

***They Still Have a Dream: a research paper on the emergence of the BLM
movement as a consequence of racial profiling by police force and the
reproduction of racist messages in mass media***

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Abstract

This academic paper focuses on the racial profiling and discursive bias against African American people in the United States. The aim of this paper is twofold: first, to illustrate and develop the Black Lives Matter movement as a consequence of racism as well as the legislation and different programs that have been created to reduce police brutality and, second, to evince the way mass media reproduces and perpetrates racist messages. This academic paper was written by means of collecting information retrieved from varied sources and assorted experts of each area mentioned as well as by applying the discursive strategies proposed by linguist Van Dijk. Ultimately, the authors of this work concluded that structural racism is a trait that prevails in the American

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society in spite of the creation of social movements and regulations that aim to combat racial profiling.

Key words: Black Lives Matter, United States, racism, police force, media, discourse, bias, legislation, social movements, discursive strategies.

Resumen

El presente artículo académico se centra en el perfilado racial y el sesgo discursivo contra las personas afroamericanas de los Estados Unidos. Este trabajo tiene dos objetivos: en primer lugar, ejemplificar y desarrollar el movimiento Black Lives Matter como consecuencia del racismo así como las leyes y los distintos programas que se han creado para reducir la violencia policial y, en segundo lugar, demostrar la forma en que los medios de comunicación masiva reproducen y perpetúan un mensaje racista. El presente artículo académico fue escrito mediante la colección de información proveniente de diferentes fuentes y expertos en cada área mencionada así como la aplicación de las estrategias discursivas propuestas por el lingüista Van Dijk. Finalmente, las autoras de este trabajo llegaron a la conclusión de que, pese a la creación de movimientos sociales y normas que aspiran a combatir el perfilado racial, el racismo estructural es un rasgo que prevalece en la sociedad norteamericana.

Palabras clave: Black Lives Matter, Estados Unidos, racismo, fuerza policial, medios, discurso, sesgo, leyes, movimientos sociales, estrategias discursivas.

Introduction

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today (NPR, cites Luther King Jr., 2022).

Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. once expressed these words at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C, where he alluded to the Emancipation Declaration in which slaves were declared “forever free” in all confederate states. Moreover, King appealed to former President John Kennedy to issue a second Emancipation Declaration in order to “free all Negroes from second class citizenship” (King Encyclopaedia, n/d, paragraph 2). Although the Congress passed the “Civil Rights Act of 1964” in said year, structural racism has remained latent in the ideology, politics, and socio-cultural aspects in the United States (Greenwald and Jones, 2016).

When addressing racism, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (n/d) puts forward an interesting definition:
Racism is an ideology that either directly or indirectly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others (paragraph 6).

Even though progress has been achieved in some aspects of society, the marginalization and constraints imposed on certain communities due to race, color, ethnicity, or nationality remain as a serious conflict, which in turn causes tremendous damage to the extent of death.

Racism, then, is not a new phenomenon. It is not a concept created a couple of years ago. Racism has been part of American society for centuries: since the nation emerged, discrimination against minorities has existed. In particular, racism towards black communities

has been — and still is — deeply embedded in the American system. Racism can take different forms: from open and violent attacks against black people to subtle indirect biased measures taken against them. Racism is not always visible at first sight, as it is often hidden behind apparently non-racial discourses.

Particularly in the United States of America, racial affairs have represented a major issue since much before the Civil War (National Park Service, n/d), giving rise to a clear segregation in society, where most of the “caretakers” – enforcement agencies – disregard Black people’s rights and attack them brutally. Additionally, digital media platforms as well as the print media certainly play a significant role in the proliferation of their underlying ideals, with a scope that extends far beyond what one can imagine, and by employing discursive strategies that facilitate their mission when delivering a biased message.

What is more, social inequality has been an issue in the United States since, within discourse, the media chooses words like “thugs”, “gangs” to describe “possible” black criminals and, on the other hand, white offenders are described as “kids prone to make mistakes” or “youthful debauchery” thus perpetuating racial discourse that is further legitimized by enforcement agencies (Greenwald and Jones, 2016).

As a result, many movements have been created with the aim of eliminating the aforementioned structural racism underlying the American system. But none of them has caused such an impact — and has received so much criticism — as the Black Lives Matter movement. Since its creation in 2013 and particularly after it gained worldwide importance in 2020, BLM has been the target of highly critical reports from the press, politicians and society in general.

Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to expound the issues of racism and discrimination that continue to wound and mark society so deeply. To that end, the subject of the present study will focus on one of the most famous organizations existing these days which advocates for Black people's human rights, that is, Black Lives Matter. At first, a general overview of the origins and purposes of the BLM movement will be provided. Then a special section will be devoted to elucidating some of the structural changes accomplished so far with regard to police forces. In said section, a review will be done on the legislation that regulates the activity and behavior of the police force; the training that police forces have to go through in order to exercise their duties; the effectiveness of these training programs; and the community engagement initiatives that arose from this social conflict which has been in crescendo in the last decade. Lastly, a critical analysis will be carried out regarding the partial discursive strategies used by the media to foster an anti-minority message.

