

## PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

### **Fraud and Plagiarism**

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism



Universiteit Utrecht

entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.

Name: Jet de Ligny

Student number: 6352510

Date and signature: 21/06/2021

*jetdeligny*

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.

# Capturing Menstrual Diversity

*Framing menstrual activism by US-based Black-led menstrual activist organizations and businesses on Instagram*

Jet de Ligny – 6352510

Thesis supervisor – Claudia Minchilli

Utrecht University – year 2020/2021 – block 4

BA Thesis Media and Culture – 21 June 2021

## **Abstract**

The current menstrual movement in the United States (US) is gaining ground and acknowledgement both in the academic and public sphere. However, this movement remains dominantly White and lacks racial diversity. This thesis challenges this focus on White American women and argues that it fails to acknowledge the complexity of the menstrual experience. The lack of a racially diverse representation and approach towards menstruation frames an incomplete picture of what menstruation and the related inequalities entail. The framing by Black American menstrual activists on social media platform *Instagram* shows what a different approach to menstrual inequality looks like and makes visible what the current mainstream movement is missing. By adopting theories of intersectionality and standpoint theory, the framing of menstrual activism by Black American women is examined. This thesis contributes to the growing field of inquiry to menstruation by focusing on the framing of menstrual activism through the lens of Black menstruating women.

## Acknowledgments

if there is a river  
more beautiful than this  
bright as the blood  
red edge of the moon if

there is a river  
more faithful than this  
returning each month  
to the same delta if there

is a river  
braver than this  
coming and coming in a surge  
of passion, of pain if there is

a river  
more ancient than this  
daughter of eve  
mother of cain and of abel if there is in

the universe such a river if  
there is some where water  
more powerful than this wild  
water  
pray that it flows also  
through animals  
beautiful and faithful and ancient  
and female and brave

*poem in praise of menstruation – Lucille Clifton (1936 – 2010)*

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Claudia Minchilli for her support and help throughout the writing of this thesis. Thank you for helping me clear up my endless train of thought and come to a focused, defined topic.

I would also like to thank my second thesis coordinator, Laura Candidatu, and my fellow BA thesis writers with whom I have spent the past six months discussing equally interesting topics. Despite the fact that unfortunately it all had to happen via an online environment, I am grateful that I had the opportunity to meet and support each other *digitally*.

Finally, I want to thank my lovely family and friends for their endless attention to all my *bloody* stories, their encouragement, and patience.

**Table of Contents**

**Abstract.....i**

**Acknowledgments .....ii**

**Introduction .....1**

**Going Back to the Roots.....3**

*Menstrual activism* ..... 3

*Intersectionality, Black Feminism & The Reproductive Rights Movement* ..... 6

*Social media & representation*..... 8

*Conclusion* ..... 9

**Methodology.....9**

**Blending Activism .....12**

*Education*..... 12

*Period poverty*..... 14

*Black empowerment*..... 15

*Conclusion* ..... 18

**Conclusion.....18**

**Bibliography.....20**

# Capturing Menstrual Diversity

*Framing menstrual activism by US-based Black-led menstrual activist organizations and businesses on Instagram*

## Introduction

The movement against inequality through menstruation is gaining ground in the public sphere of the United States (US). According to Jennifer Weiss-Wolf (2020) ongoing issues such as period poverty<sup>1</sup> and the tampon tax<sup>2</sup> that often turn menstruation into “a source of struggle”, are getting more recognition in US policy, culture and health care (539). This is reflected in the growing number of states reforming the tampon tax and in the increasing attention to the effects of the menstrual stigma in the media. For example, news of the double removal of Rupi Kaur’s period blood stain photo on *Instagram* in 2015 quickly spread and sparked opposition (HuffPost 2015). That same year *NPR* – an American independent non-profit radio organization – and *Cosmopolitan* – an American monthly fashion and entertainment magazine – proclaimed it as “the year of the period” (NPR 2015) (Cosmopolitan 2015). This growing visibility and engagement are due to the enduring hard work of menstrual activists in the US. Work that has been carried out since the 1970s, but has not received much publicity until recently (Weiss-Wolf 2020, 539).

This growing attention to menstruation is also reflected within scholarly fields. According to Chris Bobel (2010), a key figure within the Critical Menstruation Studies, the field of menstruation studies is “burgeoning” (1). As scholars from various fields such as humanities, history, and law policy are studying menstruation, research is becoming more and more interdisciplinary and inclusive (Ibidem, 4). For example, research on the experiences of menstruation among transgender men or homeless people, have expanded the knowledge and *definition* of menstruation and the menstrual *experience* (Chrisler et al. 2016; Shailini 2020). In addition, growing research on unequal US policies that discriminate and disadvantage menstruating people, such as the tampon tax, is shifting the movement’s current focus on achieving *menstrual equity* (the affordability, accessibility and safety of menstrual products; education; and reproductive care for all people) (Weiss-Wolf 2020, 539). From this viewpoint,

---

<sup>1</sup> “Period poverty is the lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints, this can be caused by a wide range of life events that negatively impact on a girl or woman’s ability to access sanitary products to manage a most intimate and regular occurrence in her life.” (Bagness 2021)

<sup>2</sup> This tax is added to menstrual products because it is not considered as a necessity of life such as food and medicine. The tampon tax is still present in many states within the US. As the additional tax increases the overall price of menstrual products, it becomes more difficult, or impossible, for low-income women to afford them. Therefore, the accessibility of menstrual products is held back. (Weiss-Wolf 2020, 541-542).

marginalized groups are also the main focus point, as they are often the ones most affected by these discriminative policies (Ibidem, 539-540).

However, despite a growth of focus on inclusivity, both publicly and academically, there remains a lack of diversity on the basis of race. Bobel's (2010) observation that the US menstrual movement is constructed from a "white racialized consciousness" and fails to appeal Black women, still holds true today (140-141). As Margaret E. Johnson (2019) argues, Black women continue to be more affected by the menstrual stigma because "the history of state and white male control over black women's bodies through slavery provides a different dimension to oppression" (21). This is agreed on by several voices from the small number of Black menstrual activists today, who show how the ongoing focus on White women's concerns throughout the movement continues to leave out the specific position of Black women. That a specific approach is recommended, is expressed by Cece Jones-Davis, a member of the *Society of Menstrual Cycle Research*. She points out that "Black women have historically believed ourselves to be 'wrong,' ... Our experience amongst an Anglo majority has given us deep-seated issues with the ways we show up in the world. And so, it is a natural progression for us to not have healthy relationships with our bodily processes, namely menstruation" (TeenVogue 2018). Because of this continuous focus on White women's concerns and the inability to appeal to Black women, Black women are still often left behind when it comes to dealing with issues like the menstrual stigma and its consequences. Like Chelsea Vonchaz – founder of #HappyPeriod, a Black-led menstrual organization – put it: "we're the last ones that have made it to the party, so to speak. White women are well into using menstrual cups, talking about blood" (The Fold 2019).

