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The Search for Racial Justice in America: The Movement for Black Lives.

Gail Marchant-Daisley

A Thesis in the Field of Government
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Abstract

This paper addresses the ongoing quest for racial justice in America, determining how best to accomplish this task. It briefly reviews the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) in the 1960's, examining contrasts and similarities with the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLMM) and Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) BLMM and M4BL today to seek an understanding of the different types of protests, what has been successful and what has not while considering future actions to achieve positive outcomes. The study further explores demographics within today's movements, and the role of women and the LGBTQ+ community, as well as how this growing diversity impacts the success of such movements. The paper uses existing, recent literature including case studies, video and radio broadcasts, and written interviews, news reports, and social media activity.

Keywords/Phrases: Racial justice; Black Lives Matter; Movement4Black Lives; Civil Rights Movement; Police Killings; Defunding Police, SayHerName

Author's Biographical Sketch

I am a 62-year-old privileged English white woman whose only exposure to discrimination has been as a woman and a lesbian. I therefore approach this work with a marked degree of humility and trepidation, always conscious of how far removed I am from the lived experience of Black people in the United States and globally. Despite this, I hope that this work with all its flaws and limitations will add something to the social justice movements which matters so much to so many around the world, but none more so than to those individuals and communities who still suffer its impacts daily.

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Chapter I

Introduction

For the purpose of this paper, today's movements will be addressed under the umbrella terms Black Lives Matter Movement (BLMM) and Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), with emphasis on BLMM, as it often at the epicenter of these events. This paper addresses the ongoing quest for racial justice in America, progress currently made, existing barriers, and possible solutions to said barriers. While some specific examples are employed, the overall approach is to consider the issue from a national perspective.

This paper is written from the unapologetic standpoint that racism is inherently and unarguably wrong and needs to be challenged and overcome. The question for activists and allies has always been and continues to be: how? How might the globe see such a momentous change through to fruition with so many at odds with marginalized groups? In an effort to answer these questions, this paper will briefly explore the history and legacy of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) throughout the 1950's and 1960's, how it impacts today's racial justice movements and an analysis of the following questions: who are today's activists? what do they seek? how do they intend to achieve their aims? what does success look like? and what challenges face today's racial justice activists and where does the debate and subsequent movement go from here? Part of this exploration will be a consideration of the attitudes of activists to non-violence and direct action, and whether real change can be achieved exclusively via electoral politics, social movements or by a combination of strategies and tactics. Moreover, does the broad demographic of

BLMM and M4BL, with their emphases on inclusivity and leadership by women and the LGBTQ+ community strengthen or dilute the overarching aim of achieving racial justice?

The purpose of this paper is to seek to determine what activists and allies, everyone concerned with attaining racial justice, can do to effect the change required. It does so by analyzing and comparing aspects of the 1950's and 1960's CRM to the movements of today, examining indicators of success and challenges, as well as suggestions for moving forward.

Background

The quest for racial justice in America is as old as the republic itself and has been the subject of professional and academic debate for decades. Nikole Hannah-Jones argues that the origins of the Revolutionary War and therefore, of the Republic itself began in 1619 with the arrival of the first slave ship in Virginia. The 1619 Project, developed in conjunction with the *New York Times*, seeks to reframe American history around slavery, contending that the Revolutionary War was primarily motivated by the desire to preserve slavery.¹ The Project has been criticized for its blurring of the margins of scholarship and activism and alleged factual errors and has been banned by some states from schools and colleges as part of the wider ban of the teaching of Critical Race Theory. Nonetheless Hannah-Jones was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her essay. This interesting ongoing debate is beyond the scope of this paper.

¹ Nikole Hannah-Jones, "The 1619 Project," *New York Times*, August 14, 2019, sec. Magazine. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>

Given the unresolved issues and that events are often happening in real time, this analysis can only hope to add to existing evidence and research, provide recommendations for possible further research while suggesting tentative solutions for future challenges. The study will conclude with a current analysis of where BLMM and M4BL are now, and where the movements might go from here. An important resource here is Barbara Ransby's 2018 work, *Making All Black Lives Matter*.² Ransby's work is a significant contribution in the field despite being published prior to the seismic events of the summer of 2020. Her work is seminal due to the perspective and experience she brings to the material as a writer, professor, historian, activist, and feminist and her emphasis on the Black feminist influences in BLMM and M4BL. Her work suggests six challenges the movements face which, while not definitive, provide a helpful benchmark in seeking to examine progress and success.

When considering racism, it is necessary to seek to explain what it means. Defined in many ways, there are instances when racism is subjective or otherwise circumstantial. Ruth Wilson Gilmore states that: "Racism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death."³ This definition succinctly and tacitly references the significant statistical data supporting the contention that in the United States, Black Americans suffer institutional and systemic racism in all areas of life. The broad definition of racism typically adopted is that of a systemic, institutionalized societal structure that preserves, embeds, and reinforces white privilege while perpetuating continuously disadvantageous

² Barbara Ransby, *Making All Black Lives Matter* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

³ Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulags: Prison, Surplus, Crises and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California, 2007), p28.

outcomes for marginalized communities. There are many scholars who have adopted the same or similar definitions.⁴

The legislative achievements of the 1960's did not end racism or racial injustice. Hangings, often referred to as lynchings, were replaced with police brutality specifically directed against the Black community, sometimes resulting in avoidable and heinous murder. If legal murder was not enough, voting rights of Black citizens have been under attack by state and national parties for decades; without a voice the Black community cannot act for electoral change, cannot work within the system and are therefore forced to work outside it.⁵ Furthermore, limitations on time and space prevent a societally encompassing study which would have to include inter alia, education, social work, health, demographics, and other measurements of societal status, outcomes, and change.⁶

Many assumed, understandably, that the election of Barack Obama, the first African American President, in 2008 would herald a new post-racial America. Obama's campaign utilized a grassroots approach, launching widespread social media campaigns primarily targeting young voters. He energized millions with his promises and slogans of "Hope" and "Change We Can Believe In,". In fact, the Obama era is seen by many scholars and activists as a disappointment or worse, a failure. Bonilla-Silva, for example, argues that Obama and like-minded politicians are oriented toward compromise rather than change and are essentially "accommodationists." He goes on to quote a *Huffington Post* blogger, Taylor March, who use the term "progressive cannibalism", which March explains as doing, " whatever [Obama] can to get elected, cannibalizing his own and our

⁴ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists* (Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), p8-9.

⁵ Bonilla-Silva *Racism Without Racists*, p44-52

⁶ Ralph Bangs, *Race and Social Problems: Restructuring Inequality* (New York: Springer, 2015).

ideals as he goes; bringing as many people along as he can, including conservatives who will have no allegiance to what progressives have worked for over decades to achieve.”⁷

The signs perhaps were there in President Obama’s famous “Race Speech,” delivered in March 2008. The speech was reminiscent of that President John F. Kennedy, delivered nearly 50 years earlier and dealing with “the Catholic Question.” It was assumed such a speech was necessary for electoral reasons, but the rejection and criticism of Obama’s former pastor and long-term mentor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, caused some consternation at the time. Scholars and historians will continue examining the Obama Administration, dissecting the potentially unanswerable question of whether the compromises he made were necessary and worthwhile to break through the racial glass ceiling.

Arguably, what Obama’s election did was to allow much of white America to believe that racism no longer existed in the United States. As Ransby puts it: “If...Obama can win the White House, racial barriers to Black Progress no longer exist, right? This simplistic and flawed analysis permeated popular discourse in the Obama era.”⁸ It is important to note that BLMM and M4BL emerged during the Obama Administration. While it could be argued that having a Black President enabled certain parties to challenge the status quo, the evidence suggests overwhelmingly that the movements emerged as a result of a **lack** of change. Since then, there has been the deliberately divisive presidency of Donald Trump. Prior to running for President, Trump was a leading voice calling for proof of Obama’s citizenship, thus questioning Obama’s legitimacy as president by suggesting he was born outside the United States. Trump

⁷ Bonna-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, 208-209

⁸ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 23.

campaigned in overtly racist terms, referring to Mexicans as criminals and rapists, criticizing a Muslim Gold Star Family, and initially refusing to disavow the Ku Klux Klan and Trump supporter, David Duke. He continuously made mockery of the vulnerable and insisted on avoiding any confrontation which may garner him negative publicity, even when consorting with child traffickers and known terrorists. White supremacists and nationalists flocked to his rallies, openly stating their pride in their white race and racist views. Trump simply played to their prejudices. For example, in November 2015 a BLM protester was assaulted at a Trump rally and the candidate commented the next day, suggesting the protestor may have deserved “to be roughed up.”

There are numerous additional examples of Trump’s divisive and racist rhetoric in and out of office, but perhaps the most notorious occurred in the wake of the “Unite the Right” march in Charlottesville, VA, occurring in August 2017. A coalition of white supremacist groups organized a march to protest the proposed removal of a statue of General Robert E. Lee. Chanting racist and anti-Semitic slogans including “Blood and Soil”, a deliberate echo of the Nazis in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, they made it clear what their sympathies were. Later an article would suggest that there is a clear line between “anti-Blackness and anti-Judaism”⁹ and it is no coincidence that during and since the Trump presidency there has been a significant rise in antisemitism. A fatality occurred after a counterprotest to “Unite the Right” congregated; a member of the conservative group drove his vehicle into the crowd, killing one woman and injuring 19 other people. He is currently serving two life sentences for the crime. Trump initially refused to condemn the white supremacists as well as the individual responsible for the

⁹ Emma Green, “Why the Charlottesville Marchers were Obsessed with Jews”, *The Atlantic* (August 15,2017), Anti-Semitism at the Deadly Charlottesville Protests - The Atlantic

fatality. It was only under pressure and days later he condemned such actions, immediately undermining the sentiment by drawing an equivalence between the two protests with his infamous assertion that there were “very fine people on both sides.”

If the Obama presidency failed to deliver on real change in racial justice, the Trump campaign and presidency left the country so deeply divided on race it rivalled circumstances prior and during the CRM. White supremacists and racists were emboldened and given a platform to openly express positions that would have been unthinkable before Trump’s divisive rhetoric. Ultimately it was this atmosphere and the rise of the extreme right that enabled the January 6, 2021, insurrection. Despite Trump’s attempt to incite a military coup on his own country, the election of President Joe Biden has significantly decreased the platform Trump and his followers once enjoyed. There may now be an opportunity for real change. Recently Trump announced his candidacy for the presidency in 2024; how the GOP responds will be indicative of how prepared they are to reject his rhetoric and conservative extremism and restore balance.

Among contemporary scholars, Bonilla-Silva and Kendi express different but overlapping views of the status of race in America. Bonilla-Silva argues that most white people think racism no longer exists and those that do blame it on minorities, mainly Blacks Americans¹⁰. He argues that racism is structural and uses the term “color-blind racism” to explain how the majority of white people justify the obvious, extensive degree of racial inequality within a “post-racial” society. They suggest it “explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of non-racial dynamics...” moving away from the Jim Crow overt racism to “whites rationalizing minorities’ contemporary status as the product

¹⁰ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, 1

of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena and blacks imputed cultural limitations.”¹¹ This, as he argues persuasively, makes racism more difficult to call-out, while maintaining and reinforcing white privilege creating “a sanitized, color-blind way of calling minorities niggers, spics or chinks”.¹²

Kendi’s thoughtful work focuses on using simple dual definitions regarding racism and anti-racism e.g., “Racist: One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea. Antiracist: One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or inactions or expressing an antiracist idea”¹³

Through this repetition of opposites, Kendi highlights both the simplicity and the complexity of the problem, reinforcing his central thesis: neutrality is not neutral. They go on to say, “Every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial equity or racial inequity.” He also rejects the concept of individuals as racists and antiracists, as the label depends on action or inaction: – the terms are “like peelable name tags that are placed and replaced based on what someone is doing, supporting or expressing in each moment.”¹⁴

Alongside Kendi’s notion of anti-racism and Bonilla-Silva’s color-blind racism are the issues of white guilt and white fragility. White guilt is the shame and remorse that some white people feel about racism, their contributions to it whether conscious or not, and even about an inability to change anything. White fragility coined, not uncontroversially, by Robin DiAngelo, includes reactions of guilt, excuses, dismissal and

¹¹ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, 2.

¹² Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, 242.

¹³ Ibram X. Kendi, *How To Be An Antiracist* (UK: Penguin Random House, 2019),13.

¹⁴ Kendi, *How to be Antiracist*,18.

anger some white people have in reaction to discussing racism.¹⁵ They essentially commit to the idea racism is not real or not as bad as stated. *White Guilt*, a 2006 work from Shelby, describes white guilt as “a vacuum of moral authority...nothing less than a social imperative that all whites, from far-left socialists to Republican presidents, are accountable to.”¹⁶ Following the rise in ostentatious demonstrations of white guilt in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, Shelby condemned Joe Biden’s response to the murder as “taking the pain of Blacks (sic) in the hope of turning it into votes.” He argues that there has never been a better opportunity for Black people to incite change, proposing they “give up feelings of victimization and be free.”¹⁷

Unsurprisingly, most criticism of white guilt comes from the extreme Conservative right. One such influencer is Anthony Brian Logan. A Black conservative content creator for YouTube, Logan often decries white guilt on the basis that the individuals expressing it have done no wrong personally and have nothing to apologize for.¹⁸ Lionel Shriver in *The Spectator* lambasts the “vanity” of white guilt, and virtue signaling by universities, corporations and celebrities and the expressions of “guilt without shame.”¹⁹ In her work on white fragility, DiAngelo quotes Dr Akeem Marsh who asserts that the range of defensive emotions expressed by white people when talking about race is due to the lack of nuance, which echoes Kendi’s definition of racist and

¹⁵ Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2018) <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1608136&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

¹⁶ Shelby Steele, *White Guilt* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), 27

¹⁷ M Dowling, “Black Intellectual Explains How White Guilt Harms Black Communities”, *Independent Sentinel*, (2020): accessed December 22, 2022, <https://www.independentsentinel.com/black-intellectual-explains-how-white-guilt-harms-the-black-community/>.

¹⁸Anthony Brian Logan, “Please Stop the Epidemic of White Guilt,” (2020): accessed December 5, 2022, <https://anthonyblogan.c10om/please-stop-the-epidemic-of-white-guilt/>.

¹⁹ Lionel Shriver, “the Vanity of ‘White Guilt’,” *The Spectator* 11, (2020).

non-racist, that most people miss the point: many people are capable of racist actions.

The suggestion is that the demonization of any such person as racist and therefore evil is too simplistic and ultimately unhelpful.²⁰ It is what they do and say that matters.

It is clear from these and other scholars as well as evidence throughout society that racial injustice and its' conjunctive ideologies of white privilege and state-sponsored violence is very much alive and well in today's United States. The overt racism of the Jim Crow era is no longer acceptable to most Americans, though admittedly the Trump presidency saw a distinct increase in overtly racist language. Still the reality for Black Americans remains that embedded white privilege and institutions remain as effective a barrier to racial justice and the equal chance for personal fulfillment as it ever was.

