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Black Lives Matter: The Movement's Relevance and Comparison to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement

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BLACK LIVES MATTER:
THE MOVEMENT'S RELEVANCE AND COMPARISON
TO THE 1960s CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

by

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B.S. December 2008, Old Dominion University

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ABSTRACT

BLACK LIVES MATTER:
THE MOVEMENT'S RELEVANCE AND COMPARISON
TO THE 1960s CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Stacy Jenkins-Robinson

Old Dominion University, 2017

The Black Lives Matter movement originated on social media after recent events that took place relating to the murders of unarmed Black men by civilian vigilantes or White policemen. This study examines the relevancy of the Black Lives Matter movement, while comparing it to the 1960s Civil Rights movement, specifically, concerning the differences in readily identifiable leadership. A Likert-scale survey was created to collect data from Old Dominion University students and affiliates who attended the event and students who were enrolled during the Spring 2016 semester, and distributed through the online survey platform Qualtrics.

Analysis of the survey responses showed that the majority of participants (27.43%) disagree that a singular identifiable leader is necessary. The majority of participants (34.16%) agree that a specific agenda needs to be better communicated. The majority of participants (26.88%) agreed that their perceptions of the movement changed with the knowledge that Black Lives Matter is being honored with a peace award. The majority of participants (33.13%) strongly agreed that images of violent protests contribute to their disinterests. The majority of participants (28.86%) strongly agreed that murders of unarmed African-Americans changed their thoughts concerning the necessity

of social change and police reform. The majority of the participants (34.63%) strongly agree that Black Lives Matter is a polarizing phrase.

It was concluded that unlike the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, a singular identifiable leader is not necessary for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Communicating the movement's agenda is the shared responsibility of those interested in racial equality. Although Black Lives Matter is a phrase unintended to alienate other communities, a name change is necessary in order to eliminate the misconception that only Black lives matter. The Sydney Peace Foundation, founded in 1998, announced in April 2017 that it would award Black Lives Matter its 2017 Peace Prize. The award recognized the work of the founding leaders of the social justice activist network, Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi.

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I would like to thank Old Dominion University alumni and current students who participated in the survey I conducted in order to gather information about beliefs as it relates to the relevance of the Black Lives Matter movement and how it compares to the 1960s Civil Rights movement, in order to make adequate recommendations. I would also like to thank Dr. Tisha Paredes for providing me with the information I needed in order to contact such a large portion of the student body, Dr. Karina Arcaute and Dr. John. Ritz for their guidance.

Stacy Jenkins-Robinson

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States of America has an extremely sordid past in reference to centuries of the mistreatment of people of African ancestry. In 1619 the system of slavery was introduced to America by the Dutch in the form of indentured servitude when twenty kidnapped Africans were sold in Jamestown, Virginia. The captured Africans worked among the colonists of Jamestown for seven years in exchange for land and their freedom. However, the indentured servitude model did not last as the colonists realized that the African laborers were beneficial to the economic foundation of the colony through the harvesting of crops (Kolchin, 2003). In 1641 slavery was legalized making African people property that could be owned for a lifetime. Slave labor became so lucrative for the colonists that in 1660 England's King Charles II established the Royal African Company to transport human beings that he referred to as black gold from Africa to America. The evolution of indentured servitude to slavery marked the beginning of an era that would plague the United States with brutalities known to man that is most poignantly described as centuries of atrocities. Although, the United States Congress outlawed the African slave trade in 1808, colonists were reluctant to restructure the system of slavery because it had proven to be quite profitable; and by 1860 there were more than four million Africans being sold through an internal system of slave trading largely in the American south (Slavery, 2009).

As slavery became more popular, so did its opposition. President Abraham Lincoln freed slaves in the rebellious states with the Emancipation Proclamation issued in 1863. The assassination of President Lincoln ignited more Americans to oppose slavery.

