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Navigating Racism and Anti-Racism on TikTok: User Interactions and Insights
into Contemporary Racial Discourses

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Thierry Meyer BSc (WU)

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Abstract

Abstract English

This thesis investigates the prevalence and impact of (anti-)racist content on TikTok, focusing on the platform's as well as its community's role in conserving and challenging racial discourses. Despite TikTok's community guidelines against hateful behaviour, hate speech including overt racism remains a significant problem, amplified by the platform's algorithm. Using Kozinets' (2019) method of netnography, this study employs a bottom-up approach through participant observation to analyse user interactions and content dissemination. Findings reveal a dichotomy in user experiences, with some never encountering racist content while others frequently encounter overt hate speech and racism disguised as humour. The dichotomous nature of TikTok content leans heavily towards the negative, with 189 out of 205 videos shared by the six participants containing hateful material. Critical Race Theory, colourblind racism, and critical humour studies provide the theoretical framework to understand these findings. The research highlights the systemic nature of racism and its reflection on TikTok, emphasizing the need for improved content moderation and educational interventions. The study underscores TikTok's dual role as a platform for both harmful racial stereotypes and valuable counternarratives from marginalized groups. Addressing racist discourse on TikTok necessitates a broader examination of societal ideologies and educational systems. This work contributes to the fields of digital studies and international development by promoting cross-cultural empathy and cooperation through the analysis of global racial discourses on TikTok.

Abstract German

Diese Arbeit untersucht die Prävalenz und die Auswirkungen von (anti-)rassistischen Inhalten auf TikTok und konzentriert sich dabei sowohl auf die Rolle der Plattform als auch ihrer Community bei der Bewahrung und Herausforderung rassistischer Diskurse. Trotz der TikTok-Community-Richtlinien gegen hasserfülltes Verhalten sind Hassreden, einschließlich offenem Rassismus, nach wie vor ein erhebliches Problem, das durch den Algorithmus der Plattform noch verstärkt wird. Unter Verwendung der Netnography-Methode von Kozinets (2019) verwendet diese Studie einen Bottom-up-Ansatz durch teilnehmende Beobachtung, um Nutzerinteraktionen und die Verbreitung von Inhalten zu analysieren. Die Ergebnisse zeigen eine Dichotomie in den Nutzererfahrungen, wobei einige nie auf rassistische Inhalte stoßen, während andere hingegen häufig auf offene Hassreden und als Humor getarnten

Rassismus treffen. Die dichotome Natur der TikTok-Inhalte tendiert stark zum Negativen, da 189 von 205 von den sechs Teilnehmer*innen geteilten Videos hasserfülltes Material enthalten. *Critical Race Theory*, *colourblind racism* und *critical humour studies* bilden den theoretischen Rahmen für das Verständnis dieser Ergebnisse. Die Forschung hebt die systemische Natur des Rassismus und dessen Reflexion auf TikTok hervor und betont die Notwendigkeit verbesserter Inhaltsmoderation und pädagogischer Interventionen. Die Studie unterstreicht die doppelte Rolle von TikTok als Plattform sowohl für schädliche rassistische Stereotypen als auch für wertvolle Gegenargumente von marginalisierten Gruppen. Die Auseinandersetzung mit rassistischem Diskurs auf TikTok erfordert eine umfassendere Untersuchung gesellschaftlicher Ideologien und Bildungssysteme. Diese Arbeit leistet einen Beitrag zu den Bereichen digitale Studien und internationale Entwicklung, indem sie durch die Analyse globaler rassistischer Diskurse auf TikTok kulturübergreifende Empathie und Zusammenarbeit fördert.

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1. Introduction

“We do not allow any hateful behavior, hate speech, or promotion of hateful ideologies.”
(TikTok 2024)

This statement can be found in TikTok’s community guidelines, along with other rules to follow to ensure user satisfaction and safety. If that statement was true, this present work would have a happy ending. Spoiler Alert: This is not the case. TikTok (*Douyin* in China), a video platform published in 2016 by the Chinese company ByteDance, known for its efficient, yet intimidating algorithm, has been target of weekly criticism based on multiple premises. One of such points for criticism being a platform for hate speech. The aim of the thesis is to address the accusations as well as to analyse the hateful discourses and its counter narratives. In April 2024 the United States passed a legislation which may lead to the ban of TikTok if the company does not agree to loosen its ties to their Chinese parent ByteDance (cf. Maheshwari & Holpuch 2024; Euronews 2024). The possible ban comes as a response to security threats of sensitive data falling in the hands of Chinese government. By passing this law, the U.S. would be the second country after India to ban the app entirely. Similarly, many European governmental institutions prohibited workers from using the app on their work phones (cf Euronews 2024).

Another security threat to the users is the one of racism and hate speech. Social media are designed to connect and entertain people; however, this is not always the case. Racist discourses have existed since the beginning of the internet. The introduction of social media, however, allowed such discourses to take place on a larger scale. Matamoros-Fernández (2017) calls this phenomenon ‘platformed racism’, a new form of racism happening on digital platforms. In her work she argues that platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook and YouTube function as hubs that provoke and amplify racist discourses. Through algorithms and a lack of content moderation racist and hateful discourses roam freely on platforms (cf. Matamoros-Fernández 2017). The new contestant TikTok does in this regard not differ from established platforms. A sophisticated algorithm designed to keep you addicted (cf. Bhandari and Bimo 2022; Koetsier 2020) leads to a ton of content and possibilities for users to entertain themselves. Unfortunately, racism is one of them. Scholarly work on racist discourses on TikTok have been so far only scarce. Weimann and Masri (2023) focus their work on the search of far-right extremist content and find an abundance of hate speech on TikTok. Overt calls for violence against marginalized groups, which are

downplayed as humouristic and ironic, are a serious problem for the younger – more naive – audience on TikTok (cf. Cox 2018).

Racism against marginalized groups is intertwined in our social system and reproduced by it. Theoretical frameworks such as the Critical Race Theory and Colourblind racism aim to explain the contributions of social, cultural, and governmental institutions to the continuing understanding of white hegemony and therefore the suppression of every other race. With TikTok a new *player* of the diffusion of racism has entered the realm of contemporary hate speech. An analysis of racist as well as possible anti-racist discourses on the app are crucial to understand how the future generation manage the precarious themes. Following this setting, the thesis proposes the following research question:

How do TikTok users navigate and respond to instances of racism and anti-racism discourses within their everyday interactions on the platform, and how does this exploration contribute to a deeper understanding of contemporary manifestations of racism and its resistance?

The thesis aims to understand the structure and discourses of racism and anti-racism on TikTok from the users' perspective. Employing a bottom-up approach, participants will provide insights into everyday interactions on the platform. Instead of actively searching for relevant content, chosen individuals will act as communicators of TikTok's environment. By analysing this content using Kozinets' (2019) method of digital netnography, a less biased and more authentic observation is presented. The results will shed light on how users perceive racism on TikTok, helping us understand the potential dangers or resources the app offers. Analysing the results through various critical frameworks will provide an in-depth insight into TikTok's role in contemporary society.

The remainder of the thesis will be structured as follows: A short introduction to the relevance of the field of international development and ethical considerations kickstart the work by providing a basic understanding of the major themes of this thesis. Chapter two focuses on existing literature to give an insight to the two main themes of racism and TikTok. The third chapter focuses on an in-depth description of the theoretical framework by analysing the different theories of racism. Chapter four introduces the chosen method for analytical analysis, namely the netnography by Kozinets (2019) and its adaption to the thesis. The methodological section is followed by the results of the work described in chapter five through different lenses. A short quantitative description of the data explains the material provided by participants in addition of a concise summary of the conducted interviews. The

main results are displayed through several case studies which aim to visualize some of the existing content on TikTok. Chapter six discusses the results along the theoretical framework to deduct the main ideas as well as give future research short insights. The conclusion closes the work and wraps up the main points.

1.1 Relevance to the field of International Development

As one of the biggest Social Media platforms TikTok serves as a digital space for cultural exchange and awareness. By analysing the global discourses of racism and anti-racism related content, this thesis aims to provide insight into the social and cultural inequalities happening on the platform and how different actors respond to this issue. The analytical part of this study contributes to the broader goal of promoting cross-cultural empathy and cooperation in the field of international development. The demographic of TikTok consists mainly of younger users and therefore gives us an idea of the discourse of the future generations and their view on global issues such as racism. Through a lens of digital, cultural, and global perspectives this thesis aims to connect the fields of international development and digital studies to analyse the different perspectives and dialogues on TikTok. Racism on the app can be analysed with the concept of social hegemony, which allows us to examine how certain racial groups are represented and how these representations influence perceptions and power dynamics. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for promoting cultural diversity and equality.

1.2 Ethical considerations

Lobinger et al. (2020: 334) postulate in their work *Pepe Pepe – Just a Funny Frog? A Visual Meme Caught Between Innocent Humor, Far-Right Ideology, and Fandom* the necessity of addressing ethical considerations in the introduction of a thesis. The following considerations are inspired by Lobinger et al., as they deal with similar constraints which can be applied to this case.

For some individuals, the interaction with sensitive topics may need to be limited and the display of such material restrained to provide a safer environment. Because TikTok is a visual platform, I find it important to present displays of hate speech found on this app. During the collection of data, it became obvious that TikTok is flooded with not only covert, but also overt racism, which needs to be addressed and analysed. Please be advised that this thesis discusses themes of racism, including historical and contemporary examples, which may be distressing or triggering for some readers. These discussions are essential to the

comprehension and analysis of the subject and aim to contribute constructively to the broader discourse on racial issues. Reader discretion is advised, and it is encouraged that readers engage with the content thoughtfully and with an awareness of the potentially disturbing nature of the topics discussed.

Furthermore, this research started with the intention of analysing both discourses of anti-racism as well as racism. Unfortunately, during the analysis of TikTok, the existing literature and the contribution of the participants, it became clear that racism is the more dominant counterpart. This study does not aim to focus solely on negativity and hate: The data gathered for this experiment focuses on the discourse shifts towards racism, forming an integral part of this thesis. While anti-racism will be covered as an important topic and counter-narrative, doing so will only be secondary in this work. This does not mean, that TikTok only contains racist content. As stated above, this thesis focuses on the content provided by participants, which happens to be mainly of racist nature. This fact itself reveals a negative side of TikTok, which will be further discussed in the empirical section. Some users may barely encounter any hateful content, while others might engage solely with such topics. In the theoretical part of this thesis, however, the focus will mainly be on discourses and frameworks involving racism, rather than anti-racism.

Finally, I would like to state that I am white, male and born in Luxembourg, one of the wealthiest countries in the world. I am aware of my privileged position and the fact that I have never been attacked based on my race or gender. Nor will I ever truly understand and relate to the experiences of individuals of marginalised groups. In this present work I will strive to be as objective and unbiased as possible, while shedding lights on existing discourses on TikTok using a critical lens, rather than exercising privileged ignorance.

2. Literature review

This section presents a summary and discussion of the existing literature. The aim of this chapter is to establish a basic understanding of the topics that this thesis works with. An introduction to different theoretics of racism and its history starts the literature review. Since this research focuses on racism on TikTok, a brief overview of the platform will be provided followed by a discussion of the impact of TikTok on our society.

2.1 Racism

2.1.1 What is Racism?

Although existing as a social practice long before, the term ‘racism’ was first coined in the 1930s following the gruesome ideologies of the Nazi regime (cf. Fredrickson 2015: 5). The understanding and usage of the term for individuals and researchers alike changed over the course of history, geography, and culture. What individuals and researchers alike understand under the term changes over history, geography, and culture. For some people it is impossible to give a clear definition of the word (cf. Omi & Winant 2018: 281). Nonetheless, for the purpose of this thesis, it is necessary to explain how the term racism will be understood for the remainder of this work.

Bonilla-Silva, an important figure in the research of racist studies, introduces his concept of a *racialized social system* as “societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races” (Bonilla-Silva 2001: 37). Racism is not an individual matter but rather an internalized system that works on multilateral levels oppressing marginalized groups to provide a hegemonic standing for the white race. Bonilla-Silva opposes the mainstream, that defines racism as the placement of some races above others, based on biological or cultural criteria. Instead, he proposes that racism is a social organisation that produces and continues to produce inequality (Bonilla-Silva 2015: 1359). The remainder of the thesis will treat racism similar to the idea of Bonilla-Silva’s *racialized social system*, in the sense that racism is a social product that is shaped by certain ideologies putting one dominant group above the other leaving an unequal order. As Bonilla-Silva further states: “The prejudice of individuals is not, and can never be, the basis for maintaining racial inequality; without an ideology to justify and enable racial projects, racial domination would not be possible at all.” (Bonilla-Silva 2015: 1361) As racism is linked to the social system, it is prone to change. The historical change of racism will be explained in the following chapter.

2.1.2 Short History of Racism

Before diving deeper into critical frameworks and theories, this section will introduce a short historical background of racism to understand what has changed over the years and why we are, where we are. I will primarily draw on George M. Fredrickson’s ingenious work ‘Racism: A short history’, which summarises the needed information.

Racism has existed since centuries and continues to do so in modern times. There are few recordings of overt racism in ancient history. Romans, Greeks, and other civilizations enslaved and attacked individuals, but race never seemed to have played a crucial role in the selection of those in despair (cf. Fredrickson 2015: 17). The earliest incident of clear hate towards a specific group based on ethnicity or beliefs occurred in the late Middle Ages. Christians started to persecute Jews because of their differing beliefs to the Christian mainstream and their alleged collaboration with the devil. Following these accusations, Jews were exiled from the Holy Land or massacred. (cf. Fredrickson 2015: 21,22). Jews might be the first victims of racism as “[...] they became external to the official hierarchy of estates or status groups and therefore became truly Other and expendable.” (Fredrickson 2015: 23) The process of ‘Othering’ remains a vital component to the concept of racism (cf. Omi & Winant 2018: 276).

The start of European voyages and enslavement of African people was one of the biggest drivers for racism. Black people were kidnapped and purchased by international travellers. Westerners viewed the African content as a new market to replace former slaves. The number of White and Christian slaves declined over time, as Christian principles prohibited hate and violence against their own. The inhumane and inferior attitude towards Black people was excused because of the fact that they did not hold Christian views. Additionally, Africans were already being treated as objects, further increasing the discrepancies between White and Black people (cf. Fredrickson 2015: 30). Although religion played a major role in racism in Medieval times, baptised Black slaves remained an object of their owners and were not able to increase their status. Simultaneously, the discovery of the Americas reinforced the idea of “modernising” other cultures.

During the Enlightenment era in the 18th century, “scholars” began to attribute black individuals a sense of inferiority and categorized them as less intellectual beings. Simultaneously, white people were seen as more beautiful and civilised (cf. Fredrickson 2015: 59,60). During the initial stages of Western imperialism, superiority based on such biological standards was not the main driver but “[t]hey saw it [the superiority] rather as the fruit of acquired cultural and technological advantages.” (Fredrickson 2015: 61). It needs to be addressed, that this does not dismiss the fact, that thousands of Black people were enslaved and treated as inferiors alone on the premise of technological superiority. Individuals were repressed and classified through a system and institutions imposed by the colonizers (cf. Bonilla-Silva 1997: 466). Internal colonialism is a key model describing the

structural component of racism, that is, that racism resides in key institutions and is embedded in societies, namely colonies. Theorists of this framework explain that all Europeans profited from colonialism, whether they actively participated or not. Resources and wealth began to flow into Europe at the expense of African slaves (cf. Staples 1976: 39). This can still be applied to today's society. Individuals belonging to the white race have, since the beginning of colonialism, countless advantages when it comes to wealth, social inclusion, and overall basic human needs. Race is a 'master category' (Omi & Winant 2018: 277) that influences every aspect of our lives. By forcing Western culture and standards as the norm, colonies lost and continue to lose theirs, while Whites are seen as the superior race that set the norms.

During the period of the U.S. civil war blackface minstrelsy as a first form of racialized humour occurred (cf. Pérez 2022). White individuals put black paint on their face and mimicked and ridiculed Black folk before a predominantly white male audience. With their performances, they created stereotypes and prejudices of Black slaves. Acts where, Black people are described as childlike, animals and inferior to Whites were at the order of the day. While the idea was to bring laughter and ridicule on the expense of Black people, the outcome was a "powerful form of racism that played a key role in the formation of a sense of "whiteness"" (Pérez 2022: 16). With the audience consisting of white male racists, their superiority was reinforced through the mocking performances. Through blackface minstrelsy the mindset of many Western individuals shifted from only being 'white' to being racially superior to Black people. (cf. Pérez 2022)

Since the End of the second World War, waves of decolonization started around the globe. The end of the colonies did not stop the hegemony of Western civilizations but just shifted the discourses towards more covert yet still dangerous forms of racism. One of the main frameworks dealing with this topic is postcolonialism which is not to be confused with decolonization, the transition of former colonies gaining their economic, military, and social independence from the European colonizers (cf. Gouaffo 2017: 131).

"So, postcolonial is not the end of colonisation. It is after a certain kind of colonialism, after a certain moment of high imperialism and colonial occupation in the wake of it, in the shadow of it, inflected by it - it is what it is because something else has happened before, but it is also something new." (Stuart Hall (1999) in Mishra & Hodge 2005: 377)

What Stuart Hall means is that postcolonialism does not talk about an end of colonialism but rather a new adapted and less overt form of Western hegemony. The mindset of the Global North sees themselves as the better and superior culture/race. Others must aim and adapt for the 'modern' standard that we stand for. During the times of slavery and colonialism, Europeans saw themselves as modern, industrialised, and civilised compared to the others. This ideology did not stop with the decolonization. To modernize the former colonies, development projects were introduced to help the underdeveloped countries achieve the Western modern standard. This idea still focuses on the dichotomy of a modern Global North and a poor Global South reinforcing inequalities and a dependency on the side of the former colonies. Europe and the United States still see themselves as the superior cultures and the norm that should be achieved. By this ideology, the Global North indirectly assumes that everyone else is less developed and therefore inferior in terms of cultural and industrial standards. (cf. Boatcă 2015)

A lot has changed since the Second World War. All around the globe, globalism and capitalism became the dominant agendas and societies became more intertwined. The Holocaust showed the absolute cruelty of human hate towards other races and people realized that this can never happen again. At the same time local civil movements in the US and all around the world preached for more equality and rights for marginalized groups. We now enter the 'Post-racial'-Era of racism. The last decades brought new perceptions on what is perceived as wrong or right; more equality was achieved; and the Internet brought people closer together. In 2009 Barack Obama became the first Black president of the United States; the Black Lives Matter movement took over the streets of the US and the Internet. All these events led to a change in the understanding of racism.

Scholars and politicians alike talk about the end of racism, where we finally work towards overcoming our inequalities towards a more fair and just world system, the belief of an end of racism (cf. Bonilla-Silva 2015; Yoon 2016: 92; Mills & Goodley 2017). This utopic state is far from achieved. Bonilla-Silva (2015) explains that we have not overcome racism but find ourselves face to face with a 'new racism' which can be characterized by the following elements:

“(1) the increasingly covert nature of racial discourse and practices, (2) the avoidance of direct racial terminology, (3) the elaboration of a racial political agenda that eschews direct racial references, (4) the subtle character of most mechanisms to reproduce racial privilege, and (5) the rearticulation of some racial practices of the past” (Bonilla-Silva 2015: 1362)

Society is dealing with a more covert form of racism, which is hidden behind the racialized social system. The overt racial prejudices and discrimination has diminished in the last years which has led to the understanding that racism is overcome. Many white individuals (especially in Western Europe) have the luxury to never encounter racism as they are favoured by a system reinforcing the hegemony and downplaying any form of inequalities. This ignorance leads to a new ideology of racism understood as ‘colourblind’ racism which will be explained in the following chapter.

2.2 TikTok

2.2.1 Introduction – What is TikTok?

One may share and create creative content, like on YouTube, while maintaining a similar “influencer-culture” like on Instagram. Political discussions, like found on X (formerly Twitter) might also take place. Users from all around the world, and other social media, are invited to create creative content in form of short videos, or a series of pictures. Some prominent features found in the app include:

- Duets: showing your video side by side to another existing content you chose to *collaborate* with. Can be used to create musical as well as dance duets. This feature is not limited to two persons, but an existing duet can be added with an additional layer leaving an array of possibilities.
- Stitch: like duets but the user chooses to use only a part of another content creators’ video in theirs and then react to it and not side by side. This may be used to address a topic or a statement from another user. For the discourses of this thesis, a stitch can be useful to address an issue occurring in another user’s video to spread awareness.
- Live-Stream: Every user has the opportunity to livestream from the camera of their phone or device. The possibilities here are endless and profit from the instant communication between user and viewers.
- Slideshows: TikTok is mostly known for its videos but recently the implementation of slideshows allowed for innovative ideas. In Slideshows, the user can post pictures side by side which are separated by sliding between each. This feature is very prominent when it comes to the use of memes and dark humour as will be discussed in future chapters.
- The use of sound/music: Sound plays a vital role on TikTok, elevating it from other social media. By using an existing sound, the content creator can add to certain trends.

For example, one specific song might be identified with a new dance trend. Using this song in their video, the user implies that they contribute to the trend. Additionally, the sound often adds to the content with the audio and the visual messages going hand in hand.

TikTok derived originally from musical.ly, which was known for their 15-second-long music and dance videos. The users participated in lip-syncing or dancing challenges with the focus being on collaborating with others. Features like the before mentioned *duet* found here its origins (cf. Carson 2016). The content has changed since then, the focus and ideology now lying on fun and light-hearted content, such as memes, videos about pets, humorous skits, or DIY-Videos (Do-It-Yourself). Though, more serious content like politics, educational videos or everyday news can still be found on the App. In their own words, their mission is “to inspire creativity and bring joy.” (TikTok 2023a). The type of content which ends up on the platform depends ultimately on the creator and, more importantly, on the audience, as discussed in the remainder of the chapter.

The For You Page

The *For You Page* (FYP from now on) acts as the main source for interaction and engagement. Videos are changed by scrolling up or down, to show the next or previous video, respectively. The navigation on the platform is trivial and intuitive, allowing for diverse content. TikTok’s webpage gives an idea of how the FYP is shaped and designed:

- User interactions, including the videos you like or share, accounts you follow, comments you post, and videos you create.
- Video information, such as captions, sounds, and hashtags.
- Device and account settings, like your language preference, country setting, and device type. (TikTok 2023c)

A detailed breakdown of a possible FYP can be found in the figure below.

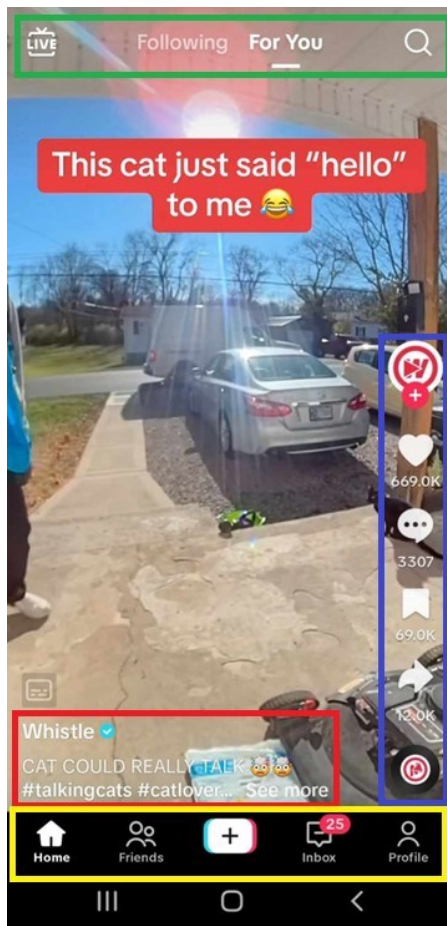


Figure 1: Screenshot from the author's FYP.

GREEN: On the top we have from left to right:

- The 'Live' button, clicking on it will show the accounts that are currently livestreaming based on recent interests.
- The 'following' section shows the content created by the users followed accounts.
- 'For You' shows the described 'FYP', which is the most prominent feature of TikTok.
- Additionally, there is the option to manually search for content through keywords or hashtags.

BLUE: From Top to bottom:

- The first symbol shows the profile picture of the creator (Avatar, Selfie, etc.), the user can easily follow the account by clicking on the '+'
- The four symbols show the number of Likes, Comments, Favourites and Shares of the content.
- The last symbol shows the music/sound used in the video, by clicking on it the user can see other videos using the same sound.

RED: Shows the Username of the original creator with a caption, usually a short description of the content, and hashtags that are chosen by the user allowing for the search of similar videos.

YELLOW: From Left to Right:

- The home button brings the user to the interface presented (FYP).
- Friends button allows to interact with your friends (See their content, Add Friends).
- The big '+' allows the user to create a video.
- The inbox shows the messages received by friends and followers.
- Clicking on the profile button allows the user to interact with their profile (liked/saved videos, settings, etc.).

Notably, the content the user is being shown on their FYP is influenced by their engagement with other content on the App. The more time one spends on the app, the better and more personalised the content gets. By liking, sharing and commenting, the algorithm learns about the users' preferences and interests. How exactly the algorithm works is not entirely officially known and has been target of severe criticism (cf. Simpson & Semaan 2021: 2f).

2.2.2 A recipe for success

TikTok has massively gained in popularity the last few years and, despite being a rather young company existing since 2016, has managed to challenge the existing competition such as Meta (Facebook, Instagram) or X (Former Twitter). The Chinese App was able to generate a whopping revenue of \$350 Million in the last quartal of 2022 compared to \$205 Million for Meta, Twitter and Snapchat combined (cf. Wong 2023). A study by Qustodio in 2022 found, that TikTok is not only the most popular social network, but also the app with the longest screen time among younger generations, with an average usage of 1h47min per day. Snapchat follows with 1h12min and Instagram with 47 minutes; Facebook and Twitter are less popular among children with twenty respectively ten minutes screen time (cf. Qustodio 2022:27ff). The numbers speak for themselves, TikTok is on top of the social media market and managed to grasp the attention of the youth. This section aims to analyse the booming success of TikTok and how its unique and addictive concept brought them millions of users.

TikTok stands out from other social media giants, thanks to their sophisticated algorithm: Users receive the, arguably, most personalised content, compared to other platforms. (cf. Bhandari & Bimo 2022:2). On Instagram or YouTube, one must actively look for content and

subscribe/follow specific content creators. If I wanted to watch political content, I first must search for content creators of my liking. On TikTok, one must only engage with the content provided on the platform. Meaning, that by simply watching, liking, and sharing videos, one's FYP will adjust to similar content to the one previously consumed. The specifics and functions of TikTok's algorithm remain unknown, however, work incredibly well. Maybe too well? It needs to be stated that interests are measured on engagement alone. The algorithm does not actually know, if the user is actually interested in the content consumed, or simply got *baited* into watching a video, waiting for the punchline. How this can be abused will be further discussed in the following subchapter *The Dark Side of TikTok*. In interviews with TikTok users conducted by Bhandari and Bimo (2022) the participants stated, that TikTok's main appeal to them is the quality of their FYP. When first joining the app, it may take a while for one's FYP to form. But once the algorithm kicks in, people are in most cases shown the exact type of videos they are interested in or as mentioned, the ones they mostly engage with. One user stated that they would not consider TikTok as a social medium but rather as a platform for entertainment (cf. Bhandari & Bimo 2022:7). This sentiment can be found amongst many users: During the interviews for this thesis, most of the participants acknowledged that they rarely send videos or socially interact with one another as Participant 1 states: "I just watch the content I get without liking and very rarely I sent content to others, well just one person." (Participant 1, Interview 1, 03:55). On Instagram one might share pictures from one's recent vacation or comment/like new posts of family and friends. On TikTok, however, one sends humorous videos to one another, without any (social) context or explanation as one participant in Bhandari and Bimo's work describes: "The TikTok [video] is the message" (Bhandari & Bimo 2022:8). The app works as a form of entertainment rather than a *real* social media platform, where users tend to interact with each other. Most users do not create content themselves but communicate through the sending of content. For examples none of the participants created their own content and only engaged with their friends through sending *relatable* content via the personal chat box implemented in TikTok. While this also a prominent feature of the competition such as Facebook or Instagram, the focus here often lies on the self-creation and connection between friends and family.

The combination of an endless stream of content, paired with an efficient algorithm, specialised for personalising one's feed, encourages prolonged engagement and habitual use. This potent mix can significantly increase the platform's addictive potential. John Koetsier, a senior contributor at Forbes, describes TikTok as "digital crack cocaine" (Koetsier, 2020). In

an online interview with Dr Julie Albright, the Forbes contributor tries to get to the bottom of the matter. According to her, “[...] you’ll just be in this pleasurable dopamine state, carried away. It’s almost hypnotic, you’ll keep watching and watching.” (Julie Albright in Koetsier 2020 [5:06-5:14]). As videos are predominantly short with no pause between them, one will lose every sense of time and just continue to scroll endlessly. Content on the platform is either infinitely looping, or the user continues to scroll through their FYP, leaving no sense of time spent on the app. The continuous stream of content leaves no break to think and close the app. For example, on other audiovisual platforms, one is more likely to be aware of the time spent watching a video or episode/film: Even with autoplay enabled, YouTube provides the option to stop autoplay, or choose a different video. The length of every video is displayed on the bottom right corner of the *thumbnail* of the video. This means that before clicking on a video one knows that it will be for example around fifteen minutes long. On Netflix, the length of each episode/film can be seen upon starting (a video). On both platforms, time can be easily managed by choosing a video/film that fits the needs. If I take a break, I choose a video of fifteen minutes as a short cool off. On TikTok it is harder to keep track of the time spent as the immersion happens quickly.

Most of the participants admitted using TikTok daily for at least half an hour with some of them spending even more time on the App as participant 3 for example: “I would say that most of the time I use it [TikTok] for around 2 hours per day, but there are also days were I am 4 hours on the app.” (Participant 3, Interview 1, 00:38). The variety of endless content and the perfected algorithm make especially young children vulnerable for a possible addiction and who can blame them. TikTok is designed to keep you addicted and to offer you the entertainment you cannot resist.

2.2.3 The dark side of TikTok

TikTok continues to grow, new members sign up daily and experience the "magic algorithm" for the first time. However, the addictive nature the platform has, is not the only problem of the seemingly innocent app. A study from Zahra et al. (2022) investigated the link between TikTok addiction and mental wellbeing. The authors found a significant correlation between usage of the app and increase of depression, as well as, decrease of academic performance (cf. Zahra et al. 2022: 1498). Similarly, Sha and Dong (2021) find in their research involving 3036 Chinese students a positive relation between TikTok usage and memory loss which mostly affected male users. Additionally, it was also found that a higher usage of the app was positively correlated to depression, stress, and anxiety (cf. Sha & Dong 2021: 8) Especially

during the Corona pandemic, a lot of young adults downloaded the app to get easy and fast access to entertainment. While being stuck at home, users had more spare time alone and less (or no) time for socialising. (cf. Feldkamp 2021:79). This helped TikTok's immense growth: The app offered easy and fast access to entertainment during lonely times. As school and university programs shifted to online learning, students have faced a more challenging educational environment. This setting may result in addiction, further worsening their mental wellbeing.

Chao et al. (2023) visualise the effects of TikTok on mental health in figure 2. Here, addictive, moderate and non-users were compared in various aspects of mental health. As seen in the figure, addicted TikTok users show significantly worse scores of mental wellbeing. These results agree with those of these previously mentioned. Additionally, there is almost no difference between moderate and non-users, implying no benefit in using TikTok in moderation. It is unclear if young adults, who already suffer from low mental health, are more likely to get an addiction to TikTok, or if the effects on mental health are due to the extensive use of the app.

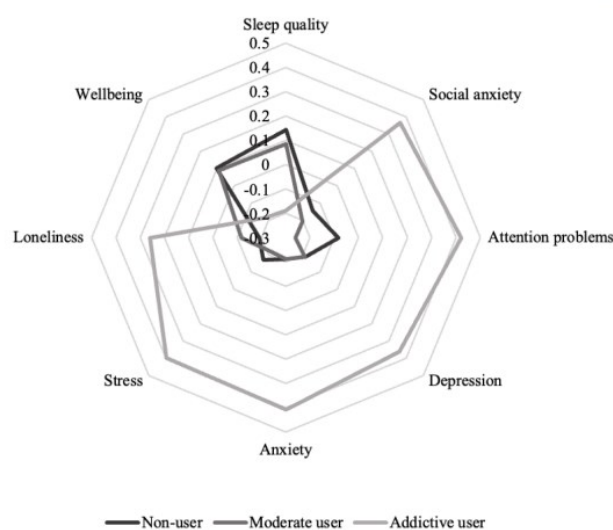


Figure 2: Radar charts showing the mental health of TikTok user groups. (Chao et al. 2023:7)

Another dangerous aspect can be linked to the interface of TikTok. As already mentioned, the FYP is the main driver of the App, where the user endlessly scrolls without having to search for content. As the form of the content on this platform consists of videos and slide shows, one may need to fully watch the video or slide show to understand the message. This makes it sometimes unavoidable for users to see sensitive or disturbing content (cf. Gabor 2023: 116). There is no way of knowing what comes next: The current video could be a cute puppy,

followed by vile images, or hate speech against minorities. There is no warning. Some creators may knowingly abuse this system, to drive engagement and further spread their content (see Chapter five and six). The first slides present innocent information, with a gruesome *punchline* being hidden at the end, making the user fully interact with the content. Examples like these will be discussed in the empiric section of the work. Moreover, because of the nature of the algorithm, any engagement with content may boost similar content to one's FYP. This was confirmed by some of the participants: "I was just more confronted with it, because I send them [racist videos], and my algorithm noticed that. So, in a way every fifth video was about racism." (Participant 3, Interview 2, 03:21). If a user comes across sensitive content, they might be shocked in the first moment, unable to swipe away. This will be counted as an interaction and the algorithm will promote similar content. As the user continues to be exposed to sensitive content, each second of a video watched, will be fed into the algorithm. One might find themselves in a vicious circle of disturbing content, with little to no help. Although there are "do not like the video" and "report" buttons, the user has already consumed the media and along with it, the disturbing messages. (cf. Gabor 2023: 116) Participants of this study confirmed this by stating, that they were pushed easily into a racist bubble by interacting more with such videos. One participant said: "I was actually in awe at how fast I got pushed into this right [wing] sphere on TikTok with a few interactions." (Participant 4, Interview 2, 01:36)

Unfortunately, problematic content is not the only issue with TikTok. Cyberbullying is widespread across social media and TikTok is no exception. One in three teens suffer from cyberbullying resulting in emotional trauma and anxiety (Jadán-Guerrero et al. 2023: 475). In their study, Chao et al. found, that addicted TikTok users were more likely to bullied, further impacting their academic performance and mental health (see Figure 3). Non- and moderate users of the application were significantly less affected. The fact that TikTok allows users to hide their profile, may encourage some users to spread hate anonymously.

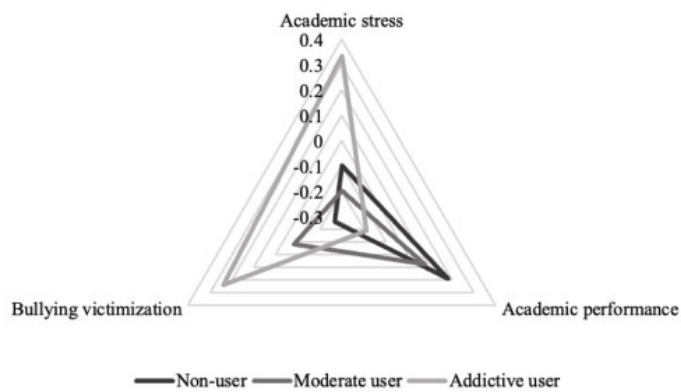


Figure 3: Radar charts showing the school factors for distant user groups (Chao et al. 2023: 6)

On top of all those problematic aspects of the app, data stealing is yet another allegation TikTok faces. The company denies these accusations. One might argue that this point is insignificant, as other social media companies have been accused of selling their users data. For example, Facebook’s Cambridge Analytica scandal from 2018. The data of 87 million Facebook users were collected without their consent and allegedly used to influence the 2016 US election (cf. Hinds et al. 2020: 1). After all, TikTok’s algorithm does require personal preferences and interests, to tailor the users FYP to their liking. However, the platform is accused of utilising more aggressive data gathering practices than other: Thomas Perkins, head analyst of Australian cyber security firm Internet 2.0, cracked TikTok’s source code. He claims: “I’ve worked on Facebook, WeChat, a bunch of applications and none of them do this, so this is a whole different league”. (Thomas Perkins in 60 Minutes Australia 2023 [2:23-2:30]) Further, the app is often being used by children, who are not aware that their data is being collected. TikTok’s mother company ByteDance has allegedly ties to the Chinese government, but where user’s data end up ultimately is unclear. Due to these accusations, many countries have been considering a ban or prohibition of the app as already stated in the introduction.

