



Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Master's Thesis 2021 30 ECTS
Faculty of Landscape and Society

From Racist Violence to Re-humanization, Mattering, and Nonviolence:

An Analysis of The Normative Reasoning, Communication, and Resonance of Black Lives Matter in the Wake of the Death of George Floyd

Heidi Margrethe Ross
Master of Science in International Relations

This page intentionally left blank

The Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, has since its establishment in 1986 played a vital role in building international partnerships for the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). Noragric contributes to international development through interdisciplinary studies in the interface between assignments, research, and education (Bachelor, Master, and PhD programs).

The Master Thesis is the final assignment students submit to fulfill the Noragric Master Program requirements in “Global Development Studies,” “International Environmental Studies,” and “International Relations.” This thesis is submitted as a final assignment for a Master’s Degree in “International Relations”.

The findings in this research are not necessarily a reflection of Noragric’s views. Extracts from this thesis may be reproduced after consultation with the author, provided that the source is acknowledged and referenced. For rights of reproduction or translation, contact Noragric.

© Heidi Margrethe Ross, October 2021

heidiross11@hotmail.com

Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric

Faculty of Landscape and Society

P.O. Box 5003

NO – 1432 Ås

Norway

Tel: + 47 67 23 01 11

Fax: + 47 67 23 06 91

Web: www.nmbu.no/noragric

DECLARATION

I, Heidi Margrethe Ross, declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research work and ideas, and that the thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. I confirm that sources of information that are not my own have been adequately cited, and a reference list is provided.

Signature: *Heidi Margrethe Ross*

Date: 1st October 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Poul Wisborg who has guided me throughout this challenging yet rewarding process. I cannot thank you enough for providing me with quick, thought-provoking, and valuable feedback on my work. Specifically, I want to say that I appreciate you for being available, supportive, and patient during the more difficult times on this journey. Your guidance and support have taught me lessons beyond this Thesis.

To my family, thank you. Each and every one of you have helped me in different ways to reach this milestone in my life.

“Mamma,” you are my rock. I would not have been able to do this without you, and I will never be able to thank you enough for everything you have done to help me in this process. Your hugs, love, delicious cooking, genuine care, and constant support have given me strength to keep going.

“Pappa,” thank you for always believing in me and for pushing me to my fullest potential, even when I do not believe in myself. To make you proud is one of my biggest motivations.

My big brother, Karl Kristian, thank you for being a role model I can look up to, and for having my back when I need you.

My little sister, Celina, you have been a great source of motivation for completing this Thesis. Although we are over 16 years apart, you have taught me more things in life than you can imagine. I hope with this, that I can inspire you to do anything you put your mind to.

“Bestemor,” thank you for showing me that it is okay to be myself unapologetically. That is something I try to carry with me in all my endeavors.

“Bestefar,” thank you for inspiring me to follow my dreams and to work hard to achieve them. I aspire to be as morally guided and integrous you.

My best friend for over 20 years, Siri, thank you for always listening to my concerns and complaints, and for motivating me to finish when it felt impossible. You have been my accountability-buddy ever since we did homework together after school in the first grade of elementary school, and I could not ask for a better one.

And last, but certainly not least, my 93-year old grandmother, my everything, “Mormor”. There is nothing that warms my heart more than having you around for some of the most important accomplishments of my life. Thank you for always believing in me and making sure I am doing okay. We did it! Now I am finally coming to visit you! You are truly appreciated, and I love you forever.

ABSTRACT

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a leading force in the struggle for a re-humanization of Black lives. After George Floyd was brutally murdered by a police officer in the summer of 2020, BLM called for the mattering of Black lives and won increasing public support for its protests against the persistent police and state violence that disproportionately affect Black people. The aim of this Master Thesis research was to understand the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM, with particular attention to how these were evident in the wake of the death of George Floyd. Using a qualitative, grounded theory approach, online sources were analyzed in order to document, interpret and explain the normative views and positions of BLM; to show how these were communicated to advance a re-humanization of Black lives; and to explain how BLM's thinking and strategy resonated in public discourse, meeting both support and resistance. The analysis and discussion were informed by two closely related perspectives on re-humanization, namely *mattering* and *nonviolence*. First, I demonstrate how BLM normative views and positions emphasized the lack of mattering extended to Black lives and opposed the violence that results from, and perpetuates, this unequal mattering. In this way, BLM insisted that an extension of mattering to include Black lives was necessary for re-humanization and racial equality. Further, I show how BLM communicated its demands through social media, direct action, and popular culture. I argue that through these forms of communication, BLM concretized its normative reasoning as the movement 1) embraced the rage that results from unequal mattering and practices of violence that distinguish between lives that matter and lives that do not, and 2) turned this rage into effective, nonviolent action through physically asserting claims to mattering. I explain how BLM thinking, strategy, and messaging evoked support across a broader public discourse than ever before, while also triggering various forms of social and official resistance. I conclude that, through its normative thinking and strategic communication in the aftermath of George Floyd's death, BLM successfully advanced a re-humanization of Black lives.

Key words: Racism, violence, Black Lives Matter, social movement, re-humanization, mattering, nonviolence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Terminology	3
Brief Explanation of BLM and its Emergence.....	4
Death of George Floyd.....	5
Thesis Overview.....	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review	7
Three Analytical Categories of Framings of the BLM Movement	7
BLM in Historical Context (1)	7
The Role of Social Media in BLM (2)	8
BLM Movement Tactics (3).....	10
Gap in Current Research	12
Chapter 3: Theoretical Orientation	14
Perspectives on Re-humanization	14
Mattering	14
Nonviolence.....	15
Summary	16
Chapter 4: Methodology.....	17
Research Design.....	17
Research Objectives and Questions	17
Sampling Approach.....	19
Case Study.....	20
Data Collection.....	21
Strategy for Analysis.....	22
Trustworthiness and Goodness.....	23
Limitations of Research	24
Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion.....	26
Theme 1: BLM Normative Reasoning	26
Introductory Remarks	26
BLM Normative Views and Positions.....	27
Understanding BLM Normative Reasoning through Perspectives on Re-humanization	35
Summary.....	39
Theme 2: BLM Organizing and Communication Strategies.....	40
Introductory Remarks	40

BLM Organizing.....	40
BLM Communication.....	43
Understanding BLM Communication as Nonviolence	50
Summary.....	55
Theme 3: The Resonance of BLM Thinking and Strategy	55
Introductory Remarks	55
Support for BLM Messages in Public Discourse	55
Resistance to BLM Thinking and Strategy.....	63
Summary.....	69
Did BLM Succeed in Advancing a Re-humanization of Black Lives?.....	69
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	72
Limitations of The Research	73
Implications and Recommendations for Future Research.....	73
References.....	75

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 1: Introduction

For years, Black lives have been de-humanized. A long history of racism has been both caused by, and has resulted in, the racialized de-humanization of Black lives. In the United States of America (U.S.), centuries of slavery, Black codes, Jim Crow laws, state-sanctioned segregation, mass incarceration, widespread discrimination, and voter disenfranchisement have created a society where racism is intertwined with social and legal institutions (Leyh, 2020, p. 241; E. Rogers, 2020; M.L. Rogers, 2014; Alexander, 2010). This racism has laid the foundation for a humanism where human dignity and value typically have not extended to include Black lives. Although more formal equalities have been granted to Black Americans over the years, racial equality – and an extension of human dignity to include Black lives – remain unfulfilled. As such, racism has not disappeared with the introduction of formal rights, but instead manifests itself differently (Alexander, 2010; Hoffman, Granger, Vallejos & Moats, 2016). Today, instead of presenting itself through “obvious” racist practices such as slavery or segregation, racism presents itself through forms of microaggressions¹ and systemic racism² (Hoffman et al., 2016).

Specifically, racism in policing has received increased attention in recent years. Numerous killings of unarmed Black people by police have brought attention to biased policing as well as police violence and brutality. A federal study carried out by the Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that police disproportionately target Black people (as cited in Kahn & Kirk, 2015). Research also shows that Black men are 2.5 times more likely to be murdered by police than White men (Edwards, Lee & Esposito, 2019), but that policemen involved in the murders of unarmed Black men are generally not indicted (Chaney & Robertson, 2015). These briefly mentioned statistics are testament to the way unjust policing perpetuates the de-humanization of Black people today, and how the mattering of Black lives is sometimes treated as inconsequential, or trivial.

In response to the unjust treatment of Black people by police, social movement activism has sought to *re-humanize* Black lives. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement

¹ Racial microaggressions present themselves through “subtle and often unintentional [and sometimes intentional] forms of racism that communicate denigrating messages to people of color and other marginalized groups” (Constantine, 2007; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000; Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007, as cited in Hoffman et al., 2016, p. 598).

² Systemic racism can for example present itself through unequal access to health care, structural poverty, or in the criminal justice system (Butler, 2020, as cited in Huegel, 2020, p. 88).

has for the past decade demanded changes that ensure an extension of care and concern to Black people, by protesting unjust policing and the numerous killings of unarmed Black people by police. Because BLM is a leading force in the struggle for the re-humanization of Black lives and the struggle towards racial equality, it is essential to gain an in-depth understanding of how the movement engages to achieve change. In recent years, scholars have shown increasing interest in the internal dynamics of BLM, its role in continuing the struggle for equality for Black people, as well as the movement's tactics (Tillery, 2018). However, little attention has been given to the *normative* reasoning and communication of the movement. And, in those instances where scholars *have* focused on the movement's normative reasoning and communication (Harris, 2015; Perhamus & Joldersma, 2016), it has taken the form of theoretical rather than empirical research. Therefore, I am interested in contributing to the academic understanding of the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM, because in order to fully understand the way BLM seeks to re-humanize Black lives, it is important to gain a more complete picture of the movement's activism.

Furthermore, in the summer of 2020, support for the movement reached an all-time high after a Black man named George Floyd was killed by a police officer who kneeled on Floyd's neck for over 8 minutes during an arrest in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Hill, Tiefenthaler, Triebert, Jordan, Willis & Stein, 2020). Support for the movement, uprisings to protest the killings of Black Americans by police and racism more widely, reached a scale that had not been seen before. The movement was believed to be the biggest social movement in U.S. history (Buchanan, Bui & Patel, 2020) and spread internationally to over 70 countries (ACLED, 2020). This makes Floyd's killing and the protests that followed a prime example for studying the movement. Further, the increasing support suggests that people were aware and supportive of BLM's overall messages. However, it is unclear which elements of the movement's activism resonated and why. Therefore, I am interested in understanding BLM's normative reasoning and communication after Floyd's death, as well as responses to this thinking and strategy, as these can be helpful in understanding how BLM was able to build a broader alliance of critique and protest. As such, the main purpose of this Thesis is to understand the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of the BLM movement with particular attention to how these were evident in the wake of the death of George Floyd. Understanding the role of normative reasoning and communication of BLM, and the responses these generate, is useful to better understand how the movement has worked to – and I will argue *did*, – advance a re-humanization of Black lives in the aftermath of the death

of George Floyd. It can also be relevant for struggles against de-humanization elsewhere, and for other struggles for humanity and dignity (e.g., labor, gender, age groups).

The main objective of the study is to *contribute to the academic understanding of the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of the BLM movement, with particular attention to how these were evident in the wake of the death of George Floyd*. This research uses a qualitative data gathering approach, more specifically a grounded theory approach, to answer the research questions that frame the study. Theories on *mattering* and *nonviolence* are used to interpret and explain BLM's normative reasoning, communication, and resonance. The following main research questions were posed:

- What normative views and positions did BLM use in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?
- How did BLM communicate and advance its normative views and positions in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?
- How did BLM normative reasoning and communication resonate within the broader public discourse, protest and support, in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?

Terminology

The terminology used in this Thesis must be addressed for clarification. As a decentralized movement, BLM consists of a variety of associated networks, organizations, and individuals. Therefore, it is relevant to clarify the terminology that will be used:

Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation (BLM Network): refers to the member-led global network of over 40 chapters that was initially born out of a social media post saying “#BlackLivesMatter,” created by Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Alicia Garza as a response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman after killing 17-year-old Trayvon Martin (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-c).

The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL): refers to a wide collective of thousands of people and over 50 organizations, including Black Lives Matter Global Network (M4BL, n.d.-c).

Black Lives Matter (BLM): This will be the “main” term for the BLM movement in this Thesis, and it works as an umbrella term for all networks, organizations, and individuals associated with the movement in the wider sense. Because the primary

focus is on the movement's normative reasoning, communication, and resonance, an umbrella term is appropriate as it enables me to see how those focal areas carry across the movement as a whole. The term will not be changed if/when quoted by other.

Other terms will be understood as follows:

Normative: refers to criteria considering what is morally right and wrong (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2020b) and how this criteria influences what *ought* to be (Hurrell & MacDonald, 2013, p. 60).

Normative views/positions: refers to shared ideas across BLM regarding what ends should be pursued, based on shared beliefs about what is morally right/wrong.

Resonance: refers to the quality of evoking response (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). As such, resonance will be understood in terms of both the support and resistance BLM evoked.

Brief Explanation of BLM and its Emergence

By and large, the Black Lives Matter movement is an international social movement dedicated to ending racism and violence that targets Black people, particularly police violence (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2020a). BLM was born in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman, a man who shot and killed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager. Zimmerman, a self-proclaimed neighborhood watchman, called police to report on Martin who was walking home from a convenience store carrying an iced tea and a bag of Skittles. Zimmerman told the police, "We've had some break-ins in my neighborhood, and there's a real suspicious guy ... this guy looks like he's up to no good, or he's on drugs or something" (Goodman & Moynihan, 2012, para. 2). Despite being told by police that his security services were not needed, Zimmerman followed Martin and shot and killed him soon after. After claiming that he shot Martin in self-defense, the Sanford Police Department decided not to arrest Zimmerman. This resulted in public outrage and calls for justice for Trayvon Martin, and eventually, Zimmerman was charged with murder (Murphy, 2016). Not long after, he was acquitted (Alvarez & Buckley, 2013). The acquittal, a verdict that activist Alicia Garza believed said that Black people are not safe in the U.S., led her to post a "love note to Black people" on Facebook, ending the post with "black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter." (Day, 2015, para. 5). In response to this post, another

activist, Patrisse Cullors, posted the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, which soon, with the help of a third activist named Opal Tometi, became a trending hashtag and commonly used slogan in nationwide protests (Day, 2015). From this, the Black Lives Matter movement was born. While the movement was born out of this specific incident, it has for the last decade been used to protest a range of police killings of Black people, as well as it works more widely to end the plethora of discrimination that disproportionately affects Black people in order to create “a world where black lives actually do matter” (Day, 2015, para. 7).

Death of George Floyd

As this Thesis seeks to understand the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM following *the death of George Floyd*, it is relevant to give some contextual background regarding what happened to Floyd. On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man was killed by a white police officer, Derek Chauvin, in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Hill et al., 2020; Aratani, 2020). Initially, Floyd was arrested outside a convenience store after a store employee called 911 and reported that Floyd used a counterfeit \$20 bill to buy cigarettes. Shortly after, the police arrived, and eventually, Floyd was pinned to the ground with Chauvin’s knee on his neck. For more than 8 minutes and 15 seconds, Chauvin’s knee stayed on Floyd’s neck, until Floyd after some time became non-responsive due to not being able to breathe (Hill et al., 2020). Floyd was confirmed dead sometime later (Aratani, 2020). The occurrence was captured on video by onlookers and security cameras, which eventually circulated on social media and in mass media news coverage. The unjust killing of yet another Black person at the hands of police caused public outrage and resulted in worldwide protests, mainly under the banner Black Lives Matter, against racial injustices.

Thesis Overview

The Thesis is divided into six chapters. In this Chapter, I introduced the Thesis in its entirety. I presented the topic of the Thesis along with the problem statement, purpose, and significance of the study, briefly introduced the main objective and research questions that guide the study, clarified terminology and the case being studied, and briefly explained what BLM is and how the movement emerged. In Chapter 2, I will review the literature on BLM,

which mainly focuses on three analytical categories of framings of the movement. I will also identify a gap in existing literature, which this Thesis seeks to fill. In Chapter 3, I explain the theoretical orientation, namely perspectives on *mattering* and *nonviolence*, that will be used to interpret and understand BLM normative reasoning, communication, and resonance. In Chapter 4, I explain and justify the methodological choices that were made for the Thesis. The Chapter defines the research design, research objectives and questions, sampling approach, choice of case, data collection methods, strategy for analysis, trustworthiness and goodness, as well as limitations and how these were attempted mitigated. Chapter 5 discusses this study's findings, which is done across three themes: 1) BLM Normative Reasoning, 2) BLM Organizing and Communication, and 3) The Resonance of BLM Thinking and Strategy. Based on the findings in these three themes, I discuss how BLM succeeded in advancing a re-humanization of Black lives. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the Thesis with a summary of main findings, implications for research, recommendations for future research, and a brief summary of the study's limitations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Three Analytical Categories of Framings of the BLM Movement

The BLM movement has become a hotly debated topic amongst scholars across diverse academic fields in recent years. As pointed out by Tillery (2018), scholarly treatments of the BLM movement generally place it within one of three categories of analytical framings. These categories include: 1) scholarly work that “attempt[s] to place the *BLM movement in historical context* within the long tradition of the African American struggle for racial equality in the United States” (Tillery, 2018, pp. 2-3); 2) scholarly work that emphasizes the *role of social media* within the movement (Cox, 2017; Freelon, McIlwain, and Clark, 2016, 2016b; Ince, Rojas, and Davis, 2017, as cited in Tillery, 2018, p. 3); and 3) scholarly work that seeks to classify the BLM movement by analyzing the *movement’s tactics*, using ideological constructs and social movement theory (Harris, 2015; Lindsey, 2015; Rickford, 2016, as cited in Tillery, 2018, p. 3). Below, I seek to give a brief account of literature and scholarly work that exists within categories (1), (2), and (3).

BLM in Historical Context (1)

In this category, the focus is literature that places the *BLM movement in the historical context* of the struggle for racial equality. The consensus within this analytical category (1) is that BLM, as well as the public and institutional responses to the movement, cannot be *fully* understood without considering how the centuries-long history of racial oppression and de-humanization has shaped the current political climate.

Although BLM came to life in the past decade, scholars agree that the movement roots in a centuries-long history of racial oppression and de-humanization and thus is best understood in a historical context. Scholars with this analytical orientation generally argue that the movement is best understood as part of a long struggle for racial equality for Black Americans (Lebron, 2017; Ekotto, 2021). By placing BLM within a historical context, these scholars illuminate the movement as a reflection of a wider call for racial equality and equal dignity, rather than viewing it solely as a present-day movement that fights against current injustices. This is particularly evident in “The Making of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History of an Idea,” where Lebron (2017) argues that although the BLM movement is relatively new, the ideas behind the movement are not. Instead, the current BLM movement was born out of

a rich tradition and struggle for human dignity (Lebron, 2017). Similarly, Ekotto (2021) argues that BLM must be understood in a historical context. By drawing upon Frantz Fanon's writings about the struggle for dignity for Black people during colonial times, Ekotto (2021) contextualizes the BLM movement within a broader Black struggle for racial equality and demonstrates that this struggle still exists today, although it manifests itself differently.

Moreover, literature places the BLM movement in a broader historical movement for Black liberation. For instance, Harris (2015) claims that BLM's recognition of the humanity of *all* Black lives, regardless of class, sexual orientation, and gender, has re-energized the Black freedom struggle. Further, in response to constant comparisons between the Civil Rights movement (1954-1965) and the newer BLM movement, Clayton (2018), has provided a comparative analysis of the two movements. While he analyses both differences and similarities between the two movements, he illuminates how they both represent historical movements in the Black liberation struggle for freedom. Furthermore, the BLM movement has been described as an "entry point into Black liberation organizing" (Carruthers, 2015), where space is opened up for activists to work on issues that are particularly aimed towards Black liberation (Garza, 2014). This renewed focus on Black liberation is discussed in "From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation," where Keeyanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2016) applies a historical analysis on past and present political conditions and structural inequalities like Black unemployment and mass incarceration, that have resulted in continued racial oppression. Taylor (2016) argues that BLM, as a larger struggle against racial oppression and police violence, can potentially renew attention to a push for Black liberation. By centering the BLM movement within a larger movement for Black liberation, scholars illuminate the need to understand the movement in a wider context of struggles for racial equality.

The Role of Social Media in BLM (2)

In this category, literature explores how BLM has utilized social media to reframe itself for the public and counter negative mass media framings of the movement. In general, scholars agree that both social media and mass media play a vital role in *informing* and *educating* the public about social issues, protests, and movements (Kilgo, 2017; Kilgo & Mourão, 2019; Murphy, 2016; Elmasry & el-Nawawy, 2017; Leopold & Bell, 2017; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019; Kilgo, Harlow, García-Perdomo & Salaverría, 2018; Kilgo, Mourão & Sylvie, 2019). Scholars argue that this vital role involves the power to *frame* protests and

movements, as well as influence public opinion (Murphy, 2016; Elmasry & el-Nawawy, 2017; Leopold & Bell, 2017; Kilgo & Mourão, 2019; Kilgo, 2017; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019; Kilgo et al., 2018; Kilgo et al., 2019; Mourão, Kilgo & Sylvie, 2018). Often, this framing examines what scholars have coined as the “protest paradigm,” which refers to patterns of news coverage that contribute to the delegitimization of protests (and sometimes social movements) by portraying them as impotent, threatening, or deviant (Lee, 2014, p. 2725). Scholars have confirmed the presence of the protest paradigm in news coverage of the BLM movement and have shown that media coverage has been marginalizing protesters through the racialization of coverage (Leopold & Bell, 2017; Kilgo & Mourão, 2019; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019; Mourão et al., 2018; Kilgo et al., 2019; Murphy, 2016). Racialization of the coverage means to cover the protests in a way that reinforces stereotypes about Black protesters (the racialized), resulting in negative consequences such as the public associating Black people with criminality, which in turn can lead to lower life quality for Black people (Leopold & Bell, 2017). While some research has suggested increasingly sympathetic coverage of BLM protests during *peaks* in activity (Elmasry & el-Nawawy, 2017), other more longitudinal research has shown that news coverage did not become more legitimizing *over time* (Kilgo et al., 2019). Instead, there is a tendency in news coverage to focus less on BLM’s agenda or demands, and more on BLM protests as confrontational and violent (Kilgo et al., 2019).