The practice of slavery throughout many Southern states has had centuries-long effects on race relations in America. For example, Smith (2015) noted the historical ties the state of Missouri-where Michael Brown, an unarmed Black 18-year-old was killed by a White police officer: a large part of the state's economic infrastructure depended on the brutal and forced labor of slaves. "Slave labor accounted for much of the region's wealth gained during the heyday of the steamboat years, roughly 1820 to 1860. St. Louis became the nation's second-largest port during this era" (Smith, 2015, p. 256). There is a deeply rooted cycle of oppression of Black Americans throughout the history of the United States. The cycle is founded upon systematic institutions that promote White privilege while simultaneously subjugating Blacks. The cycle of oppression began with slavery and its barbarism, Jim Crow Laws and segregation, the Civil Rights Movement, to the most recent, Black Lives Matter movement. Slavery is emphatically the constant connecting fiber of the cyclical oppression of Blacks in America, making the Black Lives Matter Movement necessary to continue to challenge injustices and abolish systemic practices of privilege to some at the expense of others.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Black Lives Matter movement originated from recent events related to the murders of unarmed Black men by civilian vigilantes or White policemen. The use of the #BlackLivesMatter on social media served as a rallying cry, and has been used to bring awareness to the injustice of suspicious deaths of Black people. Despite the awareness through social media that the Black Lives Matter movement has created, the movement lacks identifiable leadership and adequate communication of its agenda. The significance of this study is to examine the relevancy of the Black Lives Matter movement, while

comparing it to the 1960s Civil Rights movement, specifically, in regards to the difference in readily identifiable leadership. The purpose of the study is to compare Old Dominion University students' and affiliates' attitudes of the Black Lives Matter protests to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement to determine what is believed to be a more effective approach to achieving positive social change.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ₁: Does the lack of identifiable leadership discourage students who support social change from actively participating in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?

RQ₂: Would the presentation of a specific agenda improve the likelihood of more active involvement in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?

RQ₃: Is the phrase Black Lives Matter polarizing?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the primary spokesperson, great orator, and social activist of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement was assassinated. Bob Blauner, a researcher during the Civil Rights era, was in the initial phase of conducting interviews when Dr. King was assassinated. Blauner (1989) noted that many Blacks and Whites in America had a strikingly different reaction to Dr. King's death. "Most blacks we talked to mourned not only the civil rights leader himself but also the ray of hope that he promised, his dream that a just and integrated society might still be realized" (p. 1). Dissimilarly, Blauner noted, "Yet many whites we interviewed didn't even try to pretend sorrow or regret. A firefighter told us that his co-workers cheered when they heard that

King had died” (p. 2). The stark different reactions of the participants of Blauner’s interview experiment illustrates that a readily identifiable leader of a movement aimed at social change may not mend the fractured race relations of the United States.

On February 26, 2012, on a cold and rainy night in a gated community of Stanford, Florida, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin left his home on foot to purchase snacks from a local convenience store. A phone call was made to the local police department by 28-year-old George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer. Without just cause, Zimmerman assumed Martin was connected in some way to burglaries that had taken place in the neighborhood as indicated on the recorded 911 call Zimmerman made where he labeled Martin, according to Bell (2015), as a “Real suspicious guy,” who he subsequently pursued because as Zimmerman exclaimed, “These assholes, they always get away” (p. 852). After an altercation between the two, Martin’s teenage body lay lifeless on the cold, wet ground. George Zimmerman, the neighborhood watchman had shot and killed Martin. Outrage ensued as the media forced a narrative that put Martin, the victim, on trial. Alicia Garza, the unwitting co-creator of the hashtag and consequential movement of Black Lives Matter explained, “I watched as many of our major news stations were covering the Trayvon Martin trial. That was interesting to me, because you can’t put somebody on trial who’s dead, so it was really the George Zimmerman trial, but already, the framing is happening” (personal communication, February 2, 2016). Zimmerman was not initially arrested at the scene because although he was the aggressor as indicated in the police recordings, he claimed self-defense. It was not until Martin’s mother, Sabrina Fulton, garnered more than one million signatures on a petition, that charges of second-degree murder and manslaughter were filed by special

prosecutor, Angela B. Cory (Garza, 2016, personal communication). The not guilty plea was successfully argued on the basis of Florida's Stand Your Ground Law and sparked nationwide protests. Many people had a hard time rationalizing how George Zimmerman, the aggressor, could successfully argue in a court of law that he was standing his ground after profiling and pursuing the unarmed teenager who was simply on his way home after making a convenience store purchase of tea and Skittles.