Section 1: What is Black Lives Matter?

The history of the United States has been strongly marked by racial inequality towards black communities; and though it has been more than 50 years since segregation was legally ended by the signing of the Civil Rights Act (National Archives, n/d), racism towards black communities still persists today on a great scale. When addressing social concerns, it seems as if racial justice has historically been a central topic of unending debate. Even nowadays, fighting for basic human rights remains a grueling struggle for black people. Throughout the years, different movements were created with the aim of stopping racial discrimination, but none of them has had as much impact as the "Black Lives Matter" movement (BLM). Thus, this section aims to shed light on the Black Lives Matter movement, analyzing its foundations, purposes, ideology and political stance.

While BLM might seem like a brand-new movement based in the United States, its mission against oppression and racial inequality can be traced back to the 1960s and, currently, it flourishes day by day around the world. Though originally created in 2013 as a response to Trayvon Martin's murder at the hands of a former police officer, it was not until 2020, after the death of George Floyd, that the BLM movement became known worldwide. BLM sparked the largest racial justice protests in the United States and the momentum of these rallies has inspired other countries to support its goals of finally obtaining racial equality.

Black Lives Matter first appeared as a hashtag in social media, created by three black women—Alicia Garza, Patrice Cullors, and Opal Tometi—as a reaction to the murder of an African American teenager by a police officer and as a response to the “miscarriage of justice” due to his acquittal (Koen and Bowers, 2018; Black Lives Matter Official Website, n/d). In the following year, similar cases of racial violence took place in the United States such as the shooting of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, among others. Thus, according to the British Broadcasting Company (2020), the movement broke out nationwide and, at the same time, BLM gained increasing importance at a global level. It is important to mention that the protests were first held in Washington DC, the capital of the United States and the political center of the country. The streets of said place have witnessed protests against white supremacy and racial violence since 1922 and became the ground zero for Black Lives Matter (British Broadcasting Company, 2020).

Since its origins, the purpose of the Black Lives Matter movement has been to “eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes” (Black Lives Matter Official Website, n/d,

paragraph 1). Its mission consists in strengthening local power as well as interfering when brutality was exerted on black communities. This movement emerged in order to foster social change and fight to defend every black person's social, economic, and political freedoms. As global as it has become, BLM aims to gather citizens from all over the world in a fight against the institutions which deprive black people of their inherent rights as individuals, which have been, and still are, relentlessly taken away by the state through police force violence (Tillery and Alvin B. Jr., 2019).

Black Lives Matter has soon become a reminder of what has been—and still is—part of American history: white supremacy and the vulnerability of black communities. In fact, the hallmarks of American democracy — opportunity, freedom, and prosperity — have been historically reserved almost exclusively for white people, leaving black communities at the fringe of the system; thus, promoting oppression and exclusion (Braveman et al., 2022). This can be understood as the direct result of structural racism, that is a form of racism that is deeply rooted in social and political systems which “produce, condone, and perpetuate widespread unfair treatment of people of color” (Braveman et al., 2022, paragraph 3). The BLM movement, then, seeks to fight against these acts of violence mostly perpetrated by the police force by asking for the implementation of societal reforms that will grant black people equality. Opal Tometi, one of the founders of BLM, in her article *Black Lives Matter Is Not a Civil Rights Movement* (2015) states that the movement advocates for “the full recognition of [black people’s] rights as citizens; and it is a battle for full civil, social, political, legal, economic and cultural rights as enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (Tometi and Lenoir, 2015, paragraph 1).

Graves (2020) reveals that with the growing activity that the movement has had over the past years due to George Floyd's case - a Minneapolis black neighbor whose image circulated in the media while he died suffocated by a police officer – many people showed eagerness to join the mass protests which started to take place around the world. However, what happens with those who are unable to physically join the movement? On its official website, Black Lives Matter (n/d) invites any person who wants to contribute to the cause. Right from the very first moment, when entering the site, the viewer is greeted with a section where it is possible to join the movement so as to be kept updated on the organization, launches, among others. Furthermore, anyone may also report sites, posts and even stories contributing to the disinformation about the movement. Perhaps one of the most important ways in which people may contribute to the organization is by donating money “to help activists doing work in physical communities” (Freelon, D., McIlwain, C. D., & Clark, M. D., 2016, p. 35) and, according to the BLM site, they seek help from other corporations and foundations in order to “meet the enormous demands” (Black Lives Matter Official Site, n/d, paragraph 7).

Black Lives Matter is described as a decentralized political and social movement that does not identify itself with any political stance; an affirmation which may not be completely true considering certain aspects of its political support (Black Lives Matter Official Website, n/d). To illustrate this, it can be mentioned that there is a section in BLM's official website labeled as BLM's 7 Demands which consists mainly of claims against members of the Republican Party; a factor that may lead people to believe that there is a center-left ideology underlying the BLM movement. Just as an example, the first demand focus on banning Trump from future political office, and the movement states that it will join certain

Representatives — who are all Democrats — in this claim. Similarly, the second demand centers on expelling certain Republican members from Congress, who have allegedly “encouraged the white supremacists to take action to overturn the election” (Black Lives Matter Official Website, n/d, second demand). Again, the movement asserts its support towards a Representative who belongs to the Democratic Party in this initiative.

