavlovskaya, 2009, pg.23). These seven openings in conventional GIS, that reframe the original quantitative underpinnings of the technology, display the heightened potential of qualitative GIS and prove that GIS is indeed founded in and necessitates qualitative approaches and ideologies.

Major Innovators in Qualitative GIS

The major innovators within qualitative GIS include, but are not limited to: Goodchild, Schuurmann, St. Martin, Hanson, Sheppard, MacEachren, Pickles, Kwan, Pavlovskaya, Elwood, and Cope. Goodchild (1991) is not necessarily associated with qualitative GIS, but his work formed the early debates around GIS and the larger discipline of geography that was critical to formulating the discussions that grew GIS scholarship and the rise of GIS as an important analytical tool and framework. Schuurman was the first scholar to argue for a critical GIS (1999), that focused on insider critiques of GIS technologies (2000) and advocated for ontology-based metadata (Schuurman and Leszcynski, 2006), Schurrman's later work contributed to the feminist critique of GIS (2002; Schuurman and Pratt, 2002). St. Martin helped to establish the use of GIS in fishery communities and critiqued the power dynamics of using such a technology in semi-participatory ways (2001; 2005; 2008). St. Martin (1995) contributed to the debate about what GIS is and should be, and later advanced his argument along with Wing advocating for critical understandings of how GIS, in practice, informs knowledge production (St. Martin & Wing, 2007). Hanson (et al. 1997) was one of the first feminist GIS scholars, who explained the basic use of GIS techniques in a study of women's local employment opportunities. Hanson (2002) later argued against the assumption that GIS was positivist in nature and advocated for

critical alternative uses of the technology. Sheppard (1993) was one of the first to debate the power dynamics of place in GIS, positing that if the technology/technique was used uncritically, it would perpetuate state and masculine constructs of science. As a critical human geographer, Sheppard (2001) applied a poststructuralist approach to GIS using mixed-methods. He, then, later continued to debate the production of knowledge via GIS, advocating for mixed-methods and progressive qualitative approaches to analysis (Sheppard, 2005). MacEachren, in his early work, encouraged visualization as an analytical tool, focused on the process of the research itself (MacEachren, 1994), and later framed visualizations using GIS as a platform for interactive knowledge production, rather than GIS visualization as a simple delivery of knowledge (MacEachren, Gahegan, and Pike, 2004). Pickles work has focused on the social implications of GIS, and the socioeconomic power differential associated with its undemocratic and high-cost of use (1995; 2004). Pickles (1997), also, engaged in the debate over GIS as a tool or as a full science, advocating for a more contextualized view of GIS, contributing to the redefinition of the acronym itself.

The more contemporary contributors to qualitative GIS arguably begin with Kwan who has conducted and published an impressive amount of feminist GIS research (2002; 2004). Kwan mapped the perceived safety of Muslim women after 9-11 (2002), using mixed-methods and explored the emotional implications associated with visualizations and analysis (2007). Kwan and Knigg (2006) outlined the qualitative use of GIS tool and techniques, advocating for a qualitative GIS. Pavlovskaya's work, in the last decade, has advocated for qualitative GIS by putting it to use in her work on economic restructuring and the multiple-economies in Moscow. She mapped data collected from ethnography and in-depth interviews, proving that a highly qualitative mix-methods approach to GIS was indeed possible and fruitful (2002; 2004).

Pavlovskaya has, also, directly defended the existence and value of qualitative GIS in a number of her writings, explaining GIS and critical geography as qualitative research tools (2006), showing the reflexivity of a feminist approach to qualitative GIS (Pavlovskaya and, Martin 2007), and reframing GIS from the ground-up as a qualitative approach to research, rather than the previously presumed quantitative (2009). Elwood and Cope (2009), wrote the book on qualitative GIS, literally, with their publication, Qualitative GIS: A Mixed Methods Approach. Elwood (2006a; 2006b) focused on using mix-methods with GIS to empower marginalized people. Cope (2008) wrote about scholars as activists, in her work with children using qualitative, participatory mix-methods with GIS. To conclude this discussion about qualitative GIS, I would like to point out the team of researchers that run floatingsheep.org. Their work has brought unrivaled public attention (relative to other GISers) to qualitative GIS, mapping social media data in fun, new, and dynamic ways; from mapping racist Tweets to the beer-bellies in America, their work is bringing much need public attention to the value of geography (Zook, Graham, Shelton, Stephens, & Poorthuis, 2009).

Qualitative Research & Digital Humanities

Qualitative research and digital humanities are necessary to understand when spatializing reputational politics because collectively they serve as a strong foundation for defining new avenues within qualitative GIS. Qualitative research and digital humanities are similar in some of their methods and data, as well as, their drive to understand humanity. To understand how digital humanities is different from qualitative methods, I will provide a brief description of digital humanities. Digital humanities is largely a positivist approach to understanding qualitative data, that works to create (digitize), gather (organize in databases), and analyze (overarching automations, namely summations of content) large sums of textual and material data (Schnapp &

Presner, 2009); in order to help other disciplines bolster their methodological rigor and objectivity (Moretti, 2007). It also presents new techniques to complement existing methods and allow the analysis of much larger datasets, thanks to the computational nature of digital humanities (Berry, 2012). Many qualitative researchers do not appreciate the use of technology in this way, as they see it as a tool for unscrupulous researchers, who allow computers to perform surface analysis. Thus, the differences that separate digital humanities and qualitative research are mostly informed by epistemology and data quantity, and slightly informed by methodology. In the early years of digital humanities, it was positivist, and is now applying some critical theory. While qualitative methods have predominantly shied away from positivism, preferring post-positivism, social constructivism, postmodernism, pragmatism, and/or a host of critical epistemologies. Qualitative methods seek context and true understanding of unique perspectives, rather than overarching generalizations that are sought by digital humanities. The amount of data used is also quite different, on average digital humanities research works with exponentially more data than typical qualitative research. Finally, the methods used by both include: content analysis, archival analysis, artifact analysis, image analysis, GIS, data visualization, and text analysis. The methods that are predominantly used by digital humanities include: network-analysis, data curation, text encoding, and machine learning; while the methods predominantly used in qualitative research include: interviews, participant observation, and ethnography. Digital humanities and qualitative research have similarities and differences; digital humanities has taken on some critical scholarship, however, its constant work with big data and machine learning sets them apart from the progressive qualitative geographies that have blossomed in the past three decades. This is relevant to my research because it highlights the significance of developing new avenues between qualitative research and digital humanities that utilize and

combine their collective and unique strengths; such as, my qualitative GIS research that focuses on race and memory within social media.

Research Objectives

The contested geographies of racial history in the United States and the stories that are commonly shared about the history of race, racism, and civil rights are something we need to come to grips with as a nation and society. How to remember such a troubled past is no easy question to answer, however, by exploring what the contemporary online community expressed within social media posts we can begin to understand the state of that remembering and provide a jumping off point from which to further interpret this past in a potentially more open and honest manner. This dissertation contains within its structure and purpose three broad research objectives. Methodologically, the broad objective is to demonstrate how we can leverage Twitter's spatially-explicit data to analyze the complexities, contradictions, and tensions in how we historically remember Martin Luther King Jr. as a foundational figure within the history of civil rights, that vary spatially, within and amongst states and regions, as well as, domestically and globally. Thus, demonstrating how qualitative GIS can be applied to social media data to explore not just the multiple ways we remember and interpret the past, but also, the important role that geography and place play in structuring and shaping that memorialization. Theoretically and conceptually, this dissertation seeks to develop and illustrate the argument that social media can be seen as a place of memory and that the concept of crowdsourcing is a political act of remembering. The concept of crowdsourcing recognizes how memories are given meaning through the vernacular contestation and co-construction of narratives that surround the legacy of MLK. Remembering racialized history is a political act that can be examined when social media is seen as a place of memory. Empirically, the broad objective of this dissertation is to, identify

the multiple and competing reputational politics that are present in the content and context of Tweets that work to define Dr. King's contemporary and future reputation and how these changes in reputation vary spatially. These variations in reputational politics will be evaluated in relation to the prevailing measures of civil rights education (SPLC, 2011) and international values (Fisher, 2013). What follows is an explanation of the specific research questions that have been answered.

Designated holidays and the public response to them represent official and common mechanisms for memorialization. The memorialization of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr is complex, controversial, and often a site of contested narrative creation and realization. By analyzing the location, content, and discourse of geotagged Tweets with the #MLKDAY this study will be able to gain a deeper understanding of how his legacy is being interpreted and reproduced within the online community emerging through the Internet and social media, domestically and internationally. By answering the questions below, this study will be able to understand more about how the contemporary online community come to grips with the contested legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., his role as a civil rights leader, and the role a user's location plays in their treatment of the holiday.

1) What type of language are Twitter users using when posting about Martin Luther King Day?
    a. What are the most frequently used words present in the Tweets?
    b. In what ways are memories of MLK being leveraged to contribute to or advance certain, political/economic agendas and what are these agendas?
    c. Are his more radical ideologies about income equality present in online discussions?

The mixed-method used to address this question is textual content analysis and discourse analysis based in critical race theory, & qualitative GIS.

2) Where are Twitter users who post about Martin Luther King Day predominantly located?

   The quantitative method used to address this question is a locational frequency analysis.

3) How do the reputational politics of Tweets with the #MLKDay change by location, domestically (by state and region)? What do those differences in reputational politics symbolize?

   The qualitative method used to address this question is inductive coding, spatialized reputational politics, and discourse analysis, based in critical race theory, & qualitative GIS.

4) What happens when "The Dream" goes global? What significant difference do we see in the reputational politics of Tweets with the #MLKDay, originating from international locations versus those in the United States of America?

   The qualitative method used to address this question is inductive coding, spatialized reputational politics, and discourse analysis, critical race theory, & qualitative GIS.

Chapter 5: Methodology

This research seeks to analyze the reputational politics and discourse that surround Dr. King's holiday, the content of geotagged Tweets with the #MLKDay, and the spatial variation of the reputational politics that exist within the content of the Tweets and the relevant discourse. This chapter begins by describing the data used for this research. Then provides descriptions of the content analyses, which, include word frequency analysis and qualitative coding analysis. The chapter concludes by describing the spatializing of population politics, which, includes locational frequency analysis and locational thematic analysis.

This research utilizes an inductive mixed methods approach based on critical race theory and qualitative GIS. Qualitative GIS is a key aspect of in this study because it is an ideal mixed methodology for spatializing reputational politics. Though admittedly this research utilizes more qualitative methods than quantitative methods, but the mixture of methodologies complement one another well. The quantitative methods in the content and location analyses can generally be considered frequency counts, which, are utilized to determine the most frequently written words in the geotagged Tweets and compare the frequency of themes and categories in differing locations. The qualitative methods include critical discourse and content analysis. The critical discourse analysis consists of carefully selected texts that have been read in an in-depth, impressionistic, and interpretive manner. The critical content analyses consist of two rounds of qualitative coding of the 1,299 geotagged Tweets.

Content analysis requires categorization or coding of the data to elicit and discern themes from the data and explore the narratives within the text (Craggs, 2016). Discourse analysis is typically seen as a more qualitative method than content analysis, due to the simple fact that discourse analysis is based on the various meanings behind language and its inherent power,

while content analysis is based on a positivistic quantifying text to illuminate patterns and generalizations (Cope & Kurtz, 2016). Discourse and content analysis are often used in combination with one another to provide the researcher with a more contextualized view, containing both comprehensive descriptions and discursive detail of relevant individualized case studies (Craggs, 2016). However, when both are conducted from a critical perspective, they are not so different, they are, both inductive, thematic, critical of language, and critical of power and position (Cope & Kurtz, 2016). When paired together, they serve to powerfully inform one another (Craggs, 2016). With those considerations in mind, the key differences between the two analyses are the data and the method (Craggs, 2016). The data that informs them are different, in that, one is seemingly momentary and anecdotal, while the other is steeped in history and detailed, but both of them mutually construct and are constructed by society (Craggs, 2016). The method used for this content analysis is formal and highly structured, while the method used for this discourse analysis is more informal, impressionistic, and takes an open approach.

Both of these methods are then bolstered by developing geographically explicit visualizations and performing location analyses based in qualitative GIS. The location analyses provides geographically explicit visualizations of the quantity and content of the sampled Tweets, allowing for comparative analysis of reputational politics. I discursively analyze the content analysis, discourse analysis, and location analyses in a triangulated fashion. First, by comparing the finding of each analysis to the other analyses, independently. Then, I reconsider what I have gleaned from these couplings and think about them holistically. This mixed methodology reveals salient themes and arguments detailed in the results and discussion chapter.

Data

The data used for this dissertation are from the social media platform Twitter. Twitter is a free and open source social networking site that allows real-time information sharing, in 140-character messages (at the time the data were collected), that respond to the prompt, "What's Happening?". Twitter was chosen because it is the largest social networking platform and has proven to be an important location in which individuals construct, not only their own reputation and politics, but also the reputational politics of others. The technological advances allowing users to generate and share content with the world has vastly altered the landscape of the online video market. The study population includes all Twitter users, who used the #MLKDAY during the Twitter data collection period and had their location services turned on. To be clear, this is not meant to be an all-inclusive representation of all Twitter users, Tweets, or online commentary pertaining to Dr. King. This is just the tiptop of the proverbial iceberg in terms of data. There are many more users, many more Tweets, and an unimaginable amount of commentary online concerning Dr. King, from generalized public webpages to various other social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. The select and distinct nature of this data is admittedly a limitation that will prohibit generalized conclusions, however, it will enable an initial illumination of Dr. King's reputation and holiday on Twitter. Plus, as a qualitative scholar, my primary goal is not generalizability but the understanding of specific moments of meaning-making. To more critically understand these moments and their larger societal context I compare the domestic findings to an evaluation of Civil Rights curriculum by state, conducted by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC, 2011); and the international findings to the World Values Survey, that measured racial tolerance by country (Fisher, 2013).

Data Collection

I collected Twitter data about my chosen topic of inquiry, Martin Luther King Jr. and the U.S. National Holiday dedicated to him. To gather data about MLK and his holiday eight hashtags were designated for collection: #MLKDay, #MLKSt, #MLK, #MLKJr, #DrKing, #MartinLutherKing, #MartinLutherKingStreet, and #MartinLutherKingJr (Table 1). I selected these hashtags through an exploratory process of searching Twitter and reading related Tweets, those listed above were the dominant hashtags I came across.

The Twitter data were examined, cleaned, and organized using Excel (Microsoft 2016). The data cleaning process began by simply examining the data and looking for anomalies. These anomalies included: Tweets that contain partial data, such as, Tweets without a location, text, date, id number, etc. The second step was massaging the data and pulling multiple tables of data together using the Tweets' ID. The table containing the geographic coordinates for each Tweet was formatted in such a way that it had to be transposed before it could be joined with the main file that contains the IDs, text, and timestamp. That Excel file was then uploaded into the qualitative coding software, Nvivo (QSR International 2017). The Tweets were coded using Nvivo (QSR International 2017). Once the coding was complete, the next step involved transferring the Tweets back to Excel (Microsoft 2016) with the coding intact. The data were then uploaded to the mapping software, ArcGIS (ESRI 2016). Once the main Tweet file was joined with the location file, the geotagged Tweets were coded (using Nvivo); and the locations were visualized and spatially analyzed using ArcMap (ESRI 2016). This geospatial data were parsed into various groupings based on place (domestic/international, regionally, and state-by-state) and theme to explore the significance of location.

Table 1: Twitter Data Collection (August 2015-June 2016)

Key Hashtags	Total Tweets	Geotagged Tweets
#MLKDay	767,823	1,299 (0.17%)
#MLKSt	13	2 (15.4%)
#MLK, #MLKJr, #DrKing, #MartinLutherKing, #MartinLutherKingStreet, #MartinLutherKingJr	1,192,873	4,183 (0.35%)

Sample

For this dissertation, I chose to examine all 1,299 geotagged Tweets associated with King's Holiday (#MLKDay), because it provided a sizable yet manageable quantity of quality data. Within Twitter's database, there are three types of locational information associated with each Tweet: the user profile location, which is static and designated by the user; the places mentioned in the Tweets themselves; and the location from where the message was Tweeted. For this dissertation, I chose to use the location where the Tweet was sent, or the geotag. I have forgone analyzing the profile locations of the users because of the variability of the designated places. More specifically, many users designate more than one location, do not regularly update their profile location when traveling or moving, and/or use fictitious locations such as Never Never Land. Previous research has shown that anywhere from 1% to 12% of Tweets have a geocoded location attached (Crampton, et al., 2013; Rice, et al., 2012; Mahmud, Nichols, and Drews, 2012). Although this is a small portion of Twitter data, it has been used to map a variety of phenomena from weather and disaster relief efforts to hipsters, bankers, and artists (Shelton, et al., 2014; Poorhuis and Zook, 2014). The data used for this research are below that expected range with 0.17% of the Tweets with the #MLKDay containing a geotag, this could be due to the discrete nature of selected sample (Table 1).

By intentionally focusing on the hashtag, #MLKDay, alone rather than the day itself, I could better delve into where the formal holiday is being shared, discussed, and celebrated. The remaining data can be examined in future research. The Twitter data were collected globally from August 6th, 2015 to June 3rd, 2016 (Table 2). That specific period was chosen for data collection because it included the MLK Holiday (January 16th) and Black History Month (February), with a cushion of at least three months of, hypothetically, null data on either side of,

hypothetically, rich and desired data. All of the Tweets with #MLKDay were analyzed, however, the Tweets that contained #MLKDay mostly occurred on the day itself, with only 135 or ~10% of the Tweets occurring before January 16th and none occurring after (Table 2).