On August 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri, 18-year-old Michael Brown and his friend Dorian Johnson were approached by Police Officer, Darren Wilson, for walking in the street. C. Wilson and S. Wilson noted that according to Johnson, Officer Wilson ordered the two to, "Get the fuck out the street" (2015, p. 53). As the two neared their destination, Wilson shortly returned and an altercation ensued between the unarmed Black Michael Brown and White Darren Wilson, resulting in Brown's untimely demise. Eyewitness accounts and the testimony of Officer Wilson greatly differ. Although Wilson claimed that Brown charged him in an aggressive manner, Brown's body was found approximately 30 feet from Wilson's vehicle where the altercation took place, and there was also no gunshot residue on Brown's body, which can be argued that there was too great of a distance between the two to merit a credible threat that warranted six gunshots. "Community members and Brown's family immediately became alarmed at the shooting, with several people providing conflicting accounts of what happened in the moments immediately preceding the shooting" (C. Wilson; S. Wilson, p. 53). Protests, riots, and looting plagued the city for weeks after citizens were outraged at the police's mishandling of Brown's lifeless body by leaving it exposed in the sweltering, August heat for more than four hours as blood slowly poured from the six gunshot wounds, including two shots

to the face, that Officer Wilson inflicted upon him. Additionally, the non-indictment of Wilson by a grand jury sparked even more fury that enraged protesters and rioters alike. McLaughlin (2016) noted the reaction to the protesters by the police was one that mirrored war-torn foreign countries. "Seeing tanks and armored vehicles to this degree in the small town of Ferguson was a show of force that's usually reserved for war" (para. 7). The American Civil Liberties Union described in detail the response from Ferguson law enforcement. "Ferguson Police Department initially responded to these demonstrations by deploying officers in military-style riot gear backed up by armored vehicles, tear-gas, and stun grenades. This war-like response gave the impression that the police considered members of the community as enemy combatants, rather than disenchanting, frustrated protesters" (ACLU, 2014, p. 40). The war-like response by law enforcement only further angered the already anxious and hostile crowd.

There is a great amount of significance of the two murdered, unarmed Black teens, Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, necessitating the Black Lives Matter movement. It was with much anguish, fear, and disappointment that Garza took to social media, and wrote a letter, to express her agony of yet another unarmed Black teen murdered and no justice served. No justice served through a not guilty verdict of George Zimmerman and the non-indictment of Darren Wilson meant that there was no help in alleviating at least some of the emotional distress of the African American community that continues to lose trust in the justice system. Garza's distress was heightened because she has a 25-year-old brother who lives in a predominantly White neighborhood. Garza, like many other Black mothers, sisters, wives, brothers, and fathers, lives with an indescribable, lingering fear that loved ones being unarmed, and most importantly

innocent of a crime are still not shielded from premature death brought about by vigilantes or police officers. Garza noted, “I didn’t write that letter because I knew that eventually it would become the banner for a worldwide movement. I wrote that letter because too many of the people who are sworn to protect and serve our communities are literally getting away with murder” (personal communication, February 2, 2016). Black people live every day with a haunting fear that no matter how respectful, well-dressed, well-spoken, cultured, or educated one may be, there is never a time that being Black and the fear of death is not persistently nagging at one’s psyche. Smith (2015) noted the following:

From a European-American perspective, racism may seem like a chronic disease for which coping is as good as a cure. That perspective, however, is one of privilege. African-Americans typically live with the daily indignities of endemic racism that are mostly invisible to the dominant culture. Not long ago I heard an African-American pastor tell about a question he liked to ask other students, white students, during his seminary days: How often do you think about being white? The invariable answer was, “I never think about being white.” The existence of privilege is almost imperceptible to people of privilege, and the basis of that privilege never needs bringing to awareness. My friend, however, emphatically says that, contrary to the typical and parallel white experience, he thinks about being black every day of his life. (p. 258)

African Americans live with the consciousness of one’s skin color and are keenly aware of the threat it presents to some.