Chapters

In the next Chapter (II) I examine the history of CRM, who the activists were, what they were seeking and how and to what extent they were successful. This provides a base from which to measure and compare BLMM/M4BL. Chapter III looks at the period between the end of CRM as an active political force and the coming into being of BLMM/M4BL, the chapter provides a bridge from CRM and a background to the current movements. Chapter IV asks similar question about BLMM/M4BL as Chapter II does of CRM and contextualizes the larger genealogy of Black insurrectionist movements using quantitative and qualitative evidence as to where they stand in the public space. It looks at who, how, why, and what success means and what has been achieved, with a view of the evidence as to where BLMM/M4BL currently stand, organizationally and in terms of

²⁰ Laura Harold, "What Is White Fragility," *verywellmind*, (2020), Accessed 22 November 2022 [Verywellmind.com](https://www.verywellmind.com).

public profile and opinion. Chapter V is a discussion as to where next for the modern movements utilizing as a guide a number of challenges for the movements outlined by Ransby in 2018 and Chapter VI provides my conclusions, summarizing and synthesizing the aims and goals of the work, its purpose and broader implications for the future of racial justice in the United States, the opportunities and challenges that exist for today's movements.

The purpose of this paper is to seek to determine what activists and allies, everyone concerned with attaining racial justice, can do to bring this about.

I do so by analyzing and comparing aspects of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement and Movement 4 Black Lives to examine what has been successful and what has not, and I conclude with the significant challenges faced by today's movements with some suggestions as to ways forward to hope to avoid a future researcher writing about racial justice in America and the end of the BLMM and M4BL movements.

Chapter II

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's

The fight for racial is as old as slavery, through Reconstruction, and long before CRM protests began. While it has been a prevalent problem for centuries, the focus of this chapter will be on the CRM in the 1950's and 1960's. There is necessarily an arbitrary nature to the date selection and some scholars bemoan the oversimplification of CRM in this manner, but it is both necessary and justifiable for the purposes of this study.²¹ The chapter will focus on protestor identities, what they wanted, how they attempted to get what they wanted, and the extent to which they were successful.

Who were CRM activists?

The CRM was not a homogenous movement, and its' creation is still a continuing source of debate and disagreement between scholars. For example, there is no agreement regarding when it began, or what exactly it was attempting to accomplish. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) and the adherents to his doctrine of non-violent activism were at the forefront of the movement by the mid-60s, although Jeffries argues strongly against what he describes as the "fiction" of the "Kingcentric" scholarship, arguing instead that CRM was essentially a grassroots movement and he cites Julian Bond's myth of the "Master Narrative" which traces the origins of the CRM to the majority white South's

²¹ Richard M. Dalfiume, "The 'Forgotten Years' of the Negro Revolution," *The Journal of American History* 55. no. (1968):90-106.

refusal to implement the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v Board of Education*, a case brought and won by the NAACP which outlawed segregation in public accommodations.²² Cobb argues that emphasis on the CRM icons represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the grassroots nature of the movement, a view that has gained popularity in the last decade.²³

The movement was a coalition of various social justice organization led by those who are now referred as the “Big 6”: MLK of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP); John Lewis of the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC); Whitney Young of the National Urban League (NUL) and James Farmer Jr. of the Congress for Racial Equality (CRE). They were male with a keen sense of Christian leadership. Morris argues the significant role of the Black Church, which was to organize, and which embraced economic, political, educational, and religious views. He further notes that the Black Church was, “a setting where oppression could be openly discussed, and resources could be developed to organize collective resistance.”²⁴ There was a natural and necessary coming together of the various organizations committed to racial justice, intent to use their collective power to seek change. Morgan's essay on the 1960's sit-ins highlights some of these differences and tensions between the

²² Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Understanding and Teaching the Civil Rights Movement* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 4.

²³ Charles E Cobb Jr, “Who is Fanny Lou Hamer,” *Understanding and Teaching*, (Wisconsin: Wisconsin University, 2019). 17.

²⁴ Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), p5-6.

groups as well as the crucial role of students and the SNCC and the participation of white allies.²⁵

There were many strong and engaged female activists, who while appreciated and sometimes revered within CRM were often invisible outside the movement, with a few exceptions. Leadership was not matriarchal, with only men being asked to speak at the 1963 March on Washington. Since then there has been a significant body of scholarship and literature on the role of women in CRM, and Gyant's article²⁶ is informative on the essential role of African American women since the first Africans arrived in 1619, noting the knowledge passed matriarchally through their foremothers who have in turn passed on their "courage, strength, survival, support and faith" to the current generation of activists.

In summary, the CRM activists were not a homogenous group, but their public face was predominantly male and Christian and the role of women, while vital, was not nationally visible.

What were they seeking?

There is no unanimity about the main objectives of the CRM and insufficient attention was initially paid to the fact that aims, strategies, tactics, and demands evolved over time, as did the philosophy of MLK and others. McKinney warns that "If our narratives begin and end with King, we don't learn from the fact that he constantly

²⁵ Irwin Morgan, "The New Movement: The Student Sit-Ins in 1960" in *From Sit-Ins to SNCC: The Students Civil Rights Movement of the 1960*, ed. Irwin Morgan and Philip Davies (University Press of Florida 2012), p16-17

²⁶ LaVerne Gyant, "Passing the Torch: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of black studies* 26, no, 5 (1996): 629-647.

engaged in the back and forth of dialogue, debate, and refinement when it came to strategies, tactics and philosophies”²⁷ There are innumerable books on MLK but Shelby and Terry’s collection of essays provide some interesting insights and observations on his philosophy.²⁸ Some scholars have moved away from the simplistic framing of CRM as starting with *Brown v Board of Education* and ending with the assassination of MLK in 1964. They have also moved from the idea that CRM was only about ending segregation and increasing political participation. In the same volume of essays referred to above, Jeffries contends that “From Mississippi to Michigan, African Americans embraced the idea that freedom entailed enjoying the full range of civil and human rights afforded white Americans”, but that the aims were narrowed by the Cold War to be framed less threateningly as a struggle for civil rights and the passing of antidiscrimination legislation.²⁹

Because CRM was an evolving movement, and its leaders were evolving too, the aims also evolved. The fight against segregation morphed into a broader search for racial justice and equality before being reframed by external and internal influences as a quest for civil rights.

How did they attempt to achieve their aims?

Many people born after the movement would assume that it was a non-violent movement led by MLK, but this is another over-simplification of the movement’s

²⁷ 3, Charles McKinney, “Complicating Martin Luther King,” *Understanding and Teaching*, 115.

²⁸ Tommie Shelby, *To Shape a New World: essays on the political philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018).

²⁹ Hasan Kwame Jeffries, “Freedom Rights: Reconsidering the Movement’s Goals and Objectives,” *Understanding and Teaching*, 73

complexities reducing the issue to a simple dichotomy between violence and non-violence, MLK versus Malcolm X, epitomised for many in Malcolm's famous speech, "The Ballot or the Bullet."³⁰ ³¹ Nimitz³² provides a more nuanced analysis, drawing a line between the two men and their work, comparing MLK's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and Malcolm's "Ballot" speech. Nimitz quotes a passage from MLK's letter in which MLK talks about standing between two forces, the "donothingism of the complacent" and the "bitterness and hatred of black nationalists", suggesting that King is saying that he is choosing peace, but there will be resort to violence if necessary.³³ Nimitz asserts that Malcolm's "Ballot" speech was a "necessary complement to MLK's either-me-or them threat... necessary to make the threat credible." He argues that it was this threat, the threat of Black on white violence that prompted both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to take legislative action on Civil and Voting Rights, respectively.³⁴ The question of violence versus non-violence is complicated with many in CRM criticizing the non-violent approach from the outset. Wendt's interesting study of the role of "manhood" in the struggle provides a gender-based perspective suggesting Black male activists' non-violent resistance was emasculating, although he makes clear that this debate has been ongoing since the end of Reconstruction.³⁵ Even Rosa Parks, famous for refusing to move to the back of the bus, was sceptical about Non-Violent Protests (NVP).

³⁰ Malcolm X,, *The Schlager Anthology of Black America: A Student's Guide to Essential Primary Sources*(2021), 633-676.

³¹ Daryl Farah, "Interrogating Malcolm X's 'Ballot or Bullet,'" *Journal of African American Studies*24, (2020), 398-416.

³² August H Nimitz, "Violence and/or Non-Violence in the Success of the Civil Rights Movement: the Malcolm X-Martin Luther King Jr Nexus," *New Political Science*38, no. 1 (2016): 1-22.

³³ August H. Nimitz, "Violence and or," 7.

³⁴ Nimitz, Violence and/or, 19.

³⁵ Simon Wendt, "'They Finally Found Out That We Are Really Men': Violence, Non-Violence, and Black Manhood in the Civil Rights Era," *Gender and History*19, no. 3 (2007): 543-564.

Andrew Young, MLK's consort was critical, and³⁶ Huey Newton described it as "absurd, erroneous and deceitful."³⁷ Literature suggests those against NVP at the time were more numerous than might have been thought as a 1966 Wall Street Journal article also illustrates.³⁸ There is a vast volume of work on violence and non-violence in the CRM and a greater understanding of the complexities of the topic, including the principle of self-defence and non-violence and whether or not they are mutually exclusive. Methodologically, Morris addresses how initial NVPs were not spontaneous, providing a detailed analyses of the various groups, their interactions (and tensions), and the extremely detailed and organised planning and training that preceded the demonstrations.³⁹

To What Extent Was CRM Successful?

Success in this case is subjective, as is the question of what success even means. Given that the aims evolved over the years this is hard to delineate. Legislatively speaking, the passage of the Civil Rights Act 1964, the Voting Rights Act 1965 and the Fair Housing Act 1968 would be deemed successful, and they were landmark achievements. The effectiveness of said legislation may argue its success, however. Among many others, Hersch and Shinall offer a balanced perspective fifty years later, concluding that the legislation had an overall positive effect but was not universally successful in its aims.⁴⁰

³⁶ Wendt, *Black Manhood*, 543.

³⁷ Wendt, *Black Manhood*, 548.

³⁸ Neil A Maxwell, "Militancy on the March: Non-Violence is Fast Losing Favor as a Civil Rights Tool, *Wall Street Journal, Eastern Edition* 197, (1966):8.

³⁹ Morris, *The Origins of CRM*, 229

⁴⁰ Joni Hersch, Jennifer Bennett Shinall, "Fifty years Later: The Legacy of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," *Journal of Policy and Management* 9 (2015): <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/pam.21824>

To measure success, Santoro adopts a simple definition: was racial discrimination meaningfully reduced for the lives of Black Americans?⁴¹ He does this by analysing surveys of Black Americans' attitudes to the success or failure of CRM from 1968 – 2000 looking at class, economic and political subdivisions within the survey groups. The headline findings are that the constituent group was significantly split – in 1968 58% saw the movement as a success, 42% as a failure. Perhaps surprisingly those numbers changed by only 1.3% between 1968 and 2000. The section on BLMM and M4BL considers the up-to-date perceptions.

Santoro notes that the middle class and professionals were more likely to find the movement a success, while the poor and activists were more likely to deem it a failure.⁴² Santoro is not the first to reflect that many poor Black people felt left behind by the advantages that were gained, quoting both Rustin and MLK who had made similar comments on the plight of poor Black citizens at the height of the movement, and many have since.⁴³ Santoro also notes that the responses to the surveys are subjective – i.e. the individual's perception of change, but this does not invalidate them and they are surely more valid than white perceptions which see race through “a distorted ideological lens.”⁴⁴

In summary, there is no clear consensus as to the success or otherwise of the CRM. A tentative conclusion could be that the legislation helped many, but for many others, particularly poorer Black citizens, it did not improve their everyday lived

⁴¹ Wayne Santoro, “Was the Civil Rights Movement Successful? Tracking and Understanding Black Views,” *Sociological Journal* 30, no. 1 (2015): 627-647, <https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12181>.

⁴² Santoro, *Was CRM Successful*, Figs 1-4.

⁴³ Santoro, *Was CRM Successful*, Fig 2.

⁴⁴ Santoro, *Was CRM Successful*.

experience by significantly reducing the swathe of racial disadvantage in all areas of their lives.

Chapter III

Between CRM and BLMM and M4BL

As noted, there are disagreements regarding when the movement began and ended. Some feel it ended after MLK's assassination, while for others it was the passing of the Voting Rights Act 1965 or the Fair Housing Act 1968. 1968 saw riots in Black communities, growing civil unrest and opposition to the war in Vietnam, and the rise of other minority protest groups, notably for women and the gay community. There were also gains for the right wing and those opposed to civil rights. Christopher Lehman argues that the main groups: NAACP, SSNCC, SCLC and CRE were all still in existence and the coalition disintegrated in 1973 after years of internal and external problems.⁴⁵ Regardless, by the early 1970s media interest placed focus on the Vietnam War and later Watergate, and CRM ceased to exist as a national cohesive movement.

In 1971 President Richard Nixon launched the "War on Drugs" which has lasted for fifty years and has had a disproportionate and terrible impact on Black communities.⁴⁶ Christina Greer asserts that the War on Drugs was partially racially motivated, a strategy employed by Nixon to undermine his political opposition, including Vietnam objectors and Blacks citizens.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Christopher Lehman, "Civil Rights In Twilight: The End of the Civil Rights Era in 1973," *Journal of Black Studies*, (2006):416.

⁴⁶ Kathleen J Frydl. *The Drug Wars in America, 1940-1973*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139012829>.

⁴⁷ Christina Greer, "Nixon and the War on Drugs," *New York Amsterdam News* (2016), <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/newspapers/nixon-war-on-drugs/docview/1783899657/se-2>.

In 1982 President Reagan's declared: "We must put drug abuse on the run through stronger law enforcement" thus continuing the "war on drugs". It was used to promote overtly racist policies which led to the mass incarceration of young Black men, with mandatory sentencing, the militarization of the police force, and the devastation of Black families.⁴⁸ In 1986 Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act which provided \$1.7 billion to the war on drugs, mandating minimum prison sentences for various drug offences regarding crack, with lesser sentences for cocaine. At the time 80% of crack users were Black while the majority of whites used cocaine, quickly adding to inequity in the justice system.⁴⁹

Literature and official statistics demonstrate disproportionate incarcerations in recent decades against the Black population, with wider implications for Black communities. Bonhomme et al note that between 1985 and 1995 there was a 707% increase in the Black incarceration rates related to drugs offences and a 306% increase of whites and discusses the broader impacts on Black families and communities.⁵⁰ Cummings examines the explosion in Black incarceration as a result of the "war on drugs" and its' link to the prison-industrial complex.⁵¹

President Bill Clinton was enormously popular with Black voters, winning 83% and 84% of Black voters' support in 1992 and 1996 respectively, although his record on race in office has been heavily criticized, notably the passing of the infamous 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act with a "3 strikes and you're out

⁴⁸ Kendi, *How To Be Antiracist*, 24.