Since the nation's founding, the United States has been formed by conflicts between competing "race hierarchies" or "racial policy alignments" (Smith and King, 2020). Moreover, Smith and King evince that since the beginning of the twentieth century, these debates have primarily been between advocates of "color-blind" and "race-conscious" governmental policies (2020). Under the administration of President Donald Trump, the racially conservative "color-blind" policy coalition became an alliance promising "white protectionism."; therefore, to challenge this “white protectionism”, the Black Lives Matter movement aims at creating a more racial consciousness in terms of policy coalition which is becoming an alliance focused on "racial reparations" to abolish "structural racism" (Smith and King, 2020).

Author Juliet Hooker (2016) states that it is important to consider the general conceptualization that society has on black political practice since the negative backlash to the Black Lives Matter protests are “indicative of a crisis of U.S. democracy, but rather politics as usual in the racial state” (Hooker, 2016, p. 450). Moreover, Hooker (2016) cites Professor Danielle Allen (2004) in her thesis and states that the democracy in the United States deals with an uneven story of losses and sacrifices in which the burden of sacrifice relies upon “the powerless sovereigns” (Hooker, 2016, p.454) and there exists a relationship of domination (white people) and acquiescence (black people) which assigns the following:

To one group all the work of being sovereign [whites], and to another group [blacks] most of the work of accepting the significant losses that kept the polity stable (Hooker, 2016, p. 454).

Thus, this illustrates that African Americans have been subdued to those who are sovereign, and this systematic subordination has been one of the factors that provoked the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement so as to achieve racial justice (Hooker, 2016).

All in all, the Black Lives Matter movement is an organization which seeks to evince the racism suffered by black communities and aims to raise awareness towards this issue so as to formulate and implement policies which will reduce the amount of violence inflicted on black people, especially at the hands of police officers. It envisions the removal of all forms of racial discrimination against black people and the engagement of individuals and corporations at a worldwide level so as to put an end to all kinds of violent acts perpetrated by the police. A characteristic of the BLM movement is that it is not directly associated with any political party, though it may be argued that, considering the demands analyzed in the prior paragraph, there is a center-left ideology underlying the movement.

Section 2: Measures Taken to Reduce Police Brutality Against Black People

As described in the previous section, the Black Lives Matter movement strives to eliminate the violence suffered by black communities as a result of the structural racism underlying the American law enforcement system. This racial bias is especially present in police organizations, as it is evinced in the research carried out by Edwards, Lee and Esposito (2019), where the data showed that black people are more likely to be the target of police brutality than white people are. In this regard, the House Committee on the Judiciary (n/d) claims that systematic racism and unlimited policing have been engraved in society and,

therefore, trying to eradicate them will undoubtedly be a difficult task. Therefore, the aim of this section is to highlight legislation advocating a progressive proposal that could create structural change and analyze the creation, use and efficiency of special police training and engagement programs.

Following George Floyd's brutal murder, the Congressional Research Service (CRS, 2021) summarizes the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021. This is the latest bill passed in the House of Representatives of the United States Congress concerning the excessive use of force by police, which, according to the CRS:

Increases accountability for law enforcement misconduct, restricts the use of certain policing practices, enhances transparency and data collection, and establishes best practices and training requirements (CRS, 2021, paragraph 1).

Additionally, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act bill places special emphasis on what is known as qualified immunity — a legal immunity that protects “a government official from lawsuits alleging that the official violated a plaintiff's rights” (The Legal Information Institute from Cornell Law School, n/d, paragraph2). In Section 102 of the bill, it is proposed to remove the qualified immunity police officers hold, as an approach to increase police accountability for their unlawful actions against black people.

Furthermore, in September 2021, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF, 2021) released the statement of Sherrilyn Ifill –President and Director – Counsel of said organization – after members of the United States Senate rejected the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021. In said statement, Ifill expressed her discontent by asserting that “the failure of this legislation to move forward is a failure for our democracy” (paragraph 2). She further described the course of the process and outlined the hard work of

Congresswoman Karen Bass of California, and Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey, two democrats who relentlessly negotiated “with determination and in good faith” (paragraph 3) to advance with this significant bill and whose initiatives were not kindly embraced by Republican Senators such as Tim Scott of South Carolina. Another important aspect Ifill mentioned in the statement is that, while the problem has not been addressed by Congressmen, several districts and states have already drafted landmark accountability legislation and designed interventions aimed at changing public safety. For example, California approved the Assembly Bill No. 1196 which bans the use of chokeholds by police officers, and Virginia passed House Bill No. 5090, which demands police officers to intervene when a peer is using excessive force. Analogous bills were also passed by New York, Oregon, Arizona, Colorado, among others.

Apart from the bills described in the preceding paragraphs, other methods have been devised so as to achieve actual structural change. For instance, The Police Executive Research Forum (2016) comments on the implementation of Ethic Policing Is Courageous (EPIC), a program based on peer intervention, which was created by members of the New Orleans Police Department along with some civil rights advocates and social science experts. The Police Executive Research Forum further claims that this program has envisioned to teach police officers to intervene when witnessing other officers going beyond the powers they were granted, by providing them with the “strategies and tools they need to step in and prevent problems before they occur” (p. 2). EPIC does not only purvey special moral training, but it also offers protection to those police officers who act accordingly.