Discourse Analysis

Discourse has been defined as, "a system of language which draws on a particular terminology and encodes specific forms of knowledge" (Tonkiss, 1998, pg. 248; cited by, Cope and Kurtz, 2016, pg. 659). Discourse analysis is ideal for, "research in which discourse plays a recognizable and important role" (Cope and Kurtz, 2016, pg.659). Discourse Analysis allows the researcher to explore the societal context of the subject matter, by revealing: the broader meanings of the discourse, experiences that are enabled/disabled by the discoursed, and society's understanding of the discourse (Craggs, 2016). Discourse analysis is well-suited to answer the basic questions, 'why' and 'how' (Craggs, 2016, pg. 123). Especially when studying changes in societal institutions, structures, and/or behaviors, because examining relevant discourses will often reveal the justifications for and consequences of those changes (Cope and Kurtz, 2016), which speaks to the larger power dynamics that are at play. Discourse analysis recognizes that language, as a social practice can affect society, materially and discursively (Cope and Kurtz, 2016). A deeply impressionistic and interpretive approach to discourse analysis does not depend on a singular set of prescribed procedures and does not seek a singular truth, it does, however, require an in-depth reading and critical interpretation (Berg & Kearns, 1996). This deeply impressionistic and interpretive approach to discourse analysis has been conducted in the past by geographers to analyze identity and reputational politics of naming (Berg & Kearns, 1996; Alderman 2002). Critical discourse analysis focuses more attention on examining the inherent power relations conveyed by text by drawing, "attention to the ways in which discourses shape

Table 2: #MLKDay Tweets Per Day

Date	Tweets Per Day
7-Aug-15	1
6-Sep-15	1
19-Nov-15	1
1-Jan-16	1
5-Jan-16	1
6-Jan-16	1
7-Jan-16	1
8-Jan-16	1
9-Jan-16	1
11-Jan-16	5
12-Jan-16	1
13-Jan-16	6
14-Jan-16	8
15-Jan-16	17
16-Jan-16	35
17-Jan-16	53
18-Jan-16	1165

and are shaped by social institutions and structures" (Fairclough, 1989; cited by, Cope and Kurtz, 2016, pg.659). Critical discourse analysis has three stages of investigation: 1) a close and complex reading of the text in question, 2) take the themes that emerge from that close reading and consider how those themes and ideas are understood by society, and 3) consider relevant discourses as they overlap, ideologically (Waterton, Smith, & Campbell, 2006). This is considered a critical methodology, because it takes text analysis and places it within society; allowing exploration into and around multiple perspectives (Waterton, Smith, & Campbell, 2006). This method is indispensable for this dissertation because it seeks to answer the basic questions, 'why' and 'how,' while also contributing the value of being able to understand changes in society by examining relevant discourses and the inherent power relations conveyed by text, which, speaks to the larger power dynamics that are at play.

Content Analysis

Generally, content analysis can be understood as, "the systematic qualitative and quantitative analysis of the contents of a data corpus" (Saldaña, 2016, pg. 300). Quantitatively, content analysis is a method that is used to count/quantify features, typically text (Craggs, 2016). This method is ideal for "large collections of similar and comparable material," that may, "lend themselves to analysis that can provide descriptive overviews of the content of materials" (Craggs, 2016, pg. 122). Content analysis is a method that seeks to identify patterns within any text, in a quantifiable and objective fashion (Kitchen & Tate, 2000). Content analysis is well-suited to answer the basics questions of, 'who,' and/or 'what' (Craggs, 2016, pg. 123). Critical content analysis takes the pattern analysis of text a step further by identifying and discussing the social, economic, and political systems that play key roles in shaping the power dynamics that can be conceived of through text (Beach, et al., 2009). Including qualitative data in a

geodatabase enables the researcher to perform place-based content analysis, that is useful when attempting to examine similar materials that are spatially discrete, and extremely useful when trying to compare and contrast places based on the content of the material (Hannah & Hodder, 2015). Coding of the Tweets will follow these coding methodologies, in the order that follows: Descriptive Coding (*First Cycle Coding*), Metasynthesis (*After First Cycle Coding*), Pattern Coding (*Second Cycle Coding*), and "touch test" (*After Second Cycle Coding*) (Saldaña, 2016). This method is essential to this dissertation because it also seeks to answer the basics questions of, 'who,' and/or 'what,' while illuminate patterns within text to identify, discuss, and understand the social, economic, and political systems that shape power dynamics.

Frequency Counts

Word frequency counts of text are common in content analysis and function as basic quantitative statistics whose summaries serve to describe the language used in a textual data. These statistics can be totals, percentages, and/or ratios (Saldaña, 2016). Conducting word frequency queries in Nvivo allows researchers to identify the top 1-1,000 used words in their data and provides filtering options to remove overly common words such as (a, and, the) and group synonyms (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). To begin this analysis, I left the filters open and searched for the full range offered by the software, the 1,000 most frequent words, with a minimum letter length of 3, and exact matches only (no synonym coupling). The top result was 'https' the beginning of every link, this was followed by '#mlkday', '#mlk,' 'king,' 'day,' 'martin,' '2016,' 'luther,' 'mlk,' '#trndnl,' 'happy,' '#whatwomenwantin5words,' 'today,' '#mlkdaya,' and 'great.' Without filters applied and stop words removed, the top 15 words were all associated with internet links, other popular hashtags at that time, and MLK's name and holiday. Knowing that all of the Tweets contain a link and #mlkday terms associated with linking

and the actual #mlk were added to the stop word list. With those removed, the word frequency of the top 1000 words ranged from to 163 to 2. Given the fact that the following qualitative coding analysis would take into consideration the context and meaning of all the text, words with a frequency of 5 or less were deemed irrelevant for this analysis. After experimenting with the most frequent limits, the top 200 most frequent words were found to have a frequency range of 163 to 6. Within these top 200 most frequent words there were many matching stemmed words separated by the limitation of exact matching and the use of hashtags, such as: #dream, #dreams, dream, dreamed, dreaming, dreams. When the stemmed word coupling filter is applied, the range of frequencies in the top 200 terms went up to a range of 265 to 7. This was helpful in terms of attributing words within similar meaning within one another, especially in the case of words that had hashtags added to them, such as 'dream' and '#dream.' Upon further analysis of those stemmed word compiling, some synonymous words were still separated, such as: service/help and remember/commemorate. When the synonyms coupling filter was applied the range of frequencies in the top 200 terms only increased by one, 265 to 8. This filter also overly simplified the words meaning by grouping history, celebrate, festival, observance, and story all under the umbrella of celebrate. This filter over simplified the data to the point that amazing, arrest, arrive, beat, become, catching, and grow were all compiled under the term get; and powerful, power, and queen were all grouped under the term king. This is an issue because in this dataset king is referring to a specific person, Dr. King, and amazing and arrest have vastly different meanings when considered in reference to Dr. King. Thus, the frequency count filters used for this research were limited to stemmed word coupling, with a minimum of 3 letter word lengths, and the top 136 most frequent terms. The limit of 136 was applied because that is the point at which the frequency dropped below 10. The finding of this analysis will be reported in

the results chapter and visualized using NVivo's Word Cloud feature due to the unsightly nature of their Tree Map visualization and the fact that the summary details cannot be charted or exported as a table. A word cloud is the same thing as what many refer to as a tag cloud. A word cloud is a visualization of word frequency in which the most frequent words are the largest and the least frequent words (with the previously stated parameters) are the smallest.

Qualitative Coding Analysis

Phase 1: Descriptive Coding & Metasynthesis

The text associated with Tweets is relatively short, a maximum of 140 characters (at the time of data collection). Thus, I selected Descriptive Coding (aka Topic Coding), because it is the best strategy for short anecdotal texts, and the method typically used for coding Twitter data that is collected based on a single #hashtag (aka Hashtag Coding), since it recognizes and associates similar subjects inherently (Saldaña, 2016). This coding uses a single noun to describe the topic, not the content. Descriptive coding was also chosen, because it is one of the recommended starting points for people, such as myself, who have not performed rigorous coding before (Saldaña, 2016). This is a first cycle method, because it purely descriptive, and serves to develop and define the basic terms that will be used as building blocks in the next step (Saldaña, 2016). This first round of coding resulted in 107 total descriptive original codes (Appendix A). My research assistant, who volunteered to participate in this research to serve as a coding validation mechanism, developed 45 total descriptive original codes (Appendix B). When comparing codes, I realized I had developed too many codes, many of which described the content more than the topic. During the interim phase of coding, metasynthesis, these codes were all condensed or removed.

Metasynthesis is considered a first cycle coding method, and is typically done alongside Descriptive Coding, but it is recommended as an interim step for beginners (Saldaña, 2016). Metasynthesis allowed me to inductively collect, compare, and synthesize the basic findings (Saldaña, 2016). This method also allowed me to attribute themes to the codes and prevent oversimplification, because the method inherently preserves the differences and complexities within the data (Saldaña, 2016). Rather than forming a consensus, it helps to develop a basic understanding of the phenomenon, because it allows for codes that are descriptive and simultaneous (Saldaña, 2016). Simultaneous codes are those that attribute two or more descriptive and/or thematic codes to a single node (Tweet) (Saldaña, 2016). This is suitable for coding Twitter data due to the multitude of significant descriptive and inferential meanings present in many singular Tweets, such as 'Dream' and 'Legacy' attributed to a single Tweet, or having hierarchical codes 'Event,' 'Celebration,' and 'Marketing' all nested beneath 'Holiday.' This led me to 9 categories and my research assistant to 8 categories (Appendix A & B). These categories helped to compile the similar codes and compare competing codes, such as, characteristics attributed to Dr. King all being grouped together under MLK, while separating Tweets about protesting or basketball into the categories of activism and sports (Appendix A). This was done by writing each code on a notecard, then taking each one individually into consideration and discussion, and pairing them with other codes that had similar meanings and/or purposes. These categories helped me to understand the basic components within the data that would be compared and synthesized in the final round of axial coding aimed at theme development.

Phase 2: Axial Coding & Touch Test

Axial Coding was used for the second coding cycle, because it broadens the findings from the first round of coding. In that, it reconstructs the context that was not considered during topical descriptive coding and in doing so illuminates the dominant themes, reconnecting the data that was separated by topic (Saldaña 2016). Axial Coding is used to determine the dominant codes and categories, as the codes and categories are reorganized, synonymous and repetitive codes are synthesized into codes that better represent important concepts (Saldaña, 2016). The overarching goal of axial coding is to reach saturation, meaning that new codes are unnecessary, because all the relevant information that is present in the data has been accounted for (Saldaña, 2016). Axial Coding can be visual in nature and can be informed by and speak to the previously performed metasynthesis, which mutually allowed me to see the direction of the themes and their contexts (Saldaña 2016). The dominant categories serve as the 'axis,' while the subcategories serve as the 'spokes,' of the thematic 'wheel' (Saldaña, 2016). This visualization allows the detailed features and dimensionality of the subcategories to contextualize the dominant categories without overshadowing or oversimplifying their meaning and purpose (Saldaña 2016). It was during this phase of coding when my research assistant and I went through the codes and identified similarities, resolved differences, removed duplicates, and developed a hierarchy of categories and subcategories and detailed their descriptions, that collectively could be understood as themes (Figure 1 & Appendix C). I then coded the entire dataset using the refined categories and subcategories (Table 3). Saturation was met, meaning no new codes or designation was needed and that the existing codes covered the breadth of the data. To validate my code designations, my research assistant independently coded a random sample of 200 geotagged Tweets. The random sample was generated using Excel's random function. A random sample

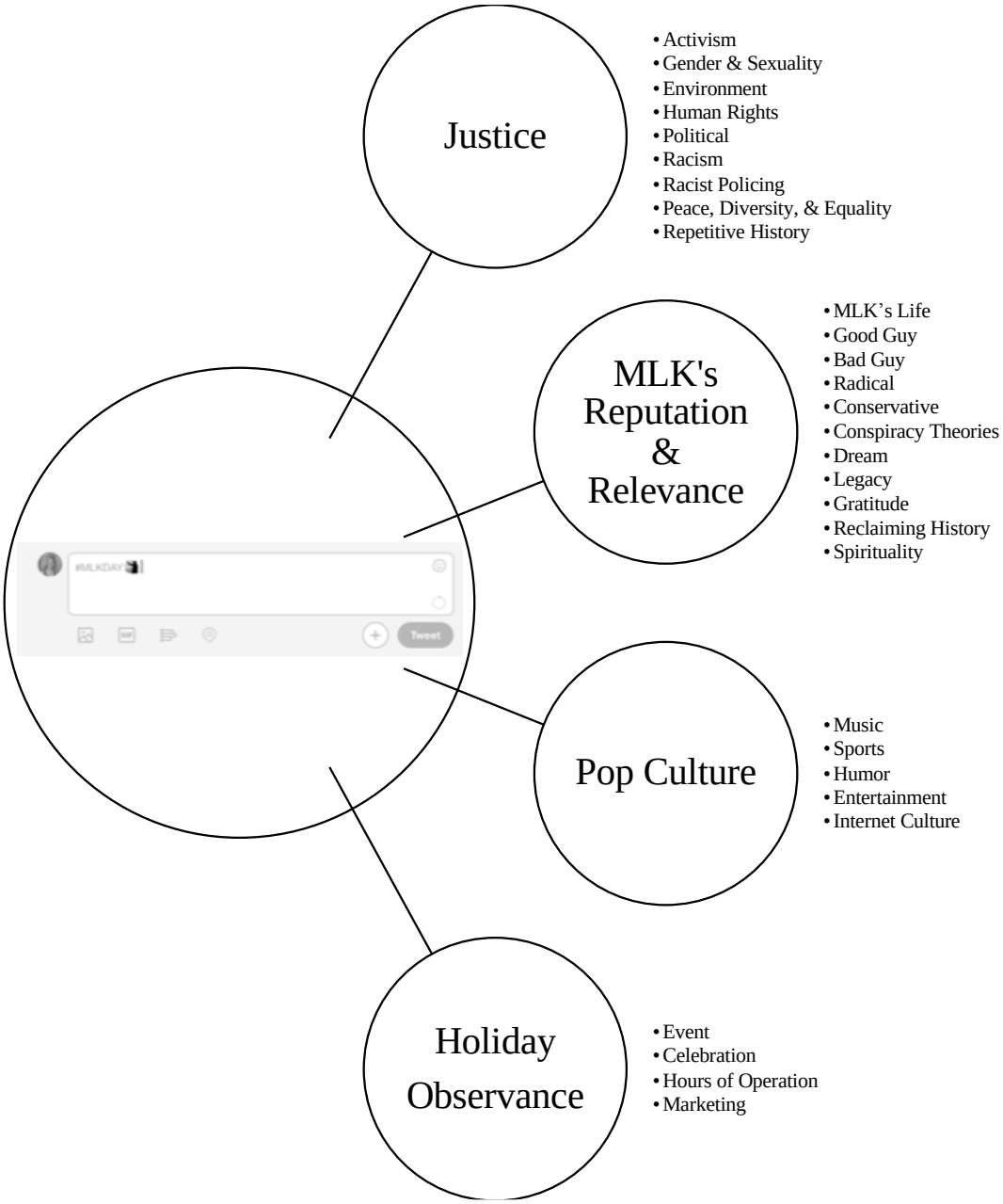

Figure 1: Final Coding Hierarchy of Themes/Categories and their Subcategories

Table 3: Final Coding Totals

Overarching Theme + Operational Definition	Code(s)	Final References
Justice	*Justice*	10
	Activism	101
	Gender & Sexuality	8
	Animal/Environmental Rights	24
	Human Rights	33
	Political	26
	Racist Policing	14
	Racism	26
	Religious Intolerance	0
	PDC	38
	Repetitive History	8
Justice Total	**288**	
MLK's Reputation & Relevance	*MLK's Reputation & Relevance*	0
	MLK's Life	140
	Good Guy	29
	Bad Guy	2
	Radical	5
	Conservative	1
	Conspiracy Theories	2
	Dream	114
	Legacy	134
	Gratitude	24
	Reclaiming History	2
	Spirituality	73
	Fearfulness	0
MLK's Reputation & Relevance Total	**526**	
Pop Culture	*Pop Culture*	7
	Music	24
	Sports	43
	Humor	8
	Internet Culture	189
	Entertainment	2
Pop Culture Total	**273**	
Observance of Holiday	*Observance of Holiday*	88
	Event	255
	Celebration	220
	Marketing	99
	Hours of Operation	52
Observance of Holiday Total	**714**	
Not Relevant	**52**	

was used rather than the entire dataset because my research assistant's time restraint. I used Nvivo's 'coding comparison' tool, which resulted in a total average agreement of 97.2%; ranging from 85.75% to 100% average agreement in subcategories, and 92% to 98.9% average agreement in dominant categories (Appendix D).

When research employs grounded theory, axial coding is typically a step directly followed by theoretical coding with the goal of producing or realizing a singular truth present in the data (Saldaña, 2016). Since this dissertation employs critical theory, axial coding will serve as my last formal round of coding because it successfully elucidated the major themes present in the data and preserved their distinctiveness and my ideological reflexivity, while also allowing for analysis and comparison of their subjectivist relationships. With the critical nature of this research in mind, I do recognize the requirement for academic rigor to formally examine the themes developed by previous qualitative coding, thus I will use the 'touch test.'