2.2.4 Racism on TikTok

The darker aspects of TikTok reveal that the platform does not fully embody the positive image it projects. Due to the anonymity and easy access to the app, racist content has been increasingly discovered (cf. Cox 2018; Weimann & Masri 2023). While racism on social networks is not a new issue (cf. Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas 2012:206), TikTok presents unique challenges in addressing discrimination and hate speech. The susceptibility and naivety of its predominantly young user base, coupled with the ability to upload videos anonymously, have facilitated the emergence of new forms of racism on social media.

Whereas on Instagram and Twitter, users are mostly shown the content of friends or followed influencers/sites, TikTok strives with a limitless suggestion of content fed by the algorithm allowing a wider reach and difficulty to monitor the content (cf. Weimann & Masri 2023:762). The FYP shows users all the videos chosen by the algorithm, which can range from videos with zero views or popular content from mainstream creators watched by millions. Therefore, the content can be spread arbitrarily, quickly, and anonymously without really being able to be controlled.

On Twitter, which is known for its (often right-wing) political discussions (cf. Pérez-Curiel 2020), you get to choose which content you want to follow. If you are interested in right wing politics, the app offers you a choice between countless accounts representing your opinions/preferences and thus creating your own personal bubble. The platform proposes you similar content additional to the one you already follow or chose to interact with. TikTok works differently, while you still get *your* FYP it is harder to keep track of the type of content you see. This might lead to unwanted topics such as racism. During the interview with the participants, it occurred, that some of them had racist content on their FYP without being interested in it. One participant mentioned: “Sometimes there is one or two TikToks in between that don’t fit but nothing major. But I immediately try to just scroll past them but that isn’t always easy to ignore.” (Participant 5, Interview 1, 04:33). This is problematic in the sense that, naïve users like young teenagers or even children encounter hateful content. This means that in theory everyone could be confronted with racism. This is an advantage for individuals who are looking for ways to spread hateful and racist content. By infiltrating the discourses of the public, they reach an audience, that usually would not actively look for hate speech as Bharath Ganesh (2020) applies to the wider understanding of right-wing manipulation:

“this ability to manipulate public discourse is in part due to the alt-right’s appropriation of the practices and aesthetics of misogynist, trolling, and gaming subcultures, where they have honed their ability to use text, irony, memes, and videos to use emotive appeals to encourage participation with anti-immigrant and white supremacist discourse” (Ganesh 2020:893)

In their work Weimann and Masri (2023) found 196 TikTok posts related to far-right extremism. For example, a young boy “rants that “black people need to become property again ... so like take your black friends and sell them”” (Weimann & Masri 2023:758). Apart from such blatant hate speech content, usernames and profile pictures were also identified with right extremism. For example, TikTok usernames included the number 88 or 18 to

symbolize the letters HH/AH (Heil Hitler/Adolf Hitler), often referred to Nazism. Additionally, users were caught showing flags which can be identified with right wing associations. Aside from using the credentials, some users are overtly sympathizing with figures like Adolf Hitler, Brenton Tarrant (responsible for the Christchurch massacre) or Anders Breivik (responsible for the Norway terrorist attack) by praising their “work” with videos containing messages like “free my homie [Brenton Tarrant] he did nothing wrong much love and support to you” (Weimann & Masri 2023:758).

2.2.5 TikTok and Content moderation

Free Speech is a democratic tool that we, as a society, strive for. Social media as a space for political, social, and cultural discussions aim to give everyone a voice and create a diverse hub. The idea behind free speech crucial but can be very problematic when in the wrong hands. Freedom of expression should exist as a right if it does not hurt any other individuals. Left-wing politics have their opinions as well as the right-wing media and we all should be able to express our ideas and messages. Unfortunately, some individuals abuse this power and create content that is harmful towards others and invoke their right of freedom of speech. The challenges coming with free speech are affecting our understanding of racist discourses and ideologies which are addressed later in the theoretical framework.

Social media is flooded with content every minute. While most of it is harmless, some is vile, aggressive, or illegal and hurts the rest of the users. This is where content moderation comes into place. Each social media platform must decide which content follows the guidelines and which needs to be addressed or deleted. Censorship is a delicate topic when it comes to the moderation of public platforms. Too much censoring and the democratic state of the app is in danger, too little and hate speech or other harmful content might flood through. The following section addresses the content moderation and the challenges that apply. It is one thing if the user creates harmful content but another if the platform allows the content to stay on the Internet. They get to decide what stays and which actions are taken to combat vile content. These decisions leave a lot of consequences and need to be studied as Tarleton Gillespie (2018) states: “Moderation is a prism for understanding what platforms are, and the ways they subtly torque public life” (Gillespie 2018: 13). The task is no easy one, social media such as TikTok are flooded with millions of videos daily. There is no way of reviewing every single content. Additionally, most social media are controlled by white men who have a certain point of view and ideologies they stand for. Their cultural understanding cannot be applied to entire world, let alone minorities (cf. Gillespie 2018: 12). While TikTok is a

Chinese company, they adapt to the Western market and values, which is why they can be treated similarly to Facebook or Twitter. All of those platforms have one main driver in common: accumulation of wealth. The prominent Forbes ‘World’s Billionaires List 2023’ reveals that the owners of the named platforms are all listed. Elon Musk (Twitter/X) is the second richest man on Earth, Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) comes at place sixteen and Zhang Yimin (TikTok) is at place twenty-six (cf. Forbes 2023). With content moderation the platforms praise security and ensure the users that their stay will be worthwhile. While this may be true, social media platforms also focus on keeping as many users as possible on their site to accumulate wealth and be better than the competition (cf. Gillespie 2018: 17). By censoring too much, they might lose a lot of users and vice versa which in their eyes means billions of dollars. As a platform, they need to represent a certain ideology that attracts the most users.

The community guidelines are an important asset for platforms to inform its users, stakeholders, or general public about their values and safety regulations (cf. Gillespie 2018: 47). These guidelines are often understood as the rules or the ‘do’s and don’ts’ of the platforms. The lighter tone makes them accessible for users to read, although most of them may never find their way to the respective regulations. (Gillespie 2018)

TikTok’s community guidelines (TikTok 2024) regarding hate speech and hateful behaviour are stated as follows:

NOT allowed

- Promoting violence, exclusion, segregation, discrimination, and other harms on the basis of a protected attribute
- Promoting any hateful ideology or claiming supremacy over a group of people on the basis of protected attributes
- Demeaning someone on the basis of their protected attributes by saying or implying they are physically, mentally, or morally inferior, or calling them degrading terms, such as criminals, animals, and inanimate objects
- Using a hateful slur associated with a protected attribute
- Denying well-documented historical events that harmed groups based on a protected attribute, such as denial of the Holocaust or the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

- Promoting or advertising conversion therapy or related programs that attempt to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity
- Intentionally targeting people who are transgender or gender non-conforming by referring to them using their former name or gender rather than their current name or expressed gender (deadnaming or misgendering)
- Facilitating the trade of any items that promote hate speech or hateful ideologies, such as books and clothing with hateful logos

Allowed

- Self-referential slurs used by a member of a group with that particular protected attribute
- Educational and documentary content raising awareness against hate speech (TikTok 2024)

The guidelines are pretty straightforward, it gives a list of rules users need to follow allowing them what they can do and what they do not. The protected attributes are “personal characteristics that we are born with, are immutable, or cannot change without severe psychological harm, and which may result in disproportionate stigmatization.” (TikTok 2024) Gillespie talks about ‘window-dressing’ (Gillespie 2018: 71) when addressing the community guidelines of platforms. They might indicate a set of rules but are also used in the favour of the tech companies to ensure their survival through the image of a secure and open-minded platform where everyone can express and unfold their emotions. The reason TikTok's guidelines are displayed here, is that they are relevant to the remainder of the thesis. These guidelines are clear stated and dictate TikTok's mission to combat any form of hate speech. In later sections I will discuss and show that this set of rules is not always enforced, and its integrity can therefore be strongly questioned.

To enforce the community guidelines, the content first goes through an ‘automated moderation technology’ (TikTok 2024), which scans the video based on a preset of standards. Additionally, TikTok employs a team of moderators to help to ensure safety. These moderators review content which was flagged by the automated moderation technology, reports of the community, and popular content (cf. TikTok 2024). Despite their efforts, TikTok is not free of harmful content and even tends to fail to moderate accordingly (cf. Zeng & Kaye 2021: 80).

Users get creative when it comes to using different tools to hide from human as well as technological moderators. Steen et al. (2023) introduce the idea of ‘algospeak’, a form of online speech used to mask certain terms to render them invisible. An example relevant for this work would be ‘r@cist’ or ‘rac!st’ instead of ‘racist’ or AH/HH as algospeak for referencing Nazism (see *Racism on TikTok*). In their work, the authors conclude that, while not always the case, using algospeak in the content of the TikToks helped creators to avoid being banned or restricted. It is important to note, that these creators were part of marginalized groups and wanted to spread awareness about themes such as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual, Queer) or sex education while getting wrongfully banned for allegedly violating the guidelines of TikTok. (cf. Steen et al. 2023) A similar tool used by TikTok users seems to be the use of slideshows as mentioned in the section of *the dark side of TikTok*. By hiding the harmful content between any of the slides, the creators avoid the detection of the moderation who seems to apply only to the first few slides. There existed vulgar and hateful content in a slideshow containing more than 35 slides which were all the same, except from the picture of question. This method gets no scholarly attention yet but was a recurring theme as will be discussed later in the empirical section.

2.2.6 Anti-racism and activism on TikTok

The last section of the theoretical background on TikTok addresses anti-racism on the platform. It is not all bad, fortunately, there is a side on the app dealing with hate speech and creating safe spaces for users to talk about their experiences and find like-minded individuals. The discourses of racism and hate speech have changed with the introduction of the Internet and especially with the boom of social media websites, but so has anti-racism. Black Lives Matter is a prime example of anti-racist activism profiting from the use of digital spaces (cf. Carney 2016: 183). TikTok as free speech platform allows for a variety of possible content and discourses. As Literat et al. state in their work, “[i]t [TikTok] offers a counterspace for marginalized counterpublics to resist their media representation as well as a platform for a seditious group to palliate their aims.” (Literat et al. 2023: 363) Many users regard the app as an extension to mainstream media, where self-appointed critics publish the ‘real’ news. This allows for a counter-narrative to censored white dominated media and address public discourses such as BLM with a more critical lens. TikTok’s features give every user the possibility to easily react to media as well as interact with other creators’ content. (cf. Literat et al. 2023: 378f)

An example for the counter-narratives is the ‘Fox Eye Trend’, where mostly white female content creators created the ‘Fox Eye look’ that resembled an oriental and Asian standard. By doing so, the creators stereotyped the Asian community. In a direct response to this trend, the Asian community on TikTok created counter-narratives to address the problematic state of Anti-Asian racism. Zhao and Abidin (2023) analyse these narratives and identify three common themes. The first theme is, that the ‘Fox Eyes’ Trend hurts the Asian users which they try to explain in their responsive videos by discussing and sharing their personal experiences. Secondly, Asian TikTok creators explain the users that the trend is racist by educating the audience on racist discourses. Finally, the last recurring theme the authors found is that activists called for a stop to the trend by directly explaining its repercussions to the viewers. With these themes, users were able to dissect the hurtful trend and educate the audience as well as simultaneously reject the racist tones of the videos. TikTok allowed its users to spread counter-narratives and awareness amongst the users. (cf. Zhao & Abidin 2023)

3. Theoretical Framework

Racism and Anti-Racism are difficult topics to study and many scholars tackled the discourses and established their idea of the functioning behind the ideologies. The following chapter will go over the important frameworks which are crucial to the understanding of contemporary racism. There is not ‘the one’ right theory to discuss and analyse the underlying research but a multitude of theories that intertwine and can be linked together. As the thesis deals with racism on TikTok, it is important to understand the dynamics of racism as well as the discourses on Internet platforms. At the same time is racism embedded in our social system which means there is a need for a framework for racism that might explain the discourses on the outside world, but which can also be applied to the ideologies coursing around the World Wide Web. This chapter aims to summarize and elaborate important theories that will be used in the remainder of the thesis.

3.1 Critical Race Theory

The thesis draws and builds upon the approach of Critical Race Theory (CRT from here on). Co-Founders Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic describe CRT in the following words:

“The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power.” (Delgado & Stefancic 2017:3)

While the theory has its roots in the U.S. legal academy, it has internationally expanded in recent years into other areas of research, mainly education but also in the fields of sociology, philosophy and politics (cf. Andreassen et al. 2023: 16). One of the main premises of CRT is that racism is embedded in society, it is a social construct and consists of invented categories into which people are divided and classified. This categorization results in various positions of power, which leads to inequality. (cf. Delgado & Stefancic 2017:9) Internalized racism is the biggest challenge we are facing in contemporary societies. Every aspect of our lives is filled with subtle racism and offensive stereotypes. Through institutions and governments racial elites subconsciously teach their dominant ways of thinking and therefore oppress the non-racial elites by reinforcing the existing stereotypes (cf. Coates 2011: 121). In our ever more rapidly evolving society, the Internet is a new place flooded with new forms of media and new images every day. The way we think or what we perceive as normal is all embedded in our racialized society.

Because racism is pervasive, operating at the interpersonal and institutional levels simultaneously, its effects are cumulative, spanning generations, individuals, time, and place—encompassing much more than discrete acts. (Speight 2007: 126f)

Especially on social media, where individuals are constantly facing countless of information it becomes harder to withstand prejudices. For example, reading comments under news about refugees leads to the assumption that all refugees are either criminal terrorists or migrate to the Global North to make easy money. Internalized racism has gone so far, that the oppressed races might identify with or even help reinforce the stereotypes as they perceive it as normal (cf. Speight 2007: 130).

Racism may have changed over the years; the cruel lynching and slavery of black people may be gone but other forms are still prevalent or have newly emerged in our society. People of Colour (PoC from now on) still suffer from many forms of discrimination; they are more prone to suffer from financial struggles, tend to get less loans, are stigmatized in public and in general are underrepresented in sectors like education, health or politics (cf. Delgado & Stefancic 2017:13). Social media are no exception being spaces of discrimination. Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos or Steve Jobs being CEOs of the big tech companies show just one side of white hegemony and patriarchy alike. And if the company is not originally from a European or North American country it immediately sparks suspicion as we see with TikTok being developed by a Chinese Company. Countless Western media or

governments like the US warn from personal data being stolen by Chinese government (cf. Maheshwari & Holpuch 2024; Euronews 2024).

CRT was for years almost exclusively used by scholars to analyse and explain the phenomena revolving around racism, inequality, and the supremacy of whiteness. In the last century we can see a shift from the academic field to the mainstream. In the U.S. the tragic murder of George Floyd started a wave of protests and calls for justice. His fate is only one of many cases showing that racism and white hegemony still are more than prevalent in today's society than we might acknowledge, which calls for frameworks like CRT. In the backlash of the BLM mass protests, CRT gained in followers outside of academia. This new interest brought the theoretical framework to everyday politics and called for institutional change. (cf. Andreassen et al. 2023)

Activists and left-wing scholars are not alone in their discussions with racial issues. With new followers of CRT also come heavy criticism, especially from conservative minds. For presidents like Emmanuel Macron and Donald Trump CRT poses a threat to the nation and would enforce racial inequality (cf. Andreassen et al. 2023). Texas Senator Ted Cruz calls followers of CRT racist and even compares the framework with the Ku-Klux Klan as he openly published in a tweet: "Critical race theory is bigoted, it is a lie and it is every bit as racist as the Klansman in white sheets." (Ted Cruz in Polus 2021). This 'threat' has led several US states to the action to restrict the educational curriculum regarding racism and to the limitation of the teaching of topics revolving around CRT and intersectionality (cf. Andreassen et al. 2023: 3). In a letter addressing the crisis, Kimberlé Crenshaw, who is famous for coining the term 'intersectionality', calls these restrictions a "dangerous attacks on racial justice" (Crenshaw et al. 2021 in Andreassen et al. 2023: 2).

3.1.1 White Hegemony

The popularity of CRT in the last years has on one hand led to a wider representation and discussion of the framework but on the other hand received a backlash of critics resulting in a fight between scholars and right-wing critics. The criticism is not only limited to the political opposition but also within the academic community. Notably Nolan Cabrera criticizes in his work *Where is the Racial Theory in Critical Race Theory?: A constructive criticism of the Critics* (2018) the lack of a racial theory in CRT without which one is left with the core tenets (cf. Cabrera 2018: 214). Scholars rely on narratives rather than an established framework.

Cabrera's solution to the issue is the implementation and addition of a Hegemonic Whiteness theory.

Figure 4 shows how Cabrera draws on Gramsci to study racial studies. Gramsci's focus does not lie on races but rather on the social inequality introduced through a capitalist system but can still be compared and applied to the understanding of White Supremacy. Both the Gramscian Marxism and White Supremacy have a superstructure, a force that dictates how culture and society works. According to Robert W. Cox (1993) there are two strands to the concept of "hegemony" for Antonio Gramsci: The first strand is oriented towards so-called civil society, which is not itself part of the state, but goes hand in hand with it and accepts the rules passed on by the capitalist superstructures. The political rule of the hegemony is not to be confused with the coercion of dictatorship. This leads to Gramsci's second necessary strand: "[...], a necessary combination of consent and coercion." (Cox 1993: 52) Rule can therefore only be guaranteed because the subaltern classes put up with it. The ideologies and norms are twisted in a way that the civil society feels comfortable enough but does not have the power over change. According to Gramsci, there is a strong civil society behind the state, which ensures that there is no revolution by other classes. Only through the cooperation of the state and civil society can hegemony and therefore capitalism be enforced. (Cf. Cox 1993)

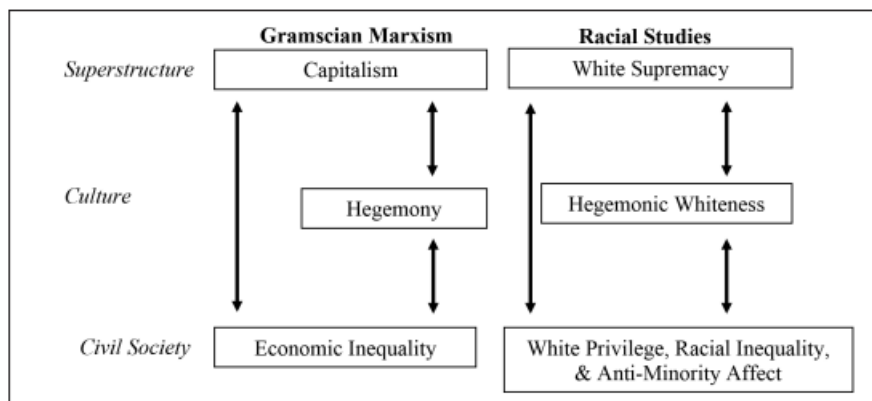


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the application of hegemony, from Capitalism to White supremacy

Figure 4: Conceptual Framework (Cabrera 2018: 224)

Gramsci's framework of an existing hegemony was applied to the economic inequality between classes, namely the bourgeoisie and the proletariat through the force of capitalism. Cabrera tries to apply this idea of a 'consent and coercion' to the racial studies. "This is akin to, in the absence of Capitalism, a dollar bill is just a piece of paper. In the absence of White supremacy, Whiteness loses its societal value." (Cabrera 2018: 224) Race itself is not the

problem but rather our society or more precisely white supremacy, which allows inequalities and prejudices to exist. White Supremacy just as Capitalism works through the consent of a huge part of the civil society. Racism is embedded in our thinking which is primarily due to the longstanding existence of inequalities going back to the start of the European colonization (cf. Weiner 2012: 334). Whiteness reinforces racism as ‘normal’ and continue to consent to inequalities to not lose their privilege. Being white is a privilege that most of its society does not want to give up, therefore we accept racism and its inequalities, because in the end it benefits the White people. Hegemonic Whiteness is an important part of the structure of racial studies that cannot be discarded. In other words, to understand racism and therefore the critical dissection of race, a focus on White Supremacy is important.

3.1.2 CRT and Online Studies

Internet research increasingly emphasizes the importance of a critical racist view in academia within the field of digital media (cf. Daniels 2013; Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas 2012). Thus, it is not only important to uncover racism as such but to understand its roots and backgrounds as well as its effects on the world wide web. In this context, social media not only serve as a meeting place for individuals, but also promote inequality between humanity through positions of power.

How CRT can be linked to the field of Digital Studies show Mills and Godley (2018) by applying three of the many different CRT tenets to discourses and practices existing on social media.

The tenet *whiteness as property* explains the phenomenon that being categorized as *white* brings certain perks and privileges. Social Media contents are dominated around white privilege and primarily targeted towards the needs of *white* users (cf. Mills & Godley 2018: 113).

Colourblindness (not to be confused with *colourblind racism*) explains the idea that we should be blind towards race and just treat everyone the same way or just ignore the concept of race. The problem here is, that race cannot be treated equally as white privilege was and continues to be the hegemony. This has led to series of inequalities, chances, and options that we cannot simply discard (cf. Mills & Godley 2018: 115). An example of this idea would be to say a not uncommon phrase such as ‘I cannot be racist my friend is black’. Racism exists everywhere and we need to acknowledge it. The Internet is in that context seen as a place where everyone is welcome, no matter the race, gender, or sexual orientation, while also

being a place full of hate and a vessel for the propagation of racist discourses (cf. Hamilton 2020: 293ff). Social outcomes are biased by the biological race of an individual and we therefore must understand the background of people as well as historical contexts that led to the inequality we have today. We must aim for equity and not equality. Yoon (2016) explains in his work how Internet Memes, which are a big part of the culture and discourses on social media, are linked to *colourblindness*. Many memes portray stereotypes and hide behind humour to make fun of minorities (cf. Yoon 2016: 115). When confronted with accusations of racism, most people tend to hide behind the “it’s just a joke” phrase enforcing the fact that it is ok to make a joke on the expense of others, this idea will be analysed in-depth in the framework of *Critical Humour Studies*.

Lastly the CRT tenet *counter-stories* is an effective tool to challenge the dominant narratives promoting racism on social media. While the Internet can be a breeding ground for hate and discrimination, it also gives many people a voice and opportunity for change and activism. Anti-Racist movements such as for example the *Black Lives Matter* movement profit from the big reach and diversity of social media websites. Through Facebook and Co., it becomes easier to connect with fellow peers and allow marginalized collectives to tell their side of the story and counter the mainstream ideologies (cf. Mills & Godley 2018: 116ff). Social media platforms like Twitter allow users to connect and form a resistance, they are at the same time also a platform for the far right to spread hate (cf. Hamilton 2020: 295). This means that social media is subject to dichotomous discourses. While counter-stories are an important form, they are also prone to hate and criticism.

3.2 Colourblind racism and entitlement racism

The white superiority of our social system leads to a new form of ideology in contemporary times: colourblind racism. Overt racism, as known during the Jim-Crow era, is nowadays frowned upon, and the majority of White people refrain to discriminate and verbally attack PoC, which leads to a more hidden racism. This *style* of the colourblind ideology as Bonilla-Silva calls it, is used by White people to distance themselves from PoC but refrain to use clear hate speech (cf. Bonilla-Silva 2015: 1365). Phrases such as ‘I am not racist, but...’ is often used before making a statement that will most definitely have racist connotations. People do not want to be perceived as racist. By using such phrases, they can distance themselves from overt racism and still give their controversial opinion. Another example is that when confronted with the allegation of being racist, some prominent figures try to escape

their situation by stating they have friends who are part of marginalized groups, therefore they cannot be racist. For example, French Republican Nadine Morano, who stated that her best friend is ‘even darker than an Arab’ and therefore she is not racist (cf. Le Point 2012). These rhetorical shields help individuals to continue to be racist but hide behind this defensive tool.

Similarly, *racial stories* serve as a tool to spread racism using narratives (cf. Bonilla-Silva 2015: 1365). A lot of white individuals see racism in the past. For example, the end of slavery or the end of the Holocaust are seen as the turning point, where racism ceased to exist. People are not racist anymore as we do not own slaves or because we are not exterminating races. Contrary to this belief, racism still prevails and is more present than ever. One example for this existence is white people taking the victim role. With more migrants coming to Europe everyday whites see themselves as the victims. ‘I cannot get a job because the migrants are taking them away from me’; ‘these migrants receive all the benefits, while we have to work our asses off’ are only two of many phrases used to reverse the roles of racism. Similarly, during the Black Lives Matter movement many Whites tried to shift the focus towards them by stating phrases like ‘What about ‘White Lives Matter’, don’t we also matter?’. (cf. Bonilla-Silva 2015) Racial stories shift the focus from the actual problem of white domination to a downplaying and victimization of the oppressors. By doing so racism is regarded as something that White people suffer from too. This can be the case of course, but not by playing a victim and telling wrongful stories.

Stephanie Ortiz acknowledges Bonilla-Silva’s idea of a colourblind society but argues additionally that the overt racist discourses have shifted or rather prevailed in the online world (cf. Ortiz 2021: 2638). While colourblind racism as an ideology exists under the form of covert prejudices on the ‘outside world’, overt hate speech is the dominant paradigm on online spaces such as social media like 4chan or X and possibly TikTok. In her work through several interviews Ortiz finds out that young adults do not see racism in the Online world which was approved by 49 of the 60 participants (cf. Ortiz 2021: 246). The dilemma she faces is that while the content discussed is in fact racist, many of the participants state that racism cannot exist in online spaces. The definition of what is perceived as racist and what not is a subjective interpretation which is influenced by our social environment. In our colourblind society, racism is something aggressive, hateful which existed long ago but is now only practiced by a few. This thinking is projected to the online world. For many naïve users there is no slavery or physical violence on the Internet, only a few trolls making jokes

or a small group of white nationalists preaching propaganda, nothing to be afraid or concerned about.

Overt racism on social media is furthermore backed by using the idea of free speech (cf. Ortiz 2021: 2650). This falls under Essed's (2013) *entitlement racism* theory. Freedom of speech is a right that should be entitled to all of us. Censorship is on the other hand often used as a tool to hinder democracy and silence the opinions of the opposition. Since the launch of the Internet, many users flee to social media spaces to express their opinion through anonymity and escape possible prosecution. Freedom of speech is in almost every case a good thing as everyone should be able to speak their mind. However, Philomena Essed (2013) explains in her work that the freedom of speech is used by racists to propagate hate speech without repercussions as they have the right to offer their opinion. By humiliating others hiding behind the façade of freedom of speech, racists are entitled and abuse an important political tool. In the Global North most countries reached a democratic state, where freedom of expression is already achieved. This right is used by racists to freely hate on marginalized groups. If attacked, they can just argue that they have the right to state their opinion and the Internet is a free place. (cf. Essed 2013: 75)

An example of such misuse of power shows the CEO of X, Elon Musk, who praises the freedom of his application as can be seen in a recent post by him in figure 5:

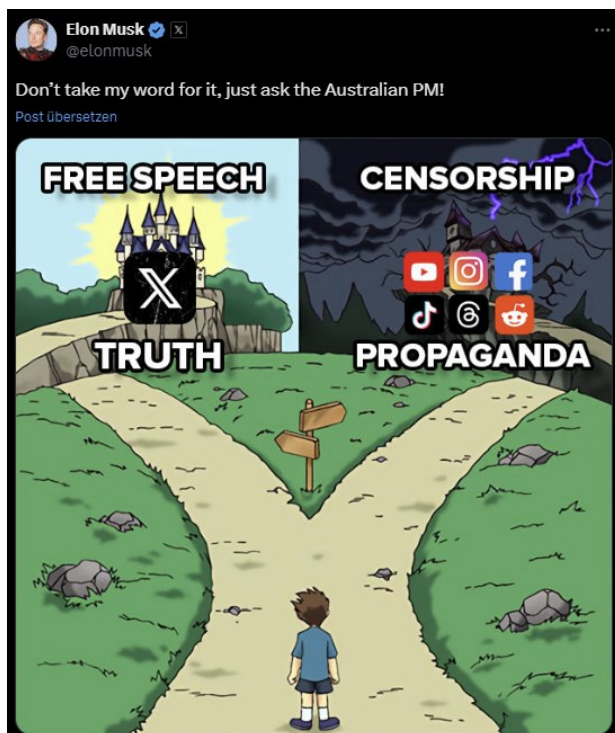


Figure 5: Tweet from Elon Musk praising free speech (Elon Musk [@elonmusk])

In Musk's eyes, X is the only true platform allowing its users to say and do whatever they please too. The competition should be avoided as they only preach propaganda from certain political fields. For Musk free speech equals truth and censorship equals propaganda. This leads to X being a hub for more conservative minds and the possibility of hate speech, because here you are allowed to do that. Elon Musk himself recently attacks the new US border regime and spreads propaganda by condemning refugees in his tweets. Especially on the Internet, as the study of Ortiz has shown, users abuse the freedom of speech to make racist comments or praise hate speech. Similarly to humour, racism on social media websites knows no limit. It is the Internet; everyone can say what they want and make use of their individual rights if criticised.

For Ortiz a combination of both theories, colourblind racism and entitlement theory, is needed to explain contemporary discourses of racism as she states:

“Together, entitlement racism and colourblind racism construct the dimensions of everyday racism in Trumpamerica, racisms which are overt and covert, and experienced online and off. The mundane social practices of everyday racism offline involve evading the centrality of race and the consequences of racism, while online, respondents are flooded with racism but ideologically coerced to delegitimize their experiences.” (Ortiz 2021: 2653)

The colourblind racism the Global North intrinsically learns at home influences the discourses and behaviours on social media. By assuming that we live in a post-racial world, overt racism ceases to exist in its more violent forms. A lot of young adults might come across a racist meme on TikTok and think nothing wrong of it, because it is funny or it is the Internet, it is not that deep what users post there. Racism is downplayed as it does not fit the old Jim Crow standards and the newly acquired ‘tools’ allow white individuals to legitimize their prejudices and hate towards marginalized groups. Through freedom of expression, users are allowed to state their opinions, no matter how controversial they might be. Similar Humour is often used as an escape, especially on the Internet, to create racist content and hide behind comedy as a form that has no social limits. The last section of the chapter will analyse critical humour studies as a way to address the discourses revolving around hate speech and comedy. The focus lies on the case of memes, which are an important form of communication on TikTok.

3.3 Critical Humour Studies

“Telling racist jokes across the racial line, in conditions where relations of racial inferiority and superiority prevail, reinforces the difference and reproduces the unequal relations because, in those situations, the point of the joke depends on the existence of racism. Thus they reproduce the categories and relations of racism, even while normalizing them through laughter. The stated good intentions of the joke-makers do not resolve the problem here, because they are not in control of the circumstances—conditions of continuing racism—in which their joke discourse will be read and heard.” (Hall 2021: 191f)

‘It is just a joke’ is a prominent phrase when people get backlash for their often-hurtful comments. Lockyer and Pickering (2008) focus on the importance of the seriousness of jokes and why they should be seen as more than just a communicative form of entertainment as “[...] humour is far from trivial” (Lockyer & Pickering 2008: 809). Humour, just as racism, is embedded in our society and part of our daily interactions. Jokes are in most cases intended to be light-hearted and make the audience laugh. Yet people forget to dissect humour in a more critical perspective. This process was also shared by participant 5: “I mean I have to be honest that I also have to laugh [at dark humour memes], it’s just like that. I mean sometimes these are things that firstly need to be deconstructed but I have to say that for now it is still internalized for me.” (Participant 5, Interview 1, 02:48) As humour is part of our cultural apparatus, it is always linked to our backgrounds and varies across social groups, historic periods, and gender (cf. Lockyer & Pickering 2008: 809). Jokes within a certain social group usually do not require a deeper understanding but rather the ridicule and making fun of different ethnicities, whether they are present or not. For example, the context immediately changes if a white man were to make a joke about another white man, rather than a similar joke being told about another race or gender. In most cases people from a cultural *higher* standing and privileged position use their power to make jokes about individuals being vulnerable and defenceless (cf. Lockyer & Pickering 2008: 813).

Raúl Pérez analyses the connection between the power of humour and its effects on the creation of racial injustice in his book *The Souls of White Jokes: How Racist Humor Fuels White Supremacy* (2022). According to the author, several scholars see humour as a social form that connects individuals through laughter and reinforces the sense of belonging. While this may be through in some cases, Pérez offers a theoretical framework stipulating that humour is also used to create inequality and to exclude certain groups of people, namely marginalized ethnicities. The sense of belonging through humour is then used to create

hierarchies between races rather than a collective reinforcement. As a white individual one may sympathise with racial jokes against other races as it reinforces not only the own superiority, but also strengthens the belonging within their own group. Through the blackface minstrelsy and other forms of racial frames, the superiority of white hegemony got reinforced over time and created today's norm of the prevailing of racial humour. Through jokes the superiority is innately transmitted, which leads to an internalization of racial hierarchies. During the 20th century through movements and protests by PoC overt racism was more and more condemned, leading to more equality in many areas, including humour. The decline in overt racism led to the thinking that racist jokes too were disappearing from the mainstream. In the colourblind and post-racial era, many scholars postulate that there is no more racist humour and that it needs to be treated apart from social inequalities. Humour is then seen as a form of entertainment that brings us together. Scholars like these fail to see the continuous hegemonic whiteness and the ignorance which further reinforces the norm of racial jokes at the expense of marginalized minorities. (cf. Pérez 2022)

How problematic the state of today's racial jokes is, shows Nolan Cabrera (2014) in his work *But We're Not Laughing: White Male College Students' Racial Joking and What This Says About "Post-Racial" Discourse*. By conducting interviews with white male college students on the topic of jokes and racism, the author finds three recurring themes: Firstly, racial jokes were a dominant form of jokes in their entourage but most of the interviewees did not perceive them as racist under the *it's just a joke* premise. Secondly, these jokes were told in a white only environment and in most cases the minorities that were subject of the joke were not present. The reason for such white dominance in joke telling connects with the last theme: In the eyes of the interviewees, minorities take the jokes too seriously and are sensitive in that regard. (cf. Cabrera 2014) Cabrera depicts the problem with a perfect example:

“Kurt saw little evidence of racism, did not believe racism was a significant social problem, and therefore in his understanding, racial minorities who talk about racism were seeing something that is not there. An alternative explanation is that racism exists, but Kurt's White privilege allows him to ignore it.” (Cabrera 2014: 10)

The example of *Kurt* shows the ignorance of privileged people. It is easy for White people to say *it's just a joke*, because in most cases, they are not at the receiving end nor do they understand how it makes other people feel. When making such jokes one does not ask the subjects for permission but just assumes or rather hopes that everyone is okay with it. And

that is the core of the problem, in most cases the privileged people are not racist or mean harm, but their ignorance lets them forget how others might feel about the topic.

For many scholars and comedians, humour should not be criticized and is supposed to break social norms and tensions (cf. Pérez 2022). This can also be observed among TikTok users as one participant mentions during the interview: “I think I have to be honest and say that for me humour has no boundaries and that is something that I definitely stand by.” (Participant 3, Interview 2, 09:06) In terms of comedy the *hurtline metaphor* (Pérez 2013: 487) plays a crucial role in the success of a joke. The *hurtline* indicates the threshold whether a joke is funny or offensive, the goal for comedians is to be as close as possible to the *line* without crossing it (cf. Pérez 2013: 486ff). Pérez applies the metaphor to comedians, whose job it is to be funny and socially critical as possible to gain laughter. This can also be applied to the public and in the case of this thesis to TikTok. Every user that creates a joke, be it a meme or a sketch, searches for validation that their content is funny and accepted by the audience. While ‘everyday’ comedians get that validation through laughter and applause, TikTok or other social media users receive likes, shares, and appraisal through comments. The big difference is that comedians show their face and cannot hide behind their anonymity. If a comedian makes a hurtful joke and crosses the *hurtline* the repercussions are immediate, people will not laugh and find them offensive, which in worst case can cost them their career. So especially white comedians need to be cautious with racial or hurtful jokes (cf. Pérez 2013: 486). On TikTok the situation is different, here the only piece of *identity* we have is the username and a profile picture. This makes it easier for users to cross the *hurtline* as the jokes cannot be identified with them as a person but just exist on the platform for the audience to digest. Of course, comparing (semi-) professional comedians to a bunch of teenagers on an app might seem like a far stretch but the *hurtline metaphor* still can be applied, if the joke becomes countless *likes* on TikTok, it is accepted by the community and can tell us something about the *hurtline* on the app. Such an example will be discussed in the section *Case Study*.