Besides the personal and stigma aspects, the focus on White women also leaves out the fact that Black women are often the ones most affected by menstrual issues such as period poverty. Research shows that Black women make up the largest share of marginalized groups such as the homeless, incarcerated and the poor in the US (State of Homelessness 2020; Carson 2020, 1; Bleiweis, Boesch, and Gaines 2020, 2-4). However, although Weiss-Wolf (2020) emphasizes a focus on these marginalized groups on the road to menstrual equity, the abundance of Black women in all these groups is not mentioned once (539-549). Given these 'gaps' within the aims of the current US menstrual movement, a more detailed focus on the position of Black women is suggested.

Black menstrual activists such as the aforementioned VonChaz and David-Jones are currently in the process of filling those gaps and changing the White racialized discourse. This becomes especially visible on the *Instagram* accounts of such Black menstrual activist



organizations and businesses. On these accounts they publicly challenge the lack of representation and focus on Black women in the menstrual movement. As the leading accounts of US-based menstrual activist organizations and businesses continue to represent a discourse constructed from a “white racialized consciousness” on their *Instagram* accounts, the specific approach by the Black menstrual activists can be appointed even better.

Because Black women have long been absent from the mainstream menstrual movement, the way in which they frame their combat against menstrual inequality has not yet been researched much. As the field of Gender Studies has taught me, it is needed to include multiple perspectives related to an issue in order to tackle it. In addition, the field of Media Studies has taught me about the impact that social media can have on society, politics, and people. Therefore, this research aims to address how menstrual equity activism resembles from the vantage point of Black American menstruating women and how this is reflected through the social media platform *Instagram*. From these motives, I will conduct a critical discourse and media content analysis on three Black menstrual activists’ *Instagram* accounts to answer the following question: *How is the combat against menstrual inequality framed on the Instagram accounts of US-based Black-led menstrual activist organizations and businesses?*

This thesis will begin by mapping the theoretical framework in which the research will be situated. Subsequently, the methodology that has been applied is discussed. After that, the analysis on the three Instagram accounts can be found. Finally, the thesis concludes with a brief discussion of the conclusion drawn from the findings.

## **Going Back to the Roots**

### *Menstrual activism*

The recent growth in attention to menstruation in the US media, overshadows the fact that it has been a point of interest in the US women’s movement since the second feminist wave (1960s-1970s). Throughout this wave, one of the leading wings of menstrual activism was formed; *spiritual menstrual activism*. This wing hails from the women’s health movement, environmentalism and consumer activism, and is strongly influenced by feminist spiritualists. Spiritual menstrual activists celebrate gender unity (bleeding connects all women) and “work to reclaim menstruation as a healthy, spiritual, empowering, and even pleasurable experience for women.” (Bobel 2010, 66-73). They believe that menstruation is “magical, mysterious, and powerful” and gives women the opportunity to “develop a self-awareness that puts them in

charge of their bodies and their lives” (Ibidem, 68). Through meditation, rituals, and dancing they oppose against the negative image of menstruation. For example, they “reclaim their bodies” through mindful and communal dancing (Ibidem, 67). The growing interest and awareness for menstruation led to the establishment of the *Society for Menstrual Cycle Research* in 1977. This marked the beginning of scientific and political attention to the subject. For example, in the 1980s menstrual activists worked closely together with the government and corporations in the process against the *Toxic Shock Syndrome* (TSS)<sup>3</sup> (Weiss-Wolf 2020, 540).

The transition to third-wave feminism (1990s-2010s), entailed more inclusive and diverse interests towards menstruation. Around the 1990s the second leading wing of menstrual activism emerged in the US; *radical menstrual activism*. Stemming from a growing criticism on the commercial menstrual industry, radical menstrual activists challenge this industry for diseases and pollution (Bobel 2010, 99). This standpoint makes it that, in contrast to spiritual menstrual activists, radical menstrual activists do not turn to the government and corporations in the demand for change. They instead seek to reach people through the use of cultural works such as visual art, humor and performance (Bobel and Fahs 2020, 1003-1004). Their course of action is strongly inspired by Punk and anarchism and concerns the discussion of topics such as free bleeding<sup>4</sup>, menstrual health education and blogging (Ibidem, 1003). Furthermore, inspired by Judith Butler’s theory of *gender performativity*<sup>5</sup> which contested the gender binary, the perspective on gender in relation to menstruation shifted. Many menstrual activists started to use the term “menstruator” instead of “menstruating women” (Bobel 2010, 163-166). Thus, in contrast to spiritual menstrual activism, who celebrate their identity as menstruating *women*, radical menstrual activists challenge this gendered aspect of menstruation. This focus on the gender binary, inclusivity, and marginalized groups was also picked up by scholars. More research to menstrual experiences and attitudes from different perspectives was conducted. For example, Joan Chrisler and others (2016), discussed how transgender men experienced and handled menstruation (1238-1250).

Despite the growing focus on inclusivity throughout the third wave, the menstrual movement remained predominantly White (Bobel 2010, 138; Cooper, Chenoa, and Koch 2007,

---

<sup>3</sup> TSS is a severe, bacterial infection that can be deadly. In the 1980s an outbreak of TSS cases and deaths occurred in the US. This concerned women who used super-absorbent tampons, and further research confirmed the relation between the use of super-absorbent tampons and the increased risk for developing TSS. After activism and research, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) took the super-absorbent tampons out of the market (Bobel 2020 1-6).

<sup>4</sup> Refers to letting the period blood flow, by not using any menstrual products.s

<sup>5</sup> In their book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, gender theorist Judith Butler argues that gender is something one performs. According to them, the relation between sex, gender and sexuality are not naturally inherited but culturally constructed through repetitive performances. This means that people take in a role which is based on the binary and conventional notions of a gender. For example, the way a “woman” or a “man” must behave is based on the imitation and reproduction of conventional and hegemonic assumptions of a gender (Butler 2002, 175-179).

58; Hawthorne 2002; 484-485). According to Bobel (2010), this can be linked to the large amount of influence and information coming from the US environmental and women's movements and Punk. These movements that have all been "noted for their predominately white composition" (Ibidem, 138). As all women of color are hardly present in the movement, Bobel (2010) observes that the absence of Black women is, relatively speaking, discussed the most (138-140). Harper Breezer, who the author interviewed, points out that Black women remain absent because the current menstrual discourse is constructed from a "white racialized consciousness" (Ibidem, 140-141). Breezer continues by stating that "this particular hegemonic consciousness produces a menstrual activist discourse that may not attract women who live daily with racism and classism" (Ibidem, 141). She emphasizes that changing the *approach* and *main message* is essential in order to appeal a diverse set of women (Ibidem, 142). Due to the lack of the ability to identify with the movement, Black menstrual activists constructed, at the time of Bobel's (2010) writing, "underground" and "off the radar" menstrual movements (142). Topics such as White privilege, racism/classism, and "decolonizing the body" were discussed, which clarifies the unique position of Black American women towards menstrual related issues (Ibidem, 143-144). Nevertheless, the amount of attention that Black women have previously drawn to their absence in various sub-movements, such as in the reproductive rights movement, cannot be compared to the small amount of attention to their absence in the menstrual movement.

