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## MULTIMODAL REPRESENTATIONS OF PREJUDICE ON VINE

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The widespread access to wireless and mobile connectivity, the increasing popularity of social media, and the pervasiveness of portable devices such as smartphones and tablets are offering unprecedented opportunities for expressing and sharing personal understandings and representations of the world. This technology-mediated and hyper-connected milieu offers a fertile ground for representing, enacting, and counteracting antisocial outlooks and behaviours such as prejudice, discrimination, and bullying. In the introduction, we propose a unified theoretical model to comprehend the idiosyncrasies of prejudice, discrimination, and bullying, in function of the analysis of user-generated Vines related to prejudice, which is presented in the second part of the article. In this study, we posit prejudice as one of the primary seeds of discrimination and bullying, and we then examine its multimodal representations on Vine, a social medium that offers a short-form apparatus for constructing and communicating meaning. This study contributes to the understanding of how prejudice is represented and interpreted on mobile social platforms and opens the field to research on how people depict and perceive sensitive issues through “condensed” forms of computer-mediated communication.

**Keywords:** Prejudice; Discrimination; Bullying; Computer-Mediated Communication; Social Media; Vine.

### 1. Introduction

The incipience of the 21st century has witnessed profound changes in communication technology. The proliferation of social media has expanded the opportunities for conversation, social signalling, and self-expression. In recent times, personal, condensed, and mobile forms of media, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, have become one of the most common forms of communication, social interaction, self-expression, information, and creativity. The profuse use of Twitter

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by politicians, celebrities, and other public figures has brought a lot of attention to how sensitive topics can be represented and discussed in a public fashion through short-form social media. One of the most popular platforms is Vine, the Twitter-owned six-second video site. Similarly to its parent company, Vine relies on the brevity of the message to engage users. Unlike Twitter, though, Vine features a cyclical element; the six-second videos repeat themselves ad nauseam until the user either pauses them, refreshes the page, or visits another video or website. Each video can be shared "as captured," without further modifications, or precisely composed and edited for the maximum expression of the sender of the message, without regard for linear or traditional forms of narrativity. Vine can be considered a multimodal embodiment of abbreviated social media, with its integration of audiovisual content, text, emoticons, metadata, and user tagging features. As of 2017, Vine is no longer active and has been replaced by Vine Camera, which offers similar functions within the Twitter framework. All previous Vines have been stored on the official Vine website (<http://vine.co>) and are available to the public. The website states:

Vines are short looping videos that have inspired, entertained, and given rise to a creative community since 2013. From break-out comedians to musicians to fandom edits and sports, Vine creators have shaped pop culture. [...] Personalities grew, memes exploded, and new culture was created.

If compared to YouTube, among other characteristics, Vine and similar abbreviated social media seem to be more *immediate* (content recorded directly into the app from a smartphone camera, which has a memo-like quality), *reactive* (quick video responses to events or feelings, which embodies an instinctive urge to share and communicate as things happen or right after they have happened), *condensed* (short form, with quick access to viewing, creating, and sharing content), *casual* (which calls for a ubiquitous and "in-between other tasks" use), and *heuristic* (the possibility to explore related Vines or discover random ones, watching several of them one after another in a relatively short amount of time). In this context, Vine's short form should be considered as one of its *affordances* (Gibson, 1979), rather than strictly as a *limitation*. In other words, Vine should not be regarded as a "lesser YouTube," but rather as a discrete medium selected by millions of users as an alternative or complement to other platforms (brevity is arguably one of the reasons why users choose to experience and create content on Vine or similar platforms). All

these features, combined with their popularity and widespread use, make Vine and similar short-form social media a fascinating object of study for advancing the understanding of how people communicate, express themselves, and share ideas.