3.3.1 Memes

Comedy is one of the main communicative forms present on TikTok and covers a broad spectrum from sketches to referencing pop culture (cf. Schellewald 2021: 1443ff). Regarding pop culture, *memes* play a vital role in today’s form of comedy appearing on the Internet.

Limor Shifman defines a meme as follows:

“(a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which (b) were created with awareness of each other, and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users.” (Shifman 2013a: 41)

Before diving deeper into the cultural and social aspects of memes it is important to explain what Shifman means with *content*, *form*, and *stance*. This clarification helps to understand the various dimensions along which memes can be analysed and differentiated.

Memes can be imitated along the three dimensions. *Content* means in Shifman’s perception the general context of the image or video. What message is communicated through either text or verbal communication. *Form* is the more abstract dimension of the typology. It is solely based on our senses, what can we see, what do we hear. The final and most complex aspect is *stance*, which contains all other possible aspects which can be imitated. Most importantly, here the user themselves plays a role, who is the audience and who is the original creator? This dimension also explains how the message is communicated. *Content*, *form*, and *stance* therefore define the possibilities along which memes can be imitated, this can be along all three dimensions or only one. (cf. Shifman 2013a: 40,41)

Furthermore, Bradley Wiggings (2019) refines Shifman’s typology of memes to make it more applicable to a broader set of memes. Wiggings especially focuses on image based memes (which is the main source of the thesis) rather than video based ones where the focus of Shifman’s typology lies (cf. Wiggings 2019: 15). A short description of both authors definitions can be seen in figure 6. Especially, *form* and *stance* are heavily relying on the analysis of a video-based meme, where audio and change of scenery is an important aspect. As an example, Shifman applies her typology to the meme of a homosexual person who gives his reaction to criticism towards Britney Spears (cf. Shifman 2013a: 42). In this video the stance is easier to define as we can see the emotions and tone of the creator as well as his speech and continuous reaction. Most of the memes are however image based, which leaves out a lot of the aspects that Shifman initially described. Wiggings therefore introduces an elaboration of the model. *Content* and *stance* go hand in hand and need to be addressed together. *Content* is ‘unavoidable’ as every meme and image on the Internet has a meaning and a message. *Stance* “is the deliberation on how that content should be (ideally) understood and which (imagined) audiences are addressed and which are ignored, marginalized, etc.” (Wiggings 2019:17). Individuals share their posts to get reactions, to tell their opinion or spread their ideology. By imitating and remixing existing pictures, the creator can convey a message with the content they post which again can be further remixed by the next person.

While TikTok is a more versatile platform focusing on sound and speech-based content, a lot of memes are image-based with the option of adding a sound. This work will primarily focus on those image-memes rather than videos. Shifman's and Wiggings elaborated model are therefore both crucial to analyse the different aspects of memes of TikTok.

Table 1.1 Elaboration of Memetic Typology

	<i>Content</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Stance</i>
Shifman (2013)	<i>Ideas and ideologies conveyed in a specific text</i>	<i>Physical incarnation of the message, perceived through our senses</i>	<i>Ways in which addressers position themselves in relation to the text; users decide to imitate a certain position that they find appealing or may use an utterly different discursive orientation</i>
Elaboration of model	<i>Unavoidable, inevitable as an aspect of communication which is rarely if ever accidental; inheres nature of ideological practice, with memes absent of human speech merges with stance</i>	<i>Neutral; memetic category of utility: video, GIF, image-macro, image inserted in another image, verbal text, hashtag, etc.</i>	<i>Loaded with meaning, charged; with memes absent of human speech, role of semiotic and intertextual construction of meaning is heightened, merges with content</i>

Figure 6: Elaboration of Memetic Typology (Bradley Wiggings 2019: 16)

Aside from being funny jokes to chuckle at, memes additionally play a crucial social and cultural role in today's society. Shifman (2013) furthermore explains how powerful memes can be in terms of their political importance. According to her they can follow three different political functions:

(1) Memes as forms of persuasion or political advocacy

Memes like any other form of political tools, can be used as propaganda. During the 2008 US election, then candidate Barack Obama gained in popularity through the power of the internet (cf. Shifman 2013b: 125f). Although Obama's campaigning team only had a small influence on the diffusion of memes as most of the content was produced by the followers and local groups. Yet the impact and profits for the former president were immense. Memes allow to give the 'small' individuals a voice and are "not produced directly by market or institutional agents (like companies or political parties)" (Nowak 2016: 83). Nowadays it is easier to influence friends or family by sending memes. During the recent pandemic of Covid-19 many memes were used to support individuals' views and creating dichotomic camps. For example,

Žákovská et al. (2023) find in their work on Covid-19 related memes, that Spanish and Czech users use memes to target authorities and express their anger towards the respective government, while additionally Chinese and Spanish memes are also targeting individuals who refuse to follow the rules (cf. Žákovská et al. 2023: 163). During the pandemic countless memes surfaced either supporting the vaccine or criticising it. Today we see memes siding with either Israel or Palestine. Tomorrow it will be a new topic calling for memes. Memes are used to support individual beliefs and by sharing a meme one also identifies with a certain opinion or political camp. The more one sees from one camp, the more one can identify and take a side. For example, if my feed is made up of memes praising the vaccine and condoning those that are against it, I might subliminally be persuaded and convinced that the vaccine is good for me or vice versa. By disguising political ideologies through memes one can reach a wider audience.

(2) Memes as grassroots action

With the possibility for any individual to express their opinion freely and anonymously, activism becomes more available. Through memes, messages can be diffused fast and call for justice at the same time. The Internet gives individuals as well as groups the possibility to empower themselves. Activism relies on the visual representation or ‘memetic signifier’ (Gerbaudo 2015) of their movements (cf. Gerbaudo 2015: 920,923). There is for example the rainbow flag as a known representation for the LGBTQ+ movement; the ‘smiling sun’ known for the anti-nuclear power movement; or the *Guy Fawkes mask* known as the symbol for revolution and the face of the activist group *Anonymous*. Through profile pictures on social media, these symbols represent the different identities (cf. Gerbaudo 2015: 920) and allow for a wider representation. For example, during June, sometimes referred to as the LGBTQ-pride-month, numerous social media accounts, ranging from big corporations to singular individuals, display the *pride flag* to show their support to the movement. During the *Fridays For Future* movements, many protesters use humour and memes in form of posters to express their anger.

(3) Memes as modes of expression and public discussion

One of the main drivers of memes is the possibility to express individual thoughts, regardless of the cultural background or opinions. Especially younger generations use memes to communicate about everyday topics. If I just passed my exam, I could make a meme; if I am upset about the ongoing political tensions, I could make a meme; or if I just want to inform

my friends how I feel, I will make a meme. Memes are just more than just ‘silly pictures’, they are a new form of expression and communication. In a way they are a coping mechanism for many users to freely express themselves while also distancing themselves from the seriousness of life. This allows for a wider public discussion as everyone can join in and create their personal meme to the topic in question. Anonymity allows no judgement based on individuals’ characteristics such as religion, gender or race and no tracing back who created the content. (cf. Shifman 2013b)

3.3.2 Memes and humour as propaganda

Humour is not always focused on entertaining an audience. Jokes as a use for a political engagement is an important asset that needs to be addressed. Anna Wagner and Christian Schwarzenegger (2020) identify four modes “in which the motivations and tactics of using humour as a communication strategy for populist activism online play out.” (Wagner & Schwarzenegger 2020: 320).

Firstly, *amplification* plays a crucial role when it comes to sharing humorous content. Humour is a more universal form of communication that reaches a wider audience. People find it easier to sympathise with jokes and comedy. Seriousness and politics can be a boring topic in the eyes of many individuals. Using jokes to lighten the tension can therefore allow populist activism to breach a barrier between serious politics and humour. One is more prone to share content if it is funny than a serious matter. TikTok strives from light-hearted banter which means that using memes or other forms of humour allows users to accumulate more likes while intrinsically pushing their political message.

Secondly, *adaption* is an important aspect of humour. Sincere topics can be adapted to the respective social medias through humour. It is easier to identify to jokes than to some serious hate. For example, memes are a very versatile form of communication which allows to adapt to several cultures. With meme templates from pop culture such as Star Wars, Lord of the Rings or Friends one can reach the respective fan base by disguising political themes through the respective pop culture.

The third mode is the *appropriation of cultural artifacts and objects*. Populists claim originally innocent artifacts and transform them for their needs. Wagner and Schwarzenegger give the example of *Pepe the Frog* which is “a cartoon character created by Matt Furie in 2005 that later turned into a popular online meme, [...]” (Lobinger et al. 2020: 333). Lobinger et al. further analyse how the originally innocent frog became a symbol for far-right

movements and is often connected to Trump and white supremacy. Similar to the *pride flag* discussed earlier, the use of cultural artifacts is perfect to confirm their sympathies to a certain movement. By consistently using *Pepe The Frog*, its followers can identify like-minded users or disguise propaganda. Another example is the abuse of the *Blue and Red Pills* from the *Matrix* movie(s). “In the manosphere, redpilling refers to embracing the idea that men’s unhappiness and lack of sexual success is the fault of women and feminists.” (Britannica 2024) Similarly in White supremacy groups, taking the *red pill* is equal to understanding that White people suffer from pressure and that Whiteness, and the Global North are in danger from marginalized groups (cf. Ganesh 2018: 34,35).

The final mode for Wagner and Schwarzenegger (2020: 321) is *attraction*. Humour attracts individuals from all parties. It is easier to sympathize with for example far-right populists if they use jokes to portray their opinions. Humouristic content receives more likes than serious politics. By using memes, older populists connect with younger generations. This is also the case on TikTok. In order to gain an audience, the content has to be attractive, catchy and memorable. Humorous visual communications such as memes are more attractive to the younger generations than plain text. Not only simplifies humour the content in discussion and therefore makes it more available for a wider audience but also catches the eye. Caricatures have always been a prominent form of political communication, there is always a more or less hidden message behind them as Shifman also argues for the context of memes:

But regardless of their emotional keying, political memes are about making a point—participating in a normative debate about how the world should look and the best way to get there. (Shifman 2013b: 120)

While Memes tend to be read as funny audiovisual content, they have a more serious note and need to be viewed from a critical standpoint (cf. Shifman 2013a: 119; Yoon 2019: 97; Matamoros Fernandez et al. 2022: 180).

4. Methodology

4.1 Research design

The method draws on Kozinets (2019) term of ‘netnography’, a rather new and unique qualitative research method, with roots in the field of digital anthropology. Netnography links ethnography with the digital web and in this case the social media platform TikTok. The method helps to understand digital communities with the help of a broad variety of

possibilities. There is no clear set of rules that need to be followed for netnography to work. It is a choice of the researcher between a set of twenty-five different practices or recipes explained in the authors book (cf. Kozinets 2019:9). Which exact methods are used is up to the researcher and based on their different needs. In the following section, the clear practices and paths chosen for this work will be underlined and explained.

One important aspect of netnography is to research *online traces* that occur “[w]hen people post images, video, or text online, or when they comment, share, or do anything else that is accessible online to anonymous or networked others [...]” (Kozinets 2019: 16). In this work the *online traces* are the posts created by users on TikTok regarding the discourses of anti-/racism.

In this thesis, the main idea of data collection is based on a digital diary as presented in Kozinets’ work (2019: 266). It serves as a meaningful tool to document the use and engagement with racist and anti-racist content on TikTok from within. In order to analyse TikTok from a bottom-up approach, a group of voluntary participants were chosen to document their everyday use. This prevents a bias of the researcher and still enables an ethnographic analysis of the App. Using participants allows for a more relatable and immersive approach that simultaneously overcomes the bias of actively looking for content and having a subjective lens.

The participants were asked to use TikTok as they ordinary would, with the exception to take notes and save videos/comments/thoughts in a digital journal or share them directly with the researcher through a dedicated account. In that way we get to see how the discourses of racism and anti-racism are present on TikTok for an everyday user. The participants were using their phone to navigate through TikTok. This allows “[...] informants to capture their reflections on a particular kind of experience as soon as possible after its occurrence.” (Kozinets 2019: 268). The participants were asked to save every type of content revolving around racism and anti-racism and if motivated make a short comment for each TikTok they encountered. There was no specific condition on what should be understood as racist or anti-racist content, the users were asked to make this decision themselves.

An external TikTok account ‘Racism_On_Tiktok’ was created by the author to facilitate communication and provide a platform in form of a diary to share and store the findings. Once the participant came across a relevant TikTok, they could immediately send it to the account, followed by a short comment regarding their opinion/reflection. This allows for a

quick and immersive feeling without disrupting the everyday interactions on the app. The account made it also easier to store and analyse the data, which will be explained in detail further below.

4.1.1 Overview of the research design and process

Before diving into the sample and detailed description of the research design, a short overview of the entire process is outlined to facilitate the understanding:

1. Search of participants: A handful of participants were selected through several criteria and informed of their task through a flyer (see *Sample*).
2. A first set of interviews was conducted with each participant to further elaborate the aim of the thesis as well as to get a first impression of their TikTok use (see *Introductory interviews*).
3. After the briefing, the participants were all set and collected relevant TikToks which they sent to the dedicated account during a period of two to three months between September 2023 and December 2023.
4. During that period, the incoming TikToks were coded and captured by the author in Excel. This is the quantitative data which will only be briefly discussed (see *Quantitative Data*).
5. With the data collection done, another set of interviews was conducted with the participants to reflect on their findings and thoughts (see *Closing interviews*).
6. A set of TikToks were chosen from the pool as specific case studies and discussed in detail to showcase the state of racism on TikTok (see *Case Studies*).
7. The results are discussed and written.

4.2 Sample

The aim of the study is to analyse everyday users' navigation on TikTok and their contact with racism and anti-racism. To find feasible TikTok users a search through extended friend groups and social media was made based on selected criteria's such as being an active user (at least 30 minutes per day OR +/- 3 hours per week), be between 20-30 years old, have already been in contact with content revolving around racism or anti-racism/resistance and be willing to document and share their experience. A flyer calling for research participants and explaining the procedures and their future role (see Appendix) was set up to ease the search.

With the help of the flyer and the spreading of information through friends, a total of six willing participants coming from different backgrounds were found. Each participant was provided a “participation guide” which used as tool to look up their tasks if ever they forgot what to do and to ensure that every participant has the same starting criteria (See Appendix for the participation guide).

The sample consists of four women and two men in the ages between 24 and 29 which allows for a wide representation along the criteria. All participants are raised in Luxembourg and finished high school. At the time of the first interview four participants are pursuing a higher university degree in different nations and two are full-time employees. As already mentioned in the initial ethical consideration, the fact that all participants were raised in Luxembourg might account for a certain bias that needs to be kept in mind. Nevertheless, the sample is representative when it comes to the population of Luxembourg and gives us an idea about a possible certain privilege. Furthermore, Luxembourg profits by its multilingualism. All participants fluently speak German, French, English, and Luxembourgish. This allows for a wide array of relevant content. A lot of TikToks were from German or French creators which leaves room for valuable information. The most important criterion of the sample is, that they are active TikTok users. The research question does not focus on a specific set of population. With the focus on qualitative data, the sample size of six was perfect to keep the data in the scope of the thesis and allow for a more individual and detailed analysis of the outcomes. Furthermore, with a digital diary it is difficult to predict the collected data by each participant and a smaller size allows for more room opposed to an abundance of data but still leaves the opportunity for a great data collection. A more precise description of the sample is provided in the Interview section.

4.3 Types of data collection

Kozinets introduces three data collection operations: *Investigative, interactive, and immersive* data (cf. Kozinets 2019: 193). All three forms of data are present in this study and will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

Investigative data “are shaped by the netnographer’s decisions, interests, perspectives, and observer effects, and can never be completely free of them.” (Kozinets 2019:193,197f). These types of data follow five operations: *Simplify, search, scout, select and save* (cf. Kozinets 2019: 215) *Simplifying* the research question into possible search themes is the most important aspect. To give the participants an idea what to interact with, the broad topics of

‘racism’ and ‘anti-racism’ were selected. The participants conducted the data collection themselves. To ensure a non-biased collection process, the participants were asked to only save content that naturally appeared on their FYP. *Searching* and *Scouting* was done by the participants. They were not actively *searching* for content but rather *selecting* TikToks that they perceived as relevant to the research question. Finally, by sending the videos to the dedicated TikTok account, the data was *saved*.

Interactive data (Kozinets 2019) is captured through interviews with the participants, their opinion and experience with TikTok sheds light on the everyday user’s interaction within the app. The participants acted on Kozinets ‘emotional engagement strategies’ (cf. Kozinets 2019: 250). They shared their personal feelings and opinions on the content in discussion. Furthermore, they reflect on their data collection experience in the final interviews.

Similarly, and overlapping in this thesis, immersive data was collected by the participants with their contribution and reflection of the content that was sent to the researcher as well as the documentation of their experience. Immersive data is not as present as investigative and interactive data. While scanning the collected data, an immersion was conducted. The content was reviewed, analysed based on the outlined theoretical frameworks. Some TikToks were selected for a deeper understanding of the existing discourses on the app.

4.3.1 Interviews

The interviews were compact and helped to get an understanding of the participants preferences as well as their TikTok habits. The second interview further served as a reflection of their work and experiences they encountered during the collection period of two months. As the interviews were very individual and short, with the experiences varying from participant to participant, there was no set of coding along themes. Significant citations are used throughout the empirical description where they are fitting to undermine arguments or counter them.

The interviews were done in a semi-structured manner, which means that although there was a set of fixed questions, the order as well as the flow of the interview allowed for openness (cf. Genau 2024). This allows for more back and forth between interviewee and the participants. Furthermore, the questions were mostly open, leaving it up to the interviewed how many and what information they want to address. The audio of the interviews was recorded with their consent. All interviews were originally held in Luxembourgish and

translated and transcribed in English. For the transcription the semantic-content transcription system by Dresing and Pehl (2018) was used.

Introductory interviews

A short interview helped to clarify the aim of the study and to ensure the expected objectives of the participants. Each one of them got a short explanation of their roles and aims of the study, during which they could ask questions or get further information if needed. This part of the interview was not recorded. The interview further served as a tool to identify the participants habits (Question 2-5 and 8) and opinions (Question 6, 7 and 9) on TikTok. Additionally, a small set of demographic questions started the interview (see Question One). To understand the content that is usually being watched or recommended on TikTok helps to get a basic idea of personal preferences and how the topic of racism and anti-racism may be incorporated or embedded in their everyday use. Three interviews were done in person and the other four via zoom.

Questions for the Introductory interview:

1. How old are you? What is your profession? Nationality?
2. How active are you on TikTok? (How often per week/day/average time)
3. Are you following any content creators or specific content?
4. Which content do you usually see on your “FYP”? Are you happy with that content?
5. Have you ever been in contact with racism and/or anti-racism on TikTok? Can you describe that content? How did you feel when you saw those videos? How did this content affect you? What emotions did this content evoke in you?
6. In your opinion, does the TikTok community, including users and content creators, contribute to creating a more inclusive and anti-racist environment? Or is the opposite the case?
7. How does TikTok's algorithm influence the content you see, including content related to racism? Do you think the algorithm helps or hinders efforts to address racism?
8. How do you choose to engage with content on TikTok? Do you intentionally seek out content that addresses social issues, including racism, or does it happen more organically?
9. Do you feel that TikTok provides enough educational resources or guidelines to help users understand and combat racism?

Closing interviews

After the collection of the data a final interview was conducted to get an idea of the participants experience and how they perceived their contribution to the thesis. This interview

profited more from the experience of the users. By explaining possible thought processes, they reflected on the time of the data collection. Participants One, Three and Five sent interesting videos, which were selected for the case studies. These participants were asked to additionally reflect on those videos. Five interviews were held online via zoom, and one was done in person.

Questions:

1. How did you fare during the data collection period?
2. Did you use TikTok to a different extent during the data collection period than before? (More often/less often?) If yes, could you briefly describe your TikTok use over the last few months?
3. How would you describe your views on racism on social media over the course of the research? Have they changed and if so, how?
4. What impressions or content have particularly stuck in your mind when you think back to this time?
5. Was there any content that you were not sure was relevant to the topic of racism? If so, can you describe them in more detail?
6. Do you have any comments/information you would like to share?

4.3.2 Quantitative data

Throughout the three months, the participants accumulated a substantial amount of data. This data will be treated as quantitative data. Kozinets (2019) differentiates between five data analysis operations which are suitable for the case of the thesis.

The first step is *collating*. The participants sent every type of content they perceived as relevant to the dedicated TikTok account. The first step is to get a grasp of the data by filtering, formatting, and filing (cf. Kozinets 2019: 334). This was done through Excel. Every video was viewed and received a short objective description to simplify the future work on the data. This helps to explain what the video/picture is about and answers the question “What do I see in the video?”. Sometimes it occurred that videos got deleted before they could be reviewed. Instead of filtering and deleting them, they got included as they give vital information on the safety regulations of TikTok as will be discussed in the results. Furthermore, every video received a time stamp indicating the time and date the participant sent them. The number of likes and comments was added (with the timestamp indicating the time they were coded) to the excel file to indicate the dimensions of the content in question.

Initially the videos were filtered by participant to ease the work, but they were later merged into one sheet to prepare them for easier and combined coding.

The next and biggest step is *coding*. To get initial codes it was firstly important to reflect on what is relevant to document and how to categorize the ideas. By looking at the data two main poles can be identified: *Racism* and *Anti-Racism*. One side helps to reinforce racism and inequality by making jokes based on racial differences or preaching hate speech, while the latter tries to counter contemporary prejudices and create resistance by spreading awareness or dismantle false information. In addition to the coding into one of the two main camps, a more specific code set was created. The aim was to divide the initial codes into smaller subcodes to get a more detailed set of what the content is about. Everything that could be relevant was coded in Excel and categorized. The step *combining* was used to create a subset of codes. By looking and reviewing the initial codes a small subset of themes could already be identified. The main process revolved around clarifying and searching for every information the content offers. The next section follows the creation and definition of the generated codes/themes along the ideas of the researcher.

Counting and *charting* define the last two steps of the data analysis operation (cf. Kozinets 2019: 333). These steps help to visualise and get an understanding of the collected data. As the name suggests, *counting* refers to the quantitative idea of comparing the created codes. While the focus of the work lies on qualitative methodology it is relevant to count and chart the immense data collection that was accumulated during the research. As counting alone doesn't give insight on the results, charting in form of data display (cf. Kozinets 2019: 348) will help to visualise the frequency of the selected codes which will be displayed in the results section.

Codes

Type of racism

The theme 'type of racism' defines the various categories, the sent videos can be placed in. This category gives a general idea which content revolving around (anti-) racism is present on TikTok.

Anti-Racism: Anti-Racism was coded when the content challenges racism and promotes equality or awareness. Most of the content actively opposed and dismantle racist paroles. In

some cases, individuals spoke out about their personal experience as PoC and their racist encounters.

Anti-‘Wokeness’: Being ‘woke’ is a rather new form racism. Wokeness is given, if a content creator addresses a certain situation based on racial prejudices and gets backlash for their opinion. On TikTok or other social media platforms, creators do not shy away to react on ‘woke’ propaganda and give their opinion on why they do not agree with these ideas. As these reactions are neither fully part of racism nor anti-racism, this code was created to place this type of content. In a way this code also depicts the reactions to anti-racism, whether the latter is justified or not.

Dark Humour: Humour plays a vital role as is described in the theoretic section. Dark Humour was coded when marginalized (or white people) were at the subject of a joke. As it is difficult to objectively understand what is meant as humour and what is overtly racist, more weight was given to humour as it seems to be consensus for the users of TikTok. For example, when clear that speech such as the N-Word was used in the context of a recurring meme format, it was coded as dark humour even if the message was overtly racist. This is important to dissect the understanding of humour as a gateway to racism.

Overt Racism: Overt racism was coded when it was clear that the creator had no intentions of hiding their racist views and attacked marginalized groups with their message.

Specific Type of Content

The specific type of content code aims to further describe and categorize the content of (anti-) racism on TikTok. The following coded were selected:

Anti-‘Wokeness’: See previous section.

Awareness: Raising awareness is one of the main drivers to fight racism and prejudices. This code was used when a content creator addressed a situation which had racial connotations. If the content creator did so to dismantle racial narratives and provide counter-stories, it was coded as Awareness.

Meme: Memes are the most dominant form of content encountered by the participants. While memes have some definitions as described in the theory section, it still comes down to subjective understandings of the culture that they are embedded in. Memes were coded firstly when the content referenced any form of pop culture such as the Office or Ryan Gosling (who

was often used as a reference as will be described) or if a recurring format was used and imitated by several users using the same punchline.

Other: When it was unclear in which category the content could be placed or it was unique, it was coded as ‘Other’.

Personal Experience: Personal Experience was coded when PoC talked about their personal experience as a marginalized group and the everyday racism they face. Similarly, this code was also used, when White individuals talked about their perspective as witnesses as PoC are verbally or physically attacked and share their opinion.

Skit: A skit draws here on the more ‘original’ type of comedy. In a skit, the user itself is subject/actor and creates a performance by playing a role and using a script. The user therefore plays a character that is part of a joke.

White Supremacy: White supremacy was coded when the message of the content implied any form of white superiority by putting the white race above any other or when PoC were in any way portrayed as inferior (e.g. videos implying that Black people still live in huts or have a low IQ).

Targeted Race

This theme defined which race was the subject of the TikTok. While coding *targeted race* was mostly used for racist content, some anti-racist creators raised awareness by talking about their personal experience as a person of colour or educating the user about existing racial prejudices, making the content eligible for the *targeted race* code. Additionally, the different codes might overlap but were coded the way the content allowed. For example, the codes *Black People* or *Arabic People* could have been part of the *African People* code or vice versa. Similarly *Chinese People* are usually part of *Asian People* but were coded separately if *Chinese People* specifically were the target. As it is difficult to understand which specific race the content/creator tries to target, it is coded as objectively as possible and thus resulting in more codes.

Type of Racism

The code ‘Type of Racism’ aims to understand in which form racism is practiced on TikTok and whether one can see a pattern. The following types of racism were coded and are defined as follows:

Hate speech:

“Hate speech and hateful behaviour attack, threaten, dehumanise or degrade an individual or group based on their characteristics. These include characteristics like race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, caste, sexual orientation, sex, gender, gender identity, serious disease, disability and immigration status.” (TikTok 2022)

Hate speech was coded when a specific minority was actively targeted whether it was veiled behind humoristic content or overt discrimination. This means that the creator or user who posted the content deliberately attacked a specific ethnicity by their choice of wording or content.

Microaggression: Contrary to hate speech, microaggression is not as offensive and overt in their communication. In this case racism might be hidden or not meant to hurt the individuals. As racism exists deep intertwined in our social system some individuals might not notice that they were being racist. For example, in one of the TikToks coded an elder White guy approaches an African American and asks him if he is from Africa, the creator of the video answers with a simple yes and the elder guy just leaves. In this case the White guy probably did not want to verbally attack the man but by asking this question he immediately assumes that every Black person comes from Africa and therefore reinforces existing prejudices.

Self-Deprecating Humour: During the coding it occurred that mostly White people spread hate and discrimination against PoC. Self-Deprecating Humour means in this context, that PoC make racist or stereotypic jokes about their own race. TikTok is a mostly anonymous platform, so it is hard to know the identity of the user, but especially in skits one sees a lot of PoC making fun of their own race making it possible to code.

Stereotyping: A usual form of racism is to make fun of people based on existing stereotypes and prejudices. Stereotypes reinforce inequality and misinformation about certain characteristics of different ethnicities or individuals. Stereotypes can be accounted to hate speech as they actively target to offend or judge individuals based on given attributes, but they were coded separately as they make up a big proportion of prejudices against races therefore deserving a code for their own.

Symbolic Racism: The explained forms of discrimination happen through communication or physical aggression. This type of racism focuses on symbolic factors. Examples are *Swastikas* or doing the *Hitler Salute*. These symbols relate to white supremacy and hate towards other races.

White Supremacy: The previous explained codes designate forms of racism that try to hurt and push other races down. White Supremacy was coded when there was no direct attack on a minority, but the content portrayed any kind of message trying to justify or propagate the supremacy of the white race.

4.4 Ethical research

Chapter Six of Kozinets' book gives guidelines for ethical research within netnography. Dealing with data on social media require ethical considerations. TikTok falls under the authors concept of a 'public site', as everyone has access to all of the content available on the app. To fully immerse into the app, one needs to registrate and create an account, but this does not concern the mere viewing of the videos, screenshots, and comments. Working with public data does not need further ethical restrictions. Although the data is publicly available, all comments and creators quoted will not be named to secure the privacy of the users and creators. Any type of content created can and will be displayed in the remainder of the thesis as it is easier and more meaningful for the reader if they visually acknowledge the content. (cf. Kozinets 2019: 184)

All participants received a consent form which they were asked to sign. By signing, they agreed to the use of their data collected from the interviews as well as their comments and thoughts given on TikTok. At every point, they had the possibility to withdraw their participation without further notice.

5. Results

This section presents the findings of the research, structured along the described methods. The results are organized into subsections based on the different analyses performed. Both qualitative (interviews, case studies) and quantitative data (data collection along the codes) are included to provide an overview of the outcomes. Each subsection begins with a brief introduction of the analysis method employed, followed by the results.

5.1 Results of the Interviews

A concise description of the main messages along the questions are captured. For the fully transcribed interviews please refer to the Appendix. In the following passages I will refer to the participants as P1-6 or Participant 1-6 to ensure their anonymity. Parts of the interviews are used throughout the whole thesis.

5.1.1 Introductory Interviews

All participants are very active on TikTok, with most of them using the app around two hours a day, while others use it less frequently but still consistently. The content on the FYP varies individually, but all participants exclusively use their FYP and do not actively search for specific topics unless they want to inform themselves on certain topics. Examples for participant-specific content appearing on the FYP was Travel/Holiday videos, Gym, LGBTQ+ videos, awareness videos or news. A lot of the interviewees had memes (also in form of dark humour) as a dominant category to describe the content they view. All of them follow specific content or users but still choose to stay on the main page while using the app. When it came to followed content, German left-wing content creators such as ‘toxic-pommes’ or ‘smypathisch’ was the most dominant category. Racism and Anti-racism were nothing new, all encountered any form of content revolving around these topics. When asked if they could describe it, only a few had specific TikToks in mind. Some saw racism in form of dark humour disguised as memes which seemed funny, yet critical, in the eyes of the users. The participants also recall some anti-racist content on their FYP. This was either news about global problems or spreading awareness and dismantling racist stereotypes as one participant remembers: “So mostly podcasts or mostly it’s people who are joking about it, they are addressing things that are really racist. They are talking about stereotypes to uncover them.” (Participant 2, Interview 1, 02:10) When talking about emotions, there was no clear answer among the interviews, it seemed that most of them were either indifferent or didn’t really pay attention how they felt. This could also be due to the mindless TikTok scrolling as mentioned in the theoretical section.

5.1.2 Closing Interviews

The participants did not encounter any problems during the data collection and were dominantly indifferent with two stating their concerns towards the racist dominance on TikTok, which they acknowledged during the two months. Similarly, most participants continued to use TikTok in the same extent as they did before. Few exceptions reduced their screen time due to work and having less personal time. Views on racism itself did not change, all participants were already wary towards hate while at the same time some accept dark humour as grey zone and frowned at. Participant 3 stated that for them humour has no boundaries:

“I think I have to be honest and say that for me humour has no boundaries and that is something that I definitely stand by. But I understand if people are against by it as it still can

hurt some individuals. If we are talking about humour, I can understand every side I have to say. But then again blunt racism doesn't need to be. The line of freedom of speech is very thin, if you then exclude individuals or if they have disadvantage then yeah.” (Participant 3, Interview 2, 09:06)

Humour was the most difficult and ambiguous aspect for the participants as they caught themselves laughing at dark humour but acknowledged that this supports hateful speeches. As the content shifted to more overt racism, all of the users were shocked to stumble upon the hateful side of TikTok, where the grey zone shifted towards an all-bad consensus and disbelief. The participants did not know that there was a darker side on TikTok that they accessed by interacting with more and more hateful content.

Most of the participants who sent predominantly racist or harmful content quickly fell into a bubble of more negative content. Four of the participants stated that while they already had racist content mostly in form of dark humour before the data collection. The frequency of such videos changed drastically after sending some initial content. As some time passed between the end of the data collection and the interviews, their FYP was able to recover to their old state as participant 4 says: “As soon as I stopped looking at the racist videos and did not interact with them, I got back into my “bubble” it felt like.” (Participant 4, Interview 2, 04:03) The other two participants had less to no racism on their feed beforehand. Both were also safe from harmful content during the data collection, while one participant did not register antiracism either. This shows that while there exists racism on the app, not every user will be in contact. Dark humour was partially accepted by the participants but by interacting with those videos, the messages shifted from humour to overt racism and hate speech against marginalized groups.

The participants that were more prone to the racist content were shocked by the state of TikTok. While they were able to collect anti-racist content, the right-wing politics dominated their FYP. This is a recurring trend as participant 3 describes “I mean there is already a shift towards the right on TikTok. I would say that this is getting more popular.” (Participant 3, Interview 2, 05:04) confirmed by participant 4:

“But if you do get this [racist] content, you always feel like it is a proper fight between people. And looking at pure mass, most comments, hate, etc. are from the right side. It feels like racist opinions are dominant on TikTok, even though I know the minority is often the loudest.” (Participant 4, Interview 2, 04:03)

These participants were also mainly concerned about the safety for children as participant 1 for example:

“Everyone is on TikTok, and especially young people really use it. They can be influenced in a much more different way as someone like us, I mean with 27 or 30 years old. I won’t be influenced by things like these. But let’s say a 13/14 year old or even younger, they take it differently than the reality maybe is. Their perception of what is right or wrong might be completely different you know.” (Participant 1, Interview 2, 06:28)

This was a consensus among users. The participants are older or have the privilege to go to university, which may make them less susceptible to racism and hate speech. However, children, who are the main demographic of TikTok, react differently when stumbling across discriminatory content.

5.2 Results of the data collection

The following section captures the results of the data collection along the created codes. The quantitative results are displayed by their frequency through counts. Tables are used to visualise them. During the data collection between Mid-September and the 20th of December a total of 205 videos were sent by the participants. From these 205 videos, twenty-nine were deleted/banned at the time of the coding. As the videos got banned it is assumed that they were of racist or hateful nature. With this assumption 189 racist videos were coded making up 92% of the total and leaving 8% for seventeen anti-racist TikToks. This shocking revelation demonstrates the one-sided discussion of the topic revolving around racism on the app.

Type of content

Type of Content	Count of Type of content	Percentage
Anti-Racism	17	10%
Anti-'Wokeness'	4	2%
Dark Humour	115	67%
Overt racism	37	21%
Grand Total	173	100%

Table 1: Type of Content

Table 1 shows the counts of the type of content. As already discussed in the brief description, anti-racism makes up for only 10% of the content (the deleted videos were not included in the code ‘Type of Content’). ‘Anti-Wokeness’ accounts for 2% and all four of the videos were users complaining about other creators being too ‘woke’. They accused others seeing

problems where they are none. The most common category is dark humour or humour in general. TikTok is known for being light-hearted fun and this is reflected by the data collection. Overt racism makes up for 21% and is therefore the second largest type of content. This revelation is concerning as every fifth content sent is openly racist and not hidden behind humour. This confirms Ortiz idea that overt racism has in fact shifted to the online realms, where it can just roam freely (cf. Ortiz 2021: 2638). TikTok users (when looking at the comment section) see dark humour as a form of comedy that is not harmful and should be viewed as banter. However plain racism and its harm to society on the other side cannot be denied at any point. Most of the content that was coded as ‘overt racism’ was a direct target to a minority and could only be judged as such. These videos ranged from plain stereotypes to hate speech and propaganda trying to situate one race above the other, in almost all cases it is White people practicing racism towards PoC.