Today, the movement (2010s-now) is primarily framed as the combat towards *menstrual equity*. This term refers to "the affordability, accessibility and safety of menstrual products, education and reproductive care" (Womens Voices 2020). To have menstrual equity means to have the ability to be free to decide how, when and why you want to take care of your menstrual health. Ending the menstrual stigma that has prevented policy-makers, healthcare providers, and individuals from prioritizing menstrual health, is therefore important. For example, as Weiss-Wolf (2020) points out, menstruators are extremely disadvantaged in the US because of policies such as the tampon tax (539-540). Especially people from marginalized groups, such as the poor, incarcerated and homeless are not able to access and afford menstrual products (Weiss-Wolf 2020, 539-540; Shailini 2020, 31-47). This *period poverty* entails various consequences such as truancy from school and delayed medical diagnoses, which is why it has become a major focus of the menstrual equity movement (Weiss-Wolf 2020, 541; Guidone 2020, 277; Johnson 2019; 20-21).

Research on period poverty (Weiss-Wolf 2020; Shailini 2020; Bobel and Fahs; 2020) ensures that advocacy for the reformation of discriminative policies is increasing. Menstrual

activists have returned to working closely with government and corporations to bring about such changes, as spiritual menstrual activists did in the 1980s (Bobel and Fahs 2020, 1006-1007). What has since been added, is the extensive use of social media to communicate their concerns. Platforms such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *Instagram* allow menstrual activists to reach a wide audience in the US. Furthermore, it gives marginalized people the opportunity to participate in the movement more easily. Nevertheless, despite more attention to “marginalized menstruators”, the movement remains mainly centered around White women (Bobel 2020, 5; Johnson 2019, 21).

From the historical overview illustrated above, it becomes clear that, despite greater inclusiveness towards transgender people, incarcerated, and homeless menstruators, Black American women have been relatively absent from the menstrual movement. Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality (1989) shows why it is important to include an approach from their perspective. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

### *Intersectionality, Black Feminism & The Reproductive Rights Movement*

My interest in the specific relation between Black American women and menstruation stems from Crenshaw’s (1989) theory of intersectionality. In her work, she states that Black American women should be approached through an *intersectional* lens, because they occupy a specific position in relation to social phenomena. Due to different forms of discrimination based on their race, gender, *and* class, they often experience social phenomena differently than White American women. The origins of this lie in the ingrained *power dynamics* that arose in the slavery era (Hill Collins 1989, 752-758). Throughout this era, White supremacy created a racist and inferior image of Black people. As regards to Black women specifically, they were portrayed as ‘angry’ and ‘oversexualized’ (Green 1998). These stereotypical, racist and overall negative views that originated from White supremacist discourses got rooted into people’s minds and continue to affect the way Black women are seen and treated in US society. To this present day, they face mistreatment in employment, health care, education, and law.

It is important to reiterate that the oppression comes from many different directions. Thus, from the oppression by men (patriarchy), by White people (White supremacy), and by White, biased men who often lead US policy positions (capitalism). Given this, Black American women are often affected by intersecting levels of oppression: patriarchy, White supremacy, and capitalism. This specific oppression is central to the field of *Black Feminism*. Black feminists argue against the White focus in the US women’s movement, the so-called *White*

*feminism*, and argue that Black women's intersectional *standpoint* should be included in research (Hill Collins 1989, 772-773; Roberts, Ross, and Bahati Kuumba 2005, 94-95). This approach is part of *standpoint theory*, which states that a scholar's position should be considered in order to assess their knowledge of a particular social phenomenon (Naples and Gurr 2014, 24-27). Critical notes on the exclusion of Black women from the US reproductive rights movement in the 1970s show why it is important to include one's intersectional standpoint. Furthermore, it shows why an intersectional approach is recommended for the US menstrual movement as well.

According to Dorothy Roberts (2014), the position of Black women within the reproductive rights movement cannot be separated from the racialized and oversexualized notions of the *Black female body*, which originated in the slavery era (4-6). She argues that racism has played a role in the formation of the reproductive policy and law in the US. Prather and others (2018) elaborate on this, pointing out that historical and racial issues perpetuate Black American women's unequal access to the entire US health care system (255-256). For example, forced sterilizations conducted on Black women throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, can be seen as a policy infected by racism (Newman 2018, 53-54). Another racist policy is reflected in the more recent birth-control method *long-acting reversible contraception* (LARC), which appeared to be more recommended to women of color than White women and to socioeconomically disadvantaged women than socioeconomically advantaged women (Dehlendorf et al 2010, 319-e5-319-e8). Given the above, history continues to affect Black American women differently by *body politics*<sup>6</sup> related issues than White American women (Roberts 2014, 4). Furthermore, as the examples show that *class* also plays an important role in determining a woman's relation to body politics, it is worth emphasizing that Black women are more likely to be in a low-income group than other women (Bleiweis, Boesch, and Gaines 2020, 2-4). This makes their relationship to body politics even more complex, as they are often affected by capitalist innovations, such as the aforementioned LARC method.

The example of the reproductive rights movement shows that, in order to gain a better understanding of menstrual activism and the various meanings it entails in the US, it is important to include the different contexts in which it occurs. As the treatment and image of a woman's body often depends on race, class, and gender, one needs to focus specifically on the various concerns that arise from it. How the lack of such focus can be challenged through social media will be discussed below.

---

<sup>6</sup> Refers to the practices and policies through which powers of society regulate the human body, as well as the struggle over the degree of individual and social control of the body.

## *Social media & representation*

According to Stuart Hall (1997), representation is more than solely the meaning-making of things – people, objects, events – through the use of language and images (1). He argues that things do not have a *fixed* and *natural* meaning, but how they are represented at a certain time and place *constructs* their meaning. In all of this, media and its producers play an important role (Ibidem, 45). Especially the ones who possess a lot of power are able to control meanings and how certain things are represented. Applying this to the menstrual equity movement; as the media mainly represents White women and their concerns, this creates an incomplete sense of what menstrual inequality entails. Therefore, representation of intersectional cases is extremely important in order to enlarge the knowledge about the complexity of menstrual inequality.