The 'touch test' is the final step in discerning which themes to keep and which ones to discard (Saldaña, 2016). This test helps in evolving the most salient themes into abstract concepts that can be discussed more generally (Saldaña, 2016). The test required me to think metaphorically about the themes that have been generated, if the themes represent something I could physically touch, such as tree, then it should not be seen as a theme and is not worth using as such, but if it something that I cannot touch, such as, nature, then it is meaningful and can be used as a theme (Saldaña, 2016). If none of the themes, I have generated, are untouchable, then I would need to go back and develop richer descriptions and elevated concepts (Saldaña, 2016). Given that the four major themes I have identified and developed (justice, MLK's reputation and relevance, pop culture, and holiday observance) are all metaphorical in nature and cannot be physically touched they all pass the test.

Spatializing Reputational Politics

Once the Tweets and their qualitative codes were imported into ArcMap, the x, y data were visualized and exported as a shapefile. The cities (Populated Places), states (Admin 1 – States, Provinces), and countries (Admin 0 – Countries) shapefiles were downloaded from the Natural Earth website (Natural Earth, 2018) and visualized. The projection used for the world map of the Twitter data is *Robinson World* and the projection used for the U.S. map of the Twitter data is *USA Contiguous Albers Equal Area Conic USGS*. Before visualizing various codes, the category and subcategory names had to be relabeled within the attribute table of the shapefile, because they were shortened due to ArcGIS character limitations. This was done by exporting the shapefile as a personal geodatabase, which, was then opened in MS Access and the column titles were edited and then save and exported back to a shapefile. The edited shapefile was then spatially joined to the countries shapefile for the international map and the states shapefile for the domestic map. A shapefile was created for each sub-category by sorting them in the attribute table, selecting those that were in the affirmative, and exporting them as new shapefiles. To create thematic shapefiles, *select by attribute* was used, to avoid creating duplicates within the data, rather than the *join* tool. The equations used in *select by attribute* to create thematic/categorical shapefiles were:

<u>Holiday Observance</u>
"HO" = 'Yes' OR "HO_Event" = 'Yes' OR "HO_Market" = 'Yes' OR "HO_Celebr" = 'Yes' OR "HO_Hours" = 'Yes'

<u>Justice</u>
"Justice" = 'Yes' OR "J_Activis" = 'Yes' OR "J_Gender" = 'Yes' OR "J_AniEnv" = 'Yes' OR "J_Human" = 'Yes' OR "J_Politic" = 'Yes' OR "J_RacstPo" = 'Yes' OR "J_Racism" = 'Yes' OR "J_PDE" = 'Yes' OR "J_RepHist" = 'Yes'

<u>MLK Reputation & Relevance</u>
"MLK_Life" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_GoodG" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_BadG" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_Radic" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_Dream" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_Legac" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_Gradi" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_Spirt" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_Consp" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_Consv" = 'Yes' OR "MLK_Recla" = 'Yes'

Pop Culture

"PC" = 'Yes' OR "PC_Music" = 'Yes' OR "PC_Sports" = 'Yes' OR "PC_Humor" = 'Yes' OR "PC_IntCul" = 'Yes' OR "PC_Entert" = 'Yes'

Once these shapefiles were developed, various maps and graphs were developed to better understand the spatial frequency and thematic distribution of the Tweets, both nationally and internationally. This method is critical to this dissertation, because it provides geographically explicit visualizations of the quantity and content of the sampled Tweets, allowing for the spatial examination of reputational politics in a comparative manner.

Locational Frequency Counts

To understand the spatial variation in Tweet frequency across the U.S. the domestic shapefile was mapped beginning with a simple point map showing the location of all the geotagged Tweets, however, this map seemed to portray the location of large cities in the U.S. more so than a meaningful quantity of Tweets (Appendix E). The next map developed was one that portrayed quantities using graduated colors and labeling of the total number of Tweets per state, however, this map seemed to portray population distribution among states more so than any meaningful Tweet frequency variation (Appendix F). This led me to create a map that normalized the number of Tweets per state by the population of each state (Appendix G). This map was slightly more telling for Tweet frequency distribution, highlighting the south west, delta south, D.C., and New York; however, the legend left much to be desired in terms of interpretability, long decimals even when converted to scientific notation are lackluster.

This realization directed me to create yet another map that took in to account the population but this time it was a map that showed the number of Tweets per 100,000 people. These numbers were computed using the field calculator and this equation: (number of Tweets per state)/(population/100,000). This alteration created legend numbers that were more readily

interpretable. An increase in the number of quantile breaks also enabled a more nuanced understanding of the spatial distribution of Tweet frequency. This is the map that is presented in the results section of the dissertation because it does the best job of visualizing the Tweets in relation to population.

With the population of each state successfully taken into consideration, I developed one more nationwide map to further examine the generalized spatial variation of all Tweets (Appendix H). This map showed distribution by calculating the percent of nationwide Tweets per state. This was done using the field calculator and dividing the total number of Tweets per state by the total number of nationwide Tweets (1,086). Though this mapping method does highlight the most populated states in the US (California, Texas, and New York) it is proven, to me, most useful when analyzing the thematic distribution of Tweets.

To understand the spatial variation of frequency across the world the international shapefiles were initially mapped, but the sparseness of the international data and the limited size of the map made it difficult to interpret and was aesthetically displeasing. Thus, this shapefile was exported to excel and graphs were developed instead. The graphs were developed using Microsoft Excel. The United States was left out of these visualizations because the U.S. has exponentially more Tweets and dominated the aesthetic. Graphs were created to show the number of Tweets per country and the number of Tweets per continent. The Tweets per country and continent graphs were then normalized by each country/continent's population to develop the rate of Tweets per 10 million people, this was calculated by using this equation: (number of Tweets per state)/(population/10,00,000). The United States Tweets and population where left out of these calculations and graphs because those stats dwarfed the other findings. This graphical visualization's utility was helpful for the interpretation of where Tweets with the

#MLKDay were most frequent that similar graphs were made for the United States, by state and by region. Zelinsky's (1980) qualitative work examining the vernacular regions of the U.S. is a seminal work in geography, thus the regions he identified were used for the regional frequency analysis.

Locational Thematic Analysis

To understand the spatial variation in the reputational politics that surround Dr. King's holiday across the U.S., the domestic thematic shapefiles were mapped individually and presented on the same page to aid in comparing the reputational politics. The method used for mapping the theme spatially followed a similar progression to the mapping of spatial frequency. The final mapping method that illuminated the changing discourse and most valued themes across the U.S. was one that compared the number of thematic Tweets to the total number of Tweets per state by calculating the percent of thematic Tweets per state. This was done using the field calculator and dividing the number of specific thematic Tweets by the total number of statewide Tweets (Figure 2).

Due to the fact that simultaneous codes were employed during the qualitative coding process some of the Tweets were assigned more than one code so the total percent is greater than 100%, in spite of this fact the maps still shows which themes were more and less valued across the U.S.

To explore the relevance of population associated with the spatial variation of thematic Tweets, a set of maps that showed the number of Tweets per 100,000 people was created. These numbers were computed much like the one for spatial frequency analysis using the field calculator and this equation:

$$\frac{Number\ of\ 'Thematic'\ Tweets\ Per\ State}{Statewide\ Population/100{,}000}$$

$$\frac{\textbf{Georgia's Holiday Observance Themed \#MLKDay Tweets } (49)}{\textbf{Georgia's Total Number of \# MLKDay Tweets } (88)}$$

$$= \textbf{Percent of Georgian \#MLKDay tweets that are about Holiday Observance } (55.6\%)$$

$$\frac{\textbf{Georgia's MLK's Relevance \& Reputation Themed \#MLKDay Tweets } (33)}{\textbf{Georgia's Total Number of \# MLKDay Tweets } (88)}$$

$$= \textbf{Percent of Georgian \#MLKDay tweets that are about MLK's Relevance \& Reputation } (37.5\%)$$

$$\frac{\textbf{Georgia's Pop Culture Themed \#MLKDay Tweets } (9)}{\textbf{Georgia's Total Number of \# MLKDay Tweets } (88)}$$

$$= \textbf{Percent of Georgian \#MLKDay tweets that are about Pop Culture } (10.2\%)$$

$$\frac{\textbf{Georgia's Justice Themed \#MLKDay Tweets } (18)}{\textbf{Georgia's Total Number of \# MLKDay Tweets } (88)}$$

$$= \textbf{Percent of Georgian \#MLKDay tweets that are about Justice } (20.5\%)$$

Figure 2: Example of Thematic Percent of Statewide Tweets Equations

To understand the spatial variation in the reputational politics that surround Dr. King's holiday, globally, the international thematic shapefiles were initially mapped individually and presented on the same page much like the domestic maps, but the sparseness of the international data and the limited size made the various maps difficult to interpret and aesthetically displeasing. Thus, these shapefiles were exported to Excel and graphs were developed instead. The graphs made were 2D column bar graphs, this style of graphing was chosen because of the quantitative utility they provide for visualizing the variation in qualitatively coded findings, as well as, their readily interpretable nature. Two graphs were generated, the first by country and the second by continent, both were normalized by Tweets per 10,000,000 people, much like that domestic thematic maps.

Chapter 6: Results & Discussion

This chapter describes and discusses the results that came from my research. Starting with the type of language that was present in geotagged Tweets with the #MLKDay, from the most frequently used words found in the word frequency analysis, to the ways in which memories of MLK are being leveraged to contribute to or advance certain political/economic agendas, and the presence or absence of Dr. King's radical ideologies about income equality determined through the qualitative content analysis. Followed by the locations where these Tweets about Dr. Kings holiday originate from, found through the locational frequency analysis. Then, this chapter describes the results of the locational thematic analysis that illuminates the spatial variation in reputational politics, domestically, by discussing what these difference in the reputational politics symbolize, what aspects of his reputation are most valued and where, and how these values vary by location. This chapter is concluded by describing the results of the locational thematic analysis, regarding the reputational politics associated with Tweets that originate from outside the United States and a discussion of how these differ from those that originate within the U.S.

Twitter's #MLKDay Language

The language used by Twitter users when posting about Martin Luther King Day was largely celebrating the holiday, events planned for the day, his life, his legacy, his dream, and his activism along with the activism his day and legacy inspire (Table 3). Other dominate uses of language associated with these Tweets were for the purpose of the marketing of various businesses and the promotion of internet culture, meaning Tweets that report what is trending on Twitter itself (Table 3). This can be seen by examining the quantitative and qualitative content analyses.

Figure 3: Word Frequency Analysis of #MLKDay Tweets

The quantitative content analysis, of word frequency shows the language Twitter users most frequently employed when posting about Martin Luther King Day are directly related to Dr. King's name, the celebration of his holiday, his legacy, and internet culture (Figure 3). The terms associated with Dr. King's names were clearly some of the largest and thus most frequent words; such as: mlk (265), king (158), martin (124), luther (119), #martinlutherking (27), and #martinlutherkingjr (27) (Figure 2). Those Tweets about Dr. King's himself were largely about how meaningful his life was, how his legacy inspired them, how grateful people were for his wisdom and leadership, and how great of man he was.

The terms correlated with the celebration of his holiday were also frequently used in both English and Spanish; such as: happy (95), today (72), #mlkdaya (70), celebrate (56), service (46)/volunteers (33), parade (37), #mlkday2016 (30), march (22), #mlkdayofservice (18), holiday (14), and #martinlutherkingday (12) (Figure 3). Many of the Tweets that were coded as 'celebrate' were offering a happy holiday wish to followers, happy birthday wishes for Dr. King, invitations to and presence at parades in his honor. The Tweets coded as 'event' were more about community service events, volunteer opportunities, and marches in his honor. Other Tweets coded under observance of the holiday were about businesses changing their hours of operation for that day and/or about marketing their business on social media. Those Tweets about hours of operation were often announcing changed hours or closings, while those about marketing encouraged readers to visit their location or webpage for special holiday deals and sales.

The terms correlated with King's personhood and legacy were frequently used, though slightly less so. These terms included words or hashtags such as: dreams (66)/#ihaveadream (28), love (48), great (48), thanks (39), honoring (32), memory (29)/remembering (23), legacy (28),

church (23)/ Baptist (10), inspirational (15), peace (13), black (11), freedom (11), hope (11), and #justice (10) (Figure 3). These terms generally show an admiration for his life and legacy, while placing value in his dream for racial equality and his inspirational strives from peace and justice.

The ways in which memories of MLK were being leveraged to contribute to or advance certain political/economic agendas, and the presence or absence of Dr. King's radical ideologies about income equality determined through the qualitative content analysis were persistently illuminated by the use of partial quotes. Those Tweets about his life and personhood largely evoked his words directly and indirectly; most persistently was his *I Have a Dream* speech. Dr. King's *I Have a Dream* speech was the keynote address he gave at *The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom* (King, 1963). This speech is present on the physical memorial landscape through the engraving of the quote at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington D.C., (there are 16 MLK quotes engraved in this memorial site) the part of the speech engraved into the statue itself is, "Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope" (NPS, 2016). This quote was chosen because it serves as a metaphor for the memorial's design, the memorial itself serving as the stone of hope while the mountain is presumably the U.S. government (NPS, 2016). The part of the speech that was most commonly evoked within the Twitter data was 'I have a dream,' which refers to Dr. King's vision for racial equality, which is largely what this speech was about, however, the underlying, less recognized purpose of this speech and this march was about people of color being trapped in poverty. This is clearly evident when the following phrases are brought to light: "the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity," "we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt," "a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds,'" and "mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one." Though these phrases were not present in the Twitter data the predominance of

references to the speech as a whole speaks to the prevalence of his entire message. The references to this speech within the Twitter data, though largely focused on the word 'dream' and the phrase 'I have a dream,' were diverse. Some of them celebrated the history of his dream:

> 'celebrate the dreams of MLK,' 'honor his dream,' 'dreaming big,' 'a profound dream,' '#HonoringTheDream,' & 'Martin had a dream.'

Many of them spoke of his dream as alive and still working:

> 'still dreaming,' '#TheDreamContinues,' 'the dream still lives,' 'your/the dream lives on,' 'your dream still lives in me,' '#BeTheDream,' '#KeepTheDreamAlive,' 'we keep have that DREAM,' 'we still have a dream,' 'let's all live the dream,' & 'his dream will live forever,' & 'hoping the world can one day make your dream come true.'

While others invoked his dream as a call to action:

> 'still working toward the dream,' 'realizing MLK's dream requires work,' it is our duty to keep on dreaming,' 'defend the dream,' & 'do more than dream.'

These abundant and diverse uses of the Dr. King's *I Have a Dream* speech through social media highlight the determined demands to fight overt and structural racism within society, and the need to address economic power struggles that endure along the lines of race and reach beyond. Here I will note that the purpose for paraphrasing individuals' Tweets and the text within is that many people do not recognize their Tweets as public data that could be studied and quoted, so I do not directly quote them in order to maintain their anonymity, due to the fact that directly quoted Tweets can be entered into search engines and openly connected to the person who wrote it. The words individuals use and how they use them is an important factor of analysis for reputational politics, because they serve to elucidate how people interpret and reproduce the politics that surround historical figures' reputations, however, these meanings are maintained through my paraphrasing and anonymity within this research is of upmost importance.

Three other of Dr. King's speeches were recurrently quoted, though none nearly as much as his, *I Have a Dream.* The second most quoted speech was, *Keep Moving from This Mountain,*

which he gave at Spelman College about social dignity and political persistence, criticizing capitalism and encouraging people to do what they could to continue making progress (King, 1960). The extensive quotes pulled directly from Dr. King's speeches that follow are integral to understanding the ideological filtering contemporary society has accepted by extracting and sharing selective phrases from his speeches that lend themselves to his more homogenized reputation, rather than his radical ideologies. The Tweets referring to his *Keep Moving from This Mountain* speech shortened his words from,

> Keep moving, for it may well be that the greatest song has not yet been sung, the greatest book has not been written, the highest mountain has not been climbed. This is your challenge! Reach out and grab it and make it a part of your life. Reach up beyond cloud-filled skies of oppression and bring out blazing stars of inspiration. The basic thing is to keep moving. Move out of these mountains that impede our progress to this new and noble and marvelous land. Langston Hughes said something very beautiful in 'Mother to Son' (King, 1960).

to, 'keep moving forward,' 'never stop moving forward,' '#keep moving,' and other short phrases. The mountains to which King refers in his speech are symbolic of relativism, materialism, segregation, and violence (King, 1960). The recurrent quoting of this speech encourages us to remember the imperfections of materialism, and thus capitalism though it is not directly said in any of the Tweets examined in this study.

The two speeches tied for third most quoted were, *Where Do We Go From Here* and *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution. Where Do We Go From Here*, was given to the 11th Annual SCLC Convention where King spoke about his social and political views, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, nonviolence, and the Vietnam War (King, 1967). Twitter users abbreviated the quote from this speech to, 'I've decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear,' was originally:

> And I say to you, I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems. (Yes) And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I

> go. I know it isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. (No) And I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love; I'm talking about a strong, demanding love. (Yes) For I have seen too much hate. (Yes) I've seen too much hate on the faces of sheriffs in the South. (Yeah) I've seen hate on the faces of too many Klansmen and too many White Citizens Councilors in the South to want to hate, myself, because every time I see it, I know that it does something to their faces and their personalities, and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. (Yes, That's right) I have decided to love. [applause] (King, 1967).