⁴⁹ David Farber, *The War on Drugs: A History*, (New York: NYU Press, 2021): muse.jhu.edu/book/102308.

⁵⁰ Jean Bonhomme, Torrance Stephens and Ronald Braithwaite, "African American Males in the United States Prison System: impact on family and community," *Journal of Mental Health and Gender* 3, no. 3, (2006).

⁵¹ Andre Douglas Pond Cummings, "'All eyez on me': America's war on drugs and the prison-industrial complex," *Journal of Gender, Race and Justice* 15, no. 2-3 (2012): 417.

provision” and the 1996 Welfare Reform Act. The prison population skyrocketed under the Clinton Presidency, rising by 60%, impacting Black citizens disproportionately.⁵² In spite of this, Clinton remains popular among Black citizens and the three-strike rule has remained in force through the following four presidencies.

Although race was not high on the public agenda during the George W. Bush’s presidency, Cassandra Q. Butts argued in 2004 that Bush’s lack of policies on housing, health, education and civil rights which allowed re-districting, were damaging to Black communities.⁵³ There was also, of course, the infamously tardy and incompetent response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina which disproportionately affected poor Black residents whose race and social status undoubtedly played a part in the inadequacy of the early relief efforts. Bush later admitted that he had made a significant mistake and had appeared detached and uncaring on his belated return from an extended holiday on his ranch.

The 1970s is often described as the beginning of the post-civil rights era and while civil rights were not as prominent in the public consciousness as they were during the CRM years, activists continued to campaign and make gains, forming alliances with other protest groups, notably feminist groups. In 1968, Shirley Chisolm broke new ground becoming the first Black woman to be elected to Congress. In 1969 she helped found the Congressional Black Caucus and in 1972 she became the first Black woman from a major political party to run for the presidency. Thoughtco has a detailed timeline

⁵² Chuck Epstein, “Black Voters Should Re-Examine Clinton’s Presidency,” *The Progressive Investor*, (2019): accessed December 4, 2022, July 22 2019, <https://theprogressiveinvestor.org/black-voters-should-re-examine-clintons-presidency>.

⁵³ Cassandra Q Butts, “Bush and Race: Policies Matter,” *The Center for American Progress*, (2004): accessed December 17, 2022, <https://www.americanprogress.org/people/butts-cassandra/>.

of notable events throughout the 1970s and 1980s, including achievements in politics, the arts and sport.⁵⁴ This was a period of increased visibility for and recognition of Black citizens in these areas, but there is little evidence that any hoped-for trickle-down effect resulted. Bonilla-Silva cites data from the Department of Numbers confirming that “since the late 1970s racial progress in the United States has stagnated and, in many areas, regressed,” including, health, education, income and wealth.⁵⁵

Affirmative Action was a policy which sought to bridge inequality primarily in employment, pay, and education. The policy has been the subject of controversy and legal challenge for decades. In their exhaustive look at the policy, J. Scott Carter and Cameron Lippard come to the depressing but unequivocal conclusion that: “The policy is dead....relegated to a call to arms for conservative politicians, pundits and citizens....As such, we now face a future of arguments where we have to pretend that systemic racism and discrimination do not pervade our society, and that race no longer predicts lived experience.”⁵⁶ If correct, and the argument is a persuasive, while there are arguments over its effectiveness, a weapon has been removed from the armory of movements campaigning for racial justice.

The interregnum between CRM’s end and the police brutality that led to the death of Trayvon Martin saw the quest for social justice relegated in large parts of the public consciousness to a somewhat marginal issue. This was due in part to the rise of other social movements such as equity for women and gay liberation, the demise of CRM, the

⁵⁴ Thoughtco, Black History Timeline: 1970–1979 (thoughtco.com), Black History Timeline: 1980–1989 (thoughtco.com)

⁵⁵ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists* 204.

⁵⁶ J. Scott Carter, & Cameron D. Lippard, *The Death of Affirmative Action? Racialized Framing and the Fight Against Racial Preference in College Admissions* (Bristol University Press, 2020), 201.

nation's focus being on such things as Vietnam and Watergate and, perhaps most telling, the War on Drugs whose devastating impact on Black citizens and communities is still being felt today.

Chapter IV

BLMM and M4BL

The origins, development, and demographic make-up of the many organizations that constitute BLMM and M4BL differ vastly from CRM. There is commonality in the current fight for racial justice and the earliest origins of protest, and between what is often seen as the triggers for the growth of CRM and BLMM and M4BL, the murders of young Black men and boys. The murder of Emmett Till aged 14, in Mississippi in 1955 was for allegedly whistling at a white woman in her family grocery store. The sheer brutality of the crime and the acquittal of all crimes by an all-white jury shocked the nation, throwing a spotlight on the extremes of racism in the South.⁵⁷

The origins of BLMM and M4BL are already part of modern folklore. BLMM began life as a hashtag. In 2013 the day after George Zimmerman was acquitted of the killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin as the youth walked home from a candy store, activist Alicia Garza posted to her friends on Facebook: “Black People, I love you. I love us. Our lives matter.” Patrisse Cullors reposted with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter and thus it is often said that a movement was born. BLMM gained momentum following the 2014 murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, with spontaneous mass demonstrations on the streets but also with coordinated action. Activists were bussed into the city described by the organizers as “freedom rides” in an obvious reference to those undertaken by CRM.⁵⁸ There would be further echoes later in protests following the death of George

⁵⁷ In June 2022 an unserved arrest warrant for the accuser of Emmett Till was found, following earlier allegations that she admitted fabricating her testimony. In August 2022 a grand jury decided that there were insufficient grounds to indict her.

⁵⁸ Wesley Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us All* (USA, Penguin Random House, 2017), 19-69.

Floyd in 2020 with protesters chanting: “How many Black lives will you kill: Michael Brown, Emmett Till.”⁵⁹

The slogan Black Lives Matter itself has echoes of the “I am a man” signs held up by striking sanitation workers in Memphis in 1968. Both appeal to and assert the fundamental truth and humanity of those often considered “other” by the majority. Selby considers both “a complex exercise in personal and collective power, but also an invitation to community,” with BLMM declaring the “fundamental truth of Black personhood.”⁶⁰

There has been considerable debate over whether BLMM is a slogan, a movement, a network, an organization, or a combination of them. For the purposes of this paper, pursuing a definition is unlikely to be as helpful as considering the demographics, aims, methods, and achievements after which a definition may or may not emerge. The study adopts Ransby’s generalised but accurate description of BLMM and M4BL as “a far-reaching movement for racial justice and social transformation...that was triggered by vigilante and police violence against Black people in the United States.”⁶¹

While the most high-profile protests and publicity have followed murders by white law enforcement or vigilantes, it is worth noting that BLMM and M4BL are far more than responses to traumatic events. Those events have built a response which focuses on the everyday violence and discrimination suffered by Black citizens and the essence of what it means to be Black in America. Because they incorporate the mundane

⁵⁹ Christopher J Lebron, *The Making of Black Lives Matter; A Brief History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁶⁰ Gary S Selby, “Dr King, Black Lives Matter and the Legacy of Hope,” *Berkeley Centre, Georgetown University*, 12 January 2018.

⁶¹ Ransby, *Making all BLM*, 1.

and unexceptional, the movements throw into relief that being Black **is** the danger. This makes it harder for opponents to attack and pin down the movements' aims and existence.

The BLMM website defines its' Mission as: "Working inside and outside the system to heal the past, re-imagine the present, and invest in the future of Black lives through policy change, investment in communities, and a commitment to arts and culture." More boldly, it sets down 7 demands under the banner "End White Supremacy", including defunding the police and passing the BREATHE Act. Interestingly and in response to largely right-wing criticism, the website trumpets BLMM's increased commitment to transparency and accountability while blaming the right-wing media for a smear campaign. Some criticism has come from members and supporters and there is currently a multi-million-dollar lawsuit ongoing over alleged missing funds.

BLMM and M4BL activists: Who are they?

The BLMM website declares that it is a global organization dedicated to the elimination of white supremacy. BLMM moved from a hashtag to a proudly leaderless movement with a loose structure of local chapters empowered to set their own agendas. Since the death of George Floyd in May 2020 the phrase "Black Lives Matter" has become globalized, and the headlines refocused on the continuing deaths of Black people by police brutality. It also appears that the global reach of the phrase and its impact on BLMM led to a more formalized organization which in turn led to disputes and fractures within the movement. From the hashtag and loose "non-organization" of the on-line community of 2013, in 2015 Black Lives Matter Global Network (BLMGN) was formed with the declared aim of being a "fundraiser, amplifier, and think tank". By 2019, BLM

Grassroots was formed -a separate entity from BLMGN. In October 2020 Cullors announced a BLM Political Action Committee (BLMPAC), as well. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this departure from what many had viewed as a free-flowing, amorphous and egalitarian movement did not sit well with some, and in late 2020, 10 chapters wrote an open letter criticizing the leadership.⁶² Complaints included Cullors being made Executive Director of BLMGN “against the will of most Chapters and without their knowledge”, that BLM Grassroots was created without the knowledge or support of most Chapters and effectively cut them off from BLMGN, and a lack of accountability and transparency both financially and in decision making.⁶³ Sheri Dickerson of the Oklahoma Chapter told Politico that money donated to BLMM was not provided to the local Chapters and that “people assume that the national leadership is representative- that is certainly not the case.”⁶⁴

From the veneration with which the founders were (and in some quarters still are) held, the very growth of the movement has brought with it a scrutiny and organizational challenges which the young movement did not face. None of the three founders remain in BLMM, Tometi and Garcia are each heading up their own organizations and Cullors stood down as executive director to pursue television and book work following a period during which she was excoriated in the press and online for the price, location and grandiosity of her home. Cullors has always maintained that this was part of a racist smear campaign, and it is notable that the up-to-date BLMM website makes the same complaint, while acknowledging the necessity for greater transparency and

⁶² Zack Linley, “10 BLM Chapters Pen Open Letter Criticizing BLMGN for Lack of Transparency in Decision Making,” *YahooLife*, accessed December 10, 2020.

⁶³ Linly, *Open Letter*.

⁶⁴ Linly, *Open Letter*.

accountability. Nonetheless, BLMM and M4BL remain largely decentralized, amorphous bodies, described by Ransby as “both an umbrella term and a coalition,”⁶⁵ pursuing in parallel broad and specific aims related to racial and social justice.

BLMM has specifically sought to distance itself from what many perceive as the patriarchal church-based face of CRM and includes and champions those traditionally excluded from the leadership of previous Black protest movements particularly women. The founders were queer women and feminists. The movements positively encourage and make space in leadership and all roles for Black queer, trans, and non-binary people, and, according to the website, all “those who have been marginalised within Black liberation movements.”

Ransby argues that Black feminist politics is at the heart of and the “ideological bedrock” of BLMM and M4BL and that the “organizers have enacted a Black feminist intersectional praxis in the campaigns, documents and vision of the major BLMM and M4BL organizations.” She is one of many who describe the loose organizational structure of such a collective, spawning many new organizations but all part of one “political family” that rejects the idea of colour-blindness and a post-racial America. It also rejects the “hierarchical hetero- patriarchal politics of respectability.” She describes the breadth of the movement, encompassing and embracing all faiths, sexualities, and genders, making the movement more than a struggle for Black people only, but one that “contextualises the oppression, exploitation, and liberation of Black poor and working-class people within the simple understanding that ...’once all Black people are free, all people will be free.’”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 4.

⁶⁶ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 2-3.

While it is right that Black women and feminists have always played a role in Black liberation movements, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Angela Davis, Shirley Chisolm, to name but a few, they were not nationally prominent amongst the broader population at the time as the CRM public face continued to be male and increasingly focussed on a single charismatic leader. The contrast with BLMM and M4BL is stark. As Cohen points out: “what’s new is the ways in which, at this moment in the [BLMM] movement, young, black, often queer women are not just doing the work but are part of the collective leadership...visible and vocal...shaping the direction of this movement...across a number of organizations”⁶⁷ She goes on to express the importance of including the most marginalised, including trans people and the necessity of recognising the connectivity of Black cis and trans women who are “at the bottom of the racial order and gender hierarchy” in order to understand the “larger structures that we’re both fighting against.”⁶⁸ She also touches on the difficulties presented by the increasingly toxic debates between gender critical feminists who assert the importance of biological sex and trans-activists who find this transphobic and reject the idea of biological sex in favour of gender fluidity and self-identification. While this conflict, for it is such, will necessarily have an impact inside BLMM and M4BL, a more in-depth consideration will be for others to pursue.

The centrality of queer and transwomen, in the movements has had a significant impact challenging and, to a certain extent overcoming the invisibility of Black women in the public eye. While the names of many Black men and boys killed by law enforcement

⁶⁷ Cathy J Cohen, Sarah J Jackson, “Ask a Feminist: A conversation with Cathy J Cohen on Black Lives Matter, Feminism, and Contemporary Activism,” *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41, no. 4 (2016): 781.

⁶⁸ Cohen, *Ask a Feminist* p786.

and vigilantes is longer and more well-known than those of Black women similarly killed, the traditionally understood model of a Black man or boy as the victim has been broadened by the voices of women and the #SayHerName campaign.

The campaign began in 2014, formed by the African American Policy Forum and the Centre for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies. One of the earliest high-profile deaths that caught the public eye was that of Sandra Bland who was found hanging in her jail cell in Texas in 2015 following an aggressive traffic stop for changing lanes without signalling. When Cohen was asked in 2016 whether the public reaction to Bland's death was a tipping point, she demurred. Sandra Bland was a middle-class, light-skinned, college-educated woman who failed to make a signal. Cohen argues that the white public "may be prepared to accept the killing of black men and marginalized black women at the hands of the state" they could more easily identify with Sandra Bland and that a tipping point would not be reached until there was the same kind of reaction to the deaths of women like Rekia Boyd.⁶⁹ In 2012 Rekia Boyd was shot and killed by an off-duty Chicago detective who allegedly mistook her boyfriend's cell phone for a gun and shot at him, killing Boyd. Interestingly, although not garnering national or international headlines, Ramsey describes the lengthy local campaigns in Chicago by various groups fighting for justice for Boyd. Her family was awarded \$4.5 in damages, the officer who killed her was acquitted and resigned from the police in 2016 before he was likely fired, thus unjustifiably keeping his pension.⁷⁰

On 13 March 2020 seven police officers broke into Breanna Taylor's apartment in Louisville Kentucky, firing 32 rounds and killing her. This led to widespread small-scale

⁶⁹ Cohen and Jackson, *Ask a Feminist*, 784.