Alicia Garza's "love letter to Black people" on Facebook closed with simple statements that would bring about a new generation of civil rights activists to be advocates for social change. She stated, "Our lives matter, we matter, black lives matter" (personal communication, February 2, 2016). She had the assistance of a friend, who put a hashtag in front of the phrase, Black Lives Matter so that it read, #BlackLivesMatter. The steady use of the hashtag on social media followed, particularly as protesters used the Black Lives Matter phrase as a rallying cry during the aftermath that followed the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Garza noted, "That is how a hashtag grew into a movement. People went home and they organized. People learned from what folks were doing on the ground in Missouri and brought it back into their own communities" (personal communication, February 2, 2016). #BlackLivesMatter has been used to bring awareness and serves as a uniformed call for justice in every suspicious death of a Black person in police custody or murder of an unarmed Black person by police or neighborhood watchman following Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown deaths.

There have been many deaths of unarmed Black people before the Black Lives Matter movement. However, the popularization of the hashtag has heightened domestic and international awareness of the disproportionate mistreatment of Black Americans in a post-Civil Rights era. The United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) published recommendations concerning racial injustices, specifically the murder of Michael Brown and the Stand Your Ground Law argued in the George Zimmerman trial. CERD Vice Chairman Nouredine Amir stated, "These are not isolated events and illustrates a bigger problem in the United States, such as racial bias among law enforcement officials, the lack of proper implementation of rules and

regulations governing the use of force, and the inadequacy of training of law enforcement officials” (Pulliam-Moore, 2014, para. 3). After the grand jury decision to not indict Officer Darren Wilson for the murder of Michael Brown, President Obama addressed the nation concerning public unrest in Ferguson and stated, “The fact is, in too many parts of this country, a deep distrust exists between law enforcement and communities of color. Some of this is the result of the legacy of racial discrimination in this country. And this is tragic, because nobody needs good policing more than poor communities with higher crime rates” (Muskal, 2014, para. 11). The lack of Black law enforcement officers in Ferguson, Missouri, has contributed to the mistrust and constant racial profiling. “As a whole 67% of Ferguson’s population is black and 29% is white, a stark contrast to Ferguson’s police department, which is 94% white. In 2013 blacks accounted for 86% of all traffic stops in Ferguson and were two times as likely to be searched compared to whites” (Pulliam-Moore, 2014, para. 4). The disproportionate number of White officers on the police force is a contributing factor to the mistrust of the largely African-American community.

The significance of this study is to examine the relevancy of the Black Lives Matter movement, while comparing to the 1960s Civil Rights movement, specifically, in regards to the difference in readily identifiable leadership. Additionally, the significance of this study is to examine the necessity of adequate communication of the movement’s agenda in order for the movement to continue to successfully progress.

LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were set to provide boundaries for this study:

1. Although a national social interest, it was reasoned that Old Dominion University students and affiliates took a specific interest in the issue, particularly since President John R. Broderick invited Alicia Garza, co-creator of the Black Lives Matter movement to be the keynote speaker at the President's Lecture Series on February 2, 2016. It was also reasoned that since Old Dominion University is located in Norfolk, VA, and that the state of Virginia has direct links to the African slave trade, this issue would raise an even greater interest.
2. The intent of this study was to determine if non-students-of-color believe that the Black Lives Matter movement, despite its name, can be all-inclusive.

ASSUMPTIONS

The results of this study were based on the following assumptions:

1. Black students are more likely to be involved with the Black Lives Matter movement than any other group.
2. Students who have been racially profiled by law enforcement are more likely to be involved with the Black Lives Matter movement.
3. Black students are more likely to understand that the hashtag All Lives Matter excludes some groups such as Muslims, the poor, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ), and Latinos.