Each new medium develops particular ways of mimicking, enhancing, or even transforming the purposes of more traditional avenues of communication. The medium-specificity hypothesis – or the belief that each medium has a peculiar viscosity, a way of being that delimits and defines its expressive potential – suggests that Vine may present unique semiotic and communicational abilities to construct and represent meaning (Gross, Bardzell, and Bardzell, 2014). Vine, like other media stemming from the unrelenting evolution of the Internet, is engendering new ways of performing and exhibiting off-line practices and behaviours. In the context of this study, it is therefore important to consider the literature on confluences, distinctions between, and transitions from physical to virtual manifestations of prejudice and prejudice-related phenomena such as bullying and discrimination (i.e., the relationship between cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural dimensions of prejudice), which we discuss in Sections 2 and 3. Subsequently, through a multimodal analysis approach, we examine Vines related to prejudice. In this framework, the focus of this study is an exploratory analysis of how people share their thoughts and ideas related to prejudice on Vine and to investigate techniques, affordances, and modes of communication through Vine as an emerging medium, with the broader intent of advancing the understanding of how sensitive topics are represented and discussed in a public fashion through short-form social media.

## **2. Bullying and cyberbullying**

Tokunaga (2010) recognizes that cyberbullying carries elements of traditional bullying, albeit adapted to the expansive reach of new electronic media and the Internet. Englander and Muldowney (2007) assert that cyberbullying, which does not necessarily require advance planning and can actively reduce chances of physical harm, might be more of an opportunistic aggression if compared with traditional forms of bullying, since cyberbullies do not directly see their victims and many of them do not opt for physical aggression if the online route is not available. While traditional bullying often exhibits both deliberation and reward-seeking (Roland and Idsøe, 2001; Schwartz et al., 1998; Unnever, 2005), because of the afforded distance and anonymity (Piazza and Bering, 2009), computer-mediated bullying is often associated with unrevealed consequences of and responses to the aggression

(Dehue, Bolman, and Völlink, 2008). Further, Patchin and Hinduja (2006) state that a lack of supervision from authorities can be considered a hallmark of electronically mediated bullying.

Although victims of cyberbullying tend to also be victims of traditional bullying (Juvonen and Gross, 2008) and the occurrence of one seems to largely predict the manifestation of the other (Casas, Del Rey, and Ortega, 2013; Cuadrado-Gordillo, and Fernández-Antelo, 2014; Law, Shapka, Hymel, Olson, and Waterhouse, 2012), the affordances of the online medium for distance and anonymity seem to encourage *sub rosa* action as 50-60% of cyberbullying victims are unaware of the identity of their aggressors (Kowalski and Limber, 2007; Wolak, Mitchell, and Finkelhor, 2007). Further, asynchronous and distant forms of communication can foster environments conducive to discrimination and bullying, since it is harder to acknowledge the noxious effects of actions and behaviours when they are not observable *hic et nunc*.

In spite of the proliferation of research on bullying and cyberbullying, many theoretical and practical components of these two anti-social conducts remain insufficiently explored (Tokunaga, 2010) and studies suggest that the distinction between the two constructs is perhaps one of kind and not degree. Compounding this issue of kind versus degree is the difficult process of definition not only of bullying, and its younger technology-propelled sibling, cyberbullying, but also of one of its generative roots, namely prejudice.

### **3. Prejudice, discrimination, and bullying**

Despite the perhaps inherent indefiniteness of the concepts of prejudice, discrimination, and bullying, scholars, government organizations, schools, workplaces, and other institutions with vested interests in societal harmony continue to attempt makeshift delineation (Christensen and Aldridge, 2013; Fevre, Grainger, and Brewer, 2011; Lippert-Rasmussen, 2006; Otlowski, Taylor, and Bombard, 2012; Vandenhoe, 2005). Indeed, not for lack of trying, the modern study of prejudice has involved the advocacy and subsequent reversal of many theoretical foundations. The early history of research on the topic characterized prejudice as a purely psychological ailment, "a dangerous aberration from normal thinking" (Dovidio, 2001: 830). Thus, in the early 20th century, the discussion of prejudice focused on its identification and subsequent excision from individuals. In the middle of the century, however, academics began characterizing prejudice as a function of typical cognitive processes. Allport (1954) claimed that an antipathy towards another social

