

On November 13, 2020 at around 1pm EST, I decided to visit a Facebook group: “The Kensington Market Salon”, which is an online group for people who love Kensington Market, and one of its community pages: “Friends of Kensington Market”. Both platforms are really active, with the newest post posted on November 11 and 12 respectively.

I decide to scroll through the community page “Friends of Kensington Market” first. There are a lot of posts promoting events like the Kensington Jazz Festival and informing about news events like car accidents in Kensington Market. So, the site is definitely casual yet informative. Since it is a community page, all the posts are made by the author of the page, whose identity cannot be identified anywhere from the site. I wonder who the author, so I do some more research on Google, where I find that Friends of Kensington Market is an organization formed by people who love Kensington Market. Its board member consists of several people, so it is impossible for me to identify which one of them update the Facebook page.

A post by from August 8 asking for help and donation for an anti-oppression event that took place at Baldwin St. on August 11 attracts my attention. The post features a photo of the poster of the event. The title of the poster is “Painting a Vision of a Future Without Oppression”, and it also says that Black and non-binary artists would be painting “their vision” on Baldwin St. The post asks people to donate or to volunteer to move supplies for the event. Most reactions to the post are positive, with likes and loves, but one person – Chris Clarke reacts “sad”. In the comments section, he questions the nature of the event and asks why the event only hires “niche acts” instead of allowing all types of acts to participate, which he thinks actually promoted oppressiveness. *[Does that reflect evidence of racism and sexism? But he does infer that the event should include more types of acts, which promotes diversity. Maybe there is just an inherent bias in him against black and non-binary artists.]* The author of the page responds by commenting that women and black communities have

been oppressed and discriminated for too long, so he/she argues that they those artists deserve their space and opportunity to shine. He/she particularly mentions that a large number of people dying from COVID is “black and racialized neighbors”. The author’s language is largely factual, and the tone is mild - he/she does not seem to be irritated by the possible lack of understanding of Chris. *[This could imply that the author is understanding of the different opinions that people have, and it also reflects her belief that diversity should be celebrated.]* Another comment on the post is made by CJ Picek, who questions the possibility of a world without oppression, to which Venetia Butler simply replies by saying “so can we count of your support?” *[Even though CJ does not believe that oppression will end, Venetia still decides to ask for his help. This could reflect her strong belief in ending oppression.]*

After scrolling for a while longer, I decide to move to “The Kensington Market Salon”, which is a Facebook group, so there are many posts made by different people, mostly who, I assume, reside in or like Kensington Market. Therefore, the site is definitely quite casual. The thread of posts on Jumbo Empanadas fire attracted my attention, as there are several similar posts on the topic. I know that Jumbo Empanadas sells Latin American cuisine, specifically empanadas, from the name of the store, but I do not know any other details of the store, as the posts do not go into a lot of details about the store. I think the original poster assume that people in the group know about the store, which means that Jumbo Empanadas is very famous and that people in the group know it very well. Therefore, out of curiosity as an outsider, I decide to do a quick Google search to get to know the restaurant better. Jumbo Empanadas is a Chilean restaurant in Augusta Avenue that started back in 1991 offering cuisine from Latin America. However, the restaurant had a fire on the night of October 17, which led to its close down for repair works.

The first post on the Jumbo Empanadas fire is made on October 18, the day after the fire, by Venetia Butler. The post comes with a picture of the store after the fire, and there is a

total of 154 reactions, and among them, there are many sad reactions (the sad-faced emoji) towards the post. There are also many comments made, some of them expressing sadness, such as “Oh no!”, and others expressing their desire to help, such as “would love to help out”. Particularly, there is a comment made by Leyla RH to make a GoFundMe page for the store owners. Her comment stands out to me because she does not just say that she will help, but she also creates a GoFundMe page, which started officially on November 1. It has accumulated over \$10000 out of the \$12000 target. Interestingly, there are a lot of earlier comments by other people who said they would like to help, but there is no evidence that they actually do something until Leyla. Leyla RH, according to herself in one of the comments, is a “neighbor” and a “Salvadoran”, which she states is also the ethnic background of the store owner. In fact, she further comments that the store owner’s brother worked with her mom in El Salvador. *[It is interesting that Leyla is the one that ultimately started the action to help the store owners because of her similar background to the store owners. This could potentially reflect that other people do not feel as strongly as Leyla to want to do something for the store owners. However, a lot of people do donate to the cause, hence demonstrating the sense of collaboration to help someone of different ethnicities.]*

On October 28, three days before the GoFundMe page is set up, Leyla posts another post asking for an update on the store, and particularly she wants to know if anyone knows the contact information of the store owner. Maggie Helwig reaches out to her and comments that she has contacted the store owner through email and telephone, and she is informed that the owner plans to reopen the store in 4 weeks’ time. Maggie further requests Leyla to get in touch with her so that they can set up the GoFundMe page together. A further comment by Leyla suggests that Maggie and Leyla do not ultimately create the GoFundMe page together, as Leyla assumes Maggie is busy with her community work. In the same comment, Leyla asked for other people who might want to collaborate on the GoFundMe page, but there is no

response. However, on the GoFundMe page, it states that Venetia Butler, who posts the first post about the fire, is, in fact, the co-organizer.

After the GoFundMe page started, Leyla posts 2 other posts with the GoFundMe link on November 1 and November 3 respectively to encourage more people to donate. The two posts are generally well-received (though did not receive as many reactions as the first post) as about 10 people react on each post, and particularly, the post on November 1 is shared 10 times. In the November 3's post, Leyla comments: "We're on our way to \$10,000", expressing her excitement towards the progress made so far in just less than 3 days. The last post about Jumbo Empanada fire is made on November 5, by Venetia, the same person who started the first post. In the post, which she captions: "1992 remember?", she shares a picture of the store of Jumbo Empanada in 1992 directly from the store's Facebook page, which has accumulated 14 likes and loves reactions, but with no comment. This ends the thread with a nostalgic and loving tone.

Further Analysis: The commentators (Chris and CJ) on the post about the anti-oppression event seem to have doubts regarding the nature of the event itself. This can possibly reflect their lack of desire to contribute to events that help promote cultural diversity, but they are just the minority. In the Jumbo Empanadas thread, Layla seems to be the one that remains engaged throughout in the topic. While this demonstrates her willingness to contribute to help maintaining cultural diversity in Kensington Market (through helping the store to reopen), I cannot disregard the possibility that Layla may be doing this as she has some connections to the store owners. Other people have demonstrated the desire to help, but only a few actually involve actively in helping in the donation process. Even the last post in the thread has a lot less reactions as compared to the first post. This can potentially reflect that most people in the community are more likely to participate in passive collaboration (by donating) as opposed to an active collaboration.