Twitter users focused on this quote are paying attention to the section of the speech that is about hate and racism. However, King's speech just a few minutes after that quote dives deep into economic and political philosophy, pushing people to think more critically about what the current world powers were feeding them. Dr. King stated:

> Now, when I say questioning the whole society, it means ultimately coming to see that the problem of racism, the problem of economic exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together. (All right) These are the triple evils that are interrelated. …In other words, "Your whole structure (Yes) must be changed." [applause] A nation that will keep people in slavery for 244 years will "thingify" them and make them things. (Speak) And therefore, they will exploit them and poor people generally economically. (Yes) And a nation that will exploit economically will have to have foreign investments and everything else, and it will have to use its military might to protect them. All of these problems are tied together. (Yes) [applause] What I'm saying today is that we must go from this convention and say, "America, you must be born again!" [applause] (Oh yes) (1967).

If it were this section of the speech that was pulled into focus on social media it would better illuminate Dr. King as the true revolutionary that he was and show why the U.S. government felt the need to sanitize his message and place the movement he led in the past. Focusing on the entirety of his words, rather than those that have been touted by the masses, bring to light his clear view of racialized politics and economic power struggles that our society has not yet reckoned with.

MLK's more radical ideologies about income equality were more directly present in the Tweets, however, they were few and far between. A total of five Tweets were coded as 'radical' meaning they addressed some of Dr. King's radical ideologies. The key example of these

exclaimed that his dream still lives today and that when he was assassinated he was in the process of planning the Poor People's Campaign, which would have been an occupation of D.C. by those in the Civil Rights Movement who believed that income equality was a necessary step toward equality, because equality in the truest form entailed equity. The other four Tweets addressed his assassination as being linked to his fight for equity or his relationship or lack thereof with the black power movement and Malcom X. The repetitive nature of racist history is also notable in eight Tweets. Two of these Tweets serve as key representations of this unfortunately continued legacy of racism in the U.S. One of them asserted that color lines have been replaced and structurally prolonged in education divides. The other declared that Dr. King would be disappointed in the minimal progress that our society has made in squashing bigots and intolerance.

Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution, was Dr. King's second to last speech given on March 31st 1968 in Washington D.C. at the National Cathedral (King, 1968). The speech was about Dr. King's social and political views, the speed of progress, his travels, nonviolence, and the Vietnam War (King, 1968). The quote shortened in Tweets to, 'The time is always right, to do what is right,' was originally,

> Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God. And without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. So we must help time and realize that <u>the time is always ripe to do right.</u> Now there is another myth that still gets around: it is a kind of over reliance on the bootstrap philosophy. There are those who still feel that if the Negro is to rise out of poverty, if the Negro is to rise out of the slum conditions, if he is to rise out of discrimination and segregation, he must do it all by himself. And so they say the Negro must lift himself by his own bootstraps. They never stop to realize that no other ethnic group has been a slave on American soil. The people who say this never stop to realize that the nation made the black man's color a stigma. But beyond this they never stop to realize the debt that they owe a people who were kept in slavery two hundred and forty-four years. (King, 1968)

The fact that this is the section of the speech that is repeatedly quoted within the Tweets under examination shows that it is still time to do what is right, and there is still progress to be made in the face of racial income inequality and affirmative action. I should also take this opportunity to note that Dr. King was first a minister and spoke of the power of God in his speeches and that many of his speeches were sermons and delivered in churches across the U.S., which makes the pervasiveness of Tweets containing references to spiritual faith unsurprising. The section of this speech that is quoted on Twitter as simply, 'the time is always right to do what is right,' is preceded by his assertion that,

> Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighborhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood. …And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. (King, 1968)

And it is followed by him positing that,

> In a few weeks some of us are coming to Washington to see if the will is still alive or if it is alive in this nation. We are coming to Washington in a Poor People's Campaign. …We are coming to demand that the government address itself to the problem of poverty. …to make the invisible visible. Why do we do it this way? We do it this way because it is our experience that the nation doesn't move around questions of genuine equality for the poor and for black people until it is confronted massively, dramatically in terms of direct action. Great documents are here to tell us something should be done. We met here some years ago in the White House conference on civil rights. And we came out with the same recommendations that we will be demanding in our campaign here, but nothing has been done. …I want to say one other challenge that we face is simply that we must find an alternative to war and bloodshed. Anyone who feels, and there are still a lot of people who feel that way, that war can solve the social problems facing mankind is sleeping through a great revolution. President Kennedy said on one occasion, "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind." (King, 1968)

It was four short days later that Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, TN where he was helping support the local sanitation workers who were on strike due to poor and unsafe working conditions, suffice it to say he never made it to Washington to lead the Poor People's Campaign. If the quotes that were taken from this speech were to focus on his understanding of a worldwide

community and his antiwar stance his legacy would work to include his revolutionary and truest self. The three speeches I have noted after the *I Have a Dream* speech are not present on the physical memorial landscape, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington D.C., these absences can be seen as a form of 'prescriptive forgetting,' because those in power do not want his distaste for capitalism and commitment to pursuing income equality through social democracy to be remembered or honored in anyway.

A contemporary Civil Rights Movement that could be considered to be radical is the Black Lives Matter Movement. The Black Lives Matter Movement's, "mission is to build local power and to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes," it was started in 2013, "in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman," who was a neighborhood watch coordinator (Black Lives Matter, 2018). Its formation as an organization grew in 2014 when, "Mike Brown was murdered by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson" (Black Lives Matter, 2018). Racist policing was prevalent in the data as it is strongly associated with the Black Lives Matter Movement, that movement was directly mentioned in ten of the fourteen Tweets. Tweets addressing the racist practices of policing in the U.S. today were actively attempting to reclaim the legacy of Dr. King as a radical activist. Many of these Tweets also worked to shame those who frame Dr. King's legacy in a manner that perpetuates the 'fact' that racism is no longer a prevalent issue within our society. The #reclaimmlk was used in association with the need to continue dreaming. News stations were targeted for exploiting MLK Day to pretend that they care about people of color, while every other day of the year ignoring important racial issues, such as Black Lives Matter protests and the unwarranted and unprecedented policing and killing of black people. Mario Woods was directly named in one of the Tweets as an example of those unjust killings of black people by

police. Mario Woods was 26 when he was shot twenty-one times by San Francisco Police, because he was holding a knife and suspected for a recent assault. The police initially claimed that Woods was lunging toward them when they decided to fire on him, however, video later released showed that he was simply standing in place posing no threat to at least five officers whom all had their guns drawn. His murder clearly distilled the key issues the BLM Movement was formed to resist. It was such a high-profile murder that Beyoncé's performance at the Super Bowl that year contained a sign that read, "Justice 4 Mario Woods." These Tweets also contained one that contained a photo of Dr. King being arrested by two white police officers in Montgomery, AL and a statement about him being an inspirational activist while touting that this photo was the 'first selfie' with cops taken by black protesters.

Though, none of the Tweets that made referenced the Black Lives Matter Movement also referenced Dr. King' s assassination, the distrust for government officials goes beyond police. Many Tweets cite Dr. King's assassination, but one stood out from the rest. One of the Tweets implicated a shadowed government conspiracy theory that J. Edgar Hoover, who was head of the FBI during four key political assasinations. These four assassination were: Dr. King who was assassinated in Memphis, TN in 1968; about three years after Malcom X was assassinated in 1965; five and half years after President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963; and three months before Robert Kennedy was assassinated after winning the presidential primary in California. Even though many investigations into these assassinations have determined there is no connection to the government and no connection to one another.

The terms that come through the word frequency analysis that are clearly related to internet culture, more so than MLK or his holiday, are surprisingly present; such as: #trndnl (96), #whatwomenwantin5words (72), trends (52), #bluemonday (38), #mondaymotivation (25),

Tweets (21), and #repost (12) (Figure 2). The Tweets coded as ‘internet culture’ were those that listed hashtags that were trending on that day, as you can see from the other hashtags present in the frequency count listed above. Other Tweets coded as ‘internet culture’ stated that Tweets with #MLKDay were trending, many of them containing the specific number of Tweets that had the hashtag, on that day, at that time, and requested others retweet their Tweet to get the word out. A political term that was present in the higher frequencies was #trumpdebate (12) but these were coded as ‘internet culture’ rather than political because it was only brought up in the context of trending hashtags, not in any commentary about MLK Day (Figure 3).

The memories of MLK being invoked contribute to and advance the political agendas of democrats, predominantly. Of the twenty-six political Tweets, fourteen were in support of democratic politicians, one was in support of a republican politician, one was bipartisan, and four were about voting. Given that the vast majority of this data were collected in 2016, there were a few references to the presidential election, three in support of Bernie Sanders, one supporting Hillary Clinton, two that were anti-Donald Trump, and one that exclaimed we were in need of a president like Dr. King. It is not surprising that out of all the Tweets about presidential candidates, Bernie Sanders had the most connections with MLK Day given the fact that he is a strong supporter of income equality, and socialized democracy, much like Dr. King. For example, one of the Tweets supporting Bernie Sanders contained the #thedreamcontinues, presumably referring to Dr. King’s progressive dream of income equality that would make meaningful progress toward equity for all. One of the Tweets that contained anti-Donald Trump sentiments claimed that MLK Day wouldn’t exist if Trump won the election and the other exclaimed there is not a day to waste because we need to save the world from a Trump presidency. This analysis of Tweets related to U.S. politics serves as a salient example of how

the reputations of historical figures like MLK, are often framed to serve a political purpose or party, and that how they are remembered and for what purpose are just as often defined and redefined by those who invoke their names and legacies.

The women of the movement, such as Rosa Parks, Mary Fair Burks, and JoAnn Robinson, were not noted in any of the Tweets examined. Three of the eight Tweets that were coded as 'gender & sexuality' were about men and their courage. One was about sex and social justice as it relates to the fight against AIDS. Four were focused on women, three of those four focused on the beauty and sex appeal of women of color. The one Tweet that spoke of women without noting their beauty was also the only one that honored the 'strong black women who stood with Dr. King,' not naming them, rather noting they deserve recognition. This Tweet was retweeted over 200 times and liked more than 500 times, however the comments that responded to it were a back and forth between 'MLK was a Republican, pro-life' and 'MLK was a democratic socialist,' none about the women themselves. Thus, the women of the Civil Rights Movement were blocked out, over simplified, and de-radicalized by this set of Tweets; much like they have been in the mainstream, hegemonic narrative of the Civil Rights Movement that focuses on a sterilized version of Dr. King and no one else.

In conclusion, the language used by Twitter users when posting about Martin Luther King Day was quantitatively and qualitatively found to be predominantly about MLK's life, legacy, and celebrating the holiday; other dominate uses of language associated with these Tweets were for the purpose of the marketing and promoting internet trends. The most frequently used words were associated with Dr. King's name, celebrating his holiday, and his dream/legacy. Memories of MLK were used to advance Bernie Sanders political campaign more so than any other and this was expected due to the time period of data collection and due to the fact that

Bernie Sanders and Dr. King support democratic socialism. Dr. King's radical ideologies about income equality were rarely directly present in the data. However, when the MLK quotes that were most frequently found in the data were placed in the context they were given in, his more radical ideologies came into clear view, as did the fact that his more radical ideologies have been ushered out of popular memory.

Where is #MLKDay

Spatialized reputational politics can be seen initially through the location frequency counts and later by thematic location analysis. This initial analysis of domestic spatialized reputational politics through locational frequency counts is supplemented by the Southern Poverty Law Center's grading of Civil Rights Movement curriculum standards by state, which, found that in most state the teaching requirement regarding the Civil Rights Movement are "grossly inadequate or non-existent" with an "average grade of F" (SPLC, 2011). The only states the earned and A were Alabama, Florida, and New York, and the only three states to earn a B were Georgia, Illinois, and South Carolina (SPLC, 2011). There were six states that earned a C, these include: Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, and Maryland (SPLC, 2011). Four states earned a D (Arizona, Arkansas, Massachusetts, and D.C.), which, is a failing grade, but teach enough to not earn an F like the remaining 35 states (SPLC, 2011). These grades supplement this analysis because it is the best comparative resource I could find.

Domestically, by region, the most #MLKDay Tweets came out of the North East, followed by the West Coast, and the South (Figure 4). Given that these are the regions of the U.S. that are most populous that is not surprising given the data utilized. The states with the most #MLKDay Tweets were California and Georgia (Figure 5).

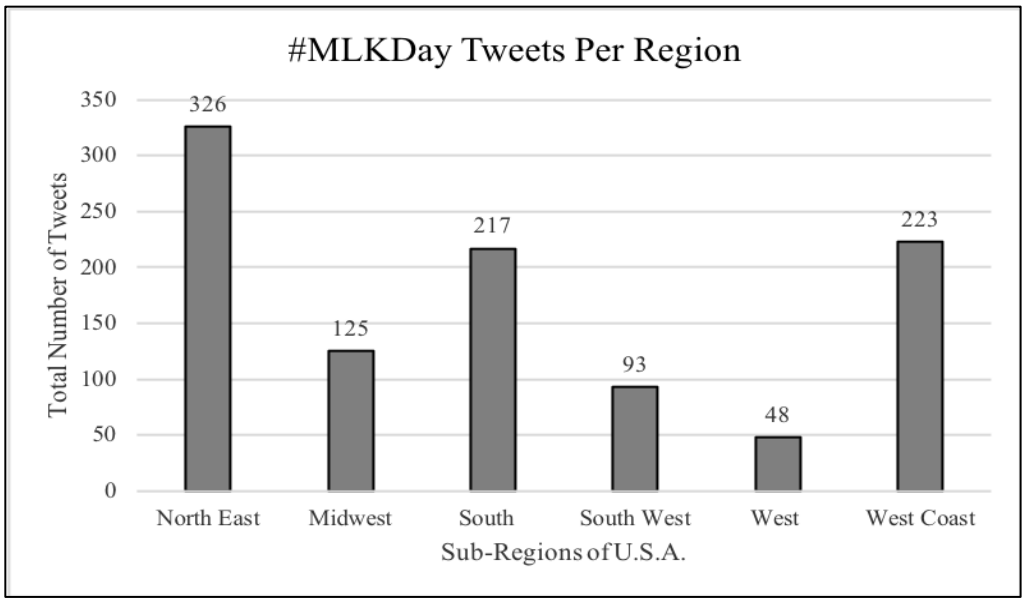

Figure 4: #MLKDay Tweet by Region

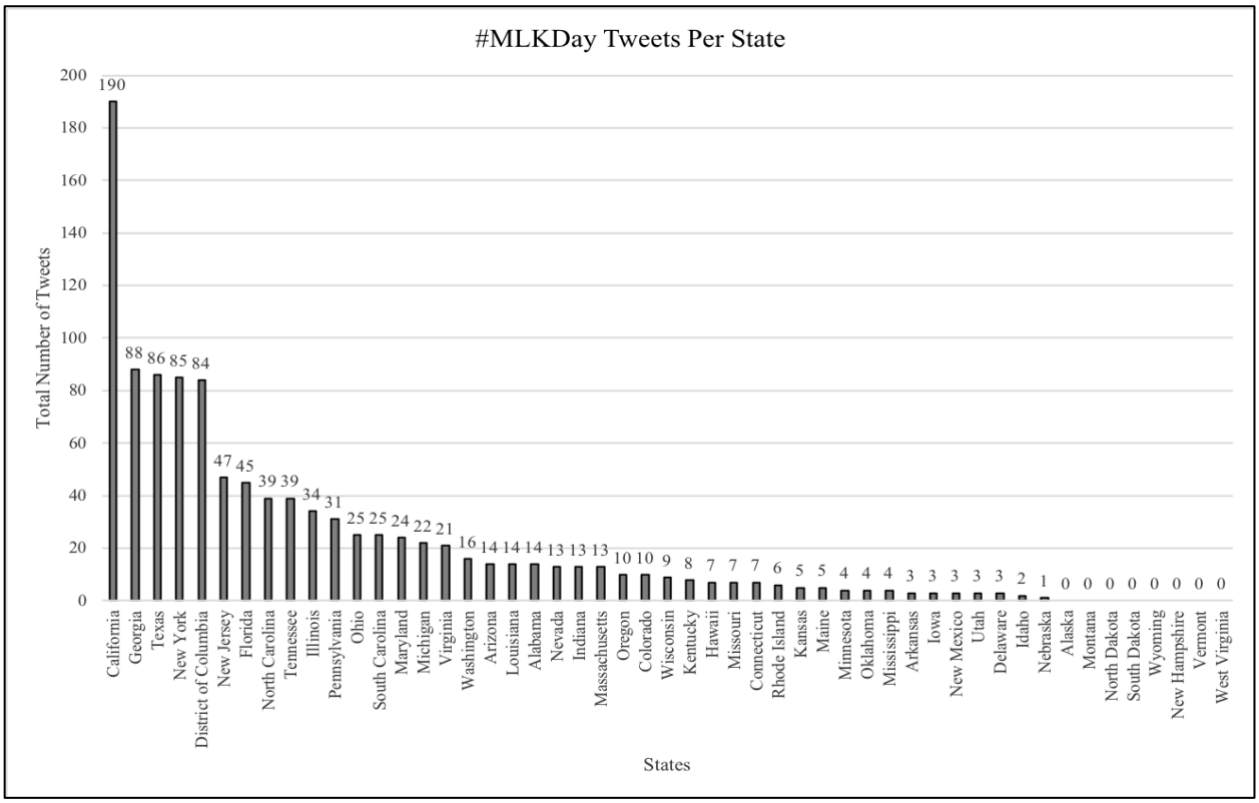

Figure 5: #MLKDay Tweet by State

Given the population and progressive liberal political leanings of California, this state's dominance is not surprising, in spite of the SPLC's F grading of it. Georgia is MLK's home state and earned a B from the SPLC's grading rubric, so these findings are also unsurprising (SPLC 2011). The states that were most seen most in the word frequency analysis included: New York (25), Texas (19), Houston (13), Oakland (13), Atlanta (12), Miami (12), and Illinois (11) (Figure 3). Given that fact that New York and Florida both earned As, Georgia and Illinois both earned Bs, and Texas earned a C from the SPLC's grading of curriculum this is also understandable (SPLC, 2011). Oakland, CA given its population, progressive politics, and proximity to the University of California Berkeley, where the Ad Hoc Committee to End Racial Discrimination was formed, this is also understandable, in spite of the poor educational curriculum related to the movement and Dr. King. When the quantity of Tweets is coupled with population by state, California fades a bit and Georgia pops out has having a high rate of Tweets by population (Figure 6). Again, Georgia is where Martin Luther King was born and where his resting place remains today, so it would make sense that those who are locally familiar with his revolutionary legacy, which is well taught in grade schools, would want to celebrate his holiday and his legacy.

