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## Ethnic Conflict's Effect on Internet and Black Male Feminism

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# ETHNIC CONFLICT'S EFFECT ON INTERNET

Ethnic Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa

How the Internet Has Been Affected

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## ABSTRACT

Within the study of democratic institutions worldwide there exists the need to study factors within states, countries, and or territories that elicit or hinder democracy. Among these are the relationships that exist between ethnic cultures that interact within the same governmental structure and the roles they play within that institution. Throughout the African continent, there are many governmental structures that support hundreds of tribes holding various sociocultural differences. These differences have led to ethnic conflicts throughout African history and even escalated to civil war which pose social, political and economic detriments to the nation involved. In recent years the internet has increasingly become a tool by central governments to stifle separatist thought that either preaches against national identity or general opinion dissenting from those of the majority. Through a comparative analysis of fixed broadband and mobile cellular subscriptions rates of countries in Africa experiencing ethnic conflicts leading to internet shutdowns, we wish to determine whether ethnic conflict have the potential to cause lasting impacts on how people use the internet services. We hypothesize that internet shutdowns have created a change of some sort in how people use internet. Through our analysis, however, we found there to be no significant differences in the rate of fixed broadband subscriptions and mobile cellular subscriptions before and after internet shutdowns. While government repression during civil wars bring economic and social costs, the demand for internet access is not abated by potential disruptions in its availability.

### **Introduction**

Since the European's colonial exodus in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Africa, many nations across the continent have experienced ethnic conflict that has had detrimental impacts on the social, political, and economic institutions of each state. Whether it has been through genocide, massacres, or full-scale civil war, the terrors ethnic conflict can pose are boundless and we find it pivotal that we understand any dangers that may stem from ethnic conflict. In recent years the internet has been increasingly used by central governments to stifle anti-government and separatist speech. Internet shutdowns have occurred in almost 20 countries like Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, and Zimbabwe (Access Now, 2020). These internet shutdowns have costed African countries billions of dollars. Even more worrying is the possibility that internet shutdowns can aggravate conflict subsequently resulting in more damagers. We can find this linkage within the 230-day internet shutdown that Cameroon's central government ordered in 2017 and 2018 to combat the ever-growing threat of the Anglophone crisis.

Though tensions between Anglophones and Francophones had early origins, conflict did not be receiving world recognition until recently in 2016 when protests emerged in the Ambazonia region in response to the appointment of Francophone judges in their areas. This would eventually propel the central government to shut down the internet for 230 days between January 2017 and March 2018. Fast forward to today, the rising tension has escalated and is now called the "Anglophone Crisis" or Ambazonia War. While protests showcasing Ambazonian discontent started in 2016, the internet shutdowns in 2017 and 2018 may have aggravated Anglophone secession rhetoric. Mukeredzi writes, "The impact of the internet disruption was severe, recalled Ms. Forgwe, who is an activist... Communication minister and government spokesman Issa Tchiroma Bakary said the shutdown was triggered by the propagation of false

information on social media capable of inciting hate and violence in the crisis-hit regions” (Mukeredzi, 2017). The internet crisis not only hindered the ability of free speech but also succeeded in disrupting much of the blossoming internet economy of the Ambazonia region. The region known as Silicon Mountain, known for its tech startups, the first anglophone university that bring in many young tech innovators would lose about \$2.5 million.

As this ethnic conflict has developed in to the Ambazonia War now, we wish to understand whether ethnic conflict has the potential to cause long term affects to how internet is used within African countries. As internet shutdowns become a tactic used by many governments throughout Africa to quell separatist movements, and free speech in the process, it is possible that the negative consequences may stem years after.

We wish to understand whether ethnic violence has the potential to alter the usage of the internet within Africa. While there is a plethora of literature on how internet crisis has affected individual conflicts, whether that be socially, economically, or politically, there does not exist literature that researches on whether the internet, itself, has been affected. If internet shutdowns are shown to have even long-lasting impacts after they have passed, its further questions whether the governments should have the power to control them to begin with.

To answer these questions, we look at the fixed broadband and mobile cellular subscriptions rates of nine countries in Sub-Saharan Africa before and after the internet shutdowns occurring in 2016 and 2017. Using a two-sample t-Test we found there to be no significant difference between the rates before and after the internet shutdown periods

## **Review of Literature**

### **Origins of Ethnic Conflict in Africa**

Many countries throughout the world hold institutions governing over people of various cultural backgrounds holding their own traditions, customs, norms, and often even languages. Ethnic conflicts can have severe effects on many facets of institution formation and operation both within and outside of a democracy. Ethnic conflict has such a strong lineage to the institutions to the state because how separate ethnic identities interact within a structure affects the ability or inability for certain individuals' inclusion or exclusion when regarding rights or liberties within that structure. Clashing of norms and values are one not uncommon to the world and certainly not to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Scholars continue to argue over the exact origins of the ethnic conflict that is present throughout African countries. One of the prevailing theories places European colonization as the culprit for the conflict seen across Africa. Scholars like Ebjuwa claim, "the aim of the colonizers was not the creation of new states in the colonies for social and economic development; rather in the words of Oladipo, the demarcation was meant to 'ensure that colonial control and dispossession could be achieved without undue rivalry among colonizers'" (Ebjuwa, 2015). Colonial lines were only drawn in relation to other colonies as opposed to in relation to the cultures present within these colonies. These colonial impositions created institutions without local roots or experiences. When concerning the institution of education during colonial period in Africa, Tiky writes, "The role of the legislature, the missions of the security forces, the independence of the judiciary, and the neutrality of the bureaucracy were foreign concepts to Ahidjo, Bokassa, Obote, Mobutu, Kaunda, Stevens, Tombalbaye, Yaméogo, and many others Tsiranana and many others" (Tiky, 2014). Low state-wide illiteracy was a facet of subjugation under European rule. Only certain families had access to the education to understand western institutions and when coupled with state's pre-colonial history of family-based hegemony,

created a predicament where few knew the means of western institutions and understood governmental structure (Tiky, 43). The education, social, and economic divisions created from their traumatic colonial past made severe problems for democratization. Power-gaining tactics by individuals and certain groups proliferated and developments of inclusion and exclusion based on identity politics started (Kuwali and Nagar, 2014). This then give credence to the start of dictatorship/authoritarian style rule in African states.