group, or “prejudice,” arises from an in-group social pressure that makes attacks on out-groups appealing. The categorical thinking inherent to Allport’s claim – all people think of themselves as either members of a group or not – encouraged the search for prejudice outside of particular social domains. As such, the goal in researching prejudice shifted to the nature of interpersonal connections (Dovidio, 2001). Specifically, Tajfel and Turner (1979) brought much-needed attention to the role of identity, both personal and within groups, in the perpetuation of prejudice. Other scholars contributed valuable findings on the phenomenon in the same socially-oriented vein (Brewer, 1979; Hamilton and Troler, 1986). Especially notable in this regard are findings that social situations trigger attitudes faster than can be cognitively assessed (Bargh, Chaiken, Gvender, and Pratto, 1992; Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, and Kardes, 1986). From this perspective, the multimodal, looping, and compressed nature of Vine carries the potential for novel discussions and understandings of prejudice in dense networks of meaning mediated by technology.

The latest research “emphasizes the multidimensional aspect of prejudice and takes advantage of new technologies to study processes” (Dovidio, 2001: 832). Most investigations on online prejudice and the potential of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to reducing prejudice have been focused on interactions among people belonging to different or contrasting groups (Alvídrez, Piñeiro-Naval, Marcos-Ramos, and Rojas-Solís, 2015; Amichai-Hamburger, Hasler, and Shani-Sherman, 2015). These studies are grounded on Allport’s Contact Hypothesis, which assumes that “interaction among members of oppositional groups stimulates affable interpersonal relations between individual group members, ameliorating stereotyped impressions of others and leading to a reduction of prejudice toward the groups as a whole” (Walther, Hoter, Ganayem, and Shonfeld, 2015: 550). Since research on face-to-face interactions supports this hypothesis (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008), it is clear that the study of group dynamics in online environments is crucial. However, to complement these efforts, it is also important to analyse how prejudice is represented and interpreted in different media, considering their specific communicational and technological affordances, contexts of use, and limitations. For example, the interactions afforded by discussion forums (e.g., mostly text-based, with conversations categorized by threads, and inter-user interactions) are much different than those afforded by the medium considered in this study, Vine (e.g.,

mostly audiovisual, with communications categorized by hashtags, and user “reactions” or comments).

As with prejudice, the concept of discrimination has also seen changes over the past several decades. Discrimination is often considered active, at least in the sense that it is not explicitly mental and thus measurable in visible and perhaps even tangible terms (Breckler, 1984; Leyens, Yzerbyt, and Schadron, 1994). Young (1990) describes a contrast between discrimination – an individual conduct meant to harm or exclude another – and oppression – harm or exclusion embedded into the societal structure itself. At this stage, it is helpful to think of discrete sets of pejorative and harmful acts against minority individuals – sexism, racism, and homophobia, to name a few – as manifestations of discrimination. More broadly, notions of discrimination appear to depend on the norms of those communities which embody majoritarian thought, or the ideals of the largest or prevailing group in any given context (Gardner, 1998).

Drawing from this literature, we propound prejudice as one of the primary antecedents of discrimination and bullying. Specifically, we define prejudice as a *latent outlook* (e.g., perceiving a person of a specific ethnicity as inferior or unwelcome) that can evolve into the *operational behaviour* of discrimination (e.g., not hiring a person because he/she belongs to that ethnicity) and bullying, i.e., the *proactive engagement* in harmful and malevolent discriminatory practices (e.g., making fun of a person in a public space on the basis of stereotypes attributed to his/her ethnicity). We posit that these conducts, although correlated, involve different stages, feelings/attitudes, and processes/actions, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Prejudice, discrimination, and bullying

	<b>Prejudice</b>	<b>Discrimination</b>	<b>Bullying</b>
<b>Conduct</b>	Outlook	Behaviour	Engagement
<b>Stage</b>	Latent	Operational	Proactive
<b>Feeling/Attitude</b>	Aversion	Hostility	Malevolence
<b>Process/Action</b>	Othering	Exclusion	Aggression