PROCEDURES

In order to conduct this study, the researcher attended the President's Lecture Series at Old Dominion University on February 2, 2016, where Alicia Garza, co-creator of the Black Lives Matter movement was attended. Garza was invited to Old Dominion University through a student-led initiative where she addressed an audience of more than

1,500 (Robinson, para. 2). Then theories were examined, and a survey was created to collect data from Old Dominion University students and affiliates. The survey consisted of a list of questions that pertained to beliefs of the effectiveness of the Black Lives Matter movement compared the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms were defined in order to explain the meaning as they pertain to this study.

1. All Lives Matter: The counterpoint to Black Lives Matter. However, this phrase is counterproductive because it is at best aspirational to Blacks and has already been achieved for most Whites through White privilege. All lives matter typically does not include the poor, disparaged, or other minorities in the United States such as Muslims and Latinos.
2. Black Lives Matter: A phrase coined by social activist, Alicia Garza, to bring awareness to unjustified shootings of unarmed Black people. The phrase has since been popularized and has become a rallying cry for all suspicious deaths or unjustified homicides of Black people, particularly concerning law enforcement.
3. White privilege: A set of advantages or immunities that White people benefit from on a daily basis beyond those common to all others. It is the presumption of White superiority within various structures and systems, which help to maintain racial hierarchy. White privilege creates, “Racial disparities that are driven and maintained by public- and private-sector policies that not only disadvantage communities of color but also over-advantage whites” (Gulati-Partee, Potapchuk, 2014, p. 25).

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

In this chapter the connection between America's history of slavery to the necessity of the Black Lives Matter movement was discussed. The statement of the problem and the purpose, which is to compare Old Dominion University students' and affiliates' attitudes of the Black Lives Matter protests to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, to determine what is believed to be a more effective approach to achieving positive social change were presented. The research questions that would help to answer the problem statement were also listed in order to assist in gaining insight to beliefs if the movement is relevant and necessary. The research questions also helped to discover what is believed that can be done to effectively contribute to positive social change. The background and significance of this study evaluated the historical contributions that led to the formation of social movements like the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the current Black Lives Matter movement. Assumptions and limitations were discussed to set a foundation for the study, theorizing what the researcher believed to be true. The procedure used to conduct the study was also discussed. Overall, the purpose of Chapter I was to connect the historical cycle of the oppression of Blacks through slavery to the significance and necessity of the Black Lives Matter Movement.

In Chapter II, the literature discussed the necessity of a new Civil Rights movement to aid in the eradication of racism in America. There is information presented using statistical data that highlights systemic institutions that have been created to maintain a steady level of oppression through economics, housing, and education. Chapter III explains the methods and procedures used to collect and analyze data for this project. Through methods and procedures, the demographics of the study's population

and how the participants were contacted is explained. Chapter IV discusses findings. Chapter IV will summarize, conclude, and make recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Black Lives Matter Movement.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to compare Old Dominion University students' attitudes of the Black Lives Matter protests to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement to determine what students believe to be a more effective approach to achieving social change. The researcher reviewed materials related to the variables presented throughout this study. This chapter examines literature that analyzed the significance of both the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter movement. This chapter also examines the relevancy of a designated individual as an appointed spokesperson for matters concerning social change. Additionally, this chapter analyzes the necessity of effective communication of the movement's agenda and the misconception that #BlackLivesMatter is interpreted by some to mean that Black lives are the only lives relevant in relation to the matter of racial equality.