To counter the negative framing resulting from the “protest paradigm,” BLM groups, activists, and supporters rely heavily on social media to mobilize support and express their demands. In the last decade, research on social media and social movements has increased, and several scholars have identified social media as a defining aspect of how New Social Movements³ frame, communicate, and mobilize for their causes (Theocharris, Lowe, van Deth & García-Albacete, 2015; Papacharissi 2016; Gerbaudo, 2012). Consequently, scholars have been interested in the role of social media within BLM as a New Social Movement. Much of the research on social media and BLM has revolved around studying hashtags and their role in propelling conversations between BLM supporters, activists, and opponents on Facebook and Twitter (Tillery, 2019, p. 301). In these studies, there is a consensus that social

³ New Social Movements refer to a wave of social movements that emerged in a post-industrial economy since roughly the 1960s. These New Social Movements differ from “old” conventional social movements that emerged in the industrial economy because they are more concerned with cultural and social issues (such as gender, race, sexuality, youth, ethnicity, spirituality, animal rights, pacifism, human rights, environmentalism, and so forth) than merely material or economic concerns (Buechler, 2013).

media, particularly hashtags, play a vital role in elevating the movement and stimulating action, specifically from the African American community (Freelon, McIlwain & Clark, 2016; Carney, 2016; Ince, Rojas & Davis, 2017; Cox, 2017; Tillery, 2019). Furthermore, literature shows that the use of hashtags has previously gained attention and support from political elites (Freelon, McIlwain & Clark, 2018), further highlighting the influence of hashtags and social media. Moreover, findings show that BLM twitter-use does not advocate violence, which challenges arguments and framings of BLM as a confrontational and violent movement that encourages attacks on law enforcement (Tillery, 2019, p. 319). Overall, literature in this analytical category (2) illuminates social media as essential in conversations about BLM.

BLM Movement Tactics (3)

As indicated, some scholars seek to frame the BLM movement by analyzing the movement's tactics, using ideological constructs and social movement theory (Harris, 2015; Lindsey, 2015; Rickford, 2016, as cited in Tillery, 2018, p. 3). Researchers with this analytical orientation generally argue that BLM can best be understood as a New Social Movement that is more concerned with expressing claims about gender, culture, LGBTQ, and racial identities than defining and achieving policy goals (Tillery, 2018, p. 3). Instead of focusing on the movement's policy goals and achievements, these researchers have shown more interest in understanding the internal dynamics and representations within the movement and how these take place in the public sphere (Harris, 2015; Lindsey, 2015; Rickford, 2016; Taylor, 2016, as cited in Tillery, 2019). As a result of detailed case studies and narrative accounts, there is consensus on three points in particular amongst these scholars: The first is that the current BLM movement intentionally rejects the "respectability politics"⁴ model that thrived in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s (Harris, 2015, pp. 37–39; Rickford, 2016, pp. 36–37; Taylor, 2016, pp. 153–191, as cited in Tillery, 2019, p. 300). The second is that activists in the BLM movement have a tendency to use frames based on identities (such as race, gender, LGBTQ) to describe both the problems they combat as well as the solutions they propose (Harris, 2015, pp. 37–39; Lindsey, 2015; Rickford, 2016, pp. 36–37, as cited in Tillery, 2019, p. 300). Finally, research shows that

⁴ Respectability politics refers to efforts among African Americans to maintain a public image that garners respect and deem them worthy in a society that de-humanizes them, which happens through adhering to hegemonic (white) standards of what it means to be respectable (Patton, 2014).

BLM activists see value in the “disruptive repertoires of contention” such as “die-ins,” rallies and marches that they use to gather attention around their cause (Rickford, 2016, p. 36), and that they are less concerned with defining goals as linear policy objectives (Rickford, 2016; Taylor, 2016, as cited in Tillery, 2019, p. 300).

The BLM movement has faced criticism for its tactics. Some people, such as former President Barack Obama, famous talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, and former civil rights activist Barbara Reynolds, have expressed skepticism about the movement’s future. They have questioned the movement’s disruptive protest tactics, the movement’s unwillingness to negotiate with political elites within the gradualist realm of public policy, and the decentralized organizational structures of the movement (“Oprah Winfrey’s Comments”, 2015; Reynolds, 2015; Shear & Stack, 2016; Tillery, 2019). Former president Barack Obama has criticized BLM for not seeking change through the political system, urging the movement to do more than yell at elected officials from outside of the political process (Shear & Stack, 2016). Further, Oprah Winfrey pointed out the movement’s lack of leadership as one of its weaknesses, emphasizing the need to “take note of the strategic, peaceful intention required when you want real change” (“Oprah Winfrey’s Comments”, 2015, para. 5). Winfrey’s sentiment was corroborated by a former activist in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Barbara Reynolds. Reynolds (2015) has criticized the BLM movement’s disruptive protest tactics – and urged BLM activists to embrace “the loving, non-violent approach” that was used during the 1960s civil rights movement (as cited in Tillery, 2019, p. 298). Moreover, Clayton (2018), who compared the BLM movement to the Civil Rights movement, argues that BLM should take lessons from the civil rights movement’s more inclusive manner of framing its issues (p. 448). Furthermore, critics have been skeptical about the BLM movement’s focus on decentralized “horizontal” leadership, arguing that a lack of leadership can potentially lead to confusion about the movement, as well as questions about trust and legitimacy (Cole, 2020). In many ways, these types of critiques suggest that a return to the type of tactics used during the civil rights movement of the 1960s would help BLM become more successful (Tillery, 2019, p. 299). While a potential to gather broader public support by using tactics used in the civil rights movement may exist, some scholars have pointed out that social media, together with BLM’s decentralized leadership structure, actually have enabled “parties of one” to partake in social change in ways that have never before been possible (Earl & Kimport, 2012, as cited in Cole, 2020).

Further, Perhamus and Joldersma (2016) have discussed BLM's tactics by exploring the movement's normative thinking and communication. In their essay, they argue that BLM "reframes for society who matters as a human life" (p. 57) and claim that BLM protests are enacted through challenging the grievability of precarious, lost Black lives, and in that way claims Black lives recognizable as human lives. They also argue that the movement is inherently an "educational undertaking" that, through its tactics, as the movement takes to the streets, invites society to learn about itself (Perhamus & Joldersma, 2016, p. 58). As such, they provide convincing arguments about BLM and its thinking and tactics, which can be further strengthened with empirical evidence. It is worth noting that this literature, although I discovered the source late in my research process, carries many similarities to my work in this Thesis. This seems to be because both works rely on Judith Butler's ideas in our analyses of BLM.

Gap in Current Research

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature in three analytical categories of framings of BLM. The reviewed literature gives an overview of the BLM movement in historical context, the role of social media within the movement, and the movement's tactics. Generally, the literature in these categories provide insightful knowledge on the movement's internal dynamics and tactics. However, I find that little attention has been given to the normative reasoning of BLM, the role this normative reasoning plays in shaping the movement's tactics, as well as how it resonates in society. In that way, the topic is understudied. *Some* existing literature *has* provided solid theoretical insights on the topic. Specifically, Harris (2015), who briefly discussed that BLM focuses less on specific civil or political rights, and instead more on broader claims for "black humanity" as a catalyst for political action (para. 12), and Perhamus and Joldersma (2016), who discuss how BLM reframes our understandings of the mattering of lives, how BLM protests challenge unequal grievability in a way that claims Black lives as recognizable as human lives, and how this influences society to self-reflect. However, I find that these works are more theoretical rather than empirical. This means that although some existing literature provides relevant and seemingly strong arguments about the role of the normative reasoning and communication of BLM, there is a research gap in the sense that there is a lack of empirical studies on the subject. Additionally, much of the literature cited was written before the George Floyd incident, after which we observed a

larger alliance for BLM than we had seen before. I seek to fill this gap by providing an in-depth exploration of the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM following the death of George Floyd. In doing so, I wish to contribute to the academic understanding of the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM by exploring how the movement used its normative reasoning and communication to advance the re-humanization of Black lives in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Orientation

Perspectives on Re-humanization

In Chapter 2, I reviewed existing literature on BLM and identified a gap in the literature that I seek to fill. After reviewing past literature, I found that more attention can be given to the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. In an attempt to fill this gap, I have devised a theoretical orientation that will inform this Thesis, specifically in the analysis and discussion in Chapter 5. In order to better understand how the movement worked to re-humanize Black lives I, have chosen two closely related re-humanization perspectives, namely notions of *mattering* and of *nonviolence*, which will assist and guide the analysis.

Mattering

Generally, the notion of mattering deals with the value placed upon lives and how this value is unequally distributed. Scholars have explored this notion in various ways, offering different interpretations, explanations, and suggestions. For some scholars, mattering is understood through the *recognition* of one's life. For instance, for Fanon (1956), to matter is to be recognized in a way that acknowledges the value and human dignity of the oppressed and marginalized (as cited in Nayar, 2011, p. 22). As such, unequal mattering is the *lack* of recognition of one's value and human dignity. Further, he sought a humanism where the Black man is accepted – and matter – as a human in his own right, rather than being evaluated from a European perspective (Nayar, 2011). In that way, Fanon's interpretation is concerned with the inherent mattering of Black lives.

With a slightly different interpretation, Butler (2020) discusses the mattering of lives using the notion of *grievability*. To her, equal grievability of lives equates to the equal value of lives (Terry & Butler, 2020, para. 15), meaning that for a life to be grievable, it must be a life that has value. To *not* be grievable, she explains, is to “feel [oneself] to be living a life that will not be mourned when it is lost, or who look at others and regard them as lives that will not be mourned if they are lost” (Terry & Butler, 2020, para. 20). Further, she also explains that equal grievability would mean that all lives have value and therefore would be considered a life worthy of not only being grieved, but also worthy of living, being lived, and *deserving* to be lived (Terry & Butler, 2020, para. 22). She writes: “To be grievable is to be

interpellated in such a way that you know your life matters; that the loss of your life would matter; that your body is treated as one that should be able to live and thrive, whose precarity should be minimized, for which provisions for flourishing should be available” (Butler, 2020, *Violence and Nonviolence*, para. 14). In this way, equal grievability is not only about being recognized as a human life that has value, and whose value means that one’s life would be grieved if lost, but also a life whose value means that one deserves to live a life where one is given opportunities to thrive and flourish.

For this study, I decided to use these notions of *mattering* based on Fanon’s ‘recognition’ and Butler’s ‘grievability’ because they appeared particularly useful to interpret and understand BLM normative views and positions in terms of what it means to matter – which I consider to be necessary to understand the violence that BLM opposes as well as what this violence destroys. More specifically, Fanon’s interpretation seemed relevant to help explain how BLM opposes violence that undermines the basic recognition of the value and human dignity of Black people, as well as how this violence calls for the recognition of Black lives ‘in their own right.’ And, Butler’s notion of grievability seemed relevant to help explain how BLM also opposes violence that undermines the *quality* of Black life.

Nonviolence

Social movements can take on *nonviolence* as a form of resistance to confront violence. As such, nonviolence can take different forms. The type of nonviolence that informs the theoretical orientation of this study is Judith Butler’s notion of nonviolence. To Butler, “violence is always interpreted” (Butler, 2020, Introduction, para. 16), and therefore nonviolence requires opposition to alternative forms of violence that distinguish between lives that matter and lives that do not (*Violence and Nonviolence*, para. 18). Further, Butler’s nonviolence is aggressive rather than passive and is built around the idea that social movements can confront violence by turning *rage* into effective nonviolent action (Butler, 2020). This involves accepting feelings of anger and rage caused by injustices and unequal distribution of grievability, and focusing on *what can be done with rage*, as opposed to “viewing rage as an uncontrollable impulse that needs to come out in unmediated forms” (Terry & Butler, 2020, para. 14). Further, this rage can be turned into effective nonviolent

action that takes the form of physical assertions of *claiming grievability*⁵ through engagement in activities like speech, gesture, and action, through encampments, networks, and assemblies (Butler, 2020, Introduction, para. 26). Claiming grievability through these actions, Butler argues, becomes a way for those engaging in this nonviolence to recast the ‘precarious’ – those whose lives are deemed un-grievable – as worthy of value (para. 26). As such, it becomes a way to take power away from those who deem them un-grievable by resisting through physically asserting their lives as worthy of value, hence engaging in persistence against violent powers that attempt to cast some lives as dispensable (Butler, 2020, Introduction, para. 26). Hence, the physical assertion of grievability is important because grievable lives are considered lives that have value, and lives that have value are typically not exposed to violence in the same way that lives with ‘lesser’ value are because it is generally not considered morally acceptable (Butler, 2020, Nonviolence, para. 1). As such, Butler argues that physically asserting grievability – and thus also value – means asserting belonging to those whose lives it is considered morally unacceptable to expose to violence (Butler, 2020, Introduction, para. 26). This form of nonviolence, Butler argues, is vital in moments “when doing violence seems most justified and obvious” (Butler, 2020, Nonviolence, para. 1).

I chose Butler’s notion of nonviolence because it appeared to provide useful theoretical insights to help me analyze and explain both BLM normative views and positions as well as BLM communication as oppositions to violence. Furthermore, Butler’s nonviolence is concerned with turning rage into action specifically in moments when violence seems like a viable option. This makes it a sensible choice as I intend to understand BLM’s normative reasoning and communication during the worldwide outrage that took place following the death of George Floyd.

Summary

In this Chapter, I have presented and justified the theoretical orientation that informs this Thesis. The theoretical orientation is informed by re-humanization perspectives on *mattering* and *nonviolence*. Moving on, in Chapter 4, I will justify the methodological choices in this research.

⁵ ‘Physical assertions of claiming *grievability*’ will be used as ‘physical assertions of claiming *mattering*’ because the Thesis considers both Fanon’s and Butler’s interpretations of *mattering*.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Research Design

The research for this Thesis used a qualitative data gathering approach. This approach was considered most suitable because the research is more concerned with analyzing words to understand the BLM movement's normative reasoning, communication, and resonance in the wake of the death of George Floyd, rather than a quantification of data (Bryman, 2012, p. 380). Moreover, the study takes a grounded theory approach, where the idea is that theory is generated in a dynamic interaction with data (Bryman, 2012, p. 387). Grounded theory was appropriate for the research in this Thesis, particularly due to the lack of prior research and analyses of the case study material on the specific topic. Therefore, it is suitable to generate theoretical insights grounded in data from a case that has previously not been explored to a large extent. However, the research also extends beyond regular inductivist grounded theory, where theory is solely empirically grounded. Instead, it includes theories and theoretical concepts relevant to the topic in the theory development process. I made this choice to avoid "knowledge isolation," where theory is developed with little or no regard to existing theories on a subject, and to avoid the risk of reinventing the wheel (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010, pp. 188, 191). Instead, the research has aimed to consider existing theories on the topic, such as theories of *nonviolence* and *mattering*, in order to synthesize my findings with previous knowledge/theories, as a way to create new knowledge as well as challenge abstractions made from the data (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010, p. 188). This has meant using an iterative research process, where data collection and analysis have happened in tandem and informed each other (Bryman, 2012, p. 387). In doing so, I have developed theoretical interpretations along the way, rather than using a clearly defined theory or theoretical framework to guide my research.

Research Objectives and Questions

The main objective of this research was to *contribute to the academic understanding of the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of the BLM movement, with particular attention to how these were evident in the wake of the death of George Floyd.*

Three main research questions were posed:

- What normative views and positions did BLM use in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?
- How did BLM communicate and advance its normative views and positions in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?
- How did BLM normative reasoning and communication resonate within the broader public discourse, protest, and support, in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?

To reach the main objective and to answer the three main questions, the study was broken down into three sub-objectives, along with each objective's relevant research questions (see below). These have been formulated to help me think about the research process more precisely and rigorously (Bryman, 2012, p. 10) to reach the study's primary objective. As seen, the main research questions address three complementary research interests, namely, understanding BLM normative views and positions, understanding BLM organizing and communication, and understanding the resonance of BLM within public discourse, protest and support following Floyd's death. The three sub-objectives and related research questions are as follows:

Sub-objective 1: To document, interpret, and understand BLM normative (moral, ethical, political) views and positions.

- a) What are BLM's foundational moral, ethical, and political views and positions?
- b) What BLM foundational moral, ethical, and political views and positions were used by BLM in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?
- c) How can perspectives on *mattering* and *nonviolence* help us understand the BLM foundational moral, ethical, and political views and positions that were used by BLM in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?

Sub-objective 2: To show how BLM communicate and advance its normative views, protest and demands.

- a) How does BLM organize and communicate to advocate for a re-humanization of Black lives?
- b) How did BLM communicate the demand for re-humanizing Black lives in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?
- c) How did BLM advocate for nonviolence and mattering of Black lives in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?

Sub-objective 3: To explain the resonance of BLM within public discourse, protest and support.

- a) What normative views and positions were reflected in the broadening public discourse, protest, and support in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd?
- b) What normative views, positions, and methods triggered the most resistance from opponents of BLM?
- c) Did BLM succeed in advancing re-humanization, nonviolence, and mattering as issues of concern in public discourse?

Sampling Approach

The method of sampling used in this research was a *non-probability* sampling method, meaning that I did not use a random selection sampling method (Bryman, 2012, p. 187). Because random sampling is not an effective method for understanding complex issues related to human behavior (Marshall, 1996, p. 523), using a non-probability sampling approach was more appropriate in this research to develop an understanding of the BLM movement's normative reasoning, communication, and resonance. Instead, I used a *purposive* sampling approach, where research questions guided the sampling process and decided which units needed to be sampled (Bryman, 2012, p. 416). Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the sample would be relevant to answering the research questions used to reach the overall research aim. The sampling was also carried out using a *sequential* approach, where I have begun with initial samples that have been gradually added to throughout the process in order to answer the research questions (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). More specifically, snowball sampling was used in the sampling process. This meant that I started with an initial purposive sample consisting of a smaller group of units of analysis, from which other units of analysis were derived (Bryman, 2012, p. 424). This sampling approach was used because it was not possible to establish a complete sample at the beginning that would allow me to answer the different research questions. In this way, the snowball sampling approach was useful as it allowed the sample to grow over time, eventually containing enough data to answer the different research questions. The "new" units of analysis were derived from the initial samples either through mentions, references, or related links on websites. Additionally, there have been elements of theoretical sampling, where data collection, coding, and analysis have happened in tandem, and where this has helped decide what data to collect further, and where

I can find it, in order to develop theoretical interpretations as they emerge in the process (Bryman, 2012, p. 419).

Overall, three selection criteria shaped the sampling of sources: a) *relevance* – the sampled source had to provide insights into the normative reasoning, communication, and/or resonance of BLM; b) *diversity* – diversity of the sampled sources was important because purposive samples benefit from a variety within the sample, so that sample units “differ from each other in terms of key characteristics relevant to the research question” (Bryman, 2012, p. 418); and, c) *closeness in time and space* – this helped limit the sample which was necessary due to time constraints and deadlines, and was done by choosing publicly available sources.

Case Study

Research with a case study design generally seeks to accomplish an in-depth exploration of a specific case, such as a community, an organization, a person, a place, or an event (Bryman, 2012, p. 67). The case being explored in this Thesis is the reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM in the wake of the death of George Floyd. I chose to study these surrounding the event of Floyd’s death because this event is both a type of *representative/typical* case, as well as an *extreme/unique* case (Bryman, 2012, p. 70). On the one hand, it is a representative/typical case in the sense that the killing of George Floyd is only one of many killings of Black Americans at the hands of police, and it can be used to “capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation” (Yin, 2009, p. 48, as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 70). On the other hand, it is an extreme/unique case due to the massive amounts of national and international attention that the killing received, and the uproar it resulted in, in the weeks and months following the event, compared to other police killings in the past. This makes it particularly relevant as a case for this research because its uniqueness holds intrinsic interest (Bryman, 2012, p. 70) and holds the potential to provide new insights into BLM normative views and positions, communication, and resonance.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study utilized multiple online documents as sources. These sources consisted of a variety of documents, including:

- Official documents derived from private sources, such as BLM Network and M4BL mission statements and other publicity files
- Online research reports
- Taped interviews, written interviews, and interview-based articles with/of BLM organizers, activists, supporters, and opponents
- Opinion articles and blog posts written by BLM founders, organizers, and supporters
- Online newspaper articles reporting on BLM events, communication methods, and responses
- Social media posts, such as Facebook/Instagram/Twitter posts by M4BL, BLM Network, BLM organizers, activists, and chapters
- Researcher journals specializing in BLM as a movement

These documents have in common that they can be read/interpreted, they have not been produced for the purpose of social research (with the exception of researcher journals and online research reports), they are preserved online and are thus readily available for analysis, and they are relevant to the research questions posed in this study (Bryman, 2012, p. 543). Furthermore, the quality of these sources has been assessed according to four criteria suggested by Scott (1990): a) *authenticity* – I have considered the authenticity of the sources and sought to use evidence that is real and of unquestionable origin; b) *credibility* – I have sought to use credible sources that are largely free of error and distortion; c) *representativeness* – I have considered whether the sources are typical of their kind and whether the extent of untypicality of some sources is known; and d) *meaning* – I have made an effort to use evidence that is clear and comprehensible (p. 6, as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 544).

When assessing the quality of the different sources, certain criteria required more attention than others for the different sources. For instance, when assessing online newspaper articles and personal documents such as opinion articles, it was of extra importance to consider the authenticity of the document before collecting data from it, to make sure the purported author of the article was the actual author (Bryman, 2012, p. 545). For official documents from private sources, such as BLM Network and M4BL mission statements and

other publicity files, authenticity was not as much of a concern. Instead, credibility and representativeness were of extra concern, as official documents are written by different people within the organizations, resulting in differences across the organizations as well as reflections of different people's positions within the organizations (Bryman, 2012, p. 551). To counter this challenge and maximize credibility and awareness of representativeness in these sources, it was useful to triangulate different documents to cross-check their quality (Bryman, 2012, p. 2017) by comparing similar sources, checking for errors, and evaluating whether they were representative. Moreover, when assessing taped interviews and researcher journals, credibility and meaning were of concern, as I sought to make sure that interviews used for analysis were not distorted or edited, and that both interviews and researcher journals were clear and comprehensible.