Because emergent technologies have the potential to influence perceptions and norms (Verbeek, 2005), the concerns of prejudice, discrimination, and bullying must be considered in relation to the affordances and uses of such technologies. Moreover,

when semiotically innovative media like Vine appear as communication options, their effects on social interactions can be both unexpected and profound. The review of the literature revealed a lack of studies that look into how media and technologies are used to represent thoughts, emotions, and understandings of prejudice outside of the Contact Hypothesis framework, in short and casual (non long-term) contacts, as well as in natural (not researcher-prompted) and informal (outside of school/work) settings. In this context, before considering the potential of CMC to reduce prejudice or attempting to produce and disseminate effective anti-discrimination and anti-bullying interventions through media, we argue that it is worthwhile to investigate how people construct, negotiate, and share their understandings of prejudice, discrimination, and bullying on such media. This will help academics and policymakers better comprehend people's perceptions and lived experiences with these phenomena, which can inform anti-discrimination and anti-bullying communicational and educational efforts through social media and technologies. Posing prejudice as a seed of discrimination and bullying, in this study we focus on user-generated representations of prejudice on Vine.

#### **4. Methods**

Because prejudice – a somehow hidden quality, as established above – and discrimination – the overt display of prejudice – have a relationship of conceptualization of the other and an associated expression, we saw fit to approach our analysis through a semiotic lens. As such, we have conducted a multimodal analysis of prejudice-related Vines. This reflects the recognition of multiple possibilities of expression in a Vine: linguistic, audio, visual, gestural, and spatial. While we cannot make claims that particular signs are conclusive indications of a thought, we do hope to characterize attitudes, behaviours, and actions related to the theme of prejudice.

##### **4.1. Multimodal analysis**

Semiotic spaces that rely on different and interconnected forms of communication require analytical frameworks apt to make sense of meaning and meaning-making processes through a multifaceted lens. Given the proliferation of computer-mediated environments, multimodal approaches to studying communication and discourse are becoming increasingly important to make sense of complex ways in which language and other modes jointly contribute to creating

meaning (Jewitt, 2014; Kress, 2010). This study employs a multimodal analysis approach (Jewitt, 2014; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001), which considers the interplay between symbiotic forms of representation such as text, pictures, moving images, posture, and gaze. This framework assumes that all modes have an equal potential to communicating meaning (Norris, 2004) in an orchestration of modes that reflects and embeds social, historical, and cultural processes (Kress, 2010).

#### **4.2. Data collection and analysis**

We accessed the Vine website (<https://vine.co>) on May 28th 2015 and used the “#prejudice” hashtag to locate the messages for the analysis. A hashtag is a tagging tool used to label and locate posts with specific topics. Once a message is posted, other users can locate it by searching one of its hashtags. On Vine, videos are almost always accompanied by textual comments and/or hashtags, therefore, in this study we define these multimodal messages as “Vines” (not just “videos”).

In our search, the engine returned 108 results. We excluded from the analysis Vines focused on the novel (or the novel-inspired movie) “Pride and Prejudice” by Jane Austen. We also excluded Vines that do not represent the author’s ideas of prejudice (e.g., offensive Vines labelled as #prejudice in the comments session). We then focused on the transcription and fine-grain analysis of the Vines that emerged from this filtering process (n=89) in collaborative data sessions, examining the interplay between videos, descriptive texts, viewers’ comments, hashtags, and emoticons. For our analytical framework, we employed the five modes discussed by the New London Group (1996):

- 1) Linguistic (L) – language (spoken and written)
- 2) Audio (A) – musical instrumentation and sound effects without immediately cognizable semantic content
- 3) Visual (V) – framing structures and movements
- 4) Gestural (G) – facial expressions and other corporeal features
- 5) Spatial (S) – physical contexts (locations, objects, relative distances)

In the next sections, these modes are abbreviated by using the respective initials (L, A, V, G, and S). The transcription of the videos is divided into “cuts,” i.e. the audiovisual fragments that compose each video. For the analysis, we implemented a three-step process:



- 1) identification and understanding of the communicative work performed by each mode;
- 2) analysis of intra-modal (within the same mode) and inter-modal (between modes) relationships;
- 3) assessment of the contribution of each mode and the relationship between the modes in the meaning-making process.