While not necessarily rebuking path dependency models of conflict, others focus on the inability of governments to include minority ethnic groups within the decision-making process of solving that conflict. The path to consensus however carries an assumption that ethnic groups, whether they may be majority or minority, will have a space in which their voices are heard. As Ebijuwa continues “This majoritarian kind of decision-making is what is responsible for the well-known adversarial politics in Africa” (Ebijuwa, 2015). Taking the example of the Niger delta crisis, whose minority ethnic group experienced economic and political problems because people in power only seek to abuse others, all sides of conflict need to be consulted for any sort of compromise to be feasible.

While crucial that every ethnic group is given equal participation in a political institution, it is not an easy task. Lijphart for example creates a nine-point model in the hopes of eliciting power-sharing among different ethnic groups. Within this model he advocates for both decentralization and power sharing tactics that also extend outside the boundaries of party coalitions like the judiciary, military, and civil service. (Lijphart, 2004). Decentralization would allow ethnic groups to organize and have greater autonomy over their respective territories. Other scholars like Horowitz, however, would question whether a majority ethnic group already in power would feel it necessary to forego some of that power to other groups. Citing examples

from the Indian State of Kerala and Malaysia, Horowitz argues against grand coalitions (that are destined for failure) and for multiethnic coalitions that while serving various interests, have been able to reduce the total exclusions of some ethnic groups (33). These potential solutions may be incomplete as Lijphart advocates for a power-sharing model that requires an ethnic group to give power to another while Horowitz admits Malaysia and Kerala may have been special cases.

Another potential reasons for conflict have been a weak sense of nationalism from citizens especially when compared to their subnational ethnic attachment. Supposedly, people are so linked to their tribal origins that, when coupled with a poor performing institution or government, they feel only an attachment to their ethnic identity. However, arguers of this opinion assert that even in the face of a potentially weak institution, if a country is experiencing economic modernization, they may be able to eventually come together and coalesce. Measuring national over ethnical identification within individuals spanning 16 countries, Robinson finds that, "Holding all other variables at their means, the predicted probability of national over ethnic identification increases from 32 percent in the poorest quarter of countries to 50 percent in the riches quarter of countries" (Robinson, 2014). It appears modernization lends itself to ethnic resolution as opposed to conflict and even speaks to a better understanding of why weak states continue in Africa. Modernization theorists find that emerging economic development lead to better foundations for cross cultural connections that better facilitate a nation-based identity. How well does this study represent what that national identity may be?

The underlying assumption of a population having nationalist affiliation is an accepted understanding for what that exact identity is. If an entire population agrees to feel some sort of affiliation to their country, does that affiliation falter if it is based on different understandings of what that national identity is? An example can be derived from Sudan where there was "an



assumption of an 'Arab' identity by a dominant group among the population and the object of this as the identity of a nation, which fundamentally discriminated against those who did not see themselves as 'Arabs were not Muslims'" (Kuwali and Nagar, 2014). National affiliation may indeed derive from a single individual, national identity is driven by whatever ethnic majority is in power and thus in of itself is a means of control over a minority. This holds true for countries outside the scope of Africa as well. To this day citizens of Barcelona do not recognize Castela (also known as Spanish) as the national language of the country as it was a national identity forced upon Spain during mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Francoism era (Frekko, 2011). There is still more work to be done on realistic solutions that can combat negatives ethnic conflict brings.

### **Impact of Ethnic Conflict**

Whatever the underlying causes or factors that have contributed to the prevalence of the ethnic conflict in Africa, there are many consequences that have arisen due to tensions between separate ethnicities. The most important and apparent consequence has been the prevalence of civil wars throughout the history of Africa. Many of these civil wars have been in part due to ethnic conflicts that clash at the political level and continue to pose disastrous consequences to the citizens involved. Taking the Nigerian and Congolese civil wars in late 20<sup>th</sup> century as examples, both scenarios had led to the deaths of millions and economic and political destabilization (Obioha, 2015). Even now the tension that had been present between the Anglophone and Francophone populations in Cameroon for years, has turned into a war as well. That economic toll of these wars cannot be overstated (CIPESA, 2017; Newiak et al., 31; West, 2016). Additionally, Obioha notes, "Ordinarily during civil wars and violence, properties are destroyed which are highly valued. Houses are burnt and economic resources are vandalized" (458). Ethnic conflict has the potential to ruin countries and requires that we study and understand these impacts as

much as possible. Recently, internet shutdowns have followed ethnic conflict only increasing the potential consequences conflict can bring.

### **Internet Shutdowns in Africa**

While much of the literature on internet shutdowns in Africa focuses on finding evidence for why governments should not partake in it, it is important to understand that internet shutdowns are not homogeneous (Marchant and Stremlau, 2019). Even though this research looks particularly at the internet shutdowns that have been caused by central governments, there are factors outside of the formal institutions of the state that have caused these to occur. In recent years, other causes of internet shutdowns have been attributed to individual internet service providers, social media networks, other non-governmental actors, and even natural disasters (Access Now, 2019). These occurrences by private parties usually stem from slowdowns that, while accidental, have disastrous impacts as well. However, the effect non-governmental entities have had on internet shutdowns and slowdowns have yet to be thoroughly researched. What has been researched however, is the justification/causes that governmental organizations use when questioned about ordering internet shutdowns.