Strategy for Analysis

As previously mentioned, the research process for this Thesis has been an iterative one, meaning that data collection and analysis have happened in tandem (Bryman, 2012, p. 387). This means that I began analyzing data after establishing the initial purposive sample to begin interpreting and making sense of the data early in the process. Further, analysis for the research in this Thesis was done using *qualitative content analysis*; an approach used to analyze documents by looking for underlying themes in the sources (Bryman, 2012, p. 558). More specifically, an *ethnographic qualitative content analysis (ECA)* approach was used. ECA refers to a process of analysis that “follows a recursive and reflexive movement between concept development-sampling-data, collection-data, coding-data, and analysis-interpretation” (Altheide, 1996, p. 16, as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 559). For this Thesis, using ECA meant analyzing the sources using *initial* categories like *meaning and values*, *strategy and agency*, and *resonance and impact*. These categories then guided the study as data from various sources was coded into them, which resulted in new categories emerging and replacing the initial ones, resulting from refinement and generation of new categories during the iterative data collection and analysis process (Bryman, 2012, p. 559).

Moreover, the ECA approach in this research was *hermeneutic*, meaning that I sought to bring out the meanings of documents by considering the perspective of the authors as well as the historical context within which the document was produced (Bryman, 2012, p. 561). This was done to develop an understanding of the link between the authors' perspectives and

the social and historical contexts within which the different sources were produced to better understand the meaning of the sources and data overall (Bryman, 2012, p. 561). This approach to analyzing the data was essential in this research because, in order to understand BLM, it is necessary to consider both social and historical contexts, and perspectives outside of my own.

Trustworthiness and Goodness

In this Thesis, I have dedicated efforts to ensure the trustworthiness and goodness of the research process and findings. To do so, I have applied various strategies to increase the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the research, as well as I have considered ethics regarding the research. To increase research *credibility* (Bryman, 2012, p. 390), I have a) relied on *triangulation* of data by using several sources of data in the study, which have resulted in greater confidence in study findings (Bryman, 2012, p. 392); and b) frequently requested *peer/supervisor review* of research design, conduct, and findings. Further, to allow readers to make judgments about the possible *transferability* of the research findings, I have provided *thick descriptions* of the data to give the reader a rich account of the findings (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). Moreover, to counter challenges regarding the *confirmability* of results – as researcher objectivity is not possible in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p. 392) – I have sought to act in good faith as a researcher without allowing personal bias from swaying the conduct of the research and findings. I have done so by a) applying a *reflexive approach* where I as a researcher practice self-reflection to understand better how my own prior biases and values implicate the research process and findings (Bryman, 2012, p. 393); and, b) regularly seeking *peer/supervisor review* of advice and input to evaluate whether personal bias is overtly swaying the conduct of research and process.

Furthermore, three measures have been applied to ensure that *ethical considerations* have been accounted for in the conduct of the research in this Thesis. First, I have registered the Thesis with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). This was done to ensure that research data is ethically collected, stored, and shared (NSD, n.d.). Secondly, I sought to maintain the confidentiality of the subjects whose opinions and viewpoints are expressed throughout the documents used for this Thesis. This was done to minimize any disturbance to the subjects and their relationships with their environments (Bryman, 2012, p. 136). In some instances, this meant using pseudonyms like ‘Organizer [number x]’ or ‘Supporter [x].’ In

other instances, I used descriptive phrases, such as ‘a director of the TV company’ or ‘a Blue Lives Matter adherent,’ to refer to the subject whose opinion or viewpoint I discussed. However, public figures, such as politicians who have publicly discussed topics related to this Thesis, or celebrities who publicly expressed views about BLM, I referred to by real names. Thirdly, I have dedicated efforts to educate myself about my white privilege, which I view as a necessary effort as a researcher trying to understand research on a topic that accounts primarily for the experiences of Black people. It is ethically necessary to practice awareness of my own experiences, subjective views, biases, and understandings as a white woman from Norway, and to consider how these influence further analysis and understandings throughout the research – something that inevitably limits my ability to fully understand issues that are based mainly on the experiences of people of color.

Limitations of Research

One common criticism of qualitative research is that the research can be too subjective and that findings can be influenced significantly by the researcher’s views and understandings (Bryman, 2012, p. 405). As such, one of the most noteworthy limitations of this research is the positionality of the researcher. As previously indicated, my positionality as a white woman from Norway inevitably causes limitations to my understanding of issues primarily grounded in Black people's experiences. Initially, I considered mitigating this limitation by requesting peer review from fellow students and friends who relate to these experiences. However, this idea was discarded as it occurred to me that this would only further the burden placed on peers who are already subjected to various forms of marginalization. Instead, I have relied heavily on reflexivity to understand how my personal biases and experiences influence the study (Bryman, 2012, p. 393). This has been done in combination with researching ways to understand my own positionality better. This limitation is raised mainly to increase transparency to allow the reader to know the researcher’s positionality from which they can make judgments about the research findings.

Moreover, another study limitation was time constraints. Generally, grounded theory research is an iterative process that seeks to achieve theoretical saturation, meaning that theoretical sampling continues until a category is fully saturated with data (Bryman, 2012, p. 421). Due to the restrictive timeframe for this research, theoretical saturation would be difficult to achieve. Therefore, instead of seeking to achieve theoretical saturation, I have

sought to get satisfactory answers to the research questions. To do so, I have specifically created timetables for data collection and analysis to hold myself accountable and structure the workload to get satisfactory answers to the research questions within the timeframe.

Also, the global COVID pandemic and the nationwide lockdown have affected this Thesis. Working from home, not being able to meet up with peers to discuss ideas, and being socially isolated, have caused limitations to the development of, and feedback to, ideas and arguments surrounding the Thesis.

Finally, another limitation of the research is that it cannot be generalized to a population. Because the type of sampling used in this research was a non-probability sample and not a probability sample, the research cannot be generalized to a population (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). Although this is a limitation, the study is still valuable because the research shows an in-depth understanding of the normative views, communication, and resonance of the BLM movement. In the next chapter, I will discuss this study's findings.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

The main objective of this research was to *contribute to the academic understanding of the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of the BLM movement in the wake of the death of George Floyd*. To reach this objective, I further defined three themes with corresponding sub-objectives and research questions (see Chapter 4 for details), which this chapter will address:

- Theme 1: BLM Normative Reasoning
- Theme 2: BLM Organizing and Communication Strategies
- Theme 3: The Resonance of BLM Thinking and Strategy

Across the themes, I will use two humanization perspectives, *mattering* and *nonviolence*, to interpret and explain BLM's normative reasoning, communication, and resonance following Floyd's death. I will try to establish which elements of BLM thinking and strategy were effective in advancing normative change, and which triggered the most resistance. On this basis, I will discuss whether, and if so how, BLM succeeded in advancing the re-humanization of Black lives.

Theme 1: BLM Normative Reasoning

Introductory Remarks

We know that racial inequality exists, and that the BLM movement fights for change. However, prior research is lacking when it comes to understanding the normative reasoning that underpins the movement and its efforts to achieve racial equality. In this research, I analyzed taped and written interviews with BLM organizers and activists, opinion piece articles and blog posts written by BLM founders and organizers, and BLM Network and M4BL mission statements and other publicity files, to explain and discuss the normative views and positions that shape the movement's normative reasoning, with a particular focus on those used by BLM after Floyd's death.

My findings align with existing literature that claims BLM concerns itself with expressing claims about culture, gender, LGBTQ, and racial identities, and that the movement uses frames based on identities to describe the problems it faces as well as the solutions it proposes (Harris, 2015, pp. 37-39; Lindsey, 2015; Rickford, 2016, pp. 36-37, as

cited in Tillery, 2019, p. 300). Based on my analysis of the material I will argue that seven normative views and positions are specifically central to BLM normative reasoning: ***Black lives (must) matter***; ***State violence must end***; ***Black lives must have the opportunity to flourish***; ***Inclusivity should be valued***; ***Institutional violence must be met with accountability***; ***White supremacy must be eradicated***; and, *Black liberation means collective liberation*. I further argue that the five highlighted in **bold** were the ones mostly used by BLM after the death of George Floyd. I will present all seven in the following pages, but I will focus more on explaining and interpreting the five used most by BLM after Floyd's death.

BLM Normative Views and Positions

Black Lives (Must) Matter. As expected, one of the main normative views expressed was that *Black lives (must) matter*. This was a clear focal point across all sources, indicating that this normative view is generally central to BLM normative reasoning. The word 'must' is placed in parentheses because this normative view embodies both the view that we *must* work to extend mattering to Black lives, as well as it captures the way BLM itself asserts that Black lives matter. Overall, this normative view was largely expressed through affirmations of Black humanity and value. These affirmations were generally expressed in two significant ways across the analyzed documents. One way includes the affirmation of Black humanity and value in connection to the racial oppression and violence that disproportionately affects Black people. This was mainly about affirming Black lives' value and humanity in response to the lack of mattering extended to them, resulting from continued de-humanization, discrimination, and violence. The Black Lives Matter Network website captures the essence of how this was expressed in several sources:

We are working for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise. (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-a, para. 4)

We affirm our humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression. (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-a, para. 5)

The other way it was expressed across documents was through placing the affirmation of Black humanity and value within the context of care ethics. Various documents highlighted society's moral responsibility in working towards equality and emphasized the

recognition/affirmation of Black lives as a prerequisite for that: “And if we are committed to a world where all lives matter, we are called to support the very movement that inspired and activated so many more. That means supporting and acknowledging Black lives.” (Garza, 2014, para. 13).

Furthermore, *Black lives (must) matter* was strongly expressed by BLM after the death of George Floyd. Seven out of nine documents that I analyzed revealed this normative view to be recurring, indicating the centrality of this view in the movement. In these documents, the affirmation of Black humanity and value were central. Although the documents did not directly state a connection to racial oppression and violence, this connection is implied through the documents essentially being ‘responses’ to the violent killing of George Floyd. A document published by BLM Network to honor Floyd shows how BLM affirmed Black humanity and value in response to the killing:

Every single Black life matters. From the neighborhoods of Sanford to the streets of Minneapolis and everywhere in between. (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-b, para. 8)

No matter who we are, no matter where we’re from, no matter what we do – we matter. (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-b, para. 9)

Our lives have value, and the fight continues until every single human knows: Black Lives Matter. (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-b, para. 11)

In a similar way, several BLM ‘organizers’ called for the recognition of Black lives after Floyd’s death. In an interview, ‘Organizer 1’ did so by demanding to be heard, recognized, and acknowledged:

We wanna be recognized. We want to be heard. And uhm... in saying that, we don’t wanna have to give a[n] explanation to why we wanna matter. You know, you’ve been hearing on the regular “black lives matter, black lives matter,” I heard a comedian say, “we’re not even asking to be equal right now, we’re asking to just matter.” Let’s start out basic, because to be equal is like a huge stretch. So, we’re saying let’s just recognize that we’re here, we exist, we have feelings, and we want the same thing, you know, everyone else wants. (Jacobson, 2020, 01:18-01:56)

State Violence Must End. Another main normative position highlighted in the documents was that *State violence must end*. This was a focal point in all the documents, suggesting it is a central normative position to BLM. In most of the documents, this position

emphasized that violence that disproportionately affects Black people must be ended. The following example by a BLM ‘founder’ gives a detailed and comprehensive account of a range of ways *different forms of (state) violence* particularly affect Black people:

When we say Black Lives Matter, we are talking about the ways in which Black people are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity. It is an acknowledgement Black poverty and genocide is state violence. It is an acknowledgment that 1 million Black people are locked in cages in this country—one half of all people in prisons or jails—is an act of state violence. It is an acknowledgment that Black women continue to bear the burden of a relentless assault on our children and our families and that assault is an act of state violence. Black queer and trans folks bearing a unique burden in a hetero-patriarchal society that disposes of us like garbage and simultaneously fetishizes us and profits off of us is state violence; the fact that 500,000 Black people in the US are undocumented immigrants and relegated to the shadows is state violence; the fact that Black girls are used as negotiating chips during times of conflict and war is state violence; Black folks living with disabilities and different abilities bear the burden of state-sponsored Darwinian experiments that attempt to squeeze us into boxes of normality defined by White supremacy is state violence. And the fact is that the lives of Black people—not ALL people—exist within these conditions is consequence of state violence. (Garza, 2014, para. 11)

Overall, the recurring focus on *state* violence shows a commitment to opposing violence in different forms. As seen, violence is understood beyond conventional understandings of violence in the ‘physical’ form and beyond police violence which the movement is generally known for opposing. The movement opposes not only violence that poses a direct and tangible threat to Black lives (like police violence), but also systems, institutions, practices, and conditions – as well as their consequences – which undermine the mattering of Black lives. Another example, highlighting both police violence as well as other types of violence more widely, directly addresses the view that violence against Black people must end: “We believe that prisons, police and all other institutions that inflict violence on Black people must be abolished...” (M4BL, n.d.-a, para. 2).

Furthermore, this normative position was also used substantially by BLM in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. This normative position was the only one that was a focal point across all of the documents. The way it was expressed in these documents reflected the abovementioned examples, though it focused more narrowly on ending police

violence after Floyd's death. Here, police violence was emphasized across documents as a threat to Black life, both historically and presently. 'Organizer 2' connected today's police violence to a racist history that continues to pose a threat to Black lives:

Modern-day policing institutions have their roots in slave catching, so it's critical to remember that these systems from the beginning were created to hunt, to maim, and to kill black people. The police have long been an uncontrollable force of violence, terrorizing our communities without accountability and with too many resources. That's the foundation of the police for this country in general. (Kirby, 2020, para. 12)

Another example shows 'Organizer 4' urging an end to police violence as it poses a threat to Black lives along with other lives: "We definitely need to talk about police reforms and the different things that can get the entire citizens of [my city] — not just white and black, but everybody — to feel comfortable and safe around police officers." (Kirby, 2020, para. 46). The recurring focus on *police* violence across these sources demonstrates how the conversation regarding state violence, and therefore also the normative position that *State violence must end*, at the time was heavily influenced by Floyd's death as his life was taken by *police*. However, ending state violence in the wider sense was mentioned in some sources, such as by 'Organizer 3': "We're not just talking about attacking police brutality. We're talking about the system in its totality. That's elected officials and other appointed officials who make the policies, laws, and rules that enable the police to do what they do." (Kirby, 2020, para. 35). This shows that BLM remained committed to a 'bigger picture,' although police brutality received noticeably more attention than state violence more widely after Floyd's death by police.

Black Lives Must Have the Opportunity to Flourish. Another central normative position expressed is that *Black lives must have the opportunity to flourish*. This was emphasized in most of the sources and was mainly about the BLM movement's emphasis on, and its work towards, improving the quality of life for Black people in a way that ensures opportunities to live fulfilling lives. One of the founders of BLM Network emphasized the movement's role in creating space for *celebrating* Black life: "We've created space for the celebration and humanization of Black lives." (Garza, 2014, para. 3). Furthermore, media reports from both BLM Network and M4BL emphasized how BLM works toward making changes that create space to *improve* the quality of Black life. The BLM Network report specifically highlighted the improvement for Black life as central to changes pushed by the

movement: “By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives.” (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-a, para. 1). The M4BL media report emphasized the possibility to live fulfilling lives as a central goal to the work carried out by BLM: “In [setting out to win rights, recognition, and resources for Black people], the movement makes it possible for us, and therefore everyone, to live healthy and fruitful lives.” (M4BL, n.d.-b, para. 2).

Moreover, around half of the documents showed that BLM argued this position following the death of George Floyd. This suggests that it was perhaps not the most prioritized normative position to be shared with the public following Floyd’s death, but that BLM nonetheless used it in their messaging to a considerable extent. Those who addressed it were mainly concerned with investments into the Black community to combat alternative forms of violence that limit many Black people from living fulfilling lives. The BLM Network firmly addressed this after Floyd’s death:

We call for radical, sustainable solutions that affirm the prosperity of Black lives.
(Black Lives Matter, 2020a, para. 4)

We demand investment in our communities and the resources to ensure Black people not only survive, but thrive. (Black Lives Matter, 2020a, para. 8)

Addressing the same concern, ‘Organizer 5’ reasoned about the role of BLM in creating changes that ultimately lead to a better quality of life for many Black people in ways that generate opportunities to flourish:

This is also something that I’ve been thinking about: what we’re trying to dismantle, what we’re trying to get rid of, and also what we’re trying to build, right? We’re trying to be these sustainable and thriving communities, where communities have access to the full spectrum of health care without discrimination and judgment... Access to clean water, access to education, all of these things that we know that are human rights and that communities need to thrive. (Kirby, 2020, para. 64)

Inclusivity Should be Valued. Another normative view expressed by BLM is that *Inclusivity should be valued*. This view was strongly emphasized across most of the documents. For the most part, documents addressed this view by promoting the inclusion of, as well as affirming, previously marginalized groups of people within the Black community,

in the movement. The following example captures the essence of how this was done across documents:

Black Lives Matter is a unique contribution that goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes. It goes beyond the narrow nationalism that can be prevalent within some Black communities, which merely call on Black people to love Black, live Black and buy Black, keeping straight cis Black men in the front of the movement while our sisters, queer and trans and disabled folk take up roles in the background or not at all. Black Lives Matter affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, Black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. It centers those that have been marginalized within Black liberation movements. (Garza, 2014, para. 10)

Another example highlights how the movement recognizes its role in centering the experiences of those marginalized groups in its push for change. It signifies that the movement values inclusivity by deliberately acknowledging and focusing on hardships and violence specifically experienced by these marginalized groups: “We are intentional about amplifying the particular experiences of racial, economic, and gender-based state and interpersonal violence that Black women, queer, trans, gender nonconforming, intersex, and disabled people face.” (M4BL, n.d.-c, para. 3).

While the material suggests that the normative view that *Inclusivity should be valued* is central to BLM reasoning, it was one of the least emphasized views by BLM in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. According to the material I analyzed, only one document mentioned inclusivity. This one document focused mainly on inclusivity across financial status, race, and sexuality, rather than inclusivity within the Black community, which is the type of inclusivity referred to in the normative view considered here. Because of this, the documents overall suggest that BLM did not use this normative view much after Floyd’s death, despite the centrality otherwise given to it. Although it could be argued that the lack of focus on this view indicates a lack of importance on inclusivity, a more plausible explanation is that some of the other normative views were more relevant after Floyd’s death and were therefore prioritized over this one.

Institutional Violence Must be Met with Accountability. The normative position *Institutional violence must be met with accountability* was primarily addressed in documents in these two ways: 1) *individuals* who partake in or enable institutional violence must be held

accountable, and 2) *institutions* that are violent must be held accountable. Most documents addressed one of these variations, and oftentimes both. The way accountability was addressed demonstrates that the BLM movement is concerned both with accountability on the individual level, and with accountability that extends beyond the individual level and beyond police brutality, and instead works towards a society that rids itself of discrimination in various institutions. A media report by M4BL emphasized accountability on the individual level and the institutional level by focusing on accountability for police officers as well as entire departments: “We call for not just individual accountability of officers after a murder, but entire police departments.” (M4BL, n.d.-c, para. 8). Another document emphasized accountability of institutions more widely: “We believe that prisons, police and all other institutions that inflict violence on Black people must be abolished and replaced...” (M4BL, n.d.-a, para. 2).

Moreover, this position was expressed by BLM after Floyd’s death, as around half of the documents addressed the need for accountability for both individuals and/or institutions for violence committed against Black people and Black communities. In some documents, this was addressed through frustrations with patterns of lack of accountability, as expressed by ‘Organizer 1’:

I hate to say it, but we've become immune to it, which is not right. We shouldn't be [saying] 'okay that happens.' It should never be that way where a kid is beaten and killed in the street, fathers are killed in the street on blatant TV and its videoed and said 'ah oh well we found a reason, we found a loophole through the system. (Jacobson, 2020, 02:34-02:50)

Other documents emphasized more directly the demand for accountability, both for those involved in Floyd’s murder and for accountability on the institutional level. Most of these documents primarily focused on accountability for *police violence*, such as ‘organizer 2’:

I think what was immediately clear was that we wanted justice for George Floyd — and justice wasn't actually enough, which is why we began the call for folks to know that now is the time to defund the police and invest in the community. (Kirby, 2020, para. 5)

This focus on accountability for police violence specifically, rather than institutional violence more widely, seems to reflect the context of George Floyd dying at the hands of police.

White Supremacy Must be Eradicated. The normative position that *White supremacy must be eradicated* was central across the analyzed documents. For the most part, it was expressed in a way that tied white supremacy to the violence posing a threat to Black lives. The BLM Network website captured the essence of how this was done across documents: “[Our] mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.” (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-a, para 1).

BLM also expressed this normative position in the wake of the death of George Floyd. It was a focal point in six out of nine documents. Generally, white supremacy was addressed as a threat to Black lives, safety, and freedom across these documents. Some documents addressed these as direct threats from white supremacists on the ground, such as ‘Organizer 4’: “A lot of the threats that we’ve been getting, talking about racism you do get that crowd that’s not really for it. White supremacists and people like that.” (Kirby, 2020, para. 47). Others, like ‘Organizer 2’, addressed these threats as a systemic problem: “What we’re really wanting to make clear to the city council and our mayor [Jacob Frey], was that the police are really upholding a strategy of white supremacy that dehumanizes black folk.” (Kirby, 2020, para. 8). Moreover, BLM Network addressed white supremacy as an all-encompassing problem that needs to be stopped: “We don’t deserve to live like this — and we continue to fight until white supremacy no longer permeates every corner of this country — until we can live full lives — freely.” (Black Lives Matter, n.d.-b, para. 6). Altogether, the examples demonstrate that ending white supremacy is a central BLM normative position, which was also reflected in the wake of the death of George Floyd, as BLM considerably used this position at the time.