#### 4.3. Trustworthiness and Soundness

In order to warrant the methodological solidity of this exploratory qualitative study, we applied criteria of *trustworthiness* and *soundness* derived from discourse analysis (Gee, 2010: 123; Wood and Kroger, 2000: 166) that mirror the quantitative constructs of reliability and validity. The generative perspectives emerging from the study (defined in the literature as *fruitfulness*, Wood and Kroger, 2000: 169-173) are heuristic in their nature, as they provide novel interpretations and raise interesting questions for the advancement of the field, and should be evaluated by criteria of *trustworthiness* and *soundness*, rather than causality, correlation, or replicability (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Tracy, 1995). Specifically, Wood and Kroger (2000: 167) link the meaning of "validity" to the Latin word *valere*, "to be strong," and state that trustworthy claims are grounded on accountable and systemic procedures, while sound claims emerge from logical analytical procedures and are supported by examples and evidence.

#### 5. Results and Discussion

In the first part of the analysis we identified specific topics and categories related to prejudice, as presented in examined messages. Some Vines featured more than one topic/category related to prejudice (e.g., LGBT and Religion). In Table 2, we focus on the leading topics/categories found in each analysed Vine.

Table 2. Leading Topics/Categories in the Analysed Vines

<b>Topic/Category</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
General concept of prejudice	27	30.34%
Race and racism	16	17.98%
Geography, nationality, and origin	11	12.36%

Gender and LGBT issues	9	10.11%
Looks and appearance	8	8.99%
Learning, school, and bullying	6	6.74%
Pets and animals	3	3.37%
Religion	3	3.37%
Age	2	2.25%
Technology and the Internet	2	2.25%
Disability	1	1.12%
Family	1	1.12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Data show that almost one-third on the analysed Vines (30.34%) were focused on generic representations of prejudice, which suggests that users consider it as an outlook that is not necessarily embodied into more operational or proactive conducts such as discrimination and bullying (see Table 1). Race and racism jointly with geography/nationality-related visions of prejudice constitute another 30.34% of the analysed Vines. The global reach of the medium and the international body of its users seem to foster such multicultural considerations. Other salient topics related to views of prejudice include gender and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) issues (10.11%), looks and appearance (8.99%), and prejudice related to learning, school, and bullying (6.74%). In relation to the aforementioned topics/categories, five leading themes emerged from the multimodal analysis of the Vines, as discussed in the following sections.

### 5.1. Impromptu impressions

In the analysed Vines, a dramatic and expansive gestural repertoire accompanies the spatial and visual modes, apparently to compensate for the limitations of time (approx. 6 seconds) and space (the real estate of the screen and the constraints of smartphone cameras). Since several Vines are self-recordings (or "video-selfies"), the expression of the face prevails on and compensates for other modes of self-expression. This repertoire includes broad sarcastic smiles, eyelid lifts, side glances, comprehensive frowning of the brow, hair touching, head shaking, and nose scrunching. Unlike conventional journalists, who typically report information dispassionately, the authors-protagonists of the Vines analysed in this study employ

facial expressions and limb movements to emphatically personalize and realize their definitions of prejudice in a limited time and space. In this context, Vine appears to be an ideal medium to note and share recent dramatic experiences or encumbering emotions, since its briefness, immediacy, and ubiquity allow for expression without over-processing, as users capture and share thoughts and feelings when they are still vivid or even as they unfold. On the other hand, these “diary” and “documentary” uses of the medium enable a delayed and distributed form of reflectivity (several users can access it at a later, indefinite, time) that also functions as a memento for the author of the message and its interested (or casual) viewers.