Specific Type of Content

Specific Type of Content	Count of Specific Type of Content	Percentage
Anti-'Wokeness'	4	2%
Awareness	11	6%
Hate speech	19	11%
Meme	79	46%
Other	21	12%
Personal Experience	6	4%
Skit	22	13%
White Supremacy	9	5%
Grand Total	171	100%

Table 2: Specific type of content

Table 2 shows the count of the specific type of content. Memes were the most dominant group with accumulating 46% of all TikToks sent. This makes them almost four times more frequent than the second group which is Skits, also being part of the subcategory of humour. Awareness was with the count of eleven, the most prevalent form of content of anti-racist discourses followed by personal experience. Overt hate speech was sent nineteen times making up 10% of the content. This is very alarming and further reinforces the problematic state of TikTok.

Targeted Race

Targeted Race	Count of Targeted Race	Percentage
African People	6	4%
Arabic people	13	9%
Asian People	4	3%
Black + White People	1	1%
Black People	74	54%
Chinese People	3	2%
Indian People	3	2%
Jews	2	1%
Migrants	12	9%
Non-Whites	11	8%
Portuguese	1	1%
Refugees	5	4%
Russians	1	1%
Thai People	1	1%
Grand Total	137	100%

Table 3: Targeted Race

Table 3 shows the count and percentage of the code *Targeted Race*, this code expresses which race was the subject of the content. With seventy-four counts making up 54%, Black People are the biggest target of racist TikTok content followed by Arabs (9%), Migrants (9%) and Refugees (5%). White people are directly only once the subject of a TikTok and ironically in a video, where at the same time Black people were targeted as both groups made jokes about each race (hence the Black + White people code). This shows that the topic of racism on TikTok seems very one-sided with PoC making up much of the content with only a handful of exceptions. This goes in hand with the idea of *whiteness as property* (cf. Mills & Godley 2018: 113) describe in the CRT tenet. Whites dominate TikTok and have the privilege of not being the target of racism and hate speech. This reinforces Essed's (2013) *entitlement theory*, as White people may feel entitled to play the victim role (cf. Ortiz 2021). By looking at table 3 it becomes clear that this is definitely not the case on TikTok. Although it would be interesting to get an idea who is responsible for the creation and diffusion of the content, in most cases the users hide behind an anonymous profile, so it is unclear if White people are always the culprits behind the memes. But this can be assumed as participant 5 suggests: "And I assume that it [racist content] comes from our Western world" (Participant 5, Interview 2, 06:50). Table 3 also shows us that Jews are the only religious group that are a

target, while some content revolved around the stereotype of Muslims and them being terrorists, most of the users and creators called Arabs as the subject and not their respective religion. It is unclear whether the hate towards Jewish people goes back to the history as seen by Fredrickson (2015) or if it is subject to the current Israel/Palestine conflict.

Type of Racism

Type of Racism	Count of Type of Racism	Percentage
Hate Speech	76	47%
Microaggression	22	13%
Self-Deprecating Humour	16	10%
Stereotyping	24	15%
Symbolic Racism	10	6%
White Supremacy	14	9%
Grand Total	162	100%

Table 4: Type of Racism

In Table 4 the counts and percentages of the diverse types of racism are displayed. With 47% hate speech makes up the most frequent form of racism on TikTok. Stereotyping is with 15% also a common type showing that stereotypes are a persistent form of using prejudices to verbally attack marginalized races. Symbolic Racism and White Supremacy cumulate to 15% meaning that the idea of a supreme race exists on TikTok. Astoundingly Self-Deprecating Humour still accounts for 10% despite TikTok being a mostly anonymous app making it hard to find out which demographic the creator of the video is from.

Comments from participants

The participants were asked to comment and briefly explain how they emotionally perceived the video they just sent. Unfortunately, not all the videos got a comment, which is understandable due to time limits or additional efforts for the participants. Sometimes it is hard to verbally state the emotions revolving around certain messages which was also prevalent in the interviews. In total forty-seven comments were captured which means that about every fifth video was commented. Most of the comments were short (one-worded) statements on what emotion the user felt such as ‘(un)funny’, ‘disgusting’ or ‘too much’. While some participants made more elaborate comments than others, the first ones send fewer videos. This may mean that they had more energy to dissect the few videos they came

across, while other users were already flooded with the constant negative content that was often very repetitive and did not feel the need to comment every video. This is understandable, as a lot of videos, especially memes, are very repetitive and similar to each other, resulting in the same emotions.

The main message one gets from the comments is, that the humoristic content was perceived as funny; the overt racism triggered more shocking emotions as well as some participants being disgusted by the seen content; anti-racism was in almost every case agreed on, meaning that the participants agreed to the message and applauded the anti-racist discourses and activism. Dark humour was a preference, with some contents being marked as funny but other being frowned upon by the same participant. It is difficult to dissect what made the content funny for the watcher, which was also addressed during the interviews with most participants acknowledging that the content itself (the hate or prejudice) towards marginalized groups is not funny but rather the context which makes it funny. As one participant states:

“Ok to be honest, I find this one [video sent] really funny. [...] Yes, what can I say, I have to say that I find this one very funny. Inflation is also a recent topic, football also. I don’t know how I can describe this better.” (Participant 3, Interview 2, 11:13)

5.3 Case Studies

From the quantitative outset we already were able to get an idea of how racism is perceived on TikTok. The following section will dive deeper into the analysis of the content by focusing on a specific set of videos and trying to understand what these videos may further tell us about the state of racism on the app. The aim is to give an in-depth content analysis of a few chosen contents that were sent by the participants along the ideas of the theoretical framework outlined at the beginning of the thesis.

Selection

The videos were selected based on both their message and impact. For the message, it was important that the content was one-dimensional and the ideology behind it as clear as possible. The impact was chosen either by the content being sent by multiple participants or by the number of likes and comments received. Every video had a certain number of likes and comments that were captured by the time of the coding. Unfortunately, it was not possible to be make a completely objective decision which videos made a suitable selection. The influence of the author on what would be interesting to further analyse played a vital

role. The selected content aims to represent the coded categories as much as possible but is in no extent a representation of all the data that was collected. For a detailed understanding of all of the content sent please refer to the excel table in the *Appendix*. The selected TikToks were screenshotted and saved via an Internet Browser.

Racism as a form of superiority

TikTok is filled with messages reinforcing the superiority of individual races, in almost every case, the White race. For a lot of users being 'racist' is something funny and to be proud of. For example, Figure 7 shows a TikTok series of 3 images. The first image shows the actor Ryan Gosling who seems to be sad/devastated with the caption "When she's blonde". Similarly, the second picture is again a more sinister Ryan Gosling with the caption "When she's brunette". In the third picture, a much happier and content Ryan Gosling with the caption "When she laughs at all my most racist and homophobic jokes known to mankind".

The creator of this meme wants to portray the message, that being racist and homophobic is an important criterion when it comes to the 'selection' of a girlfriend. It is not enough if the girl you are interested in has 'only' blonde or brunette hair colour. Hence the unhappy or even devastated pictures of Ryan Gosling to picture the emotions. On the other hand, the user is content and feels superior if she laughs at their hateful jokes which is depicted by a picture of Ryan Gosling where he is well dressed and looks classy. An important focus lies on the word 'most', for the creator racist jokes can be graded and their jokes are especially racist and homophobic when compared to the rest of 'mankind'. This post has more than 363 thousand likes which reflects the shocking popularity of this meme.

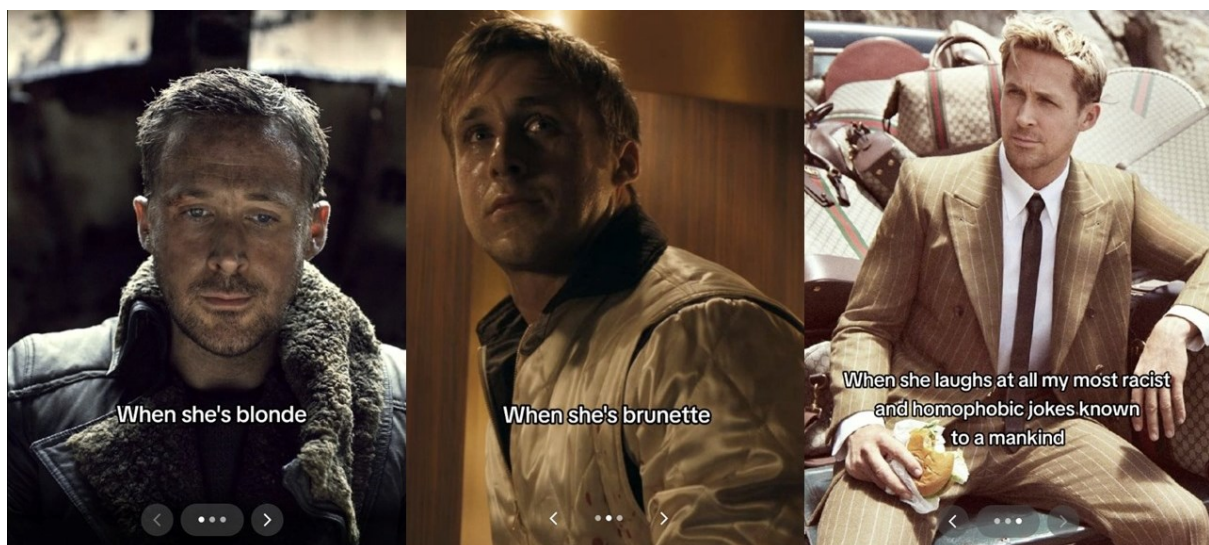


Figure 7: Ryan Gosling meme.

A second example of the widespread acceptance of racism as a normality and superiority is captured in similar TikTok, where the creator explains that men only have two moods: 'spending time with their girlfriend' and 'racism'. The message that we get from this meme is that men are racist if they are not with their girlfriend, which is a significant amount of time. Racism is here portrayed as something normal and a 'mood' that an individual has. While people are usually sad or happy, this user sees racism as a state of emotion. The comments from other users under this video are also relevant. One user commented 'I only have the last one' (267 likes), meaning they are only racist. Others are agreeing with the creator with comments like 'based' or 'me fr' (for real). A German user commented 'Your girlfriend has to be even more racist than you are' (Original: Die Freundin muss noch rassistischer sein als man selber) implying a sense of competition between a couple, where the more racist you are the better.

This format of meme was sent multiple times with small adjustments. Sometimes it was a different actor for the first figure or 'When she is racist' in the last picture instead but the message was always the same: Racism is seen as a superiority or as something that is normal. Similarly, racism seems to be a criterion when it comes to the choice of a partner. The creators do not hide the fact that they are racist or that they want racist friends/partners but even state that is something they are proud of and want to share through posts like the ones listed. The question remains if the creators posted these as a joke or are openly racist. Participant 5 had the following reaction the meme portrayed in figure 7:

"This one is really crazy. I mean you always see Ryan Gosling, so it's already posted from the perspective of a man in regards of a woman, I guess. He feels good, respectively like the best and greatest man when his girlfriend or partner laughs at his racist and homophobic jokes. So he receives affirmation by his partner because he then seen as funny. But through that he just reinforces racist and homophobic stereotypes. And I think that we should counter and dissect such prejudices and not reinforce those for personal endorsement." (Participant 5, Interview 2, 14:40)

Regardless of their intentions, the message that they spread is that racism is a 'mood', something that is or should be ever-present as mentioned by participant 5. Their idea of the post being from a man is also important. All of the TikToks from this type were in the point of view of a white man, either Ryan Gosling or Bryan Cranston. The number of likes and interactions these posts get shows that the creators are not alone in their thoughts, which is confirmed by the comments sympathizing with their opinions. Through these memes it also

becomes clear that the users of TikTok see racism as a form of competition where the better you are at ‘being’ racist the more respect you earn. In the section *Critical Humour Studies*, it was outlined that in the comedy industry the competition is the key driver, where one tries to come as close to the ‘hurtline’ without overstepping it. The existence of a ‘hurtline’ on TikTok is discussed in the next section.

A competition in racist humour

Mememes are a form of imitation and while there are millions of them on the Internet, a lot of them share similarities. On TikTok one can distinguish a common pattern, three pictures in a slide form with the last one being the punchline. Figure 8 shows such a meme that was very popular before and during Christmas. It always starts the same way: A close relative (here a mother) asks the user to create a Christmas list via a text message which appears on the phone. The second slide is always an interlude to the actual punchline with common phrases like ‘Ok Mommy’, ‘Ok’ or ‘Hold on’. The last picture is then a screenshot from a note app with an ‘actual’ Christmas list with things like ‘toys’, ‘my girlfriend’ or ‘a ps5’. Below this, there is another listing with hateful ‘wishes’ such as the ones listed in the figure.



Figure 8: Christmas Wishlist meme.

The message of the creator is just plain cruel and by no means justifiable. Some comments under this post are: ‘I am asian but i agree’ (4.995 likes), ‘how did you have the same Christmas list as me’ (8.969 likes) or ‘Real (I have no girl I just agree with the last part)’ (618 likes). These comments combined with the 546 thousand likes the content got shows the widespread acceptance of the TikTok community of this post. Scrolling through the rest of the comments reveals that only a very small minority is concerned and questions the message of the post. One user commented ‘You are a weirdo’ and got immediate backlash with replies such as ‘It’s a joke bro’, ‘Crying?’, ‘dawg has level 2 humour’ (implying that the original

commentator has a low sense of humour) and ‘he’s obviously joking’. All these comments seem to see this post as a joke and therefore nothing wrong with it. For TikTok users, terrorist attacks, hanging feminists, rotting out an entire race or bringing slavery back is something that should be considered as funny and anyone who ‘doesn’t get it’ is just boring or has no understanding of humour. Or as Wiggings puts it well: “the vast majority of critical memes inhere a directionality which addresses at least two groups, one which is positioned to ‘get the joke’ and one which may be the target of the joke.” (Wiggings 2019: XV, XVI).

There are a multitude of things that need to be addressed regarding such memes. Firstly, racist memes can work in a seasonal matter. The TikToks were sent and created shortly before Christmas, mostly early December. Creating a Christmas List is something people, and especially children, tend to do during the time of the postings. This means that the creators were waiting for the right time to make their post to get the most attraction and popularity. Similarly, these types of memes were created in different languages. The participants sent almost identical ones to the one in figure 8 in German and French, meaning that there is no limit to geographical location or language spoken, the racist jokes stay very similar when it comes to Western European countries or North America. The punchline is the key as the rest stays with small exceptions the same. The *content* as described by Shifman (2013a) and Wiggings (2019) changes, as the different slides always show something different. The *stance* always stays the same: Racist content and hate speech. Here the creator can use their ‘creativity’ and chose the joke they want to display. The example in figure 8 shows one user who went all out and created a very hateful list. Their message is racist, sexist and contains all forms of other hate speech. Other examples that were collected, were Christmas wishes such as ‘Burn all ni**ers’, ‘kill all ni**ers or ‘9 year old ni**er sex slave’ (The N-Words were not censored in the memes) just to name a few. It is important to note that these posts in respective order had 500.4 thousand, 380.7 thousand and 303.6 thousand likes and all of them were still available for anyone to watch three months later in February.

With the concerning number of likes the question remains what and who makes these types of memes popular? All of them seem to have the same message with no clear distinction between them and still every meme gets well over hundreds of thousands of likes. Unfortunately, we can’t know for sure whether these likes are from the same group of people liking these memes or if there are in fact more than a cumulative million individuals liking racist content.

One idea for the popularity of the memes is the hurtline metaphor discussed in the theoretical section. As a reminder “the *hurtline* indicates the threshold whether a joke is funny or offensive, the goal for comedians is to be as close as possible to the *line* without crossing it (cf. Pérez 2013: 486ff).” The effects of the hurtline on TikTok and social media content was already discussed in the respective section, but the example outlined helps to visualize how this concept works. The comedians (here users) of TikTok must create the most offensive possible meme to get the viewers’ attention. Hence the creator in figure 8 tries to be creative and push the hurtline to its limits by creating a very offensive meme and targeting multiple groups simultaneously. The creators push each other on who can create the most offensive and racist meme. Participant 3 adds a different aspect to this idea:

“I don’t find this one funny. This is just to trigger people. You just list things that people find shocking just to get a reaction. That is one of the goals of TikTok, to get attention through things like this.” (Participant 3, Interview 2, 12:08)

This suggests that the hurtline is deliberately crossed to force engagement. The meme in the figure stood out, because it overstepped the hurtline in so many ways by attacking as many target groups as possible. The engagement goes through the roof, even if it is a critical one.

We can apply and confirm Wagner & Schwarzenegger’s (2020) four modes to this type of memes. *Amplification* is given by the abundant amount of likes and shares the content have, this shows that they are reaching a wide audience. *Adaption* is the key here. Not only was it possible to create the memes during Christmas, but they can also be varied and adapted regarding the needs. ‘Send home Arabs’ was one form of the meme that possible targets Western European countries such as France or Germany, while ‘9/11 part 2’ addresses more the US-audience. Regarding the *appropriation of cultural artifacts and objects* one can say that the far-right used *Christmas Lists* for their own humorous purposes. During that period of time, it was clear that if you saw a Christmas List on your FYP on the first slide, it will probably contain dark humour or hate speech. *Attraction* is again confirmed with the high number of likes, users from TikTok are attracted and content with humorous content. Similarly, attraction is also given by the destructive nature of these memes, that attract both racists as well as activists triggered by such content as mentioned by participant 3. These memes are only a fraction of all examples that show that humour plays a vital role when it comes to diffusing political opinions or in this case hate speech. Users do not acknowledge the danger and ignorance of the described memes.

With users competing in ways to portray racism, they tend to get ‘creative’. In figure 9 we see another successful example of dark humour. The first slide shows stacks of coins rising in a rising manner with an arrow symbolising some kind of growth with the caption ‘inflation’. The second image shows four black men in a prison dress, meaning that they might have been slaves or prisoners. As the picture is in black and white, it suggests, that it is of older nature. The final picture shows the French National Football team hand in hand. The shown players are all black with each player having an amount of money displayed next to them (65M\$, 95M\$, etc.) which indicates their transfer-market value as a Football player.



Figure 9: Inflation meme.

The message of the video is that Black people’s ‘value’ raised with time, similar how inflation works. In this case not the money or economy has inflated but the worth of black people. During colonialism, they were free as slaves and nowadays they are expensive Football players. Note that this TikTok was uploaded on 15/10/2023 and has over 1.3 million likes (!!!), 88.3 thousand shares and 11.8 thousand comments. Many users as well as the participant who sent this find this type of content very funny:

“Ok to be honest, I find this one really funny. Because I mean the story is that Black people were enslaved back then, which definitely wasn’t ok. But now through the inflation they are so to say more expensive. It is known that the French national football team mostly consists of black people. What can I say, I have to say that I find this one very funny. Inflation is also a recent topic, football also. I don’t know how I can describe this better.” (Participant 3, Interview 2, 11:13)

Like the creator, the comments work in a creative manner with some examples such as “it’s like bitcoin. you wish you invested earlier ...” (1.982 likes); “Should have bought sooner, can you tell me when it falls?” (5.571 likes) or “Black Bitcoin” (11.9 thousand likes). Everything hints towards the same message, that Black people are seen as wares that can be traded

willingly based on their price. Black lives are reduced to prices and values, where it is better to *buy* humans at a cheaper price.

While some might argue that this should be treated as a joke, we are dealing with the same ideologies that were the mainstream during colonialism and active slavery. TikTok users make fun of the Black population being nothing more than wares that can be traded among White people. Additionally, without going too deep into economics, inflation is generally seen as something bad, that we need to avoid. This implies that with the French Football team becoming valuable players, Black people are inflated, meaning they are more expensive than they should be. The consensus of the *jokes* in the comments is, that we should go back to the old days, where the Black population was worth less or even nothing. While the user who posted the TikTok can be seen as creative, it is at the cost of a marginalized group. This reinforces the prejudices that Black people are only wares which have a price. It is also concerning, that the content received well over a million likes, which not only means that it is widely accepted and welcomed by the TikTok community but also that the content moderation of the app failed. The creator even wrote in the description, that the video was already banned but he wanted to try again, the video was since then online without being taken down.

TikTok as a medium for right-wing propaganda

Aside from the *funny banter*, in form of offensive hateful and jokes, TikTok also nests an abundant amount of propaganda, mostly from the more conservative or even far-right politics.

One example is an ‘informational’ video from a creator who specializes in informing his viewers about conspiracy theories. In said video we firstly see a quick shot of African immigrants who arrived at the island of Lampedusa with the caption “The island of Lampedusa, in Italy, has set a record with the arrival of over 5,000 African immigrants in 24 hours.”. The creator reacts to the glimpse with the following words: “Is it me or all those young men military age? You notice that? All these men that are coming over from these Third World countries are all of military age. Sleeper Cells? Possibly.” The description of the video says: “sleeper cells are coming to shore near you.”

A quick search and explanation from the creator himself reveal that sleeper cells are supposed to be terrorists in disguise that are waiting for a signal from their operator to then attack the country they are infiltrating (cf. Merriam Webster, 2024). The creator implies with this

message that African immigrants coming to Europe are terrorists and that they are here to fight and conduct terrorism. Interestingly he does not give any evidence or further explanation for his claims, it seems to be his made-up opinion that he shares with the TikTok community. First, his claims are more than wrong, there is no evidence that African immigrants are trained military terrorists that are sent to Europe, this is just misinformation and dangerous propaganda. Looking at other videos of the creator it quickly becomes clear that he sees himself as someone who uncovers the *truth* that no one likes to hear. In most cases his information seems more like far stretched conspiracy theories such as the example of the video. With his false message he not only calls for hate and caution against immigrants but also reinforces false stereotypes and prejudices. Naïve users might get the idea, that immigrants are trained military which puts us in danger and become wary or even hostile towards refugees. We are dealing with a more and more present migration crisis with news of countless deaths through the sinking of boats and a difficult border situation around Europe. I will not go further over the details of the migrant crisis and the pain the immigrants might go through as this is not the topic of the thesis. It still needs to be said that a lot of people are suffering and seeking refuge in other countries.

The message of the creator alone is not the problem. There are countless conservative conspiracy theorists already existing on the Internet, for example the prominent figure Alex Jones, an American radio moderator who is known for his far-right attitude and countless conspiracy theories and misinformation. Individuals such as the creator or Alex Jones are carrying out their opinions for the world to listen. Some individuals see through their lies and inform themselves on the topic in discussion or just be wary in general of their messages. The video on TikTok received 240 thousand likes. Again, one cannot be sure behind the intentions of the likes, but it seems that a lot of users approve the message preached. A glimpse of the comments confirms this presumption. One user commented ‘Definitely a big possibility of some being sleeper cells’ (14.7 thousand likes), another comment says, ‘This is the end of Europe if they don’t take serious action!’ or ‘I think it’s a war tactic sent from the enemy. the war has already started’ (5.554 likes). There is not one comment that questions the theory of the creator. Participant 4 also states this concern: “These echo chambers are created, where people are never really in contact with different opinions and are just confirming each other’s beliefs.” (Participant 4, Interview 2, 04:03) Everyone agrees that the immigration is a threat to Europe or the Global North in general and that we need to stop this *madness*. The comment

section agrees that these African immigrants look suspicious and that they are coming to Europe to destroy us from within.

This is highly alerting. This is not one single opinion from a loony conspiracy theorist but a conglomerate of users spreading false information and startling each other to hate and be cautious of the 'other'. The fact that one commentor uses the word 'the enemy' already reinforces the problematic world view of 'us' and 'them'. Anyone that wants to come across the sea to Europe needs to be viewed as the 'enemy' in the eyes of these individuals. This is especially dangerous for TikTok, where a lot of naïve kids or teenagers are mindlessly scrolling. Anyone that may already be in some way biased or suspicious towards immigrants through other forms of media might find his confirmation in messages like these. The app gives a platform for right-wing politics and propaganda like this example which can brainwash many users.

Similar examples were sent numerous times. Refugees and immigration were the most dominant theme when it came to propaganda. It is important to note that none of the content sent was published by right-wing platforms or parties such as AfD (Germany) or Front Nationale (France). All the content that was collected, was created by individual users who never affiliated with any politics or stated their intentions. This makes it hard to understand the background of the creator. For example, if the AfD were to post hate against refugees it would just confirm their political ideologies and persuade users of their ideas. The state of TikTok is much more complex. In one French video, we see on the first slide a worker laying bricks with the caption "Portuguese immigration"; the second shows an Italian grandma in front of pizzas with the caption "Italian immigration"; third is a Chinese woman in front of a buffet in a Chinese restaurant with the caption "Chinese immigration; finally we see a picture of a riot with the streets being in flames and people destroying things with the caption "Immigration of 'chance'" which refers to the new waves of refugees coming from the North of Africa to France. The user asks the viewer to put their opinion in the comments. The hashtags of the video are "patriot","MarineLePen","Immigration". A look to their profile reveals that the user posts countless videos preaching the message that France should belong to French people and that there is no room for immigrants. Furthermore, the account is reposting interviews from the right-wing politics reassuring their messages. The difference to the first example is, that we have no idea who this creator is, are they a singular French patriot? A hidden account from right-wing politics to push their ideologies? Or someone different altogether? Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing, which makes TikTok very

dangerous in terms of transparency. Anyone can create an account and start publishing propaganda to diffuse hateful messages and misinformation towards marginalized groups. The anonymity brings another advantage to the users as they can just create countless accounts and surpass boundaries. Right-wing politics, as well as left-wing politics, cannot just say what they want if they want to gain followers. There is a societal understanding of certain limits that play a vital role in what high ranked politicians are allowed to say and what not. This is different on TikTok. I can create an anonymous account and just say that I hate all immigrants and that they are all bad with no one being able to stop me.

The issue of freedom of expression as described in Essed's (2013) *entitlement theory* is very relevant for the case of TikTok as users are free to just spread misinformation as they want. In the outside world there are limits in forms of sanctions. On social media such as TikTok, users are entitled to express their opinions by spreading wrong messages. The example of the two creators who see it in their need to verbally attack refugees and immigrants to prove that the Global North should remain in the hands of the White population. France to the French nationals and not to some savage immigrants who are only there to profit. By remaining anonymous, the second creator has the freedom to push the limits on what can be expressed without having repercussions. Their messages will be seen by countless users and like-minded individuals spreading hate and ambiguous opinions across the platform.

Hegemonic whiteness

The following section will show some examples of TikTok users portraying hegemonic whiteness or white as a form of superiority in any kind. The first example is a TikTok with two slides. In the first we can see a simple hut made from wood and straw in a desert with the caption 'Africa in 2023'. The second picture shows an ancient Greek temple made from marble and a beautiful gold statue inside with the caption 'Greeks 400 BC'. With this content the creator of the TikTok implies that European architecture is far superior to the African one. Not only did the Greeks create colossal and impressive buildings in ancient times which were already superior back then, but the creator also spreads the misinformation that Africans live in huts. The common stereotype of Africa being backwards and Europeans being the modern and intellectual as we know it from colonial times is here displayed. The content described spreads racist misinformation as one might think that Africans live in huts, while in fact pyramids as one of the most fascinating architectural buildings in our history existed long before the temple on the second picture existed. At the same time the creator tries to prove the

superiority of Europeans by putting these two pictures completely out of their context to prove their racist opinion.

In a similar example, another user first portrays a world map with the average skin colour which shows that people around the Equator are darker than the ones near the two Poles. This is of course common sense with how the exposure to the Sun works. In the second picture we can see again a world map with the average IQ displayed. Here Africa and the Arabian Peninsula seem to have a significant lower IQ than Europe, North America, or East Asia. The first note is that both maps have no source making them already invalid. What the user tries to imply here is that there is a correlation between the Colour of the skin and the IQ points a person has, which would make Black people significantly less intelligent than White people. Again, two pictures with no connection are taken out of their context to prove the racist opinion that the white population is superior based on their high intelligence.

Misinformation is a powerful and dangerous tool. For most users in both examples the images have no correlation and that we are dealing with simple racist superiority. The participant who sent the second TikTok was aware of this misinformation and added their opinion: “Africa unfortunately has a worse educational level, but due to governmental issues that go back to colonization. One has to be cautious while seeing such things and ask ‘Why is it that way?’, if that map is actually accurate.” (Comment by Participant 3). A more naïve user who may already have a sense of hegemonic superiority might see this differently. By coming across these types of content one might get the idea that Europe is in fact intellectually superior, more modern and developed than Africa. This thinking goes back to the colonial as well as post-colonial thinking, that we as citizens of the Global North are better than the others based on criteria that we are selecting. On TikTok misinformation without any sources or context can help to confirm the hegemony by making us of different contexts to support one’s opinion regardless of whether the information is right or not, as long as Whites are displayed as the better race.

Overt Racism and content moderation

Finally, this section addresses examples from the worst form of racism: overt racism and clear hate towards other races. One can maybe discuss that humour has no boundaries and that it may be ok to use racism as a means of jokes or that propaganda comes from uneducated and brainwashed individuals who just ‘don’t know better’. This final category however draws the last straw and can be in no means justified or explained, it is just wrong.

In figure 10 we can see again a series of 3 images in the form of a slideshow. The first picture shows two soldiers mounting or reloading a machinegun on a boat with 'me' and 'you' over the respective soldiers. The second image shows what looks like the same soldier firing the said gun into the sea. The last picture then shows what seems to be a boat full of black people, maybe a refugee boat but we cannot know for sure. The first hashtag in the caption says '#migrants' which might confirm that the boat we are looking at is in fact a migrant boat.

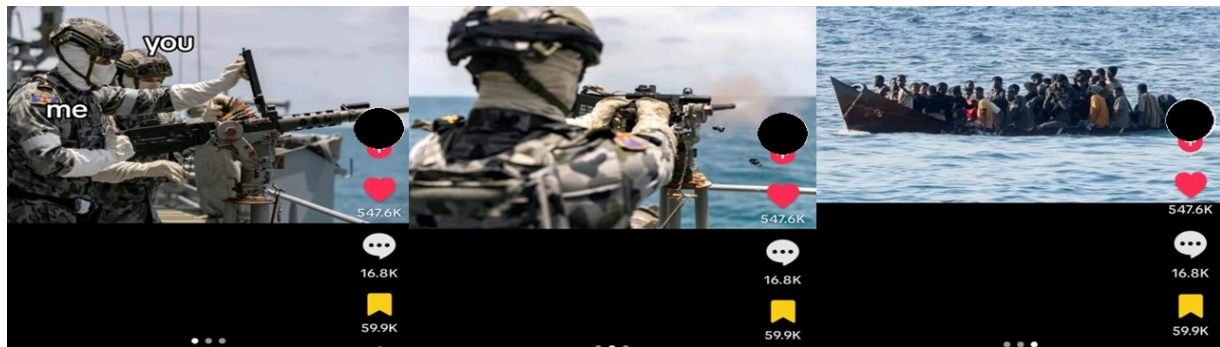


Figure 10: Boat 'meme'

The message of the creator becomes very clear. They call for an attack on migrant boats and refugees. Not only an attack but straight murder of these men. This is clear hate against Black people and can in no way be excused. This TikTok was created on 25.09.2023. The day these screenshots were taken was the 03.03.2024, more than 5 months later (The video was finally taken down at the time of proofreading in May). The video has around 550 thousand likes, 17 thousand comments and 171 thousand shares. We are not talking about a video that might go unnoticed by the community or TikTok's guidelines. It is very concerning that after 5 months and countless likes that the content is still roaming free on the app for anyone to see.

On TikTok's website one finds the following passage regarding their guidelines:

"Part of the joy of TikTok is coming across new and unexpected content. But the platform is not a place to intentionally shock, upset, or disgust others. We recognize this type of content may be triggering, cause psychological harm, or lead to extreme discomfort. **We do not allow gory, gruesome, disturbing, or extremely violent content.**" (TikTok, 2024)

Furthermore, TikTok states:

"We aim to remove content or accounts that violate our guidelines before they are viewed or shared by other people in order to reduce potential harm. Content on TikTok first goes through technology that reviews it against our guidelines. If content is identified as a potential violation, it will be automatically removed, or flagged for additional review by our trust &

safety team. Additional review will occur if a video gains popularity or has been reported.”
(TikTok, 2024)

According to their website, all TikTok videos will undergo automatic review before anyone gets to see it. Of course, such technology can be flawed, and some creators might find possible loopholes. The video in question has over half of a million of likes, which falls under the category of ‘popularity’ and according to some comments has been reported multiple times. Now the content itself does not show ‘gory, gruesome, disturbing, or extremely violent content’, there is no physical violence against a group of people. TikTok states in their enforcement section that content may be allowed under “public interest exceptions” (cf. TikTok 2024) namely: “Documentary, Educational, Medical and Scientific, Counterspeech, Satirical and Artistic” (TikTok 2024). Now I am no professional moderator, but the content described seems to fall under none of the listed exceptions. The only one that would remotely make sense would be “Satirical” but as TikTok states that they are talking about “public interest exceptions” there is no way of justifying a decision to keep this content on the app.

The participant who got this video on his FYP stated the following during the interview:

“This is no way or any form humour for me, you just call for the most racist people to interact with your post. If you read the comments, I just read one that said ‘Tell me when and where, I am there’, to just say that you would participate in such shit is so disgusting and has nothing to do with humour. It is borderline offensive.” (Participant 1, Interview 2, 08:10)

Furthermore, he is also more than surprised that the video still exists and has this number of likes. This shows that this video appears on users’ interface, without them wanting to. We are dealing with overt racism, with a “[...] call for hate and murder.” (Participant 1, Interview 2, 07:38). Aside from colourblind and internalized racism there is still overt hate speech existing on TikTok (as suggested by Ortiz (2021)) ready for anyone to watch, which is highly concerning. Interestingly, as the comment which the participant read already implies, there seems to be a feeling of belonging here. The first slide is also not just a plain picture but the “me” and “you” imply that one can join this ‘crusade’. It is not just a singular user portraying hate but they call for users to join them, which appears to be accepted in the comments as some users state: “With great pleasure (264 likes and originally in French); “I daydream about this” (109 likes); “LETS GOOOO YES” (135 likes) or “let me fire too bro” (51 likes, originally in French). Fortunately, the comment section is not all bad with some comments opposing the creator: “Doesn’t this go to far??” (4.619 likes originally in French); “comments

got no life fr [for real]” (214 likes); “This is too extreme” (611 likes) or “This definitely goes too far” (380 likes). Although these users question the message, they are only minority in the comment section. Most of these comments also seem to be implying that this still can be seen as a joke. “Too far” means here that the ‘hurtline’ (Pérez 2013) is crossed for some users. It is difficult to understand if both the creator or the commentors are serious about their messages or if they just follow “some joke”. Nevertheless ‘joking’ about killing migrants with no background or context whatsoever is just plain cruel and hateful.

Anti-Racism

TikTok is not all bad. While much of the sent content had negative connotations such as hate speech, there is a side on TikTok dedicated for activism and the fight against hate of any kind. With seventeen sent videos the sample was smaller. None of the videos called for a clear stop of racism or targeted specific type of content but spread awareness. TikTok is used to educate the users on topics around racism and history of the Global South.

One specific topic was discussed by several German speaking content creators. Two of those were sent by the participants. Both content creators addressed a hot chocolate drink with a shot of alcohol called *Lumumba*. This drink was sold at several Christmas markets in Germany and received heated discussion in local politics as well as on TikTok. Patrice Lumumba was an important revolutionist who fought for the independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo against the Belgian rule and was later shot for his fights (cf. Akrap 2023). When people order a *Lumumba*, they order a hot chocolate (dark) with a shot of rum. This can be translated to a black person who got shot. The content creators of TikTok call for a change of name and want to inform the users of the dark background of the seamless innocent drink. The drink has obvious racist connotations which was new information to a lot of people. Both content creators explain where the name originally comes from and that this cannot be tolerated at German Christmas markets.

The interesting part about these two videos are the dichotomy of the comments. On one hand, a lot of users are sympathising with the girls with comments such as ‘I work in a café. Last year, I heard of this drink and chose to rename it. It is not that hard.’ (569 likes, translated from German); ‘I didn’t know the term and was shocked of the backstory of it... Reason enough to just stay with Cacao with a shot...’ (553 likes) or ‘Oof. Thank you for enlightening me. I didn’t know this name. But it shows again that everyday racism isn’t an imagination of the affected.’ (110 likes). All these reinforcing comments were under one of the girls TikTok.