An example of EPIC implementation is that of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD, n/d.), which, according to its official website, has embraced the EPIC principles and

they can now be observed in the training provided to sworn members of the BPD. Such police organization also states that training has its foundations on the science of active bystandership – its notion is explained below – and it further asserts that learning is conveyed by means of cases based on real life. Moreover, The Center for Innovations in Community Safety (CICS, n/d) of Georgetown Law brings up Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE), a nationwide project which has similarly been designed to guide police officers to step in to prevent or mitigate misconduct and “create a law enforcement culture that supports peer intervention” (paragraph 1). In addition, the CICS highlights that ABLE training is free of charges for enforcement bodies, but active bystandership and peer intervention are expected from these agencies by means of training, accountability, policy, and support.

In connection to the foregoing, the ABLE program attracted several agencies of the United States and requires the participation of all the members of the agency, from those members with the highest hierarchy to those with the lowest. The “ABLE” training program proposes the model “train-the-trainer”, where instructors are thoroughly trained and further certified, allowing them to deliver the program to their colleagues and expand it throughout the United States. In fact, many police departments have adopted the ABLE project, including, among others, Philadelphia, New Orleans, NYC, Dallas, Denver, Wilmington (NC), Boston, and Baltimore (list retrieved from the Philadelphia Police Department Official Website, n/d, paragraph 9), and many more which are in the process of doing so.

While training strategies are still being executed, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 1997) many communities have been taking matters into their own hands since the 1950s and consequently *civilian review* has been developed in order to carry out a check on policing. In “Fighting Police Abuse: A Community Action Manual”, the

ACLU elucidates the idea behind civilian review by claiming that as complaints filed by citizens are reviewed by individuals who are not sworn police officers, civilian inquiries are more autonomous. ACLU also emphasizes that, at the beginning, civilian control over police activity was only an unfeasible idea but gradually the system was adopted by more than 80 cities across the United States. Moreover, it is revealed that civilian review systems acquire different shapes: some of them are formed mainly by citizens and therefore are considered “more “civilian” than others” (paragraph 8), while several consist of a municipal agency presided over by an executive director. Some essential types of systems might vary from the most “civilian” types headed by individuals who are not sworn officers to the least autonomous types in which case the process is directed by sworn officers.

The ACLU (1997) further asserts that civilian review boards actually work because the already existing ones reduce not only the public reluctance to file complaints, but also the bureaucratic procedural barriers that come hand in hand with this. Also, there is more control over police policies, and it fosters other reform efforts. Section 4 of this manual contemplates and outlines the importance of civilian review boards, the control of police shootings and the use of deadly force, and it establishes that one of its main goals is to reduce police brutality.

In conclusion, completely eradicating racism is a desirable but yet distant end, as it is deeply rooted in the American system, in particular inside law enforcement agencies. Nevertheless, methods such as special training for police organizations and community engagement programs are being introduced to attend to the violence exerted by enforcement agencies towards black people. Actions and measures as the ones discussed throughout this section imply a slow but firm step towards reducing police brutality against black communities.

Section 3: Common strategies employed by the press which suggest racist bias

The authors of this academic paper have carried out an in-depth analysis of the discursive strategies used by the media, in three different newspaper articles, that perpetuate racism and reproduce biased ideologies against minorities, mostly, against African American people. Said strategies, proposed by linguist Van Dijk, include disclaimers, hyperboles, metaphors, and the use of lexicalization, among others. This section will focus on the analysis of examples of these strategies found in different newspaper articles.

The first two articles were published in the American newspaper Fox News, whose slogan is “fair and balanced”. However, Pew Research Center conducted a survey and analyzed the demographics of said network and the results showed that said newspaper had a strong far-right political stance and, due to this reason, it has been highly criticized for employing biased reporting practices in its articles.

Said articles are, on the one hand, *BLM silent when confronted with data showing massive 2020 spike in Black murder victims* (see Appendix 1), written by Emma Colton, which seeks to create and divulge sentiments against the Black Lives Matter movement. On the other hand, *Hey, Black Lives Matter, stop terrorizing our cities* (see Appendix 2), written by journalist Todd Starnes, whose conservative views and tendencies are quite marked.

Then, the third article, entitled *Why I'm suing Black Lives Matter* (see Appendix 3) is published in the Washington Examiner: a self-proclaimed American conservative newspaper which current motto of “Restoring America” advocates the “American Ideals” of patriotism, unity, strength, optimism, among others, and therefore it addresses a conservative-republican audience. Moreover, it should be highlighted the fact that the article under study was written by Todd Rokita, a Republican Attorney General serving for Indiana.