## 5.2. Pillow talk

Vine users incorporate the various spaces that they feel are most relevant to their notions of prejudice or capture and share their views and emotions wherever and whenever they feel the urge to do so. To some extent, this is not unanticipated behaviour. Suler (2004) and Green, Bobrowicz, and Ang (2015) find that people share their experiences and selves online, even when what they share might be less easily discussed in person. However, the semiotic affordances of Vine may further affect this tendency. The punctuated spatial and visual modes inherent to the platform and the portability of the devices used to record the Vines lend themselves to make users’ experiences immediately available for the viewer. Although the structure of Vine enables users to expand the settings of their messages, their need to highlight the immediacy and relevance of their experiences with prejudice inclines them towards a construction of “forced intimacy.” Users commonly film themselves with bird’s-eye, frog’s-eye, centred full facial, or centred mid-face to torso perspectives, giving viewers nowhere else to focus on but their person. For this reason, gestures, facial expressions, and the spatial support from lighting and domesticity play a prominent role in these messages, like in the following excerpt:

Cut 1

L: [*tremulous*] Another reason why I like Robin Williams is (.) he was (.) against racism, prejudism, and sexi>

A: silence

V: bird’s eye view of speaker’s face and torso

G: sweeps hair with fingers towards start, scrunches face throughout

S: on pillow

In this Vine, the author shares his appreciation of Robin Williams through the actor's advocacy for social justice causes. The viewer is forced to observe the speaker carefully throughout his message, with the only background visible – that of a pillow on a bed – allaying the intrusion with a calming sense of candour and familiarity. Data show that approximately 36% of the indoor videos took place on a bed, couch, or other reclining furniture item. Although such spaces may serve as coddling and, to a certain extent, intimate invitations, the sudden and often exaggerated visual and gestural means (e.g., facial expressions and limb movements) vividly advocate users' views on prejudice and their impetus to share them with an audience. From this perspective, the discourse on prejudice represented on Vine shows a spatially and temporally condensed interplay between modes encapsulated in padded and protected environments; these confined surroundings invite the viewer and give prominence to the message by isolating it from the outside world.

### **5.3. Telic epiphanies**

The brevity of Vine forecloses some of the narrative complexity that can be accomplished through other means of communication. While some of this is remedied through the addition of video descriptions and hashtags, users can still feel narratively constricted, as evidenced by those Vines that are cut off before the message is fully conveyed. As such, Vine users often resort to multimodal "dramatic cuts" (without transitions) and "dramatic endings" to achieve their communicative goals:

#### Cut 1

L: Hey guys (.) Some people have been thinking that I'm prejudiced lately (.)

A: silence

V: centred focus on speaker's face,

G: another man flaring eyes and grinning off to left

S: none

#### Cut 2

L: I mean (.) All I do is sit home and play Minecraft (.)

A: silence

V: focus on Minecraft game and clock

G: none

S: Minecraft swastika [*designed in the game*]

Cut 3

L: Oh, I'm Hitler

A: silence

V: frog's eye view of speaker

G: same second man partially visible on bottom left

S: none

Epiphanies are abrupt and intensely emotional revelations (Jarvis, 1996), two qualities that the Vine platform can accommodate well through theatrical gestures, rapid changes in visual framing, the precipitous appearance of new objects in the foreground or background, and sharp changes in pitch and linguistic pacing to elicit users' attention. Interestingly, several of these epiphanies are humorous in nature; in this sense, they are reminiscent of the punch lines of jokes, providing viewers with a revealing closure at the end of the message.

#### **5.4. Cubist renderings**

A striking feature of Vine is the ability for the user to insert her or himself into the frame from various angles in rapid succession. This manipulation of the spatial and visual contours of the message creates a virtual multiplicity of supporting voices, even where there is only one author. Users align each of these perspectives with different roles in self-acted conversations with themselves (as different characters), pets, or even objects. The effect of these cubist renderings is, in either case, persuasive. Visual, spatial, and gestural modes are manipulated to create a sense of inevitability through a choral and iterated agreement of perspectives/voices, a "stacking of the deck" in a confined and simulated debate intensified by the continuous looping of the Vines.