If one looks at the comments of the other creator, we get a whole different reaction. Some comments again agree with the girl, that the drink has negative connotations and is a sign of everyday racism. Others disagree with messages such as ‘It is only racist through this story. Before no one had racist intentions when ordering a Lumumba’ (1841 likes); ‘Only interests the same type of person. Today I will order a Lumumba.’ (17 likes); ‘Now it starts ... one really can exaggerate ... nothing is questioned but here Lumumba’ (34 likes) or ‘so unnecessary! Not a single soul knew why the hot chocolate was called Lumumba, there was no racist intentions behind it when ordering it’ (19 likes). This reminds of the *entitlement theory* (Essed 2013) as the users feel entitled to address an obvious problem and make it about the White race. For the users it seems easier to complain about a drink having a name changed than to admit that we still have many racial connotations that need to be addressed. It does not matter if the drink has racist connotations, but it does matter when they must make the effort and adapt to change.

The comment section shows that we have on one side users who agree that Lumumba needs to be changed and others stating that it is far stretched and uncalled for. Who is in the right here, stays a subjective discussion. The question arises, why one content creator only had comments agreeing with her, while the other one got hate and backlash for stating the same message. Both were German speaking girls with one video having 32.9k likes and 1587 comments and the other 7.160 likes and 423 comments. Aside from the comments, one of the more important aspects here is that users are educated, which resonates in the comments. A lot of users thank the creators and confess that they never heard of the backstory before. TikTok is here used as media platform to dismantle racist stereotypes and let users chose what they do with that information like the *Fox Eye Trend* addressed by Zhao and Abidin (2023). TikTok offers a space for counter-narrative to mainstream racist ideologies.

Another prominent type of videos was personal storytelling. Content creators describe their personal experiences with racism. In storytelling videos, the victims make users aware of contemporary cases of racism. For example, two girls explained their situation as a witness of overt racism towards PoC. Both incidents happened in a train from the Deutsche Bahn. The first girl is white and explains that she was riding first class and a family speaking a foreign language was also sitting in the department. A man in a suit confronted the family by implying that they are not allowed to sit in the first class. Unbothered the family ignores the man, who then again verbally attacks the family and accuses them of not having a valid ticket. The creator of the video then intervenes and asks the man in the suit to calm down,

who then discusses with her. He assumes that they probably have no ticket and do not understand the system. The girl defends the family by asking the man to mind his own business, which he eventually does. It turned out the family had all right to sit there.

With this video the girl wanted to spread awareness to not judge people based on their nationality and skin colour while also demonstrating that everyday racism is very prevalent. The second girl is black and describes her experience as victim of racial profiling. She sits alone at a place for four people and the train conductress requests her to leave her seats. Confused the girl asks why she must leave. The conductress gets defensive and aggressive and tells her to take another place immediately. The black girl accepts while she sees that a white woman was allowed to stay at the place. The conductress continues her aggressive routine. She passes all passengers and exclusively stops to check the ticket of a PoC. The girl notices this and confronts the conductress and accuses her of being racist. Furious the train attendant defends herself by saying that she is only doing her job. The creator then explains her followers that she is shocked by the experience she just had to undergo. She further addresses and tagged the Deutsche Bahn to spread awareness about the racial profiling that she and others experienced.

Both examples showcase the existence of everyday racism and microaggressions in Germany. The incidents happened in a train, a transportation many people use daily meaning that PoC are not safe from racism in their commute to work or travelling. The perpetrators showed no remorse and acted based on prejudices or racial ideologies. There was no need whatsoever to verbally attack the family or the black girl as they just minded their own business. The comments are very supportive in both cases. While most of the users seemed shocked by the experiences, some posted stories of their own reinforcing the arguments of existing racism in our society. This side of TikTok helps to dismantle the assumption of a colourblind society, where racism is no more. These were only two of countless examples. Similar ones were sent by the participants such as a Black Swiss doctor experiencing racism in his workplace or a Black content creator discussing allegations of individuals accusing her from being a Third World country. Many more examples happen every hour without being captured or shared with others and just stay in the dark. TikTok as a platform gives victims a safe space to talk about their experience and share their thoughts with like-minded individuals.

6. Discussion

6.1 TikTok and the colourblind racism

Since the end of the 'Jim Crow'-Era many individuals talk about a colourblind world system. In their eyes we overcame racism and what is left is a small minority continuing to diffuse hate. The scholars of the Critical Race Theory, as well as other theoretical frameworks, oppose this assumption. Racism is as present as ever, just under a different form. We are blinded by the hegemonic whiteness dictating our norms and what is to be seen as wrong or right.

TikTok as a presumed platform for fun and creativity can be seen as a driver for the diffusion of hate speech and adds to the inequalities in our world system. Many of its users, who are dominantly teenagers and young adults, engage with these types of content and share it to friends. For instance, many of the comments seemed to agree with hateful speech in different forms. Overt racism is understood as jokes that are not that serious. Conspiracy theories are reinforced and widely accepted. The White race is seen as superior and simultaneously individuals originating from Africa leave their backwards countries to profit from the economic and socially advanced Global North. These ideologies are not different from the ones existing centuries ago. The only difference is that nowadays we have faster and more masked ways to spread hateful messages.

The collection of the data and its critical analysis shed light to the current state of colourblind racism on TikTok. Hateful content is more than common on the platform. The idea of Bonilla-Silva's colourblind ideology is reproduced on the app. Especially the comments reflect the rejection of an overt racist society. With TikTok's such as the examples in figure 9 or 10 one cannot deny the overt hate speech against marginalized groups. By looking at the comments, we get a different idea. All throughout the analysis, the comments deny any overt racism. 'It is just a joke' or 'Come on it is not that deep' are common responses to criticism. The users on TikTok do not seem to understand the repercussions of the content they support or create. Racism has shifted from the overt verbal or physical attack to the social, cultural, and historical exclusion of marginalized groups. Hate and prejudices against minorities is internalized in today's mindset in the form that young teens and adults see nothing wrong with jokes at the expense of the feelings and identities of PoC.

Throughout the analysis I got the sentiment that users do not see any racism on TikTok. In Cabrera's words: "An alternative explanation is that racism exists, but Kurt's White privilege allows him to ignore it." (Cabrera 2014: 10). TikTok is full of *Kurts* who downplay the seriousness of jokes. Similarly, the comments under the *Lumumba* video reinforce the idea that the White society lives in a privileged close-minded bubble. The people addressing the racist connotations, be it *Lumumba* or a joke being too harsh or racist, are seen as too sensitive and the ones creating the problem. The internalized way of thinking has led to a widespread understanding that there is nothing wrong with White hegemony and micro racism existing in plain sight.

6.2 But it's just a joke bro.

The danger of humour as a tool to reinforce stereotypes and prejudices is the next heated topic of TikTok. Since the time of blackface minstrelsy, the social role of humour as a driver for inequality has only worsened as described by Pérez (2013, 2022). TikTok functions as a social hub for jokes and 'funny' content creating hate and inequality amongst its users. Memes play a vital role in the diffusion of hate hidden behind pop culture. Only those proficient in Internet culture and its linguistics understand the message and ideologies of the memes. This makes them a more elite form of humour that creates a sense of belonging. By participating in current trends, users can reinforce their social status. On Instagram, users post pictures or content of themselves to generate positive affirmation through likes and compliments; Twitter functions as a social hub where political and cultural opinions are published searching for like-minded friends or ideologies; Facebook as a more diverse platform mixes different ideas of social affirmation. Finally, TikTok can be described as the affirmation of the funniest and most original content. Users are not rated by their looks as on Instagram or rated on their political standing but rather on their creativity in creating laughter and joy. This means that to belong to a certain community, the users must compete with others on who can create the funniest joke that generates the most likes, giving them social acceptance. The example of the Christmas list shows this form of a competition on who can be the most creative when it comes to racism. The more racist and creative the content, the more interactions it seems to get. This is reinforced through the 'inflation' meme, with the French Football team being compared to slaves. TikTok works as a platform for racists to get creative and gather their cloud. With the example mentioned, their creativeness gets rewarded with millions of likes and interactions.

As critical humour scholars have already warned, humour is internalized in our social system. On TikTok it becomes clear that for its users' dark humour has no boundaries. Jokes are always seen as a gateway to make fun of marginalized groups without having repercussions.

“Internet memes sometimes come from unexpected places, but one consistent attribute is that memes help individuals and groups to share in a discourse. The internet is a conduit for discursive expression; identity construction occurs precipitously when individuals embrace, accept, or reject, etc. attributes that are consistent with a particular ideological practice. This can have positive or negative real-world effects.” (Wiggings 2019: 118)

Wiggings sums it up perfectly. By creating and sharing memes, the users portray a certain ideology, which is in this case racism and hate towards minorities. It is not just a joke; it allows like-minded individuals to target marginalized groups while hiding behind the humouristic façade. If the creator gets criticised, they downplay the seriousness by playing the ‘it’s just a joke’- card. This goes hand in hand with the colourblind society we live in as many individuals do not see the problem of using jokes to acknowledge prejudices. One cannot blame every TikTok user for laughing at creative dark humour. As a society we learned that hate speech in form of humour is okay and can be used to bypass social restrictions. It is not racist if it is a joke. The state of TikTok shows the dangerous road we are headed towards; the younger generations are coping through humour and memes. By constantly seeing jokes at the expense of racial attributes, they might get the idea, that it is normal to joke about marginalized groups. Furthermore, stereotypes and prejudices are reinforced, if one sees ten memes where black people are portrayed as savages or criminals, naïve individuals might assume that there is a truth to this. What began with Black minstrelsy for an elite audience has become overt racist humour addressing millions of users. What has not changed is White people laughing at the expense of already marginalized ethnicities.

6.3 Anti-Racism and Awareness

To say it is all bad would be a wrong assumption. While TikTok is an important driver for hate speech and racism it also offers counter-narratives and new forms of activism. Some users as can be seen from the study had zero contact with racist discourses and only engaged with a more positive side of the app.

Awareness was especially dominant as a form of anti-racism. Informing individuals of the wrongs of our society is a powerful tool to counter hate. Many people are ignorant and accept white supremacy as it does not hurt them and even reinforces their status in society. In other

words, some people just tend to ignore the state of inequality and chose not to engage in critical thinking. This makes sense as we unfortunately cannot expect everyone to dissect every message. This is why awareness is important. The *Lumumba* drink during the Christmas markets is only one of the many examples of micro aggression in our society. For years we, as a society, did not question its name. Another example from the German-speaking culture is the ‘Zigeuner-sauce’ (Gypsy-sauce), which was widely accepted until recently with the names being changed. TikTok is here a perfect starting point to inform especially the younger generations of the existing wrongs in our society. I did not know the exact background of the *Lumumba* drink until I came in contact with one of the videos on TikTok. It is never too late to acknowledge being wrong about something and changing for the better.

We live in a society where we change how we think about inequality and hate speech. The LGBTQ+ community was never more accepted; women are more and more empowered; and a more open worldview is adapted. Of course, we are far away from where we need to be, but one can argue that we are somewhat on the right path. Social media platforms help to break old-school traditions and overcome racist discourses. Marginalized groups have a platform to talk about their experiences. They have an ear for like-minded fellows but also can tell their stories to the world and spread awareness.

6.4 The role of TikTok

Racism exists on every platform, be it Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, whereas the latter is known for being a hub for far-right populists. TikTok is no exception. The challenge for Social Media apps is to keep them safe and get rid of as much hate as possible. With the Chinese company being a rather new contestant, they struggle to moderate appropriately. The question is if they really struggle to enforce their guidelines or just chose not to. For example, Elon Musk, the CEO of X (former Twitter), openly states on his personal account that he stands for freedom of speech, and he is against censoring any kind of opinions, allowing, and even personally reposting the messages of conservative individuals (cf. see figure 5). Of course, TikTok is different, in the ideology of content. Here the focus is to entertain and spread fun. Still the amount of deliberate hate speech on an app designed for younger customers is very concerning.

After a quick glimpse of the content sent by the participants, many of the videos are still available months after being published. Fortunately, at the same time many of the content got deleted and accounts banned which shows that the content moderation somewhat works.

Some videos as some examples from the case study are still up, despite having countless views and likes. There is no explanation how this can be allowed to stay on the platform unless TikTok's moderators chose not to delete it. They need to do better. By allowing propaganda and racist content, even in the form of humour, the users might get the idea, that it is ok and normal to see such content. Internalized racism is a very big issue in the fight for equality as it happens everywhere, at any time without us really acknowledging it. Some participants of the study realized that they were more aware of the content during the data collection as they actively engaged with the discussed discourses.

Another important aspect is the one of 'bubbles'. As the thesis showed not everyone of the participants encountered racist or even anti-racist discourses. TikTok works through the algorithm which is designed to show you the exact type of content that you desire. This would mean that the racist content would theoretically only appear to those that sympathize with the messages or like the content. This is exactly what happened to some of the participants, who got more racist content on TikTok, once they engaged with it. They fell into the racist bubbles which means that they got more and more hate speech. This allows conservative minds to find a hub of like-minded individuals making TikTok very dangerous for right-wing ideology. Of course, censoring content goes against our freedom of speech but allowing such bubbles to exist, users can feed on the ignorance of certain users to 'recruit' them for their ideology.

6.5 Limitations

The aim of the thesis was to shed light on racist and anti-racist discourses on TikTok. There are several limitations to this study which will be addressed in this section.

TikTok is an anonymous platform which makes it hard to analyse and get a grasp of the background of the users. Who is the creator? What are their goals? Who liked the content and why? Questions like these can only answered by contacting each user and hoping that they state their honest intentions. This makes research on TikTok very difficult and leaves a lot of open questions to subjective interpretation. This limitation can hardly be bypassed as the anonymity and privacy of the participants should be guaranteed.

The sample yet significant is small and is hardly representative to the community. The participants were all raised in Luxembourg, a privileged Western European country and underwent a certain degree of education. Location and language preferences are integrated into the algorithm of TikTok which means that the content viewed and received is limited to a

fraction of the userbase. Furthermore, the sophisticated algorithm makes each participant very individual but at the same time makes it almost impossible to project the FYP of six participants to the public. Future research needs to address this problem and gather a larger sample with a more in-depth screening of each FYP to get an idea of the racist discourses on TikTok.

Some participants mentioned, that once they started sending relevant content, they fell into a bubble. This means that the abundance of videos might be biased through the algorithm of the app. The more racist videos they sent, the more similar content TikTok provided them. Participant 4 elaborates: “[...] as soon as I stopped looking at the racist videos and did not interact with them, I got back into my “bubble” it felt like.” (Participant 4, Interview 2, 04:03) While racism and hate speech are still a serious problem, the result shared by ‘ordinary’ users might be biased towards a more negative side.

6.6 Future implications

The study showed the dark side of TikTok and how relevant the topics of racism and anti-racism are. The app is constantly evolving with more and more new users registering every day. With the results found one notices a danger for young adults who mindlessly scroll through TikTok. While this thesis serves as a good starting ground, a lot needs to be done. Fellow scholars and researchers should elaborate the ideas and present the current state of the app. As this work is a master thesis, the resources and extent of the work were limited. A bigger sample surpassing national borders already helps to grasp a broader understanding of the topic. Scraping is here an important tool to collect data from TikTok. As this thesis has shown a small interaction of the user leads them into bubbles which distorts the data and can make the result one sided. A larger sample could also fix this problem with anti-racism being possibly more relevant as it was displayed in the results.

Research is not the only topic that needs to address the topic but politics, cultural and social stakeholders need to come together to create a safer more equal environment. TikTok repercussions are not exclusively for its users but for a wider understanding of how racism is perceived among our social system. Banning the app will not stop racism but we as a society have to change and educate our future generations. TikTok should and already does play a vital role of activism and a vessel for anti-racism. More pressure needs to be applied to the educational side of TikTok, while at the same time reducing harmful content to a minimum. TikTok as a platform itself needs to change its mentality. They are part of the problem by

letting harmful content exist on the app. While content moderation is hard, security and the well-being of young users should always be a priority. This is for the moment not the case and needs to be addressed in the future.

Finally, you as a reader can make a change by reflecting on the topic of anti-racism and racism. If you are a TikTok or any other social media user, I invite you to think about the content you see and keep the results of this thesis in mind. As a creator you should be aware of what you post and how it may be perceived by any type of audience.

7. Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the multifaceted issues surrounding TikTok, while focusing on the prevalence and impact of mainly racist content on the platform. The research revealed that despite TikTok's community guidelines that prohibit hateful behaviour (cf. TikTok 2024), hate speech remains a significant problem. With the help of the participants the thesis analysed how TikTok's algorithm, inadvertently amplifies racist discourses due to its content recommendation system. The existence of racist bubbles shows the dangerous side of the app, where like-minded users present covert as well as overt hate speech.

The study employed the method of Kozinets netnography (2019) and more particular participant observation to provide a bottom-up approach on user interactions and content dissemination on TikTok. Through this methodology, the research was able to gain insights into the everyday experiences of users, particularly how they encounter, interpret, and respond to racist content. The findings of the study were multifaceted. First, two participants reported never encountering any racist discourses on TikTok. In contrast, the remaining four participants experienced a significant prevalence of dark humour, explicit calls for violence, and overt hate speech against marginalised groups on their FYP. The latter group expressed shock and concern regarding the destructive nature of overt hate on the platform. Additionally, the participants found that racism disguised as humour presented an ambiguous challenge; some content was perceived as humorous, while other content was clearly offensive and unacceptable.

The theories of Critical Race Theory, colourblind racism and critical humour studies were crucial to undermine the findings. These frameworks highlighted the systemic nature of racism on social media platforms and outside world. The issue at hand extends beyond TikTok itself. Racism is deeply embedded in social structures and institutions. From young

age on, children are socialized into thinking that humour in form of racist ideologies has no boundaries. While TikTok's content moderation policies may inadvertently allow such hate speech to exist, it is important to recognize that these ideologies originate from broader societal contexts. TikTok functions here merely as a platform that reflects and amplifies the pre-existing prejudices and discriminatory attitudes embedded within our culture. This does not let TikTok off the hook, because through their questionable content moderation and ideology, hate speech in many forms roams freely. Exposure to such prejudices and propaganda material on TikTok leaves naïve users, such as children and young adults, susceptible to internalizing false ideologies, thereby normalizing attitudes of intolerance and hate. Therefore, addressing the problem of racist discourse on the social media platform necessitates a broader examination of social ideologies and educational systems that perpetuate these norms.

While a significant portion of the findings addresses racist discourses, a minority fraction has actively challenged mainstream perspectives, seeking to deconstruct and counter the mainstream. TikTok serves as a vital platform for individuals belonging to marginalized groups, providing them with the possibility to connect with like-minded peers and share their personal experiences together. The emergence of such counternarratives on TikTok signifies a crucial shift toward more inclusivity and representation within social media. TikTok can be used to amplify underrepresented voices but also challenges prevailing narratives, such as those from the far-right, that perpetuate marginalization and inequality. Unfortunately, we are from where we need to be, by such voices being underrepresented and lost in the countless hateful discourses.

In conclusion, while TikTok offers a platform for creativity and connection, it also poses significant risks in terms of perpetuating harmful racial stereotypes and discourses. Addressing these issues requires a combined effort from both TikTok and its users, as well as cultural and social institutions.

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Appendix

Call for research participants for master thesis on racism on TikTok

I am currently seeking individuals to participate in my research study for my master thesis on **Racism on TikTok**. Your unique insights and experiences are crucial to advancing the understanding in this field.

About the Study: The master thesis aims to examine how TikTok users manage and react to occurrences of racism and discussions about anti-racism during their routine engagements on the platform. By delving into these dynamics, the study seeks to enrich the comprehension of current manifestations of racism and the strategies employed to resist and counteract them in today's context.

Selection Criteria:

- Between 20-30 years old
- Be an **active TikTok user** (At least 30 minutes per day OR +-3 hours per week)
- Have already been in contact with TikTok content and discourses about racism/anti-racism
- Be motivated to actively share and document your TikTok contents over the period of 2-3 months between **Mid-September and December 2023**
- Optional: Create your own content

Your role in the participation:

- Participate in a short introductory interview (aims of the study, your role, and tasks)
- Be in close contact with me over the course of 2-3 months and document your engagement with TikTok content revolving around racist and anti-racist discourses (Videos/Comments/Own thoughts/Emotions) through a digital diary
- Participate in a closing interview reflecting your findings and thoughts

How to Participate: If you are interested in joining my research, please contact me via E-Mail (a01502065@unet.univie.ac.at).

Your participation will be greatly appreciated, and your insights will have a big impact on my research. Your contributions will be treated anonymously and with care.

Thank you for considering being a part of this study.

Sincerely,

XXX

Research Participation Guide

Thank you very much for participating in my research on TikTok. This short guide aims to explain your role, your tasks as well as the purpose of this research. Please contact me in case you have any questions or doubts regarding your contribution.

What is the study about?

Racism on social media is not a new thing, with the ever-evolving web there are new possibilities for racist discourses to proliferate. TikTok is not spared from minorities harming content. The aim is to research how discourses regarding racism and anti-racism are taking place in the social medium. Despite the abundance of literature regarding racism, only a few conducted a bottom-up approach, which will be the chosen method for this study. That is why your participation will be crucial to understanding how users experience racist and anti-racist content on TikTok. The results may provide an insight into the contemporary discourse.

Research question:

How do TikTok users navigate and respond to instances of racism and anti-racism discourses within their everyday interactions on the platform, and how does this exploration contribute to a deeper understanding of contemporary manifestations of racism and its resistance?

How will we communicate?

The account Racism_On_TikTok (on TikTok) was created to facilitate communication and provide a platform to share your findings. If you come across any relevant videos/comments, please send them via private message to this account with all your opinions and thoughts (further details down below). I will be the only one who has access to this account so please feel free to share everything you want; it will be treated accordingly and with care.

If you prefer using other means of communication, please do not hesitate to contact me. For the duration of the study, I will be available to answer any questions or provide further information.

What should you share/send?

Everything that revolves around anti-racism and racism on TikTok, such as educational videos, memes, opinions, etc. If you come across videos (or comments) that may be relevant to the discourse, send them to my account. Here is where you can include your thoughts and opinion concerning too. It's up to you what and how much you want to share with me. For example:

- Emotions that came up while watching the video (How did this content make me feel? Did I like or dislike what I saw? If so, what did I (dis)like about the video)
- Thoughts about the content (What did the creator try to achieve? Is there a hidden message? What was the perception I got from watching the video?)

Again, those are just examples, please feel free to share anything that may be relevant in your opinion.

Things to keep in mind

It is important that you do not actively seek anti-racist/racist content by searching for videos or following creators (that you did not follow before the study) that specialize in these themes. There is no set number of videos to send in – the data should reflect your everyday use and your participation should not change your habits. It is satisfactory if you only come across a handful of videos during the study. Please continue using TikTok as you already do. Do not like, save or favourite any videos you come across, but merely share them with the account.

The participation should not be a tedious task or feel like an assignment. Your time and energy are valuable so please browse on TikTok in your own pace. The amount of videos you send in is not relevant for your participation. Please do not increase your screen time to find content or feel bad for not sending more videos.

Your contribution will constitute a main part of my master thesis. Do keep in mind that I might quote your thoughts/comments in the finished thesis. Your privacy is of great concern, hence why your data will be anonymised. Further details can be found in the consent form (please contact me if you have not received it by now).

The estimated time for data collection is around 2-3 months. After receiving this document and having a check-in with me, feel free to start documenting. If you feel like, you can also record your TikTok screen time (How often or how long you have been on the App) as an additional documentation. Please let me know once you are done with your collection so we can do a short recap of your experience afterwards.

Most importantly this is a voluntary participation, I am very thankful for your efforts and engagement. You decide how much time you want to spend and what information you share. There is no right or wrong way to document your collection and do not feel pressured to fulfil any expectations.

Transcriptions of interviews

Introductory interviews

Participant 1

I: Let me just put my phone here, it should work now. Are you ready for the first question? (00:11)

P1: Yes

I: What is your age, profession and nationality? (00:14)

P1: I am 29 years old, I work for the police and I am Luxembourgish. (00:19)

I: Ok perfect. How active are you on TikTok? On average per week or per day? (00:24)

P1: During the day I would say mostly 10 minutes, I just watch what people have send me. Well let's make it half an hour, always depends on my motivation. But yeah, definitely maximum half an hour. (00:43)

I: Do you follow any specific type of content or content creators? Or is it that you usually just watch your FYP? (00:49)

P1: I just watch my FYP, nothing more or what friends send me. (00:52)

I: Ok yeah so what type of content usually appears on your feed? (00:58)

P1: A lot of music, fashion so like clothes, dogs. I think that's it oh yeah and indoor decorations and babies. (01:16)

I: Babies that's interesting (Both laughing). So have you already been in contact with racism and/or anti-racism on TikTok and if yes could you shortly describe the content? (01:26)

P1: I mean I have to say yes, otherwise I wouldn't have sent you anything. So yes I have come in contact with racism only and no anti-racism. (01:30)

Interview is shortly disrupted as the waiter brings in the drinks.

P1: So yes, where were we. Ah yes, so if it was racist, it was individuals who made racist comments or talked about racial incidents. And dark humour. (02:19)

I: How did you feel when you saw these videos? Maybe describe your emotions when you came in contact. (02:25)

P1: Sometimes I laughed at the content but when you watch it twice you start to question it. (02:30)

I: Understandable, so in your opinion would you say that the TikTok community, so the users and creators, contribute to racist discourses or rather hinder them, through awareness and activism? Just in your opinion. There is no right or wrong here. (02:51)

P1: I mean I guess they try and hinder it but if one watches a few of such videos, you start to get a lot of that content. Or wait could you maybe repeat the question? (03:03)

I: So in your opinion, would you say that the TikTok community encourages racism through ...

P1: No definitely not. I think that it is definitely more anti-racist. (03:14)

I: Do you think that TikTok influences your FYP in the sense, that you get content that you usually won't get. So in this case, that you get more racist content even though you are not interested in such? (03:24)

P1: Yeah I think that sporadically you get content that doesn't suit you and yes if you watch it entirely then you get more of this type. (03:35)

I: How do you decide to work with content on TikTok, do you actively search for specific type of content, do you like or share content? Or do you just watch your FYP? (03:48)

P1: I just watch the content I get without liking and very rarely I sent content to others, well just one person. (03:55)

I: OK so the last question. Do you think that TikTok provides enough educational resources or guidelines to help users understand and combat racism? (04:03)

P1: No. Otherwise we wouldn't get such videos. If one were to actively look for it, one would find a lot of such content. Keywords should not be able to be searched but yeah that is definitely a problem. (04:16)

I: Yes you are definitely right. Ok so that was it. Thank you for your time and I will stop it here.

P1: You are welcome.

Interview ends (04:23)

Participant 2

I: Ok it seems to work. The first questions are quite straightforward. How old are you? (00:08)

P2: 24 (00:11)

I: Your profession? I am assuming you are a student momentarily? (00:16)

P2: Yes, I am a student. (00:18)

I: What is your nationality? (00:20)

P2: I am Luxembourgish. (00:22)

I: Ok then we have the question: How active are you on TikTok? On average per day/per week, it can be approximately? (00:30)

P2: Hmm I would say that I watch at least 2 hours TikTok per day (00:35)

(both are laughing)

I: Yes I feel you.

P2: Yes well it always depends, but yeah 2 hours. (00:42)

I: 2 hours is not bad. Ok so which content do you usually see on TikTok? Just briefly explain what comes in mind. (00:56)

P2: Mostly meme videos but also a lot towards of LGBTQ or individuals talking about their experience with autism and adhs. Such things. (01:11)

I: Ok that's interesting. So do you have any specific content creators that you follow? Where you would say ok those I like to watch? (01:19)

P2: I only watch my FYP, I mean I follow people but I don't specifically visit their accounts. (01:25)

I: Ok yeah. Have you ever been in contact with racism and/or anti-racism on TikTok? (01:35)

P2: Actually since I chose to participate, I was like I never had a video with racism on TikTok. And then since the last days I got a lot of such videos. (01:44)

I: Ok wow that is crazy. Could you describe that content for me? (01:50)

P2: So mostly podcasts or mostly its people who are joking about it, they are addressing things that are really racist. They are talking about stereotypes to uncover them. (02:10)

I: So its more that people talk about their experience with racism? (2:12)

P2: Yes exactly. (02:14)

I: How does this content make you feel? So in your case mostly podcasts if I got that right? (02:30)

P2: I would say neutral. It's more anti-racial, I never had something openly racist, so that's really good. (02:36)

I: In your opinion, does the TikTok community, including users and content creators, contribute to creating a more inclusive and anti-racist environment? Or is the opposite the case? So that because of TikTok the stereotypes are reinforced, or racism is provoked? (02:48)

P2: I would say that really comes down individually depending on the content on the FYP. TikTok has its way that one is pushed in more radical things. People tend to have very radical opinions, be it positive or negative. Its hard to find more neutral content. (03:08)

I: Yeah I noticed that too, its always either left or right but no true middle way. (03:15)

P2: Yes exactly.

I: The next question follows that up. Would you say that TikTok's algorithm influences the content you see? Like you said that you just started to see racist/anti-racist content after you chose to participate? In a way that you now see it maybe more actively. (03:35)

P2: Yes definitely. Its often when you talk or google things that then I start to get TikToks about those things. Also a lot of ads appear. (03:50)

I: So do you personally search for content? I think you said in the beginning that you are only on your FYP and that you are only scrolling through the content if that is correct? (03:59)

P2: Yes I don't actively search for content. Well I don't know if I go on a vacation. Then I actively search for restaurants or cool places which you usually find on TikTok. (04:08)

I: Oh really? I didn't even know that, that's good to know, I need to keep that in mind. (04:14)

(both laughing)

P2: Yes it's a better source than Google. (04:16)

I: I only knew TripAdvisor but good that TikTok has something like this. (04:22)

P2: Yeah I can't trust TripAdvisor, it seems like only old people use that. On TikTok you have more the younger generations. (04:27)

I: Definitely good to know. Ok we are coming to the last question. Do you feel that TikTok provides enough educational resources or guidelines to help users understand and combat racism? In your opinion, I mean there is no real way of knowing. (05:07)

P2: So that TikTok itself is doing something against it? (05:09)

I: Yes exactly, that through their guidelines or how the platform is constructed. (05:14)

P2: I would say that they try and act but often it seems that they block content that is actually against racism, that are positively acting against racism. They are getting blocked because of their guidelines because they are not really listening what the video is actually about and then they hear one word and choose to block the video, even though it actually has a positive outcome. (05:45)

I: Yes I guess you are right. A lot of people seem to get blocked even though they aren't doing something wrong, while the real racist culprits seem to be still out there. I mean its hard, TikTok is flooded with countless videos and its surely impossible to review every single video if no one actually reports it. I mean I personally got a lot of dark humour memes and those seem to be doing just fine and stay on TikTok for a very long time. They just seem to be getting worse and worse. (06:15)

P2: Yeah exactly they are really getting worse. Like maybe you find one video funny and all of the sudden your whole FYP is full with such content. (06:23)

I: Gets you really contemplating about your choices. (Both are laughing) Ok well that was all the questions. Thank you very much for your time. (06:37)

Interview ends 06:39

Participant 3

I: Ok everything is set up are you ready? (00:04)

P3: Yes

I: Ok so how old are you, what is your profession and your nationality? (00:13)

P3: I am 24 years old; I work for the police, and I am Luxembourgish. (00:24)

I: Perfect, how active are you on TikTok on average? So per day or per week. (00:29)

P3: I would say that most of the time I use it for around 2 hours per day, but there are also days were I am 4 hours on the app. (00:38)

I: Do you follow any type of content or specific content creators? (00:42)

P3: Yes both, but on the page were I follow the specific content, I am only active for about ten minutes once a week. (00:50)

I: ok so what type of content is that generally? (00:54)

P3: It's very different content. Interior design, clothing, humour or stars, so yeah very different topics. (01:03)

I: What is the other type of content you usually get on your FYP? (01:06)

P3: Because I am very active on TikTok, I would actually say that I see everything. On my page there is a little something of everything basically. (laughs) (01:17)

I: Ok so you would say that you have seen every corner of TikTok once? (01:21)

P3: In a way yes. (01:24)

I: Is there anything that is more dominant or stands out? (01:27)

P3: I would say clothing/fashion or something similar. (01:31)

I: Ok so I assume you have been in contact with racism and/or anti-racism? And could you maybe shortly describe it? (01:38)

P3: Yes so anti-racism was very dominant during the Black Lives Matter movement during a whole year. TikTok participated massively here. Now I would say it's half-half again, I see both types of content. None of them are now more extreme than the other. Although anti-racism seemed to disappear a little bit. (02:02)

I: So the racist content in what form is it shown on TikTok? (02:05)

P3: There is some overt racism. There are a lot of real-life situations of racist incidents, but also dark humour or in general what people perceive as racist. (02:22)

I: How do you feel if you see these videos? What emotions describe it? (02:28)

P3: Some content I find funny, some videos make me feel indifferent and in some occasions I feel shocked. It always depends on the type of content. (02:38)

I: In your opinion, would you say that TikTok community, so the users and creators, contribute to racist discourses or rather hinder them, so that through the actions of the community either more racist or anti-racist discourses are diffused? (02:47)

P3: I would honestly say that the topic of racism as such is more discussed on TikTok, but in both ways. There is some push to the bad corners but also anti-racist discourses to counter those. (03:00)

I: Would you say that TikTok influences what kind of content you see, so that maybe you see more racism or anti-racism without your doing? (03:08)

P3: Yeah most definitely. The algorithm is very good, if you just watch one video entirely, you already get more of that type of content. (03:16)

I: So you watch the videos mostly entirely? (03:19)

P3: Yes because I find it very interesting, so both racist and anti-racist videos. (03:30)

I: How do you chose to engage with your content, do you actively search for content, do you like videos or share it with others? Or are you just scrolling? (03:40)

P3: Most of the time I just scroll on my FYP. Sometimes I search for specific content but that is just if you go to the comments and see a blue comment. So the search function for the comments itself, but otherwise I just scroll. I never really do my own input. (03:59)

I: We are coming to the last question. In your opinion, would you say that TikTok provides enough educational resources or guidelines to help users understand and combat racism? (04:12)

P3: Yeah I would say so. You can report every video, I mean you as a user can do a lot. It is just that most of them are quite lazy so they don't do it. (04:22)

I: So you yourself already have reported content? (04:24)

P3: No nothing with anti-racist or racist content. But rather other stuff (laughs). (04:34)

I: Well okay that was all. Thank you very much.

P3: A pleasure.

Interview ends (04:39)

Participant 4

I: It should be recording now. So we are starting with some simple questions. How old are you, what is your profession and your nationality? (00:08)

P4: I am 27 years old and Luxembourg. I am currently working for the Luxembourgish state in the Ministry of Education. So more specifically I am working in youth orientation, specifically in the non-formal education part. For example, student jobs, extracurricular activities and so on. Basically, everything apart from school. (00:26)

I: Ok perfect so how active are you on TikTok on average? So per day or per week. (00:32)

P4: Quite often to be honest. I had a long period without because I was super busy with life. I kept using it though also now for the experiment. So, in normal non-busy times, I use it daily, usually around half an hour per day I would guess. (00:49)

I: Yeah I totally get that once one is busy, it becomes less. Are you following any specific content creators or type of content? (00:57)

P4: I do, I mostly follow political pages and satire about it. I can't really say which ones specifically because a lot of accounts are pretty generic. But it is a lot about German politics. A few pages I follow are 'We Love You' and 'smypathisch'. And yes this is the right spelling (laughs) seems wrong but is correct. For the rest, I don't know. Oh, wait I do follow this one guy, a journalist, who reports on the war in Ukraine. So, I mostly get random stupid content and news. (01:27)

I: Ok so that means you mostly follow left-wing politics and type of content of I understand that right? (01:32)

P4: Yes exactly.

I: Apart from the content you follow, what is usually shown on your FYP? (01:35)

P4: A weird mix. Many funny videos and random memes that just make you chuckle. Otherwise, a lot of news from the left spectrum. I did notice more right content too though. And I guess because I often go in the comments to check what people are writing there I tend to get more of this stuff. (01:47)

I: Yeah that's what also happened to me it's crazy how fast you fall into this bubble.