Black Liberation Means Collective Liberation. Documents expressed that BLM views Black liberation as necessary to collective liberation. This normative view was present in most of the documents and was mainly about the intertwined condition of oppressed groups seeking liberation. The following example captures the essence of how this view was expressed across documents:

When Black people get free, everybody gets free. This is why we call on Black people and our allies to take up the call that Black lives matter. We’re not saying Black lives are more important than other lives, or that other lives are not criminalized and oppressed in various ways. We remain in active solidarity with

all oppressed people who are fighting for their liberation and we know that our destinies are intertwined. (Garza, 2014, para. 12)

This example demonstrates that although BLM focuses on the mattering and quality of Black lives, it also recognizes the suffering of, and need for liberation for, other marginalized groups outside of the Black community who are also subject to unequal mattering.

Although this normative view was otherwise central to BLM normative reasoning, it was only mentioned briefly in one document after Floyd's death. A possible explanation for the *lack* of focus on this view after Floyd's death may be that BLM prioritized expressing normative views specifically related to the liberation of *Black* lives, as opposed to a collective focus, considering the movement at the time was concerned with protesting the police killing of another Black life.

Understanding BLM Normative Reasoning through Perspectives on Re-humanization

Because BLM is a response to the continued de-humanization and discrimination of Black lives, it is reasonable to understand BLM's normative reasoning in light of the movement's opposition to violence. In the following pages, I will use re-humanization perspectives on *mattering* and *nonviolence* to explain the normative reasoning used by BLM after Floyd's death as opposition to violence that undermines Black mattering.

Mattering – What Does Violence Destroy? In order to understand BLM's normative reasoning, we must understand the violence that the movement opposes. However, to understand the violence that BLM opposes, what it destroys, and why we should care, it is helpful to first situate the violent practices, systems, structures, and institutions in light of the conditions of life that they destroy. This means understanding the conditions of "life and livability," as well as their relative difference (Butler, 2020, Introduction, para. 21). It means understanding the difference between a life that is considered being *alive* and one that is *living*, or that *matters*. As such, the movement's interpretations of what it means to matter form the foundation for the movement's view on what constitutes violence. In other words, it is what forms the basis for the movement to oppose violence that undermines Black mattering. Therefore, it is helpful first to understand the different ways *mattering* is interpreted by BLM.

As indicated in Chapter 3, Fanon (1956) interpreted mattering as the basic recognition of a human life's value and human dignity (as cited in Nayar, 2011, p.22). Similarly, as suggested by the normative views and positions analyzed in this study, BLM partly understands mattering as the acknowledgment of Black lives and the assertion of Black humanity and value. This interpretation was most apparent in the normative view that *Black lives (must) matter*, where the mattering of Black lives was clearly expressed as affirmations of Black humanity and value. With that being said, it was also indirectly expressed in other normative views. For instance, the normative position *State violence must end* embodied this interpretation of mattering; by confronting forms of violence that undermine the basic recognition of Black humanity and value (such as police violence), BLM suggests that mattering must include acknowledgment of Black lives' value and human dignity by calling for an end to the violence that undermines those very aspects of mattering. This shows that at the basic level, BLM considers a life that matters to be a life that is recognized as having value and human dignity. Further, BLM's interpretation of mattering seems to mirror Fanon's (1956) belief that Black lives must be recognized as valuable lives 'in their own right,' rather than being evaluated by other perspectives, specifically the European/white perspective (as cited in Nayar, 2011, p. 22). By exclusively focusing on the mattering of *Black lives*, and by asserting that '*Black lives matter*,' rather than asserting that '*All lives matter*' or that '*Black lives matter, too*' – both of which have been presented as alternative phrases for the movement (Lopez, 2016) – BLM suggests that Black lives must be recognized as valuable 'in their own right.' This was illuminated in the material by 'organizer 1' who stated: "We wanna be recognized. We want to be heard. And uhm... in saying that, we don't wanna have to give a explanation to why we wanna matter" (Jacobson, 2020, 01:18-01:32). By saying that no explanation should be needed for wanting to matter, this organizer indicates that the *inherent* mattering of Black lives as valuable lives 'in their own right', without having to be explained or justified, is important to the way BLM interprets mattering.

Furthermore, as indicated in Chapter 3, Butler (2020) interpreted mattering in terms of the '*grievability*' of lives. On the one hand, grievability is concerned with the value placed on lives which determines the extent to which a life is considered grievable once lost. On the other hand, the grievability of lives has to do with the extent to which a life is considered "worthy of living, being lived, and deserving to be lived" (Terry & Butler, 2020, para. 22) and suggests that grievable lives are lives "for which provisions for flourishing should be available" (Butler, 2020, Violence and Nonviolence, para. 14). This latter part of Butler's

interpretation is particularly relevant to understand BLM normative views and positions, as BLM specifically emphasizes the opportunity to flourish as a central part of the mattering of Black lives. This was particularly evident in the normative view that *Black lives must have the opportunity to flourish*, as seen in a focus across documents on the ‘healthiness and fruitfulness,’ ‘joy,’ and ‘celebration’ of Black lives. Through this normative view, the movement encouraged investments into the Black community, and ‘radical, sustainable’ solutions that help Black communities thrive. This suggests that BLM is concerned not only with basic dignity and recognition of the inherent value of Black lives but is also concerned with the improvement of the quality of Black life. In that way, BLM challenges ideas about what it means to matter by expanding the conversation of mattering to *also* include equal opportunities to live fruitful lives. This supports existing literature that claims BLM reframes for society what it means to matter as a human life (Perhamus & Joldersma, 2016, p. 58).

Understanding these distinctions in BLM’s interpretations of mattering is helpful to understand the movement’s opposition to various forms of violence that undermine Black mattering. For instance, BLM’s interpretation that Black lives matter ‘in their own right,’ and that they must be recognized as having value and dignity helps explain why the movement opposes violence, such as systems, practices, behaviors, and laws that threaten or undermine the basic claim to value and human dignity for Black people (such as police violence that directly threatens Black life and considers it without value). In a similar way, BLM’s interpretation that mattering *also* emphasizes the quality of Black life and the opportunity to flourish helps explain why the movement opposes more subtle forms of violence. This can include discrimination in health care, lack of access to clean drinking water, and lack of investments into Black communities (among others) – all of which undermine Black mattering by hindering opportunities to flourish as well as potentially limit the quality of life for Black people. Overall, these interpretations of mattering form the foundation for BLM’s view on what constitutes violence and what that violence destroys.

Nonviolence – Interpreting and Opposing Violence. As explained in Chapter 3, Judith Butler’s perspective of nonviolence states that because violence is always interpreted (Butler, 2020, Introduction, para. 16), *nonviolence* requires opposition to various types of violence that distinguish between lives that matter and lives that do not (Butler, 2020, Violence and Nonviolence, para. 18). Butler’s argument rests on the interpretation that violence is being done through unequally extended mattering. As such, the refusal to acknowledge all lives as valuable/grievable means that violence is being done to those lives

that are considered not to matter (Trecka, 2020). *Nonviolence*, then, opposes this violence. The documents analyzed for this study capture how BLM normative views and positions embodied this type of nonviolence after Floyd's death by opposing alternative forms of violence that undermine Black lives' mattering. This was particularly evident through the normative views and positions *State violence must end*, *White supremacy must be eradicated*, and *Institutional violence must be met with accountability*.

The normative position *State violence must end* embodied nonviolence by reflecting shared views across BLM regarding opposition to state violence. At the very base of this normative position lies the interpretation that the state can be, and is, violent in a way that discriminates against Black lives. After Floyd's death, BLM predominantly expressed views focused on ending police violence as a form of state violence. The analyzed documents captured the way BLM opposed police violence that historically and presently threatens Black lives and disproportionately targets them in a way that suggests a lack of mattering extended to them. Although less focus was given to state violence more widely, one document specifically referenced how BLM opposes not only police violence but "the system in its totality," referring to the elected and appointed officials responsible for making the rules, laws, and policies that enable violence against Black people (Kirby, 2020, para. 35). In this way, BLM embodied nonviolence both through its opposition to police violence and the 'system' more widely.

Further, the analyzed material suggests that BLM expressed the normative position that *White supremacy must be eradicated*, largely to oppose white supremacy because it works as a substructure that supports violence that poses a threat to Black lives. In the analyzed documents, white supremacy was primarily addressed after Floyd's death as a threat to Black lives, safety, and freedom. Whereas some addressed it as direct threats from personified white supremacists on the ground, others addressed it as a systemic problem that de-humanizes Black people or poses a threat to Black people's chances to live free lives. By addressing white supremacy in these ways, the movement seemed to undertake a more significant societal change that deals with eradicating the very scaffolding that supports state violence, systemic racism, and racial inequality – all of which undermine Black mattering and perpetuate a lack of mattering extended to them. In that way, the movement embodied nonviolence by confronting the systemized idea (white supremacy) that distinguishes between lives that matter and lives that do not, which leads to racism and the perpetuation of violence against Black people.

Moreover, the way BLM expressed the normative position *Institutional violence must be met with accountability* after Floyd's death also captures the way BLM opposed violence that discriminates against Black lives. On the one hand, the findings suggest that through this normative position, BLM opposed institutional violence by calling for accountability of those individuals who partake in or enable it, as well as calling for the accountability of violent institutions themselves. In that way, the movement maintained the existence of violence that results from a lack of mattering extended to Black lives and opposed this violence by calling for accountability for it. On the other hand, by calling for accountability for institutional violence, it can be understood that BLM opposed the violence that is being done when there is a lack of accountability for violence that discriminates against Black people. To put it differently, the *lack of accountability* for inflicting violence on Black lives is in and of itself a form of violence that undermines Black mattering by suggesting that Black lives are less/not worthy of justice. In that way, BLM opposed this violence by calling for more accountability.

Overall, understanding these normative views and positions through the notion of nonviolence helps to illuminate how BLM emphasized the *lack* of mattering extended to Black lives and opposed the violence that it leads to. BLM's opposition to this violence – combined with the movement's assertions of the value of Black lives, its calls for the acknowledgment of this value, and its pleas to improve the quality of life for Black people – demonstrate how the movement insisted that an extension of mattering to include Black lives was necessary for racial equality and equal mattering. In that way, BLM's normative reasoning reflected what Harris (2015) argued to be a broader claim for “black humanity” as a catalyst for political action (p. 12).

Summary

In Theme 1, I have documented, interpreted, and explained BLM normative reasoning, with a particular focus on the views and positions used by BLM in the aftermath of Floyd's death. I have shown that these emphasized the lack of mattering extended to Black lives and opposed the violence that it leads to. As such, they promoted that an extension of mattering to include Black lives is necessary for re-humanization and racial equality. With the help of re-humanization theory on *mattering*, I explored the movement's interpretations of what it means to matter, based on its normative reasoning, to better understand the violence that the movement opposed and what it destroys. Then, with the help of re-humanization theory on *nonviolence*, I explored how the different normative views and

positions are essentially oppositions to violence that distinguishes between lives that matter and lives that do not (like the violence that undermines Black mattering). In Theme 2, I will explore how BLM communicated this normative reasoning after Floyd's death.

Theme 2: BLM Organizing and Communication Strategies

Introductory Remarks

Theme 1 showed that after Floyd's death, BLM's normative reasoning promoted the message that an extension of mattering is necessary to re-humanize Black lives, end the violence that discriminates against Black people, and work towards racial equality. In theme 2, I will show that BLM communicates this message to reach mass media primarily in three ways: *social media*, *direct action*, and *popular culture*. Through these three, BLM communicated the demand to re-humanize Black lives after Floyd's death. With the help of Butler's (2020) theory on nonviolence, I will show that BLM essentially concretized its normative reasoning as it 1) embraced rage resulting from unequal mattering and violence that distinguishes between lives that matter and lives that do not, and 2) turned this rage into effective, nonviolent action through physically asserting claims to mattering.

To explain BLM's organizing and communication, I analyzed social media posts, interview-based articles with BLM organizers and activists, researcher journals, online newspaper articles, and online research reports. Because it is helpful to understand the context of how BLM organizes in order to understand how BLM communicates, I will first explain *BLM organizing*. Then, I will present my analysis on *BLM communication*, with a particular focus on how BLM communicated its demands after the death of George Floyd.

BLM Organizing

Overall, the documents that were analyzed suggest that BLM is *decentralized* and *unstructured*. Organizing varies across the movement because it consists of a wide array of organizations and people – both official and unofficial. While there are certain organizations that are officially registered and represent the movement on a larger scale, such as BLM Network and M4BL, there are also unofficial chapters that support and organize as part of the broader BLM movement (Maqbool, 2020). A lead communications strategist at the BLM

Network explains: “Because we are decentralized, chapters are autonomous and develop their own strategies. They know what’s best for their communities” (Bhambani, 2016, para. 16). This suggests that the movement is decentralized and unstructured also amongst the official organizations of the movement. What this means is that the movement largely bases itself on local organizing and grassroots power to advocate for re-humanizing Black lives.

Despite being decentralized and unstructured, the movement is *coordinated*. A BLM organizer with a group called Blackbird that is part of the broader BLM movement explains that, “[i]t’s decentralized but coordinated, there are no top-down mandates” (Stephen, 2015, para. 11). This is corroborated by a BLM Network founder who explains, “...different chapters might take on different issues, but there is this throughline of valuing black life and understanding that we are not a monolith but being radically inclusive in terms of chapter makeup.” (Chotiner, 2020, para. 20). These examples highlight that there is coordination between organizations and people within BLM, although the movement lacks structure and central leadership. Compared to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which was largely guided by remarkable leadership (i.e., Martin Luther King) as well as structured organization (Clayton, 2018, p. 452), local organizing and grassroots power in BLM are guided by coordination and common understandings – such as valuing Black life and being inclusive – throughout the movement. This is suggestive of the vital role BLM normative reasoning plays in holding the movement together. That is, because there are no central leadership roles or structured organizing that maneuvers the movement, it relies even more heavily on its normative reasoning as a central guiding principle for collective action across local organizing and grassroots power. This is indicative of a different form of organizing, where the movement organizes around sharing the normative reasoning, the thinking, and the message that holds the movement together.

Moreover, the focus on local organizing and grassroots power reflects a commitment to intersectional leadership in BLM organizing. The movement rejects “hierarchical style[s] of leadership, with the straight black male at the top giving orders” (Reynolds, 2015, para. 16; as cited in Clayton, 2018, p. 459). According to the documents that were analyzed, the hierarchical and male-dominated structure is instead supplemented with a commitment to bring queer and trans people, the undocumented, the incarcerated, people with disabilities, and other Black people belonging to typically marginalized groups, to the front of the movement (Reynolds, 2015, para. 16, as cited in Clayton, 2018, p. 459; Black Lives Matter, n.d.-a.; M4BL, n.d.-b). As such, the movement insists on intersectional solidarity and

encourages leadership across typically marginalized groups. This marks a change from traditional styles of leadership and indicates a renewed style of organizing that is more inclusive. By being more inclusive, the movement expands “the range of people for whom it is essential to fight” (Ekotto, 2021, p. 256) and commits to equal mattering by opening up for typically marginalized voices to be heard in order to advocate for the re-humanization of *all* Black lives.

Furthermore, data and previous research show that online tools like social media play a big role in how BLM organizes to advocate for re-humanizing Black lives. Social media is said to have displaced "the top-down approach of old guard civil rights organizations" (Harris, 2015, para. 11, as cited in Clayton, 2018, p. 459) and enabled the BLM movement to mobilize on a grassroots level. Previous research shows that BLM organizers have made social media, particularly Twitter (and hashtags like #BlackLivesMatter), a central part of grassroots activism, and resultingly the movement's growth has been directly linked with online conversations over social media (Anderson & Hitlin, 2016). Stephen (2015) articulates this newer phenomenon well:

If you're a civil rights activist in 2015 and you need to get some news out, your first move is to choose a platform. If you want to post a video of a protest or a violent arrest, you put it up on Vine, Instagram, or Periscope. If you want to avoid trolls or snooping authorities and you need to coordinate some kind of action, you might chat privately with other activists on GroupMe. If you want to rapidly mobilize a bunch of people you know and you don't want the whole world clued in, you use SMS or WhatsApp. If you want to mobilize a ton of people you might not know and you do want the whole world to talk about it: Twitter. (Stephen 2015, para. 8)

This shows how social media plays a significant role in enabling BLM organizers, activists, and supporters to engage in grassroots organizing in their communities (Clayton, 2018). This way of organizing to advocate for the re-humanization of Black lives has never before been possible to the extent it is today. This means that the BLM movement can organize in ways it has not been able to organize before and reach out to an abundance of people that have traditionally been difficult to reach. As suggested by prior research on the role of social media in BLM, social media posts by BLM activists have been essential in sparking national (U.S.) conversations about police killings of unarmed Black citizens – without relying on mass media reporting (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016). This means that BLM social

media organizing has the potential to stimulate conversation and mobilize support in ways that would be difficult, or even impossible, without the help of online tools.

BLM Communication

Because BLM is decentralized and consists of various organizations and people – both official and unofficial – there is great variety in *how* the movement communicates its demands. Based on my analysis of the material, I propose that BLM communicates its demands primarily through three methods of communication: *social media*; *direct actions*; and *popular culture*. In the following pages, I will present these three methods of communication, as well as how BLM used them following Floyd’s death. Some findings fit into more than one of these methods (for example, social media use can also be interpreted as a direct action). Despite these overlaps, I discuss examples in the category that I consider most fitting.

Social Media. Social media has become a space commonly used by BLM activists, organizers, and supporters to communicate the demand for re-humanizing Black lives. Although BLM operates across different social media platforms, Twitter stands out as one of the most used platforms by the movement. A research report by Pew Research Center specifically emphasizes the role of Twitter in propelling conversations about race and racial inequality (Anderson & Hitlin, 2016). This is specifically due to the role of ‘Black Twitter,’ a term used to describe a “network of culturally connected communicators using the platform [Twitter] to draw attention to issues of concern to Black communities” (Reid, 2018, para. 8), and its role in bringing national attention to issues regarding race (Anderson & Hitlin, 2016). The report shows that BLM activists have used hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter to inform the public about their views and demands, and to express solidarity with victims of police violence (Anderson & Hitlin, 2016). Overall, the reports’ results tell how social media, particularly Twitter, has become a central part of BLM communication and an important tool used to highlight issues of concern to the movement.

BLM used social media to communicate the demand to re-humanize Black lives following the death of George Floyd. The analyzed documents specifically capture how BLM used social media to spread informative and expressive content to communicate the movement’s normative views and positions. The following example from May 27, two days after Floyd’s death, shows how M4BL used social media (Facebook) to inform about the

racist legacy that has underpinned the continued violence against Black people (the example is an excerpt from the original post):

George, Ahmaud, and Breonna's deaths are the result of centuries-old anti-Black attitudes flanked by prejudicial legislation, and a wild wild west approach to law and order meant to intimidate Black people and control our behavior. Many elements, like racist stereotypes, a guilty-until-proven-innocent approach to vigilantism and law enforcement for Black people, Stand Your Ground laws and antiquated policing systems with roots in slave catching coalesce to create a network of deadly terror for Black communities nationwide. This network, coupled with a criminal-legal system with a history of antipathy toward us, wreaks havoc on Black bodies like George, Ahmaud, and Breonna. (M4BL, 2020, para. 1)

Later in the same post, M4BL expressed a demand for change:

With all the uncertainty we're swimming in, can't we agree to leave this network of deadly terror in the old world? Our vision is one in which all Black people not only matter but are thriving. We urge you to act now for Black lives. (M4BL, 2020, para. 4)

By addressing the deaths of Black people at the hands of police as a result of 'a network of deadly terror', M4BL contextualizes the killings of Black people by police within a system of violence that disproportionately affects Black communities – essentially informing about the many ways racism continues to violate the Black community. Furthermore, by addressing the desire to leave this violence behind, driven by a vision of equal mattering and quality of life for Black people, M4BL expresses a demand for change. Similarly, the following tweets from BLM Los Angeles (@BLMLA) and BLM Network (@Blklivesmatter) both inform of and express the same sentiments:

@BLMLA:

The murder of #GeorgeFloyd in Minneapolis very clearly illustrates the lineage of police from slave-catching. It was all about the total power of police and complete powerlessness of Brother George and all who begged for, fought for, prayed for his life. #BlackLivesMatter (BLMLA, 2020)

@Blklivesmatter:

Too much trauma.

Too much mourning.

Too many hashtags.

Too often healing these wounds over and over again.

STOP KILLING US.

We stand with you Minneapolis, our hearts are broken too.

#blacklivesmatter

#Minneapolis (Black Lives Matter, 2020b)

While the tweet from @BLMLA focuses on placing the murder of George Floyd within the realm of racist police violence that has its roots in history, the tweet from @Blklivesmatter is quite expressive as it reveals immense frustration with the continued police killings of Black lives. Both tweets highlight how BLM used the hashtag *#Blacklivesmatter* to assert the mattering of Black lives.

Hashtags were used substantially after Floyd's death. Research shows that *#Blacklivesmatter* was used roughly 47.8 million times on Twitter between May 26 and June 7 (Anderson, Barthel, Perrin & Vogels, 2020). This does not mean that the hashtag was primarily or overwhelmingly used to assert the mattering of Black lives or show solidarity for the movement, as the research does not break down *how* the hashtag was used. However, it does show that the hashtag was used increasingly after Floyd's death, and a portion of this likely was to assert Black mattering and show solidarity with victims of police violence, seeing how prior research has shown this connection to be true in the past (Anderson & Hitlin, 2016). Moreover, other hashtags were specifically used in support of BLM. The hashtag *#Blackouttuesday* was shared on Instagram more than 28 million times by Instagram users in solidarity with the BLM movement after Floyd's death (Monckton, 2020). Initially, this hashtag was born out of efforts by the music industry to stand in solidarity with the BLM movement following Floyd's death. Under the hashtag *#TheShowMustBePaused*, the music industry planned to disrupt the workweek by pausing work on *Tuesday*, June 2, 2020, to protest police violence against Black lives, as the multi-million dollar music industry greatly profits from Black art (Aswad, 2020). However, this quickly spread across social media as the hashtag *#Blackouttuesday*, where Instagram users posted 'pictures' of plain, black squares in solidarity with the BLM movement more widely (Monckton, 2020). In this way,

the hashtag #Blackouttuesday, accompanied with plain, black squares, became one way BLM used social media to communicate the demand to re-humanize Black lives following Floyd's death.

