Individual and collective coping with racial discrimination: What drives social media activism among Asian Americans during the COVID-19 outbreak | New Media & Society

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What drives racial minorities to partake in social media activism for racial justice? Answers to this question are vital and urgent, particularly in view of growing anti-Asian hate crimes amid the current pandemic. Motivated to address this question, we draw insights from the transactional model of stress and coping, the situational theory of problem solving (STOPS), and social media activism literature. We propose an integrative model that delineates the psychological antecedents and processes leading Asian Americans to cope with racial discrimination and engage in social media activism. Results of an online survey among 400 Asian Americans supported the proposed model, highlighting a perception-motivation-coping-activism effect chain. Our study advances the three bodies of literature—coping, STOPS, and social media activism—in the context of racial discrimination concerning an understudied minority group: Asian Americans. It also renders meaningful insights to organizations, groups, and governments that seek to support this community.

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