To begin with the analysis of the articles, the first discursive strategy illustrating the ongoing racist speech in the media that will be examined is a *disclaimer*. To start with, a disclaimer “combines positive self-presentation [of the dominant group] and negative other-presentation in one formula” (Van Dijk, 2012, p. 25). A typical disclaimer could begin with “I have nothing against black people, but...” and that but-clause is usually followed by negative or racist phrases. Van Dijk explains that the first part of the formula is used to prevent a negative first impression by the reader, so that the speaker or writer would not be immediately categorized as racist. Some examples of this found in the articles are:

Police say it was a peaceful protest. **But** photographs taken from the bridge showed a very different situation. In one instance, young men climbed atop a tractor-trailer- raising their fists in defiance (Starnes, 2016, paragraph 8).

There is no question that serious racial problems have been a part of our nation’s history. In fact, every nation significant to world history built itself up in some degree, wrongly, on the backs of slaves. This should not be forgotten. **But** it should be put into context, including that our way of self-government accelerated the abolition of slavery in America. Our children should be taught to love their country, not falsely condemn it. (Rokita, 2022, paragraph 18)

These are examples of disclaimers of apparent concession. At first there seems to be a positive and realistic message, yet the but-clause immediately counteracts and conveys a negative idea.

Another important device employed by the media to reproduce racist ideologies is *lexicalization*. Van Dijk (1991) asserts that the choice of a particular word is never neutral; instead, it tends to “signal the opinions, emotions or social position of a speaker” (p. 53). In this way, word choices are always influenced by the person’s view of the topic being

discussed. Thus, the media commonly employs words with negative connotations, for example words associated with violence, to refer to the Others. This strategy can be found in the article written by Colton: the adjective “skyrocketing” (paragraph 1) is used to stress the way in which the number of black murders suddenly increased to unprecedented levels after the adoption of the measures to defund the police promoted by the BLM movement. The verbs “spike” (paragraph 4) and “shoot up” (paragraph 6) reinforce this idea. Then, in the article written by Starnes, another instance of this strategy can be found:

It feels like our nation has been sucker-punched. You can see it on people's faces. Sorrow. Frustration. Anger. Helplessness (Starnes, 2016, paragraph 22).

The use of words here show that all U.S. citizens feel helpless whilst “U.S. police killed at least 258 black people in 2016” (Craven, 2017, p.1) Therefore, the author is reversing the situation and portraying white U.S. citizens as the victims of the dangers that black people pose to society and that they are the ones to blame.

A further strategy that is commonly used is the literary device of *hyperbole*. It is revealed that hyperboles – defined as “extravagant exaggerations” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) – will serve to characterize the Other’s negative features or actions. This device is found in the article written by Starnes, whose lead reads:

Black Lives Matter protesters *laid siege* to a number of cities over the weekend including my hometown: Memphis, Tennessee (Starnes, 2016, paragraph 1).

The author uses hyperbole (*laid siege*) and then, he directly mentions that the protest is being held in his hometown. When the author refers to “my hometown” he may refer, implicitly, that the country itself is being threatened by the protesters.

Another strategy employed is the one of explicit vs. implicit meanings, in which case readers are presumed to possess certain general knowledge that will lead them to make their own associations without resorting to explicit information appearing on discourse. For instance, this is used in the article written by Starnes to make the audience have a negative impression of the Black Lives Matter movement: “I wonder if the driver of that tractor-trailer thought it was a peaceful demonstration?” (Starnes, 2016, paragraph 6) or:

We have no idea how many emergency responses were hampered by the gridlock created by the BLM crowd. We have no idea how many people missed family events or missed work because they were trapped on the interstate (Starnes, 2016, paragraph 9).

Furthermore, *implicitness* is also used in the article written by Rokita:
Rather, our investigation pertains to expectations of ethical, financial, and legal propriety on which all honest and law-abiding people can agree (paragraph 20)

In this case, it can be perceived how Rokita expects the audience to recognize themselves in the “all honest and law-abiding people”, once again perpetuating a distance between them – the lawbreakers – and us – the ideal model citizens.

In addition, there is another strategy worth mentioning that is the one of the “protest paradigm”, which is found in all articles:

The protest paradigm states that the media tends to emphasize the drama, inconvenience and disruption that protests create, rather than highlighting the demands and grievances of the protestors themselves (Palmer, 2021, p. 15).

Moreover, the paratext also plays a crucial role in reinforcing the idea that BLM is a destructive movement. For example, in the article written by Colton, the second picture included in the article shows the American flag in front of a building on fire as a result of a

riot against the murder of Jacob Blake at the hands of police officers. It may be inferred that the author included this picture so as to metaphorically show how BLM is destroying the United States. In the same way that the American flag in the picture will get burned if the fire on the building is not extinguished, the United States will be engulfed in flames if the BLM movement is not stopped.

All in all, this section of the paper has provided enough evidence to assert that, when it comes to ethnic affairs, media discourse serves a significant role in influencing, either directly or indirectly, the mental models of society and perpetuating their own ideals. Thus, the analysis of these articles based on Van Dijk's theory of Discourse Analysis shows how discourse and power are intertwined and how this discourse is at hands of a few people, mostly white. So, the importance of reading between the lines and understanding that the media is biased may help us, as users, to dissect the information we are presented with and analyze it in a more objective way.