Furthermore, BLM also used social media in a more 'unconventional' manner after Floyd's death. Voluntary, famous, non-Black celebrities invited Black activists, founders, and organizers to 'take over' their Instagram accounts to amplify Black voices. In this way, BLM communicated the demand for re-humanizing Black lives by reaching out to large follower bases to educate them about racial issues (Stewart & Ghaffary, 2020). Examples of this include how BLM activists, founders, and organizers like Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, Ibram X. Kendi, Stacey Abrams, Zerlina Maxwell, and Kimberlé Crenshaw, to name a few, were invited by famous persons like Selena Gomez, Hillary Clinton, Ellen DeGeneres, Kourtney Kardashian, and Ashley Graham, among others, to use their Instagram accounts to reach their large follower bases (Stewart & Ghaffary, 2020). In this way, BLM was able to share normative messages, knowledge, perspectives, and suggestions for solutions to racial injustice, all rooted in Black voices and experiences, with millions of people they would typically not reach. This innovative strategy allowed celebrities to participate in the struggle for racial equality proactively and for BLM to engage with the followers of celebrities who have the power to influence public perception about the movement and its demands. In this way, BLM reached a wider audience outside of the Black community, essentially broadening the movement's reach when communicating for change.

Direct Action. BLM commonly uses direct action to advocate for a re-humanization of Black lives. Direct action is a way to achieve goals or desired changes through one's own activity rather than through the actions of others (Sparrow, 1997; as cited in Graeber, 2008, p. 202). Rather than seeking change through the existing electoral system by putting pressures on other persons and existing institutions to make changes, direct action is a way to use one's own power to make changes through actions like occupations, lockouts, rolling strikes, sabotage, pickets, and demonstrations among others (Graeber, 2008, p. 202; OAITH, n.d.). It may also include *civil disobedience*, such as sit-ins, road blockages, spray painting, or other illegal actions (OAITH, n.d.), and *iconoclastic* direct actions that work as agents of social change through the destruction of icons, images, or monuments (Platt, 2020).

Rickford (2016), a specialist in transnational social movements, argues that "most Black Lives Matter adherents recognize the inherent shortcomings of appeals to politicians,

the courts, and other ‘acceptable’ channels of redress, and have wholeheartedly embraced the arena of the street” (p. 36). This means that the BLM movement at large prefers to communicate its demands and views through direct actions such as the occupation of campaign events, retail stores, sporting events, municipal buildings, and police stations, as well as through organizing protests, marches, rallies, and staged die-ins in multiple places and cities (Rickford, 2016, p. 36). Typical examples of these direct actions by BLM were mostly evident in the news articles analyzed for this study. The articles highlight how direct action tends to be used by the movement to confront violence (particularly police violence) and demand mattering of Black lives. Typical examples include rallies, like those that took place in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, where protesters rallied the streets after the police shooting of Michael Brown and expressed demands for accountability of the officer who shot him, as well as demands for the mattering of Black lives (Gambino, 2014). Other examples include civil disobedience like staged die-ins, such as on Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. in 2015 when BLM protesters lay motionless on the floor to dramatize killings of Black people by police and bring attention to police violence (Laughland, 2015). In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 2016, protesters blocked the road on Airline Highway to protest police violence following the police shooting of Alton Sterling (“Baton Rouge killing”, 2016). These examples are testament to how BLM campaigns in the streets to bring attention to discrimination, and to re-humanize Black lives.

BLM also has a history of communicating for the re-humanization of Black lives through iconoclastic direct actions. BLM activists used this type of direct action when spray painting “Black Lives Matter” and “Tear it down” on a confederate monument in Durham, North Carolina, in 2015. The monument was put up to honor soldiers who fought for the South in the civil war, but BLM wanted it taken down because it essentially celebrated soldiers who fought to keep slavery intact (“Confederate memorial”, 2015; Bridges & Gallagher 2015). These are examples of how BLM has used direct action to confront the symbolic violence represented by statues/monuments that celebrate people whose legacies have ties to racism.

BLM relied heavily on direct action to communicate its demands after Floyd’s death. A report by ACLED reveals the magnitude of direct action used by the BLM at the time: over 7,750 demonstrations linked to the BLM movement were registered in the U.S. across all 50 states, in more than 2,440 locations between May 26 and August 22, 2020 (ACLED, 2020). These demonstrations also spread globally, with demonstrations being reported in 74

countries worldwide (ACLEd, 2020). Direct actions included protests, marches, rallies, occupations of roads, speech acts, staged die-ins, and the destruction, removal, and replacement of confederate monuments (NBC New York, 2020, June 4; Martinez & Learish, 2020; Dakss, McNamara, Baldwin & Carissimo, 2020; Buchanan, Bui & Patel, 2020; Safi, 2020; “How statues are falling”, 2020; Platt, 2020).

Typical examples of each of these direct actions and how they were used to protest Floyd’s death include: tens of thousands of people gathered to march through New York City in support of ending police violence and calling for racial justice after Floyd’s death (NBC New York, 2020, June 4); a peaceful rally held outside the Boston State House on May 31, 2020 (Martinez & Learish, 2020, para. 33); protesters laying on the ground with their hands behind their backs in a staged die-in, in New York on June 1, 2020 (para. 29); demonstrators shutting down the northbound 110 freeway in downtown Los Angeles on May 29, 2020 (para. 41); a candlelit vigil being held in Iran in support of the BLM movement over the death of George Floyd (Hagemann & Jeffery, 2020, p. 21); peaceful protesters filling up Dam Square in Amsterdam on June 1, 2020 (para. 2); thousands demonstrating in London by taking a knee and marching along the Thames (para. 12); and, protesters toppling a statue former slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol and replacing it with a sculpture of BLM protester Jen Reid (Bland, 2020; “How statues are falling”, 2020). Additionally, speech acts played a central role across these direct actions, as protesters regularly called for the mattering of Black lives by chanting phrases like “Black lives matter,” “Justice for George Floyd,” “Say his name,” and “No justice, no peace,” amongst others (Hagemann & Jeffery, 2020; NBC New York, 2020, June 4).

Despite some media reports framing BLM direct actions at the time as violent (Lahut, 2020; Radnitz & Hsiao, 2020), research shows that they were overwhelmingly peaceful (ACLEd, 2020; Chenoweth & Pressman, 2020). This is not to say that *all* BLM demonstrations were peaceful, as there were indeed those that turned confrontational. However, some of these were reported to have been started by infiltrators or ‘agents provocateurs’ who came to provoke racial unrest (ACLEd, 2020; Chenoweth & Pressman, 2020). A widely known example of this happened when ‘Umbrella man,’ a man carrying an umbrella to a demonstration in Minneapolis on May 27, 2020, was spotted inciting violence and promoting vandalism as he was seen smashing the windows of an auto parts store with a sledgehammer and later spray painting a message on the doors to promote looting. The man was later linked to a white supremacist group and thus believed to have shown up to incite

violence and racial unrest (ACLED, 2020; MacFarquhar, 2020). Another example is the indictment of a supporter of the far-right “boogaloo” movement, who allegedly murdered a law enforcement officer at a BLM demonstration in California (Chenoweth & Pressman, 2020). These events are significant because they reveal a more complex image of the violence/confrontations that took place at some of the demonstrations after Floyd’s death. With that being said, in a few reported cases, BLM protesters themselves instigated confrontational behavior, vandalism, and looting. However, this was such a small part of the demonstrations, which implies that the movement was primarily peaceful (Chenoweth & Pressman, 2020). Also, in my view, these cases do not appear representative of the movement as a whole. Even when there *are* instances of violent/confrontational resistance coming from BLM, they should neither be portrayed nor understood as representing the entire movement. To conclude, my analysis of the material suggests that BLM used various direct actions following Floyd’s death and that these were overwhelmingly peaceful.

Popular Culture. BLM commonly uses popular culture to communicate its demands. The analyzed documents emphasize how BLM uses popular culture to communicate the movement's concerns by sending messages about racial issues and inequality through expressive and informative outlets like music, movies, documentaries, art, television, literature, sports, and influential people such as celebrities. A typical example is how BLM protesters have used music to send messages about racial inequality, such as playing Michael Jackson's "They Don't Care About Us" at protests (Anderson, 2014). In this way, music has been used to intensify the movement’s message. Another example is when famous actor Jesse Williams promoted the BLM movement in the documentary “Stay Woke: The Black Lives Matter Movement” and urged people to be aware of the de-humanization of Black lives in the U.S. (Workneh, 2016). Moreover, athlete Colin Kaepernick famously kneeled during the U.S. national anthem before a football game to draw attention to racial inequality and oppression of Black people in the U.S. and promote the BLM movement (Reid, 2017). These examples reflect different ways in which BLM has used popular culture to communicate the demand for a re-humanization of Black lives.

Moreover, BLM used popular culture following Floyd’s death. The material I analyzed specifically highlighted how athlete activism played a role in advocating for the re-humanization of Black lives. For instance, NBA players called for racial justice by kneeling together during the U.S. national anthem while wearing “Black Lives Matter” shirts before a basketball game on July 30, 2020 (Martin & Lev, 2020). Another example was when several

NASCAR drivers took a stance to support the BLM movement after Floyd's death during a race on June 10, 2020 (Rabin-Havt, 2020). Bubba Wallace, who at the time was the only active driver in NASCAR's top series who was Black, wore a "Black Lives Matter" shirt and showed up with his car painted with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Several other prominent drivers had created a video supporting the movement and pledged to learn more about racial issues and advocate for change. These efforts were also supported by the president of NASCAR, Steve Phelps, whom himself held a speech in support of the movement, urging change (Rabin-Havt, 2020). These are typical examples that show how athletes used their platforms after Floyd's death to support BLM, bring attention to racial inequality, and demand equal mattering. In a different fashion, BLM communicated the demand to re-humanize Black lives through art. For instance, BLM protester and artist Dustin Klein used light design to convert a confederate memorial of Robert E. Lee into a public screen showing victims of police violence and a range of Black thinkers who are/were famous throughout history (Shaw, 2020). In doing so, he used art to convey the movement's message. Overall, these examples show how the movement used different aspects of popular culture to communicate its demands after Floyd's death.

Understanding BLM Communication as Nonviolence

So far, I have shown that BLM communicated through social media, direct action, and popular culture after George Floyd's death. Using a re-humanization perspective on nonviolence, I will show how BLM, through these methods of communication, concretized its normative reasoning.

Embracing Rage. As explained in Chapter 3, Butler's notion of nonviolence takes an aggressive approach, where the idea is that social movements should *embrace the rage* that results from injustice, rather than promote equanimity, and instead use rage effectively by turning it into effective nonviolent action (Butler, 2020; Terry & Butler, 2020). To do so, feelings of rage must be accepted throughout movements as a valid reaction to injustices and unequal grievability (Terry & Butler, 2020). My analysis of BLM communication indicates that BLM was consistent with this approach in the aftermath of Floyd's death.

Instead of attempting to tame the rage felt by many after Floyd's unjust killing, and instead of promoting equanimity or a loving approach, feelings of rage were embraced by BLM and cultivated into nonviolent action through the movement's three methods of

communication. As previously indicated, BLM used social media to communicate the demand for re-humanizing Black lives, partly through condemning the killing of George Floyd, denouncing violence that targets Black people, and calling for the mattering of Black lives. This was done in various ways that expressed frustration, sadness, and discontent with police violence and other forms of violence that disproportionately affect Black people. In several instances, BLM tied this violence to strenuous efforts made by the state to de-humanize and terrorize Black people. These ways of denouncing violence that targets Black lives mirrored feelings of frustration and rage, demonstrating that social media was used both as an outlet for rage caused by racial injustice and a motivating force behind the movement's call for change. Further, through direct actions, groups of people came together to express their anger and rage in a variety of ways. Using these direct actions to collectively express frustration, anger, and rage over racial injustices, violence targeting Black people, and the unequal distribution of mattering, the movement embraced feelings of rage and re-routed those into nonviolent action. This was also the case with popular culture. For instance, Bubba Wallace and other prominent NASCAR drivers turned rage into nonviolent action by directing their anger with racial injustices into peaceful demands for change at a NASCAR event following Floyd's death (Rabin-Havt, 2020). At this same event, NASCAR president Steve Phelps urged change as well and touched upon the anger felt by many as a result of racial inequality:

[The United States] is in pain, and people are justifiably angry, demanding to be heard. The black community and all people of color have suffered in our country. And it has taken far too long for people to hear their demands for change. Our sport must do better. Our country must do better. (Rabin-Havt, 2020, para. 7)

In joining the BLM movement to work towards change, and in acknowledging the 'justifiable anger' felt by many, it is evident that rage was not only used to fuel nonviolent protest at the event, but also understood more widely as a valid reaction to racial inequality and embraced as a part of the struggle towards change.

This embracing of rage indicates that rage was not viewed by BLM "as an uncontrollable impulse that needs to come out in unmediated forms" (Terry & Butler, 2020, para. 14), or that needed to be tamed or replaced with equanimity, but instead embraced as a central force in resisting violence and demanding racial justice. This observation supports the literature mentioned in Chapter 2 that claims the current BLM movement rejects the 'respectability-politics' model that thrived in the civil rights movement (Harris, 2015, pp. 37–

39; Rickford, 2016, pp. 36–37; Taylor, 2016, pp. 153–191, as cited in Tillery, 2019, p. 300). The way BLM embraced and publicly expressed feelings of anger, frustration, and sadness suggests a movement that distances itself from concerns of the type of public image emphasized in the ‘respectability-politics’ model (see Literature review). Instead, BLM seemed to value a more aggressive approach in the struggle for change.

Physically Asserting Claims to Mattering. Butler (2020) states that it is *what is done with rage* that has the potential to form an effective nonviolence in the face of oppression. She argues that rage can be turned into effective nonviolent action through *physically asserting claims to mattering*: “[n]onviolence is less a failure of action than a physical assertion of the claims of life, a living assertion, a claim that is made by speech, gesture, and action, through networks, encampments, and assemblies; all of these seek to recast the living as worthy of value, as potentially grievable, precisely under conditions in which they are either erased from view or cast into irreversible forms of precarity” (Butler, 2020, Introduction, para. 26). In other words, nonviolence implies action as physical assertions of claiming mattering, through engagement in a range of nonviolent acts to oppose the violence that is being done when mattering is unequally extended resulting in some lives being considered less/not valuable.

The killing of George Floyd is an excellent example of a situation where Black mattering was undermined and where the BLM movement responded to the violence by physically asserting claims to mattering. The movement’s communication through social media, popular culture, and direct action represents different ways in which BLM did so. For instance, the analyzed material showed that BLM used the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter to assert Black lives’ mattering and denounce the violence that undermines it, such as the killing of George Floyd by police. In and of itself, the hashtag operates as a physical assertion of mattering as a written action that asserts the mattering of Black lives very clearly. However, the hashtag also operates as a network/assembly through which people ‘get together’ online to bring attention to racial issues and show solidarity with victims of police violence (Anderson & Hitlin, 2016) and, in that way, claim the mattering of Black lives. Another similar example is how the movement assembled under the hashtag #Blackouttuesday. With more than 28 million people posting black squares alongside #Blackouttuesday on Instagram to stand in solidarity with BLM and oppose violence that targets Black people (Monckton, 2020), this became a way that the movement assembled to claim the mattering of Black lives on social media.

Furthermore, physical claims to mattering were made through popular culture by athletes and artists. For instance, when NBA basketball stars knelt during the national anthem while wearing “Black lives matter” shirts (Martin & Lev, 2020), they physically asserted mattering through assembling and participating in a gesture meant to bring attention to racial injustice and confront violence and unequal mattering. Moreover, artist and BLM protester Dustin Klein’s use of a light show to ‘replace’ the statue of Robert E. Lee with former victims of police violence and Black thinkers (Shaw, 2020) is an excellent example of how BLM used art to physically claim mattering. In one way, the light show *de-faced* Robert E. Lee, a figure representing symbolic violence as a former slave owner. By de-facing the statue, the artist physically asserted claims to mattering through ‘removing’ the representation of symbolic violence against Black lives that was present, and arguably celebrated, in the statue. In another way, the art *re-faced* the statue by showing victims of police violence and Black thinkers to celebrate Black figures. In this way, the artist physically asserted claims to mattering by ‘replacing’ the statue with images in a way that underpinned Black mattering. As such, the art was used to de-face and re-face the historical landscape (Shaw, 2020) through a physical claim to mattering.

Perhaps the most significant way BLM physically asserted claims to mattering was through direct action. As previously indicated, people attended over 7,750 BLM demonstrations across the U.S., as well as demonstrations in 74 other countries worldwide (ACLEDE, 2020). The magnitude of these marches, rallies, and protests highlights how thousands of people assembled to oppose violence that targets Black people and to demand Black lives’ mattering. When tens of thousands of people physically showed up to protest for change in New York City after Floyd’s death (NBC New York, 2020, June 4), they participated in a physical assertion to the claim to mattering for Black lives. So did protesters who shut down a freeway to protest police brutality in Los Angeles on May 29, and protesters who staged a die-in to dramatize Floyd’s killing in New York on June 1 to call for justice and demand mattering of Black lives (Martinez & Learish, 2020). Also, at these events, protesters chanted phrases like “Black lives matter” (Hagemann & Jeffery, 2020; NBC New York, 2020, June 4), demonstrating how BLM asserted claims to mattering through speech. Furthermore, when BLM supporters removed the statue of former slave trader Edward Colston and replaced it with one of BLM protester Jen Reid (Bland, 2020; “How statues are falling”, 2020), the movement physically asserted claims to mattering through the removal of a statue that undermines Black mattering and represents symbolic violence against Black

lives. All in all, BLM's use of these different direct actions became a way for the movement to turn rage into nonviolent action through physical assertions that Black lives *do* matter.

The way BLM communicated through social media, popular culture, and direct action after Floyd's death show that by embracing rage and physically asserting claims to mattering, the movement *concretized* its normative reasoning. According to Butler (2020), claiming mattering in this way is a way for those whose lives are deemed *not* to matter to physically assert their own value (Introduction, para. 26). This has two important purposes, both of which are relevant to the way BLM communicated after Floyd's death. The first is that asserting ones' own value is a way to take power away from those who try to deem them disposable. Thus, asserting their own value is a way to persist against violent powers that try to cast them as disposable. The second purpose is that by asserting their own value, they also assert belonging to the population of lives whom it is considered morally unacceptable to expose to violence (Butler, 2020, Introduction, para. 26). As such, claims to mattering are an essential part of nonviolence because lives that matter are considered lives that have value, and lives that are considered to have value are generally not exposed to the same violence as lives that are considered disposable (Nonviolence, para. 1). Understanding BLM through this lens points to how BLM, through concretizing its normative reasoning, communicated in a way that sought to change the environment in which violence exists and operates, which, according to Butler (2020), is necessary for equality and freedom (Introduction, para. 26).

Existing literature has touched on similar understandings of BLM's communication. In their essay on BLM, Perhamus and Joldersma (2016) claim that BLM protests are enacted through challenging the grievability of precarious, lost Black lives, and in that way, claims Black lives recognizable as a human life. Further, they conclude that BLM's public grieving of lost Black lives accounts for a haunting of the norms that justify killings of Black people resulting from state violence (Perhamus & Joldersma, 2016, p. 58). As such, their theoretical analysis of the relationship between BLM's thinking and tactics, and the potential effect the public grieving of lost Black lives has on the normative landscape, is similar to my understanding of BLM communication after Floyd's death. In that way, my understanding of BLM's strategy supports the logical argument first presented by Perhamus and Joldersma (2016). These similar understandings are not surprising, considering both our works are informed by the ideas of Judith Butler.

Summary

In Theme 2, I have proposed that BLM primarily communicates to re-humanize Black lives in three ways: social media, direct action, and popular culture. Furthermore, I have explained that after Floyd's death, BLM's communication through these methods was essentially a concretization of BLM's normative reasoning, as the movement 1) embraced rage resulting from unequal mattering and violence that distinguishes between lives that matter and lives that do not, and 2) turned this rage into effective, nonviolent action through physically asserting claims to mattering. In doing so, the movement sought to change the environment in which violence exists and operates. In Theme 3, I will explore how BLM normative reasoning and communication resonated in public discourse, meeting both support and resistance, following Floyd's death.

Theme 3: The Resonance of BLM Thinking and Strategy

Introductory Remarks

Theme 2 showed that following the death of George Floyd, BLM communicated to re-humanize Black lives using social media, popular culture, and campaigning in the streets to reach mass media. In theme 3, I will identify and explore some responses to BLM's normative thinking and strategy in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. To do so, I analyzed taped interviews with BLM supporters, opinion piece articles, online newspaper articles, online research reports, and interview-based articles with BLM supporters and opponents. I will first present examples and analysis of the *support for BLM messages in public discourse*, followed by examples and analysis of *resistance to BLM thinking and strategy*.

Support for BLM Messages in Public Discourse

BLM messages evoked support across the broader public discourse. Based on my analysis of the material, I argue that all seven BLM normative views and positions were reflected and supported in the broader public discourse to some extent.

First, the normative view that *Black lives (must) matter* was substantially reflected in the public discourse. For the most part, this view was expressed quite directly, such as by

‘Supporter 15’, a student who explained that the mattering of Black lives was their reason for supporting the movement: “I go to these protests because black lives matter, because my friends are tired of being treated like they are less than, like they are dangerous, like their skin color is a threat.” (The Learning Network, 2020, para. 30). Others, like ‘Supporter 32’, a self-proclaimed republican who believed that institutionalized racism was a thing of the past until he saw the video of Floyd’s killing, addressed the killing as an inhumane act that undermined the mattering of Floyd’s life: “I could not help but wonder how everyone could participate in such an act of sheer inhumanity; I didn’t understand how it could have come to pass that they somehow saw George Floyd as being less.” (Austin, 2020, para. 1). Also members of the police, like ‘Supporter 21’, a police officer who chose to kneel and march with BLM protesters in solidarity, addressed the killing and emphasized that Black lives are valuable to him and his police department:

When I agreed to take a knee, I was looking to join them [BLM protesters] and let them know that I care and that we — the [name of police department] — care.