Because of the lack of representations and chance to speak in society and mainstream media, marginalized groups extensively turn to social media to share their experiences and increase their visibility (Charmaraman et al. 2015; Manduley et al. 2018). For example, Aida Manduley and others (2018) show how marginalized groups in the US use social media to make up for their lack of representation in the official sex education curriculum (152). As they point out, social media allows marginalized groups, such as LGBTQIA+ people, POC, and QTPOC,<sup>7</sup> to fill the “gaps of knowledge” and function as a safe space to gather and exchange information concerning sex-related topics (Ibidem, 157).

A similar technique is performed by women of color, who appear to often make use of blogging and join “affinity identity groups” to express their “marginalized voices” (Charmaraman et al. 2015, 17). Furthermore, finding “psychological empowerment and social support” are main reasons behind WOC’s extensive use of social media (Ibidem, 15-17). For example, Black women use social media to discuss topics related to social justice issues and to find like-minded people. Given this, Charmaraman and others (2015) argue for greater focus on the value of social media “to help push through change regarding norms, beliefs and stigmas” (17).

As the above shows, social media are an important resource for marginalized people to find information on health-related topics and to challenge and adapt dominant, exclusive narratives. Furthermore, it lowers the threshold for them to express their voices, find support, and empower each other. As Bobel and Fahs (2020) point out that social media is an important medium for communicating, representing, and disseminating central concerns of the menstrual

---

<sup>7</sup> The term *LGBTQIA+ people* refers to “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual, & Allies.” The acronym is often expanded to variations of LGBTQIA to inclusively represent identities which include intersex and questioning people.” *POC* to “People Of Color”; an umbrella term for anyone who is not White. *QTPOC* to “Queer and Trans People Of Color”.

movement as well, more knowledge about how these findings relate to Black menstrual activists on *Instagram* is worth exploring (962).

### *Conclusion*

Three conclusions can be drawn from the discussed research. First, that current research and media center White women and their concerns within the menstrual equity movement. Second, that Black women occupy a specific position in relation to menstruation and that this has been neglected. Third, that social media platforms play an important role in the provision of health-related topics for marginalized groups and the finding of support. Building on the current framework, more knowledge about different representations of the menstrual equity movement will provide a fuller understanding of the meaning of menstrual inequality. How such knowledge can be gained, is discussed below.

### **Methodology**

Being a menstruating woman and familiar with the barriers and problems the menstrual stigma can entail, the growing attention to menstruation and its related problems intrigues me. As this movement is barely taking place in The Netherlands, I have been following its course in the US. As a feminist researcher, I am trained to observe and approach social phenomena from a critical perspective. From that standpoint, I found that the US menstrual movement mostly centers *me*, a White, cisgender, middle-class woman. I discovered a lack of racial diversity both in the non-scholarly and scholarly field. This discovery uncovered the current *power dynamics* in the US menstrual movement. Driven by Crenshaw's theory of *intersectionality* (1989) and *Black feminist theory*, I wanted to explore a possible menstrual countermovement led by Black American women. As I do not live in the US, I was not able to explore the state of affairs on location. Therefore, I turned to social media to gather my information. I chose to limit my focus to *Instagram* because of its central aspect of visuality, its ability to communicate with its audience, and its increasing popularity (Newberry 2021). The similar aspects of *Facebook* present it as a possible additional source, but due to too much data for this research and the higher usage of *Instagram* by menstrual activists, this medium was omitted. Further research specifically targeting other social media platforms such as *Facebook* or *Twitter*, is therefore suggested.

As Heather McIntosh and Lisa Cuklanz (2014) argue, the *online space* is often used by women to address issues in “ways that other media often overlook” and enable participation, support and activism (272). Given this, an online space can have the power to shift and disrupt dominant discourses. Although the first results on *Instagram* were White-led organizations such as *@periodmovement*, a more specific search to US Black-led menstrual organizations and businesses entailed an entry into a realm of Black menstrual activism. I found content regarding menstrual activism, menstrual education, marketing, and (menstrual) politics. The given that the content is addressed from the intersectional perspective of a Black American woman plays an important role in its meaning making. Therefore, to better understand how these US Black-led menstrual activists frame the combat against menstrual inequality, a critical discourse analysis and a media content analysis was conducted on the *Instagram* accounts of three popular Black-led menstrual organizations and businesses; *@wearehappyperiod*, *@no\_moresecrets469*, and *@thehoneypotco*. It goes without saying that there are a lot more US-based Black-led menstrual activist accounts on *Instagram* that have a similar way of framing and contribute to a changing discourse. However, because of their popularity the three accounts mentioned above have been included.

To clarify the reason for this choice, a brief introduction of all three accounts will be given. *@wearehappyperiod*<sup>8</sup> concerns the *Instagram* account of #HappyPeriod, a non-profit menstrual organization that combats against period poverty. Its founder, Chelsea VonChaz, is becoming a well-known figure within the menstrual movement. She is a member of *Period Equity*, a menstrual organization founded by the aforementioned Weiss-Wolf. Given the growing visibility and presence of *@wearehappyperiod* both inside and outside *Instagram*, it was included into the research. *@no\_moresecrets469*<sup>9</sup> is the account of *No More Secrets Mind Body Spirit Inc.* This is an organization that combats period poverty and aims at decreasing menstrual stigmas and silences in the Black community. Because of their specific focus on the Black community and their extensive use of *Instagram*, and growing popularity this account was included. Finally, *@thehoneypotco*, concerns the account of menstrual product brand *The Honey Pot*. This business occupies a prominent position in the area of plant-based menstrual products. With a total of 388K followers it is the most-followed account of all the accounts included in this research. Given its wide reach and visibility in the US menstrual space, it was included.

---

<sup>8</sup> 19K followers

<sup>9</sup> 7.340 followers



For the media content analysis, the following aspects of content dating from December 2019 to March 2021 were included in collection of data; posts; captions; comments; and IGTV's<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, the visibility of their intersectional position in the content served as selective aspect. For example, an advertisement on its own was not part of the analysis, but content related to Black feminism was. This was done to shed a light on the different concerns and priorities Black-led menstrual activists embrace. The decision to solely focus on posts that are related to Black feminism might provoke criticism on the objectivity and trustworthiness of the analysis. Therefore, to illustrate how the occurrence of such representation and narrates frame a different view towards menstrual inequality, examples from the mainstream US menstrual activist account *@periodmovement* were brought forward where necessary.

Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality guides the way in which decisions were made in collecting data and conducting the analysis. The above has shown that Black American women occupy a specific position in relation to menstrual politics as a result of historical exclusion, discrimination and racism. The representations and narrations on their *Instagram* accounts are framed from a particular context and cannot be well understood and analyzed without having knowledge about the broader intersectional position of its producers. Therefore, throughout the media content analysis, examples of their *Instagram* content were alternated, analyzed and connected to the broader discourse of the US menstrual movement, the women's movement, and Black women.