Conclusion

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream, but it is still a dream, far away from being real. Black people still struggle with segregation, inequality and still carry the "chains" of discrimination (NPR, 2022). When the founding fathers of the United States wrote the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence, they signed a kind of promissory note which all Americans would inherit but the American Dream has been reserved almost exclusively for the white citizens of the country (NPR, 2022). In the last decade, this social inequality became even more apparent since this discriminatory behavior is, partly, supported by mass media (Greenwald and Jones, 2016).

Considering the results obtained from the extensive research carried out in this paper, it can be concluded that structural racism is present in almost every aspect of American society, particularly in law enforcement agencies and the media. Black people are not only the victims of brutal attacks by police officers, but also the target of racist reporting practices by the press.

Consequently, Black Lives Matter was created with the aim of reducing, and eventually eliminating, this racism and discrimination suffered by black people; to claim minorities' rights in the United States, and to raise the voice of the African American people that have been ignored for years (NPR, 2022).

However, after BLM became known worldwide following the death of George Floyd in 2020, criticism towards the movement grew on a great scale. The media plays a crucial role in the proliferation of the ideas that comprise its own agenda, particularly when it comes to racial affairs. This is mainly due to the influence the media exerts on society: instead of using their power and voice to promote racial equality, media groups focus on structuring biased discourses around black people and BLM, thus perpetuating and spreading racist ideas and prejudices. It has been demonstrated that, if the source from which the message emerges does not share the ideas of the characters involved in the account, then the message will likely be constructed upon a biased discourse favoring the view of the source. Moreover, it is appropriate to remark that, even though sometimes media is blatantly straightforward, usually readers cannot fully perceive other subtle techniques in which the press engages so as to deliver its message. The articles analyzed herein are just three examples of the many cases there are regarding biased discourses stemming from the press, and this is a fact that should not be disregarded when consuming information from these sources.

All in all, while BLM seems to be succeeding at spreading its message worldwide, the goal of completely eradicating racism from the American system is yet far from being achieved. This is mainly due to the fact that media exerts a great amount of influence over its audience, and sometimes its discursive strategies permeate readers in such a way that it becomes imperceptible for them. Nevertheless, being aware of the intention and the techniques frequently employed by the press will certainly allow us to develop a more critical eye when consuming media.

Luther King Jr. finished his speech using these words in a hopeful attitude:
And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last (NPR cites Martin Luther King Jr, 2022).

His words are part of the African American legacy that is latent in the U.S society and it is high time to make those words matter.

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Annexes

Article 1



BLM silent when confronted with data showing massive 2020

spike in Black murder victims By Emma Colton

Published April 19, 2022

Fox News

The Black Lives Matter organization was silent when approached for comment on 2020's skyrocketing number of Black murders and experts citing BLM and the defund the police movements for contributing to the deaths.

Fox News Digital reached out to the Black Lives Matter press team on April 14 inquiring if they had comment on FBI data showing there was a 32% increase in Black murders in 2020 compared to 2019, as well as a comment regarding experts such as the Manhattan Institute's Heather Mac Donald arguing the BLM and defund the police movements contributed to the murder spike, not the coronavirus.

Fox News Digital also detailed the yearly numbers of Black murders from 2010 to 2020 within the inquiry but did not receive a response from the organization as of Tuesday morning.

MASSIVE INCREASE IN BLACK AMERICANS MURDERED WAS RESULT OF DEFUND POLICE MOVEMENT: EXPERTS

The summer of 2020 was marked by protests and riots from coast to coast in support of the BLM and defund the police movements following the death of George Floyd. FBI data show murders across the board spiked by nearly 30% in 2020 compared to the year prior, marking the largest single-year increase in killings since the agency began tracking the crimes.

For Black Americans, the murders spiked disproportionately.

At least 7,484 Black Americans were murdered in 2019, according to FBI data Fox News Digital reported on Tuesday. That number shot up to at least 9,941 murders in 2020, meaning there was an increase of 2,457 Black Americans murdered over the previous year.

Among White murders, FBI data show there were 7,043 White people murdered in 2020, meaning 2,898 more Black people were killed compared to Whites.

An average of 6,927 Black Americans were murdered each year between 2010 and 2019, meaning Black murders shot up by 43% in 2020 compared to the previous 10-year average.

Thousands of people across the country pledged their support for Black Lives Matter in 2020, including by joining protests. Support of the group also extended to corporations vowing donations to social justice initiatives, athletes wearing BLM apparel at the stadium and celebrities rushing to publicly support and donate to BLM.

THE CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE DONATED TO THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT



<https://www.foxnews.com/us/black-lives-matter-silent-2020-black-murder-spike-experts-blm-defund-contributed.print# 1/3>

22/7/22, 18:34 BLM silent when confronted with data showing massive 2020 spike in Black murder victims

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES - 2021/04/20: A protester waves a Black Lives Matter flag during the demonstration. Hours after the verdict of the Derek Chauvin trial, protesters meet outside of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's home to protest his proposed funding of the Los Angeles Police Department. (Photo by Stanton Sharpe/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images) (Getty Images)

"Certainly, the protests and riots mid-2020 after the death of George Floyd followed a pattern of spiking violence that we've seen following past viral police incidents, such as the deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray. This pattern has been termed the 'Ferguson Effect': police pull back while violent crime spikes precipitously," Hannah Meyers, director of the policing and public safety initiative at the Manhattan Institute, told Fox News Digital.