P4: Exactly, it's hard to get out of it. (01:52)

I: Definitely. So I assume you have been in contact with anti-racism and/or racism on TikTok? Could you maybe shortly describe them and how did these videos make you feel? (02:01)

P4: Yes a lot. I got into some sort of rabbit hole, where I was exposed to some pretty racist "memes". Blatantly hating minorities. I think most of the content I got was from Europe in general, Western, and Central Europe probably. It was memes about black people, Queer and community, etc. It is quite disturbing to see such content. (02:17)

I: Yeah I get that. (02:19)

P4: But then I also got hit by a wave of content creators from the left spectrum that tried to catch an audience as well. What I noticed is that many of them have way fewer interactions than the racist stuff, and often many hateful comments from random accounts. So it felt like I got stuck between two sides. (02:34)

I: You are right, it always seems like there are the two sides on TikTok and it always depends on which you land. (02:39)

P4: Exactly. Although right-wing stuff did prevail on TikTok in my view, but I did feel this "counteroffensive" you know, in a way, of these groups fighting for viewership. I think many people on the left realised that racist content got big and now try to act against it. For now, they are tiny though compared to the hate I sometimes see on that app. (02:57)

I: So you would say that you are frustrated when it comes to these type of contents? (03:00)

P4: Yes definitely. It did make me quite uneasy. I am a left-leaning person, and I care about our social democracies and topics like development aid, and climate change deeply. I mean a few years ago I always hoped that this right-wing surge would so to speak die out a little and that young people are way more social and left-to-centre-leaning than older generations. But now every time I use TikTok, I feel like the young generations are being influenced by this. I guess it is not limited to TikTok though, as hate spreads way quicker than positivity unfortunately, no matter where on the internet. People don't tend to comment on grounded stuff or positive thinking online. The people spreading hate or "easy solutions" are the ones commenting and interacting on every social media. On TikTok, however, I think young people are getting fast into this because videos don't need logic, reason, or truth to be successful here at all. (03:41)

I: That is definitely true. It is dangerous for the younger generations as they tend to be more naïve I guess. Unfortunately the focus will always be more on hate and negativity I guess. But yeah that brings us to the next question. Would you say that in your opinion, does the TikTok community, so its users and content creators, contribute to creating a more inclusive and anti-racist environment? Or is the opposite the case? (04:01)

P4: I am not sure I can answer that. People get what they already believe on TikTok or the content they interact with. However, what I do think I can see, is that TikTok might radicalise opinions more, no matter in which direction. (04:11)

I: So you would say that there is some content that drives people more to racism? (04:15)

P4: Exactly but in both directions, there are a lot of extremes on the app and those always stand out which makes more people see them. (04:22)

I: Ok yeah. Similar to the previous question, would you say that TikTok as the app influences what type of content you see on your FYP? So that it might provoke more anti-racism or racism as such? (04:31)

P4: I think it hinders it. Most racist videos you get are not from big platforms or big content creators, but from thousands of people that just simply repost stuff that was maybe already banned from bigger channels. This

means that TikTok might try to limit racist content, but because many people reshare it with tiny accounts, it spreads super fast. And people would continue to get this content if they interacted with it once or twice. It's an even more anonymous platform than Twitter (now X) I think. It gets very unhinged very fast there. (04:58)

I: Yes Twitter is also very crazy there when it comes to free speech and such. I think people can always create a new account on TikTok, which makes it unavoidable. (05:08)

P4: Yes exactly, people can create millions of accounts. (05:10)

I: Ok lets continue with the next question: How do you choose to engage with content on TikTok? Do you intentionally seek out content that addresses social issues, including racism, or does it happen more organically? (05:18)

P4: Half and half I would say. I don't go to the search function to look for political stuff, but I actively engage with content I agree on, both for my sanity and to support the people who try to act against hate online. I hope to give them more of a platform like that. (05:29)

I: Yeah that is a actually great idea, I only use my FYP like everyone I guess (laughs). Coming to the final question. Do you feel that TikTok provides enough educational resources or guidelines to help users understand and combat racism? (05:42)

P4: No definitely not enough. The fact that I don't even know about any actions from them shows how little visibility their "efforts" are having. And I am a person that cares about the topic so I should be one of the first ones to know about this. (05:51)

I: That's true I mean also the fact that everyone somehow seems to have been in contact with racist content shows that they are doing very poorly and a lot of work need to be done. (05:58)

P4: Yes exactly, I mean of course its hard to moderate everything but come the state on TikTok is disastrous. It can't get worse. (06:08)

I: Yes exactly. Well ok I think that was it, thank you very much for your great input, it was helpful. (06:14)

P4: It was a pleasure.

Interview ends (06:17)

Participant 5

I: I think it should work now, well it seems to be recording. Ok so the first question is how old are you? (00:20)

P5: 25 years old. (00:22)

I: What is your profession? You are a student, right? (00:24)

P5: Yes I am a student, I am doing my masters which is also part-time, so currently I am doing an internship in an art museum. More specifically in exhibition management. (00:35)

I: And your nationality?

P5: I am Luxembourgish. (00:38)

I: Ok perfect. How active are you on TikTok on average? So per day or week? (00:44)

P5: I use it every day for at least an hour I would say. (00:51)

I: What is your usual content you get on your FYP? So what you usually see when you scroll? (00:58)

P5: A lot of people who talk about their everyday experiences but nothing that has a really deep meaning. (01:11)

I: So like a podcast type?

P5: Yeah exactly. I get a lot of random stuff. (01:17)

I: Do you have any specific content creators or type of content that you follow? (01:20)

P5: I think I follow two people. One is 'toxic pommies', she is from Vienna and does satirical content about Austrian or more Viennese people that are part of a certain society. So very rich people for example. And the other one is very feminist content creator. (01:47)

I: So have you already been in contact with anti-racist and or racist content? And can you maybe shortly describe if so? (01:52)

P5: Yes a lot, well not that much but most of the time it is spreading awareness, so anti-racism. And racist mostly dark humour. (02:05)

I: So in form of memes? (02:07)

P5: Yes exactly.

I: How did these types of contents let you feel? What emotions did these invoke in you? (02:15)

P5: For anti-racist videos it is always interesting to see the different aspects and perspectives of the discourses. Most of the time there is a racist incident followed by a reaction of a content creator. That is very interesting to see and to accept. And yeah the other, the dark humour. I mean I have to be honest that I also have to laugh there, it is just like that. I mean sometimes these are things that firstly need to be deconstructed but I have to say that for now it is still internalized for me. That I find it funny. (02:48)

I: In your opinion, would you say that the TikTok community, so its users and content creators, contribute to creating a more inclusive and anti-racist environment? Or is the opposite the case? (03:00)

P5: That is ambivalent, because I think TikTok is more for the younger generation and I think one already sees that these generations seem to be already more enlightened, that they are more active and in my eyes advocate more for inclusion. On the other hand is TikTok such a big platform, where everyone can create an account and in that sense diffuse anything. And yeah that's why it is hard to give a clear one-sided answer. (03:34)

I: I mean it comes down to your opinion, there is no right or wrong here. I mean you can never know what happens on the app. It always depends on your preferences and what type of content TikTok shows you. (03:43)

P5: Exactly I was about to say, it depends on what side of TikTok you end up upon. (03:46)

I: I mean it is always good to be in contact with more sides so you get a broader understanding. Coming to the next question. Do you think that TikTok influences your algorithm regarding to the discussed themes? Do you think TikTok hinders or allows some specific contents? (04:06)

P5: Yeah I would say so, last time I had a very weird situation. I don't know why but at some point my TikTok was in Arabic like 20 TikToks in a row. There I didn't know what was going on and what TikTok wanted to tell me. But otherwise I don't know. Sometimes there is one or two TikToks in between that don't fit but nothing major. But I immediately try to just scroll past them but that isn't always easy to ignore. (04:33)

I: Ok so you would say that sometimes there isn't just any random content that you do not want to engage with?

P5: No not really, I mean only the dark humour is just the issue here really. (04:48)

I: How do you chose to engage with your content, do you just scroll or also like/share? Or actively search for specific content also regarding to racism and anti-racism? (05:05)

P5: I am actually only on the FYP. Only if I search for a certain style, fashion style or something similar. Otherwise I am only on my FYP. Or when there is a trend. Or wait that could have been good for the first question. I have a lot of content on my page, where people are dancing (laughs). (05:25)

I: That is exactly why TikTok became popular so that really makes sense in a way (laughs). (05:30)

P5: But yes I am usually only on my FYP. (05:43)

I: Comin to the last question. Do you feel that TikTok provides enough educational resources or guidelines to help users understand and combat racism? In a way that the younger generations are enlightened about sensitive topics. (06:12)

P5: Unfortunately I am not really aware how they as a platform work or how they choose to engage with such type of content. I just know that we as users have the possibility to report videos. But I don't know the exact procedures behind it or the criteria to select videos. (06:38)

I: Yeah I think it is hard to know how exactly they work, they are very secretive about it. So did you already report a video? (06:43)

P5: No I don't think so, on Instagram yes but here not really. I mean it is hard to know if it really helps or what happens with the video afterwards. It would be very interesting to know what happens afterwards (07:05)

I: Ok perfect that was it. Thank you for your time and input.

P5: Thank you.

Interview ends (07:10)

Participant 6

I: Ok wait it should be recording, let me just get my questions ready. The first three questions are quite quick and general. How old are you? (00:22)

P6: 24, well 25 in October. (00:27)

I: Ok perfect and what is your profession? (00:37)

P6: Finished university and I am looking for a job. (00:38)

I: What is your nationality? (00:40)

P6: Officially Luxembourgish but Vietnam. (00:48)

I: How active are you on TikTok? On average per day/per week, this doesn't have to be exact but just approximately. (00:56)

P6: Well I am on TikTok every day that is sure. And wait let me just check my screen time. Daily average is like 2 hours for me. (01:20)

I: Ok yeah it seems most people use TikTok for around that time. I think I use it also like 2 hours. Ok so next question. Do you have any specific content you usually watch or content creators you follow? (01:36)

P6: Hmm I would say that my TikTok is currently gym and travel videos. (01:45)

I: So you would say that your videos change over time and you don't stick to specific content? (01:50)

P6: Well I always get travel videos and gym because I recently started to go actively. But yeah usually it depends. (02:02)

I: Yeah I mean that makes sense, for me it always changes over time as I get more interested in other stuff. (02:10)

P6: It also changes for me depending on which network I am in. (02:12)

I: Oh really? (02:15)

P6: Yes when I am over at a friend, I only get meme videos (02:20)

I: Wow that's really crazy and creepy though. (02:24)

(both laughing)

P6: Yeah and when I am back home I get my usual content. (02:30)

I: That's really interesting to know and very creepy. I didn't know they had access to your network like that. I mean I was in Italy and it was in Italian sometimes, I mean that somehow makes sense but that it changes from network to network is crazy. Ok so have you ever been in contact with racism and/or anti-racism? (02:57)

P6: Yes but I couldn't tell you a specific example. (03:04)

I: Ok so its more occasional? From time to time singular videos? (03:10)

P6: Yes exactly. Most of the time its news footage, its not an actively created TikTok regarding racism but more what happened in the world or something like that. (03:22)

I: Ok so you see these videos occasionally. Is there a specific reaction you have towards such videos? (03:30)

P6: Yes, I am shocked that there are still people like this in the world. (03:40)

I: Yeah, no I totally get that, its crazy to think. In your opinion, does the TikTok community, including users and content creators, contribute to creating a more inclusive and anti-racist environment? Or is the opposite the case? (04:03)

P6: Its hard to say, because I don't really see those racist videos. There are always stereotypes or memes. There is anti-racism, well not anti-racism per se but more to lighten the tension. To make the serious topics into a less serious topic in a way. (04:40)

I: Yeah I understand that. Its maybe because there is a younger generation who isn't taking things as seriously. Its not like Facebook. (04:50)

P6: Oh god yeah Facebook comments is crazy. (04:54)

(Both laughing)

I: One should investigate Facebook comments on news platforms, you would get a totally different viewpoint I guess. (04:55)

P6: In Luxembourg every comment is bad. (05:00)

I: Exactly you could write a master thesis only on those comments. (05:05)

(talking about Luxembourgish politics, not relevant)

I: I mean we already talked about this but would say that TikTok influences your algorithm, also regarding racism? (05:40)

P6: Yes definitely, like we talked, depending on where you are you get different videos, but I don't know about the racism part as I don't get such videos. (05:49)

I: Ok coming to the next question. Do you feel that TikTok provides enough educational resources or guidelines to help users understand and combat racism? Or deleted bad videos in a way. Just in your opinion, of course there is no way of knowing. (05:59)

P6: Yes I would say so. Of all social media platforms, TikTok seems to be the most strict one. You sometimes watch a video and when you scroll down you get the option to review the video you just watched. How was the video? Was it entertaining? In which category would you put this? And you can indicate and help TikTok. If it bothers you, you can also say that. I think TikTok has become more strict. Also because of that thing where the CEO was on trial. I think TikTok seems more regulated. (06:43)

I: Last question which I accidentally skipped. How do you choose to engage with content on TikTok? Do you intentionally seek out content that addresses social issues, including racism, or do you usually just like, scroll and interact with content? (07:00)

P6: No mostly, well lets say 80% of the time I only use the FYP. I am just swiping and sometimes liking. (07:18)

I: Ok that was it for the questions. Thank you for your time. (07:22)

Interview ends (07:24)

Interviews after data collection

Participant 1

I: Wait let me just quickly find my document. (00:32)

P1: I first have to say I didn't really send you that much TikToks. I think I didn't send any videos since our last interview if I am correct. (00:42)

I: No worries I mean you sent a lot of videos in the beginning, if you didn't get any then that is OK, no need to push it. Some people just don't get a lot of videos on those topics. It always depends on your FYP I guess. (01:00)

P1: Yes I didn't really get that much recently. (01:07)

I: Yes I mean your opinion is what counts. Ok lets get to the first question. How did you fare during the data collection period? Just maybe describe how it was for you. (01:20)

P1: Indifferent actually. It didn't really changed me in that sense. And yeah. (01:37)

I: Ok so did you use TikTok in a different way, did you maybe use it less or more during the last months? (01:45)

P1: Yes I actually didn't use TikTok at all the last few months to be honest. (01:49)

I: So also during the data collection? (01:51)

P1: No not really. Sometimes once every two weeks or so, or maybe once a week, but rarely. But there were also weeks where I didn't use it at all. (02:06)

I: Ok so how would you describe your views on racism and anti-racism on social media over the course of the research? Did they change? (02:22)

P1: I didn't think that such things would actually exist on TikTok to be honest. I mean its publicly available and a lot of young people have access to it. I didn't know that and also that this content isn't banned, I wouldn't have thought. (02:40)

I: Yes exactly some racist videos are still online after months. I mean there is a lot of content that got deleted I have to say, where I looked through the messages and everything was banned, which is good but still its crazy that some videos still exist on there. (03:05)

P1: Its still crazy to think how long this videos are one there, how long it takes to deleted them. Everyone has seen them. Just like a video I just saw that had 1.2 Million likes and is still available. That's so many and that's just crazy (03:20)

I: No exactly that's just so many, the question is always who likes these videos and its difficult to really differentiate if people really like it or just try and spread awareness by maybe giving it a like. I really don't know. (03:40)

P1: Yes exactly. (03:42)

I: Ok so what impressions or content have particularly stuck in your mind when you think back to this time? For example specific videos or thoughts you maybe still have in mind. (03:53)

P1: Yes one video where a guy is complaining that in the hospital a black doctor is supposed to deliver his child to the world. And another one where there was a Belgian game show, where [...] (04:09)

I: You mean the one with the foreigner? (04:10)

P1: Yes exactly that one. I have to say that the first one I really hated and found disgusting but the second one I found very funny. Well funny, more like the answer because it seemed like his first instinct and that's crazy. (04:25)

I: This is actually one of the videos I wanted to share with you, I mean the one with the foreigner. It's crazy like you said that this is his first instinct. In a way that oh yeah foreigner. (04:38)

P1: Yes.

I: Ok was there any content that you were not sure was relevant to the topic of racism or anti-racism? If so, can you describe them in more detail? (04:50)

P1: There is nothing that comes to mind, there is no video where that would be the case or where I hesitated to send it. (05:00)

I: Yes I mean it could always be that you weren't sure about something. Maybe someone isn't sure about the process (05:18)

P1: Yes or someone has another inhibition. (05:20)

I: Exactly its hard to define what racism really includes or not includes. So that always comes down to personal opinion. Some people maybe don't see it as racism, while other do and vice versa. I think that's hard to find out where everyone's inhibition is. (05:35)

P1: Yes exactly.

I: Ok so the last question. Are there any remarks or information from your side that could be relevant or that you want to share? Just things that come to mind. (05:46)

P1: Yes as before, that it is crazy that such videos are firstly uploaded and then that they stay there for such a long period even though TikTok is so present. Everyone is on TikTok and especially young people really use it. They can be influenced in a much more different way as someone like us, I mean with 27 or 30 years old. I won't be influenced by things like these. But lets say a 13/14 year old or even younger, they take it differently than the reality maybe is. Their perception of what is right or wrong might be completely different you know. (06:28)

I: Yes exactly. I would say, I mean I guess that most of the participants who took part can reflect or question the content they see. For some of them it is humour and they maybe can draw a line, but for young individuals it is harder to differentiate or understand what is going on. This might be funny in a way but the message behind it must still be seen critically. There is also a lot of propaganda that is really problematic. Let me just send you the video that I wanted you to comment and maybe express how that makes you feel. This one has 500 thousand likes. I think it was one of the first videos you send me. Content like this is really crazy. (07:11)

P1: That's just absurd. 570 thousand likes, this video exists since September that's so long. This has nothing to do with humour whatsoever, even if you wanted to sell it that way. This is just a call for hate and murder. (07:38)

I: Exactly and it has 170 thousand shares. If you maybe can just shortly elaborate how this content makes you feel. (07:41)

P1: This is no way or any form humour for me, you just call for the most racist people to interact with your post. If you read the comments, I just read one that said 'Tell me when and where, I am there', to just say that you would participate in such shit is so disgusting and has nothing to do with humour. It is borderline offensive. (08:10)

I: Yes you are right. Ok I just send you the next video let me just find it. (08:25)

P1: I have to say that I find this one funny This is not disgusting or anything. If you are able to reflect about it, you can still laugh about it you know. (08:34)

I: Ok there was one more but it was the one with the foreigner that we already discussed and the family that refused to have a Black woman as their doctor. (09:00)

P1: Yeah its crazy that you have those both sides, the funny humorous one and the one where you have plain hate, those that stand 100% behind their message and if the wrong people see that they can get the wrong ideas in a way that these people might be right in their eyes. (09:25)

I: Yes exactly that. Ok that was it. Thank you very much for your contribution.

P1: Of course my pleasure.

Interview ends (09:35)

Participant 2

I: Ok I think it is recording. The first question is how did you fare during the data collection period? Just maybe quickly describe how did you feel or if you had any kinds of problems. (00:19)

P2: Personally or with the project? (00:21)

I: No no with the project, sorry should have clarified (both laughing) (00:24)

P2: No I had no problems, everything went smoothly. I mean I thought I would become more videos. I can't remember how many I sent you. I think it was like four no? (00:47)

I: Yeah it was like six or seven if I am correct. (00:46)

P2: I mean that is alright but yeah I really thought I would get more content. (00:52)

I: I mean if I am right you only sent anti-racist videos? (01:04)

P2: Yes exactly. I had no racist videos [...]

Problems with the internet connection for a while.

P2: I think it should work better now. (02:08)

I: Yeah I didn't quite catch what you were about to say (02:11)

P2: It was very exciting because usually I wouldn't have paid attention to such things. I mean like when we started with the project, I didn't know how many videos I would actually get, because that wasn't something I kept in mind before. (02:25)

I: Exactly yes, so would you say that you used TikTok to the same extent as before the data collection. Did you maybe use it more often or less often than before? So just quickly describe how you used the app for the last two months. (02:48)

P2: I think I used it mostly to the same extent as before. I just had a little more stress with university so could have been that I used it less during that time. Then I thought to myself 'oh no I haven't been on TikTok all day' (03:09)

I: Oh no I hope you didn't see it as your homework (both laughing) (03:13)

P2: No I continued to use it as I normally would.

I: Ok that's good, that was the goal that you would just use it how you feel like it. The task was not to go to the app 50x a day just to sent me something. Of course now with the stress you should use it less, no need to force it. But yeah I think the next question is what you already briefly mentioned. How would you describe your views on racism and anti-racism on social media over the course of the research? Did they change? (03:48)

P2: Yes I notice it way more when I get such content. I used to just scroll mindlessly, I mean one already forgot what one was watching five minutes ago, so yeah I think I am more aware now. (04:00)

I: Yeah exactly that's TikTok in a nutshell, one constantly forgets what one was looking at. Like what did I just watch? (Both laughing) I mean its always hard to keep track, I also have a hard time remembering what every participant sent me as it is just so much. It is interesting of course and I have everything coded more or less but yeah just the amount of videos is crazy. That's why the interviews are helpful to make sense of the data a little bit more. But yeah enough of me, lets continue with the next question. Do you have any specific impressions or content that are stuck in your mind when you think back to this time? Maybe like specific videos or comments that stood out? Or just general impressions. (04:56)

P2: Yeah more generally. I think that I remember some videos with micro-racism or microaggression, where users talked about their everyday experiences. Where they are confronted with these topics. So yeah everyday racism. (05:15)

I: Yeah I think that is the type of content that you sent me the last months. But yeah similar to this question, was there any content, where you were not sure whether it fits the thesis/task, so racism or anti-racism? If yes could you just shortly describe it? (05:36)

P2: Yes I had some videos, that actually had nothing to do with racism but when looking to the comments, you saw some racist connotations. And I wasn't sure if it was fitting. I mean it wouldn't even be given, that TikTok shows you the same comments that I got. So yeah I didn't send it because its harder to track. For example, my boyfriend has always comments in German and I tend to only get the English ones. (06:04)

I: Yeah that definitely makes sense. There was some participants that sent me content in French but I still got the English comments first as I have my settings in English I guess. That's why the comments are very difficult to deal with, there is no way of knowing why some comments are shown rather than others. I also only see only very racist comments, with others being hidden away under those or not existing at all. It is impossible to scroll through 50.000 comments to get an idea of all of them. Most users also only tag their friends or something. That's not useful at all. (both laughing) But yeah we can wrap it up with the last question. do you have any comments or information you would like to share? Anything that might be relevant. (07:10)

P2: No I don't think so. I think that I get more videos of such kind now that I have been paying more attention. It seems my algorithm has caught wind that I watch these videos to the end. (07:23)

I: Yeah I guess that somewhat makes sense. That's what I noticed too, that the more you watch it to the end, the more videos you get recommended. The other participants also had the same thing I think, once you are in the bubble, its hard to get out. That's then problematic when working or analysing at, as one never knows if it's the algorithms doing or if there is in fact that much content. But yeah thank you very much for your time and contribution. (07:48)

P2: Of course, it was a pleasure.

Interviews ends (07:42)

Participant 3

I: Before we start with the interview, that I just wanted to inform you that I sent you some videos that I ask you to watch after the initial questions. Just that you are aware. (00:26)

P3: Send them to my phone, its easier that way. (00:25)

I: Ok yes that makes sense. I will send it to you afterwards. Ok let's get to the questions. Are you ready? (00:34)

P3: Yes (00:35)

I: How did you fare during the data collection period? Maybe just briefly explain your experience or anything that comes to mind. (00:45)

P3: It was okay, I felt indifferent during the collection. I just continued to use TikTok as I normally would. There were definitely some shocking contents, but I also had a lot of TikToks that made me laugh. (01:03)

I: So you laughed at the racist content just to be clear? (01:06)

P3: Yes well I had a lot of dark humour. One has to differentiate there between humour and more serious topics. I would say that I feel the same as I did before the collection some months ago. (01:21)

I: Ok yeah.

P3: I mean I knew that this [racism on TikTok] existed, it was nothing new for me. I just used TikTok more often than I do now. (01:38)

I: Ok that's good, because that would actually be the next question. Did you use TikTok to a different extent during the data collection period than before?

P3: Well I used it as much as I did before the collection, but right now I am rarely active because I have a new job, where I don't get to be on TikTok that often anymore. (02:01)

I: So in December, when the period ended you were still quite active? (02:07)

P3: Yes there I was still a lot on the app. Now I am just like maximum an hour on TikTok. (02:14)

I: So before you started with the data collection you used TikTok in a similar way is that correct? (02:22)

P3: Yes I used it the same amount. (02:32)

I: Ok the third question. How would you describe your views on racism on social media over the course of the research? Did they change? (02:50)

P3: Well they didn't really change. I was just more confronted with it, because I send them and my algorithm noticed that. So in a way every fifth video was about racism. So the majority of my FYP consisted of such content. But I have to say that some things, especially dark humour was a trend back then. (03:21)

I: Yes I noticed that by the videos you send. For example those Christmas Lists were quite a thing during December with a lot of dark humour. (03:30)

P3: Yes exactly. (03:34)

I: I mean if you send them to me it seems normal that the algorithm thinks that you are interested in such videos. (03:38)

P3: Exactly that's why I think it was so extreme for me that I had a lot of content. My algorithm adapted itself rapidly. Because right now I have almost no such TikToks anymore. (03:52)

I: So I assume before the collection it also wasn't that bad. (03:55)

P3: Yes I had some but definitely not in that extent during the data collection. (04:02)

I: Ok so what impressions or content have particularly stuck in your mind when you think back to this time? For example specific videos or overall emotions. (04:15)

P3: Yes they Christmas List I still have in mind. And then one video where a woman brought a child to the world and refused to be treated by a black doctor. (04:32)

I: True I think that was one of the first videos that I got. (04:35)

P3: Yes that one I still have in mind, but for the rest I can't even really recall, just the typical stupid videos. Ahh Marine Le Pen was also in a lot of videos where ... I mean there is already a shift towards the right on TikTok. I would say that this is getting more popular. But for the rest I can't really remember anything to be honest. (05:04)

I: I mean that makes sense if you have countless videos that you lose track of some of them. Especially when a lot of them are very similar. (05:08)

P3: Yes I mean I didn't always pay really attention, I just watched them and sent them. I mean not all TikToks, most of them yes but not all. (05:20)

I: The next question. Was there any content that you were not sure was relevant to the topic of racism or anti-racism? If so, can you describe them in more detail? I mean if you weren't sure. (05:33)

P3: Yes. Some videos were about Arabs and I wasn't sure if you mean racism as only White or Black people or if other ethnicities are also part. (05:53)

I: In a way everything. (05:55)

P3: Ah ok so everything but yeah I wasn't sure if it was that so I basically sent everything that was hostile against foreigners. (06:02)

I: Yes that was right. Everything can be part of it. Also if it is against White people, although I didn't get a single content going against White people. I think it was only one video, that you also sent me, where a White and a Black guy write stereotypic tweets against each other. That was the only one. (06:27)

P3: I have to say that one year ago it was definitely a trend to hate on White people, so racism against White people. I think that was during the Black Lives Matter time. TikTok was very split back then. But right now this isn't really the case anymore. Now refugee waves are more the trend. I think there are a variety of popular themes of racism that are coming and going. (06:56)

I: Yes that's really crazy. Because I think we in Europe are much more confronted with such themes. For example the US has maybe less, I mean of course they have refugees but (07:05)

P3: Yes but it doesn't seem to make a difference for them. (07:10)

I: Here I received a lot of TikToks concerning Arabs, against migrants coming over the sea. It seems a lot like its 'us' vs. 'them'. (07:18)

P3: Yes exactly this. (07:21)

I: This was the last question. I still want to ask if you have any comments or information you would like to share? Anything that might be relevant. This was stuck in my head. (07:37)

P3: I think I have to be honest and say that for me humour has no boundaries and that is something that I definitely stand by. But I understand if people are against by it as it still can hurt some individuals. If we are talking about humour I can understand every side I have to say. But then again blunt racism doesn't need to be. The line of freedom of speech is very thin, if you then exclude individuals or if they have disadvantage then yeah. Some things are better if they are not said. Especially because you can influence so many people, especially on something like TikTok, where a lot of young people are and they might see racism as something usual and normal. And they also might have no emotional intelligence that in real life should restrain to do as opposed on the Internet. (09:06)

I: Yes a lot of people share or like such content which shows the influence. (09:10)

P3: Yes its crazy, its really to much normalized. (09:18)

I: Exactly even if regarding dark humour 300 thousand of the 500k likes see this as a joke, it is enough that the rest of the 200k or even only 2k see this as something normal and are actively racist and therefore reinforce their stereotypes. This is a massive problem. (09:37)

P3: Yes exactly that's right. Its difficult to differentiate at that moment, its even impossible. The Internet was always a dodgy and weird place and I think that will always be the case. (09:52)

I: That's definitely true. Ok well let me just quickly send the videos to your phone so you can give me a short description how these make you feel. You send me this one. Maybe just shortly describe how this makes you feel. (10:15)

P3: Ok to be honest, I find this one really funny. Because I mean the story is that Black people were enslaved back then, which definitely wasn't ok. But now through the inflation they are so to say more expensive. It is known that the French national football team is mostly consisted of black people. Yes what can I say, I have to say that I find this one very funny. Inflation is also a recent topic, football also. I don't know how I can describe this better. (11:13)

I: It is your opinion, no need to describe it in detail, there is no right or wrong. (11:22)

P3: Yeah I mean these guys are for me French people, I don't see them as Africans, I don't know. (11:30)

I: Ok let me just send you the next one, it is the Christmas list we talked about earlier. Again just maybe give a small comment. (11:45)

P3: I don't find this one funny. This is just to trigger people. You just list things that people find shocking just to get a reaction. That is one of the goals of TikTok, to get attention through things like this. I don't find this one funny to be honest. (12:08)

I: Ok then I send you the last one. Let me just find it. There you go. (12:20)

P3: Yes this was a trend for a time. I think this was a movement against the more liberal people to say. Now everything is taboo, you get cancelled for everything you say. And here you take this back a little, that you can say what you want. This is the perspective of a man and when a woman can laugh about these things and not, to say in Internet terms, be a Nazi-Feminist, then it is a good woman, a good match, whatever. (13:13)

I: Yeah this reminds me of one of the TikToks you send me which shocked you, where a girl from Balkan heritage said that she would only date guys from her country to not break the lineage. (13:18)

P3: Yes exactly never break the rule I think it said. That's crazy because I know a lot of people who really think like this and go through with it, they really care for that, to not mix in a sense. (13:34)

I: Yes that's really crazy. (13:37)

P3: Yeah definitely. Its exaggerated in my opinion (13:45)

I: Ok that was it from your part. Thank you very much for your contribution. (13:50)

Interview ends (13:55)

Participant 4

I: Ok I think we can start. The first question is rather open. How did you fare during the data collection period? Just maybe briefly explain what comes in your mind. (00:10)

P4: It felt really bad to give many of these videos attention. I sometimes "liked" racist stuff so I would get more of this content, which I didn't like. But I did it for a while for the experiment, and then the content came organically. So good on the one side that I didn't have to like it anymore, but sad for my feed because it was full of "black humour". (00:24)

I: Oh no I am sorry to hear that, but I guess with the algorithm it makes sense. So, you would say that your content switched back normal since the end of the collection. (00:30)

P4: Yes since then the racist side of TikTok has been less which is good but I still know that it is there. But definitely sure to get less stupid content. (00:38)

I: Yeah I get that, glad you got your old FYP back. So did you use TikTok to a different extent during the data collection period than before? (00:45)

P4: No, I tried to use it fairly consistently just like before. There were maybe a few days I was off the platform because I went on holiday. Otherwise, it remained the same. (00:54)

I: Ok perfect that is good to know. So the question is how would you describe your views on racism on social media over the course of the research? Do you think they have changed and if so, how? (01:06)

P4: I don't think my views on racism itself changed, but I got some new insights into how quickly content and ideas like this can reach impressionable people on TikTok. I was actually in awe at how fast I got pushed into this right sphere on TikTok with a few interactions. It feels like that there are endless so-called "bubbles" on TikTok where people are just screaming into a microphone to a crowd of people with the same beliefs. There's little to no pushback under hateful comments which is very sad to see. So, in a way, racism remains the same to me, but I saw how quickly people can fall into getting racist. (01:36)

I: Yes that's true I realise that too when I started the thesis, that with a few interactions one quickly falls into this dark pit, where people just post what they want. (01:45)

P4: Exactly there is no filter, people just post hateful content and it seems that everyone in the comments just agrees with the creator. Its just so frustrating. (01:54)

I: Exactly so on that note are there any impressions or content that is stuck in your mind when you think back to this time? (2:00)

P4: Content that tries to ridicule and discredit the queer community, and also movements like Black Lives Matter etc. Mostly though, I got short “slideshows” of racist jokes towards black people. (02:09)

I: So mostly racist content if I am correct? (02:13)

P4: Yes exactly, there was some anti-racist content, but this was definitely more stuck in my mind. It’s just sad to see all the hate towards these innocent groups and people agreeing on hate in a way, even if it is meant as humour. (02:25)

I: Yeah the state of TikTok is very sad right now, the thesis showed me the problematic side of it. Was there any content that you were not sure was relevant to the topic of racism? If so, can you describe them in more detail? (02:35)

P4: Ah yes as I said, I am not sure if the hateful content towards feminism and the LGBTQ community falls under this research, but I got a lot of content against it. People making mockery videos about non-binary people and feminists, people on climate protests, etc. I would even say more than racist content in a way. (02:53)

I: Yes I get that, I mean it would have fitted in some of the discourses but it is always hard to objectively think of all the content that is relevant or not. Also it seems like you got a lot of hate in general with people not accepting certain things. But nevertheless, the content you sent was very helpful so don’t worry about it. (03:08)

P4: Ok good to know, yeah one quickly connects racism more to hate towards specific races, while hate on TikTok is just like this normal thing for people to do I guess. (03:18)

I: Exactly, there will always be hate but it is hard to say what falls under the category of racism. So that brings us to the last question: do you have any comments or information you would like to share? Anything that might be somehow relevant or comes to your mind? (03:29)

P4: Yeah as I said as soon as I stopped looking at the racist videos and did not interact with them, I got back into my “bubble” it felt like. It is the main thing I notice on TikTok. These echo chambers are created, where people are never really in contact with different opinions and are just confirming each other’s beliefs. But if you do get this content, you always feel like it is a proper fight between people. And looking at pure mass, most comments, hate, etc. are from the right side. It feels like racist opinions are dominant on TikTok, even though I know the minority is often the loudest. (04:03)

I: That’s also what I noticed before I started to work on my thesis, by just watching the videos to the end one quickly gets more and more. I am happy that you managed to get out of the bubble again, but the content you sent was very insightful even if it was disturbing at times. But I just hope your FYP stays healthier from now on. (04:16)

P4: Yeah me too hopefully it stays that way (laughs). (04:22)

I: Thank you very much for your contribution.

P4: Of course.

Interview ends (04:27)

Participant 5

I: Ok everything should work. Are you ready? (00:16)

P5: Yes

I: How did you fare during the data collection? Just briefly explain how the experience was for you or how did you feel? (00:26)

P5: I have to say that because I actively paid attention to what content I watched or what TikTok showed to me. The more I actively realized that I got a lot of racist content. Back then I didn’t really engage with them yes ok

but they were there. And that is when I realized how problematic that is displayed on TikTok and reproduced. I had some sarcastic content, I mean I don't know if you could even call that sarcastic. (01:08)

I: So dark humour?

P5: Yes exactly dark humour. (01:10)

I: Ok so before the data collection you also had racist content or did that just start during the period? (01:16)

P5: I would say it is the same actually, but I didn't actively register it because I didn't think much of it. Now I paid more attention. I mean maybe, but I don't know how the algorithm really works, that because I always sent you the content that I got more of this type. (01:36)

I: I mean that would make sense. If you continue to send content, the algorithm acknowledges that you are interested in that type of content. (01:44)

P5: Yes exactly. I wanted to say something but I lost my thought.