### **Causes and Justifications**

When countries experience internet shutdowns or slowdowns caused by the political institution of the state there are often many supposed justifications given. Access Now has collected data on internet shutdowns in their Shutdown Tacker Optimization Project (or STOP) where they analyze global internet shutdowns the authorities supposed justification for them. They found that:

In 2017, the most common official justifications for internet shutdowns were 'Public Safety; and Stopping Rumors and Dissemination of Illegal Content' which were used 21

and 18 times respectively. These justifications are often code-words of political events such as public protest, which were involved in 31 instances this year. Elections continue to trigger internet shutdowns in alarming numbers. (2017)

Governments consistently try to hide their tampering of elections through this tactic of slowing or shutting down internet especially during election seasons. In addition to Gambia's presidential election in 2016, countries including, but not limited to Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Chad and the Republic of Congo also experienced interruptions during elections season (Freyburg and Garbe, 2018). Governments across the entire world utilize scapegoats such as public safety, and national security to circumvent not only confused citizens but also human rights organizations that protest the usage of internet blockages. In 2011 study, Philip Howard researched the reasoning given across 566 instances of purposeful government-oriented internet interruptions through 101 countries and found that both democratic and autocratic governments were capable, and willing to disable social media networks while under the justification of security concerns. Before we can understand the varying impacts of these interruptions pose it is important, we understand the modes through which we previous literature have categorized them.

### **Modes of Measurement**

Like how internet interruptions are not homogenous in their causes, the same can be said for their area of effect which depends on the sort of interruption. Internet slowdowns differ from internet shutdowns as the later assumes a complete loss of internet, from that service provider or social media platform, while the former assumes a hindrance but not complete loss of that service. Access Now defines internet shutdowns as "intentional disruption of internet or electronic communications, rendering them inaccessible or effectively unusable, for a specific population or within a location, often to exert control over the flow of information" (2019, p. 2). This comes

under the assumption of a governmental actor being the cause of the internet shutdown. It should be noted that there is still much that has not been measured about the role of non-governmental agencies like internet service providers (or ISPs), and social media platforms, and the specific interactions they have with central governments when they are told to cease, or slow down their services.

Whether or not the cause of the internet disruption comes from the political institution internet interruptions exist more on a spectrum depending on who, how, where, and for how long a state or country is affected. In a University of Oxford workshop on internet shutdowns they delineated five “dimensions of this spectrum” as duration, breadth, depth, speed, and frequency (Marchant and Stremlau, 2019). Duration and frequency refer to how often the internet is shut off in the country and for how long. Internet interruptions and shutdowns can occur at intervals and not necessarily consecutively. Breadth is the amount of people affected or the geographic/regional dispersion. Depth refers to the kind of content that was targeted which can be slowing down internet speeds, or completely restricting certain social media platforms. Speed ranges from slowdown all the way to full blackouts. As we begin to understand how exactly internet interruptions affects countries, it is important we move toward discourse that recognizes these facets that create differences between them.

For examples, Cameroon’s 2017-2018 internet shutdown during the Anglophone crisis the duration was extreme as it lasted 230 days yet and the breadth was contained to the region of Ambazonia and not nationwide. Ethiopians internet shutdown that occurred between 2016 and 2018 and a high frequency but narrow in breadth as it was sometimes limited to only one city and the depth was limited as well as it targeted individual social media platforms (Ayalew, 2019). Though these internet interruptions are not always homogenous and share differences across the

spectrum, they do share similarities in the fact of the irreparable harm and burden they place upon regions that are unlucky enough to experience them.

### **Economic Consequences**

One of the main reasons of the current literature surrounding internet interruptions by advocacy organizations like Access Now, are due to not only the human rights violations that ensures but also the socioeconomic consequences as well. Because governments are so quick to provide justification for the hindrances internet interruptions places on human rights like free speech, human rights organizations like The Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (or CIPESA) and The Bookings institute have started to use economic data to persuade governments away from altering internet usage. For example, Vice President and director of Governance Studies of the Brookings Institute, Darrel M. West, writes that economic losses due to temporary internet shutdowns between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 have included \$320 million in Morocco, \$72 million in the Republic of the Congo, and \$20 million in Algeria (West, 2016). Coupled with the fact that internet interruptions have been increasing every year, this data puts into perspective the potential losses that African countries, and the rest of the world, may face given it continues. West continues to state that these numbers do not account for losses due to taxes, investors, or possible decreases due to consumer confidence. Tax losses may be an incredibly statistic as major tax losses can severely hinder the government's ability to provide welfare for lower income individuals. Thus, the effects internet interruptions can have on poor communities is another topic that should be researched more as well. To understand whether internet access have long term effects on how people use internet, we must first understand how individuals respond to product shortages.

### **Microeconomics and the Internet**

Within rational consumer theory utility refers to the total satisfaction received from consuming a good or service (Baumol and Blinder, 2011). Essentially the more useful a product is to a consumer, the greater utility they will have. Utility is important to understand because it effects the demand for a product. According to rational consumer theory, consumers will not buy a product they receive do not receive utility for. When a product such as the internet does not work, or more accurately experiences time periods of inaccessibility, a consumer receives zero utility from it. According to rational consumer theory then, this should influence the demand for internet services during periods of internet shutdown (Hubbar and O'Brien, 2017). The quantity demanded is defined as the quantity that buyers are willing and able to buy at a particular price (Cowen and Tabarrok, 2015). Even though the price of internet services may stay stagnant the willingness, which stems from utility, and ability to pay for internet services during times of internet shutdown will decrease heavily. The question we seek to answer is whether the decreases in quantity demanded have residual effects *after* periods of internet shutdowns.