The Ferguson effect was coined by St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson in 2014 after police shot and killed Black man Michael Brown, sparking widespread protests. The theory gained widespread attention in 2016 after Mac Donald wrote an opinion piece for the Wall Street Journal arguing the effect is one "where the Black Lives Matter narrative about racist, homicidal cops has produced virulent hostility in the streets."

Murders in the 2010s first broke the 7,000-murder benchmark in 2015 after the high-profile deaths of Freddie Gray that same year and Brown in 2014, jumping by nearly a thousand in one year. Black murders had fallen four years prior to Brown's death, according to the FBI data reviewed by Fox News Digital.

**'WOKE' RETAILERS WHO ASKED CONGRESS FOR HELP AMID SMASH-AND-GRABS
SUPPORTED LEFT-WING POLICE REFORMS**

Mac Donald wrote in 2020 that the Ferguson effect was playing out again following Floyd's death in Minneapolis and was unfolding with even more brutality.

2020's "violent-crime increase—call it Ferguson Effect 2.0 or the Minneapolis Effect— has come on with a speed and magnitude that make Ferguson 1.0 seem tranquil," Mac Donald wrote during the crime spike that year.

KENOSHA, WI - AUGUST 24: People watch the American flag flies over a burning building during a riot as demonstrators protest the police shooting of Jacob Blake on Monday, August 24, 2020 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Blake was shot in the back multiple times by police officers responding to a domestic dispute call yesterday. (Photo by Joshua Lott for The Washington Post via Getty Images)

She told Fox News Digital this month that the Black Lives Matter and the defund the police movements contributed to the crime spike in 2020 and had nothing to do with the coronavirus and lockdowns.

**FORMER FOOTBALL COACH FIRED FOR REMOVING BLACK LIVES MATTER POSTER
ALLEGES FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS VIOLATED**

Other experts have meanwhile cited the shock of the pandemic and its lockdowns for the crime spike of 2020. A University of California study, for example, estimated that more than 100,000 Californians bought guns in 2020 out of fear of the pandemic's destabilizing effects. The study argued that by aggravating "poverty, unemployment, lack of resources, isolation, hopelessness and loss," the pandemic has "worsened many of the underlying conditions contributing to violence."

Meyers told Fox News Digital that the coronavirus likely aggravated the effects of the Ferguson effect in 2020, explaining that police forces were "diminished" with officers calling out sick, and young men, who are the "most likely to be involved in gun violence," left with time on their hands when schools closed businesses shuttered.



22/7/22, 18:34 BLM silent when confronted with data showing massive 2020 spike in Black murder victims

"But were there more homicides in 2020 due to Covid-related hardships such as the need for food? Anecdotally, I don't know of any such murders and I'm skeptical that this was a significant contributor to the enormous surge," Meyers added.

Article 2



Hey, Black Lives Matter, stop terrorizing our cities

By Todd Starnes

Published July 28, 2016

Fox News

Black Lives Matter protesters laid siege to a number of cities over the weekend including my hometown:

Memphis, Tennessee.

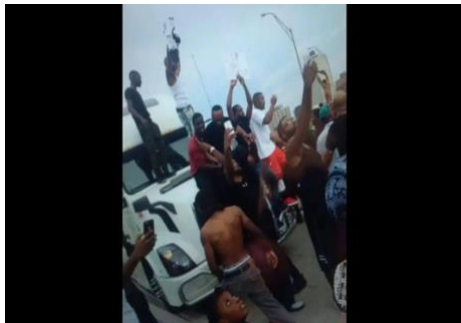
They shut down the Interstate 40 bridge over the Mississippi River -- stranding thousands of motorists for hours -- in sweltering heat.

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Blocking a roadway is a crime under Tennessee law.

Yet Memphis police officers were told to stand down and allow the agitators to block the Hernando-Desoto Bridge. They used to call that kind of behavior aiding and abetting.

Not a single person was arrested.



(Fox 13 Memphis)

Police say it was a peaceful protest. But photographs taken from the bridge showed a very different situation. In one instance, young men climbed atop a tractor-trailer- raising their fists in defiance.

I wonder if the driver of that tractor-trailer thought it was a peaceful demonstration?

Television station WMC reported that protesters even blocked a car trying to escort a child to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Apparently that child's life did not matter to the protesters.

The car was eventually allowed to pass -- but only after police intervened.

Click here to get Todd's best-selling book – an in-depth primer on how to restore traditional American values!

We have no idea how many emergency responses were hampered by the gridlock created by the BLM crowd.

We have no idea how many people missed family events or missed work because they were trapped on the interstate.

In St. Paul, Minnesota, at least 21 police officers were injured during a "full-scale riot" on Interstate 94, according to the Star- Tribune.

Violent thugs hurled rocks, concrete and rebar at officers as they protested the killing of Philando Castile. One of those officers suffered a broken vertebra after someone dropped a concrete block on his head.