Globally, the vast majority of Tweets originate from the U.S. (1,086). However, when the U.S. is left out and the data is normalized by population, Oceania provides the greatest contribution of data, followed by North America (Canada and Mexico), followed by Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia (Figure 7). Forty countries from around the world were points of origin for #MLKDay (Figure 8). Ireland, Sweden, Kuwait, Canada, and the Dominican Republic, when rated by population contributed more than Tweets referring to the King holiday, than any of the others (Figure 8).

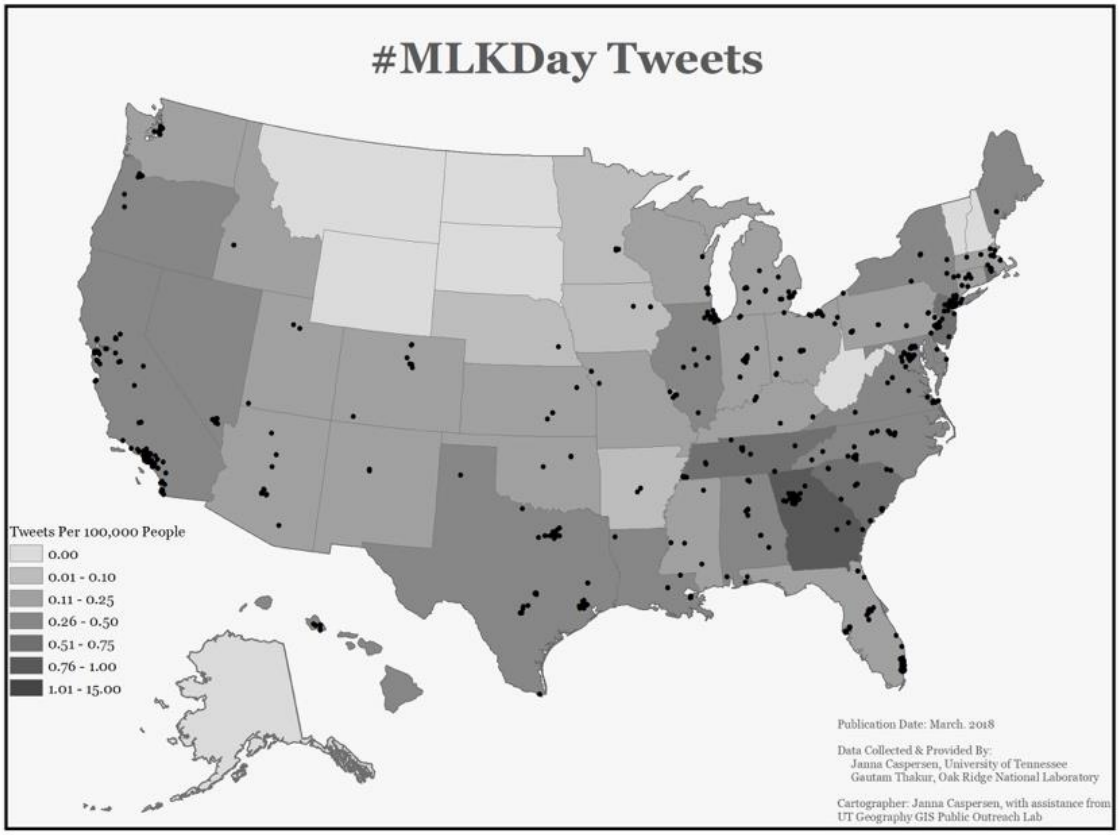

Figure 6: Map of #MLKDay Tweets per 100,000 People

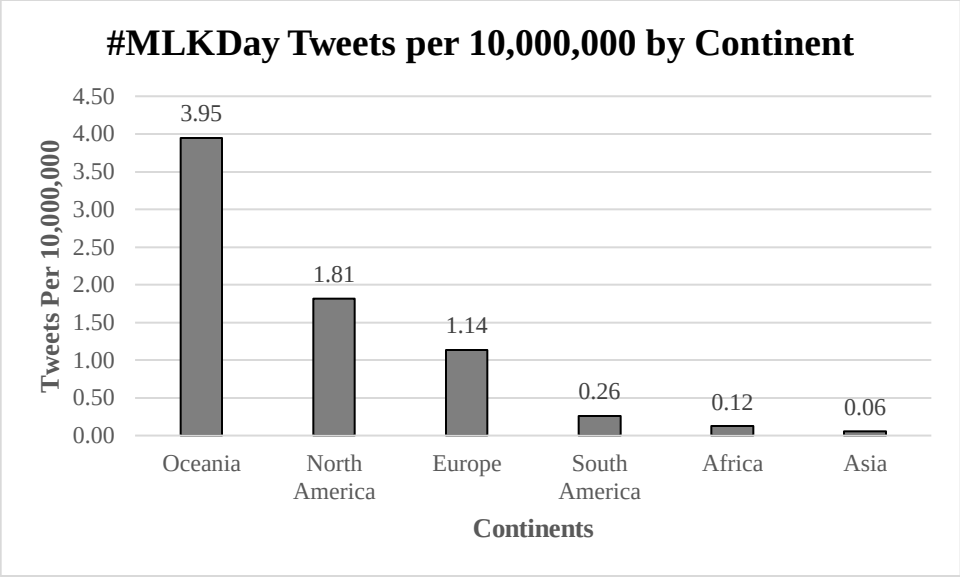

Figure 7: #MLKDay Tweets per 10,000,000 by Continent

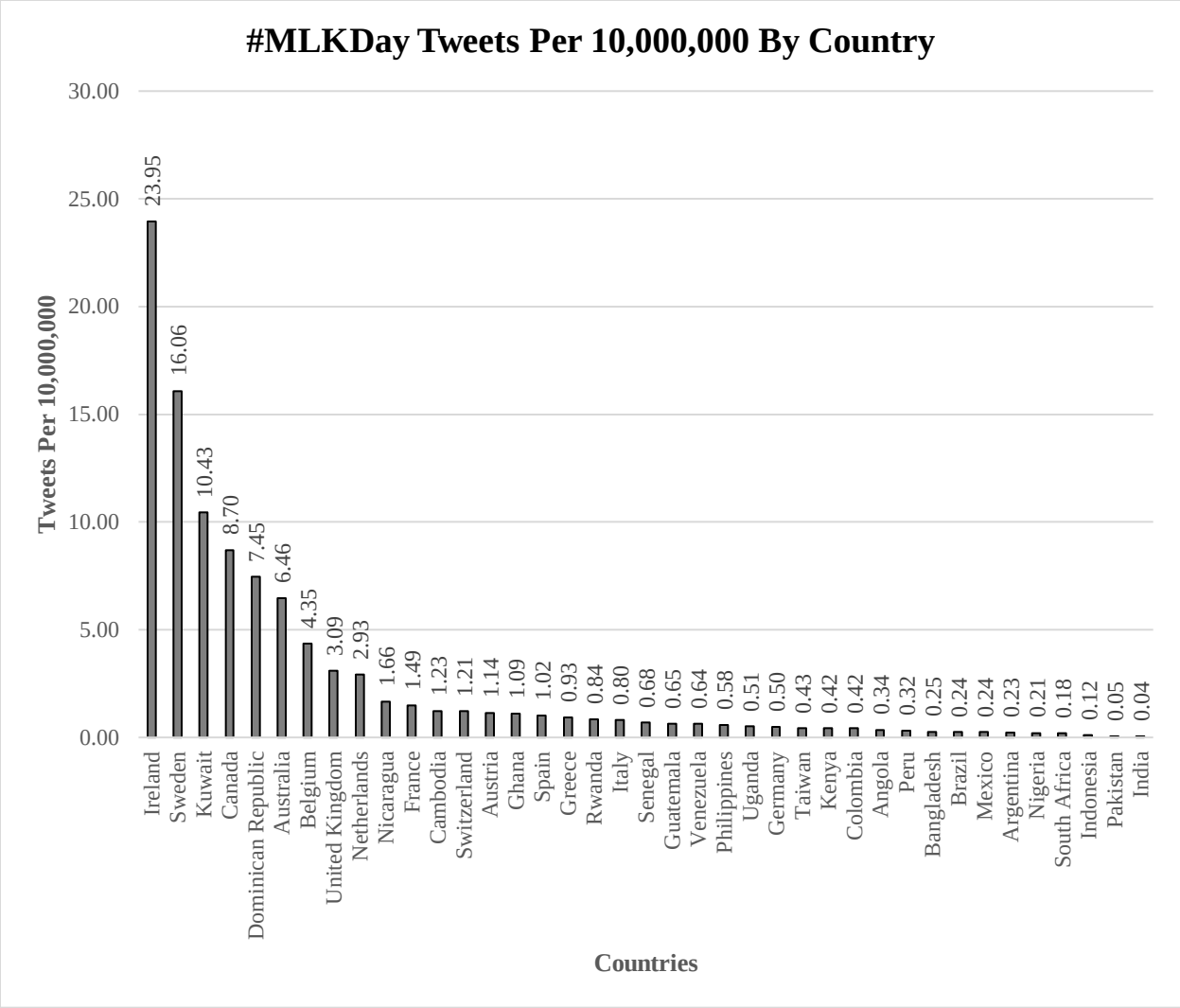

Figure 8: #MLKDay Tweets per 10,000,000 by Country

Five of the top ten countries are places considered to be more racially tolerant, by the World Values Survey, while four have no data to present, and one (The Dominican Republic) is considered to be moderately racially tolerant (Fisher, 2013).

In conclusion, there is spatial variation across the U.S. and world when analyzing Tweets with the #MLKDay. Domestically, Twitter users who post about Dr. King's holiday are regionally located in the Northeast, South, and West Coast, and more specifically by state in California, Georgia, Texas, New York, and D.C., all with almost more than twice as many Tweets as any other state. Internationally, Twitter users who post about Dr. King's holiday are dominantly located in Oceania and North American when the frequency is rated by population, and more specifically, Ireland and Sweden.

#MLKDay in the U.S.

Twitter's #MLKDay thematically coded reputational politics changes by location, domestically, both regionally and by state. Considering statewide population Georgia pops out for all the themes, compared to others states that stand out for specific themes (Figure 9). Much of the East, South, and West show interest in observing the holiday (Figure 9). While Georgia is flanked by Tennessee, and the North East with Tweets about Dr. King as a person, his reputation and his relevance (Figure 9). Georgia and Alabama are the two states with the most Justice themed Tweets, when the total is rated by population (Figure 9). Considering the fact that the majority of the activism associated with Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement took place in the south-eastern region of the U.S., the physical cultural contact zone in this region is clearly represented within the contemporary cultural contact zone of Twitter when viewing the Tweets in relation to population (Figure 9).

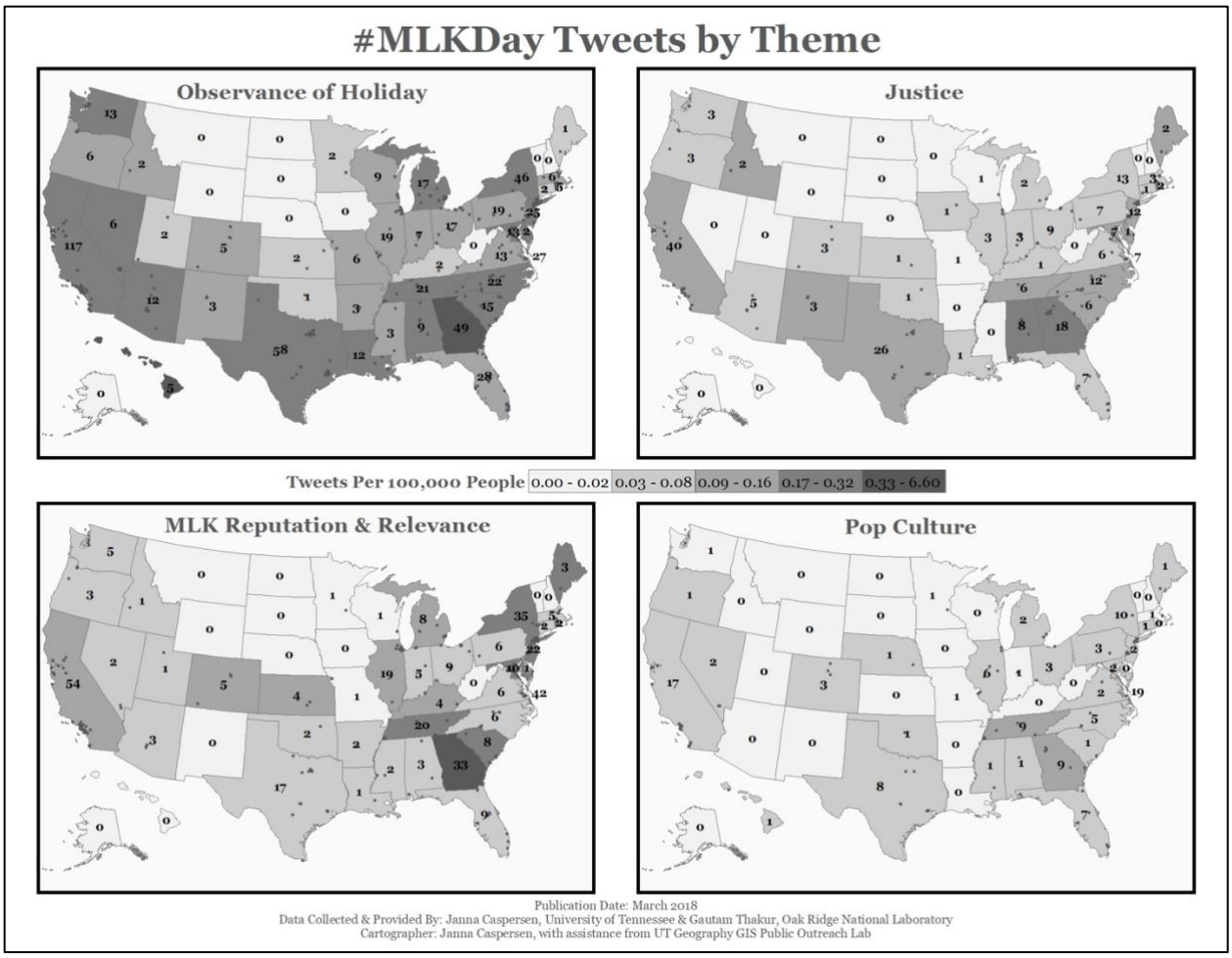

Figure 9: Maps of #MLKDay Tweets by Theme in U.S. per 100,000 People

When considering the dominant themes by their percent of total statewide Tweets more variation by state can be seen between the themes that are most prevalent. Observance of the holiday itself is clearly the most pervasive theme, followed by MLK's reputation and relevance, justice, and pop culture (Figure 10). Using a bar graph to visualize the thematic results is helpful in showing the clear majority of Tweets that relate to observance of the holiday, and the vast number of Tweets coming from California, while also portraying the prevalence of Tweets from Georgia, Texas, New York, and D.C. (Figure 11). Regionally visualizing the thematic distribution of Tweets shows that the South is the true leader in terms of observing the holiday, while the North East leads in Tweets about Dr. King himself, and the two were close to a tie for themes about justice (Figure 12). The west coast shows that the majority of those Tweets are associated with the observance of the holiday. The Midwest is also clearly most interested in the observance of the holiday and closely followed by MLK himself (Figure 12).

In conclusion, the thematic reputational politics that surround Dr. King are spatially varied in the United States. The #MLKDay Tweets in the U.S. are largely about observance of the holiday, in the places that have them at all. Those that concern justice are largely found along the east coast, the delta south, and California. Those that concern MLK's reputation and relevance are located in those same regions. In the Midwest, Illinois stands out with nineteen Tweets along with Michigan at seventeen as related to MLK reputation and observance. These differences in discourse across the United States potentially symbolize a difference in the ways these places value Dr. King as a historic civil rights leader, however, the generalization of these findings is not reasonable considering the small subsect of data used and the understanding that social media is not used by all or every day.