However, is important to understand that internet services for the most part has no alternative. Even though the utility of internet services may be volatile within a state that experiences internet shutdowns frequently, people are forced to use it as it is essential to everyday life. The only alternatives when experiencing these shutdowns are either traveling to places where internet service has not been affected or other ways of circumvention (Mukeredzi, 2017; Dahir, 2017; Kingsley, 2019; Ogola, 2019). Due to lack of an alternative product for the internet, we may not see change between consumer habits before and after these internet shutdowns.

### **Current Research Implications**

The current literature has expanded sufficiently to give a holistic understanding of the effect's internet interruptions continue to have on African countries. However, there does not

exist current literature that investigates how ethnic conflict, that has resulted in internet shutdowns, have had on the long-term stability of internet or consumer habit within that country. The ethnic conflicts that occurs and the central governments that pose restrictive conditions on to Internet Service Providers have the potential to permanently harm the internet services accessibility for that region and skew how people decide to pay for internet services in the long term. Additionally, it is important to note that these internet interruptions concern more than just problems of censorship as for some it is means of income, receiving valuable information, and connecting with family or loved ones. Due to the many uses that internet services provide we need to understand how it is affected to better understand the long-term consequences that ethnic conflict through internet interruptions can have.

### **Methodology**

For this project I will be conducting deductive research. This research is rooted in the understanding that ethnic conflict in Africa has contributed toward the use of internet interruptions by central governments usually to in an effort stifle protests or speech. These internet interruptions may potentially change the environment of what internet service providing within those regions. We hypothesize that internet interruptions of some sort affect that post-internet shutdown environment of civilian's relationships with how they interact with internet service after the shutdown. This hypothesis stems from wondering whether living in an environment where internet interruptions either occur frequently or has a high percentage of occurring affects an individual's commitment to internet providers say through payment. We know through rational consumer theory that as a consumer experiences reduced utility in a product, demand decreases. Given the internet shutdowns, does an individual still pay for internet if they know it can and is often taken away without suddenly? Does the market for providing service decrease or increase in areas where government intrusions occur frequently? Do areas where internet interruptions occur often experience a lowered rate of internet expansion? If so, then the consequences of government internet interruptions are more severe than we previously thought. The economic pitfalls of a society experiencing decreased demand for internet services are tremendous. A decrease in the rate of internet expansion could also lead certain regions or countries months, or even years behind their regional or even global counterparts. For the purposes of this study we will compare the number of fixed broadband subscriptions and mobile cellular subscriptions to that of themselves prior to before their respective internet interruptions.

### **Data Set**



This methodology was chosen as it has the potential to provide us with information on the aggregate effects ethnic conflict has on the internet environment. For this study we are utilizing data obtained from the World Bank online database. Every year with the help of member organizations the World Bank compiles statistical data from those countries and helps developing countries improve their national statistical systems. Their data on fixed broadband and mobile cellular subscriptions are recorded every year so using that we will isolate time periods before and after government-imposed interruptions.

We used Access Now's shutdown tracker in order to delineate the time periods when the internet interruption occurred. Their tracker utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to record the number of internet shutdowns in and to characterize the shutdowns, including their magnitude, scope and causes" (Access Now, 2017). The Current tracker only has data from 2016 and 2017 so that is the time period we will utilize. Access Now defines an internet shutdown as "an intentional disruption of internet or electronic communications rendering them inaccessible or effectively unusable, for a specific population or within a location, often to exert control over the flow of information" (2017). The tracker also includes full networking shutdowns, bandwidth throttling, and service-based blocking for two-way communication platforms. The tracker also includes the specific dates when the internet shutdowns occurred and the breadth of the shutdown. The tracker includes a variety of other facets as well but the ones prior mentioned are the full scope of the ones deemed relevant to this study.

### **Constructs**

The independent variables for this study are the time period as we will be comparing the data for our dependent variables, number of fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people) and mobile cellular subscriptions data, both before the dated internet shutdown and after the internet

shutdown. We hypothesize that depending on the breadth and frequency of our given shutdowns they may have negatively affected the number of fixed broadband subscriptions and/or mobile cellular subscriptions.

Another one of the constructs that were important to assess during this study were the five dimensions of each shutdown: duration, frequency, breadth, depth and speed. The placement of where the internet shutdowns fall along these dimensions will determine the potential of each event to even influence our dependent variable. An internet shutdown that has a occurs often, for a long period of times, and has a widespread regional breadth has the potential to cause ore long term repercussions to stability than one that may have a lower frequency and narrower breadth. We will compare our results with these five dimensions in order to gain an understanding of how certain dimensions may be likely to cause aggregate effects.

### **Two Sample T Test (Assuming Unequal Variances)**

After obtaining the internet shutdowns that occurred in 2017 and 2017 from the Access now data and the number of fixed broadband subscriptions and mobile cellular subscriptions from the World bank data the rate of changes between 2013-2015 and 2016-2018 were calculated for each country. This was to create a supposed pre and post-internet shutdown time periods. We then will compare the means of the pre-internet shutdown to those of the post-internet shutdowns for both independent variables that are being measured. This will be done using a two-sample t-Test to determine if there is any difference between the means of the rates of changes between the two time periods.