⁷⁰ Ramsey, *Making All BLM*, 136-137.

demonstrations which were soon overshadowed by the mass demonstrations following the murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020. The following month, Precious Fordan reported on one of the demonstrations and noted that Taylor's name was not mentioned once: "The protests I witnessed were representative of how the deaths of Black women at the hands of police are treated as nothing more than an afterthought. They're only acknowledged when in some way tied to the death of a Black man, even if the string that loosely connects them is the timing of their deaths."⁷¹

In 2020 the Louisville Metropolitan Government paid Taylor's family \$12 million in relation to her death without admission of liability or wrongdoing. On 4th August 2022, four current and former Louisville officers were charged with federal crimes in relation to civil rights and unlawful conspiracy theories.

A 2019 study by Edwards et al confirms that while the majority of the deaths of Black people at the hands of the police are men and boys and they are 2.5x more likely to be killed than their white counterparts, Black women are 1.4x more likely to be killed by police than white women.⁷²

In summary, BLMM and M4BL represents a vast and diverse set of organizations, groups and individuals, both affiliated and not, with a common aim of challenging and ending police and state violence towards Black people, with many having additional and specific aims. It is undeniable that the leadership and involvement of Black women, lesbians and trans women has influenced, shaped, and broadened the base, appeal and

⁷¹ Precious Fordan, "The 'Say Her Name' Movement Started for a Reason: We Forget Black Women Killed by Police," *Teen Vogue*, (2020), www.teenvogue.com/story/say-her-name.

⁷² Frank Edwards, Hedwig Lee and Michael Esposito, *PNAS(Evanston: Northwestern University, 2019)*, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3151-3194>.

tactics of the main organizations and the inclusivity has allowed a greater voice for those previously denied one.

BLMM and M4BL: What are their aims?

BLMM and M4BL started as a response to continuing police violence against Black people. The amorphous nature of the movement has allowed for different movements and individuals to pursue both broader and more specific aims. Lowery suggests that BLMM and M4BL is best thought of as an “ideology” to which “not all adherents subscribe in the same manner”⁷³

Some scholars and activists have made clear their belief that racial inequality in the United States is so embedded in the structure of societal institutions, that fully dismantling these institutions is the only solution. There is widespread condemnation of the myth of a post-racial color-blind America. Ransby highlights that Black people are “represented in all categories of the oppressed in the United States,” thus “to realize the liberation of all Black people means undoing systems and injustice that impact all other oppressed people as well.” She echoes the movements’ calls for “systemic and fundamental change”, and abolitionism, described by Cullors as “getting rid of prisons, jails, police, courts and surveillance”⁷⁴ She also cites creating a post-capitalist society, and “lives without sanctions and violence that attempt to regulate their bodies, their gender expressions and their sexuality.”⁷⁵ Bonilla-Silva asserts that “racism forms a structure...the struggle must be geared towards the removal of structures and institutions...” and further that the aims of

⁷³ Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us*, 87.

⁷⁴ Patrice Cullors, *An Abolitionist's Handbook* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2021);, 6.

⁷⁵ Ransby, *Making All BML*, 3.

BLMM and M4BL include “ending mass incarceration, reparations and economic justice.”⁷⁶

The very breadth and depth of these aims presents challenges in analysis, not least in how their advocates see them being achieved, which is considered in the next section.

For the purposes of this section, it will be helpful to break down some specifics.

The Black Lives Matter website describes BLMM as a “global organization” whose mission is to “eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.” It also contains 7

“Demands.”

1. Convict and Ban Trump from future political office.
2. Expel Republican’s in Congress who attempted to overturn the 2020 election and incited January 6 attack on the Capitol.
3. Launch a full investigation into the ties between white supremacy and the Capitol Police, law enforcement and the military.
4. Permanently ban Trump from all digital media platforms
5. Defund the police.
6. Don’t let the coup be sued as an excuse to crack down on “our movement.”
7. Pass the BREATHE Act.

Of these 1-4 and 6 relate specifically to Trump and the January 6th insurrection and are not considered here. Of broader interest are the deeply controversial calls to defund the police and pass the BREATHE Act.

⁷⁶ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism*, 211.

Calls to defund the police gained significant momentum after the murder of George Floyd. Some definitions cause confusion as to what the phrase means and how it is differentiated from abolitionism, and indeed there is an overlap in some activists' definitions. To differentiate, however, Cullors' definition above is adopted. Abolitionism in this context refers to the abolition of police and prisons and is supported and explained by those with lived experience and work in the social justice milieu on the basis that the system is broken, and reform will never be enough to change it.

Black citizens do not have the luxury of police protection. For many Black activists and citizens, the police are the problem. Stretching beyond the frequent murders Kaba points to the “routine and mundane violence that shapes our lives on a real systemic basis, and on a structural basis.”^{77 78} In a further interview,⁷⁹ Kaba expands upon the abolitionist theme: “I am looking to abolish what I consider to be death-making institutions, which are policing, imprisonment, sentencing and surveillance,” and in the book itself asks: “What happens when you define policing as actually an entire system of harassment, violence and surveillance that keeps aggressive gender and racial hierarchies in place?”⁸⁰

This is the heart of the abolitionist argument: the police and the Prison Industrial Complex are so embedded into the structure of a society that maintains racial inequality and perpetuates white supremacy that reform alone is insufficient. They believe the system is permanently damaged and needs to be demolished and rebuilt. In the midst of

⁷⁷ Noah Berlatsky, “Interview With Mariame Kaba,” *New York Times*, (2021): accessed on January 5, 2023, <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/abolish-police-prison>.

⁷⁸ Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us* (Chicago: Haymarket Books,, 2021).

⁷⁹ Keeanya-Yamahtta Taylor, “The Emerging movement for Police and Prison Abolition,” *The New Yorker*, (2021): accessed January 14, 2023, <https://newyorker.com/news/ourcolumnists>.

⁸⁰ Keeanya, *We Do This*.

the protests following the murder of George Floyd, 9 members of the Minneapolis City Council announced that they would dismantle the police department. This was too radical even for some activists, and the proposal was quietly abandoned with no agreement at the time on any police reform package. Still, Minneapolis became the center of the movement to defund the police and the matter was put to a referendum in November 2021. The referendum asked whether the police department should be abolished and replaced with a new Department of Public Safety. The so-called “Question 2” was defeated by 56% to 44%.

Defunding the police essentially means diverting police funding to social and community programs such as social work, housing, education and is based upon the belief that crime is a symptom and result of social deprivation and systemic racial discrimination. While this is seen by some as a compromise between abolition and simple reform, research and polling suggest that while there is strong support for police reform, Americans are not in favor of totally defunding or abolishing the police. An article in *The Economist* cites polling in June 2020⁸¹ suggesting that a quarter of Americans favored cutting police funding outright, while a larger share of nearly 50% favored redirecting funds to alternative social projects, such as mental health response and social workers. There is a difference between Republicans and Democrats, with 68% of Democrats in favor, 55% of Republicans opposed. Even so, the fact that 45% of Republicans were in favor is notable, in these most partisan of times.

Further statistics suggest there was widespread support for less drastic reforms with 88% in favor of de-escalation training, 87% for bodycams, and 67% for banning

⁸¹“Most Americans do not want to “defund” the police”, *The Economist (Online)*, June 18, 2020, London.

restraints on suspects' necks. Given that this polling took place in the immediate aftermath of George Floyd's death, the last statistic is surprisingly low, while other stats remain overwhelming. More recently, Vaughnn et al report continuing strong support for police reform, but that defunding and abolition "generate opposition both in terms of slogan and substance."⁸² They report that public support is dependent on the "perceived implications for crime and public safety..." and is thus unlikely to receive national support.⁸³ Unsurprisingly, the police are strongly opposed and highlight these fears.⁸⁴

The difference comes down to the essence of abolitionism and defunding. For the many Black Americans, the police are a constant threat. For many white Americans, they are a reassurance, and it is vital to emphasize that, however supportive of the aims of the movements, white activists and affiliates and the white public at large cannot truly know or comprehend the fear that Black people have, poor or not, when they leave the house or that Black parents fear when their children go out after dark.

Luke Mogelson, a white journalist, captures this dissonance in his essay on the Minneapolis protests after Floyd's death. He records initially viewing the reaction of some of his Black co-protesters to the forceful police action as excessive, thinking "Come on, they're not going to kill us." and only later understanding that his experience of what had happened was different in a fundamental way to that of his Black fellow-protesters: "Deep down, I was not afraid of the police; on an instinctive level, I understood that there was a limit to what they could do to me. If the legitimate fear that law-enforcement

⁸² Paige E Vaughnn, Kyle Peyton, Gregory A Huber, "Mass support for proposals to reshape policy depend on the implications for crime and safety," *Criminology and Public Safety, Special Edition: George Floyd Protests and the Criminal Justice System* 21, no. 1, (2022): 125-146.

⁸³ Vaughnn et al,

⁸⁴ Cynthia Lum, Christopher S. Koper, Xiaoyun Wu, "Can We Really Defund the Police? A Nine-Agency Study of Police Response to Calls for Service" *Police Quarterly* 25, no. 3, (2022): 255-280.

officers instilled in Black protesters was fundamentally unknowable to me, so was [their courage] when standing up to them.”⁸⁵

Across the Pond

Mogelson’s observation about the unknowability of Black people’s experience is wholly relatable to all thinking white people. Even going to numerous protests cannot prepare one for the difference in the white and Black experience. There are a great many differences between the United States and Great Britain, but the belief amongst many in both countries, not just Black people, is that the police are systemically racist. In 1993 Stephen Lawrence, a Black teenager from London, was murdered at a bus stop by a group of white youths. Their identities were widely known and published, but for years there was no successful prosecution. An enquiry into the case found that the Metropolitan Police responsible for policing in London was “institutionally racist.”⁸⁶ Although 2 of the original 6 suspects were finally convicted nearly 20 years later in January 2012, the case remains a stain on the Met. Recent events and enquiries have further confirmed a widespread distrust in law enforcement, particularly among the Black population. The Met is now in special measures following a report uncovering a litany of new systemic failings, including errors in stop and search which disproportionately affects Black men, the strip-searching of Black children, grossly offensive messages revealed amongst officers at Charing Cross Police Station in London, and controversies over specific stop, and search incidents, such as that of a Black champion athlete Bianca Williams.

⁸⁵ Luke Mogleson, “The Uprising,” *The New Yorker*, (2021): 753.

⁸⁶ William MacPherson, “The United Kingdom Government,” *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, (1999).

Williams is in a relationship with Black Portuguese sprinter, Ricardo dos Santos. In July 2020 the couple and their three-month-old infant were taking a drive and were stopped by police, handcuffed, and searched for essentially no reason other than their presence was suspicious because they were a Black couple driving an expensive car. They were searched for drugs; nothing was found. Initially the police insisted that the action was proper and proportionate but in June 2021, almost a year later, 5 officers involved were charged with gross misconduct, potentially leading to termination. In August 2022, De Santos was stopped again, this time by 7 armed officers, a rarity in British policing. The police tried to pull him over by driving in front of him, but he drove off, he says, in fear for his safety, wanting to stop on a main road where there would be witnesses. His action has inevitably led to victim blaming, a common occurrence in the UK and US. Many white commentators questioned why, if De Santos had done nothing wrong, he did not just stop. This represents a fundamental lack of understanding of the treatment of Black people by the police and their consequential view of law enforcement as a threat rather than a protection. It is the study's hope that it reinforces an understanding that systemic and structural racism is not exclusive to the United States. A crucial difference is the lack of guns among law enforcement and civilians. While guns complicate and often fatally escalate matters, racism remains the issue.

In late 2022 there were two incidents involving the British Royal Family which have led people to question whether the Royal Family, which includes the Head of State of the UK and many Commonwealth countries, is institutionally racist. One involved a Royal event celebrating various charities working with female victims of violence, a cause which is championed by King Charles' wife Camilla. The Royals have various

functionaries, among them “Ladies-in-Waiting” who attend these events and mingle with visitors. One such was Lady Sarah Hussey, who had worked for the Royals for decades. She questioned a woman of color, Ngozi Fulani, at length about where she was “really from”, refusing to accept that Ms. Fulani is a Londoner. The Palace and the Prince of Wales condemned any appearance of racism, Lady Sarah resigned and was forced to apologize.

In contrast, the Royals have been reluctant to make any comment or intervention into the undeniable racism that has characterized media coverage in the UK of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. The couple released a controversial Netflix documentary series which aired in late 2022 which generated massive publicity and appeared to divide the nation. The right-wing press and media have written negative stories about the Duchess for years, but this came to a head in an article written for the Rupert Murdoch-owned Sun newspaper. Jeremy Clarkson, one of the most-well known and highest paid presenters on British television was the author. In it he wrote that he “hate(s) Meghan Markle”, lies awake at night “gnashing his teeth” and dreaming of her being “paraded naked through every town in Britain” with citizens “throwing excrement at her.” This racist, misogynistic, twisted sexual fantasy, irrelevantly said to be based on a scene from the TV show Game of Thrones, sparked near universal condemnation and a deafening silence from the Royals, the Sun, and the right-wing media. To make matters worse, Carlson had been a lunch guest with Queen Camilla the week before the article was published. The contrasting reactions to an article inciting violence against a woman of color and a geriatric royal functionary asking wildly inappropriate questions is striking. The royal

family has never commented on the Clarkson article, thus supporting assertions of racism.

How Do They Seek to Achieve Their Aims

The calls by BLMM and M4BL to abolish or defund the police have, with others formed the basis for proposed changes to legislation. The BREATHE Act, named for George Floyd's dying pleas, was drafted and presented by the Electoral Justice Project of M4BL, and supported by BLMM. It contains far-reaching proposals. The main provisions of the BREATHE Act include:

- Divest Federal Resources from police and incarceration and end criminal legal harms.
- Invest in new approaches to community safety.
- Allocate new money to build healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities for all.
- Hold political leaders accountable and enhance self-determination of Black communities.
- Demilitarize the police.
- End life sentences, mandatory minimums, and the three strikes rule.
- Repeal the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act.
- Set a timeline to close down federal prisons and immigration detention centers.

The Act has been described by proponents as “The Modern-Day Civil Rights Legislation We Need”⁸⁷ and supported by House representatives Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass) and Rashida Taib, (D-Mich), but described by opponents as “The Progressives Descent into Full Derangement.”⁸⁸ In fact, the BREATHE Act has never been introduced into Congress, but has formed the basis of other legislative proposals: The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act proposed an end to qualified immunity which provides police and public officials protection from law suits, mandating body and dash cameras, banning chokeholds like the one that killed George Floyd, banning no-knock warrants in drugs cases, such as that used in the killing of Breanna Taylor, and strengthening oversight and accountability, including a national database of police misconduct. The Act was introduced and passed twice in the House but was blocked in the Senate. The Ending Qualified Immunity Act was also introduced twice but did not receive a vote in either Chamber.

Any federally proposed legislation faces the perpetual difficulties inherent in the system in that it is not binding on state and local governments. There are over 17,000 police forces at all levels in the United States and the sheer volume as well as numerous channels of accountability make reform and monitoring difficult, skewing data on issues such as police brutality against Blacks people, as well as the number of misconduct cases against any one officer. One legislative success, although not directly linked to BLMM and M4BL was the signing into law by President Biden of the Emmett Till Antilynching Act of 2022. After 100 years of campaigning and hundreds of legislative attempts,

⁸⁷ Patricia Cullors, “The Moder-Day Civil Rights Legislation We Need,” *Teen Vogue*, (2020): accessed January 4, 2023, <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/the-breathe-act>.