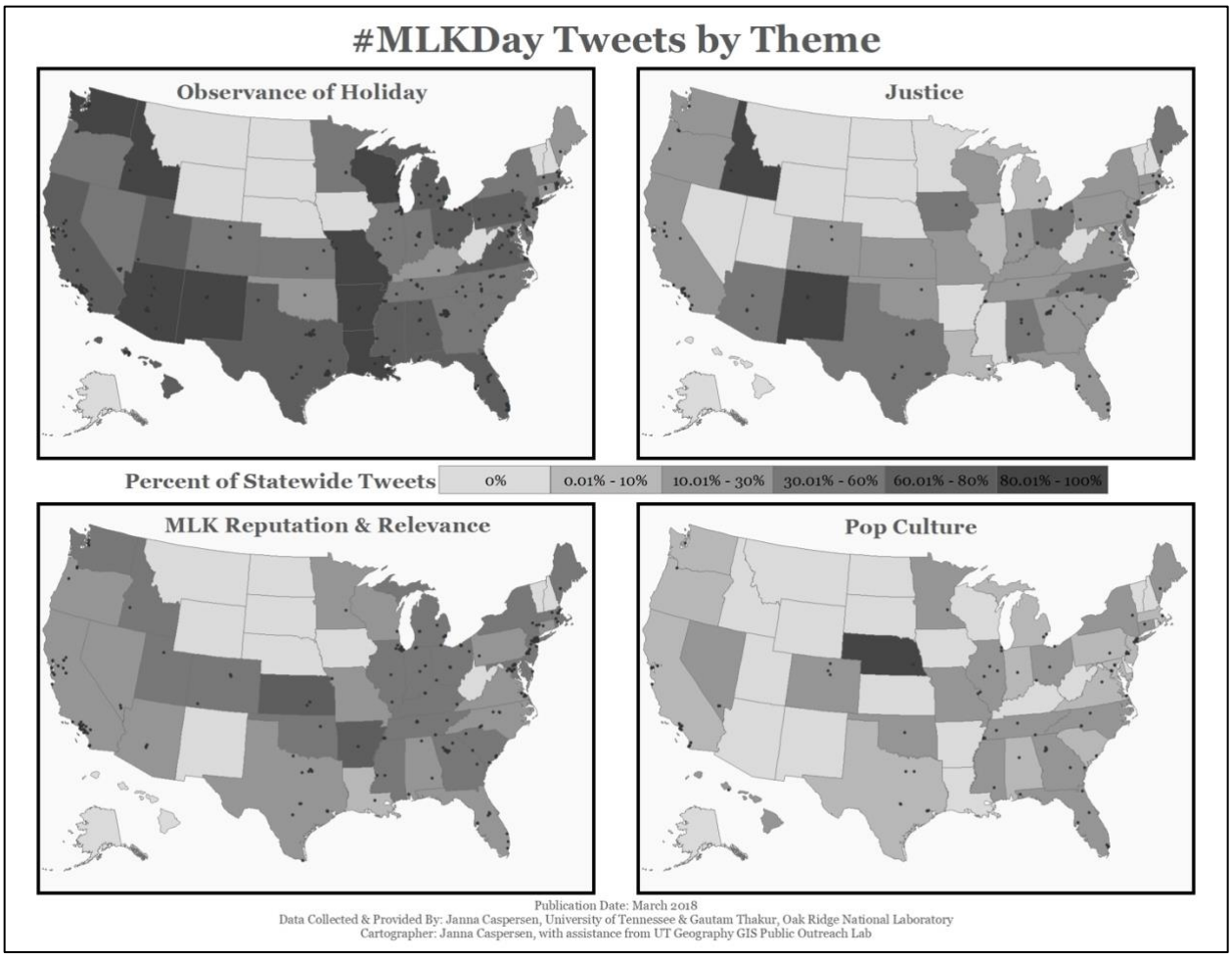

Figure 10: Maps of #MLKDay Tweets by Theme in U.S.

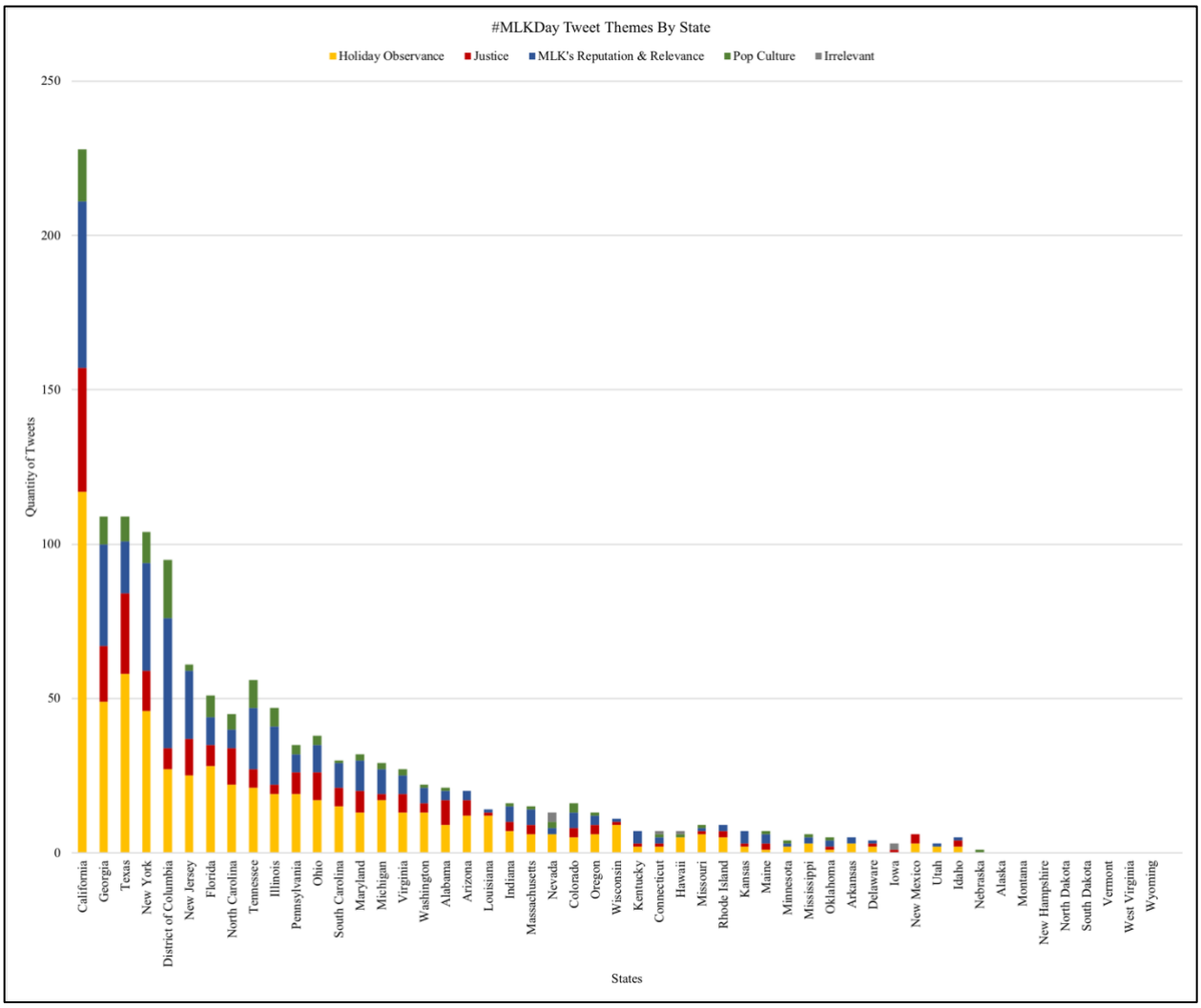

Figure 11: #MLKDay Tweet Themes by State

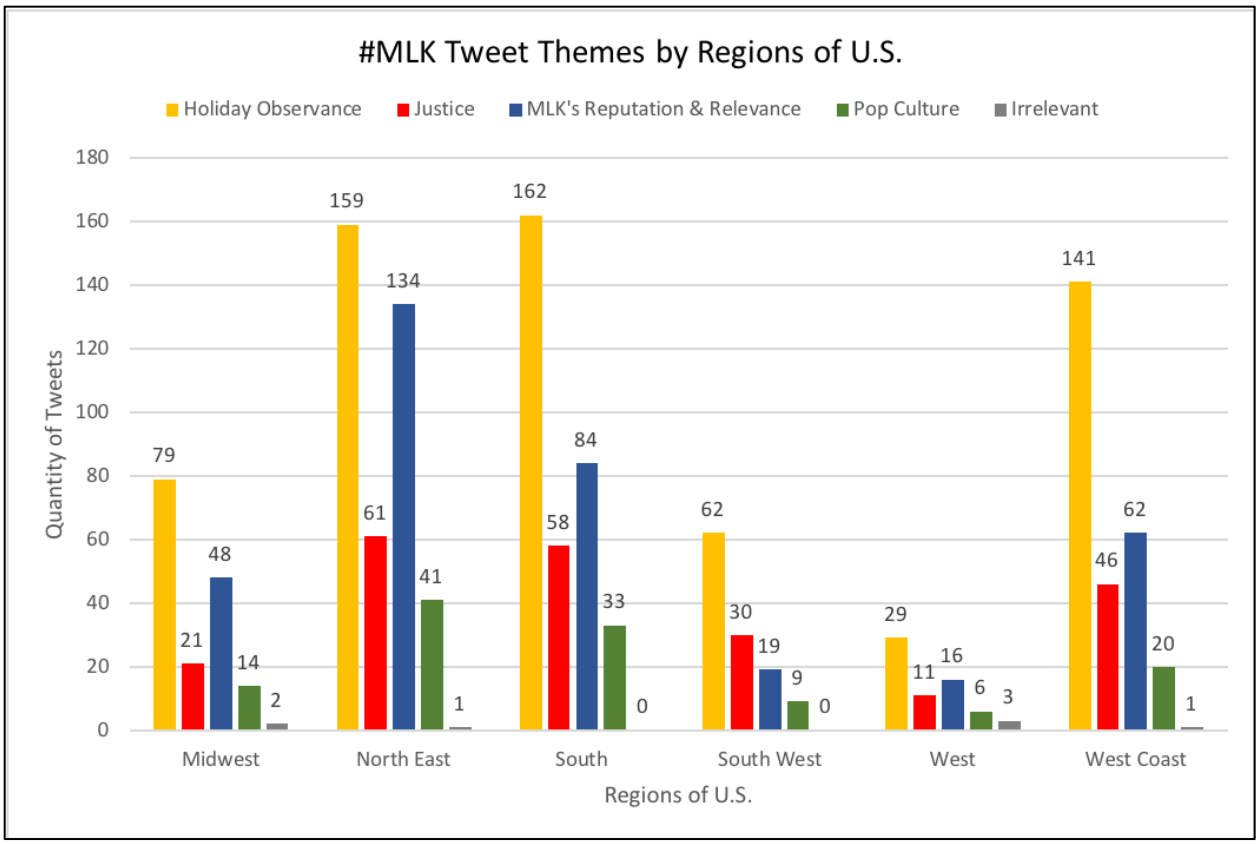

Figure 12: #MLKDay Tweet Themes by Regions in U.S.

#MLKDay Around the World

When "The Dream" goes global the significant differences seen in discourse about MLK are clear when it is examined by continent, all show Tweets that perpetuate internet culture, Oceania with the most, followed by North America and Europe (Figure 13). Considering the relatively small sample size of Tweets, and Twitter's lack of popularity abroad these finding should not generalize about the populations as a whole. The transnational movement of specific memories can, however, be seen as lens through which to view the countries issues, because the diffusion of ideas that circulate around certain memories are modified and absorbed in ways that benefit the ideological perspective of the consumer (Yoon & Alderman, 2018). The main difference between Tweets that came from international locations versus those from the United States of America is the pervasiveness of pop cultural Tweets, that mostly have to do with 'internet culture,' the trending of hashtags (Figure 13). Whereas, in the U.S. the observance of the holiday is most frequent, thus the contemporary cultural diffusion of celebrating Dr. King's holiday is not as strong in the contemporary cultural contact zone of Twitter, as the propagation of internet culture.

When examining the themes of Tweets by country a few interesting findings stick out. Bangladesh and Kuwait only have Tweets about MLK himself. The ones from Bangladesh express admiration for his love of education and his legendary activism, while those from Kuwait all cheer on the idea of keeping his dream alive (Figure 14). Nigeria, Uganda, Cambodia, Guatemala, and Indonesia are the only countries with Tweets about Justice, Nigeria having twice as many as the rest (Figure 14). The relevant Tweets that came out of Nigeria were about supporting activism and industrial pollution violating basic human rights, thus it is clear that