(Clifford, 2020, para. 11)

It is my hope that black and brown members of our community know, and continue to know, that officers value them. (Clifford, 2020, para. 14)

Even Pope Francis took a moment during his weekly Angelus prayer at the Vatican to stand up for the mattering of Black lives as he called out the hypocrisy in tolerating racism while claiming that all lives are sacred: “My friends, we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.” (Didonato & Gallagher, 2020, para. 4). Overall, the ways in which this normative view was reflected in the public discourse suggest that people acknowledged the recognition of Black humanity and value as a precondition for ending the racism and violence that discriminate between lives that matter and lives that do not. Thus, *Black lives (must) matter* was understood as affirmations of the value of Black lives, the recognition of that value, and as condemnations of racism that undermines that value. It is noteworthy that the examples portray how this view was reflected by a student, a republican, a member of the police, and one of the world’s most significant religious leaders. As such, the examples illustrate that it was a view that resonated across different groups of people, which signifies the broad support for it in the public discourse.

Furthermore, the normative position that *State violence must end* was also significantly reflected in the broadening public discourse after Floyd's death. Overall, those who emphasized this normative position addressed police violence – and state violence more widely – as reasons for supporting the movement. In an online opinion piece, 'Supporter 3', a white man whose wife and children are Black, described how George Floyd's death led him to realize the reality of systemic racism and structural inequalities, and how he hoped the protests after Floyd's killing would lead to more effective work to end this:

For too many years -- my entire life, in fact -- I had failed to realize that by and large law enforcement has one set of rules for dealing with White citizens and another for people of color. (Wierson, 2020, para. 18)

The video of the death of George Floyd was a rude awakening for me. It made me realize that despite all the trappings of privilege that my children have and will continue to enjoy as they grow up -- good schools, lots of travel, a loving and stable home -- being Black will be the singular component of their identity that will most clearly define them not only vis-à-vis law enforcement but in society in general. They will not have the freedom that I as their father have always had -- to always assume that interactions with police will be uneventful. (Wierson, 2020, para. 22)

My hope is that these nationwide protests not only shine a light on the issues of policing and race, but ignite and fast-track White America's realization that we as a country still have a long way to go to address systemic racism, racial inequality and a biased criminal justice system in dire need of reform. (Wierson, 2020, para. 26)

This father's views resonate with the BLM normative position, as he realizes that he does not want his children to exist in a world where violence exists and discriminates between lives that matter and lives that do not. Others, like 'Supporter 2', an attendee at a BLM protest, emphasized in an interview how Floyd's death represented a tipping point after many years of state violence and systemic racism, and that now, people expect change:

This is a breaking point for people. [Racism] has been going on for 400 years – yes, slavery ended, but other forms of violence have replaced it. People are becoming more aware – especially because of the rise in technology as a lot of racist incidents, especially those involving police officers, are caught on tape. People are getting sick of it. It's totally understandable, that after centuries of

blatant racism against African Americans in this country, people want to see change. (Middleton, 2020, para. 5)

As already observed, many people focused on the structural changes they hoped to see. Since a police officer took Floyd's life, the focus was primarily on structural changes to end *police violence*. 'Supporter 27', a student participating in an online 'current events conversation' about the George Floyd protests, argued that changes in policing are necessary to reduce police violence: "The only way at this point, things can change (I think) would be a full-scale overhaul of the police system with more monitoring, and red tape." (The Learning Network, 2020, para. 55). Another student participant in the same online conversation, 'Supporter 30', demanded an end to state violence: 'To end these deaths — the deaths of our brothers and sisters, children and parents, friends — we need to dismantle every institution and system.' (The Learning Network, 2020, para. 63). Similarly, 'Supporter 19', a pediatrician, expressed concern about the impact of systemic racism and state violence on the health of Black patients:

[Health care workers kneeled for George Floyd] because racism is bad for our patients' health. We know that prevention is the best medicine. This is why we consider it our fundamental responsibility to address the systemic and individual racism that underlie so many of our nation's health inequities. (Novick, 2020, para. 1-2)

In an open letter, more than 100 LGBTQ organizations pledged support to BLM and connected the ongoing protests to their own struggle against state and police violence:

We, the undersigned, recognize we cannot remain neutral, nor will awareness substitute for action. The LGBTQ community knows about the work of resisting police brutality and violence ... We celebrate June as Pride Month, because it commemorates, in part, our resisting police harassment and brutality at Stonewall in New York City, and earlier in California, when such violence was common and expected. (Greenfield, 2020, para. 4)

In that way, the struggle to oppose violence that distinguishes between lives that matter and lives that do not, resonated among members of the LGBTQ community.

Overall, these examples show that state violence against Black lives was acknowledged and denounced in the broader public discourse. While some expressed concerns with police violence specifically, a substantial amount of people across the analyzed

documents spoke of state violence in terms of systemic racism without limiting it to police violence. This is interesting considering that the material I analyzed in Theme 1 suggested that BLM expressed the narrower normative position and demand of ending *police violence*. There are several possible explanations for this. It could be that the documents I analyzed did not capture the times when BLM *did* focus on state violence more widely. And/or, it could be that people who expressed this normative position drew a connection themselves between police violence and systemic violence more widely. In any case, it shows that the BLM normative position that *State violence must end* was reflected in the public discourse and echoed by individuals in a variety of positions.

Further, the normative view that *Black lives must have the opportunity to flourish* was reflected in a few of the documents I analyzed, which suggests that it did somewhat resonate within the public discourse. It mainly reflected that people recognized racism as limiting the quality of life for Black people. ‘Supporter 19’, the pediatrician, explained that health care workers protested together with BLM to fight systemic racism that limits the quality of life for Black people and to ensure better health for their patients: “We [kneeled for Floyd] because we are dedicated to prolonging and enriching peoples’ lives and cannot tolerate them being stamped out on the pavement.” (Novick, 2020, para. 1). Further, in a blog post, university student ‘Supporter 20’ held that systemic racism robs Black Americans of equal opportunities and is a major determinant of a person’s quality of life:

Racism is not solely a social issue but engraved in the systemic structure of society. In the US for example, failure in the provision of equal opportunities to the African-American population has led to an enormous racial wealth gap and a black-white unemployment gap. This seems to be a sad trend we are still seeing across the world. (Salome, 2020)

Overall, evidence from public discourse demonstrates that to some extent, people see that racism and violence discriminate between lives that matter and lives that do not and need to be addressed through a mattering that emphasizes the quality of Black lives. Thus, *Black lives must have the opportunity to flourish* was understood in terms of ending violence that limits opportunities for Black people to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Moreover, a few of the documents I analyzed reflected the BLM normative view that *Inclusivity should be valued*. Some of these documents were particularly concerned with illuminating that, despite their support for the Floyd protests, they were unhappy with how

unjust murders of Black women are not given the same consideration as those of Black men. In an opinion piece, ‘Supporter 16’ expressed frustration over this:

Following the unfortunate killings of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, we were screaming from the rooftops about injustice. And rightfully so. The rage and the anger surrounding those cases was well-deserved. But when it came to Breonna Taylor, the rage lasted a few days and then quelled to a mere whisper. It has now been over 100 days since she was killed, and almost nothing has been done.

(Egbuonu, 2020, para. 1)

Other documents showed that this normative view was reflected through the centering of LGBTQ voices in the movement’s fight for change. ‘Supporter 8’, a spokesperson of an LGBTQ+ advocacy group, expressed solidarity with the BLM movement and centered the experiences of people of color within the LGBTQ community: “It is all of our responsibility to speak out publicly against racism, systemic injustice, and police brutality, and to elevate voices and amplify stories of people of color, especially with the LGBTQ community.” (Morrison, 2020, para. 5). While numerous documents made mention of inclusivity in other ways, such as being an ally (especially white people mentioned inclusivity in this way), that is not a reflection of the BLM normative view, as the movement’s focus is on promoting the inclusion of (and affirming) previously marginalized groups *within* the Black community (see Theme 1 for details). With that being said, public discourse demonstrates that, to some extent, people acknowledged that confronting violence that discriminates between lives that matter and lives that do not, should be addressed through a mattering that is inclusive of previously marginalized groups, such as women and members of the LGBTQ community.

Further, the normative position that *Institutional violence must be met with accountability* was substantially reflected in the public discourse. Most of the material I analyzed suggests that this normative position was reflected in how people sought increased accountability for *police violence*, which is likely due to the context of Floyd being killed by police. In most cases, people were not only concerned with accountability for the policemen in Floyd’s killing, but showed a more general concern for increased accountability of all police officers who participate in police violence. ‘Supporter 2’ captured the essence of this:

It’s not just George. There have been hundreds and hundreds of black individuals who have been wrongfully murdered by police, who have not been arrested nor faced any repercussions. George Floyd is just the start – any police officer who has murdered someone wrongfully should face jail. (Middleton, 2020, para. 8)

Other documents showed that people expressed frustration with the general lack of accountability for police violence, such as ‘Supporter 13’:

How many more innocent black lives will be taken before change is made? How many more riots? How many more tears? How much longer until the police are held accountable for their actions and people of color don't have to fear? (The Learning Network, 2020, para. 26)

Overall, the way this normative position was reflected in public discourse demonstrates that people agree that racism and violence that discriminates between lives that matter and lives that do not, must be met with public reactions and personal accountability for those who partake in it.

Moreover, the normative position that *White supremacy must be eradicated* was reflected in several documents. Mainly, people recognized White supremacy as a system that undermines Black mattering, particularly as it perpetuates violence that distinguishes between lives that matter and lives that do not, such as implied by ‘Supporter 5’:

Each and every institution and system was created to make “whiteness” the unattainable objective every minority was forced to strive for. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Philando Castille, Michael Brown, Alejandro Vargas Martinez, Trayvon Martin. Their deaths are all symptoms of the disease our county was built on. Systemic and institutional racism. (The Learning Network, 2020, para. 62)

Although this normative position was reflected in numerous documents, it was surprising that it was not reflected even more, considering it was one of the most communicated normative positions by BLM after Floyd’s death (see Theme 1 for details). A plausible explanation for this is that the public discourse focused more on state and institutional violence and how these undermine Black mattering, perhaps because these were more directly linked to the incident surrounding Floyd’s killing. In any case, this normative position was reflected considerably in the broader public discourse, and in a way that showed that many people see racism and violence that discriminates between lives that matter and lives that do not, as something that needs to be dealt with in terms of addressing how society at large gives precedence to whiteness.

Further, the normative view that *Black liberation means collective liberation* was reflected in public discourse after Floyd’s death to a considerable extent. For the most part,

this view was expressed by members of *other marginalized groups* who argued that marginalized groups should support the Black community in their fight for equality because their struggles and liberation are intertwined. The essence of this was captured by ‘Supporter 17’, a member of the South-Asian American community:

I do not believe that the racism that black people and other races face can be considered one and the same. I do believe, however, that the same disrespect, dehumanization, and ignorance seen in America right now fuels existing racist institutions in every corner of the world. In supporting the black community in their fight today, we have the opportunity to weaken the oppressive systems and ideologies that oppress not just our own people, but people of all nationalities.
(Samrow, 2020, para. 13-14)

Similarly, university student ‘Supporter 30’ addressed Floyd’s killing in a letter to the Chinese-American community:

I urge all Chinese Americans to watch media such as Asian Americans, to seriously reflect not only on our own history, but also on our shared history with other minorities—how our liberation is intertwined with liberation for Black Americans, Native Americans, Latinx Americans, and more. We are not exempt from history. What has happened to George Floyd has happened to Chinese miners in the 1800s and Vincent Chin, and will continue to happen to us and all minorities unless we let go of our silence, which has never protected us, and never will. (Huang, 2020, para. 13)

These examples illustrate how members of other marginalized groups connected their own struggles for racial equality and freedom to the ongoing Floyd protests. In that way, they resonated with BLM’s confrontation with violence that discriminates between lives that matter and lives that do not. Interestingly, this normative view was reflected considerably in the public discourse, although findings from Theme 1 suggested that BLM did not express this view much after Floyd’s death. A likely explanation for this is that people made these connections themselves, based on the overarching message BLM communicated regarding racism and violence, as they also affect other non-white groups besides the Black community.

Overall, it is evident that BLM’s normative views and positions received wide support across the public discourse. As such, BLM’s overarching message to extend mattering to include Black lives and denounce the violence that undermines Black mattering was largely understood, agreed with and prioritized as an issue of concern on the public agenda. While

existing research has already found that BLM gained widespread and increased support in the aftermath of Floyd's death (Long & McCarthy, 2020), the analyzed material help explain how different elements of BLM thinking resonated across the public discourse.

Resistance to BLM Thinking and Strategy

Although BLM messages resonated in the broader public discourse, BLM thinking and strategy also triggered resistance. It is not my intention to provide a comprehensive account of the counter-mobilization that opposed BLM in the aftermath of Floyd's death, but rather seek to understand which elements of BLM thinking and strategy that triggered resistance. Based on my analysis of the material, I found that the normative views and positions that seemed to trigger the most resistance were *Black lives (must) matter*, *State violence must end*, and *Institutional violence must be met with accountability* – and – that the communication method that triggered the most resistance was *direct action*.

To begin, one of the normative views that seemed to trigger the most resistance was *Black lives (must) matter*. Based on the material, two typical examples of resistance to this view were the counter-movements/slogans *All Lives Matter* and *White Lives Matter*. *White Lives Matter*, generally known as a racist response to BLM that promotes white supremacy (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.), seemed to respond in opposition to BLM in ways that sought to undermine Black mattering. For instance, adherents of the group tagged 'White Lives Matter' on a statue dedicated to honoring Arthur Ashe, a Black American tennis legend, on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia, in June 2020 (Lapin, 2020). In another incident, adherents of *White Lives Matter* left two posters with the writings 'White lives matter' and 'I can breathe' (referencing Floyd's killing) in a window of a house in downtown St. John's in Canada on June 29, 2020 ("Group decorates sidewalk", 2020). These examples suggest that the assertion of *white* mattering was used by *White Lives Matter* to counter the BLM movements' focus on Black mattering. In that way, their actions seemed to be directed towards undermining the value and humanity of Black lives that BLM was asserting at the time. Also, considering that *White Lives Matter* is known as a group that promotes white supremacy, it is sensible to assume that the group's resistance was also triggered by the BLM normative position that *White supremacy must be eradicated*, and that these actions were carried out to assert white power when faced with a movement that directly challenges it.

Further, All Lives Matter is another slogan and counter-movement to BLM that has often been used to oppose the BLM movement and the perceived exclusion of other lives' value from the phrase '*Black lives matter*' (Atkins, 2019, p. 1). After Floyd's death, several adherents of All Lives Matter expressed that they perceived BLM's specific focus on the mattering of *Black* lives to be exclusionary and divisive. For instance, when vice president at the time, Mike Pence, was asked repeatedly in an interview to say that *Black* lives matter following the death of George Floyd, he declined to because he viewed the BLM movement as exclusionary: "Well, I don't accept the fact, [name of interviewer], that there's a segment of American society that disagrees, in the preciousness and importance of every human life." (Carvajal, 2020, para. 6). Similar views were expressed at a counter-protest to BLM in Durango, Colorado, on August 14, 2020, where several counter-protesters showed up to support "'America' and the idea that all lives matter" (Mullane, 2020, para. 17). These examples illustrate that All Lives Matter was used as a response to the perceived threat that BLM poses to the mattering of *every* life when promoting the view that *Black lives (must) matter*. In light of this, it was clear in the documents that several All Lives Matter adherents did indeed support the mattering of Black lives but counter-protested because they believed the movements' focus on *Black* lives was divisive. At an All Lives Matter rally in Springfield, Oregon, on July 10, 2020, an All Lives Matter protester – a Black man – emphasized the divisive role of BLM and instead advocated for unity (Duvernay, 2020a). At the rally where he was a speaker, he shouted to the crowd: "For those guys in the back, Black lives matter!" (Duvernay, 2020b, para. 3). Then, he went on to criticize BLM protesters for using political and racial tension to create divides:

These criminals, they're trying to attack the American way of life, and if you understand how these communists work, they use every form of either political or racial tension, and they use it to create division as a divide-and-conquer strategy so that we do not pull together as an American people and rise up against the corruption at our door. (Duvernay, 2020a, para. 47)

The analyzed documents also suggested that there were people who mobilized under All Lives Matter as a way to actively undermine BLM and the mattering of Black lives. For instance, two All Lives Matter protesters who countered a BLM protest in Franklinville, New Jersey, following George Floyd's death, mockingly re-enacted the killing of Floyd as BLM protesters marched past (Murphy & Joseph, 2020). The event was caught on camera, and the man who recorded it expressed the contradictory view that while 'all' lives matter, *Black*

lives do not: “Black lives matter to no one... All lives matter. All lives matter. Police lives matter. God bless the police. God bless the police. You dumbass protesters [said about BLM protesters].” (Murphy & Joseph, 2020, para. 13). Overall, these various examples suggest that the normative view that *Black lives (must) matter* faced resistance in at least two ways – from those who claimed the focus on acknowledging the humanity and value of Black lives was exclusionary and divisive, and from those who did not seem to agree that Black lives matter and therefore sought to undermine Black mattering.

Furthermore, the normative positions *State violence must end* and *Institutional violence must be met with accountability* also triggered considerable resistance after Floyd’s death. As explained in Theme 1, BLM expressed these normative positions primarily by calling for an end to, and accountability for, *police violence* specifically, after the killing of George Floyd. This seemed to trigger resistance that largely opposed BLM’s views on and attitude towards the police. A typical example from the analyzed documents is *Blue Lives Matter*, a pro-police counter-movement that emerged after BLM first started protesting systemic racism and police brutality (O’Leary, 2020). Blue Lives Matter adherents generally believe there is an ongoing “war on cops” (para. 10) and therefore advocate for the protection of law enforcement personnel and petitions for crimes against police to be recognized as hate crimes (Skelly, 2020). In light of the BLM movement’s critiques of police brutality following Floyd’s death, Blue Lives Matter adherents seemed to mobilize mainly as a way to counter BLM as it was perceived to be anti-police. As expected, the documents I analyzed suggest that many adherents of Blue Lives Matter counter-mobilized BLM to show support for the police during a time when law enforcement was under fire. For instance, NASCAR driver Kyle Weatherman got his car painted in support of the Blue Lives Matter movement to show support for police amid the ongoing protests after Floyd’s death (Steed, 2020). This display of support for Blue Lives Matter seemed to be a response to BLM as it came only a few days after Bubba Wallace showed up to a race with his car painted with #BlackLivesMatter, and after NASCAR president Steve Phelps and other drivers spoke out to denounce racism (see Theme 2 for details). Another Blue Lives Matter adherent, a speaker at one of the movement’s rallies in New York City in August 2020, emphasized the role of Blue Lives Matter in supporting the police amid the ongoing protests:

[New York is under attack by an] insurgence of an extreme left population, subsequently creating violence and chaos that’s causing public safety to go out of control. (Hinman, 2020, para. 14) ... There’s no one that supports and defends the

blue. There's no one. There's a very small contingent. However, we have a few out here, and you can amplify that voice, that message, that we back the blue and we are that silent majority. (Hinman, 2020, para. 15)

The documents also highlighted that Blue Lives Matter adherents mobilized against BLM because many believed BLM's criticism of police undermined law enforcement and the work they do. Blue Lives Matter NYC released a video dedicated to standing up for police officers in response to the perceived 'anti-law enforcement movement' that took place as BLM protested police brutality after Floyd's death (Balsamini, 2020). A director of the TV company that presented the video along with Blue Lives Matter highlighted the video's role in opposing the perceived disregard of law enforcement officers that presented itself amid BLM protests: "This video provides a stark contrast to the current anti-law enforcement movement that ignores the faces of every human being who is a law enforcement officer." (Balsamini, 2020, para. 4). Overall, these examples illustrate that BLM's messages to end police brutality and hold those who partake in it accountable triggered some resistance, as some perceived them to be anti-police.

Moreover, BLM methods of communication also triggered resistance. According to the material I analyzed, it was clear that BLM's use of direct action was the method of communication that triggered the most resistance. In one way, resistance came in the form of delegitimization of BLM protests. Literature mentioned in Chapter 2 has argued that BLM protesters and protests in the past have been marginalized through a racialization of media coverage that has contributed to delegitimizing BLM protests (Leopold & Bell, 2017; Kilgo & Mourão, 2019; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019; Mourão et al., 2018; Kilgo et al., 2019; Murphy, 2016). In the documents analyzed for this study I also found examples of this, as some news outlets and politicians delegitimized the protests and protesters by framing them as violent, emphasizing words like 'riots,' 'looting,' 'destruction,' and 'thugs' when reporting on, and speaking of, the protests and protesters. Fox News, for instance, used the following headline in an article about the protests, suggesting that the BLM protests led to widespread destruction across the U.S.: "Rioting, looting linked to George Floyd protests leaves trail of destruction across American cities." (Norman, 2020). Similarly, a Wall Street Journal article emphasized the destruction of cars, windows, and buildings when addressing the nationwide protests:

The worst civil unrest in decades erupted in cities across the U.S. this weekend as anger sparked by the death of a black man in Minneapolis police custody touched

off demonstrations nationwide as protesters torched vehicles, smashed windows and defaced buildings. (Campo-Flores, Ansari, Ailworth, & Bauerlain, 2020, para. 1)

In a similar fashion, Donald Trump delegitimized BLM protesters who demonstrated peacefully outside of one of his rallies in Tulsa, Oklahoma, by referring to them as ‘thugs’ (Chavez & Sanchez, 2020). While some of the protests at the time did indeed result in destruction, violence, and looting, these depictions of the protests to be destructive ‘nationwide,’ ‘across American cities,’ and that the protesters were ‘thugs’ were misleading and delegitimizing, considering that reports showed that over 93 percent of all demonstrations connected to BLM following Floyd’s death were peaceful and did not involve violence nor other destructive activity (ACLEED, 2020).