As Michel Foucault (1970) points out, a discourse can be seen as a formation of ideas, attitudes, beliefs and courses of action that construct knowledges around a certain topic (129). These knowledges are often viewed as the one and only *truth*. However, as *power* plays a major role in the construction of these discourses and knowledges, it often entails the in- and exclusion of perspectives (Frost and Elichaooff 2014, 46-47). For example, as White people are often the ones in power, they are also often the ones constructing a discourse and thus knowledge. As a result, many other perspectives and experiences left out, constructing incomplete knowledge. Given this, a critical approach to discourses is important to expose biased and incomplete knowledges.

Leading this back to the current menstrual discourse in the US, the *knowledge* about menstruation, the menstrual experience, and menstrual inequality is incomplete as it has mainly been approached and framed from a White woman's perspective. Therefore, to expose the current gaps in that knowledge, a critical-discursive approach was conducted. Articles and

---

<sup>10</sup> InstagramTV; offers the possibility to record and share long videos.

interviews from the Black menstrual activists were consulted to gain more background information about their motives and views towards menstrual equity. The framing of the Black-led menstrual activists on *Instagram* was placed within this broader discourse and analyzed to show how it fills these gaps in knowledge. Having illustrated the methods, let us now focus on the analysis.

## **Blending Activism**

As Bobel (2010) has argued, Black American women discussed topics such as White privilege and the decolonization of the Black female body on “off the radar” menstrual activist platforms in the 2010s (142). Given that *Instagram* is anything but off the radar, it is interesting to explore whether and how Black menstrual activists have adapted their activism on such a visible and public platform. That the intersectional position of Black women remains central among Black American menstrual activists is well shown in a recent statement by Chelsea VonChaz, founder of #HappyPeriod and @wearehappyperiod – a Black-led menstrual activist organization – wherein she points out that “white women do not have those stressors that come from racism and the other factors stemming from these issues. Therefore, we do not bleed the same.” (Thinx, 2020).

Deriving from VonChaz’s statement, the personal standpoint of Black menstrual activists plays an important role in the content they share on *Instagram* (Hill Collins 1989, 772-773). Hence, analyzing their framing will give us a better understanding about the diversity of menstruation. The moments when their intersectional identity comes forward most prominently can be categorized into three themes; *education*, *period poverty*, and *Black empowerment*. How these themes are structured is explained below.

### *Education*

Bobel and Fahs (2020) have shown how radical menstrual activists added menstrual health education to the concerns of the movement throughout third-wave feminism (1003). They advocated for more thorough discussion of topics such as the menstrual cycle and the menstrual stigma in US schools. Menstrual activists have ever since been arguing that more knowledge about menstruation will increase its normalization and can decrease delayed medical diagnoses such as endometriosis<sup>11</sup> (Guidone 2020, 277). However, to this day menstrual health is barely

---

<sup>11</sup> A disorder in which tissue similar to the tissue that normally lines the inside of the uterus — the endometrium — grows outside the uterus.

educated in the curriculums of US health care classes (Ibidem, 277). Furthermore, regarding the US sex education curriculum in general, it often excludes races and genders other than White people and heterosexuals as well (Manduley et al. 2018, 152). Social media has allowed under-represented groups to shift these current curriculums within sex education (Ibidem, 158-159), a process which is also visible among Black menstrual activists on *Instagram*.

For example, in 2019 *@wearehappyperiod* – a Black-led menstrual activist organization – shared a series of posts about their menstrual education program *SELF*; a program specifically directed at Black women and girls. In a response to a comment, the aforementioned VonChaz writes that the specificity of the program stems from the fact that Black women and girls witness “modern colonization of black experiences, racism in education, and global menstrual equity” (*@wearehappyperiod*, December 1, 2019). She continues by stating that Black women “do not bleed the same” because of their experiences with “racism, misogynoir, white feminism, laws, and post traumatic slave syndrome” (Ibidem).

VonChaz’s comments can be aligned to Roberts (2014), who argues that racism originated in the slavery era continues to negatively affect Black women and their body (4-6). As Roberts (2014) has shown, racism against Black women, also known as *misogynoir*, has caused them to be neglected in US reproductive health policies (4-5). VonChaz’s statement that Black women do not bleed the same because of experiences and laws that are connected to misogynoir shows how this also applies to menstrual health policies. Furthermore, the mentioning of the *post traumatic slave syndrome*, reflects the lasting mistrust towards US health care among Black women because of traumatic experiences such as rape, sterilization, and sexual assaults (Prather et al. 2018, 254-255). VonChaz’s mentioning of White feminism<sup>12</sup> as one of the reasons to why Black women do not bleed the same, reflects how the movement still fails to address these “particular needs” of Black menstruating women (Roberts, Ross, and Bahati Kuumba 2005, 94-95). As pointed out in Bobel’s (2010) article, the approach from the US menstrual movement in 2010 was centered on the concerns of White women (142). VonChaz’s comment shows how this argument continues to hold true in the today’s US menstrual movement.

A similar point of critique can be found in the #BlackGirlsBleed movement created by *@no\_moresecrets469*, the account of a Black-led menstrual activist organization that provides free menstrual products to the Black community. One of the objectives of the movement is to

---

<sup>12</sup> “The label given to feminist efforts and actions that uplift White women but that exclude or otherwise fail to address issues faced by minority groups, especially women of color and LGBTQ women.” (Dictionary.com 2021).

amplify “the authentic voices of Black menstruators” as they face “systemic racism in the menstrual health space” which is “historically dominated by White perspectives” (@no\_moresecrets469, September 11, 2020). This argument is repeatedly brought up on their account, often adding to it that menstrual equity cannot be realized without racial justice (@no\_moresecrets469, October 19, 2020). As Johnson (2019) points out, *menstrual injustice* is indeed intertwined with intersectionality and that menstrual equity cannot be realized without identifying and including intersectional experiences (2-3). By expressing concerns that relate to racism and White privilege, @wearehappyperiod and @no\_moresecrets469 give voice to their intersectional identity and visualize the continuous exclusion of Black women from the menstrual movement.

Given the above, it can be argued that Black women’s menstrual activism is strongly intertwined with anti-racism activism. As the examples from @wearehappyperiod and @no\_moresecrets469 show, racism continues to disadvantage Black women both inside and outside the menstrual space. They point out how racism affects the way in which menstrual health education is constructed and conveyed. Given this, a specific educational approach that discusses the relation between menstruation and racist experiences is needed to appeal Black women and girls.