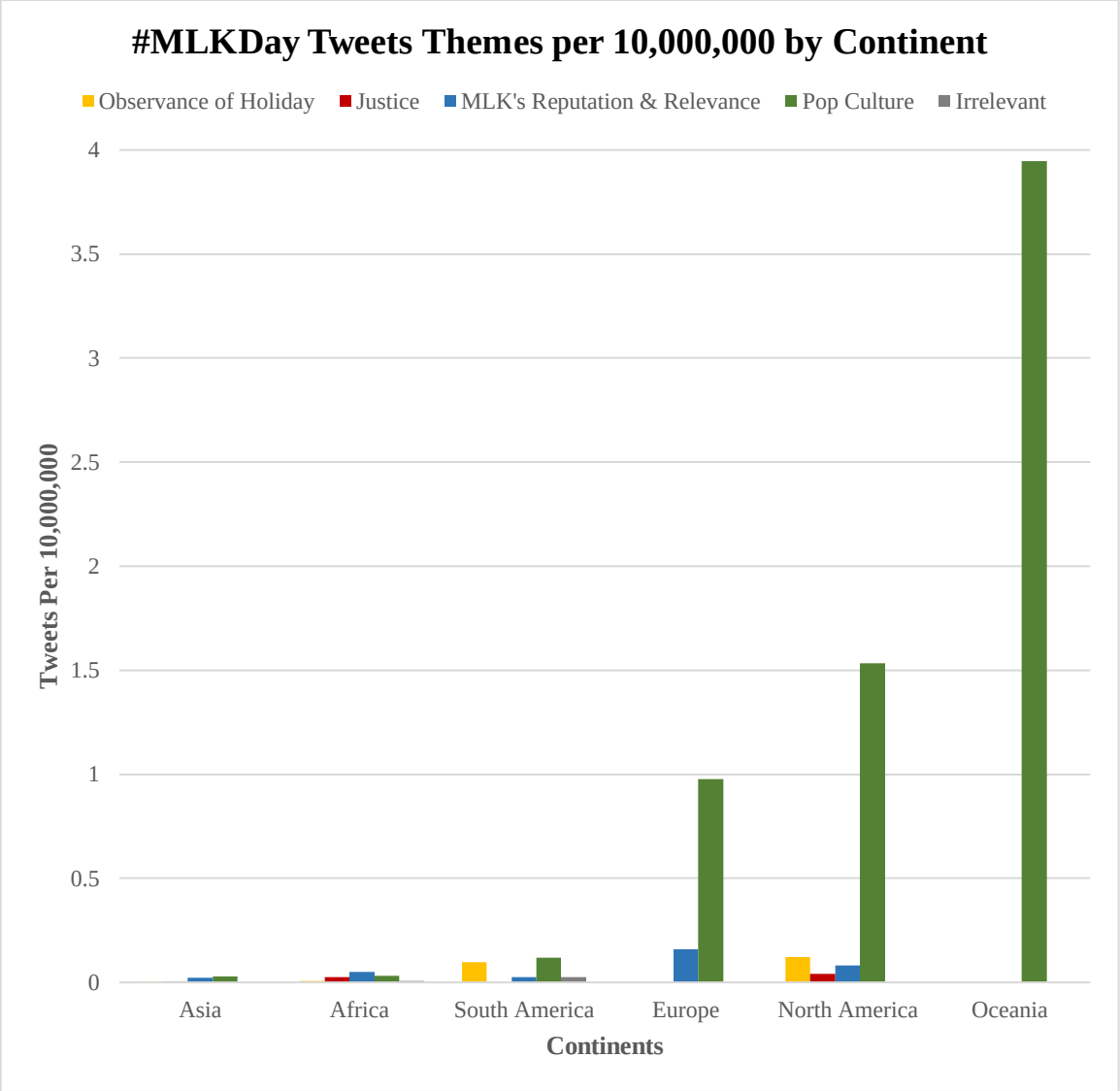

Figure 13: #MLKDay Tweet Themes per 10,000,000 by Continent

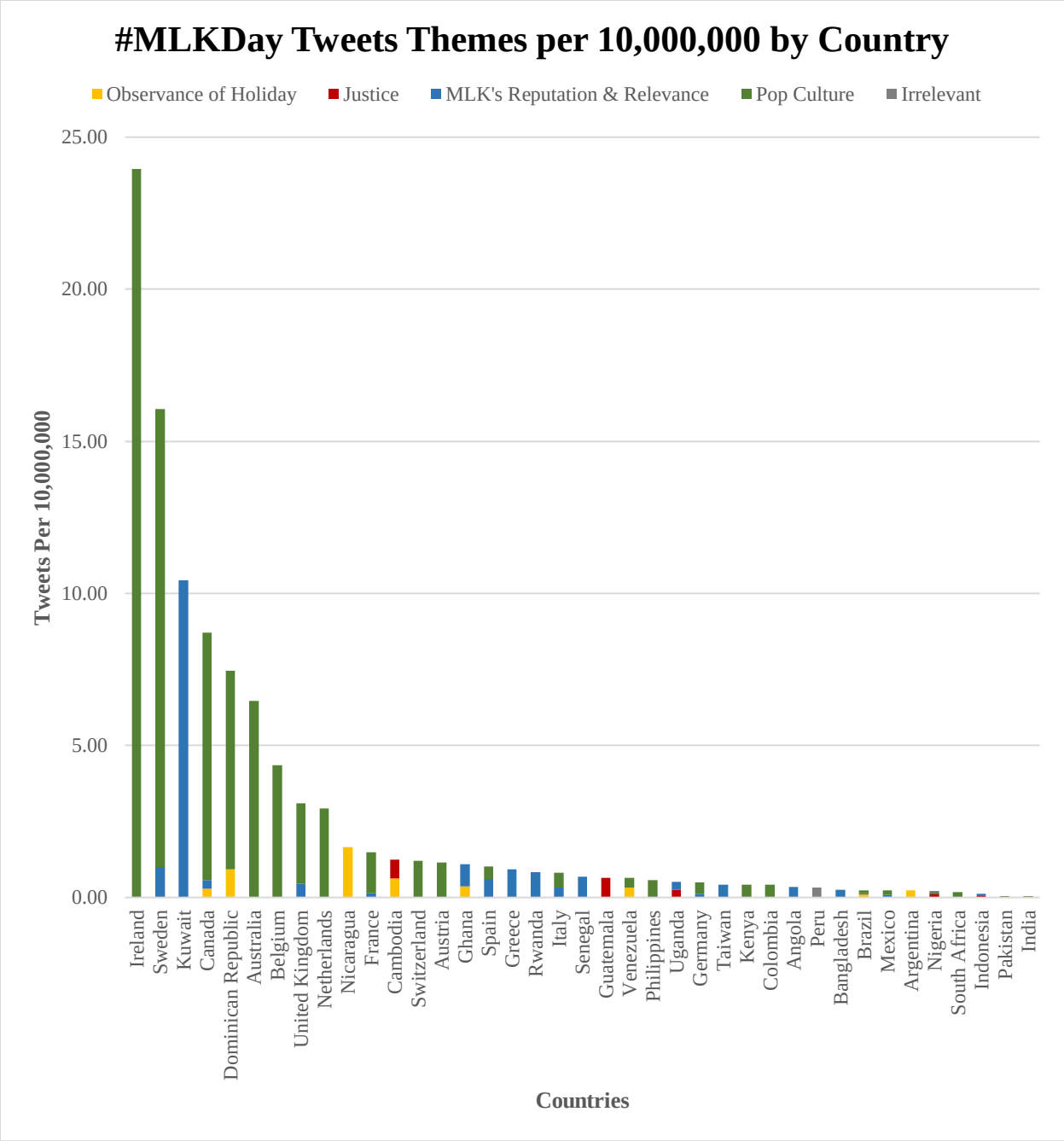

Figure 14: #MLKDay Tweets Themes per 10,000,000 by Country

MLK's reputation as a someone who fought for justice is a lens through which a few Nigerians view their country's issues and use his reputation to bolster their ideological perspective. The Tweets coming out of Cambodia were celebrating MLK day and stating that the holiday wouldn't exist anymore if Trump became president, which, indicates to me that those sharing their thoughts from Cambodia may be democrats from the U.S. The Tweet from Guatemala reflects the countries revolutionary roots by stating that change doesn't come by talk alone, another example of how MLK's reputation has been used to benefit local ideological perspectives abroad. This statement when directly countered by a Tweet that came out of Indianapolis that stated 'words change the world,' potentially reveling the subdued nature of many Americans before the 2016 election, before protesting became the new brunch in the first half of 2017.

In conclusion, when analyzed as a whole the international Tweets with #MLKDay were largely about internet culture and what was trending, but second to those were Tweets that remembered Dr. King's life and legacy. The Tweets about his life and legacy engaged deeply with his reputation as a strong advocate for racial equality, many focusing specifically on his dream, others cheering for the value he placed in education and peaceful protest. While the #MLKDay Tweets that were celebrating his holiday, internationally, were predominantly sharing a simple 'happy MLK Day.' The #MLKDay Tweets that were about justice were using Dr. King's legacy as more of a lens through which to bolster their ideological perspectives about issues in their own countries. This is different from the content of the Tweets that originated from the U.S. because the vast majority of those were celebrating the holiday or celebrating Dr. King and his legacy, not advancing internet culture.

Chapter 7: Conclusions & Recommendations

This chapter highlights the conclusions I have come to through my dissertation research, the significance of the research itself, the lessons I have learned, and my recommendations for future research.

In terms of the language used in association with #MLKDay on Twitter quantitatively and qualitatively were found to be predominantly concerned with MLK's life, legacy, and celebration of his holiday; other dominate uses of language associated with these Tweets were for the purpose of the marketing and promoting internet trends. The most frequently used words were associated with Dr. King's name, celebrating his holiday, and his dream/legacy. Memories of MLK were used to advance Bernie Sanders political campaign more so than any other politician, due to their mutual belief in democratic socialism. Dr. King's radical ideologies about income equality were rarely directly present in the data, however, when the MLK quotes that were most frequently found in the data where placed in context, his more radical ideologies came into clear view, as did the fact that his more radical ideologies are not as popular as his ideologies about racial equality.

As far as the locational frequency of #MLKDay Tweets across the U.S. and world there is spatial variation. Domestically, Twitter users who posted with the hashtag were regionally located in the Northeast, South, and West Coast, and more specifically, by state, in California, Georgia, Texas, New York, and D.C. Internationally, Twitter users who post with the hashtag were predominantly located in Oceania and North American when rated by population, and more specifically, Ireland and the Sweden.

The thematic reputational politics that surround Dr. King also varied spatially across the U.S. and the world. The Tweets with #MLKDay in the U.S. were largely about observance of the

holiday. Those that were thematically related to justice were largely found along the east coast, the delta south, and California. Those that concern MLK's reputation and relevance were located in those same regions, however, two states in the Midwest, Illinois and Michigan, also stood out. These differences in discourse related to the reputational politics that circulate about Dr. King, across the United States, potentially symbolize a difference in the ways these places value Dr. King as a historic civil rights leader. The international Tweets with #MLKDay were largely about internet culture and what was trending, but second to those were Tweets that remembered Dr. King's life and legacy. The Tweets about his life and legacy engaged deeply with his reputation as an activist for racial equality, many focusing specifically on his dream, others cheering for the value he placed in education and peaceful protest. The #MLKDay Tweets that were about justice were using Dr. King's legacy as more of a lens through which to bolster their ideological perspectives about issues in their own countries. This is different from the content of the Tweets that originated from the U.S. because the vast majority of those where celebrating the holiday or celebrating Dr. King and his legacy, not advancing internet culture.

This dissertation provided revealing analyses of the themes that circulate within and through those Tweets that reference #MLKDay, using these informal expressions to explore multiple and competing frames of civil rights and African American heritage, what King exactly means or symbolizes to multiple publics in the United States, and how his reputation varies both among his supporters and detractors. The crowdsourcing of King has both affirmed and challenged dominant ways of talking about civil rights memory and thus showing the dissonance and tension inherent in remembering racialized struggles in a country where these wounds are far from being healed.

The three broad research objectives of this dissertation have been completed. Methodologically, the objective to demonstrate how we can leverage Twitter's spatially-explicit data to analyze how the complexities, contradictions, and tensions in how we historically remember Martin Luther King Jr. and his holiday, vary spatially using qualitative GIS has been established. Theoretically and conceptually, this dissertation developed and illustrated the argument that social media can be seen as a place of memory and that the concept of crowdsourcing is a political act of remembering, showing that social media can serve as an analytical place to explore not just the multiple ways we remember and interpret the past, but also the important role that geography and place play in structuring and shaping that memorialization. Empirically, this dissertation identified multiple and competing reputational politics present in the content of Tweets that define King's contemporary reputation and how it varies spatially.

Significance

The study of geography has been one of changing tides for its entire existence. Recently, the heaviest swell in the study of place and space has been in the form of data, from traffic sensors and smartphones to volunteered geographic information and social media. Social media, in particular, provides insight into massive amounts of first person narratives. Although these narratives in the case of Twitter are short (140 characters, at the time), meaning can still be discerned, especially when you look at them in the light of how these short interactions are becoming more and more influential in the contemporary online community and contemporary politics. The political importance of Twitter, domestically and internationally, seems to only be growing, as evident in a recent article published in *The New York Times*, "President Trump's first weekend in office unfolded much the way things often did during his campaign: with angry

Twitter messages, a familiar obsession with slights and a series of meandering and at times untrue statements, all eventually giving way to attempts at damage control" (Baker, Thrush, & Haberman, 2017). This dissertation has built upon and contribute to the growth in social media analysis in geography and demonstrated the usefulness of Twitter as a place of memory and cultural contact zone, in which, the complexities of race, memory, and place within America's social life can be analyzed. In many cases, social media is synonymous with big data analysis, however, the analysis conducted for this research has been much smaller than prevailing studies, though the data were collected from a big data processor. While social media data are more often analyzed in a quantitative fashion and with large data sets, this research has broken away from that pattern and used a small subset of large data to perform mixed methods analysis, while heavily relying on qualitative analysis.

This dissertation's examination of the representation of Dr. King's legacy through place specific discourse and content analysis of Tweets associated with King's holiday, has explored the role of Twitter as a technology of memory, and a medium for collective textual memory work. This research has shed light on how those who participate in social media view and interpret the MLK holiday and how they are crowdsourcing or co-constructing the historic racial narratives that surround the politics of remembering King and defining his reputation.

The outcomes of this study are measured by how well the collected social media data has been understood as a place of memory and a technology that can be used to further our understanding of digital space as a political arena, in which, short text posts are the boxing gloves used to spar for contemporary significance and meaning. The publication and dissemination of this research will ideally lead to a more meaningful appreciation of the role of social media platforms as places of memory and how these social media platforms are

increasingly rich with history and remembrance. The reputational politics that surround Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. have been made evident by numerous researchers, and I have expanded upon those understandings by analyzing the spatial variation in the public and collective ways his legacy is being remembered. Examining the construction of his legacy into narratives, and how those competing narratives work in our contemporary lives to express public feeling and laying claim to the past and the interpretation of how that past is commemorated. The what and where of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy on Twitter sheds light on the broader role of geography with social memory an ever changing and insightful place of contemporary memory online.

Lessons Learned

The lessons I have learned from this research are analytical and methodological. The analytical lessons I have learned from this research is primarily concerned with the relatively shallow qualitative nature of Tweets, compared to traditional qualitative data such as in-depth interviews, archival analysis, etc. and potentially other social media data sources that allow for more extensive content sharing. The crowdsourcing memory approach to research emphasizes the expansive and insightful nature of data available online, however, this research has made it fairly evident that analyzing Twitter data alone is not as insightful as I had hoped and expected. Perhaps this would have been different if I had included all Tweets and not only geotagged Tweets, or this may have been different if I focused on a different hashtag.

The methodological lessons I have learned from this research are dominantly focused on data storage and data management. First and foremost, always back-up your data to an online storage bank if it will fit. Second, when dealing with relatively larger amounts of data than you are used to, take copious notes as to how you move it around and where you move it to, in the beginning I had to start over a few times with the cleaning of the data, because I couldn't

remember what I had already done with various sections of the data. In terms of qualitative analysis within geographic information systems, there is currently not a good software program to both, conduct the qualitative analysis and visualize the results, thus, it is necessary to know the intricate details of how to maneuver the data in and out then back into the programs one will use.

Future Research Recommendations

I strongly recommend that future research conducted along similar analytical veins, which, aims to utilize a crowdsourced memory approach, should incorporate a variety of data sources, analyze the data at finer scales (such as county), incorporate data from multiple social media platforms, investigate possible relationships with demographic/census data, and gather that data based on multiple related focuses. By following these recommendations, the researcher would have a more qualitatively in-depth dataset to work with and an amplified holistic lens through which to interpret their findings. Along a similar line, I would encourage the researcher to collect, use, and analyze multiple years of data, multiple social media data sources, and multiple related or comparative historical figures or events. I, also, encourage future researchers wishing to conduct analysis along similar methodological avenues take a class or attend a workshop focused on data management and/or database design, if they are not already familiar. Another valuable extension for this research would be to apply the qualitative inductive codes to the non-geotagged tweets via machine learning. In my future work associated with Twitter data I will be sure to keep track of how many individualized users the data comes from, and I encourage others to do the same; though anonymization of the Twitter users personal information does make that difficult or impossible, as it did in this dissertation research.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Primary Researcher's #MLKDay Codebook		
Categories (9 Total)	**Original Codes (107 Total)**	**Description**
Education	University	Writing about university
	Youth	Writing about youth
	Bullying	Any mention or act of bullying
	Segregation - Schools	Statement about schools and segregation
	Education	Statement about education
Activism/Justice	Activism	Any mention of activism or activists' activities
	Animal Justice	Things to do with animals, animal rights
	Change	Statement about change
	Civil Rights Movement	Statement about the Civil Rights Movement
	Community	Statement about community
	Compliance	Statement about compliance
	Discrimination	Statement about discrimination in any format for any reason
	Diversity	Statement about diversity
	Economics	Statement about economics
	Voting Rights	Writing about voting rights
	Environmental Justice	Statement about environmental justice
	Equality	Statement about equality
	Equity	Statement about equity
	Finance	Statement about finance
	Flint Water Crisis	Flint water crisis
	Freedom Riders	Statement about freedom riders
	Gun Control	Statement about gun control
	Heath Care	Statement about heath care
	Historic Politics	Statement about historic politics
	History	Statement about history
	Human Rights	Statement about human rights
	Immigration	Statement about immigration
	Income Inequality	Statement about income inequality
	Indigenous Peoples	Statement about indigenous
	Terrorism	Statement about terrorism
	International Politics	Statement about international politics
	Justice	Statement about justice
	Mental Health	Statement about mental health
	Modern Politics	Any statement about contemporary politics
	Opportunity	Statement about opportunity
	Peace	Statement about peace
	Police	Any statement about police
	Protest	General protest/protesting

	Protest - Boycott	Protesting in the form of Boycott
	Protest - Grassroots Organization	Talking about Grassroots Organizing as a basis for protest that lead to change.
	Protest - Labor	Protesting about labor
	Protest - March	Protesting in the form of Marches
	Protest - Social Media	Protesting in the form of Social Media posts
	Protest - Teach In	Protesting in the form of Teach-Ins
	Protest - Wages	Protesting about wage and/or unions
	Right To Protest	Defending the right to protest
	Same Problems As The Past	Expressing that we as a society have the same problems as the past in the present
	Service	Advocating/Asking/Thanking someone/a group for service/volunteering
Race	Daily Life - Black People	Statements about what its like to be a person of color
	Interracial Relationship	Statement about interracial relationship
	Racism-Racist	A racist statement or a statement laden with racism
	Jim Crow	Statement about Jim Crow
	KKK	Statement about KKK
	N-Word	Any tweet with the N-word
	Malcom X	Statement about Malcom X
	White Nationalist	Writing about white nationalist
	NAACP	Anything about the NAACP
Sports	Baseball	Any mention of baseball or something associated with baseball
	Basketball	Any mention of basketball or something associated with basketball
	Football	Any mention of football or something associated with football
	Soccer	Any mention of soccer or something associated with soccer
	Sports	Any mention of sports generally
Gender	Women's Rights	Writing about women's rights
	Women Of The Movement	Writing about women of the movement
MLK	Dream	Simple reference to MLK's I Have a Dream Speech
	Conservative MLK	Statement about MLK being conservative politically and/or ideologically
	MLK - Bad Guy	Statements about MLK being a bad guy
	Radical MLK	A Tweet claiming MLK was radical ideologically or politically
	Reclaim	Claiming to reclaim MLK's legacy
	Inspiration	Statement about inspire
	Hero	Statement about hero
	Happy Birthday MLK	Wishing MLK a Happy Birthday
	Conspiracy	Statements about conspiracy theories
	Coretta Scott King	Statements about Coretta Scott King
	Disrespect Legacy	Statement about something or someone disrespecting MLK's legacy
	Honor	Honoring MLK
	Assassination	Statement about MLK's assassination

	Hypocrisy	Statement about hypocrisy
	Leadership	Any mention of MLK's role as a leader
	Legacy	Remembering and celebrating MLK's legacy
	Truth	Any quote claiming to find/know the "truth" about MLK
	Wisdom	Writing about wisdom
	Quote	MLK quote
	Gratitude	Any Tweet thanking MLK for his work, life, etc.
	Life	Celebrating MLK's life
Holiday	Happy	Statement associated with Happy MLK Day
	National Parks	Tweet about National Parks being free
	Celebration	Statement about celebrating the holiday
	Discount	Announcing a discount due to the holiday
	Marketing	Tweet meant to act as marketing
	Event	Statement about an MLK Day Event
	Hours Of Operation	Business hour for the holiday
	Parade	Statement about MLK Day Parade
Pop Culture	Pop Culture	Something to do with Pop Culture
	Music	Anything about music
	Internet Culture	Statement about internet culture
	Humor	Statement about humor
	Social Media	Writing about social media
	Hip-Hop	Statement about hip-hop
Other	Family	Statement about family
	Not Relevant	A Tweet that is not relevant to MLK or his holiday
	Religion	Religious statements
	Hope	Statement about hope
	Love	A statement about love

Appendix B

Research Assistant's #MLKDay Codebook		
Categories (8 Total)	**Original Codes (40 Total)**	**Description**
MLK's Relevance To Now	Relevance	References to how MLK message/words/work are presently useful/important/current
	Memory	References to remembering or memorializing
	Legacy	Use of the word legacy and references to how MLK memory has been carried on
	MLK Quote	Use of quote in Tweet text or image associate with Tweet
	MLK Speech	Use of speech in Tweet text or image associate with Tweet
	Dream	Use of word dream
	Gratitude	Statement about thankfulness to MLK
	Truth	References to truth or truthfulness
MLK As A Person (Qualities)	Radical	Use of word radical
	Morality	Statements with emphasis on values or morals
	Heroism	Referring to MLK as a hero
	Honor	Expressions of honor/reverence
	Love	Use of word love/loving/loved
	Faith	Religious and spiritual references
	Leadership	References to MLK as a leader
	Humility	References to being humble or having humility
	Assassination	References to MLK assassination
Justice	Justice	Statements about taking action to help others/use of word justice
	Contemporary Politics	References to current political realities
	Historic Politics	References to politics in the past
	Environmental Justice	Specifically mentioning the environment as a social justice issue
	Education	References to school/learning
	Solidarity	Use of the word solidarity/reference to collective action/standing together
	Gender	References to gender/role of women/gender politics
Mlk Day	Celebration	Use of the word celebrate/celebration or references to methods of celebration
	Events	Statements about events happening for/on MLK day
	Business	Notices of business hours and advertisement
	Service	References to people doing work for others as part of MLK day or in their daily life
	Motivation	Use of word motivation
Place	Public Space	References to parks and other publicly owned places
	Monument	References to statues/physical memorials
	Street Names	References to MLK street