In another way, resistance was reflected in the government’s response to the protests. According to the analyzed documents, the government threatened to use, encouraged, and actualized forceful resistance to deal with the protests. Shortly after Floyd’s death, Trump posted several messages to his Twitter account, threatening to send the National Guard and military forces to disperse protests and implying that looters would be met with lethal force (Kilgore, 2020, as cited in ACLED, 2020). He also encouraged state governors to use the National Guard to “dominate” protesters and promoted the use of more brutal methods of putting down the uprisings (Burns, 2020, para. 1). On one occasion, Trump sent federal agents to Portland, Oregon, claiming that it was necessary for public safety as Portland’s city leaders and local law enforcement had been unsuccessful in curbing weeks of unrest (Kavanaugh, 2020). On another occasion, the then President sent National Guard troops to crack down on protests in Washington D.C. (Cummings, n.d.). As shown by a report which reviewed data on demonstrations and political violence in America for the summer of 2020, the government responded forcefully to BLM protests, although the movement was overwhelmingly peaceful in its protesting (ACLEED, 2020). According to the report, demonstrations associated with BLM were disproportionately met with forceful intervention by authorities compared to demonstrations *not* associated with BLM. While those not associated with BLM were met with government intervention in about 3% of demonstrations, over 9% of BLM demonstrations were met with intervention. In the latter, authorities used force – such as pepper spray, tear gas, rubber bullets, and the beating of protesters with batons – in more than 54% of the demonstrations (ACLEED, 2020). These attempts at policing the protests, even the peaceful ones, indicate that BLM’s use of direct action was perceived

as a significant threat or challenge that needed to be contained. Also, the government's disproportionate policing of BLM protests compared to other protests further supports the indication that the U.S. government viewed BLM as a significant threat.

Moreover, BLM's use of *iconoclastic* direct action stood out in the documents as specifically controversial and triggered resistance from both the government and parts of the public. The government seemed to crack down on BLM's use of these actions as Trump issued an executive order towards the end of June 2020, which authorized federal agents to pursue protesters who participated in removing and/or damaging statues or other federal property (ACLEDE, 2020). This executive order came about during the ongoing BLM protests, suggesting that Trump issued it largely as a response to the BLM movement's use of these actions after Floyd's death. Further, members of the public came out to resist these actions at a demonstration in Stone Mountain, Georgia, where clashes broke out between people who supported the removal of confederate monuments and those who opposed it (Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 2020, as cited in ACLEDE, 2020). At this demonstration, a far-right group called the Three Percenters criticized the BLM movement for removing confederate monuments across the U.S. following Floyd's death (Pitofsky, 2020). Public resistance shown in isolated incidents like these reflected a broader public disapproval of the destruction/removal of confederate statues/monuments. Polls show that although a majority of Americans supported the BLM protests more generally following Floyd's death (Long & McCarthy, 2020), *most* Americans still opposed the removal of statues of confederate generals or presidents who enslaved people (Guskin, Clement, & Balz, 2020). This suggests that iconoclastic direct actions were a controversial method of communication that triggered resistance from both opponents and supporters of BLM. It is worth noting, however, that when compared to polls from 2018, it is evident that public support for the removal of confederate statues has increased ("Poll: Support grows", 2020), suggesting that while BLM's use of iconoclastic direct actions was met with resistance after Floyd's death, the movement is challenging, and perhaps even slowly changing, widely held beliefs about what constitutes 'accepted' forms of political action.

Overall, it is evident that BLM's thinking and strategy triggered resistance from various sections of society. This resistance is testament to the challenges BLM faced when attempting to re-humanize Black lives and highlights that some elements of BLM activism were particularly contested in the process, such as *Black lives (must) matter*, *State violence must end*, and *Institutional violence must be met with accountability*, as well as *direct action*.

Summary

In Theme 3, I have explored both the support and resistance BLM thinking and strategy evoked after the death of George Floyd. First, I showed that BLM normative reasoning evoked support within the broader public discourse, as all seven normative views and positions were reflected across the broader public discourse to some extent. I have shown that BLM's message to extend mattering to include Black lives and denounce the violence that undermines Black mattering was acknowledged, reflected on, and supported in the public discourse. Then, I showed that BLM triggered resistance from various sections of society, such as from the government, the President, news outlets, and counter-mobilizing groups, that challenged the movement's thinking and strategy. In the following pages, I will conclude Chapter 5 with a discussion on whether, and if so how, BLM succeeded in advancing a re-humanization of Black lives in the aftermath of Floyd's death.

Did BLM Succeed in Advancing a Re-humanization of Black Lives?

So far in this Chapter, I have shown that after Floyd's death, BLM had an overarching normative message to re-humanize Black lives, communicated this message, and evoked both support and resistance. In Theme 1, I found that BLM normative views and positions are oppositions to violence that undermines the mattering of Black lives. They emphasize that an extension of mattering is necessary to re-humanize Black lives and achieve racial equality. In Theme 2, I found that BLM communicated this message through social media, popular culture, and direct action, and that its communication was essentially a concretization of its normative reasoning. In Theme 3, I found that BLM messages evoked support within the broader public discourse, but that the movement's thinking and strategy also triggered various forms of social and official resistance. Based on these findings, I argue that BLM successfully advanced a re-humanization of Black lives.

The support for BLM's message(s) in the public discourse suggests that BLM successfully advanced a re-humanization of Black lives. All seven BLM normative views and positions were reflected in the public discourse, suggesting that BLM's call to re-humanize Black lives was heard, acknowledged, and mirrored. This means that the movement was able to promote its normative thinking in the public discourse by successfully bringing its concerns onto the public agenda, getting people to reflect on these concerns, and ultimately influencing people's thinking and understanding of race relations, mattering, and violence

that discriminates against Black people. In doing so, BLM was able to influence people to acknowledge the existence of violence that undermines Black mattering and get across that an extension of mattering to include Black lives is necessary to end this violence and achieve racial equality. Through its normative thinking and strategy – and through a concretization of nonviolence – BLM encouraged society to self-reflect about questions of right vs. wrong in a way that involved revisiting questions of what it means to be human, who we are as a society, what kind of society we want to live in together as human beings, as well as what this means for our shared expectations for appropriate behavior. In that way, the movement operated as a pilot for normative change. As such, this study’s findings and analyzed material supports and provides empirical evidence to the claim made by Perhamus and Joldersma (2016) that the movement is inherently an “educational undertaking” that, as it takes to the streets, is reflective of an educative core that “invite[s] society to learn about itself in a new way” (Perhamus & Joldersma, 2016, p. 58). Furthermore, the material I have presented challenges the voices and literature that claim that the movement’s lack of leadership would lead to confusion about the movement (Cole, 2020), as in this case, BLM’s overall message to re-humanize Black lives seemed to be widely understood and supported, even spurring individual reorientation, new political commitments, and civic action. It also presents a challenge to the critics and literature that suggest BLM would be more successful if it practiced a more loving or inclusive approach (“Oprah Winfrey’s Comments”, 2015; Shear & Stack, 2016; Reynolds, 2015; Clayton, 2018), as in this case, an aggressive form of nonviolence seemed to be effective in advancing a re-humanization of Black lives.

Moreover, I contend that the resistance BLM triggered is not a sign of the movement’s failure to advance a re-humanization of Black lives, nor that the elements of BLM thinking and strategy that evoked the most resistance were points of weaknesses in BLM’s activism. There are three main reasons why it should not be considered as such. The first is that BLM was able to reach through to people and evoke support despite facing resistance. In this way, resistance did not get in the way of BLM advancing some level of normative change. The second reason is that resistance is an integral part of the struggle to achieve change. Change is agonistic, which means “striving to overcome in argument” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, n.d.). As such, change is a struggle – a process – and resistance is part of it. Therefore, the resistance BLM triggered after Floyd’s death was not necessarily an indication that the movement *failed* to advance a re-humanization of Black lives, but rather a reminder that change takes time and is often the

result of confrontation and struggle. On that note, those elements of BLM thinking and strategy that triggered resistance played a meaningful and important role in that struggle because they confronted sections of society that knowingly, or perhaps even unknowingly, contribute to upholding the unequal mattering and violence BLM seeks to end. Finally, the third reason is that the resistance BLM triggered indicates that the movement mattered because, "...why would the state mobilize its coercive force or opposition groups mobilize, if a social movement's activism mattered little?" (Mello, Introduction, 2013, para. 12). In other words, the fact that BLM triggered resistance is an indication that the movement was influential to some degree and that it did matter because if not, it likely would not instigate considerable state repression nor counter-mobilization. All in all, I conclude that BLM successfully advanced a re-humanization of Black lives in the wake of the death of George Floyd. In Chapter 6, I will conclude this Thesis with a summary of the main findings, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this Thesis, I have explained the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM, with particular attention to how these were evident following the death of George Floyd. More specifically, I have demonstrated that the normative views and positions used by BLM emphasized the lack of mattering extended to Black lives and opposed the violence that it leads to. In that way, BLM insisted that an extension of mattering was necessary to re-humanize Black lives, to end the violence that discriminates between lives that matter and lives that do not, and to work towards racial equality. Further, I showed that BLM communicated through social media, direct action, and popular culture. Through these, BLM concretized its normative reasoning as it embraced the rage that results from unequal mattering and violence, and turned this rage into nonviolent action as physical claims to mattering. In doing so, BLM sought to change the environment in which violence exists and operates. Further, through analyzing the resonance of BLM in public discourse, I demonstrated that the movement's overarching message to extend mattering to include Black lives and denounce violence was widely acknowledged, reflected on, and supported in public discourse. I also demonstrated that BLM triggered resistance from various sections of society, such as the government, the President, news outlets, and counter-mobilizing groups that disagreed with and challenged the movement's thinking and strategy.

Based on these findings, I argued that BLM successfully advanced a re-humanization of Black lives after George Floyd's death. The movement was able to promote its normative thinking in public discourse, and in this way, was able to influence people to acknowledge the existence of racist violence that discriminates against Black people, and that to end this requires that mattering must be extended to include Black lives. I contended that the resistance BLM faced should not be considered an indication that BLM failed to re-humanize Black lives because: the movement was able to evoke support despite social and official resistance; advancing a re-humanization of Black lives is a process, and resistance is an integral part of the struggle to achieve change, and; resistance to BLM suggests that the movement's activism mattered.

Yet, while BLM advanced a re-humanization of Black lives in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd, racial equality and equal mattering remain unfulfilled. The consequences of not ending the violence that discriminates between lives that matter and lives that do not, and not extending mattering to Black lives, can both be detrimental to the

trust between state and civilians and have fatal consequences, as more lives are lost to this violence. And, while BLM plays a leading role in the struggle for change, we all have a moral responsibility to educate ourselves on racism, to reflect on what type of world we want to live in together as human beings, and seek to create a world that ensures equality and mattering for all. A good place to start is to voice support for BLM, speak out against racism, attend protests for racial equality, and to vote for and support politicians and political parties that advocate anti-racist policies.

Limitations of The Research

There were several limitations with this study. One was the positionality of the researcher. I tried to mitigate this by practicing self-reflection to better understand how my own values and biases implicated the research process and findings, to try to analyze and discuss the topic without letting my own experiences limit or dictate my understanding of BLM. Another limitation was time constraints. This meant that instead of seeking to achieve theoretical saturation, I sought to achieve satisfactory answers to the research questions. Because of this, more research would have led to new insights, better grounded insights, and more nuanced understandings that were not captured. Relatedly, the main research objective was quite loaded, bearing in mind the time constraints for the study, and would have benefited from further data collection and analysis to reach theoretical saturation. With that being said, timeframes were created to hold myself accountable and answer the research questions in a timely manner, which allowed me to give satisfactory answers to the research questions.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

This Thesis has contributed to the academic understanding of BLM. Based on a review of literature, I found that not enough attention has been given to the normative reasoning and communication of BLM, and that the literature that *has* done so has been more theoretical than empirical. This study contributes to filling this gap, as it documents, interprets, and explains the normative thinking that underpins the movement's activism and shows how BLM communicates to re-humanize Black lives through a concretization of its normative thinking. Furthermore, while other research has documented increased support for

BLM after Floyd's death (Buchanan, Bui & Patel, 2020; Long & McCarthy, 2020), this study helps explain which elements of BLM normative thinking and strategy resonated in public discourse, protest and support. Overall, the study helps explain how BLM was able to advance a re-humanization of Black lives.

Although the research contributes to the literature on the normative reasoning, communication, and resonance of BLM, further research is recommended. While this research has argued that BLM successfully advanced a re-humanization of Black lives after the death of George Floyd, it remains unclear whether BLM has been able to influence long-term normative change. While new research shows that fewer Americans support BLM now compared to after the protests last year (Ghosh, 2021), more research is needed to examine whether the movement's overall message had lasting effects on social or legal norms outside of the support, or lack of support, for the movement itself. This is a relevant topic for further research. In relation to this, it would be interesting if research could look into what behavioral changes, if any, regular people have made in their everyday lives after the Floyd protests to be more proactively anti-racist. It is also relevant to investigate whether states (both U.S. and other countries) have taken any measures (e.g., made any policy changes) after the Floyd protests to commit to end state violence and ensure equal mattering. Additionally, research could explore how BLM normative thinking and strategy resonated across the broader public discourse in other countries, and how this contributes to an understanding of BLM as a global movement. Further, this study's focus on the case surrounding the death of George Floyd meant that particular attention was given to the normative views and positions BLM used at the time. Hopefully, future research can seek to better understand those views and positions that were not expressed much after Floyd's death but are otherwise central to BLM, as they are also vital in the struggle for equality.

References

- Alexander, M. (2010). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. The New Press.
- Alvarez, L., & Buckley, C. (2013, July 13). Zimmerman Is Acquitted in Trayvon Martin Killing. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/14/us/george-zimmerman-verdict-trayvon-martin.html>
- Anderson, D.B. (2014, December 9). Messenger King: Michael Jackson and the politics of #BlackLivesMatter. *The Baltimore Sun*. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/oped/bs-ed-messenger-king-20141209-story.html>
- Anderson, M., Barthel, M., Perrin, A., & Vogels, E.A. (2020, June 10). #BlackLivesMatter surges on Twitter after George Floyd's death. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/10/blacklivesmatter-surges-on-twitter-after-george-floyds-death/>
- Anderson, M., & Hitlin, P. (2016). *Social media conversations about race*. (202.419.4372). <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/08/15/social-media-conversations-about-race/>
- Aratani, L. (2020, May 29). George Floyd killing: what sparked the protests – and what has been the response? *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/may/29/george-floyd-killing-protests-police-brutality>
- Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED). (2020). *Demonstrations and political violence in America*. https://acleddata.com/acleddatanew/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ACLED_USDataReview_Sum2020_SeptWebPDF.pdf
- Aswad, J. (2020, June 2). The Weeknd calls on major music companies to ‘Go Big and Public’ with Blackout Tuesday donations. *Variety*. <https://variety.com/2020/biz/news/the-weeknd-blackout-tuesday-black-lives-matter-major-labels-donations-1234623619/>
- Atkins, A. (2019). Black Lives Matter or All Lives Matter? Colorblindness and Epistemic Injustice*. *Social Epistemology*, 33(1), 1-22. doi: 10.1080/02691728.2018.1483879

- Austin, D. (2020, June 14). George Floyd's death has to be a tipping point. White people like me must fight racism. *Think*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/george-floyd-s-death-has-be-tipping-point-white-people-ncna1229181>
- Baton Rouge killing: Black Lives Matter protest photo hailed as 'legendary'. (2016, July 11). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36759711>
- Balsamini, D. (2020, July 18). Blue Lives Matter releases video 'standing up for officers' nationwide. *New York Post*. <https://nypost.com/2020/07/18/blue-lives-matter-releases-video-standing-up-for-officers/>
- Bhambhani, D. (2016, February 10). The communications goals and strategies of Black Lives Matter. *PR Week*. <https://www.prweek.com/article/1383011/communications-goals-strategies-black-lives-matter>
- Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation. (2020a, May 30). *#DefundThePolice*. Black Lives Matter. https://blacklivesmatter.com/defundthepolice/?__cf_chl_jschl_tk__=b8cdc9825ffc19e02839a7013bc5f15fcd131591-1612227999-0-ARk8IHR3rp6N1KImBYwgKvR7yILwR1zZCYZE-rN_mQIGvTuileCB3kVV68oySR92sHt8gHp0bk-THIupQu6IQcIhkY_E7F0ieXLRISbAV2CEK0UN10f32yJJpoAklNINxZkwzlrT3nq-ihSZ2xjKIWbgCgwjAZ3xpV1mj5IQi60CGzyxwABsyBVRDLgWQ1GeBtsmb3icVcfS2ITJsyRltBOy1OML6RhvMuaRqplOW-w2S7SvyHc7PEGAuf1tFLZ1b4oPIXbTZtJdoyDhExQkpCTvWTot1h7IeKuo62DbHjKxlvavNkgTyPwBxg9gziZM-ny8aCGzh0uF3JUBC_sGs514n_AYd8x4FCTCMN0-YtMR4BYGg8EfvcSDT8v8vx4SCZNCzG2jGtgBpL6ZCIDbT4
- Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation [@Blklivesmatter]. (2020b, May 27). *Too much trauma. Too much mourning. Too many hashtags. Too often healing these wounds over and over again* [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/Blklivesmatter/status/1265586957054357504>
- Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation. (n.d.-a). *About*. Black Lives Matter. <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>
- Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation. (n.d.-b). *Rest in power – beautiful*. Black Lives Matter. <https://blacklivesmatter.com/rest-in-power-beautiful/>

- Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation. (n.d.-c). *Herstory*. Black Lives Matter.
<https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>
- Black Lives Matter Los Angeles [@BLMLA]. (2020, May 27). *The murder of #GeorgeFloyd in Minneapolis very clearly illustrates the lineage of police from slave-catching* [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/BLMLA/status/1265488001821368320>
- Bland, A. (2020, July 15). Edward Colston statue replaced by sculpture of Black Lives Matter protestor Jen Reid. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/15/edward-colston-statue-replaced-by-sculpture-of-black-lives-matter-protester>
- Bridges, V., & Gallagher, R. (2015, July 7). Graffiti painted on Confederate statue in Durham, blasted off UNC's 'Silent Sam'. *The News & Observer*.
<https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article26643019.html>
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2020a, August 13). Black Lives Matter. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved September 9, 2021 from
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Black-Lives-Matter>
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2020b, May 21). Normative ethics. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved September 8, 2021 from
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/normative-ethics>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Buchanan, L., Bui, Q., & Patel, J.K. (2020, July 3). Black Lives Matter may be the largest movement in U.S. history. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>
- Buechler, S.M. (2013). New Social Movements and New Social Movement Theory. In D.A. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans, and D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm143>

- Burns, K. (2020, June 1). Trump called governors “weak” and said they need to “dominate” George Floyd protesters. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/6/1/21277062/trump-governors-dominate-george-floyd-protesters>
- Butler, J. (2020). *The force of nonviolence: an ethico-political bind*. Verso.
- Campo-Flores, A., Ansari, T., Ailworth, E., & Bauerlein, V. (2020, June 1). Anger and Unrest Sweep Across U.S. *The Wall Street Journal*. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/george-floyd-protests-minneapolis-11590844180>
- Carney, N. (2016). All Lives Matter, but so does race: Black Lives Matter and the evolving role of social media. *Humanity & Society*, 40(2), 180-199. doi: 10.1177/0160597616643868
- Carruthers, C. (2015, September 17). *Black Lives Matter is an entry point into Black liberation organizing*. Medium. <https://medium.com/focus-series/black-lives-matter-is-an-entry-point-into-black-liberation-organizing-a95d4d26cd45>
- Carvajal, N. (2020, June 19). Asked repeatedly to say 'Black lives matter,' Mike Pence says 'all lives matter'. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/19/politics/mike-pence-black-lives-matter-all-lives-matter/index.html>
- Chaney, C., & Robertson, R.V. (2015). Armed and dangerous? An examination of fatal shootings of unarmed Black people by police. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 8(4), 45-78.
- Chavez, N., & Sanchez, R. (2020, June 21). Trump calls protesters 'thugs' despite peaceful demonstrations in Tulsa and much of the US. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/20/us/nationwide-protests-saturday/index.html>
- Chenoweth, E., & Pressman, J. (2020, October 16). This summer’s Black Lives Matter protesters were overwhelmingly peaceful, our research finds. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/10/16/this-summer-black-lives-matter-protesters-were-overwhelming-peaceful-our-research-finds/>
- Chotiner, I. (2020, June 3). A Black Lives Matter co-founder explains why this time is different. *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/a-black-lives-matter-co-founder-explains-why-this-time-is-different>

- Clayton, D.M. (2018). Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: a comparative analysis of two social movements in the United States. *Journal of Black Studies*, 49(5), 448-480. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934718764099>
- Clifford, E. S. (2020, June 2). As chief of police, I knelt for George Floyd to show the people I serve that Black lives matter. *Think*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/chief-police-i-knelt-george-floyd-show-people-i-serve-ncna1221466?icid=related>
- Cole, A. (2020, July 15). Black Lives Matter: decentralised leadership and the problems of online organising. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/black-lives-matter-decentralised-leadership-and-the-problems-of-online-organising-140897>
- Confederate memorial in Durham vandalized. (2015, July 1). *ABC11*. <https://abc11.com/confederate-monument-durham-vandalized-maplewood-cemetery/821112/>
- Cox, J.M. (2017). The source of a movement: making the case for social media as an informational source using Black Lives Matter. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(11), 1847-1854. doi: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1334935
- Cummings, W. (n.d.). 'Everything is under perfect control': Trump says he ordered National Guard to leave DC. *USA Today*. <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/06/07/trump-orders-national-guard-leave-washington-dc/3170144001/>
- Dakss, B., McNamara, A., Baldwin, S.L., & Carissimo, J. (2020, June 7). George Floyd U.S. protests live updates from June 4, 2020. *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-updates/george-floyd-death-protests-unrest-disorder-2020-06-04/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h>
- Day, E. (2015, July 19). #BlackLivesMatter: the birth of a new civil rights movement. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/19/blacklivesmatter-birth-civil-rights-movement>
- Didonato, V., & Gallagher, D. (2020, June 3). Pope Francis condemns death of George Floyd, calls US unrest 'disturbing'. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/03/europe/pope-francis-george-floyd-intl/index.html>