I: No worries (both laugh) Maybe it will come back. Maybe we can continue with the next question. Did you use TikTok to a different extent during the data collection period than before? And maybe shortly describe how it was during the period? (02:10)

P5: I don't think that I used it more or less but rather the same as before. I continue just like I used to. But I remember that the first few days or maybe first two weeks I always thought 'oh no I didn't get any relevant content for the project, you have to send something'. Things like these, I mean I pressured myself but I didn't really use it more than before. (02:40)

I: I mean even you sent nothing that would also be ok, that is still an answer to the research. But if you continued to just use it like you usually would then everything is alright. (02:48)

P5: Yes and I definitely had my half an hour per day like I used to. So even without your thesis (both laughing) (02:55)

I: Perfect that's good to know. How would you describe your views on racism on social media over the course of the research? Have they changed and if so, how? (03:13)

P5: I would say that they changed. I think, I mean its hard to describe in words. In my eyes I have a liberal and critical worldview. Of course there is always room for improvement and to learn new things. But the thing that changed is, is how present racism is on TikTok and how fast that can be reproduced without people really think about it. There is just some random TikTok and it gets views from like 2 million and it just stays on the app without really being reported or deleted. (04:00)

I: Yes exactly its really crazy. I mean you said that you always reported the videos and I noticed that some of the sent content was actually deleted before I got to watch them. Which is good but still there is still so many videos that still exist. The next question is what impressions or content have particularly stuck in your mind when you think back to this time? What memories have been stuck in your mind? (04:30)

P5: Wait I just have to quickly answer again to the other question.

I: Yes of course go ahead.

P5: The thing that changed is that I was way more active and that I reported a lot of the content I came across. In a way that I don't just continue to scroll mindlessly or passively in a way that I am so emerged that I don't even realize what I watch. (04:45)

I: Ok so did you have any impressions or content that you remembered when you look back? (05:06)

P5: I think there is one TikTok, which I still think of frequently. I know that I talked about it with others. I mean I am afraid to even talk about it. It's the one with the monkeys. (05:50)

I: Do you mean the one with the monkey eraser, where the police is described as 'monkey eraser'? (05:37)

P5: (laughs) Yes I find this one so crazy. So yeah I find this one so absurd how heavy this racism is intertwined in our system. And I assume that it comes from our Western world, I don't think that it comes from not Western countries. I mean I can't really prove it but the fact that racism is still internalized that way and present. The fact that it can be done with such easy means such a powerful statement can be made. Like the one video, that got almost 2 million views and 400 thousand likes. It is so sad and crazy. Also if you read the comments, I was so shocked, I mean I felt sick. I think I also wrote that as a comment, it can't be that something so absurd can happen on the app. Such devastating and destructive content. I don't know. (06:50)

I: So that was the main thing that was still in your mind when looking back? I mean it was a few weeks ago so I understand that not everything is still fresh. (07:05)

P5: I mean yeah, if I would look through all of them again I would remember some things again but right now and say 'Oh yeah it's true that one was also crazy' but yeah right now I don't remember anything that really stuck out. I just know that there was this one girl that always spread awareness in a way that she talked about individual and cultural personalities from Africa. And she lived and is a model in North America. I think I sent you one video from her. (07:42)

I: Is that the girl that talks about people always talking about her roots as Third World country? (07:47)

P5: Exactly. And she, I mean I still get videos from her, is annoyed and upset and I really get it. Racism exists and has existed for such a long time and yeah, I also remember her because she is so good. (08:07)

I: So it's good that there are still some positive thoughts there.

P5: Yes exactly.

I: That there is raising awareness and activism on TikTok. So would you say that for your case that there is more anti-racist discourses or more racist content? (08:25)

P5: I think anti-racism but maybe that is my ideal thinking that I hope that this is the case. I mean there has been some time ... oh wait maybe it is because I don't actively pay attention. But yeah I assume that it has been some time that I got something overtly racist such as the monkey one. (08:53)

I: Could also be that because you don't send them anymore that the algorithm goes back to it's normal state. (08:58)

P5: Yes that could also be.

I: But it still is interesting to know that there is less on your page now, which is great. (09:02)

P5: Yes but I still get anti-racist content. That is still there (09:08)

I: Coming to the next question. Was there any content that you were not sure was relevant to the topic of racism? If so, can you describe them in more detail? (09:18)

P5: Actually yes there were some videos where I wasn't entirely sure. Is it something that is really racist or not, is it something that is actually relevant or not. It seems like I already filtered back then in a way. At first I just sent everything where I thought that it could be relevant but afterwards I had my doubts. So the content were I wasn't sure, which I still get today is the European society bashing or making fun of the North American society, namely the USA. I mean that is problematic, because I see it as the point of view of Europeans, which I am of course part of. So how we perceive the American lifestyle and society. I mean that is also racist but I am more on the side of the racists in a way. But yeah I was unsure if I should send you this if that is part of the thing you needed. But could have been interesting (10:36)

I: Yes I mean it is definitely good to know. Every form of racism is important. I had almost no instances of 'white-on-white' racism or generally anti-white racism. This seems to be a different extent as it is focused on one nation. I mean it is and should still be perceived as racism. But all the things you sent were part of the discourses that make up anti-racism and racism so no need to worry. It is hard to stay objective and differentiate on what is part of racism and what not. (11:11)

P5: I mean yeah I thought that it is racism but not racism towards a marginalized group. It is not people who have been oppressed and murdered since decades. And yeah that's why I was quite unsure. (11:27)

I: I mean that makes sense, its hard to decide what is part of racism and what not. Lastly if you have any type of information or comments that you want to address now is the time. Anything that you want to add or discuss is welcome. (11:53)

P5: I don't know nothing really to give you on the way but more what it made with me. The fact that I actively pay attention and that it changed me. That if one really looks at it from a critical view and take the time to actively describe the TikToks, then one remembers it more actively. It becomes clearer how negative TikTok is. That sounds corny but I walk more positively out of this and learned to dissect the contents one comes across. (12:38)

I: No I really understand what you mean by that. I sent you a video, that you sent me back then. So if you could just quickly tell me how this one makes you feel. Let me just quickly show it to you.

Quick pause while the participant looks at the video.

P5: This one is really crazy. I mean you always see Ryan Gosling, so it's already posted from the perspective of a man in regards of a woman, I guess. He feels good, respectively like the best and greatest man when his girlfriend or partner laughs at his racist and homophobic jokes. So he receives affirmation by his partner because he then seen as funny. But through that he just reinforces racist and homophobic stereotypes. And I think that we should counter and dissect such prejudices and not reinforce those for personal endorsement. (14:40)

I: Ok perfect that was it, I thank you for your time and contribution.

P5: It was a pleasure.

Interview ends (14:52)

Participant 6

I: Ok I think everything works now, are you ready? (00:25)

P6: Yes.

I: Ok so the first question is just generally how did you fare during the data collection period? Maybe just briefly explain what comes to mind. (00:33)

P6: Well the last few months during the period, especially in December I was using TikTok very scarcely, because I was working. That has definitely changed since we started. But yeah I think that was it. (01:00)

I: So there is nothing that comes to mind? (01:04)

P6: No I would say that my FYP has stayed the same as in the beginning. The only is that I am not as active anymore. (01:12)

I: That is completely fine. I mean by that you already have answered the second question, which is if your screen time has changed during the collection period. So for you it became less I assume? (01:23)

P6: Yes let me just quickly check my screen time just to be sure. One moment. (Searches for screen time settings)

I: No worries.

P6: Daily average or no wait here it says 11 hours in a week I assume. I think it is weekly but I am not sure. (02:54)

I: Yeah that could be, I am not very familiar with the exact settings to be honest. I just remember that in our first interview you also looked up how many hours you have, but I am not sure how many hours you said. (03:00)

P6: Yeah I think back then it was around three to four hours a day. Well more like three I guess. (03:06)

I: I mean now that you are working, it makes sense that it has changed. But yeah so it has become less, that is good to know. (03:22)

P6: Yes exactly.

I: Ok coming to the third question: How would you describe your views on racism on social media over the course of the research? Have they changed and if so, how? (03:35)

P6: I think its specifically hard to say with TikTok. Because it always depends on the algorithm. I didn't have much before, respectively nothing. So nothing has really changed. It's more Facebook, where I notice the more racist tones. So for me personally but I haven't been on Facebook in recent times too so its hard to say. (04:05)

I: Yeah I agree, Facebook is definitely a nightmare, especially the news section, where every boomer comments by complaining about refugees and such. (04:16)

P6: Yes exactly, it's really those news sites or political changes, the comments are really crazy. (04:25)

I: But yeah TikTok is actually not better but I guess as you said that always depends on the algorithm. (04:35)

P6: Yes from other people I know that there is a lot of racism and that they get a lot of such content. (04:46)

I: Yeah the other participants definitely sent a lot so I guess it is somewhat true. I think its around 200 videos with most of them being of racist nature. It is definitely lot to analyse. So aside from the fact that it is good that you have no racist content, it is also less work in a way. (both laughing) (05:05)

P6: Yes you probably needed that one outliner so I guess that's me. (both laughing) (05:10)

I: But there is definitely nothing to worry about. Ideally everyone should have your algorithm I guess. Having no racism shows that at least some side of TikTok is free of hate. (05:33)

P6: But I have to say that before we started or back then I often got asked 'do you like this content' or something similar and you could always choose. So I assume if you answered that regularly you get better content, in that sense less racism. (05:50)

I: Yeah that could definitely be. One participant said that they reported a lot of content and that since then it has become less. So that seems to work. And that once they didn't report it anymore it escalated again. (06:06)

P6: Yeah that could be.

I: Ok so the next question is a little bit harder for you as you didn't send or stumbled upon any specific content. But do you have any impressions or content that you remembered when you look back at the research period? But yeah I still wanted to ask but of course if you have no answer that is ok. (06:31)

P6: Yes I have to think. No I don't think there was anything but also because I didn't have such videos. (06:50)

I: That makes sense I mean its hard to reflect if there wasn't anything out of the ordinary. We can just continue with the next question: Were there any content that you were not sure was relevant to the topic of racism? If so, can you describe them it? (07:16)

P6: I think I had at the very beginning some insecurities on what is now relevant for the thesis. But I have to remember which content that was. I really can't remember it to be honest. (07:41)

I: That's totally fine, I mean it has been some time since the data collection started, so its hard to remember everything. (07:50)

P6: I think I can tell because I discussed it with someone, so I could ask that person but not sure if she remembers it too. (07:58)

I: I mean if ever there is anything you start to think of, you can always message me or let me know otherwise. So just let me know if you start to remember it. And if not no worries at all. (08:09)

P6: Ok yes I will come back to that. Let me just write it down. (08:15)

I: Thank you. I mean we are also coming to an end, there is one last question left: Do you have any type of information or comments that you want to address? Anything that you want to add or discuss is welcome. Anything that might be relevant. (08:28)

P6: For my side I mean I had some racist or unpleasant content on my FYP but I always reported it like that one person. But yeah I think that is the only thing. Oh and I always deleted my history and such things. So the search history but I started that the last few months I think. So I think you always get similar content to the one friends sent you. So yeah I started to delete the history, so that TikTok only shows me the things I truly want to see. (09:25)

I: So the history on TikTok? (09:30)

P6: Yes exactly, just on TikTok. (09:40)

I: Yeah that's definitely a smart thing to do. Sometimes I get videos where I only originally watched 1 or 2 videos that were interesting but then it starts to flood my FYP with such videos. (09:55)

P6: Exactly, I also don't like as often anymore. I only like videos if they are really good or I save them, such as travel videos or something. That's why those always appear on my FYP. Content that my friends sent me, well I watch it but I don't like it. (10:28)

I: Ok perfect that's good to know. But yeah that was it, thank you very much for your time.

P6: Thank you, also when I couldn't be as helpful unfortunately.

Interview ends (10:35)

Date	Time	Type of content	Specific Type of Content	Type of Racism	Targeted Minority	Description of content	Comment participant	Code Comment	Likes and comments
20-Sep	21:50	Anti-Racism	Personal Experience		Asian people	Asian guy makes a parody of white people trying foreign (Asian) food and being racist about other people's culture	This video isn't racist but rather a parody on behaviour I have seen myself in other tiktoks by many white people. Not liking certain foods is not racist but trying something from someone else's culture and calling it "disgusting" and pretending like you are throwing up is derogatory and lacks respect.	Agreement	525.2k + 3636 comments (09/10 14:02)
25-Sep	11:50	Anti-Racism	Awareness			Educational video of the meaning of the often-racist used phrase "Ching Chang Chong"	An educational video about everyday racism. I also realize how often people generalize Asia as a continent and are irritated when I tell them that I as an Iranian am also an Asian. They most of the time counter with "They are talking about people with squinty eyes" and not me.	Agreement	1079+ 167 comments (09/10 14:03)
28-Sep	16:11	Overt racism	Other	Hate Speech	Black People	French couple doesn't want a black midwife for their childbirth and complains	Very bad, other people with the same IQ are sure to be encouraged in their way of thinking the same way	Shock	41K + 9.769 comments (09/10 14:05)
28-Sep	16:11	Overt Racism	Other	Microaggression	Migrants	French TV Show (Guess the right word, the letter G is given) asks a contestant the question: Animal living among us. The contestant answers with "Étranger" which translates to foreigner, public laughs	The fact that something like this is broadcast on public television at all is perhaps funny for most people, but if you think about it, it's really bad	Shock	408.8K + 3.907 comments (09/10 14:07)
29-Sep	12:29	Overt racism	Meme	Hate Speech	Refugees	A series of 3 images: The first one shows two soldiers on a boat manning an automated machine gun with the captions "you" and "me" over the soldiers; the second image shows the same soldier shooting the gun into the open sea; the third picture shows a boat full of refugees trying to cross the sea.	Very bad agitation, very tasteless	Shock	Video got deleted

29-Sep	09:25	Dark Humour	Other	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	The video shows a black mom and her newborn baby in a zoo near the monkey exhibition, she "shows" the baby to the monkeys and one of them immediately approaches to inspect the child.	Very stupid comparison	Dislike	431.4K + 6.109 comments (09/10 14:08)
04-Oct	10:02	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Arabic People	A series of 3 images in French: The first one is a WhatsApp message from "Mom" saying "Prepare your wishlist for christmas"; The Second is just a plain picture saying "Ok"; The third picture is a note on a smartphone called "Wishlist for Christmas" with one wish: Send all the Arabs back home".	Disgusting	Dislike	Video got deleted
05-Oct	19:52	Deleted video							
06-Oct	22:37	Dark Humour	Skit	Stereotyping	Migrants	French guy says that people should stop saying that migrants have bed bugs as migrants don't even have beds	Dark humour, not really funny	Dislike	688.3k + 7698 comments (09/10 13:57)
06-Oct	22:53	Dark Humour	Skit	Microaggression	Migrants	Small child talks to French right wing candidate Marine Le Pen, who is known to be racist. The child is Asian and says that he will vote for her and hope that she will be president of France. Marine Le Pen then answers with: "Are you sure that you will vote for me?" This clip is followed by a guy mocking Marine Le Pen by emphasizing on the "Are you sure you will vote for me?" then joking that the kid is Asian and Marine Le Pen won't have that			390.9k + 2978 comments (09/10 13:58)
06-Oct	22:53	Overt racism	Other	Microaggression	Black People	A guy is filming an older man at a gas station with the caption "You ever get curious and want to ask a black dude". The older guy looks at the cameraman (who is presumably black) and plainly asks him "Are you from Africa?" The guy simply replies with "Yes"	Old people are ignorant, funny	Funny	825.1k + 7902 comments (09/10 13:58)
06-Oct	13:14	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	The video shows a black guy eating chicken and watermelon while talking online over a headset with the caption "How fast, mfs figure out that you're black in game chat. We then hear a voice over the microphone saying "Well well well" (The guy knows that the other one is black), the guy eating the chicken then replies with "There is no way you can tell" The other guy then replies with "Bro I can smell your			2.6 Million + 18.1k comments (09/10 13:54)

						chicken a mile away"			
06-Oct	19:17	Dark Humour	Skit	Stereotyping	Black People	A video of a black guy going through a mall and asks a random guy "to act black for 5 dollars" in order to win the "challenge and get money". The other guy just thinks and steals the money and runs. The description says "Bro jumped straight into character"			182.5k + 1319 comments (09/10 13:54)
06-Oct	19:31	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows Gordon Ramsay in his show "Hells Kitchen" furiously saying "Oh shit, shit its black" as meat was overcooked. The caption says "Army men when they are witnessing their wife giving birth"			587.6k + 3012 comments (09/10 13:55)
07-Oct	18:28	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Arabic people	A series of 3 images in French: The first one is a WhatsApp message from "Mom" saying "Prepare your wishlist for christmas"; The Second is just a plain picture saying "Ok"; The third picture is a note on a smartphone called "Wishlist for Christmas" with one wish: "Go to Mexico" , but almost not visible at the bottom of the screenshot one can see another "wish" saying "Beat the Arabs with ham"	Funny	Funny	144,3k + 10 comments (09/10 13:59)
08-Oct	09:10	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Arabic people	A series of 3 images in French: The first one is a photo of a white guy in a suit and wearing glasses, it says "Glasses of Francois"; The Second is almost the same just a stock photo of a white woman wearing glasses which says "Glasses of Juliette" ; The third picture is a picture of a scope from a Sniper or an Assault rifle saying "Glasses of Abdel Karim"	Funny	Funny	91.7k + 722 comments (09/10 14:00)

08-Oct	11:05	Overt Racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Black People	A black guy seems to be at a gaming convention wearing a sign "First person to say the N-Word gets 5\$". Then a guy approaching in a body suit from the game Among Us and says the N-Word, takes the money and runs away. The captions says "Bro was undercover so he didn't care." We then see the black guy commenting his day on an escalator, as the guy in the costume is seen again on the opposite site of the escalator just staring at the dude with a caption "You cocky moterf-"	Honestly, kinda funny	Funny	121.1k + 425 comments (09/10 13:55)
09-Oct	08:10	Dark Humour	Meme	Microaggression	Black People	A video of what seems to be an interview with a Wrestler who says "Truth be told, I am not really a fan of the black people" with a caption saying "Grandma out of nowhere at thanksgiving dinner", implying that older people tend to be racist	Fact is that older people are more racist	Agreement	422.8k + 1727 comments (09/10 14:00)
09-Oct	01:20	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Jews	There are 2 photos. On the first one you see a tweet from Jason Jay Smart which shows the Brandenburger Gates in the colours of Israel as a show of solidarity in light of the recent attacks. The second shows a picture from a movie/series showing Adolf Hitler crying and a girl asking "Are you crying, my Führer?" And he replies with no.			450.3k + 7354 comments (09/10 13:56)
09-Oct	01:27	Dark Humour	Meme	White Supremacy	Jews	A series of 3 pictures showing the American Psycho figure "Patrick Bateman" played by Christian Bale. The first picture shows Partrick Bateman frowning and frustrated with a picture "Jerusalem belongs to Palestinians". The 2nd picture is the same but saying "Jerusalem belongs to Jews". The third picture now shows Patrick Bateman smiling and happy with a picture saying "Jerusalem belongs to Christians".			82.8k + 3521 comments (09/10 13:56)
09-Oct	08:45	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A video of what seems to be an interview with a Wrestler who says "Truth be told, I am not really a fan of the black people" with a caption saying "Grandma out of nowhere at thanksgiving dinner", implying that older people tend to be racist			422.4k + 1725 comments (09/10 13:56)
09-Oct	17:08	Deleted Video							

09-Oct	17:36	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Indian People	A "sketch" of an oriental looking guy: Firstly, he impersonates an European with the caption: "How European people find out they have covid", he then eats chips and a voice asks how it tastes, the guy says he can't taste anything, he then acts shocked as it may be a symptom for covid. The second part is the same but the European is changed with an American and the guy is just wearing a cap and sunglasses to impersonate a different person. The third and final part shows the caption "How Indian people find out they have covid", he then again eats chips but this time he doesn't react surprised when he can't taste anything. He then smells his armpit and begins to panic as he can't seem to smell himself			1.0m + 3705 comments (11/10 09:01)
10-Oct	20:12	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Arabic people	A series of 3 images in French: The first one is a stock image of a white guy (maybe an uber or a taxi driver) and a white woman sitting in the back, both are smiling, the caption says "The private driver of Mathilde"; The second image is very similar, a white chauffeur with a white woman sitting in the back with the caption "The private driver of Manon"; The third image is a picture of a white policeman in front of a police car with the caption "Private driver of Mohamed"			199.5k + 2577 comments (11/10 8:46)
10-Oct	18:58	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	A series of 2 videos, the first video shows a guy pulling a chain which leads to the chain to whip. After the whipping, a black guy answers in another video with "You don't need to tell me twice" with a background full of cotton. He then proceeds to "harvest" the cotton in a distressed manner	It seems to me that many black people make racist humour content	Surprised	629.0k + 4527 comments (11/10 09:12)
11-Oct	08:21	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Arabic people	A series of 2 images: The first one is an image saying "The final chapter"; The second image shows a French tweet of one guy asking "Brothers do you know any tips to master/overcome Arab [the language]", One guy replies with simply "A taser"			5570 + 26 comments (11/10 8:52)

12-Oct	15:30	Dark Humour	Other	White Supremacy		A video shows a woman playing the popular game "Cards against humanity" (known for focusing on dark humour) with her cat. The question is "What will end racism once and for all?", she asks the cat to show one of the 4 answers, the cat points at one and therefore chooses the answer "Restoring Germany to its former glory." accompanied with an ominous music.			715.0k + 7322 comments (16/10 14:15)
12-Oct	19:01	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Chinese People	Series of 3 pictures: The first one shows a guy pointing at the camera with the caption "Squint your eyes"; the second image shows a group of several dogs sitting and looking at the camera; the third picture shows the guy again but looking very concerned with the caption "Why you looking at them dogs like that Chinese boy"			541.1k + 7846 comments (16/10 14:19)
13-Oct	17:27	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Arabic People	A series of three pictures: The first shows a stock image of a chauffeur with the caption "Chauffeur von Lea"; The second one again shows a picture of a driver and a guy sitting in the back with the caption "Chauffeur von Jakob"; The third picture shows a German police officer in front of a police car with the caption "Chauffeur von Mohammed"			53.9k + 681 comments (16/10 14:22)
13-Oct	17:43	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	A video of a black guy playing video games with people online. He says "Yo we got an enemy is capturing C" (referencing to an online game); AN other guy replies "We ain't selling hellcats to a baboon" (implying that the first talker is black); The black guy then replies with "How the fuck do you know I am black?"; The other guy replies with "Well when all you hear is [a sound of a chimpanzee screaming is inserted]"			532.9k + 2234 comments (16/10 14:27)
13-Oct	17:44	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		The video is a scene of the Joker from Batman sliding down an immense pile of money and throwing a lighter at it and therefore burning all the money with the caption "A big pile of money. But you have to stop being racis-"			325.9k + 2040 comments (16/10 14:31)

14-Oct	16:35	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	The video is a skit. The user DPJLocal is walking in the game "Minecraft"; his username is BigKneeGro47 (already a racist connotation); He then goes to a villager (NPC in the game) and tries to imprison him and says "You will be my slave" (In the game); The game then ends and says "Friendly fire will not be tolerated"			65.1k + 237 comments (16/10 14:34)
15-Oct	08:31	Anti-Racism	Personal Experience	Self-Deprecating Humour	Migrants	The video shows a Mauritian girl happily dancing with the caption "Me asf when a r@cist tells me to go back to my country bc my country is their dream vacation that they can't afford"			1.0m + 3905 comments (16/10 14:45)
15-Oct	11:34	Deleted video							
15-Oct	11:39	Overt Racism	Hate speech	Hate Speech	Migrants	The video first shows a informational video showing the island of Lampedusa and a camera man filming the newcomers with the caption "The island of Lampedusa, in Italy, has set a record with the arrival of over 5.000 African Immigrants in 24 hours. Then a guy replies to this video with "Is it me or are all these young military age? You know what I am saying? All these men, that are coming over from these Third World countries are all military age. Sleeper cells? Possibly."			220.7k + 9050 comments (16/10 14:53)
15-Oct	13:38	Anti- 'Wokeness'	Anti- 'Wokeness'	Microaggression	Black People	The video shows one of the most famous streamers "Montanablack" from Germany reacting to an educational video posted from Rundfunk (a media site in Germany). In the video a black woman tries to explain us that hiking is racist. Montanablack is fed up a shaking his head watching the video. His message: "Die wollen uns doch komplett verarschen. Wer hat da das Crack geraucht. Was für ne Pisse muss ich mir da anschauen. Es werden Probleme gemacht wo keine Probleme sind und die Scheiße kriegt auch noch Aufmerksamkeit. Traurig." The girl says "Outdoor sports is dominated by white people." Montanablack pauses and is fed up, he replies "Ich muss mich gerade zusammenreißen sie nicht zu beleidigen."			125.3k + 1201 comments (16/10 15:02)

15-Oct	13:38	Overt Racism	Hate speech	Hate Speech	Migrants	The video shows a French politician Jordan Bardella who is member of the Front National (right wing party) in what seems a morning show. He talks about politics and migrants. He says that Hungary has a strict migration policy and therefore almost no crimes in Budapest and it is safe to wander there at night. He says that crimes can be directly related to immigrants.			33.7k + 505 comments (03/11 10:41)
15-Oct	16:50	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	A black guy films a sketch of himself with the caption: POV: you have dark skin. He is in a room with his friends. They shut down the lights and one friend jokingly asks "Where is Kevin?" as he has darker skin and they can't "see" him.	unfunny	Dislike	4071 + 38 comments (03/11 10:45)
15-Oct	16:59	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a stock image of money stacking up, representing inflation; the second image shows 4 black slaves or jail workers with price tags of 0\$; the third image shows some players of the French national football team, all being black. Again, there are price tags but this time 65M\$, 95M\$, 84M\$, etc.	funny	Funny	2.3M + 31.5k (03/11 10:50)
15-Oct	19:21	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	Series of 3 images: The first shows three erasers in the shape of a monkey with the caption "Monkey erasers"; the second image is just a black background with the caption "or"; The third picture shows a police squad (all white!) posing for a photo with again the caption "monkey erasers"			1.3M + 12.9k (03/11 10:57)
15-Oct	14:41	Dark Humour	Other	Stereotyping	Arabic People	The video shows a guy reacting to another video. The other video is an East African guy who apparently asked his followers to come up with rapper names for him. He then proceeds to show the list that the followers came up with. All the "rapper names" are heavily stereotypical. Some examples: The pilot; Watermelon warrior; Big head; Lil Mecca; Notorious 911; 21 Bananas; Abit abusive; Big miskeem; Central C4; Straight outta Sahara; 50 cents a say; Abduwitdapoo; Mr Boom no basic; etc. The guy reaction to the video is just constantly laughing about the different names			218.8k + 1251 comments (16/10 14:41)

15-Oct	12:28	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 3 videos: The first picture said "My mom asked me what I want for christmas"; the second said: "This is what I wish for"; The third slide said: "Bring slavery back"	My first instinct was just to scroll on quickly because I was shocked and might actually not want to be confronted with such postings. Then I scrolled back again and couldn't believe it. I read through the comments and just thought how can you post something like this nonchalant and be so ignorant. I must say I was ignorant too by not wanting to be confronted I feel obligated to report the video as it goes beyond black humor in my eyes. And 2.4 million likes is insane. It reflects a part of society.	Shock	2.4million
15-Oct	15:00	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	Series of 3 images: The first shows three erasers in the shape of a monkey with the caption "Monkey erasers"; the second image is just a black background with the caption "or"; The third picture shows a police squad (all white!) posing for a photo with again the caption "monkey erasers"			887.3k + 8120 comments (16/10 14:04)
16-Oct	07:43	Dark Humour	Meme	Symbolic Racism		A series 3 images: The first one shows a stock image of a chair with the caption "Chair in France"; the second one is again a chair but with the caption "Chair in the US", the third one shows a broken chair with one of the legs pointing away from the chair which makes it look like the chair does the "Hitler salute"			313.9k + 4113 comments (03/11 11:01)
16-Oct	07:47	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Arabic people	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a stock image of a guy working with cells on a computer with the caption "Bernard studying the cells"; the second image is similar but this time two women looking at cells on a computer, with the caption "Josianne and Bernadette studying a cell"; the third image shows a guy in a hoodie in a police cell with the caption "Mohamed studying a cell"			53.2k + 821 comments (03/11 11:05)

16-Oct	12:25	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Arabic people	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a castle with the caption "castle of Dimitri"; the second one shows another castle with the caption "castle of Florian"; the third one shows a prison with the caption "castle of Abdel"			157.9k + 1522 comments (03/11 11:10)
16-Oct	12:27	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Black People	A series of 3 images: The first one shows an indoor climbing wall with the caption "climbing wall of Lukas"; the second is similar but this time an outside climbing wall with the caption "climbing wall of Nathan"; the third one shows a tree with the caption "climbing wall of Mamadou"			12.9k + 1008 comments (03/11 11:13)
16-Oct	19:11	Overt racism	Other	Stereotyping	Chinese People	It shows a photo taken of the user and his cousin in Hong Kong with a beautiful scenery. In the background you can see a couple who is also posing for a photo. The white couple holds their eyes back in order to make the stereotypic Asian "squinty eyes" in Hong Kong			720.0k + 9390 comments (27/10 9:38)
16-Oct	19:12	Overt racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Black People	We see gameplay from the online multiplayer game <i>Roblox</i> . There is user dressed as a skeleton following another user who is black. The skeleton is using an automated AI as the voice output for the microphone (everyone in the game can hear him). He follows the black character and tries to get the AI to say the N-Word or things like "Why are you black?", "Get back to work, I hate your scat pack driving ass you ni-", "Monkey see monkey do ,	This is definitely too much	Dislike	185.9k + 1154 comments (27/10 9:44)
16-Oct	08:29	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Indian People	Series of 3 images: The first shows what seems a family of Indian origin posing for a photo with the caption "I see who you are"; The second picture shows a deodorant with the caption "You are my enemy"; The third picture shows a stock photo of a shower with the caption "My enemy"; The song in the background is in synch with the captions	This is just very racist and rude. The fact that I understand from which point of view this was posted makes me think about the position I have as a white person in central Europe.	Shock	36.0k + 674 comments (16/10 14:08)
17-Oct	14:09	Dark Humour	Meme	Symbolic Racism		The video shows a cat who resembles Adolf Hitler with the caption "I saw that you were perfect and so I loved you"; the owner did a video with the cat, where she kisses her and the cat makes a move that looks			112.3k + 800 comments (03/11 11:17)

						similar to the Hitler salute with the caption "And I loved you even more"			
17-Oct	14:11	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		The video shows a series of 3 images: The first one is a notification from mom reading "Start making your Christmas list."; the second one is a picture of a Santa with the caption "okay momma"; the third picture is a note from a phone with a Christmas list. The first wish is "Her." wish is highlighted and a drawn heart next to it. Under this is a series of other wishes: Increase world hunger, Bring back concentration camps, WW3, End charities, Bring back covid, 9/11 part 2			720.0k + 12.2k (03/11 11:27)
17-Oct	18:00	Dark Humour	Other	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	The video shows the famous black YouTuber <i>KSI</i> reacting to another video. He reacts to a series of videos that have the same pattern. For example one video says: "How to turn rocks into water" and a white guy licking a rock, then the caption says "Now that the Africans are here" and proceeds to drink expensive water with the caption "How is my form??" This implies that African people don't have access to water and he tries to get their attention that way. <i>KSI</i> mostly reacts by laughing or being slightly shocked. Another example: How to steal an airplane!! Followed by the caption "Now that all the Arab people are here" and proceeds to throw his backpack in the closet and runs away with the caption "How is my form" and a bomb emoji. This is a reference to the 9/11 plane hijack and that Arab people have bombs in their backpacks.			196.7k + comments disabled (27/10 9:51)
18-Oct	01:15	Overt Racism	Other	Symbolic Racism		The video shows a content creator playing Minecraft, a sandbox game that allows you to build anything. He goes to a house and there is a sign that says "Do not open" followed by a sign that says "Last warning do not break planks"; the creator doesn't oblige and continues to go and breaks the planks revealing a swastika that was created by a user.			385.8k + 3546 comments (27/10 9:56)

18-Oct	17:00	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	It is a series of 3 images: The first one is a screenshot from another video saying "In the 18 years of my life, I've never seen a black kid with Down's syndrome", the second picture shows <i>Goku</i> from Dragon Ball Z in his <i>super sayin</i> (strongest) form. The third picture is a screenshot of a comment under that video. It says "God doesn't punish a person twice"			2.9M + 29.2k comments (27/10 10:01)
18-Oct	11:51	Anti-Racism	Awareness			An educational video explaining the situation around Israel and Palestine, showing how provoking and insulting the Israelis are towards the population of Gaza and Arabs in general			3015 + 55 comments (3/11 9:54)
18-Oct	14:30	Anti-Racism	Personal Experience			The video shows a Mauritian girl happily dancing with the caption "Me asf when a r@cist tells me to go back to my country bc my country is their dream vacation that they can't afford"			2.0m + 8736 comments (03/11 9:57)
19-Oct	16:53	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	POV: You have a dark skin part 2	unfunny		5212 + 97 comments (03/11 11:29)
19-Oct	16:59	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	It is a series of 3 images: The first one is a screenshot from another video saying "In the 18 years of my life, I've never seen a black kid with Down's syndrome", the second picture shows <i>Goku</i> from Dragon Ball Z in his <i>super sayin</i> (strongest) form. The third picture is a screenshot of a comment under that video. It says "God doesn't punish a person twice"	funny, but actually not funny	Funny	3.0M + 30.4k comments (03/11 11:31)
19-Oct	17:19	Dark Humour	Skit	Microaggression	Non-Whites	A French guy is filming himself answering the question whether he is racist or not. He says that at night he keeps the light out and that he eats spices. So there is no need to justify if he is racist or not.	VERY funny	Funny	195.7k + 1543 comments (03/11 11:39)
19-Oct	17:19	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A scene from a Lego movie with the guy being shocked and then that emotion turns into happiness with the caption "When you make the most r@cist and disgusting joke humanity has ever heard but she starts to laugh"	racism is tolerated, actually a no go, but I don't find this one terrible	Dislike	978.k + 5205 comments (03/11 11:43)

19-Oct	08:10	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	It is a series of 3 images: The first one is a screenshot from another video saying "In the 18 years of my life, I've never seen a black kid with Down's syndrome", the second picture shows <i>Goku</i> from Dragon Ball Z in his <i>super sayin</i> (strongest) form. The third picture is a screenshot of a comment under that video. It says "God doesn't punish a person twice"	I was very shocked again. I wonder if the person who created this tiktok recognizes it as black humour or actually means it racist and discriminatory. Even if it is black humour, this person is strongly influenced by stereotypes and hopefully aware of them. Also very crazy how many people interact with videos like this.	Shock	2.9M + 29.2k comments (27/10 10:13)
20-Oct	11:26	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	POV: The most normal boys' trip in Germany; a group of black people decide to go on a trip in Germany and film their experience; they film themselves in towns named "Oberneger", "Unterneger", and posing in front of a sign saying "Welcome to "Neger""			71.7k + 511 comments (03/11 11:48)
20-Oct	17:44	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Asian People	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a bulldogge with the caption "Dog of Bertrand"; the second one shows a border collie with the caption "dog of Cecile"; the third one shows spring rolls with the caption "Dog of Xiong Ming"	funny	Funny	124.1k + 2809 comments (03/11 11:52)
20-Oct	17:55	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Arabic people	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a paradisiac island with the caption "The vacation of Mathilde"; the second shows a beach with a amusement park with the caption "Vacation of Mathieu"; the third one shows the twin towers in New York with the caption "the vacation of Mohamed"			36.9k + 759 comments (03/11 11:54)
21-Oct	18:26	Overt Racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Migrants	A guy films himself entering a room with the caption "I am not racist but when I call a client service and I come across a guy who talks with an accent I already know that my problem won't be solved"	I don't agree	Disagreement	10.2k + 160 comments (03/11 11:57)
22-Oct	00:27	Overt Racism	Hate Speech	Microaggression	Chinese People	The caption says "One racist video a day until I have 1000 followers"; The video shows a white French guy filming himself and wishing someone Happy Birthday in different languages. He doesn't know how to say Happy Birthday in Chinese so he just mimics the language and says stereotypic and racial sounds.			111.0k + 870 comments (03/11 12:04)