### *Period poverty*

Another main concern of the US menstrual movement is the combat against period poverty. As mentioned earlier, especially poor, homeless, and incarcerated menstruators are at risk of being affected by this problem. Therefore, it is fortunate that their difficult position is acknowledged more and more within the US (Weiss-Wolf 2020, 540). Advocacy to reform discriminative laws such as the aforementioned tampon tax, is increasingly achieving success. Furthermore, many menstrual organizations have been focusing on the provision of free menstrual products among the affected groups. Since the mainstream media has picked up on this issue, the public has gradually started to pay more attention to it as well. However, despite the increasing focus of mainstream media, scholars, and menstrual activists (Weiss-Wolf; 2020; Chrisler et al. 2016; Shailini 2020) on marginalized menstruators in the combat against period poverty, the role of race is barely discussed. For example, only four posts out of 336 posts shared by @periodmovement – the leading US menstrual organization against period poverty – over a two-year period discuss the role of race in period poverty (@periodmovement, June 24, 2020; June 27, 2020; July 2, 2020). The high percentage of Black women from low-income, homeless

and incarcerated groups shows that race should be included as an important point of attention while advocating against period poverty (Bleiweis, Boesch, and Gaines 2020, 2-4).

Several posts from @no\_moresecrets469, show how this neglect of Black women is challenged. For example, a post during *Black History Month* (BHM) reads: “#blackhistorymonth #PeriodPoverty is a Racially motivated Issue ❤️!” (@no\_moresecrets469, February 3, 2021). Furthermore, in a series of seven posts on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2021, the establishment of a *Periodt Menstrual Supply Hub*<sup>13</sup> on the University of Lincoln is promoted. The captions show that the Hub is specifically addressed towards the BIPOC community. Expressions such as “Look 🙄 at this #Blackgirlmagic” and “Black 🖤❤️💜 Students proudly posing with PADS TAMPONS LINERS and WIPES 💜💜💜💜 !!” show how the focus lies on Black women (@no\_moresecrets469, March 26, 2021).

@wearehappyperiod’s promotion of a free menstrual product vending machine in Compton, a town in the US with a large percentage of Black people, paints a similar picture. The captions address concerns such as the provision of free menstrual products to “undeserved communities”. Both the location and the use of hashtags such as #BlackGirlMagic, #BlackGirlsRock, #BlackWomensHealth, and #BlackWellness, make clear who these undeserved communities are (@wearehappyperiod, March 17, 2021). By adding these hashtags, @wearehappyperiod places its message into the bigger discourse of Black feminism and shows how social media can be used by marginalized groups to connect with and empower people from the same identity group (Charmaraman et al 2015, 15-17).

The above shows once again how Black menstrual activism is intertwined with anti-racism activism and mainly focuses on the empowerment of Black menstruators. Why the empowerment of the Black community can be considered as an aspect that distinguishes their framing of menstrual activism from the mainstream movement, will be discussed in more detail below.

### *Black empowerment*

US menstrual activism towards menstrual equity is about women empowerment; breaking the stigma; and changing discriminative laws. Evidently these objectives also apply to the concerns of Black menstrual activists. However, their activism towards menstrual equity also includes activism towards equity for Black people in the US. For example, Bea Dixon, founder of *The*

---

<sup>13</sup> A place (Hub) where menstruating students of the University of Lincoln can go when they need menstrual products / help / advice.

*Honey Pot* and @*thehoneypotco*, emphasized in a *Target* commercial that her success was so important because it means that the “next Black girl that comes up with a great idea, she could have a better opportunity” (Target 2020, 0:20-0:29). A wave of criticism followed, in which the statement was appointed as non-inclusive and racist towards White people. Dixon, in turn, argued that her statement stems from the current White supremacy within venture capital funding, a disparity that continues to disadvantage Black entrepreneurs and wealth (Breakfast Club Power 105.1 FM 2021, 3:28-6:10). According to Lynette Medley, founder of *No More Secrets: Mind Body Spirit, Inc.* and @*no\_moresecrets469*, this also applies specifically to the menstrual space. She states that it is “really a white space”, which ensured that “menstrual brands and menstrual movements have not historically uplifted Black communities or Black organizations.” (Philadelphia Magazine 2020). Medley’s statement can be connected to Bobel’s (2010) observation that the menstrual equity movement is mainly framed from a “white racialized consciousness” (140-141). To shift this White framing, Dixon and Medley’s statements make clear how their menstrual activism includes the empowerment of Black women.

The focus on Black empowerment is also reflected on their *Instagram* accounts and is mostly evident in the extensive coverage of the *Black Lives Matter* (BLM) movement and *Black History Month* (BHM). Especially after the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, all three accounts have started to focus more on Black empowerment. From then on, content that discusses the racism in the US health care system, personal stories of racism, and the promotion of Black-owned businesses has increased. For example, shortly after the killing, @*thehoneypotco* shared a series of posts that promotes Black-owned companies in several domains and an IGTV named “Solidarity Through Consciousness”. In this video, Dixon expresses her personal fear coming from the racism against Black people in the US (@*thehoneypotco*, June 3, 2020). Similar personal reflections from the 2020 BLM revival can be found on the other two accounts. For example, part of the caption of a BLM post by @*wearehappyperiod* reads:

#HappyPeriod is a safe space I created to be free of racism and shame. The point is to heal traumas that ONLY Black and Brown girls have. Racism is the root of menstrual equity. I wish to continue empowering young Black people with periods. ... I want to highlight the work of @*aapolicyforum* for their work focused on the police brutality against Black Women and Black Girls. ... The current events have triggered me, but

more importantly inspired me to proudly move forward in serving, promoting, and exuding Black Girl Magic. (@wearehappyperiod, June 4, 2020)

The posts and captions by @thehoneypotco and @wearehappyperiod show how their intersectional identity as a Black American woman plays an important role in their posting. By including the racial aspect to menstrual experiences, they challenge the focus on White experiences within the menstrual movement. Statements such as “the point is to heal traumas that ONLY Black and Brown girls have” by @wearehappyperiod, show how, as Crenshaw argues, Black women continue to occupy a specific position in the US. Similar posts that specifically empower the Black community and Black women, can be observed throughout BHM.

In February 2021, @thehoneypotco shared a series of posts named “Reclaiming Wellness” as part of the BHM. Throughout these posts, the often-overlooked position of Black women within the wellness space is put forward. Topics such as a specific focus on the construction of self-love among Black women, the role of the Black Panthers within the medical sphere, and important Black inventors or thinkers are discussed. In all of these posts the role of Black women is celebrated. For example, one post celebrates the vulva of the “Black human” and emphasizes that “it doesn’t need to be lighter” (@thehoneypotco, February 20, 2021). This post empowers Black people and criticizes the focus on light-skin in the Black community.

Given the above and to clarify the different approach by Black menstrual activists, it is important to briefly mention how mainstream menstrual activists have framed BLM and BHM. Throughout a two-month period (15 posts) after the killing of George Floyd, @periodmovement discussed the BLM movement quite extensively. However, it is worth emphasizing that three of these posts concern the discussion of racism against Black people within the organization itself (@periodmovement, June 24, June 27, July 2, 2020). Furthermore, the personal aspect which is present with the three Black-led menstrual activist accounts cannot be found on these accounts.