## **Results**

Data for the internet shutdowns experienced by the Sub-Saharan African countries including the dates of the events and affected scope are shown (see Table 1). While internet

shutdown data for Ethiopia was obtained, it could not be included in the two-sample t-Test as 2018 data was missing from the World Bank dataset that was being used. Data was also missing on some of the exact ending dates of the internet shutdowns but that did not affect our results as our analysis did not attempt to measure a specific correlation between the days of

*Table 1: Sub-Saharan Countries Experiencing Internet Shutdowns (2016-2017)*

Country Name	Dates of internet Shutdown	Total Days	Affected Scope
Morocco	2/16/2016 - 7/20/17 -	???	National
Uganda	2/18/2016 - 2/21/2016	4 days	National
Chad	2/9/2016 -	???	National
Ethiopia	5/30/2016 – 6/8/2016	9 days	National
	7/11/2016 – 7/13/2016	3 days	National
	8/7/2016 - ???	???	Regional
	5/30/2017 – 6/8/17	9 days	National
Mali	8/18/2016 - ???	???	National
Gabon	8/28/2016 - ???	???	National
Gambia	11/30/2016 – 12/2/2016	3 days	National
Dem. Rep. of Congo	12/18/2016 - ???	???	National
Cameroon	1/17/2017 – 4/20/17	94 days	Regional – Anglophone region
Togo	9/5/2017 - ???	???	National

*(Data derived from Access Now STOP)*

The null hypothesis for both tests was zero, or in other words that there would be no significant different between the means of both groups. The alpha value used for each test was 0.05.

*Table 2: t-Test: Two-Sampling (Assuming Unequal Variances) of RoC of Fixed Broadband Subscriptions*

	2013-2015 RoC	2016-2018 RoC
Mean	2.8038	1.48349
Variance	8.907019716	3.491204245
Observations	10	10
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	15	
t Stat	1.185758302	

P(T<=t) one-tail	0.127081091
t Critical one-tail	1.753050356
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.254162181
t Critical two-tail	2.131449546

*Table 3: t-Test: Two-Sample (Assuming Unequal Variance) of Mobile Cellular Subscriptions*

	2013-2015	
	RoC	2016-2018 RoC
Mean	1.2264	0.99602
Variance	0.0405143	0.130927746
Observations	10	10
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	14	
t Stat	1.759487165	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.050159448	
t Critical one-tail	1.761310136	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.100318897	
t Critical two-tail	2.144786688	

These tests were a two-tailed as we simply wanted to note a significant difference in the means.

For the t-Test run on the rate of change of fixed broadband subscriptions our p-value was approximately 0.254. This is greater than our alpha value of 0.05 so we fail to reject the null hypothesis (see Table 2). There is no evidence that the temporary shutdown of the internet in these cases affected trends in broadband subscriptions.

For the t-Test run on the rate of change of mobile cellular subscriptions our p-value was approximately 0.100. This is also greater than our alpha value of 0.005 so we fail to reject the null hypothesis (see Table 3). The null hypothesis stands that there is no significant difference between the means of the rate of change for mobile cellular subscriptions before and after the internet shutdown.

Thus, while I had expected that internet shutdowns might stifle future expansions of internet usage, I instead find that no significant change occurred. Thus, authoritarians who shut down the internet may pay a short-term cost to the economy but do not seem to experience a long-term change in how the internet is being used or developed in their country.

### **Experimental Design Strengths and Pitfalls**

Due to the constraints of the researcher this design does suffer from some pitfalls. One of them being that the data we are obtaining from the World Bank is aggregate data that displays information about the countries we are examining. Internet shutdowns can vary vastly in breadth and so the effects of an internet shutdown that occurred in only a small part of a region in a country, may not necessarily be shown through this study. At the same time, this can be thought of as a strength as well because understanding how even regional internet shutdowns make affect national data is worthy enough pursuit in of itself. Another weakness in this study is the limit of the Access Now's internet shutdown tracker which has only the shutdown data from 2016 and 2017. We know ethnic conflict in Africa is ongoing and the same with internet shutdowns so our results of how a specific internet shutdown affects the long-term internet data will be skewed in that way.

Additionally, there are many factors that can contribute towards different mobile cellular subscription and fixed broadband rates. Any factors that could attribute to a change in income level, for example, has the potential to be a confounding variable that affects our data. A correlation coefficient could prove useful in remedying this but there were gaps in the data sets rendering such a test unhelpful, notably the exact dates of the internet shutdown.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to test whether the internet shutdowns occurring in Africa were posing potential long term, or even short term, differences on the state of the internet within those countries. We predicted that the growing ethnic conflict in Africa which has in turn led to the prevalence of internet shutdowns within Africa would influence people's utility of internet services which would subsequently alter the rate of change experienced by both Broadband subscriptions and mobile cellular subscriptions. This study found, however, that there was no significant change in the rates of changes.

What these findings tell us is that the internet shutdowns occurring within 2016 and 2017, even though mostly nationwide (except for one case in Ethiopia and another in Cameroon) are not affecting how the people consumer internet services. These findings while not what was hypothesized are not necessarily surprising. Since the advent of the internet worldwide, it has increasingly become a resource necessary in nearly all aspects of life and there currently exists no alternative. Because of this, it may not be surprising that even despite potentially unreliable services, one is compelled to purchase them anyway. Additionally, because in most of the cases it was the central government that ordered the internet shutdown and thus forced internet service providers to halt services, it is reasonable that the affected people harbored no ill will specifically against those companies. Understanding that internet shutdowns removes a precious resource from people while leaving them with no alternative option is particularly disheartening.

As ethnic conflict in African countries increase it is interesting to consider whether a similar test run today would result in similar conclusions. In the past years, countries like Cameroon, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have experienced shutdowns ranging from 20 days to months so I wonder if this same study retested with current data would illicit

different results. Compared to the internet shutdowns in recent years the ones that occurred in 2016 and 2017 seem somewhat miniature so a different result could be possible.