⁸⁸ Tim Donner, “The BREATHE Act: The Progressives Descent into Full Derangement,” *Liberty Nation News*, (2021).

lynching was finally declared a federal hate crime. To those outside the U.S. the fact that it took until 2022 to pass this law is mystifying.

Although BLMM and M4BL have thus far failed to make legislative progress, there have been two Executive Orders (EOs) oriented toward safer policing. In the immediate aftermath of George Floyd's murder, amidst continuing protests, former President Trump signed Executive Order 13929 as a minimal response to the national outrage over the brutality of his wrongful death. It provided funds for de-escalation training, a system of credentialing police forces, and the banning of chokeholds "unless deadly force is allowed by law", that caveat making the "ban" virtually meaningless.

On the second anniversary of George Floyd's death, President Biden signed Executive Order 14074: Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing, and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety. Key reforms include:

- Improving Data Collection via a collective database recording all instances of misconduct in federal agencies.
- Use of force only to be permitted where there is "no reasonably effective, safe, and feasible alternative..."
- Banning no-knock warrants except if there is an imminent threat of violence to an officer or other individual.

There are further provisions including on limiting militarization, credentialing, establishing a committee on mental health, and enforcing bodycam use. The power of an EO is limited and for broader and deeper reform legislation is necessary. The ACLU, amongst others, acknowledge Biden's EO as a positive move and the "most substantial federal action on police reform since George Floyd's murder" but asserts that "it does not

go nearly far enough”⁸⁹. It calls on Congress to pass comprehensive police reform legislation, removing qualified immunity, and strengthening civil rights protections. Additional calls are for continuing action and vigilance and to “reimagine public safety by creating alternatives that are community-centered and also focus on prevention.”⁹⁰ The ACLU supports defunding but not abolishing the police. M4BL described the EO in a statement on its website as: “...a poor excuse for the transformation of public safety that [Biden] promised the Black voters who put him in office [and] a shameful way to mark the memory of George Floyd...”

In summary, the aims of BLMM and M4BL are as broad as the movements themselves. A shared aim is to end police violence against Black citizens. Some seek systemic, societal change. The differing aims feed into the means of achieving them, which form the basis of the next section.

Protest and Politics: Inside the Tent or Out?

There are many ways to protest regardless of environment, and with one or one million participants. BLMM and M4BL is broad enough to encompass all of these and more and this breadth is part of the movements’ effectiveness. Within BLMM and M4BL, activists debate the effectiveness of electoral politics and direct activism.

As mentioned above, for many the election of Barak Obama was a turning point and for some, like the white majority, signaled the end of racism and the dawn of a new post-racial America. While some still suggest its progress, the Obama presidency was a

⁸⁹ ACLU, News & Commentary, The Biden Administration’s Executive Order is a Foundation to Build Upon, (2022): accessed January 2, 2023, <https://www.aclu.org/news/criminal-law-reform>.

⁹⁰ ACLU, *News & Comment*

disappointment which exposed the limitations of his ambition, as well as what is achievable in electoral politics. This view also rejects the politics of respectability, whereby privileged members of minority groups adopt the social norms of the majority group to enhance their status while distancing themselves from the perceived negative characteristics or behaviors of others in their own group.

Ransby notes that there are more high profile and rich Black people than ever before but that “there is a simultaneously greater economic disparity within Black America than ever before...” and that the growth and profile of this elite “has obscured the suffering below.” This and disillusionment after the Obama administration suggested “the limitations of any politician to change our lives and to transform our lives.”⁹¹ Ransby goes on to state that the politics of respectability isolates and marginalizes those who don’t conform to middle-class behavior while she reminds us that “proper behavior never protected Black people against violence.”⁹²

The term “politics of respectability” was coined by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham in 1993 when women in the Black Baptists Church sought to demonstrate their respectability and moral adherence to white American values, and in doing so to distinguish themselves from the “unrespectable” and negative stereotyped Black women.

In contrast, Dazey argues that the politics of respectability is “an inherently ambivalent political strategy, one that stands at the crossroads of forms of resistance and accommodation of oppressive structures.”⁹³ She acknowledges the arguments against respectability politics as a, “capitulation to the dominant power structure,” assimilation,

⁹¹ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 23.

⁹² Ransby, 69.

⁹³ Margot Dazey, “Rethinking Respectability Politics,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 72, no. 3, (2021): 580-593.

reinforcement of negative stereotypes, and exclusion of the most vulnerable, but argues that the politics of respectability “encourages expectations for fair treatment and cultivates collective aspirations of justice and equality.”, implying that those defending the politics of respectability “challenge the binary oppositions between accommodation and resistance” and “participate in the transformation of dominant social and political imaginaries through the correction of negative representations of marginalized groups.”⁹⁴ In short, Dazey suggests that more research is needed before dismissing the politics of respectability, indicating it may have a use. While it is incontrovertible that there are more well-known Black people than ever before, paving the way for the success of others, it does not address the Ransby’s criticism that it does nothing to help the poorest and most oppressed, only expanding a still small and exclusive Black elite.

The rejection of the politics of respectability is encompassed in the now ubiquitous phrase “Unapologetically Black” - Ransby defines this as acknowledging that “blackness is rooted in a particular political and historical context with bloody roots in the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, slavery and Jim Crow (old and new).” She cites the story of Mellody Hobson, President of an investment company and wife of film producer George Lucas who had an “epiphany” at the funeral of Ebony founder, John Johnson. She quotes Hobson: “He was unapologetically black... [I had] been apologizing for who I am, about being a woman, being black – and it stops today.” Ransby comments on the previous necessity of successful Black elites distancing themselves from the suffering and struggles of poor, non-elite Black people⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Dazey, *Rethinking Respectability Politics*, 580.

⁹⁵ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 97-98.

While activists and allies will likely welcome the opening of a broader and more inclusive definition of “blackness”, Unapologetically Black needs to become more than the latest celebrity endorsed slogan and translate into a real reversal of the Black elites’ assimilation into white society, creating a bridge which opens up opportunities for poor working class Black families and individuals to an equitable society. There is currently little evidence that this is happening, and this leads back to the question of how such change can be achieved?

The disappointment of the Obama presidency engendered a debate on the effectiveness of electoral politics versus activism efforts. Bonilla-Silva, while dismissing Obama as being about compromise rather than change, highlights that “because most minority politicians must either “compromise” to get elected or are dependent upon local white elites, their capacity to enact policies that benefit the minority masses is quite limited.” He continues with the observation that today’s minority politicians are essentially college educated career politicians rather than politicians arising from protest or social movements and are not “race rebel[s]... and are therefore “no threat to the power structure of America”.⁹⁶

Clearly, however, this is not a binary choice, and it appears both obvious and widely accepted that change is likely to be effected by both protest and involvement in electoral politics. Bonilla-Silva describes the differing paths of three prominent Fergusson activists to illustrate this point. DeRay Mckesson, Brittany Packnett and Netta Elzie created Campaign Zero in 2015 to explore solutions to reducing police violence. Since then, Mckesson and Packnett have become more aligned with mainstream activity

⁹⁶ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism*, 206-208.

while Elzie has remained firmly on the protest side. McKesson ran unsuccessfully for mayor of Baltimore in 2016, was briefly a senior officer in the public school system, and now writes and broadcasts. Packnett was appointed by President Obama to his task force on 21st century policing and remains a prominent media figure and commentator. Elzie remains active in protest movements and on Twitter. Packnett famously said: “there are some people who need to be revolutionary and there are some people that need to be in the White House.”⁹⁷ Bonilla-Silva comments that the divergent paths of these three individuals demonstrates the different paths that can be taken to seek racial equality and “This diversity definitely stands out as one of the strengths of the movement.”⁹⁸ It is evident that, unless one is calling for violence, change needs to happen peacefully through protests and politics. The rhetoric from some of the more radical activists is indeed revolutionary in terms of dismantling institutions, ending white supremacy, abolishing the police and prisons, and re-imagining a new and equitable society. However, mainstream BLMM and M4BL do not call for violent struggle, instead requesting direct action, “a tactic used to make an immediate intervention or disruption that stops business as usual,” according to the D.C. BLM website.⁹⁹ This includes Rallies, Marches, Caravans, Social Media Campaigns, Blockades, Reclaiming Space, Strikes, Walk-Outs, Disobedience, Street Theater, Hunger Strikes, Banner Hanging, Work Slowdowns, and Wheatpasting.

As Rhodes points out, the movements are happy to adopt and adapt some of the tactics of the Black Panther Movement, such as Political Theatre, the rejection of

⁹⁷ Bonilla-Silva, 235.

⁹⁸ Bonilla-Silva, 235.

⁹⁹ Black Lives Matter D.C., <https://www.dcblm.org/direct-action>.

respectability politics, and signs with catchy, politically-drive slogans like the “Hands Up. Don’t Shoot” of Ferguson, which were an echo of the “Free Huey” signs in Oakland in May 1969,¹⁰⁰ but there are no outright calls from the movements for armed insurrection, with few exceptions. Most notably, Hank Newsome, the head of the Greater New York BLM Chapter, has remained an outspoken voice holding out the possibility or inevitability of violence if change does not occur. In the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder, Newsome gave an interview to the UK Daily Mail newspaper in which he said BLM was developing a highly trained military arm, talked of “mobilization”, drew comparisons with the Black Panthers, and echoed Malcolm X by declaring “we are prepared to stop these murders [by police] by any means necessary.”¹⁰¹ On June 25 2020 he told the New York Post that if the system does not change “we will burn it down.”¹⁰² In November 2021 Newsome told then mayor-elect, Eric Adams, that if he reverted to a more aggressive style of policing “there will be riots, there will be fire, and there will be bloodshed...”¹⁰³ Most of these reports appear in the conservative press; it is unclear whether they are purposefully less prominent in the liberal media. Further research should examine the extent and the growth or decline in calls for violence in the context of a possible decline of the protest movement and the extent to which Newsome is one of a few voices employing such rhetoric.

¹⁰⁰ Jane Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers: The Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

¹⁰¹ Ryan Parry, “Black Matter Leader Declares War on Police,” *Daily Mail*, (2020): accessed December 19, 2022, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8384065/Black-Lives-Matter-leader-declares-war-police.html>.

¹⁰² Mark Moore, “BLM leader: If change doesn't happen, 'we will burn down this system',” *New York Post*, (2020): accessed December 19, 2022, nypost.com.

¹⁰³ Linda Schmidt, Kayla Mamelak, BLM threatens 'riots, bloodshed' in NYC if Adams brings back police unit, mayor-elect responds, *Fox News Broadcast*, (2021): accessed January 3, 2023, <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/black-lives-matter-threaten-riots-fire-bloodshed-in-nyc-if-adams-brings-back-police-unit>.

An issue for any protest movement is that the absence of an armed threat presents a real problem in effecting change: if you rule out the possibility of a violent struggle, there is far less incentive for those who benefit from the status quo to make any meaningful change as MLK realized. This can be where the limits of both non-violent protest and electoral politics can be exposed. In an attempt to meet this challenge, M4BL includes on its website a strategic 5-year plan, focusing on concrete measurable goals. This plan, entitled, M4BL Project 2024: Black Power Rising, sets out 5 Pillars:

- Mass Engagement: to involve 10% of the nearly 47 million Black people in America in political education, training and cultural events.
- Local Power: to establish self-determined communities where Black people are in governing power in at least 5-10 communities.
- Building Across Movements/Multi-racial Strategy: to align the left across issues, sectors and identity.... [and] maintain an intersectional analysis that elevates and centers anti-Black racism.
- Leadership Development: train 50,000 Black organizers, activists, strategists and people in other essential roles to accomplish the strategy.
- Electoral Strategy: to capture clear electoral victories with an eye towards preventing the rise of white-nationalist and authoritarian rule.

It will be for future scholars to determine the success or failure of these goals. The ways BLMM and M4BL seek to achieve their aims are as diverse as the aims themselves, but mainly a mixture of direct non-violent action and legislation. Crucially, the amorphous nature of the movements means that diverse local and community goals can be championed at the same time as national efforts.

Popularity and Public Perception

An issue with the movements' strategies and the aims is that they rely heavily on mass ongoing support and participation which is significantly reliant upon public awareness.

In May 2022, Newsweek reported on a poll by YouGov, commissioned by the University of Massachusetts Amherst.¹⁰⁴ The report cites earlier polls from June 2020, immediately after George Floyd's murder showing that the 67% of Americans supporting BLMM dropped to 55% in September 2020. The May 2022 poll shows support for BLMM's aims among Americans falling from 48% in April 2021 to 31% and support for its' tactics from 40%-31%. Among Black people support also fell for goals from 67%- to 56% and for tactics from 65% to 49%. There were also significant decreases in support for the banning of chokeholds at 62% to 58%, reducing police funding from 38% to 31%, and allowing the deactivation of body cameras from 71% to 64%. Opposition has increased only marginally, and 25% of those polled described themselves as indifferent to BLMM. The report cites the director of the poll and associate professor of political science at UMass, Amherst Tatishe Nteta as suggesting that the public may be suffering from movement fatigue and BLMM "may have reached its; zenith."

A further breakdown of the current support for BLMM and M4BL comes from a Pew Research Center poll focusing on age as well as race.¹⁰⁵ Teens are overwhelmingly supportive of BLMM and M4BL, with 39% somewhat supportive, 31% strongly

¹⁰⁴ Khaleda Rahman, "Support for Black Lives Matter Plummets Among African Americans: Poll", *Newsweek*, (2022), accessed January 13, 2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/support-black-lives-matter-plummets-among-african-americans-poll-1708122>.

¹⁰⁵ Kiley Hurst, Support for the Black Lives Matter movement varies considerably between U.S. teens, adults, *Pew Research Center*, (2022): accessed December 30, 2023, r <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/06/15/u-s-teens-are-more-likely-than-adults-to-support-the-black-lives-matter-movement/>.

supportive, so 70% in total, among adults the figures are 31% and 26% respectively. These numbers still confirm a majority of adults at 57% in support. Support declines with age, according to other polls, although not significantly. Ages 18-29 managed 66%, while ages 30-49 were 57%. ,50-64 was 54%, with the over 65s was at 49%. That is still almost half of Americans showing support for the movements.