The examples reflect how *Instagram* is used by Black menstrual activists to empower Black people (Charmaraman et al 2015, 15-17). Furthermore, the personal aspect in their posts ensures that their intersectional position and combat against racism are given a prominent place in their menstrual activism. An aspect that cannot be found in the mainstream movement.

## *Conclusion*

The analysis shows that Black menstrual activists not only strive for menstrual liberation, they strive for racial liberation as well. Their discussion of menstrual related topics is often focused on Black women and girls and include expressions of anti-racism activism. Furthermore, they pay a lot of attention to Black movements, such as BHM and BLM. In case of both aspects, expressions of their personal, intersectional standpoint as a Black American woman can be noticed. Therefore, their combat against menstrual inequality can be seen as a combination of anti-racism activism and menstrual activism. This distinguishes Black menstrual activists' framing from the mainstream framing on and outside *Instagram*, which often lacks the attention to the consequences of racism on menstrual politics and experiences.

## **Conclusion**

This research has analyzed the framing of menstrual activism by three US-based menstrual activist organizations and businesses on the social media platform *Instagram*. This was done to explore how Black women express different concerns in the move for menstrual equity than the current White-centered mainstream movement does. Throughout this research it has been shown that the existing research and focus of the US menstrual activist movement has been relatively racially exclusive. This has resulted in knowledge about menstruation and the menstrual experience that is mainly based on White American women. Sounds stemming from Black American menstrual activists indicate that menstruation should be approached differently by race. Historical and racist matters such as slavery and forced sterilization, have ensured that Black American women have another relation to their body than White women. Because of this, their relation towards menstruation often differs as well. Given this, it was argued that the approach from a White woman's perspective fails to appeal Black women. Therefore, a specific focus on the position of Black American women towards menstruation and how they frame menstrual activism was suggested and carried out.

The analysis on the framing by US-based Black-led menstrual activist organizations and businesses on the social media platform *Instagram* has shown that different concerns were indeed brought forward. Throughout the expressions and discussions of *education*, *period poverty*, and *Black empowerment* Black menstrual activists frame their combat against menstrual inequality different than the mainstream menstrual movement. The overall attention to *racial equity* indicates that their menstrual activism is strongly intertwined with anti-racism



activism. Concerns such as racism within the US health care system, the neglect of Black women and girls in the menstrual movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement show that Black-led menstrual activists approach menstrual inequality with a strong focus on racism and White dominance, an aspect that is missing in the mainstream US menstrual movement.

The findings show that the experience of menstruation depends on the context in which it takes place. Women's relation to their bodies and thus menstruation is historically and socially constructed. Leading this back to the case of Black American menstruating women, their relation is so complex that it cannot be aligned to those of White American menstruating women. Therefore, a more specific approach to Black American women both in the scholarly as non-scholarly field is needed. Since this matter also applies to other racial minority groups, more research into the racial diversity of menstruation is recommended.

## Bibliography

- Bagness, Carmel. The Royal College of Nursing. "Period Poverty | Womens Health | Royal College of Nursing." Accessed June 14, 2021. <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/womens-health/promoting-menstrual-wellbeing/period-poverty>
- Bleiweis, Robin, Diana Boesch, and Alexandra Cawthorne Gaines. "The Basic Facts About Women in Poverty." Center for American Progress, 2020.
- Bobel, Chris. "Introduction: Menstruation as Lens – Menstruation as Opportunity." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, edited by Chris Bobel, Inga T. Winkler, Breanne Fahs, Katie Ann Hasson, Elizabeth Arveda Kissling, and Tomi-Ann Roberts. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020: 1 – 6.
- Bobel, Chris, and Breanne Fahs. "From Bloodless Respectability to Radical Menstrual Embodiment: Shifting Menstrual Politics from Private to Public." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 45, no. 4 (2020): 955 – 983.
- Bobel, Chris, and Breanne Fahs. "The Messy Politics of Menstrual Activism." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, edited by Chris Bobel, Inga T. Winkler Breanne Fahs, Katie Ann Hasson, Elizabeth Arveda Kissling, and Tomi-Ann Roberts. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020: 1001 – 1018.
- Bobel, Chris. *New Blood: Third-Wave Feminism and the Politics of Menstruation*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2010.
- Breakfast Club Power 105.1 FM. "HoneyPot Founder Beatrice Dixon Speaks On Racist Backlash From Target Commercial." March 5, 2020. Radio interview, 15:28. Accessed June 7, 2021. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3w7f\\_GHqIk&t=291s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3w7f_GHqIk&t=291s).
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Tenth Anniversary Edition*. London: Routledge, 2002. Accessed April 2, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

- Carson, E. Ann. "Prisoners in 2018." US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 253516 (April 2020): 2.
- Chrisler, Joan C., Jennifer A. Gorman, Jen Manion, Michael Murgo, Angela Barney, Alexis Adams-Clark, Jessica R. Newton, and Meaghan McGrath. "Queer Periods: Attitudes toward and Experiences with Menstruation in the Masculine of Centre and Transgender Community." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 18, no. 11 (2016): 1238 – 1250.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14, no. 4 (1989): 745 – 773.
- Cooper, Spring Chenoa, and Patricia Barthalow Koch. "'Nobody told me Nothin': Communication about Menstruation among Low-Income African American Women." *Women & Health* 46.1 (2007): 57 – 78.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *u. Chi. Legal f.* (1989).
- Dehlendorf, Christine, Rachel Ruskin, Kevin Grumbach, Eric Vittinghoff, Kirsten Bibbins Domingo, Dean Schillinger, and Jody Steinauer. "Recommendations for Intrauterine Contraception: a Randomized Trial of the Effects of Patients' Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status." *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 203, no. 4 (2010): 319-e1 – 319-e8.
- Dictionary.com. "What Does White Feminism Mean?" Accessed June 18, 2021. <https://www.dictionary.com/e/gender-sexuality/white-feminism/>.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (A.M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Pantheon Books, 1970.
- Frost, Nollaig, and Frauke Elichao. "Feminist Postmodernism, Poststructuralism, and Critical Theory." In *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer* edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014. 42 – 72.

- Green, Laura. "Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitudes Toward African Americans - Scholarly Essays - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University." Accessed June 1, 2021. <https://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/jimcrow/links/essays/vcu.htm>.
- Guidone, Heather C. "The Womb Wanders Not: Enhancing Endometriosis Education in a Culture of Menstrual Misinformation." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, Chris Bobel, Inga T. Winkler, Breanne Fahs, Katie Ann Hasson, Elizabeth Arveda Kissling, and Tomi-Ann Roberts. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020: 269 – 286.
- Hall, Stuart. "The Work of Representation," *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc; Open University Press, 1997: 13 – 74.
- Hawthorne, Dorothy J. "Symbols of Menarche Identified by African American females." *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 24.5, 2002: 484 – 501.
- Johnson, Margaret E. "Menstrual Justice." *UC Davis Law Review* 53, no. 1 (November 2019): 1 – 80.
- Larson, Andrea. "Meet Chelsea VonChaz, The Powerhouse Behind The #HappyPeriod Revolution." *The Fold*. Accessed June 3, 2021. <https://thefoldmag.com/wellness/meet-chelsea-vonchaz-the-powerhouse-behind-the-happyperiod-revolution>.
- Maltby, Anna. "The 8 Greatest Menstrual Moments of 2015." *Cosmopolitan*, October 13, 2015. <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/health-fitness/news/a47609/2015-the-year-the-period-went-public/>.
- Manduley, Aida E., Andrea Mertens, Iradele Plante, and Anjum Sultana. "The Role of Social Media in Sex Education: Dispatches from Queer, Trans, and Racialized Communities." *Feminism & Psychology* 28, no. 1 (2018): 152 – 170.