#### **5.5. Disrupted normalcy**

Nearly all the analysed Vines demonstrated the iconoclasm of a norm. Whether because of the bold celerity of the medium, the evidentiary potential, or the distance from the viewers, the creators of the messages felt comfortable confidently

challenging others' understandings of prejudice. This confidence resulted in users speaking forcefully in their own voices, using the linguistic mode for self-expression. Even more dominant, though, were those modes which fleshed out the distinctive personalities of the authors, providing lived, experiential, and non-academic interpretations of prejudice.

One of the most common instruments used to challenge normalcy was humour. In these Vines creators juxtaposed prejudice to closed-mindedness, stereotyping, and bigotry, signalling its silent pervasiveness in society. For example, in one on the Vines, a young African-American man talks to the camera like in a staged interview for a local TV show or news program (the setting is a nice suburban neighbourhood). He earnestly states: "I like running through white people neighbourhoods with my shirt off." In the subsequent cut, this young man is running in a joyous and triumphant posture that resembles a victorious sprinter right after the finish line. With an elated, vibrant, and high-pitched voice girdled in euphoric laughter, he communicates uncontainable enthusiasm and pure enjoyment as he exclaims: "Haha, I'm gonna steal all your stuff, hahaha!" By using humour through the condensed and multimodal affordances of Vine, users attempt at unmasking and challenging the latent and everyday normalcy of prejudice.

## **6. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies**

Although we have characterized several keys in which users of Vine talk about prejudice, we also recognize that this study has limitations. As mentioned earlier, the study is focused on the use of Vine to express attitudes and perceptions about prejudice, but it does not include Vines that express prejudicial attitudes, without expressly acknowledging it. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that there are other Vines concerning prejudice that do not carry the "prejudice" hashtag. Aside from our focus on the hashtag as a sampling tool, we did not explicitly research the mechanisms through which Vines achieve prominence; these mechanisms could have a mitigating or amplifying effect on the eventual evolution of the conversation surrounding prejudice. Further, we did not consider the impact, popularity, or number and quality of elicited comments. The investigation of prejudice on Vine from an international and multicultural perspective would also be valuable, in order to compare and contrast local and global conceptions of prejudice. Other lines of inquiry may include identifying how prejudiced views are propagated and received across

computer-mediated channels explaining how social media isolate, perpetuate, or defeat particular kinds of viewpoints and biases.

## 7. Conclusions

The themes discussed in this article represent the engagements that users felt particularly valuable for a personal portrayal of prejudice on Vine. Indeed, within the parameters of this rapid and “confessional” medium, users craft a person-oriented kind of “dramatized authenticity,” which aspires to be both socially activist and attuned to the emotions of others. The purposeful contextualization of prejudice through telic epiphanies, cubist renderings, and other normative disruptions draws an unrelenting attention to latent prejudice, thereby unveiling its pervasiveness and, at the same time, potentially inhibiting its evolution to the stages of discrimination and bullying. In conclusion, this study’s findings suggest that Vine and similar short-form social media may serve as a bold and powerful tool for personal expression and social change. In recognizing that the process involved in bullying is one of stark aggression, Vines seem to have the capability of producing disarming “anti-aggressions,” often through the use of humour. The provocative brevity and multimodality of the medium reveals prejudice as a lurking danger to be exposed, with the added implication that purposeful action in this regard is required. Ultimately, the analysis of the affordances of an emergent social medium in relation to user representations of prejudice can serve as the first step towards further research aimed at preventing and counteracting discrimination and bullying (e.g., have students create short-form videos against prejudice to be published on social media). In this sense, the contextualization of prejudice on Vine highlighted in this study can support future studies on responsible and activist uses of personal media and technologies for civic participation and social change.

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