Although the UMass Amherst poll showed a decline in support among Black Americans, this is not reflected in the PRC poll which shows 92% of Black teens and 80% of adults supporting at least somewhat. For Hispanics the figures are 82% and 66% and for whites 57% and 50% respectively. A Civiqs poll in November 2021 found 82% support among Blacks with 53% of whites opposed, with overall support at 44% and opposition at 43%.¹⁰⁶

Polls are not always reliable and there are some significant discrepancies in findings due to timing, size of sample, and methodology. Moreover, the PRC poll was focused primarily on age groups. However, the most notable discrepancy is in the reported views of Black respondents. PRC found 92% in favor Civiqs 82% while the YouGov Poll found support among Blacks declining from 67% to 55%. This is puzzling and potentially important for an understanding of where BLMM and M4BL currently stand. Support has declined universally since the highpoint of outrage and protest following George Floyd's murder, but whether this decline is predominantly among whites or, as YouGov suggests, also among Blacks is a question that merits further polling and research. Some indirect support for the YouGov findings is provided by an

¹⁰⁶ Zack Linley, Poll Shows Decline in Black Lives Matter Support, *Newsone*, (2017): accessed on November 25, 2022, NewOne.com.

additional PRC poll published in August 2022,¹⁰⁷ which found that 64% of Black respondents thought that the increased focus on racial inequality and violence had not led to changes that improved their lives. 31% said it had made progressive changes, however. In 2020, 56% thought that it would lead to meaningful change, though the overwhelming majority agreed that the system needs changing with 95% addressing policing, 95% citing court and judicial processes, and 94% addressing the prison system.) Only 13% thought that the achievement of equality was very likely.

These sobering findings lead to the question - why is nothing working to achieve real and lasting change? Is it movement fatigue, as Nteta suggests, a view perhaps supported by *Los Angeles Times* correspondent, Erika D. Smith: “Black Lives matter and always will. But I feel that the Black Lives Movement will never matter as it once did.”¹⁰⁸ This comment was in the context of an article on the lawsuit filed by 26 BLM Grassroots Chapters against BLMGNF, accusing it of siphoning off \$10 million of donations. Such controversies are undoubtedly damaging to the movement’s reputation and, following the filing, Amazon suspended BLMM from its charity program and other companies, clamoring to support BLMM and M4BL following Floyd’s murder, have distanced themselves. But the decline began before the lawsuit, although accusations of financial mismanagement have dogged the organization for a number of years.

Consideration of the question of defunding the police in Minneapolis is suggestive of the popularity and trajectory of BLMM and M4BL. Minneapolis, the site of

¹⁰⁷ Shawna Chen, Poll: Most Black people say racial reckoning hasn't improved their lives, (2022): accessed January 4, 2023, (m)<https://www.axios.com/2022/08/30/black-lives-matter-change-poll>.

¹⁰⁸ Brandon Tensley, BLM infighting has been brewing for years, but the movement's mission 'isn't finished, (2022): accessed January 5, 2023,) [ps://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/blm-infighting-has-been-brewing-for-years-but-the-movement-isn-t-finished/ar-AA11BVaV](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/blm-infighting-has-been-brewing-for-years-but-the-movement-isn-t-finished/ar-AA11BVaV).

Floyd's murder, was the focal point for protests nationwide and beyond. The subsequent referendum on police reform occurred as law enforcement employment was decreasing and violent crime was increasing. In a CNN report¹⁰⁹, Rob Kuznia noted that the number of murders in Minneapolis escalated to levels not seen since 1995, when Minneapolis was dubbed "Murderopolis." In 1995 there were 97 murders. In the years between 1996 and 2019, the murder rate reduced significantly, decreasing as low as 30.¹¹⁰ In 2019 there were 46 murders, in 2020, the year of George Floyd's murder and the subsequent unrest this leaped to 84 and in 2021 the figure was 96 – just one short of the record 1995 figure. In 2022 the figure was down slightly to 81.

In the post-Floyd era, the police numbers in Minneapolis declined by more than 1/3 from 900-560 and many in law enforcement, according to Kuznia's report, cite not just the low numbers but that very low morale contributed to the exodus. For many city residents, Black and white, this led to lawlessness and a sense of abandonment; in 2020, 8 residents, 4 of them Black, sued the city over the decline in police numbers and in July 2021, a Judge ordered that the police hire more officers to make a minimum number of 730 in total.

It is estimated that, nationwide, between 15 and 26 million people protested in the immediate aftermath of George Floyd's murder.¹¹¹ Information on Twitter cites that the #BLM hashtag was used 47.8 million times between May 26 2020 and June 7 2020, with

¹⁰⁹ Rob Kuznia, Once nicknamed "'Murderopolis,' The City That Became The Centre of the 'Defund the Police' Movement is Grappling With Heightened Violent Crime," (2022): accessed January 6, 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/09/25/us/minneapolis-crime-defund-invs/>.

¹¹⁰ "Crime in Minneapolis, Minnesota (MN): murders, rapes, robberies, assaults, burglaries, thefts, auto thefts, arson, law enforcement employees, police officers, crime map," (2023), accessed December 5, 2023, city-data.com.

¹¹¹ Larry Buchanan, Quotrung Bui, and Jugal K. Patel, "Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History," *The New York Times*, (2020): accessed January 14, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>.

emphasis on civil rights rather than law enforcement.¹¹² A Gallup poll at the same time showed confidence in law enforcement at below 50% for the first time.¹¹³

Alongside this activity there were changes in the political landscape. Mayor Jacob Frey, who was roundly booed by a crowd in 2020 for stating that he did not support abolition of the police, was re-elected in 2021, refunded an earlier cut to the police budget, and pledged extra funding for the next 2 fiscal years. On his website he adopts what is referred to as the both/and approach, both effective and just policing and delivering on deep seated structural reforms. Frey appointed the city's first Community Safety Commissioner, Dr Cedric Alexander, sworn in in August 2022 to lead an integrated response to crime overseeing 5 departments: 911, police, fire, neighborhood security, and emergency management.¹¹⁴ It appears then that in Minneapolis at least the more radical demands from BLMM and M4BL have been sidelined for a more moderate approach rejecting the concept that the system is irretrievably broken and needs to be dismantled for true reform to occur. The appointment of a Commissioner to co-ordinate and integrate agencies and approaches to public safety is reflective of the public's concern at crime and lawlessness in their city.

Although the apparent decline in support for BLMM and M4BL has been gradual, the change in attitudes began immediately following Floyd's murder, as protesters took to the streets. From the initial, almost universal horror at the footage showing Chauvin with

¹¹² Holly S Cowart, Ginger E. Blackstone, and Jeffrey K. Riley. 2022. "Framing a Movement: Media Portrayals of the George Floyd Protests on Twitter." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 99 (3): 676–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10776990221109232>.

¹¹³ Aimee Ortiz, "Confidence in Police is at a Record Low Gallup Poll Finds," *The New York Times*, (2020): accessed December 22, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/us/gallup-poll-police.html>.

¹¹⁴ Jon Collins, "Cedric Alexander becomes the first community safety commissioner," *Gahan Journal*, (2022): accessed January 9, 2023, [https://sahanjournal.com/policing-justice/cedric-alexander-becomes-first-community-safety-commissioner/..](https://sahanjournal.com/policing-justice/cedric-alexander-becomes-first-community-safety-commissioner/)

his knee on Floyd's neck, the subsequent protests quickly became politicized as Republicans and right-wing commentators shifted public attention away from the murder to those protesting it, leading Jennifer Chudy and Hakeem Jefferson to conclude that Floyd's death was not, as some claimed at the time, a catalyst for real change and a "racial reckoning."¹¹⁵ There were protests in at least 140 cities, the large majority of which were peaceful, but were met in many instances by tear gas and rubber bullets. There was some looting and vandalism and just three days after the murder, President Trump said: "When the looting starts, the shooting starts." In Minneapolis, Mayor Frey referred to the actions of the protesters as "outright looting" and "domestic terrorism", while Governor Tim Waltz declared that the situation was no longer about Floyd, but "attacks on civil society, instilling fear and disunity to our great cities."¹¹⁶ The National Guard was also deployed in 21 states.

The portrayal of the violence that took place has been heavily criticized by some activists and commentators. Prior to the murder of Floyd, Patricia Cullors complained in 2017 that "The media ignores the hundreds of people who are peacefully marching. Instead, they focus on one or two who are not peaceful and wholly ignore law enforcement who attack everyone."¹¹⁷ Later in 2021 they stated, "human life matters more than property".¹¹⁸ Statistics demonstrate that the scale and portrayal of violence was massively overrepresented in the media. The Crowd Counting Consortium reports that in 94% of protests there were no arrests, in 97.9% no injuries to the protesters or public,

¹¹⁵ Jennifer Chudy and Hakeem Jefferson, "Support for Black Lives Matter Surged Last Year: Did it Last?" *The New York Times*, (2021): accessed January 7, 2023,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/22/opinion/blm-movement-protests-support.html>.

¹¹⁶ Derrick Bryson Taylor, "A Timeline of the George Floyd Protests," *The New York Times*, (2021): accessed January 5, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.html>.

¹¹⁷ Cullors, *When They Call You*, 197.

¹¹⁸ Cullors, *Abolitionist Handbook*, 743.

98.6% no injuries to police and in 96.7% no property damage.¹¹⁹ And yet 42% of the American public, even at the time, thought that some protesters were trying to incite violence and destroy property.¹²⁰ But the issue is not so easily simplified by criticizing the media. Though sometimes inaccurately representing the protests, the media was invaluable. John Lewis often said that “Without the media, the civil rights movement would have been a bird without wings... Without the media’s willingness to stand in harm’s way and starkly portray the events of the Movement... Americans may never have understood or even believed the horrors that African Americans faced in the Deep South.”¹²¹ Lowry questions why it took white reporters writing for white audiences to bring these unspeakable inequalities to the fore: “Was the lens of whiteness required for the nation to accurately recognize the Black experience?” Later they asked: “Why must a Black man or woman’s death be captured on video and played in a loop on cable news, for the country to finally give credence to decades of declarations by Black Americans that they were being brutalized by the police?”¹²²

Another aspect of media coverage that impacts the movements and the fight for racial justice is victim-blaming. Cullors asserts the premise that: “When cops kill there is a presumption that the killer is in the right.”¹²³ Lowry writes that the media portrait of the deceased is often used to determine whether the victim is “innocent” – in that “it could have been me”, or “as is often implied to be the case in those killed by police officers, if

¹¹⁹ Kenneth Best, “Study of 2020 Protests Shows Difference Between Reality and Perception,” *UConn Communications*, (2020): accessed January 5, 2023, <https://today.uconn.edu/2020/10/study-2020-protests-shows-difference-reality-perception/>.

¹²⁰ Geoffery Skelley, How Americans Feel About George Floyd’s Death And The Protests, *FiveThirtyEight*, (2020): accessed December 5, 2022, [https://devisedata.com/search?n=243&q=how americans feel about gerorge floyd%27s death and the protests&devised=5eb8eb31a5049f8f02c149a9](https://devisedata.com/search?n=243&q=how+americans+feel+about+gerorge+floyd%27s+death+and+the+protests&devised=5eb8eb31a5049f8f02c149a9).

¹²¹ Lowry, *They Can’t Kill Us*, 154.

¹²² Lowry, 154.

¹²³ Cullors, *When They Call You*, 187.

this tragic fate was reserved for someone innately criminal who behaved in a way we never could.” He adds “In those early days the national media litigated Michael Brown, rather than litigating the shooting. We placed the burden of proof on the dead teenager, not the officer who had shot and killed him.”¹²⁴ Lowry later describes the shooting of Jeremy Lett, a “non-innocent victim”, by police officer Stith, as another incident used to undermine the ideology of BLMM and M4BL.

Lowry points out that protests and chants were “never meant to assert the innocence of every slain Black man and woman. [They were] an assertion of their humanity and a demand for a system of policing and justice that was transparent equitable and fair.” Rather than asking “who is the perfect victim” activists reframed this as “Does it matter?”¹²⁵ The issue was explored, specifically in relation to Michael Brown and Eric Garner and Twitter traffic by Mia Moody-Ramirez¹ and Hazel Cole in their 2018 article which notes the original victim blaming of both, but how BLMM and M4BL helped to provide a counter-narrative that was ultimately helpful in the struggle for racial justice.¹²⁶ As can be seen, however, there is still a long way to go.

Victim-blaming can be a form of racial stereotyping, although the Moody-Ramirez and Cole’s analysis and conclusion was that the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner became “a catalyst for a national dialogue on victimization of Black males and females killed by police officers.”¹²⁷ Since that 2018 article, there have been many more deaths of Black men and women at the hands of law enforcement and whilst victim

¹²⁴ Lowry, *They Can’t Kill Us All*, 36.

¹²⁵ Lowry, 195.

¹²⁶ Mia Moody-Ramirez¹ and Hazel Cole, “Victim Blaming in Twitter Users’ Framing of Eric Garner and Michael Brown,” *Journal of Black Studies* 49, no. 4, (2018): 383-407, accessed January 13, 2023, <https://devisedata.com/search?n=243&q=how+americans+feel+about+gerorge+floyd%27s+death+and+the+protests&devise=5eb8eb31a5049f8f02c149a9>.

¹²⁷ Moody-Ramirez and Cole *Victim Blaming*, 402.

blaming still exists, it is hard to imagine anyone but a violent white supremacist viewing, for example, the murder of George Floyd and argue that it was in any way justified. Does a killing by law enforcement have to be that brutal and public to make it universally condemned?

The ubiquity of smartphones, creating citizen journalists and capturing real-time events has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the agendas and profiles of BLMM and M4BL. Without the video of the protracted death of George Floyd there may not have been anything like the public national and international reaction that occurred. Derick Chauvin may not have been charged and convicted. However, the infamous Los Angeles Rodney King beatings of 1991 were also filmed with scant results. and the footage led initially to acquittals of the officers involved which sparked the Los Angeles riots of 1992 in which 63 people died and more than 2000 were injured. Ultimately in a further trial in 1993, two of the four officers were convicted and served jail time.

Achievements and Successes

The success of the CRM is defined by its' legislative achievements, rather than claims to a fundamental shift in public attitudes, although the former may not have been possible without the latter. The achievements of BLMM and M4BL are minimal but still beneficial. There has been no progress legislatively or federally with the exception of the Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Act; there have been the two Executive Orders, but much of the measurable success of the movements has taken place at state and local level.

Derek Chauvin was convicted in April 2021 for the murder of George Floyd and sentenced of 22.5 years in a landmark case, although an appeal is pending. The conviction was only brought about by the force and scale of protests, suggesting the scale

of public reaction required to effect change. *The Washington Post* has been logging every fatal police shooting in the United States since 2015 and has recorded more than 5000 such shootings. The rate remains steady at 1000 annually, and victims are disproportionately Black and Hispanic. Although Black citizens account for less than 14% of the population, they are killed at more than twice the rate of whites: 41 per million for Blacks, 29 per million for Hispanics and 16 per million for whites.¹²⁸

Research conducted by Bowling Green State University provides statistics for outcomes when non-federal police officers are arrested for murder or manslaughter following an on-duty death by shooting. Between June 2005-2019, only 104 officers were arrested. Of these, 35 were convicted of a crime. 15 pled guilty, 20 were convicted by juries, and in 31 of the 35 cases the officer was convicted of a lesser charge than murder. Racially speaking, Non-Black officers accounted for 29 of the convictions, the victims being 19 Black victims and 10 Non-Black. The victims in 22 of the 35 convictions were Black. The officer responsible for the murder of 12-year-old Tamir Rice in 2014 when responding to a call of a child playing with “what may be a toy gun”, was exonerated under the belief that his life was in danger: only 11.5% of police shootings involved a victim who was armed when they were killed.¹²⁹

In April 2021, Duante Wright was shot after a routine traffic stop when officer Kim Potter apparently confused her gun with her Taser. She was convicted of first- and second-degree manslaughter but only sentenced to serve 16 months in prison when the typical sentence is more than 7 years with a maximum of 15. So, a conviction yes, but

¹²⁸ *The Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>.

