**INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

*Ethical Clearance Reference Number: MRSP-19/20-17195*

**YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET**

**Title of Project**

A Tweet at the Table: Black British Women’s Identity Expression on Social Media

**Invitation Paragraph**

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which forms part of my PhDresearch. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

**What is the purpose of the project?**

This project will compare discourse in Black British Facebook groups with Black British Twitter in order to consider the conditions and limits of digital Black solidarity, to theorise a reason for the movement away from closed Facebook groups towards the discursively open space of Twitter, and to explore what the communication practices of Black British women on different networking sites reveal about identity expression on social media.

As a Black British scholar-activist I have found these groups integral to my personal learning, health and growth, and aim to ensure that the Black users of these spaces are adequately represented and cited as cultural and intellectual producers.

**Why have I been invited to take part?**

You are being invited to participate in this project because you are a Black British female (or non-binary) user of a closed Facebook group, or have been nominated by a member of this group as an influential Twitter user from this same demographic.

**What will happen if I take part?**

There are three ways that you can take part in the project.

1. By giving permission for a social media post (or comment) you have made to be included and analysed in my thesis, with your chosen level of anonymity
2. By participating in a short (up to one hour maximum) interview with me about your social media usage, including questions about your preferred social media network, about codeswitching online and offline, and about which Black British social media users you find influential.
3. By participating in a focus group (up to one hour maximum) with other Black British users, to discuss platform migration, Black identity online, and codeswitching.

Interviews will ideally be face to face and at your convenience, but digital mediums such as Skype are possible in some circumstances. Multiple focus groups will be held over a period of three months so as to accommodate as many people as possible: participants would pick the most convenient location and date to attend a focus group of their choice. Ideally participants would be able to commit to all three ways of taking part, but agreeing to any form of taking part is a huge help!

You will be asked to sign a consent form stating the level of participation you have agreed to. The raw data collected will be samples of Facebook posts and Twitter content – you will not be identifiable from this content unless you explicitly consent to be. This material will be subjected to discourse analysis, through a Black feminist lens. The rest of the data will be from the interview and focus group discussions.

Interview and focus groups will be recorded, only with participant consent, and only for my personal use in transcription and analysis. This material will be shared on request, and you are able to retrospectively retract anything you do not wish to be included in the study, up until **1st May 2021** when interview data will have been committed to the final report.

**Do I have to take part?**

Participation is completely voluntary. You should only take part if you want to and choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in anyway. Once you have read the information sheet, please contact us if you have any questions that will help you make a decision about taking part. If you decide to take part we will ask you to sign a consent form and you will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Please indicate on the consent form the level of consent you are agreeing to – whether that is to having selected social media posts of yours used in this study, a one to one interview, and/or participating in a focus group with other Black participants.

**What are the possible risks of taking part?**

Any risks will be mitigated to the best of my ability, but may include personal distress from recollecting or sharing uncomfortable feelings or memories as relate to politics, racism, sexism, queerphobia etc.

Appropriate resources such as mental health support services will be signposted before and following the research to ensure the participant is fully equipped to access help if further support is required.

**Data handling and confidentiality**

Your data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR). Raw data will not be shared with any third parties. Data will be stored in accordance with King’s College London and the AHRC’s data retention schedule, i.e. anonymised and archived in an institutional repository for at least three years.

Choices will be offered to participants with regards to anonymity versus identification, and these options are outlined on the consent sheet. These options range from total anonymity (referred to by a random pseudonym in the thesis) being identified by social media handle or other chosen pseudonym, or by name (first, last, or both). This option to be identified in the final report is in line with my commitment to a radical citation praxis, where Black people are fully acknowledged and cited as intellectual and cultural producers, in traditional scholarship. Before any publication you will be shown your data and the proposed citation, which you are able to edit for more or less accompanying information.

Due to the digital nature of this project’s data collection, and the ephemeral nature of social media data, non-traditional forms of removing consent will be acknowledged. Deletion of tweets or Facebook posts by the user will be considered removal of consent. In order to accommodate this all primary data used in the thesis will be held in a closed data repository available only on request, to protect user anonymity. Tweets will be referenced as tweet IDs, so that deleted tweets are unable to be viewed, thus preserving the right to delete.

A limit does exist to this confidentiality, which is during the focus groups – while other participants will be asked to respect the confidentiality of focus group discussions, this cannot be guaranteed.

**Data Protection Statement**

Your data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR). If you would like more information about how your data will be processed in accordance with GDPR please visit the link below:

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/support/research-ethics/kings-college-london-statement-on-use-of-personal-data-in-research>

**What if I change my mind about taking part?**

You are free withdraw at any point of the project, without having to give a reason. Withdrawing from the project will not affect you in any way. You are able to withdraw your data from the project up until **1st May 2021,** after which withdrawal of your data will no longer be possible except via post deletion due to final datasets and interview data having been committed to the final report.If you choose to withdraw from the project, we will not retain the information you have given thus far, either as raw data from your social media posts or interview data.

**What will happen to the results of the project?**

The results of the project will be summarised in my PhD thesis, and potentially in future academic publications. I will also be keeping a public research diary of initial findings here [www.riannawalcott.com/research](http://www.riannawalcott.com/research), with an open comment box where participant feedback will be noted and appropriately cited. All participants will receive copies of the research prior to submission, and a final copy following submission.

**Who should I contact for further information?**

If you have any questions or require more information about this project, please contact me using the following contact details:

Rianna Walcott – [rianna.walcott@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:rianna.walcott@kcl.ac.uk)

Due to the digital nature of this project, please also feel free to contact me via my social media handles, @rianna\_walcott on Twitter, [www.facebook.com/sweetpeari](http://www.facebook.com/sweetpeari) on Facebook, or via the contact form on my website, [www.riannawalcott.com](http://www.riannawalcott.com)

**What if I have further questions, or if something goes wrong?**

If this project has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the project you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Dr Zeena Feldman,

Room 0.03, Chesham Building, Strand, London, WC2R 2LS

[zeena.feldman@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:zeena.feldman@kcl.ac.uk),

[+44 (0)20 7848 1421](tel:+44%20(0)20%207848%201421)

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.**