### **Implications**

In conclusions, hopefully the results of this study allow for further research on the how the state of the internet has been affected by ethnic conflict. Because this data was only able to paint a picture with a very wide brush it is hard to understand whether the internet shutdowns did not affect people's engagement with the internet at a regional level or one that differentiates based on the socioeconomic factors. Like Marchant and Stremlau's claims, further research into internet shutdowns need to be put into how it has affected lower income populations. Higher income individuals may be able to easily afford to relocate or adapt better to internet shutdowns compared to lower income individuals who lack a similar ability to do so.

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### Appendixes

*Table 4: Sub-Saharan Countries Experiencing Internet Shutdowns Broadband Subscription (per 100 people)*

Country Name	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Morocco</b>	2.50310664	2.9054768	3.31048391	3.57404169	3.87526241	4.30929249
<b>Uganda</b>	0.11626435	0.14954138	0.21117866	0.23232519	0.0235215	<b>0.02219802</b>
<b>Chad</b>	0.11110831	0.07414609	0.08034172	<b>0.03520203</b>	<b>0.0022042</b>	<b>0.00215794</b>
<b>Ethiopia</b>	0.24958328	0.48044093	0.4740396	0.53955726	0.05916358	
<b>Mali</b>	0.01768405		0.02006448	0.11936249	<b>0.08318735</b>	0.63390078
<b>Gabon</b>	0.48979924	0.57330927	0.56898289	0.74795567	0.72485632	1.3730639
<b>Gambia</b>	0.0223047	0.1355209	0.17129625	0.17448872	0.18067753	0.19442181
<b>DRC</b>	0.00063062	0.00067781	0.00131157	<b>0.00126921</b>	<b>0.00122852</b>	0.00549555
<b>Cameroon</b>	0.07654924	0.0742047	0.08776151	0.19214637	<b>0.06824453</b>	<b>0.07133094</b>
<b>Togo</b>	0.09942885	0.17666013	0.90223371	0.64931183	0.65662364	<b>0.33154635</b>

*Table 5: Sub-Saharan Countries Rate of Change of Fixed Broadband Subscriptions*

Country Name	2013-2015 RoC	2016-2018 RoC
<b>Morocco</b>	132.26%	120.57%
<b>Uganda</b>	181.64%	9.55%
<b>Chad</b>	72.31%	6.13%
<b>Mali</b>	113.46%	531.07%
<b>Gabon</b>	116.17%	183.58%
<b>Gambia</b>	767.98%	111.42%
<b>DRC</b>	207.98%	432.99%
<b>Cameroon</b>	114.65%	37.12%
<b>Togo</b>	907.42%	51.06%

*Table 6: Sub-Saharan Countries Experiencing Internet Shutdowns Mobile Cellular Subscriptions*

Country Name	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Morocco</b>	42,423,794	44,114,534	43,079,696	<b>41,513,933</b>	43,916,066	44,737,885
<b>Uganda</b>	18,068,648	20,365,941	20,220,273	22,838,486	24,948,878	<b>24,472,033</b>
<b>Chad</b>	4,561,243	5,251,560	5,465,797	5,585,709	6,368,600	6,984,130

<b>Ethiopia</b>	25,646,865	30,490,000	42,311,629	51,224,000	<b>39,600,000</b>	
<b>Mali</b>	19,749,371	23,505,559	22,698,915	20,217,697	22,034,110	<b>21,955,565</b>
<b>Gabon</b>	2,745,229	2,932,731	2,821,555	2,962,486	<b>2,663,243</b>	2,930,554
<b>Gambia</b>	1,848,854	2,283,691	2,715,672	2,838,127	2,966,000	3,181,393
<b>DRC</b>	28,231,900	37,102,958	37,752,782	<b>28,889,317</b>	<b>35,375,246</b>	<b>36,470,600</b>
<b>Cameroon</b>	15,664,666	17,039,059	18,160,667	18,717,503	20,135,388	<b>18,455,836</b>
<b>Togo</b>	4,262,993	4,516,114	4,855,206	5,505,424	6,069,905	6,144,507

*Table 7: Sub-Saharan Countries Rate of Change of Mobile Cellular Subscriptions*

<b>Country Name</b>	<b>2013-2015 RoC</b>	<b>2016-2018 RoC</b>
<b>Morocco</b>	101.55%	107.77%
<b>Uganda</b>	111.91%	107.15%
<b>Chad</b>	119.83%	125.04%
<b>Mali</b>	114.93%	108.60%
<b>Gabon</b>	102.78%	98.92%
<b>Gambia</b>	146.88%	112.09%
<b>DRC</b>	133.72%	126.24%
<b>Cameroon</b>	115.93%	98.60%
<b>Togo</b>	113.89%	111.61%

## Review of Literature

### **Introduction**

To this day women of color continue to face many forms of discrimination. Black Feminism contends that the experience of black women needs to be understood through an intersectional lens. Whether socially, academically, or financially, black women face bigotry at every turn even when compared to their white female counterparts. The black community itself has failed to address issues of patriarchy that exist within its structures that minimize the experiences of black women (Harris et al., 1999). Black men have been similarly oppressed for the color of their skin yet also perpetuated black female discrimination. Given this, we seek to investigate whether there is a place for black men within black female critique. If so, what are the specific mechanisms that would enable this? Solutions are only as strong as their theory can be realistically applied so it is vital, we distinguish potential solutions from mere theory.

Though this literature we will focus specifically on black men's place within black feminist critique and advocacy. We first review how literature discusses men's role in feminism in general. Then we discuss how this applies to the black community, which necessitates a discussion on separating identity and ideology and dismantling of black masculinity as currently constructed. We posit that black men becoming allies and advocating for black feminist requires literature that addresses specific methods black men can take to stop perpetuating black female subjugation within the black community and society overall. The resulting analysis may provide adequate information to extrapolate how men of any race may advocate for feminism.