¹²⁹ Philip M Stinson & Chloe A Wentzlof, “On-Duty Shootings: Police Officers Charged Murder or Manslaughter,” *Bowling Green State University: Police integrity Research Group*, (2019), bgsu.edu.

real progress? Wright had a criminal record and there was a significant amount of victim-blaming in the right-wing media in particular.

Breonna's law, named for Breonna Taylor has led to the banning of no-knock warrants in Connecticut, Florida, Oregon and Virginia, with restrictions in many other states. 13 states explicitly allow the warrants while the remainder leave it to the discretion of a local jurisdiction. In June 2020, Republican Senator Rand Paul introduced the Justice for Breonna Taylor Act that would ban no-knock warrants nationwide, but it received no support. In February 2022, Amir Locke was shot and killed in the execution of a no-knock warrant that did not include him; no charges were brought against the firing officer, but in April a non-total ban on such warrants was introduced in Minneapolis but with exemptions, including the destruction of narcotics and the suspect seeking to escape, the ban's effectiveness is questionable.

In California there was major victory for the campaign to decriminalize cannabis use when Proposition 64 was passed in November 2016 with 57% voter approval. Patricia Cullors was part of this campaign and emphasizes the importance of this victory in seeking to break what she calls the "school to prison pipeline." In the campaign, Cullors emphasized that the first contact for many young Black people with the police is marijuana. Statistically, the LA County jail housed at least 500 inmates nightly for possession and for many this was the start of interactions that "often send them spiraling deeper into the claws of the prison industrial complex."¹³⁰ The law removes one option for law enforcement to weaponize against Blacks citizens. The measure also saves millions spent on incarceration and generates millions of dollars in marijuana taxes,

¹³⁰ Cullors, *When They Call You*, 244

invested back into communities, while decreasing incarceration rates.¹³¹ Today 39 states have legalized medicinal cannabis and 21 states with the addition of the District of Columbia have approved recreational sales. 22 states have legalized both. There are now only four states where marijuana is fully illegal.¹³² These are important changes saving millions of young people from encountering law enforcement, potentially ruining their entire future. Though a progressive decision, as Cullors says, it is still merely the removal of one tool from the arsenal that continues to oppress Black citizens.

Given the partisan nature of public discourse, the view in the media of the success or otherwise of BLMM and M4BL depends significantly on the political standpoint of the reporter. Putting the view for the conservative media, *The Washington Examiner* reports that while the prison population in Blue states fell, the killing of unarmed Black men by police fell from 12 in 2019 to 4 in 2021 (not verified), but the increase in violent crime has led to Black victims comprising 55.8% of homicides in 2020, while accounting for under 14% of the population. The Examiner concludes that “If the goal of the Black Lives Matter movement was to stop black people in America from getting killed, then it has failed spectacularly.”¹³³

Despite the report, Black citizens suffering disproportionately as victims of crime is not a new phenomenon and thus cannot be laid at the door of BLMM and M4BL, although it is correct that there has been a significant rise in homicide in recent years with 30% between 2019 and 2020 according to FBI figures. This has

¹³¹ Cullors, *When They Call You*,

¹³² Marijuana Legality by State, *DISA*, (2023): accessed December 16, 2022, <https://disa.com/maps/marijuana-legality-by-state>

¹³³“What Black Lives Matter has accomplished”, *The Washington Examiner*, (2021): accessed January 1, 2023, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/equality-not-elitism/editorials/what-black-lives-matter-has-accomplished>.

led some commentators to conclude that the BLMM and M4BL have undermined the morale, confidence, and numbers in law enforcement, leading to a vacuum and “when the peace forces in our society were morally disarmed, their natural enemies, the criminal element, seized the opportunity.”¹³⁴ While that may be true, society cannot ignore the reality that Black citizens have always been disproportionately affected by violent crime and in recent years not in a radically different way. In 2005 the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that Black citizens were victims of 49% of homicides,¹³⁵ while in 2019 it was 52%. Stacey M. Brown recorded that 18.08 in 100,000 Black people were victims; the figure for whites was 2.69 per 100,000.¹³⁶

Poverty and crime have become inseparable. Literature and statistics demonstrate the structural inequality forcing Black people into disadvantaged states vis-à-vis whites in all areas of their lives. Bonilla-Silva argues that little progress has been made since the 1960’s in housing isolation, education, and health equity.¹³⁷ Ransby refers to the Movements’ awareness that “the lack of affordable housing, low wages, the erosion of public services, lack of jobs and spiraling personal debt have all facilitated the slow death of tens of thousands of Black people deemed dispensable...”¹³⁸ Cohen points to “other forms of state violence or state oppression

¹³⁴ Patrick J Buchanan, “Who Is Killing 10,000 Black Americans Every Year?” *CNSN News*, (2021): accessed December 9, 2022., <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/equality-not-elitism/editorials/what-black-lives-matter-has-accomplished>.

¹³⁵ Erika Harrell, “Black Victims of Violent Crime Bureau of Justice Statistics,” *OJP*, (2007): accessed December 1, 2022, ojp.gov).

¹³⁶ Stacey M Brown, “Black Victims of Violent Crime,” *OJP*, (2022): accessed December 5, 2022, ojp.gov.

¹³⁷ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*, 23.

¹³⁸ Ransby, *Making All Black Lives*, 8.

that we need to be paying attention to” and that “the structural transformation of the lived conditions of marginalized communities has to guide our struggle.”¹³⁹

The universality of deprivation and inequality for Black citizens explains the calls by some activists for the dismantling of the current state and fundamental structural reform. Even for those who do not go that far, the broad reform of the police, while urgent and essential, needs to be accompanied by structural societal reforms addressing systemic injustices that mean Black citizens fair worse than their white counterparts by every social measure.

¹³⁹ Cathy Cohen, *Ask A Feminist*, 776-777.

Chapter V

Discussion: What is Next for BLMM and M4BL?

In 2018 Barbara Ransby set out six “themes, dilemmas, and challenges” for BLMM and M4BL. They are as follows:

1. Unapologetically Black
2. Social Media and new technologies
3. Integrated organizing and youth leadership
4. Black feminist influences
5. Abolitionist practices and accountability
6. Class politics and money¹⁴⁰

Maintaining public support and presence should also be on the list. Ransby’s challenges are by no means the only measures of progress and understanding where the movements are and are going, but they do capture the essence of the movements, their firm placement in the modern world and some fundamental differences from protest movements that have gone before.

Unapologetically Black – The Reassertion of Black Political Identity

Ransby explains that the phrase arose as a backlash to and recognition of the fact that many Black elites had gained acceptance in white society, essentially acting as privileged whites often do. The phrase was adopted by young Black organizers and

¹⁴⁰ Ransby, *Making All Black Lives*, 96-122.

activists to counter the perceived distancing of successful Black Americans from “other” Black citizens, especially the suffering and struggling poor. The phrase is assertive and defiant against assimilation and the politics of respectability. It appears designed also to challenge and test liberal white elites’ performative tolerance and anti-racist stances. Ransby asserts that the phrase, now ubiquitous, shows users of it “foregrounding all the ways in which anti-Black attitudes and practices still exist and are refracted through the prisms of gender, sexuality, citizenship status, and class...and refusing to disassociate from the common experience of ordinary Black folk...”¹⁴¹

Stephanie Batiste summed up the issue of Black elites: “If you’re an athlete or a musician, your Blackness is acceptable...if you’re not performing, white audiences view your Blackness with suspicion.”¹⁴² There are numerous incidents of ordinary Black people going lawfully about their business and still being reported to the police or arrested, for example, the two men arrested for “being Black in Starbucks” in 2018. Another instance in 2020 concerned a white person walking her dog. She phoned police to say she felt threatened by a Black man who was bird watching in the same park because he asked her to leash her dog.

These headlines are a brief representation of everyday incidents that do not get reported. They can occur anywhere. Often when society expresses outrage at such an incident, there is talk of the start of a “national conversation”, but it is far from clear that anything shifts in the lived experience of Black citizens. It would be interesting to see some further study in this area.

¹⁴¹ Ransby, p98

¹⁴²What it means to be 'unapologetically black' | CNN,21 April 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/21/us/beyonce-lamar-unapologetically-black>

“Unapologetically Black” is a phrase that has become almost as famous as Black Lives Matter. This has brought with it public attention, but has the ubiquity of the term and its’ co-option robbed it of its’ power? There was a series of the same name in 2018 which will have been helpful in getting the message of discrimination in the workplace out to a wide audience, and there are now Unapologetically Black festivals, yoga classes and a whole range of apparel sold widely, including on Amazon. The word “unapologetically” has also been used as a prefix for numerous groups and individuals, people declaring that they are unapologetically themselves, unapologetically gay etc. An Unapologetically Black monument is being built in an LA suburb, it will be 1.3 miles long, but as the word monument suggests, it is commemorating something already gone, the Black neighborhood of Crenshaw. Whether the term itself will become a monument to a phase of the struggle for racial equality or remain a defiant call remains to be seen.

Social Media and New Technologies

Twitter and other social media have been hugely impactful on the reach of BLMM and M4BL agendas. Ransby describes it as “...the soapbox and public square of this generation, where many of the debates about strategy, tactics and ideas are argued out in sound-bite form, for good or ill. In many ways, it is where BLMM.M4BL was incubated.”¹⁴³ It is also where most people learned in real time of the killings of Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and many others, including George Floyd. The almost universal presence of smart phones and bodycams provide graphic and immutable evidence of what Black people have always known and white people can no longer deny:

¹⁴³ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 101.

police are not here to protect the Black community. Though beneficial, however, it should be noted Twitter is not neutral or one-sided, and it can be used for disadvantageous purposes as well. It's a multi-national corporation that uses tools such as algorithms and encoding to influence its' use and users.¹⁴⁴

A recent study examined the impact that large scale news and social media had on public awareness and support for BLMM and M4BL.¹⁴⁵ The findings showed that protests dramatically increase the use of terms associated with the BLMM and M4BL agenda and cite terms such as “systemic racism”, “mass incarceration” and “white supremacy”, which are typically only used in activist environments, signifying “a lasting change in the way America discusses racial inequality” and has a “sustained impact.” There must be an element of caution in accepting whether these changes are “lasting” and “sustained” given the timeframe of the study although the results do show significant spikes in “mass incarceration” and “white supremacy” from 2016 and 2018 respectively and “systemic racism” from 2020.¹⁴⁶

Like all media, Twitter can be a force for good or bad. It is essentially democratic and inclusive and has produced a generation of what have become known as “citizen journalists”, highlighting to millions the plight of Black Americans suffering discrimination and losing their lives in “routine” encounters with law enforcement. Ransby points to social media as instrumental in the Ferguson uprising, forcing the

¹⁴⁴ Ruha Benjamin, *Race after Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* (Cambridge, Polity, 2019).

¹⁴⁵ Zachary Okun Dunivin, Harry Yaojun Yan, Jelani Ince, and Fabio Rojas. ‘Black Lives Matter Protests Shift Public Discourse,’ *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119, no. 10 (2022): <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2117320119>.

¹⁴⁶ Zachary Okun Dunivin, Harry Yan, Jelani Ince, and Fabio Rojas, “Black Lives Matter Protests Shift Public Discourse,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119, no. 8 (2022): accessed January 2, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2117320119>.

mainstream media to report stories that might otherwise be ignored or marginalized. She also points to its' opposite powerful effect as a tool of "distortion and manipulation."¹⁴⁷

In 2015 the Dream Defenders, one of the many groups that came into being following the murder of Trayvon Martin, operated a "Blackout" of Twitter due to the abuse and negativity and the difficulty of getting the message of their positive work across.¹⁴⁸ It seems unlikely that such a boycott would happen now given Twitter's power as a public space and the Dream Defenders, while doing valuable work are relatively small fry with 90,000 followers compared to BLMM's 1 million.

Social media is now an accepted and important source of information during public or political events. Politicians of all ranks use it to make announcements, and for many it is a primary news source. Its usage is also high. Twitter claimed 396.5 million active users in 2022 with an estimated 59% using it as a news source. Black Twitter, which has existed for 10 years, is described by keisha bruce as "a digital gathering of culturally connected Black people who use Twitter to discuss matters relevant to Black communities," which has "shaped much of today's internet culture."¹⁴⁹ Literature has begun examining the impact of Black Twitter on culture and the influence of women, though Black Twitter is not considered more any more homogenous than the "Black community."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 101.

¹⁴⁸ Kate Aronoff, "Inside the Dream Defenders' Social Media Blackout," *OpenDemocracy*, (2015): accessed November 15, 2022, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/inside-dream-defenders-social-media-blackout/>.

¹⁴⁹ keisha bruce, "Black twitter shaped the platform, but its future lies elsewhere," *The Conversation*, (2022): accessed December 18, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/black-twitter-shaped-the-platform-but-its-future-lies-elsewhere-194950>.

¹⁵⁰ Feminista Jones, *Reclaiming Our Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2019).

While Twitter is in flux it seems inevitable that social media will evolve and whatever it may look like down the line it seems impossible to envisage a world in which social media does not play an active and significant role in dispensing and commenting on news, highlighting issues and giving a ready-made platform for the organization of protest movements.

Intergenerational Organizing and Youth Leadership

Much is made of the leadership of young people in BLMM and M4BL and a report of the demographic of the George Floyd protests supports the centrality of young people in the movements. The report finds that 18–34-year-olds made up the majority in the following cities: 66% in New York, and Los Angeles, 67% in Minneapolis and 69% in Atlanta. Interestingly, the second most popular group was those over 55, 24% in New York, 23% in Atlanta and Minneapolis and 20% in Los Angeles. Most came from inside the city they were protesting in.¹⁵¹ *Teen Vogue* observed that young Black often queer-identifying women are at the vanguard of BLMM and M4BL,¹⁵² and BLMM and M4BL run workshops and camps to teach leadership and community organizing to young people.¹⁵³ Ransby warns against the “fetishizing” of youth in the movements, emphasizing “To be young is a phase of life, not a political status.”¹⁵⁴ She cites the status

¹⁵¹ Mobilewalla, “New Report Reveals Demographics of Black Lives Matter Protesters Shows Vast Majority Are White, Marched Within Their Own Cities,” *Cision*, (2020): Accessed November 10, 2022, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-report-reveals-demographics-of-black-lives-matter-protesters-shows-vast-majority-are-white-marched-within-their-own-cities-301079234.html>.