Race	Diversity	Use of word diversity
	Race Words	Use of any word referring to race and perception of races
	Racism	References to racists/racism/race-based oppression
	Black Lives Matter (BLM)	Mention of Black Lives Matter as a statement or movement
Pop Culture	Music	Statements by or about musicians/ references to music
	Sports	Statements by or about athletes/references to sports or athletic activities
	Drugs	References to drugs of any type
Null	Irrelevant	Doesn’t have anything to do with MLK day

Appendix C: Final Coding Totals

Overarching Theme (4 Total)	**Codes (31 Total)**	**Description**
Justice	Activism	**Community action**, organization, leadership, including but not limited to organizations (SNCC), NGOs (NAACP) and **unions** (labor, industrial). Protesting and the right to protest (marches, teach-ins, boycotts, clicktivism, etc.). **Civil Rights Movement histories** (Freedom Riders, Montgomery Bus Boycott, Malcom X, and **Women of the Movement** [Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King] etc.).
	Gender & Sexuality	**Women's Rights** (Voting, Family Planning, etc.) and **LGBTQ Rights** (Marriage, Equal Protections, etc.)
	Animal/Environmental Rights	**Animal Rights** (Veganism), **Climate Change**, Water Rights, **Pollution** (Flint Water Crisis) etc.
	Human Rights	**Education, Hunger, Homelessness**, etc.
	Political	**Historic and/or contemporary, domestic and/or international, issue based** (HealthCare, Mental Health, Gun Control, Income Equality/Taxation, Voting, Immigration, etc.) **political facts and/or commentary.**
	Racist Policing	**Black Lives Matter** (group and/or movement) and **discriminatory police** targeting black communities and individuals. Racial Profiling.
	Racism	**Discrimination based on race** (Black, Indigenous, etc.), daily life experiences of Black Americans, discriminative race word, Jim Crow, KKK, White Nationalism, Segregation.
	Religious Intolerance	**Discrimination based on religion** (Islam, Judaism, etc.)
	PDC	Praising and/or questioning **Peace, Diversity, & Equality**
	Repetitive History	Frustration that a past issue(s) is still an issue(s) (mostly about equity and equality based on race). **History repeating itself.**
	Justice	General statements about justice, without being specifically related to any of the justice subcategories.
MLK's Reputation & Relevance	MLK's Life	Recounting various aspects of his life and words (**anecdotes and/or quotes**). Not inlcuding his Birthday.
	Good Guy	**Framing MLK as a good person** due to his leadership, wisdom, love, heroism, etc.
	Bad Guy	**Framing MLK as a bad person** due to infidelity, lieing, racism, etc.
	Radical	Framing MLK as a **politically and economically radical** (socialist, liberal).
	Conservative	Framing MLK as a **politically and economically conservative** (capitalist, republican).
	Conspiracy Theories	**Conspiracy Theories** associated with his assassination, the FBI, Israel, and/or Loyd Jowers, etc.
	Dream	"I have a dream" the **past and present fight for racial equality**

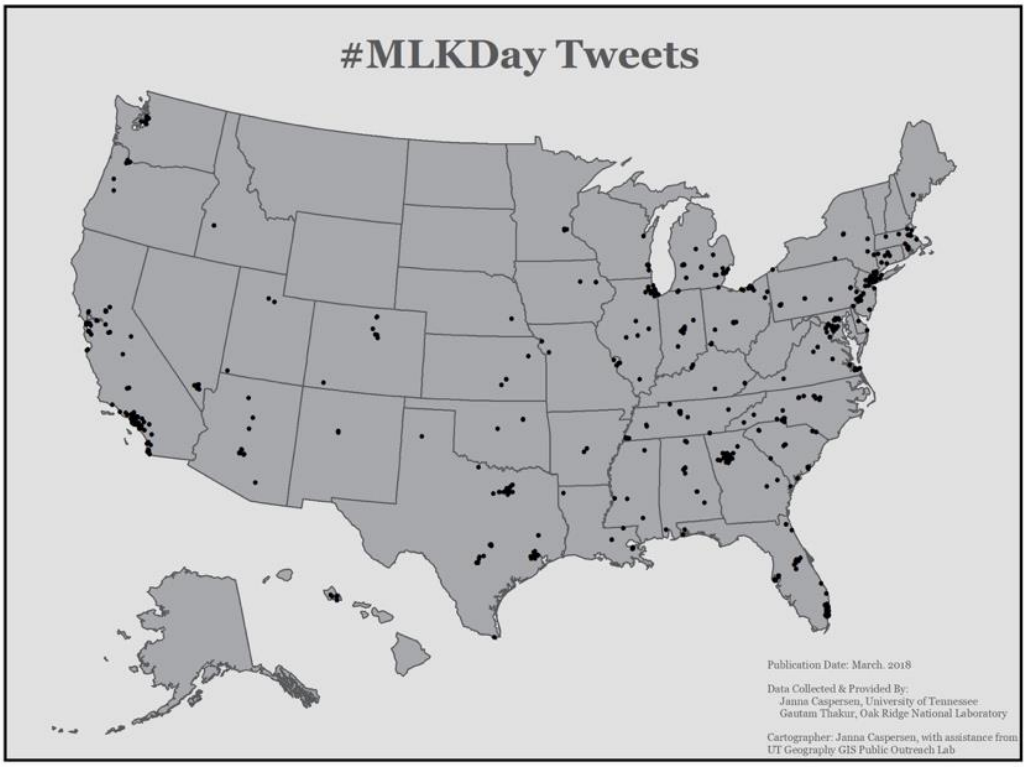
	Legacy	**Honoring the memory of MLK**
	Gratitude	**Thankfulness** aimed at MLK for making the world a better place.
	Reclaiming History	**Challenging what others think about MLK's life & legacy.**
	Spirituality	**Religious Faith**
	MLK's Reputation & Relevance	General statements about MLK
Pop Culture	Music	Hip-Hop, Elvis, Grammys, Music Videos, etc.
	Sports	Any and all sports, sporting events, athletes, coaches, etc.
	Humor	Jokes, funnies, hahas
	Internet Culture	Commentary about social media itself, all #s, and/or seemingly gibberish
	Entertainment	Movies, Television, Oscars, Emmys, etc.
	Pop Culture	Generally, related to pop culture
Holiday Observance	Event	Day of Service, Lecture, Speech, Protest, etc.
	Celebration	"Happy Birthday MLK," Parade, and/or Party
	Marketing	Advertising, discounts, and/or freebies
	Hours of Operation	Announcement about being open/closed or changed business hours.
	Holiday Observance	General observance of holiday, recognition that it is a holiday without additional meaning or purpose
Not Relevant	Irrelevant	Tweets that have nothing to do with the holiday.

Appendix D: Coding Validation

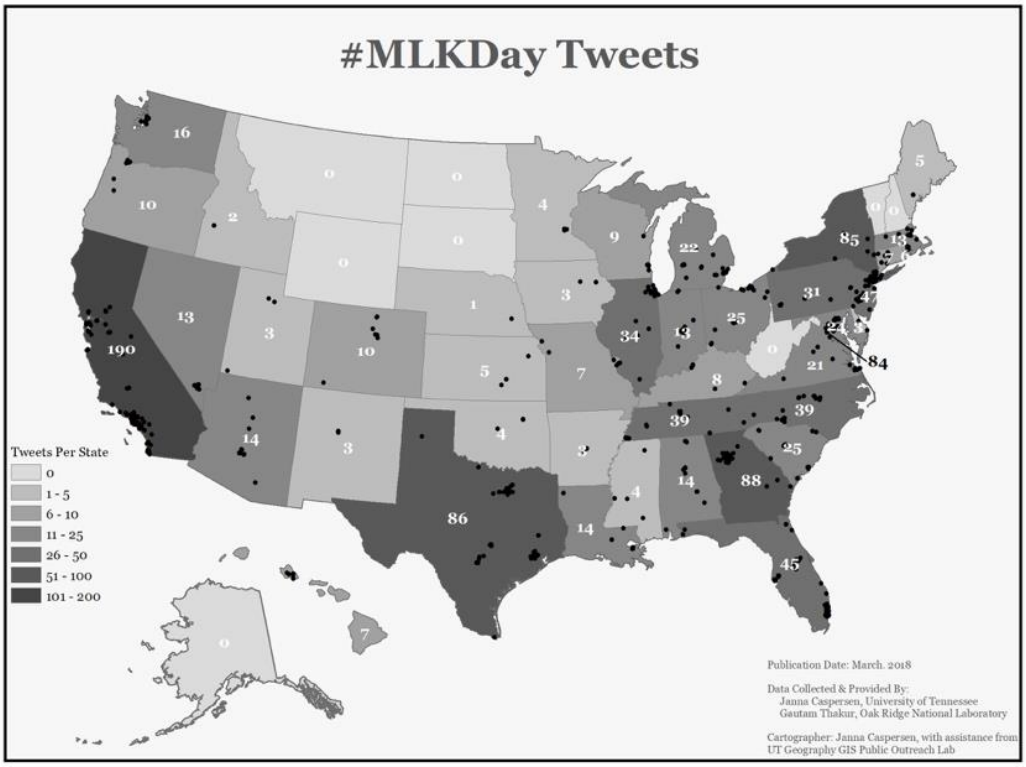
Overarching Theme	Categories & Subcategories	Emma's	Janna's	Average
Justice	**Justice**	0	0	100
	Activism	13	11	96.36
	Gender & Sexuality	3	3	98.92
	Animal/Environmental	4	4	98.69
	Human Rights	6	6	97.82
	Political	5	5	98.08
	Racist Policing	3	3	99.1
	Racism	1	1	99.64
	Religious Intolerance	0	0	100
	PDC	0	0	100
	Repetitive History	0	0	100
Justice Total		***35***	***33***	***98.96454545***
MLK's Reputation & Relevance	**MLK's Reputation &**	0	0	100
	MLK's Life	13	12	96.075
	Good Guy	12	11	96.155
	Bad Guy	1	1	99.65
	Radical	1	1	99.66
	Conservative	0	0	100
	Conspiracy Theories	1	0	99.82
	Dream	20	21	93.885
	Legacy	18	19	94.14
	Gratitude	4	4	98.78
	Reclaiming History	0	0	100
	Spirituality	7	7	97.85
	Fearfulness	0	0	100
MLK's Reputation &		***77***	***76***	***98.155***
Pop Culture	**Pop Culture**	0	0	100
	Music	5	4	98.63
	Sports	9	14	96.395
	Humor	3	3	98.9
	Internet Culture	21	26	92.3
	Entertainment	1	2	99.435
Pop Culture Total		***39***	***49***	***97.61***
Observance of Holiday	**Observance of Holiday**	9	13	97.96
	Event	46	44	85.75
	Celebration	41	39	87.045

	Marketing	18	19	94.035
	Hours of Operation	15	12	95.295
Observance of Holiday		***129***	***127***	***92.02***
Not Relevant		***2***	***4***	***99.15***
Total Average Agreement				***97.18***

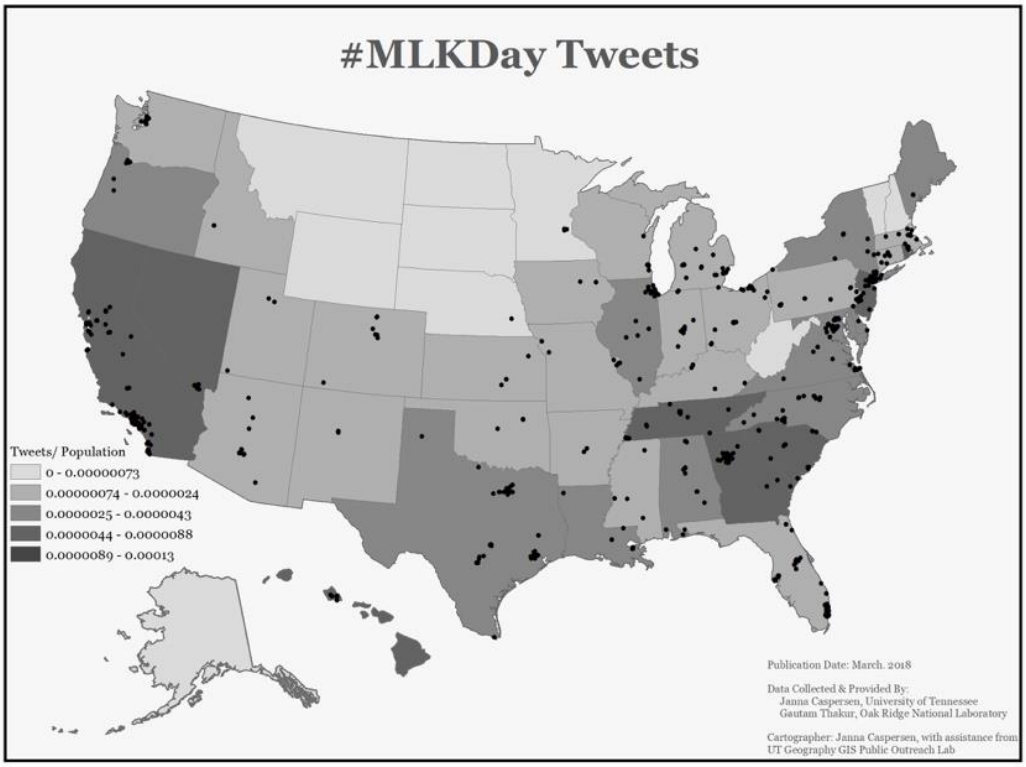
Appendix E: #MLKDay Tweets Domestic Point Location



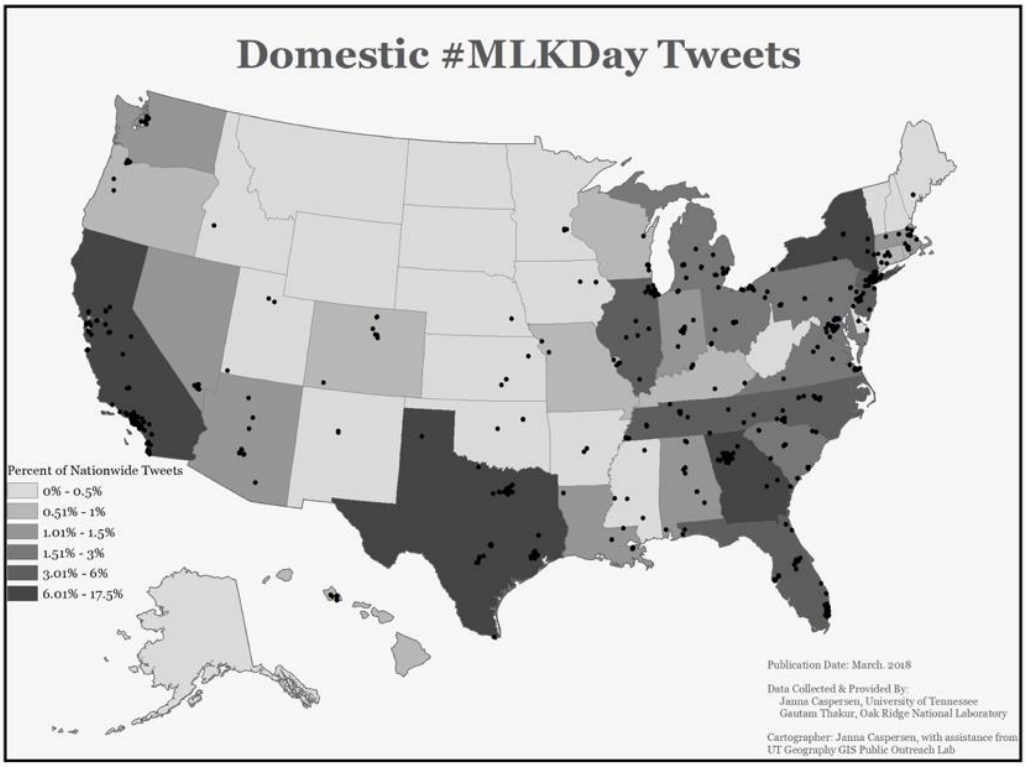
Appendix F: #MLKDay Tweets Per State



Appendix G: #MLKDay Tweets / Population



Appendix H: Percent of Nationwide #MLKDay Tweets



Vita

Janna Caspersen was born and raised in Wisconsin. She completed her B.A. in Geography at The University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire. She completed her M.A. in Geography at East Carolina University. She completed her Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Tennessee - Knoxville. Her research focuses on geographies of social media, mixed methods, qualitative geographic information sciences, and critical race theory. Her specific interests range from critical toponym studies, civil rights heritage, and hip-hop music landscapes to experiential learning and population dynamics. Previously, Ms. Caspersen conducted her Master's research by locating Sudanese ethnic groups using subject matter experts and participatory research methods. She has also assisted on many research projects, including: locating and mapping MLK Streets for the National Civil Rights Museum, sustainable tourism analysis in Cuba, suitable habitat modeling in Honduras, and multicultural competence development though experiential and place-based learning in the U.S. Delta South.