Understanding of our identity as a black male, we write not to define feminism but to understand the current state of the literature.

### **Maleness and/or Feminism**

Throughout feminism literature and feminist critique, there has been a prolonged subgenre concerning men's contribution. The late 20th century seemed to hold many negative notions about the ability of a man to be a feminist. In his essay *Male Feminism*, Stephen Heath's writes that:

Men's relation to feminism is an impossible one... Women are the subjects of feminism, its initiators, its makers, its force; the move and the join from being a woman to being a feminist is the grasp of that subjecthood. Men are the objects, part of the analysis, agents of the structure to be transformed, representatives in, carriers of the patriarchal mode; and my desire to be a subject there too in feminism-to be a feminist- is then only also the last faint in the long history of their colonization. (Heath, 1984)

This "fundamental asymmetry" that Heath poses suggests that men have no place in feminist literature as it would become yet another pillar upon which men would assert their domination (25). Heath reaches an impasse as he argues for the passiveness that men need to have in the process, yet concurrently questioning what this passiveness would look like.

Attempting to resolve Heath's predicament, Joseph Boone argues that "In exposing the latent multiplicity and difference in the word "me(n)," we can perhaps open up space within the discourse of feminism where a male feminist voice can have something to say beyond impossibility and apologies and unresolved ire" (12). Boone seeks to redefine the complexity of men's involvement in feminism. The analysis depends on the examination of the male identity as it relates to "its own sexual/textual body" (12). In other words, he is arguing that men's engagement with feminism should exist concurrently and proceed from the introspective examination of masculinity itself that dissociates oneself from their gender. This assertion lies in

Boone's notion that androcentric perspectives are learned, notably through sociocultural practices, and thus can be unlearned as well if given enough attention (Awkward, 1999). Further essays present the necessity of identifying oneself as a biologically male yet ideologically separate.

Additionally, analyzing men's role within feminism assumes an understanding of what feminism is. How do we then define feminism? Responding to this question, Alice Jardine answers, "Struggle. The inscription of struggle. When the members of the same feminist theory group mentioned above tried to articulate how we can recognize a feminist text-whether written by a man or a woman- it was this that was found to be necessary. The inscription of struggle—even of pain..." (Jardine, 1985). She questions why men would even want to be a part of this discourse yet also agrees with the notion that dismantling masculinity can prove useful. She wishes not for guilt or mimicry from aspiring men but rather an accepted role working alongside women. Jardine equates work with blood, sweat, and tears, and subsequently pain. What does this specifically mean for black men as it relates to black feminism then? What exactly should this work look like? Before answering those questions, we should understand the relationship between black men and women.

### **A Community Twice Oppressed**

Black men have ignored against notions of sexism that exist within the community due to the discrimination they all face. For example, black women throughout the Civil Rights Movement, while being the foundation for much of the grassroots organizations, received little recognition and had little influence within the existing strict leadership structure. Writing about the discrimination faced during this period, Farah Griffin explains:



“Malcolm’s promise of protection assumes a stance of victimization on the part of those who need to be protected without allowing much room for their agency in other spheres. It places the woman in the hands of her protector—who may protect her but who also may decide to further victimize her...Malcolm X’s promise of protection falls under the rubric of the ‘ideology of respectability.’” The protected woman is the ‘respectable’ woman. The man who protects her is the respected man.” (216, 219)

While attempting to protect black women from the racist grips of the white man, Malcolm X, and many black men at the time, inadvertently perpetuated patriarchy. The lack of agency allowed by women during these times to quell racism is indicative of the problem that the black community still faces today. As evidenced, the black community has had the problem of black politics always being centered around men. Women at the time voiced their concerns about the lack of female voices in leadership but were met with harsh criticism (Griffin, 86). Even though the movement was centered on racism, there exists no rationale to the lack of leadership black women were able to possess. Black men, through the discrimination they face, have been unable to conceptualize intersectionality and discrimination faced by black women for being black and a woman. Luke Charles Harris asserts, “Moreover, they teach our young at least the follow two powerful and disturbing lessons: (1) to support undeserving black men for the sake of the ‘race’ and (2) trivialize the concerns of Black women, and the Black feminist movement writ large (Harris, 1999). The effect this has on the younger generations cannot be understated. If the black community is to move forward and truly support feminism, we need to first understand and validate the experiences held by each member of our community. This necessitates the additional understanding that our community has been a vector for discrimination against others within the community. Failure to address issues such as these reinforces the notion that sexual violence,

domestic violence, and rape are “white woman issues” which further disempower and invalidate the experiences of black women (Harris, 383). It is through these mechanisms that the relationship between black men and women differs from that between white men and women. This task of dismantling the privilege within the black community is no easy one, but necessary, nonetheless.

### **Black Maleness and/or Feminism**

Currently proposed solutions to black men finding their place within black feminist critique lack detailed mechanisms on how to achieve them. If black men are to make any contribution to feminist critique, there must exist a debunking and revision of the social constructs that have hindered us thus far. Boone’s asserted that “Indeed, if the male feminist can discover a position from which to speak that neither elides the importance of feminist to his work nor ignores the specificity of his gender, his voice may also find that it no longer exists as an abstraction...but that it in fact inhabits a body: its own sexual/textual body” (Boone, 12). If we take these words to hold, then for the black men this means that becoming feminist requires the repudiation of social constructs like masculinity and femininity especially when viewed through a sexuality lens. Throughout the black community, homophobia is still deeply rooted. In addition to the obvious discrimination it imposes on people who identify as homosexual or queer, it has continued to skew black men's masculinity notions of what it means to “be a man.” Speaking upon the destructive capabilities of this, Mark Anthony Neal tells:

It’s not enough for us to simply eradicate homophobia in our own lives, we need to make the message loud and clear that homophobia is not welcome in our communities. We also need to think differently about black masculinity and understand that black men exhibit a

range of attitudes and behaviors that don't always fit neatly into some mythical notion of a "Strong Black Man." (Neal, 2015)

For the black community to become one that can produce conscientious men capable of feminist discord of any kind we must end these notions of homophobia. Through this, we may teach a generation that is better able to conceive the differences between socially constructed truths and actual truths, but also one understands intersectionality. This may be the first step in breaking down the culture of dismissal that has plagued the black community. Understanding intersectionality will allow people to be more connected to those whose experiences may not be unilaterally rooted in blackness.