¹⁵² Precious Fondren, “Young Black Activists Are Leading the Movement for Black Lives,” *Teen Vogue*, (2020): accessed November 22, 2022, <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/young-black-activists-faces-black-lives-matter>.

¹⁵³ “Black Lives Matter Youth Camp Teaches Leadership, Community Organizing,” *YahooNews*, (2021): accessed November 20, 2022, <https://www.yahoo.com/now/black-lives-matter-youth-camp-221435820.html>.

¹⁵⁴ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 104.

of older Black women who wield significant influence, these include Angela Davies, Jamala Rogers, Cathy Cohen, Linda Burnham and Barbara Smith, all in their fifties and sixties. Charlotte Carruthers stated that most of the disagreements “are along the lines of ideology, not necessarily age...” while acknowledging that young activists “are a new generation claiming its’ voice of defiance while at the same time holding on to a sense of history.”¹⁵⁵

It is over simplistic but not inaccurate to describe youth being at the heart of BLMM and M4BL, and for many activists the historical context is real and important. DeRay Mckesson said: “We did not invent resistance and discover injustice in August 2014. We exist in a legacy of struggle, a struggle rooted in love.”¹⁵⁶ Homage is regularly paid to Ella Baker, Fanny Lou Hamer and Assata Shakur, among others, and intergenerational ties are often emphasized as a natural and essential aspect of the intersectionality of the movements. Ransby quotes Mary Hooks in an often-repeated statement: “The Mandate for Black people in this time is to avenge the suffering of our ancestors, to earn the respect of future generations and to be willing to be transformed in the service of the work.”¹⁵⁷

The demographic report is interesting in that it suggests a significant fall-off in activism between the ages of 35 and 54. This seems likely to be because the middle age demographic is more concerned with raising families and careers than political activism.

¹⁵⁵ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 105.

¹⁵⁶ “American Masters,” (2022): accessed November 16, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/>.

¹⁵⁷ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 106.

Black Feminist Influences

Ransby describes the profound influence of the Black feminist tradition that emerged in the 70s, “holistic, intersectional, radical and inclusive, recogniz(ing) that the personal is political, and the political is profoundly personal.”¹⁵⁸ The Florida-based Dream Defenders proudly declare themselves as, “A Black women-led organization of Black, Brown and working-class youth fighting for a world where our people are free from cages and our communities have what they need to thrive.” Their aspirations go beyond the elimination of racial injustice, acknowledging that if they are serious about eliminating state violence against women, they must “be serious about fighting violence against women in our own communities” The organization is not exclusively women.¹⁵⁹

The Black Youth Project, or BYP100, is another grassroots organization that developed following the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2013. The group’s mission statement emphasizes a Black membership aged 18-35, remaining, “dedicated to creating justice and freedom for all Black people...through transformative leadership development, direct action, organizing, advocacy and political action using a Black queer feminist lens... dedicated to economic, social, political and educational freedom.”¹⁶⁰.

The visibility, centrality, influence, and leadership of Black women is new compared to the dominant Black male leadership in CRM throughout the 1950’s and 60’s

¹⁵⁸ Ransby, *Make All BLM*, 106.

¹⁵⁹ “Fighting For the Future,” *Dream Defenders*, (2023): accessed November 17, 2023, <https://www.dreamdefenders.org/>.

¹⁶⁰ . Brianna Z. Ross, William DeShields, Christopher Edwards, and Jonathan N. Livingston. ‘Behind Black Women’s Passion: An Examination of Activism Among Black Women in America,’ *Journal of Black Psychology*48, no. 3–4, (2022): 428-447, accessed November 20, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00957984221084779>.

wherein women prominent in the movement were largely kept out of the public eye. A recent small study by Ross et al asserts that Black women have been at the forefront of protests since the 17th century, but the explosion of Black women activists and leaders in recent years is worthy of further examination.

The Ross study of 107 women addressed possible links between awareness of racism and activism, psychological empowerment and activism, and spirituality and activism.¹⁶¹ Though some definitions of psychological empowerment vary, it is clear that it requires critical awareness of the issues, an understanding of the sociopolitical context, and the ability to mobilize resources. It is also linked to positive mental health in relation to coping skills, resourcefulness, and perceived control.¹⁶² Overall the study found a positive relationship between activism, perceived racism and psychological empowerment, but no such link between activism and spirituality. There is a growing body of scholarship concerning the participation of Black women in activism, and a 2017 study found that Black women are more active than any other racial group, with 40% activists and 56% involved in community projects.¹⁶³

The involvement of more Black female leaders has placed greater emphasis on intersectionality, providing broader acceptance and understanding to marginalized groups. In their study on intersectionality and social movements, Roth cites earlier research highlighting the understanding of Black women as “the interconnection of race, class and gender and their criticism of movements that focus on one single form of

¹⁶¹ Ross et al., *Behind Black Women's Passion*.

¹⁶² Ross, 432.

¹⁶³ Ross, 429.

discrimination.¹⁶⁴ Roth distinguishes between structural and political intersectionality, citing Crenshaw: “the effects of multiple subordination, for example how immigration status and unemployment shape the experience of domestic violence” and political intersectionality which, “encompasses the efforts to achieve inclusion and to mitigate power differentials within and between movements and organizations.”¹⁶⁵ The intersectionality that we see in the current BLMM and M4BL movements encompasses both concepts. Organizations formed and led by Black women recognize the different experience that different groups bring “and thus seek to consciously avoid marginalization, silencing and inequality” while simultaneously deliberately not confining themselves to gender issues only.¹⁶⁶

Addressing the CMR directly, Roth identifies “continuities and discontinuities” between CRM and BLMM and M4BL. The connections are identified as continuing the “Black feminist activism which has always been intersectional...with emphasis on local protest and local coalitions” and the discontinuities as the rejection by BLMM and M4BL of “sexism and homophobia, the goal to achieve ‘respectability’ and patriarchal and hierarchical structures which characterized CRM.” Roth presents BLMM and M4BL as a modern-day attempt to rebuild the CRM efforts in which protesters are unapologetically Black, embrace LGBTQ+ communities, and are “queer-affirming and intergenerational.”¹⁶⁷ It is undoubtedly true that today’s Black feminist influences and influencers embrace and expand upon the “traditional” role of Black women as coalition

¹⁶⁴ Silke Roth, “Intersectionality and Coalitions in Social Movement Research—A Survey and Outlook,” *Sociology Compass* 15, no. 7 (2021): 2, accessed November 15, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12885>.

¹⁶⁵ Roth, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Roth, 4.

¹⁶⁷ Roth, 5.

and bridge-builders to achieve a greater reach and intersectionality than their predecessors.

Abolitionist Practices and Accountability

Ransby's fifth challenge for the movements is to continue to tackle the issues of "competition, ego, sexism, homophobia and even interpersonal violence that have plagued past movements," while recognizing that human beings are imperfect and bring their own baggage to their cause.¹⁶⁸ The difference for BLMM and M4BL from their predecessors is how the organizations seek to deal with such issues which is by healing and redemption, summed up by Jamala Rogers: "And what of redemption? When wrongdoing and harm has been acknowledged by those in our movement, there's rarely a healing process that takes both accountability and personal salvation into account. Restorative justice has a vital place in the movement, and the corrupt courts system."¹⁶⁹ The attempts to address the issues ethically and restoratively have been challenging and time consuming. Organizations such as BYP100 and BLMGN have institutionalized policies and additional staff to address internal transgressions, for example, and Ransby finds hope in the fact that "while sexual harassment and assault are still real within the Black community and society at large, at least social movement organizations have mechanisms and a commitment to respond."¹⁷⁰ It is important that this commitment is not lost or diluted, a significant challenge necessary to maintain the organizations' ethical approaches. It also resonates with wider abolitionist agendas wherein the current system

¹⁶⁸ Ransby, *Making All BLM*, 113.

¹⁶⁹ Ransby, 113

¹⁷⁰ Ransby, 115

of mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline is replaced with community restoration and efforts toward judicial equity. In line with this philosophy, some in BLMM and M4BL organizations refuse to call for the imprisonment of law enforcement officers who unlawfully kill Black citizens.

Class Politics and Money

Ransby is clear that with inclusivity and intersectionality, emphasizing the poor and marginalized, BLMM and M4BL “inescapably positions itself in opposition to neoliberal racial capitalism, though of course opposition to the extreme injustices of capitalism does not necessarily mean endorsement of a system-wide overhaul.”¹⁷¹

As such, Ransby finds there is space for all opinions and debates within the movement. She does, however, make clear her view that, with the majority of opinion in BLMM and M4BL circles, “racial capitalism [is] one of the foundations of Black social and economic oppression,” a view supported by the Vision for Black Lives and BYP100. This is at the heart of the fundamental debate in the movements, whether the system can be fixed or if it must be torn down to rebuild. In addition, while the argument about Black elites leaving the poor behind is supported, it does not make sense for the movement to ignore prominent Black citizens. It might be informative to consider the view and commitments of the Black elites as well as to further explore the extent to which Black activists truly wish to distance themselves from them.

Money is another potential and currently real source of tension within the movements. BLMM and M4BL have received criticism from inception. Allegations of

¹⁷¹ Ransby, *Make All BLM*, 117.

financial discrepancies and tensions over how and where donations should be spent were frequent. Ransby points out that as money flooded in during the Ferguson protests there was “no overarching movement infrastructure that [had been agreed] and that could have resolved” disputes on the ground.¹⁷² Since then, there have been media attacks on the apparent personal wealth of prominent BLMM and M4BL members, complaints from local Chapters about the distribution of funds, and now the litigation over the alleged siphoning of \$10 million in donations – an allegation vehemently denied, but undoubtedly harmful to public perception.

While the opponents of the movements, primarily in media, will make much of these controversies, the leadership is also to blame. Public support and donations are crucial to the future effectiveness of BLMM and M4BL, corporations are now distancing themselves and while there are mixed feelings about corporations paying lip-service to racial inequality, their high profiles have garnered significant attention and funds. BLMM and M4BL need to ensure that their financial transparency and hygiene are beyond reproach, removing a potentially powerful weapon from their opponents’ armor.

The above are just some of the issues facing BLMM and M4BL, but the overwhelming challenge, discussed in the next chapter, is the broader and most significant one: how do the movements maintain profile and interest in racial justice among the wider public and what can they do to achieve this.

¹⁷² Ransby, *Make All BLM*, 121.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Today's movements for racial justice are in many ways a continuum of all the movements which came before, despite differing characteristics. The amorphous nature of the modern movements, the broad demographic and intersectionality, the devolved structures, and varying views on tactics and strategies to achieve racial equality require further research. Any conclusions could be subject to immediate change based on social and political developments. New technology, for example, revolutionized how members communicated with each other and the public. It has had a very significant impact on the reach and effectiveness of the movements, as noted earlier with real-time updates and first-hand eyewitness accounts.

This increased awareness has not been effective in bringing about systemic change. There has been progress in reform at state and local levels, but not at the federal level. Nationally, there is an increased likelihood that offending police officers will be fired and prosecuted for the unlawful murder of Black citizens following the conviction of Derek Chauvin, indicating some measure of change. However, subsequent killings have not always resulted in charges or convictions and when they do sentences are often more lenient than the norm.

It is troubling that the 2020 protests did not effect greater change: if watching the real-time protracted murder of a fellow human being is not enough, what is? The evidence suggests a number of reasons why large scale change did not happen: extreme bipartisanship among lawmakers has led to almost total stalemate at federal level with no

meaningful legislation being passed save for the Emmett Till Act; the nature of journalism of all types means that a single issue can only dominate and command mass attention for so long before something else takes over; there is a suggestion of “movement fatigue” among both activists and the general public and the decentralized nature of the movements themselves often means a lack of cohesion and a dilution of “strength in numbers”.

The diverse and disparate nature of the movements, the embrace of previously marginalized groups, and the centrality of intersectionality can be seen as both a weakness and a strength, with the latter outweighing the former. The research suggests that at local level it is certainly a strength as evidenced by the success of many local campaigns both in relation to reform and the winning of compensation for the families of those wrongly killed. The intersectionality of race, class, gender, and age ensures not only that the widest possible demographic is engaged in the struggle but acknowledges the unavoidable reality that the struggle for racial justice is inextricably linked to the struggle for economic and social justice and can best be achieved through the widest possible involvement of all those marginalized by society.

The main challenges for BLMM and M4BL going forward are to keep the issues in the public eye, to accept and embrace that all different strategies have value, and to limit the opportunities for opponents to smear them and to work to translate the local victories into national achievements.

Demographics aside, there are greater similarities between CRM and BLMM and M4BL than might appear at first glance. Both employ the mixture of tactics of direct action and legislative reform, both struggle with seeking to translate any gains into

tangible improvements in especially poor, Black people's lives and both have achieved limited success. The legislative achievements of CRM are greater than those thus far of BLMM and M4BL, although the latter, largely aided by technological advances have reached a massive national and global audience.

This study seeks to add to the understanding of where the fight for racial justice in America now stands and where it might go from here with the opportunities and challenges faced by those seeking change to pass effective legislation at state and federal level. It also seeks to address and combat the MAGA narrative both in Congress and among the general public, to advance the cause in local communities and keep the issue alive and in the conscious minds of a public bombarded with a wide range of news and issues 24 hours a day.

There is much further research to be done in this area, not only on the matters highlighted herein, but also as the movements progress or falter to further examine what works, what doesn't and what success might ultimately look like. While literature on the diversity of BLMM and M4BL is ample, future research might further explore any impact on more traditional racial organizations and in particular whether the movements have managed to partner with straight men and religious groups. Future researchers might further investigate poverty and other areas of disadvantage in the Black community on micro and macro levels.

To summarize, while awareness remains high, achievements remain low. Those who believe that the system is inherently broken and must be rebuilt have little public support. Activists and allies must move forward, however. The study reveals both the

power and limitations of protests against police brutality, suggesting that change can happen slowly and incrementally, but also unevenly.

Protestors must develop new strategies to engage people and encourage social change, while expanding on current progress. The MAGA movement has caused the GOP to shift politically to the far right, and the struggle for the soul of the party is ongoing and of vital importance to all who seek legislative advances. Though interest in the issue of racial equality may be periodic, allies and activists must remain engaged and committed. Patience is a double-edged sword, and no one could criticize a cry of “how long do we have to be patient for?” but if the alternatives are apathy/acceptance or violence, patience may be necessary, as are activism, and the ability to seize every opportunity to make greater change and these must co-exist so that all who are impacted can achieve equality.

This paper has looked exclusively at racial justice in America, and while America is unique, struggles for racial and other forms of equality are not. There may be lessons to be learned from contemporary analysis of other struggles, and for those involved in the quest for racial equality, their allies and all who hold fundamentally to the belief that all people are equal, the struggle goes on and hopefully future scholars will build on the work in this paper to examine further how wide-ranging and permanent change can be achieved.

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