McIntosh, Heather, and Lisa M. Cuklanz. "Feminist Media Research." In *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014. 264 – 295.

Meadows-Fernandez, A. Rochaun. "I Started Using a Menstrual Cup and the Women in My Life Were Horrified." *Teen Vogue*. Accessed June 3, 2021. <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/period-taboo-and-menstrual-cups-in-the-black-community>.

Naples, Nancy A., and Barbara Gurr. "Feminist Empiricism and Standpoint Theory." In *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014. 14 – 41.

Newman, Carla M. "Essay: Bartering from the Bench: A Tennessee Judge Prevents Reproduction of Social Undesirables; Historic Analysis of Involuntary Sterilization of African American Women," *Geo. JL & Mod. Critical Race Persp.* 10 (2018): 53 – 62.

No\_moresecrets469. "#BlackGirlsBleed 🗳️💔🩸 Join the Movement 🗳️🗳️❤️." *Instagram*, September 11, 2020. Accessed June 3, 2021. [https://www.instagram.com/p/CE\\_w2v4Dwss/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CE_w2v4Dwss/)

No\_moresecrets469. "#blackhistorymonth #PeriodPoverty is a Racially motivated Issue 🗳️❤️!" *Instagram*, February 3, 2021. Accessed June 5, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CK1gccpj3Tp/>

No\_moresecrets469. "#History #WomensHistoryMonth #womensupportingwomen I'm in tears 😭 right now .. God is so good 😊." *Instagram*, March 26, 2021. Accessed June 5, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CM5E70nDpqz/>

No\_moresecrets469. "Menstrual justice without social justice is impossible!" *Instagram*, October 19, 2020. Accessed June 3, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CGhxXWHD3Gb/>

NPR.org. “Why 2015 Was The Year Of The Period, And We Don’t Mean Punctuation.” Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/12/31/460726461/why-2015-was-the-year-of-the-period-and-we-dont-mean-punctuation>.

Periodmovement. “A word from PERIOD.” *Instagram*, June 27, 2020. Accessed June 14, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CB67fdNJfTs/>

Periodmovement. “Action taken today by PERIOD’s Board of Directors. The Board has terminated PERIOD’s contract with Nadya Okamoto.” *Instagram*, July 2, 2020. Accessed June 14, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CCJieKwgiH9/>

Periodmovement. “We are incredibly grateful and humbled to be in this moment with you, doing this work.” *Instagram*, June 24, 2020. Accessed June 14, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CB1GAKOpSXo/>

Philadelphia Magazine. “Not Everyone in Philly Has Access to Pads and Tampons. That’s a Problem.” July 29, 2020. <https://www.phillymag.com/be-well-philly/2020/07/29/period-poverty/>.

Prather, Cynthia, Taleria R. Fuller, William L. Jeffries IV, Khiya J. Marshall, A. Vyann Howell, Angela Belyue-Umole, and Winifred King. “Racism, African American Women, and their Sexual and Reproductive Health: A Review of Historical and Contemporary Evidence and Implications for Health Equity.” *Health Equity* 2, no. 1 (2018): 249 – 259.

Rao, Mallika. “About That Period Photo That Broke The Internet | HuffPost.” Accessed June 7, 2021. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/rupi-kaur-instagram-period-photo-series\\_n\\_7213662](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/rupi-kaur-instagram-period-photo-series_n_7213662).

Roberts, Dorothy. “Introduction.” in *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Vintage, 2014.

Roberts, Lynn, Loretta Ross, and M. Bahati Kuumba. “The Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights of Women of Color: Still Building a Movement.” *NWSA Journal* 17, no. 1 (2005): 93 – 98.

Target. “Bea Dixon of The Honey Pot | Black Beyond Measure.” February 4, 2020. Commercial, 0:29. Accessed June 7, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23kUpB79cQk>.

Thehoneypotco. “The Honey Pot Meditation: Solidarity Through Consciousness 🖤👊🏾👊🏽👊🏼👊🏻👊🏺.” *Instagram*, June 3, 2020. Accessed June 10, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CA-nKqDDKK3/>.

Thehoneypotco. “Dear Black human, your vulva is beautiful.” *Instagram*, February 20, 2021. Accessed June 10, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CLhM36Pjs32/>

Thinx | Thinx (BTWN) | Speax. “Meet Chelsea VonChaz, The Woman Behind #HappyPeriod.” Accessed May 19, 2021. <https://www.shethinx.com/blogs/thinx-piece/meet-chelsea-vonchaz-hashtag-happy-period>.

Vora, Shailini. “The Realities of Period Poverty: How Homelessness Shapes Women’s Lived Experiences of Menstruation.” In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, edited by Chris Bobel, Inga T. Winkler, Breanne Fahs, Katie Ann Hasson, Elizabeth Arveda Kissling, and Tomi-Ann Roberts. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020: 31 – 47.

Weiss-Wolf, Jennifer. “US Policymaking to address Menstruation: Advancing an Equity Agenda.” In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, edited by Chris Bobel, Inga T. Winkler, Breanne Fahs, Katie Ann Hasson, Elizabeth Arveda Kissling, and Tomi-Ann Roberts. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020: 539 – 549.

Wearehappyperiod. “HappyPeriod for SELF is our new youth-centric curriculum focused on period health and self-efficacy, empowering Black & Brown 9-13 year olds. Our official fundraiser has launched, use the link in the bio to support! ✨.” *Instagram*, December 1, 2019. Accessed June 5, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/B5i1ntQBhR/>

Wearehappyperiod. “Founder’s Message.” *Instagram*, June 4, 2020. Accessed June 10, 2021. [https://www.instagram.com/p/CA\\_tAbgJIU3/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CA_tAbgJIU3/)

Wearehappyperiod. ““Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom”- Marcel Proust. 🙏.” *Instagram*, March 17 2021. Accessed June 13, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CMhwduZI7ms/>.

Women’s Voices for the Earth. “What Does Menstrual Equity Mean to You?” Accessed May 5, 2021. <http://www.womensvoices.org/what-does-menstrual-equity-mean-to-you/>.