In a similar yet different veil, Carbado discusses how one of the fundamental aspects of the male feminism should be to "unbecome" a man. He reasons, "A fundamental goal of male feminism should be to facilitate the process of men unbecoming men. In other words, male feminism should help men unlearn and repudiate the patriarchal ways in which they have learned to become men" (Carbado, 2013). Like Boone's call for the male repudiation of their socially constructed gender, Carbado recognizes the importance of leaving behind socially constructed masculinity. This repudiation of masculinity should also show itself within the way the black community views fatherhood. Traditional aspects of masculinity posit that fatherhood's only responsibilities are to "provide financially and to dispense discipline" (Neal, 156). A conceptualization of fatherhood that includes the nurturing capabilities and puts fathers in a loving partnership has the potential to dismantle notions of toxic masculinity that may see emotionally absentee father roles. The capacity for fathers to teach their sons the importance of learning the experiences of black women (and women in general) has the potential to reverse years of erroneous gender roles and norms.

However, through the oppression that black men themselves face, how can these hopes reach fruition? Neal declares that the skewed versions of masculinity present within the black community may stem from a defense system created to endure their experiences with discrimination like both police brutality, and prison sentencing. If this is taken to be true, we are yet to see solutions to how black men will be able to dismantle the masculinity that has supposedly protected them, while still surviving. If black men are to become feminists as Neal suggests, there needs to be more research into how black men will be able to create this balance. Only through that will we see potential mechanisms through which black males may begin to transform to eventually become feminists.

### **Black Male Feminist**

We bear witness to black men asserting their inputs of male inclusion into black feminism critique. It is not surprising then, that each author ends their respective essays asserting how there must be some sort of inclusion of black men into black feminism. If we are to truly take a magnifying glass to the black men's relationship with black feminist critique, we must not hesitate to critique how black men write concerning feminism.

While Neal provided much-needed literature on the effect of masculinity, other parts of his work raise interesting questions. He describes his process of coming out as a feminist when he acknowledged the world around him. (Neal, 54) This sentiment poses some potential problems within the black female critique. His self-identification as a feminist directly opposes literature that seems to suggest that black men can never be feminist. Also, though it may not be his attention to do so, his self-insertion into a dialogue that has not necessarily "accepted" him is rather presumptuous. His need to do this also begs an interesting question of why men need to be denoted the term feminist in the first place. Though Neal does not monopolize his discussion of

black feminist theory, he comes close to doing what black women sometimes say black men do. Carbado writes, “Black men engage in feminism and/or define the content of Black feminism, they entrench and legitimize this authority” (89). This comes from his discussion that black feminists feel that black men frequently try to impose higher authority to speak upon issues concerning their race. Sadly enough, Neal is not alone in this manner.

In his work *A Black Man’s Place in Black Feminist Criticism*, Michael Awkward similarly attempts to find where black men’s place in feminism lies. He states that feminism “does not mean attempting to invade an/other political body like a lascivious soul snatcher or striving to erase its essence to replace it with one’s own myth of what the discourse should be” (Awkward, 379). Though arguably not explicit, does his definition not ascribe to the exact acts he condemns? For a black man to define what black feminist is or is not, irrespective of the definition they posit appears to be problematic as much literature on the subject seems to pose that it is rooted in experience’s men could not possibly know.

## **Conclusion**

We wished to understand the current state of the literature surrounding black men’s relationship with black feminism as a black feminist critique or an individual wishing to advocate for black feminism. The literature seems to show there is a dearth about how a black man may seem himself within the black feminist critique. The literature experiences a cognitive dissonance of what it means to be a feminist or specifically black male feminist. We have even seen some black men prematurely placing themselves within the literature. Future literature into the subject should see a discussion by black women on what exactly it means to be a black feminist and subsequently what this would mean for black male feminism if that is deemed necessary.

However, further literature should not stop there. Black male scholars wishing to advocate for and/or contribute to the black feminist movement should instead seek to focus on how black men and the greater black community can decrease and eventually dispel the sexism and flawed masculinity present in the community. The violence committed against black women even within intimate partnerships continues throughout the community (Richie, 2012). Black men may find themselves better contributing through dismantling the culture that allows for that. Despite Neal's problematic self-assertion into black feminist dialogue, his text does peer into possible avenues such as a redefining of masculinity, fatherhood, and an awareness of the detrimental effects of rap music. His text, while informative, leaves there much to be desired within the literature for solutions. Further research should examine specific methods of breaking down the problems described by Neal and going beyond theory and realistically explain how this dismantling occurs.

It should be up to those who experience discrimination to define in their terms what their literature looks like rather than those who are doing the discriminating. For black men to further burden black feminism with having to somehow keep being discriminated against whilst fitting black men into their narrative honestly appears like further oppression. Black men would not ask their white counterparts to define the exact constraints of critical race theory so a similar approach should be taken when understanding their role within black feminism. Black men should focus their efforts on finding solutions as opposed to inserting themselves into spaces they may not belong to. Sometimes the service one wants to do is not always the service a community may need.

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