Could someone explain to me how fracturing a police officer's spine and preventing a child from getting to the hospital advances the Black Lives Matter agenda?

The police-involved shootings in Baton Rouge and Minnesota were terrible tragedies.

If investigators determine the officers broke the law -- they should and must be brought to justice.

But both shootings are still under investigation -- so to be honest -- no one knows for certain what happened.

Yet, the mainstream media, the Obama administration and the professional race agitators have once again rushed to judgment -- just like they did in Ferguson, Missouri.

They never let a crisis go to waste, do they?

It feels like our nation has been sucker-punched. You can see it on people's faces. Sorrow. Frustration. Anger. Helplessness.

I understand that frustration -- but it does not give us a license to disobey the law.

Peaceful protesting is one thing. Domestic terrorism is another.

Instead of turning a blind eye, the Memphis Police Department should've sealed off both ends of the bridge and arrested every single person not in a vehicle.

But that's not what happened.

The rule of law matters -- without it -- we've got anarchy.

Article 3

Washington Examiner
PRESENTS

RESTORING
AMERICA



Back in October 2020, for example, leaders of the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation bought a \$6 million mansion in Southern California.

As Indiana's attorney general, I wouldn't necessarily make such events my business.

But I do make it my business when charitable donors here in my state get scammed. A big part of my job is protecting Hoosier consumers, and I take that responsibility very seriously.

So, on April 26, I filed a lawsuit against BLM, but only after it steadfastly refused to respond to a civil investigative demand that we issued back in February.

We need to know whether BLM is fulfilling its basic obligations as a nonprofit charitable organization.

In a 2020 report, BLM stated it raised over \$90 million in 2020 while distributing approximately \$21.7 million to 30 local organizations and affiliated chapters, including an affiliated chapter in South Bend, Indiana. However, an IRS filing by BLM for the first half of 2020 listed the organization as having zero revenue, expenses, and/or assets.

This organization also appears to have failed to follow such standard practices as filing annual reports and documenting how its funds have been spent.

So, we're investigating whether BLM has violated either the Indiana Deceptive Consumer Sales Act or the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation Act. The reason we issued a civil investigative demand in the first place was to obtain information and documents held by BLM that were relevant to our investigation.

This situation reminds me of another event from a few years ago, when a band of con artists bilked more than \$187 million from donors by claiming to represent charities helping cancer patients.

Eventually, those fraudsters entered into an agreement with the states, and the federal government settled allegations against them. Part of their scheme, though, was to start up organizations with very altruistic names — Cancer Fund of America, Cancer Support Services, Children's Cancer Fund of America, and The Breast Cancer Society.

With names like that, what decent person wouldn't want to contribute? But those organizations amounted to a get-rich-quick racket with little connection to actual cancer patients.

Which brings us back to Black Lives Matter.

Obviously, we all should believe the words of that slogan — because all lives matter. And just as all decent people want to stop cancer, so do all decent people want to stop any racial discrimination and promote equal opportunity for all people.

But is this fight truly the focus of BLM?

BLM co-founder Patrisse Cullors has described herself and fellow co-founder Alicia Garza as "trained Marxists." And at one point, BLM vowed to "disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement" — i.e., the idea that a child is best nurtured in a home featuring a mother and father.

Such ideas ignore America's exceptionalism: the fact that we are unique to world history. At our

founding, the best ideas for self-government came together at the same time and in the same place. Unique, indeed. And thank God for such an event. This kind of government unleashed the greatest innovation, prosperity, and upward mobility that human history ever witnessed.

There is no question that serious racial problems have been a part of our nation's history. In fact, every nation significant to world history built itself up in some degree, wrongly, on the backs of slaves. This should not be forgotten. But it should be put into context, including that our way of self-government accelerated the abolition of slavery in America. Our children should be taught to love their country, not falsely condemn it.

Again, though, our investigation into BLM does not pertain to ideology. My office already concluded that BLM is a political organization in a [legal advisory opinion](#) last year.

Rather, our investigation pertains to expectations of ethical, financial, and legal propriety on which all honest and law-abiding people can agree.

The expectation that BLM should operate in an aboveboard manner is hardly a partisan issue. In fact, California Attorney General Rob Bonta, a liberal Democrat of the sort typically endorsed and celebrated by BLM, sent the organization a letter earlier this year warning it that it could face penalties, late fees, and the revocation of its registered status as a charitable trust if it did not comply with statutory requirements.

Regardless of your political stance, the integrity of the system and the individuals running nonprofit groups matter. Nonprofit groups serve an important role in society in addressing matters of public concern, theoretically filling gaps that otherwise might require direct government assistance. For that, they receive certain benefits, chief among them not having to pay certain taxes.

Here in Indiana, we have a long history of nonprofit groups doing valuable work. But we always want to make sure that generous Hoosiers can know that the money they donate goes to the actual causes they intend to support.

For now, we suggest that those who believe that Black Lives Matter consider donating to organizations other than the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation

And here in Indiana, we continue to encourage any Hoosier donors who believe they have been scammed to file a consumer complaint with my office at www.indianaconsumer.com.

Todd Rokita is Indiana's attorney general.