22-Oct	05:00	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Refugees	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a yellow car with the caption "Car of Eric"; The second one shows a sports car with the caption "Car of Bastien"; the third one shows a raft boat with the caption "Car of Abdel"			8055 + 113 comments (03/11 12:06)
22-Oct	05:02	Overt racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Arabic people	The caption says "One racist video a day until I have 1000 followers"; The video shows Jean-Marie Le Pen talking to a woman in a restaurant, he says that he has bought a house on the country side so that his kids can see cows instead of Arabic people.			22.8k + 519 comments (03/11 12:10)
22-Oct	13:46	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Arabic people	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a woman wearing a bracelet with the caption "bracelet of Celine"; the second one shows a similar picture with the caption "bracelet of Christelle"; the third one shows an ankle monitor with the caption "bracelet of Karim"			9486 + 284 comments (03/11 12:15)
22-Oct	11:02	Overt racism	Skit	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows far-right extremist Paul Miller also known as <i>Gypsy Crusader</i> on omegle, a platform that allows you talk to random people. He asks two girls to solve his riddle. The riddle goes as follows: "Riddle me this. They are loud and obnoxious, they like music that rhymes, they are a fraction of the population, and they commit half the crimes. Who are they?" The girls refuse to answer and he is very amused and laughs. The next person comes up and it is a black guy and Paul Miller acts shocked, points the finger and says "Ni-" and then the video cuts.			1.1M + 8292 comments (27/10 10:07)
23-Oct	09:23	Overt Racism	Hate speech	Hate Speech	Refugees	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a white soldier with the caption "Leaves women and children in better country and goes to war"; the second image shows three black men with the caption "leaves women and children in war and goes to better country"; the third picture says "big difference."			40.8k + 738 comments (03/11 12:18)
23-Oct	09:25	Overt Racism	Hate speech	Hate Speech	Arabic people	A series of 3 images: The first one is a stock image of a happy Arabic family holding a housekey in their hand with the caption "Them in our countries"; the second image shows a group of hooded black men,			188.3k + 9321 comments (03/11 12:30)

						who seem to be part of the Islamic State, holding white guys hostage and threatening with knives with the caption "Us in their countries"			
23-Oct	09:35	Deleted video							
23-Oct	09:41	Overt Racism	Hate speech	Hate Speech	Migrants	A series of 4 images: The first one says "I wish for a new car"; the second one says: "I wish for a new girlfriend"; the third one says "You know what I wish for?"; The fourth one says "For all the not integrated foreigners and disrespectful of our beautiful country to go back home."			58.3k + 1919 comments (03/11 12:36)
23-Oct	18:46	Dark Humour	Other	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	The video shows a black dad playing with his son, they have a toy which makes sounds. The dad opens a door and the sound "Hi monkey" can be heard. The dad just looks shocked. The caption says "Kids toys going crazy"			1.7M+ 6242 comments (03/11 12:40)
23-Oct	21:50	Deleted video							
24-Oct	12:38	Overt Racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Black People	Drunk woman is being filmed on an airplane harassing a black stewardess for not getting alcohol	Woman makes racist comments because she isn't getting any more alcohol from the stewardess. It is hypocritical as she calls the stewardess racist but at the same time also is racist and insulting by saying "white lives matter", the counterpart of "Black lives matter" created by racist white people as they feel excluded once the world doesn't revolve around them.	Shock	110.9k + 6653 comments (03/11 10:04)
26-Oct	19:36	Overt Racism	Other	Microaggression	Black People	The caption says "One racist video a day until I have 1500 followers"; The video shows a French cook who got hate on the Internet for his pancakes. The pancake in talk has as ingredients banana and covered with Nutella, he calls it the Mamadou pancake			81.3k + 1732 comments (03/11 12:43)
26-Oct	23:15	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	"POV: The geography teacher shows a picture of starving, naked black people. That one friend:" The video shows a guy laughing about a serious matter			567.6k + 8168 comments (03/11 12:46)

26-Oct	14:43	Dark Humour	Other	Microaggression	Black People	The video shows a white woman in a car showing a small black toy and saying how cute and adorable it is. Then she drops it accidentally. A black guy reacts to the video by saying "You had to drop the black one hmm?"	The woman isn't directly called a racist but more as a joke, that she just had to drop the tiana figure which is black. Similar to the fact that "coincidentally" black people die first in horror movies, where one asks if it is really a coincidence or rather on purpose	Agreement	634.2k + 3521 comments (03/11 10:12)
27-Oct	11:38	Deleted video							
27-Oct	11:55	Dark Humour	Skit	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows a skit from famous comedian Bruno Sacha Baron Cohen, where he mocks "African people" and says that he traded a black child he named OJ for an iPod when he was in Africa			362.2k + 2330 comments (03/11 12:51)
27-Oct	12:22	Dark Humour	Meme	Symbolic Racism		The video shows a cat which has its paw stuck on a curtain so it looks like the cat is doing the Hitler salute			415.3k + 5698 comments (03/11 12:53)
27-Oct	12:49	Dark Humour	Skit	Hate Speech	Non-Whites	The video shows an AI version of a few right-wing French politicians saying racist jokes to each other and laughing. One example: Why are there no black people in Star Wars? Why? Because it plays in the future. Or: What separates a man from a monkey? The Mediterranean Sea			78.4k + 485 comments (03/11 12:57)
28-Oct	08:48	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A series of 3 images: The first one says "I support Israel"; the second says: "I support Palestine"; the third one shows bugs bunny in a dress with the caption "ladies and gentleman" "I support the racism"			317.5k + 5009 comments (03/11 12:59)
28-Oct	19:27	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Non-Whites	A series of 3 images of the actor Bryan Cranston: The first shows a portrait of an emotionless Bryan Cranston with the caption "ur mom died"; the second one is the same image but with the caption "Ur sister died"; the third picture shows Bryan Cranston shocked with the caption "Ur skin became darker in summer (I became what I hate)"	not happy to see such shit	Dislike	612.4k + 6042 comments (03/11 10:23)
28-Oct	19:49	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Asian People	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a stock image of a yellow eraser with the caption "Yellow eraser??"; the second image shows a black background with the caption "or"; the third image	They are getting really disgusting now	Dislike	1.5M + 14.5k comments (03/11 10:29)

						shows an atomic bomb (probably fat man) with the caption "yellow eraser"			
29-Oct	18:22	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	Caption: My brother after saying he's not racist: The video shows the music video for the song "Freaky Friday" from Lil Dicky and Chris Brown, where Chris Brown says the N- Word repeatedly			1.7M+ 21.0k comments (03/11 13:03)
29-Oct	19:09	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	African People	The caption says: "African people when I finish my plate", the video shows a concert with a remixed version of the song Satisfaction by Benny Benassi where people are partying and there is a massive drop			116.2k + 538 comments (03/11 13:03)
30-Oct	07:48	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	African People	A series of 3 images: The first one says "Hey guys look at this joke"; the second says "They found water on Mars"; the third one shows a score: Mars 1-0 Africa			149.5k + 5085 comments (03/11 13:09)
30-Oct	20:04	Dark Humour	Meme	Microaggression		"POV: The classes that visit Germany for their school trip" The video shows a German grandma who wants to toast with her Schnapps and says <i>Heil Hitler</i> as an old force of habit			288.3k + 0 comments (03/11 13:11)
31-Oct	15:21	Dark Humour	Other	Symbolic Racism		The video shows a person filming inside of a supermarket and zooms to the carpet, which is shaped like a swastika			6186 + 123 comments (03/11 13:13)
31-Oct	19:59	Overt Racism	Hate speech	Hate Speech	Migrants	A series of 3 images: The first one says "for my hero"; the second says "I choose"; the third one says "my mom", the mom sent a message to her daughter: "Hey children please take care. Be aware of Arabs and blacks. I love you"			505.4k + 15.6k (03/11 13:18)
31-Oct	20:02	Dark Humour	Other	Symbolic Racism		The video shows a person filming a Michelin tyre and slowly zooming up and capturing the Michelin Logo which looks like he is doing the <i>Hitler salute</i> (They added a small white piece of paper so it looks like Hitler)			26.2k + 450 comments (03/11 13:20)
31-Oct	22:40	Anti- 'Wokeness'	Anti- 'Wokeness'			Educational video correcting a white girl who says that Israelis are all white and Palestinians are non-whites and that's why Western media focuses on Israel. The guy being from Israel himself says that this			66.0k + 4036 comments (03/11 13:25)

						is complete bullshit as there are many Israelis who are non-white.			
01-Nov	08:09								
01-Nov	08:11	Overt Racism	Hate speech	Hate Speech		The video shows a sped-up version of some scene from a film or a movie with the caption "The solution for racism is that everyone stays in his country"			26.3k + 845 comments (03/11 13:28)
01-Nov	08:20								
01-Nov	23:20	Dark Humour	Other	Symbolic Racism		A person is filming in a supermarket and films a batch of ranch and then proceeds to film up, the ranch is ordered in the form of a swastika			25.6k + 416 comments (03/11 13:30)
02-Nov	14:55	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Indian People	A series of 3 images: the first one says "hold your breath"; the second says "or"; the third one shows an Indian family "hold your breath"			754.0k + 26.4k comments (03/11 13:31)
02-Nov	09:49	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Thai People	The video shows a wedding with the caption "When your beautiful bride from Thailand makes the walk down the aisle". It then shows a kid cheering and being happy but then looking down and frowning/being confused.	The fact that I understood what this video is about, proves that the world/society that I am living in is wrong. This is not only about racism but also about transphobia.	Shock	109.8k + 333 comments (03/11 10:18)
04-Nov	08:45	Deleted video							
05-Nov	17:42	Overt Racism	Hate speech	Hate Speech	Non-Whites	The video shows a series of 7 images: The first one shows guys working on a construction with the caption "Portuguese immigration"; the second shows an elder woman behind 3 pizzas with the caption "Italian immigration"; the third shows an Asian woman in front of a Chinese buffet with the caption "Chinese immigration"; 4: And...; 5: A picture of a burning street with what seems a protest, with the caption "immigration "chance""; 6:"We created France" with a picture of a group of POC posing for a picture; 7: "Tell me what you think in the comments"			19.7k + 4440 comments (13/12 12:51)
06-Nov	13:51	Dark Humour	Other	Microaggression	Black People	The picture shows a white woman talking for the international day for the abolition of slavery. As it is raining a black guy is holding an umbrella over her.			527.9k + 2826 comments (13/12 12:57)

06-Nov	14:35	Dark Humour	Other	Microaggression	Black + White people	A series of tweets "fighting" between a white guy and a black guy. Examples: Imagine having to wear sunscreen; Imagine having to travel for clean water; Imagine the spiciest food you can tolerate being salt; Imagine the best footwear in your village being a pair of sandals.			2.5m + 28.2k (13/12 13:00)
09-Nov	11:11	Dark Humour	Other	Symbolic Racism		The video shows the caption "German bear" with a bear waving which resembles the Hitler salute			120.2k + 877 comments (13/12 13:02)
09-Nov	13:56	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Russians	A skit of a Russian saying that everyone immediately thinks he is Russian because of his accent but that is racist because he says he gets his accent from drinking vodka			265.5k + 1873 comments (15/12 9:19)
09-Nov	16:17	Overt racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Portuguese	One can hear a Luxembourgish old man say: "Did you shit well you fucking dirty Portuguese? Go back to your land if it doesn't please you! You bully everyone. Instead you should shut up you dirty Portuguese!"			2655 + 78 comments (15/12 9:46)
09-Nov	20:13	Dark Humour	Meme	Microaggression	Black People	The first video shows a chocolate ball being glazed with steaming hot milk, the video then cuts to a black guy doing sports outside and sweating and steam comes from his head because of the cold			2.5M + 11.1k comments (15/12 9:49)
10-Nov	19:02	Dark Humour	Skit	Hate Speech	Black People	A skit showing a white guy happy to start a round of pool with his friend. The friend asks where the black one (ball) is, the guy replies: well, the other balls were feeling a little uncomfortable.			1.2M + 2578 comments (15/12 9:51)
11-Nov	13:01	Deleted video							
11-Nov	13:01	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Migrants	A German Arab films himself answering questions asked from his viewers. Most questions are racist or hinting towards his ethnicity. For example: "Stupid migrant", he answers "Stupid? Yes. Migrant? Also yes. Good description."; Why Germany and not Africa? "In Africa I would have to work to get money."; What are your children's names? "They have no names, they are numbered 1 through 17."; How does your future look? "I don't know how it will be behind bars, probably dark."			359.9k + 3632 comments (15/12 10:11)

14-Nov	14:04	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Non-Whites	A skit showing a version of the prominent joke: "A Turk, an Arab and an Albanian. Who is driving?" Then the video shows a white police guy saying "The police".			250.9k + 4755 comments (15/12 10:14)
15-Nov	10:32	Anti-Racism	Personal Experience	Hate Speech	Black People	A German black girl shares her experience with the Deutsche Bahn, where she and others were victim of racism and stereotyping, the girl was asked to leave her 4 seats even though there was enough place (but the white woman was allowed to stay), another not white passenger was also immediately attacked for not promptly showing his ticket. The girl is devastated and unsecure about her negative experience and addresses Deutsche Bahn that there is a need for change.	This video addresses Deutsche Bahn and in general tries to spread awareness that a train attendant was racist towards the girl. Such situations happen very often unfortunately, for example also at the airport, where POCs (Person of Color) are 'randomly' selected for an additional control. This train attendant was overtly racist but unfortunately it is often difficult to prove that if that person is really racist or if it is in fact just really random that one was selected for the control, what in most cases is not the reason.	Agreement	25.8k + 1078 comments (13/12 12:35)
16-Nov	07:40	Deleted video							
16-Nov	14:42	Dark Humour	Other	Stereotyping	Black People	The video shows a guy going through a supermarket and he spots a black doll that is locked behind a barred section			2.2M + 18.4k comments (15/12 10:16)
16-Nov	14:42	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 3 images: The first one shows a stock image of money stacking up, representing inflation; the second image shows 4 black slaves or jail workers with price tags of 0\$; the third image shows some players of the French national football team, all being black. Again, there are price tags but this time 65M\$, 95M\$, 84M\$, etc.			1.1M + 10.4k comments (15/12 10:19)
16-Nov	23:35	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows a kid releasing a fish back into the water, he says, "Well here we go, we are releasing this little black" (maybe some sort of fish); the caption says "It is 1848 and slavery is abolished"			113.2K + 808 comments (15/12 10:23)

17-Nov	07:09	Dark Humour	Skit	Hate Speech		A skit showing a white guy running around and clearly thinking about something and brainstorming with the caption "Me scientifically selecting the racist friends that I can send the racist memes to."			205K + 1055 comments (15/12 10:25)
19-Nov	07:31	Dark Humour	Meme	White Supremacy	Non-Whites	A series of 3 photos: "Bro what if it doesn't work out?" "But bro" "We're white"			209K + 2790 comments (15/12 10:28)
19-Nov	07:39	Overt Racism	Hate Speech	White Supremacy	Non-Whites	A series of 6 photos: 1: Shows a screenshot from an interview saying "BLM leader: Whites are subhuman 'genetic defects'"; 2: Shows a picture of what seems to be a drawing of an ancient Roman city with the caption "romans over 2000 years ago"; 3: Similar but this time with Greece; 4: Shows a black kid sitting in front of a hat with the caption "Africa an hour ago"; 5: Shows a picture of 2020 Mass shooters (Most of them seem to have darker skin) with the caption: "whites are subhuman"; 6: is the same; the sound used is a remixed version of a Hitler speech			411.8K + 15.3k comments (15/12 11:31)
19-Nov	11:34	Anti-Racism	Awareness	Microaggression	Black People	A video from a black girl says "POV: Your woke white friend, when someone calls me coloured" The black girl then imitates a girl screaming "You don't say that! NO! Are you insane?"			6962 + 126 comments (15/12 11:41)
20-Nov	08:30	Overt Racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Refugees	A series of 2 images: The first one says, "Why are violence and (g)rapes going up in Europe?"; 2: Shows a picture of a lifeboat full of migrants with the caption "It might seem crazy what I'm about to say."			85.2K + 3075 comments (15/12 11:45)
21-Nov	11:32	Deleted video							
22-Nov	08:32	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A series of 3 images: 1: Shows the actor Ryan Gosling who seems to be sad/devastated with the caption "When she's blonde"; 2: Again a sad picture of Ryan Gosling with the caption "When she's brunette"; 3: A more happier and content Ryan Gosling with the caption "When she laughs at all my most racist and homophobic jokes known to mankind"			260K + 2134 comments (15/12 11:54)

22-Nov	11:01	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		The video shows a scene of the movie Ratatouille, where a cook reads a letter and is in complete shock. The captions says "My teacher reading my essay on how to solve over-population and world hunger"; the sound used is a Hitler speech			284.6K + 1581 comments (15/12 12:18)
22-Nov	14:19	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A video showing random scenes of a guy's life with the caption: Men only have 2 moods followed by one caption saying "Spend time w/ girlfriend" and the other "racism"			19K + 126 comments (15/12 12:42)
22-Nov	14:34	Deleted video							
22-Nov	19:03	Deleted video							
23-Nov	11:38	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	The image shows a big modern harvester that is harvesting cotton with the caption "Super Ultra Nigger 9000"			584.5K + 9444 comments (15/12 12:45)
23-Nov	21:27	Dark Humour	Meme	Symbolic Racism		A series of images depicting SpongeBob as Hitler with the sound from "Epic Rap Battles of History"			1.3M + 8012 comments (15/12 13:04)
23-Nov	21:27	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy	Non-Whites	A German guy posting pictures of himself and saying that a German guy needs a German woman			19.9K + 1612 comments (15/12 13:06)
24-Nov	07:56	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows a scene from the movie Imperium, where Daniel Radcliffe plays an undercover Neo-Nazi. In this scene during a neo-Nazi demonstration a black guy asks the protagonist what he is doing and the protagonist (Daniel Radcliffe) answers with "shut the fuck up nigger"; The caption says "Your line was 'back off sir'"			1.8M + 11.5k comments (15/12 13:11)
25-Nov	16:56	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy	Non-Whites	The images are used as propaganda that European/American people are more beautiful than black people. The last image says "Race is a social construct."			88K + 2536 comments (15/12 13:14)
25-Nov	20:38	Anti-Racism	Awareness			The user explains the disturbing origin of a painting that shows a black woman surrounded by 3 white men. The origin is that one of the guys was a famous gynaecologist from 1845 who used black women as specimen for his experiments on the pain of gynaecology			202.2K + 3041 comments (15/12 13:21)

26-Nov	16:23	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy	Non-Whites	A series of 2 pictures: 1: A side by side portrait of a white and a black woman with the caption "We are the same"; 2: Shows a concerned and rather angry expression of a character from "The boys" with the caption "My honest reaction." The video description says "You are NOT the same."			54.6K + 2052 comments (15/12 13:24)
26-Nov	18:26	Dark Humour	Other	Microaggression	Black People	The video shows a supermarket during Christmas. A person films the chocolate Santa's by Kinder who are ready to take. The camera then zooms to the side to a darker version of Santas who are behind plastic			1.5M + 14.5K comments (15/12 13:35)
27-Nov	16:30	Deleted video							
27-Nov	20:12	Deleted video							
28-Nov	14:18	Deleted video							
29-Nov	09:41	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A series of 3 photos: 1: A guy who shows no emotion with the caption "being her first kiss"; 2: Same picture with the caption "being her first boyfriend"; 3: This picture shows the same guy now happy and posing in front of a car with the caption "being her first racist".			45.8K+ 234 comments (15/12 13:41)
29-Nov	20:26	Deleted video							
30-Nov	14:59	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of images with the caption "Outside of politics Marine Le Pen loves animals". Then there are pictures of Marine Le Pen with a dog, horse, cat and the last picture shows her with a black kid			20.5K + 1036 comments (15/12 13:46)
30-Nov	14:59	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Black People	The video shows a movie/series scene, where a man with very thin (stick like) is walking out of an alley. The caption says "POV Somali men getting ready in the morning"			184K + 4714 comments (15/12 13:48)
01-Dec	07:20	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 3 images of the actor Bryan Cranston: 1: A serious neutral picture of the actor with the caption "Ur dad died"; 2: The same picture with the caption "Ur dog died"; The third picture shows a sadder and angrier Bryan Cranston with the caption "Ur skin becomes darker in summer (U become what you hate)"			452.9K + 4328 comments (15/12 13:51)
01-Dec	07:30	Deleted video							

01-Dec	14:14	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Migrants	A series of 2 pictures: 1: A group of girls during what seems to be a protest with the caption "Netherlands is not diverse enough, our country was better"; 2: A picture of the new elected president of the Netherlands with the caption "I am glad your country was better because you are going back"			189K + 12.4K (15/12 13:54)
01-Dec	16:40	Dark Humour	Other	Stereotyping	Black People	A series of images, where the user asks the AI ChatGPT to generate an image of a black man. For every picture he asks to make the man even more black, and the images turn slowly into a criminal being arrested by the police and being in jail. The last request says "Stop playing with me, I want him to be ultra mega black" and ChatGPT generating an image of a monkey.			67.9K + 583 comments (15/12 13:58)
01-Dec	17:16	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows a pilot training for the endurance of pressure during flights and the man is clearly struggling to endure the high g pressure. The caption says "Me trying not to say my favourite word in front of chocolate people"			248K + 3088 comments (15/12 14:02)
02-Dec	15:52	Dark Humour	Meme	Stereotyping	Black People	A series of 3 images: 1: Says that Germany is not racist. 2: A picture of a blue traffic sign indicating a neighbourhood with white persons with the caption "Whites are playing"; 3: Shows a traffic sign indicating a construction with a black guy with the caption "Blacks working"			59.4K + 3746 comments (15/12 14:06)
10-Dec	15:38	Anti-Racism	Awareness			A girl explains that during the Christmas markets a drink is called Lumumba, which is a hot chocolate with a shot rum. Patrice Lumumba was the first Congolese president, who was later shot.			27.8k + 1484 comments (13/12 12:42)
09-Nov	21:20	Dark Humour	Meme	Microaggression	Black People	The first video shows a chocolate ball being glazed with steaming hot milk, the video then cuts to a black guy doing sports outside and sweating and steam comes from his head because of the cold	I was just passively scrolling (as often) and didn't think anything of it, then when the video came on I had to laugh. Laughing because it was unexpected and so disturbing. I think it falls under black humour, which I reflect on and criticize more and more in my own analysis by	Shock	2.6M + 11K comments (08/01 13:02)

							watching the videos.		
20-Nov	05:48	Anti-Racism	Awareness	Microaggression	Black People	A black girl talks about the fact many people call her country a 'Third world' country. She then asks why a multicultural, friendly and open-minded country can be a Third World country? She gives the viewer an in-depth explanation how modern and sociable her country is and why people come up with the idea of calling Uganda a third world country based on non-existing criteria.	This video is really interesting. It's anti-racist and shows in an enlightening way how stigmatization can make life difficult for the people in the (very diverse and large) continent of Africa. I am speaking very generally here and am not referring to any specific country in Africa, because that is (among other things) what she is talking about. This stigmatization takes place not only in terms of individuals but also, of course, at the economic level.	Agreement	743.7K + 15K comments (08/01 13:09)
21-Nov	06:01	Anti-Racism	Awareness	Microaggression	Black People	A black girl posted a video where she makes a concerning face with the caption "When I see a white girl with box braids". This series of images is about the comments under that post and should show the reactions to the girls' opinion, with some strongly disagreeing.	Cultural appropriation is a topic that is not addressed enough in my opinion. Every time I see a non-bpoc person with braids, I feel a strong sense of unease. I wonder what goes through their head. There is a lack of education, not only in school but also in everyday life, in advertisements, in all kinds of representations. Hair is interwoven into socio-cultural structures and if you decide to "copy" a hairstyle that is actually meaningful, you/we as a part of that society have to question it critically and must be addressed.	Agreement	92 + 34 comments (08/01 13:26)
26-Nov	14:09	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows a cat looking at a black dog for a while after attacking the dog with the caption "bro identified the skin colour first"			1.3M + 7.188 comments (03/01 13:00)

29-Nov	20:44	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A series of 3 images: 1: Shows the actor Ryan Gosling who seems to be sad/devastated with the caption "When she's blonde"; 2: Again a sad picture of Ryan Gosling with the caption "When she's brunette"; 3: A more happier and content Ryan Gosling with the caption "When she laughs at all my most racist and homophobic jokes known to mankind"			356.2K + 3.580 comments (08/01 13:28)
02-Dec	15:52	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 3 images: 1: Shows a message from "mom" saying "Start making your Christmas list"; 2: "Ok"; 3: Shows a note saying Christmas list followed by "Her" and then almost unreadable at the end "Burn all niggers"			497K + 9390 comments (02/01 12:50)
02-Dec	16:22	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A series of 3 images: 1: Shows a message from "mom" saying "Start making your Christmas list"; 2: "Ok"; 3: Shows a note saying Christmas list followed by "Her" and then "Bring back slavery"; 9/11 Part 2; Make all Asians disappear; Burn all charities; Explode children's hospitals; Hang every feminist			545.4K + 12.1k comments (02/01 12:53)
02-Dec	16:22	Overt Racism	Overt racism	Symbolic Racism	Black People	The video shows some students in a bus and one kid (seems to be white) has an app that simulates a whip and waves his phone in front of a black kid which results in the phone making whip noises. The caption says "Straight to hell"	Very bad, already during childhood racism is taught and practiced in detriment to others,probably very traumatic	Shock	144.6K + 765 comments (02/01 12:56)
02-Dec	17:03	Dark Humour	Skit	White Supremacy		The video shows a girl playing Cards Against Humanity with her cat. The question asked is "What will end racism once and for all?", the cat chooses the card/answer "Restoring Germany to its former glory."			1.2M + 11.7K comments (02/01 12:58)
03-Dec	10:24	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 2 images: Shows a shovel with the caption "Digger bucket"; 2: Shows a black kid holding a watermelon in a KFC bucket. (Implies the rhyme "Nigger bucket")			1.7M + 17.7K comments (02/01 13:01)
03-Dec	12:31	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A series of images: 1: Actor Brad Pitt looking concerned with the caption "she is blonde"; 2: Again, Brad Pitt but this time smoking and not a good picture of him with the caption "she is brunet"; 3: Again a picture of Brad Pitt but when he was younger and in a suit with the caption "she is racist".			217.8K + 1.317 comments (02/01 13:04)

03-Dec	12:31	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 2 images: 1: Says "What's most unattractive thing about a girl"; 2: Shows a black car with the caption "Being same colour as my car"			100.7K + comments disabled (02/01 13:06)
03-Dec	15:16	Deleted video							
03-Dec	18:19	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 3 images: 1: Shows a message from "mom" saying "Start making your Christmas list"; 2: "Ok"; 3: Shows a note saying Christmas list followed by "Her" and then almost unreadable at the end "Kill all niggers"			380.7K + 11.4 comments (02/01 13:09)
03-Dec	18:32	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy	Refugees	A series of 2 images: 1: Shows a boat full of refugees with the caption "They all want to live in Europe but ..."; 2: Shows a map of Colonial Africa with the caption "they didn't like when we brought Europe to them"			109.7K + 363 comments (02/01 13:12)
03-Dec	19:39	Deleted video							
04-Dec	10:24	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Non-Whites	A series of 3 images of the actor Bryan Cranston: 1: A serious neutral picture of the actor with the caption "Ur mom died"; 2: The same picture with the caption "Ur sister died"; The third picture shows a sadder and angrier Bryan Cranston with the caption "Ur skin becomes darker in summer (I became what I hate)"			688.4K + 6.769 comments (02/01 13:14)
04-Dec	10:24	Deleted video							
04-Dec	10:41	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 3 images: 1: Shows a field with the caption "Send"; 2: Again, shows a field with the caption "This"; Shows a black guy holding cotton in his hands with the caption "to your favourite collecting machine"			405.3K + 15.1K comments (02/01 13:17)
04-Dec	10:41	Dark Humour	Other	Microaggression	Black People	A black guy is talking with his Asian maid and asks her what her last name is. She answers with "Supannikar" (a common Asian name), the black guy is shocked and yells "Super Nigger????"			1.6M + 7.636 comments (03/01 10:17)
04-Dec	14:44	Deleted video							
04-Dec	15:00	Deleted video							

04-Dec	17:44	Overt Racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 2 images: 1: A group of black children smiling for a picture with the caption "Where is my house?"; 2: A picture of a white politician with the caption "Not in Europe"			19K + 511 comments (03/01 10:21)
04-Dec	17:44	Deleted video							
05-Dec	07:33	Overt Racism	Hate Speech	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 2 images: 1: Says "And they say romance is dead..."; A white guy asking a girl to prom with the following sign: "If I was black I'd be picking cotton, but I'm white so picking you!Prom?"	Rednecks, typical American, they are basically still in slavery time in the South	Shock	70.1K + 5.403 comments (03/01 10:25)
05-Dec	09:50	Anti-Racism	Awareness	Microaggression		A girl explains that during the Christmas markets a drink is called Lumumba, which is a hot chocolate with a shot rum. Patrice Lumumba was the first Congolese president, who was later shot. She explains in detail, who Lumumba was and how he died. In recent events, a lot of politicians and social media influencers call for a change of the beverage. The creator of the video also explains the duality of comments on this issue: On one hand people agree and say that it is racist and we need a change, while other complain that we have always called it like that and there shouldn't be a change.	I like this, everything gets modernized and more tolerant and such things also have to adapt	Agreement	7.143 + 422 comments (03/01 10:32)
05-Dec	15:58	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 3 images: 1: Shows a message from "mom" saying "Start making your Christmas list"; 2: "Ok mommy"; 3: Shows a note saying Christmas list followed by "Vbucks and ps5" and then almost unreadable at the end "9 year old nigger sex slave"			303.2K + 8.925 comments (03/01 10:35)
05-Dec	17:07	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	A series of 2 images: 1: A picture of Thadeus from SpongeBob with Heart emojis in his eyes and the caption ">>>"; 2: A picture from a Fortnite squad with 4 black skins; the sound used just screams "Niggers"			324.8K + 3.284 comments (03/01 10:37)
06-Dec	07:34	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy		A series of 3 images: 1: A selfie from a girl with the caption "Remember"; 2: A picture of what seems to be a Bosnian cultural event with the caption "never break"; 3: A picture of a family tree, where every individual has Bosnian as a nationality with the caption "The rule."	I know a lot of people from the Balkan States that actually say that and pursue it, scary, pure race blood doesn't exist for people	Shock	18.9K + 646 comments (03/01 10:41)

06-Dec	17:05	Deleted video							
06-Dec	05:59	Deleted video							
07-Dec	13:23	Deleted video							
07-Dec	18:01	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		A series of 2 images: 1: A picture of an Asian guy at a restaurant with the caption "Your standards are so high"; 2: Says "She's racist".			184K + 2.051 comments (03/01 10:46)
07-Dec	19:51	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy	Black People	A series of 2 images: 1: A picture of guy with the caption in French saying "Your standards are so high"; 2: Says "Not a black girl"	I have already heard this often in real life -> Racism or preference?	Agreement?	82.3K + 7.848 comments (03/01 10:48)
08-Dec	15:39	Deleted video							
09-Dec	15:28	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy	African People	A series of 2 images: 1: A picture of a hut in a desert like environment with the caption "Africa, 2023"; 2: A picture of an ancient Greek building with the caption "Greeks, 400 BC"			29.5K + 1.054 comments (03/01 10:52)
09-Dec	18:27	Deleted video							
09-Dec	18:34	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy	African People	A series of 2 pictures: 1: A map showing the average skin colour, where Africa stands out; 2: A map showing average IQ where again Africa stands out.	Africa has in reality a worse educational level, because governmentally not everything works, also because of the colonization, one has to ask oneself "why is that" and question statistics like these (if that map is actually accurate)	Disagreement	6.526 + 1.477 comments (03/01 10:55)
09-Dec	20:46	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech		The video shows a French singer who sings the Lyrics "Not me, Definitely not me", the caption says "My friend: I am trying to start to make less racist jokes"			130.4K + 495 comments (03/01 10:57)
09-Dec	15:44	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows the game Fortnite and more specifically a scene, where the character Peter Griffin is killed. The caption says "Peter Griffin has a rare alternate voice when you kill him"; the voice in question says "Oh I hate nig-" and then cuts off			1.1M + 5.834 comments (03/01 13:03)
11-Dec	19:29	Anti- 'Wokeness'	Anti- 'Wokeness'	Microaggression	Black People	A black woman reacts to another black woman who explains that saying "good morning" has a racist background as during slavery white people used to say good "mourning" to dead black slaves. The girl that			614K + 15K comments (03/01 12:54)

						reacts is just laughing and shaking her head			
11-Dec	22:39	Dark Humour	Meme	Microaggression	Black People	A French girl is doing a dance and added the caption "My physics professor after having confused two students just because they are black	Seems to be a world-wide phenomena, for example for asians europeans also look the same	Agreement	275.4K + 1.536 comments (03/01 12:57)
11-Dec	22:55	Anti-Racism	Awareness	Microaggression	Black People	A girl explains that during the Christmas markets a drink is called Lumumba, which is a hot chocolate with a shot rum. Patrice Lumumba was the first Congolese president, who was later shot.			32.3K + 1.593 comments (08/01 13:32)
12-Dec	07:53	Anti-'Wokeness'	Anti-'Wokeness'	Microaggression	African People	A French black guy reacts to a black girl who is upset by in her eyes culturally inappropriate decoration in a white persons home (A lot of statues from African animals or decoration originating from Africa), the guy is upset, because he sees nothing wrong with it, if people are happy with that decoration then where is the problem, he says he supports the "fight" but there is a limit to everything			187.1K + 4.703 comments (04/01 12:45)
12-Dec	07:53	Anti-Racism	Awareness			This is the video that the other guy referred to. The girl is upset that a white household possesses a lot of "African" decoration, she says that this isn't normal and that people always see Africa as a whole and not the separate countries, "if you don't see the problem, then you are the problem"	I find it exaggerated, decoration is for me an appreciation, she is looking for things to be upset about	Disagreement	7.516 + 8.330 comments (04/01 12:52)
12-Dec	08:22	Dark Humour	Skit	Self-Deprecating Humour	Black People	A white French guy is doing an interview with two black people and asks them if he can tell them racist jokes. He tells them the jokes and both black people are laughing and find the jokes funny	Good that they can laugh over dark humour, but it would have been understandable if they were upset	Funny	866.7K + 5.495 comments (04/01 12:55)
12-Dec	11:33	Dark Humour	Meme	Hate Speech	Black People	The video shows a scene from the series "Breaking Bad", where the protagonist Walter White approaches a car with a black sitting in it (the context is complex). He pulls down the window and calls the police saying that there is a man watching his house and that he feels in danger. The caption says "Grandparents when they see a black man minding his own business:"	funny, but it is true, old people are more racist than young ones	Funny	252.K + 1.332 comments (04/01 12:58)

12-Dec	23:17	Anti-Racism	Personal Experience	Hate Speech	Black People	A Swiss/Benin anaesthetist talks about his experience as a doctor in Switzerland. He is originally from Benin, where he met his Swiss wife in a hospital and they moved to Switzerland, where he pursued further education. He struggles being black in Switzerland as a lot of people are suspicious of him and his supervisor stole opium in his name and tried to get him in jail. When she was caught, she said: "You black people are all drug dealers, so it wouldn't have mattered if you would have been caught in place"	Very shocking, not normal, especially when it comes from colleagues that are 'educated', they should know better	Shock	11.8K + 309 comments (04/01 13:06)
12-Dec	06:38	Overt Racism	White Supremacy	White Supremacy	African People	A series of 3 images: 1: Shows a boat full of refugees with the caption "So they all want to come to Europe?"; 2: "But"; 3: Shows a map of Colonial Africa with the caption "they didn't like when we brought Europe to them?"	What the fuck, this isn't the same; idiots annoy me	Disagreement	478K + 18.5K comments (03/01 13:05)
14-Dec	17:33	Anti-Racism	Personal Experience	Microaggression	Asian People	The girl shows her experience as an Asian in South Africa. We see a random guy on the street imitating the "squinty eyes" and she explains that this happens very often.			2.6M + 43.4K comments (08/01 13:35)
16-Dec	00:16	Deleted video							
18-Dec	08:43	Anti-Racism	Awareness	Hate Speech	Migrants	A German girl shares her experience she encountered in the first class in an ICE train. There was a white man in a suit and nearby there was a family speaking in a foreign language. The man told the family that they can't sit in the first class. Confused the family just mined their own business. He then confronted them again but this time the creator of the video intervened and said that they probably have a ticket, but the man said he won't believe that. The girl discussed with the man, and he said that someone that doesn't speak German won't understand the system. They continue to discuss, and the girl wanted to raise awareness for racism.			620 + 234 comments (03/01 13:08)