- Duvernay, A. (2020a). Locals have organized against Black Lives Matter, leading to street fights, standoffs. *The Register-Guard*.
<https://eu.registerguard.com/story/news/2020/08/23/locals-have-organized-against-black-lives-matter-leading-street-fights-standoffs/5601292002/>
- Duvernay, A. (2020b). Some scuffles at All Lives Matter rally in Springfield. *The Register-Guard*. <https://eu.registerguard.com/story/news/2020/07/11/some-scuffles-at-all-lives-matter-rally-in-springfield/42017983/>
- Edwards, F., Lee, H., & Esposito, M. (2019). Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race-ethnicity, and sex. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(34), 16793-16798.
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1821204116>
- Egbuonu, Oge. (2020, June 26). Breonna Taylor and George Floyd both deserve justice. But justice for Black women is elusive. *Think*.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/breonna-taylor-george-floyd-both-deserve-justice-justice-black-women-ncna1232190>
- Ekotto, F. (2021) Frantz Fanon in the Era of Black Lives Matter. In Kim D.D. (Eds.), *Reframing Postcolonial Studies* (pp. 249-259). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52726-6_10
- Elmasry, M.H., & el-Nawawy, M. (2017). Do Black lives matter? *Journalism Practice*, 11(7), 857-875. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2016.1208058
- Freelon, D., McIlwain, C., & Clark, M. (2016). *Beyond the hashtags: #Ferguson, #Blacklivesmatter, and the online struggle for offline justice (Research Report)*. Center for Media & Social Impact. https://cmsimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/beyond_the_hashtags_2016.pdf
- Freelon, D., McIlwain, C., & Clark, M. (2018). Quantifying the power and consequences of social media protest. *Media, Culture & Communication*, 20(3), 990-1011. doi: 10.1177/1461444816676646
- Gambino, L. (2014, August 11). St Louis protesters demand murder charges for police officer who shot teen dead. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/11/st-louis-protesters-officer-teenager>

- Garza, A. (2014, October 7). A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter movement by Alicia Garza. *The Feminist Wire*. <https://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/>
- Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the Streets: Social media and contemporary activism*. Pluto Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183pdzs>
- Ghosh, P. (2021, May 25). A year after George Floyd killing, fewer Americans support Black Lives Matter movement, poll finds. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/palashghosh/2021/05/25/a-year-after-george-floyd-killing-fewer-americans-support-black-lives-matter-movement-poll-finds/?sh=97b3a9353a26>
- Goldkuhl, G., & Cronholm, S. (2010). Adding theoretical grounding to grounded theory: toward multi-grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 9(2), 187-205. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691000900205>
- Graeber, D. (2008). *Direct Action: An Ethnography*. AK Press.
- Greenfield, B. (2020, June 2). *LGBTQ Pride Month leaders, in show of solidarity, unite to support George Floyd protests: 'Stonewall was a riot'*. Yahoo Life. https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/lgbtq-pride-month-leaders-unite-support-george-floyd-protests-182304667.html?guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAIInnRc02C33RABrt8qk2srfQyM8pKXDsiRQQSarmhnNBn2uu7G0K44kmDNUWSTN2xMYtxT4vXzTa-lxRGPDJRINM1Gpc9Xj0zOD5EocNykf1ocx0_HnhxAWhMzlhllFgcyYDubgOE60TSuU7Ji6azjblB7hrBhJ6_tM0cty0rxPx&guccounter=2
- Goodman, A., & Moynihan, D. (2012, March 22). Walking while Black: The killing of Trayvon Martin. *Democracy Now*. https://www.democracynow.org/2012/3/22/walking_while_black_the_killing_of_trayvon_martin/
- Group decorates sidewalk with anti-racist messages in protest of 'White Lives Matter' sign. (2020, June 29). *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/side-walk-chalk-black-lives-matter-1.5632032>

- Guskin, E., Clement, S., & Balz, D. (2020, July 21). Americans support Black Lives Matter but resist shifts of police funds or removal of statues of confederate generals or presidents who were enslavers. *The Washington Post*.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/americans-support-black-lives-matter-but-resist-shifts-of-police-funds-or-removal-of-statues-of-confederate-generals-or-presidents-who-were-enslavers/2020/07/21/02d22468-cab0-11ea-91f1-28aca4d833a0_story.html
- Hagemann, H., & Jeffery, L. (2020, May 31). George Floyd reverberates globally: Thousands protest in Germany, U.K., New Zealand. *NPR*.
<https://www.npr.org/2020/05/31/866428272/george-floyd-reverberates-globally-thousands-protest-in-germany-u-k-canada>
- Harris, F.C. (2015). The next Civil Rights movement? *Dissent*, 63(3), 34-40. doi: 10.1353/dss.2015.0051
- Hill, E., Tiefenthäler, A., Triebert, C., Jordan, D., Willis, H., & Stein, R. (2020, May 31). How George Floyd was killed in police custody. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html>
- Hinman, M. (2020, August 30). Blue Lives rally takes hard turn red. *The Riverdale Press*.
<https://riverdalepress.com/stories/blue-lives-rally-takes-hard-turn-red,72373>
- Hoffman, L., Granger, N.Jr., Vallejos, L., & Moats, M. (2016). An existential-humanistic perspective on Black Lives Matter and contemporary protest movements. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 56(6), 595-611. doi: 10.1177/0022167816652273
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. (n.d.). Agonistic. In *The American heritage dictionary of the English language* (5th ed.). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Retrieved September 17, 2021 from
<https://www.yourdictionary.com/agonistic>
- How statues are falling around the world. (2020, June 24). *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/us/confederate-statues-photos.html>
- Huang, E. (2020, June 4). A letter from a Yale student to the Chinese American community. *Asian Network @ Yale*. <https://asiannetwork.yale.edu/news/letter-yale-student-chinese-american-community>

- Huegel, V. (2020). On the Politics of Nonviolence: An Interview with Judith Butler. *Interfere: Journal for Critical Thought and Radical Politics*, 1, 86-91.
<https://interferejournal.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/9.-on-the-politics-of-nonviolence-huegel.pdf>
- Hurrell, A. & Macdonald, T. (2013). Ethics and Norms in International Relations. In Carlsnaes, W., Risse, T. & Simmons, B. A (red). *Handbook of International Relations*. (2nd. Ed. 57-84). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Ince, J., Rojas, F., & Davis, C.A. (2017). The social media response to Black Lives Matter: how Twitter users interact with Black Lives Matter through hashtag use. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(11), 1814-1830. doi: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1334931
- Jacobson, B. (2020, June 11). *Black Lives Matter, an interview to help us understand the protest* [Video] Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuyjmhpFoQw>
- Kahn, A., & Kirk, C. (2015, August 9). What it's like to be Black in the Criminal Justice System. *Slate*. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2015/08/racial-disparities-in-the-criminal-justice-system-eight-charts-illustrating-how-its-stacked-against-blacks.html>
- Kavanaugh, S.D. (2020, July 25). Trump sent the feds to quash Portland's protests: What we know amid the nightly turmoil. *The Oregonian*.
<https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2020/07/trump-sent-the-feds-to-quash-portlands-protests-what-we-know-amid-the-nightly-turmoil.html>
- Kilgo, D.K. (2017). *Black, white, and blue : media and audience frames from visual news coverage of police use of force and unrest*. [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin] University of Texas Libraries.
<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/62093/KILGO-DISSERTATION-2017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Kilgo, D.K., & Harlow, S. (2019). Protests, media coverage, and a hierarchy of social struggle. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 24(4), 508-530. doi: 10.1177/1940161219853517
- Kilgo, D.K., Harlow, S., García-Perdomo, V., & Salaverría, R. (2018). From #Ferguson to #Ayorzinapa: Analyzing differences in domestic and foreign protest news shared on

social media. *Mass Communication and Society*, 21(5), 606-630. doi: 10.1080/15205436.2018.1469773

- Kilgo, D.K., & Mourão, R.R. (2019). Media effects and marginalized ideas: Relationships among media consumption and support for Black Lives Matter. *International Journal of Communication*, 13, 4287-4305.
- Kilgo, D.K., Mourão, R.R., & Sylvie, G. (2019). Martin to Brown: How time and platform impact coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement. *Journalism Practice*, 13(4), 413-430. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2018.1507680>
- Kirby, J. (2020, June 16). What 4 organizers want to see from America's protests. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/2020/6/16/21288380/george-floyd-protests-organizers-black-lives-matter>
- Lahut, J. (2020, June 11). Protests this past week have been largely peaceful, but Fox News continues to show old footage to rile up viewers. *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com/fox-news-replays-violent-old-protest-footage-actual-protests-calm-2020-6?r=US&IR=T>
- Lapin, T. (2020, June 17). 'White Lives Matter' painted on statue of African American tennis great Arthur Ashe. *New York Post*. <https://nypost.com/2020/06/17/white-lives-matter-painted-on-statue-of-tennis-legend-arthur-ashe/>
- Laughland, O. (2015, January 21). Black Lives Matter protesters interrupt lunch with 'die-in' on Capitol Hill. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jan/21/black-lives-matter-protesters-die-in-capitol-hill-longworth-office-building>
- Lebron, C.J. (2017). *The Making of Black Lives Matter: A brief history of an idea*. Oxford University Press.
- Lee, F.L.F. (2014). Triggering the protest paradigm: Examining factors affecting news coverage of protests. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 2725-2746.
- Leopold, J.K., & Bell, M.P. (2017). News media and the racialization of protest: an analysis of Black Lives Matter articles. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 36, 720-735. doi: 10.1108/EDI-01-2017-0010

- Leyh, B.M. (2020). Imperatives of the Present: Black Lives Matter and the politics of memory and memorialization. *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 38(4), 239-245. doi: 10.1177/0924051920967541
- Lindsey, T.B. (2015). Post-Ferguson: A “Herstorical” Approach to Black Viability. *Feminist Studies*, 41(1), 232+.
- Long, S., & McCarthy, J. (2020, July 28). Two in three Americans support racial justice protests. *Gallup*. https://news.gallup.com/poll/316106/two-three-americans-support-racial-justice-protests.aspx?utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_content=morelink&utm_campaign=syndication
- Lopez, G. (2016, July 11). Why you should stop saying “all lives matter,” explained in 9 different ways. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/2016/7/11/12136140/black-all-lives-matter>
- MacFarquhar, N. (2020, July 30). Minneapolis police link ‘Umbrella Man’ to white supremacy group. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/28/us/umbrella-man-identified-minneapolis.html>
- Maqbool, A. (2020, July 10). Black Lives Matter: From social media post to global movement. *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53273381>
- Marshall, M.N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, 13(6), 522-525.
- Martin, J., & Lev, J. (2020, July 31). NBA season restarts with a nod to Black Lives Matter and 2 games that went down to the wire. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/31/us/lebron-james-black-lives-matter-nba-spt-trnd/index.html>
- Martinez, P., & Learish, J. (2020, June 9). Nationwide protests over George Floyd’s death. *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/protests-minnesota-george-floyd-death/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h>
- Mello, B. (2013). *Evaluating Social Movement Impacts*. Bloomsbury Academic. <https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/evaluating-social-movement-impacts/ch1-introduction>
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Resonance. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved September 8, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resonance>

- Middleton, G. (2020, May 31). Exclusive interview: George Floyd and the fight for change: Interviewing a Minneapolis protester. *Brig Newspaper*.
<https://brignews.com/2020/05/31/george-floyd-and-the-fight-for-change-interviewing-a-minneapolis-protester/>
- Monckton, P. (2020, June 2). This is why millions of people are posting black squares on Instagram. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulmonckton/2020/06/02/blackout-tuesday-instagram-black-squares-blackouttuesday-theshowmustbepaused/>
- Morrison, T. (2020, June 1). Over 100 LGBTQ+ organizations release open letter in solidarity with George Floyd protests. *ABC News*.
<https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/News/100-lgbtq-organizations-release-open-letter-solidarity-george/story?id=70991937>
- Movement for Black Lives. (M4BL). (2020, May 27). *George, Ahmaud, and Breonna's deaths are the result of centuries-old anti-Black attitudes flanked by prejudicial legislation* [Status update]. Facebook.
<https://m.facebook.com/mvmt4bl/posts/2272906333004832>
- Movement for Black Lives. (M4BL). (n.d.-a). *About*. Movement for Black Lives.
<https://m4bl.org/about-us/>
- Movement for Black Lives. (M4BL). (n.d.-b). *Black power rising*. Movement for Black Lives. <https://m4bl.org/black-power-rising/>
- Movement for Black Lives. (M4BL). (n.d.-c). *Vision for Black lives*. Movement for Black Lives. <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/>
- Mourão, R.R., Kilgo, D.K., & Sylvie, G. (2018). Framing Ferguson: The interplay of advocacy and journalistic frames in local and national newspaper coverage of Michael Brown. *Journalism*, 1-21. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918778722>
- Mullane, S. (2020, August 14). Counterprotesters bring guns, flags to BLM rally in Durango. *The Durango Herald*. <https://www.durangoherald.com/articles/counterprotesters-bring-guns-flags-to-blm-rally-in-durango/>
- Murphy, J. (2016). *From Distortion to Dehumanization: How mainstream media misrepresents the Black Lives Matter movement*. [Honors thesis, Siena College].

Siena College Digital Collections.

<https://siena.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15739coll1/id/217/>

Murphy, P.P., & Joseph, E. (2020, June 11). All Lives Matter protesters re-enacted George Floyd's death as a Black Lives Matter march went by. *CNN*.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/10/us/all-lives-matter-reenact-george-floyd-black-lives-matter-trnd/index.html>

Nayar, P. (2011). Frantz Fanon: Toward a Postcolonial Humanism. *The IUP Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 111(1), 21-35.

NBC New York. (2020, June 4). *Tens of thousands march through New York City for George Floyd* [Video file]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EX6iy4fvvi0>

Norman, G. (2020, June 1). Rioting, looting linked to George Floyd protests leaves trail of destruction across American cities. *Fox News*. <https://www.foxnews.com/us/george-floyd-protests-aftermath>

Novick, D. (2020, June 18). If you wear a white coat, stand up for Black lives. *CNN*.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/18/opinions/white-coats-for-black-lives-novick/index.html>

NSD. (n.d.). *NSD*. NSD. <https://www.nsd.no/en/>

O'Leary, F. (2020, August 19). What is Blue Lives Matter and why do some people consider it racist? *The Sun*. <https://www.the-sun.com/news/992088/blue-lives-matter-racist-flag-blm-protests/>

Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses. (OAITH). (n.d.). *Public and direct action* [Fact sheet].

http://www.oaith.ca/assets/files/Action/TrainingforChange/21_Public_Action.pdf

Oprah Winfrey's Comments. (2015, January 1). Oprah Winfrey's comments about recent protests and Ferguson spark controversy. *People*. <https://people.com/celebrity/oprah-on-recent-protests-and-ferguson/>

Papacharissi, Z. (2016). Affective publics and structures of storytelling: sentiment, events and mediality. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(3), 307-324. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2015.1109697

- Patton, L.D. (2014). Preserving respectability or blatant disrespect? A critical discourse analysis of the Morehouse Appropriate Attire Policy and implications for intersectional approaches to examining campus policies. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 27(6), 724-745. doi: 10.1080/09518398.2014.901576
- Perhamus, L., & Joldersma, C.W. (2016). Interpellating dispossession: Distributions of vulnerability and the politics of grieving in the precarious mattering of lives. *Philosophical Studies in Education*, 47, 56-67.
- Pitofsky, M. (2020, August 15). Opposing demonstrations clash in Georgia over removal of Confederate monuments. *The Hill*. <https://thehill.com/homenews/news/512201-opposing-demonstrations-clash-in-front-of-countrys-largest-confederate-monument>
- Platt, V. (2020, July 3). Why people are toppling monuments to racism. *Scientific American*. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-people-are-toppling-monuments-to-racism/>
- Poll: Support grows for protests, removal of Confederate statues. (2020, July 21). *WRAL*. <https://www.wral.com/poll-support-grows-for-protests-removal-of-confederate-statues/19197339/>
- Rabin-Havt, A. (2020, June 11). Black Lives Matter protests are even reaching NASCAR. *Jacobin*. <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/06/black-lives-matter-nascar-blm-kirk-price-bubba-wallace>
- Radnitz, S., & Hsiao, Y. (2020, August 24). Are Black Lives Matter protesters peaceful or violent? Depends on whom you ask. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/08/24/are-black-lives-matter-protesters-peaceful-or-violent-depends-whom-you-ask/>
- Reid, J. (2017, August 22). How Colin Kaepernick became a cause for activists, civil rights groups and others. *The Undefeated*. <https://theundefeated.com/features/how-colin-kaepernick-became-a-cause-for-activists-civil-rights-groups/>
- Reid, W. (2018, November 28). Black Twitter 101: What is it? Where did it originate? Where is it headed? *UVA Today*. <https://news.virginia.edu/content/black-twitter-101-what-it-where-did-it-originate-where-it-headed>

- Reynolds, B. (2015, August 24). I was a civil rights activist in the 1960s. But it's hard for me to get behind Black Lives Matter. *The Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/08/24/i-was-a-civil-rights-activist-in-the-1960s-but-its-hard-for-me-to-get-behind-black-lives-matter/>
- Rickford, R. (2016). Black Lives Matter: Toward a modern practice of mass struggle. *New Labor Forum*, 25(1), 34-42. doi: 10.1177/1095796015620171
- Rogers, E. (2020, August 17). 'Racialized dehumanization': UC Berkeley experts weigh in on criminal justice. *The Daily Californian*.
<https://www.dailycal.org/2020/08/16/racialized-dehumanization-campus-experts-weigh-in-on-criminal-justice/>
- Rogers, M.L. (2014). Introduction: Disposable Lives. *Theory & Event* 17(3).
<https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/559375>
- Safi, M. (2020, June 9). George Floyd killing triggers wave of activism around the world. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/09/george-floyd-killing-triggers-wave-of-activism-around-the-world>
- Salome. (2020, June 11). Black Lives Matter – Being an ally. University of Westminster International Student Blog. <http://blog.westminster.ac.uk/international/black-lives-matter-beinganally/>
- Samrow, K. (2020, June 5). The shades of the Black Lives Matter movement. *Voices of Youth*. <https://www.voicesofyouth.org/blog/shades-black-lives-matter-movement>
- Shaw, M. (2020, June 25). Refacing the Robert E. Lee monument in Richmond. *Reading the Pictures*. <https://www.readingthepictures.org/2020/06/refacing-robert-e-lee-monument/>
- Shear, M.D., & Stack, L. (2016, April 23). Obama says movements like Black Lives Matter 'can't just keep on yelling'. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/us/obama-says-movements-like-black-lives-matter-cant-just-keep-on-yelling.html>
- Skelly, K. (2020, August 11). *Blue Lives Matter is trending, but what does it mean?* The Latch. <https://thelatch.com.au/what-is-blue-lives-matter/>

- Southern Poverty Law Center. (n.d.). *White Lives Matter*. Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/white-lives-matter>
- Steed, L. (2020, June 14). Nascar driver Kyle Weatherman races in Thin Blue Line car days after Bubba Wallace hit track in Black Lives Matter car. *The Sun*. <https://www.the-sun.com/news/981175/nascar-kyle-weatherman-races-thin-blue-line-car-bubba-wallace-black-lives-matter/>
- Stephen, B. (2015). Get up, stand up: Social media helps Black Lives Matter fight the power. *Wired*. <https://www.wired.com/2015/10/how-black-lives-matter-uses-social-media-to-fight-the-power/>
- Stewart, E., & Ghaffary, S. (2020, June 24). It's not just your feed. Political content has taken over Instagram. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/6/24/21300631/instagram-black-lives-matter-politics-blackout-tuesday>
- Taylor, K.Y. (2016). *From #Blacklivesmatter to Black liberation* (1st ed.). Haymarket Books.
- Terry, B.M., & Butler, J. (2020). The Radical Equality of Lives: Judith Butler talks with Brandon M. Terry about MLK, the grievability of black lives, and how to defend nonviolence today. *The Boston Review*. <https://bostonreview.net/philosophy-religion/brandon-m-terry-judith-butler-radical-equality-lives>
- The Learning Network. (2020, June 4). What students are saying about the George Floyd protests. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/04/learning/what-students-are-saying-about-the-george-floyd-protests.html>
- Theocharris, Y., Lowe W., van Deth, J.W., & García-Albacete, G. (2015). Using Twitter to mobilize protest action: online mobilization patterns and action repertoires in the Occupy Wall Street, Indignados, and Aganaktismenoi movements. *Information, Communication & Society* 18(2), 202-220. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2014.948035
- Tillery, A.B. (2018). *What kind of movement is Black Lives Matter? The view from Twitter* (Working Paper). *Semantic Scholar*. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/506b/559f4a2ccef604296e2b2b8e0164469bdbb2.pdf>
- Tillery, A. B. (2019). What kind of movement is Black Lives Matter? The view from Twitter. *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 4(2), 297-323. doi: 10.1017/rep.2019.17

- Trecka, M. (2020, July 17). Do more than no harm: on Judith Butler's "The Force of Nonviolence" [Review of the book *The force of nonviolence: an ethico-political bind*, by J. Butler]. *Los Angeles Review of Books*, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/no-harm-judith-butlers-force-nonviolence/>
- Wierson, A. (2020, June 19). White dad with Black kids: George Floyd was my wake-up call. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/19/opinions/white-dad-black-kids-george-floyd-wake-up-call-wierson/index.html>
- Workneh, L. (2016, May 16). Jesse Williams wants you to 'stay woke' in new film on Black Lives Matter. *Huffpost*. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/jesse-williams-stay-woke-documentary-black-lives-matter_n_5739516ee4b077d4d6f3688a



Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Noregs miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Postboks 5003
NO-1432 Ås
Norway