A MOVEMENT WITHOUT LEADERSHIP

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s is engrained in American history with the faces of leaders and advocates for change like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and President John F. Kennedy. There is a danger that accompanies the responsibility of being the spokesperson for a movement of social change. The responsibility of moving societal views in an unfamiliar direction can be delicate and demanding. "Charismatic leaders can be co-opted by powerful interests, place their own self-interest above that of the collective, be targeted by government repression, or even be assassinated, as were Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. The dependence of movements on charismatic leaders can therefore weaken them, even lead to their collapse" (Harris, 2015, p. 36). The

reliance on a single spokesperson or leader of a social change movement can hinder progression. The Black Lives Matter movement is a nontraditional effort to shift societal views in the direction of all-inclusivity. The movement includes many people of various backgrounds and nontraditional gender standards. Although the movement was founded by three friends, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, who used social media to express “rage and frustration” of the deaths of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, the Black Lives Matter movement does not have a designated individual who serves as a representative to articulate demands or concerns to politicians or to the public (personal communication, February 2, 2016). “The movement comprises a broad coalition. Many of its followers are women; many are gay; some are transgender; some aren’t black. It has no formal leadership and no shortage of leaders” (Altman, 2015, p. 24). Harris (2015) noted the “nostalgia” associated with comparing the Black Lives Matter movement to the “golden age” of the 1960s Civil Right Movement, but also noted that key activists of the Black Lives Matter movement reminds us that this current surge of protest “is not your grandmamma’s civil rights movement” (p. 35). Now is the time for change.

An interview series conducted by Bob Blauner in 1968, 1978-1979, and again in 1986, illustrated the feelings and beliefs of the often negative connotations White people associated with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His finding in the interview series is evidence of the adverse public reception that can make an individual like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a target of unrivaled hostility.

Still other Whites saw the martyred leader as a sinister force, a firebrand, and they held him personally responsible for the country’s racial troubles, including the violence following the assassination. Many Whites felt resentful, even jealous, of

the time television devoted in the wake of the assassination to documentaries about King and the Civil Rights Movement. (Blauner, 1989, p. 2)

Tackling race relations in an attempt to change the majority of society's views is delicate in nature. Eliminating an individual as a movement's spokesperson can ease one into transitional thinking that highlights the benefits of total racial equality over perceptions of racial superiority. Blauner noted the stark contrast in tone and response of the participants of his interview series in 1978 and 1979. "Whites sounded less extreme in their racial attitude, perhaps in part because they were no longer confronted by a strong and aggressive Black movement and because the public clamor and pressure for racial equality had abated" (Blauner, 1989, p. 3)

The comparison of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the current Black Lives Matter movement not only differs the latter's lack of readily identifiable leadership; the Civil Rights movement had many focuses of change such as housing, economics, and jobs. Conversely, the focus of the Black Lives Matter movement is to highlight the poor treatment of Blacks by the police and to create police reform with the hopeful expectation that all of American society will desire racial equality.

Though the 1960s movement addressed the civil and political rights that were denied to black people access and use of public accommodations, the right to vote, and ensuring fair employment and housing opportunities-it did not directly confront the racialized degradation black people endured, and many continue to endure, at the hands of the police. What the Black Lives Matter protests have

done, however, is not only put police reform on the policy agenda but demanded that American society reconsider how it values black lives. (Harris, 2015, p. 34)

INCREASING INVOLVEMENT THROUGH AGENDA SPECIFICITY

Information technology has made reaching people across the globe significantly convenient. The use of smartphones and social media connects people throughout the world virtually instantaneously. Social media is the platform today's social activists like Black Lives Matter co-founder, Alicia Garza used to reach followers and friends in a letter following the shooting death of Trayvon Martin.

Today, social media particularly twitter can reach individuals throughout the nation and across the world in milliseconds, drastically slashing the time it takes to organize protests. As a recent New York Times Magazine spread noted, through twitter, core Black Lives Matter activists like Johnetta Elzie and Deray Mckesson, who are based in St. Louis, now have the ability to frame events and direct the actions of hundreds of thousands of people across the nation at their fingertips. (Harris, 2015, p. 35)

There is a complexity that relates to social media and one successfully communicating social change agendas. Altman (2015) noted the power of the Black Lives Matter movement, but also highlighted the difficulties in developing and communicating a clear message. "That model has been a strength, allowing protesters from a range of ideologies to unite under a common banner. But it may hinder the process of developing a clear platform" (p. 24). With so many voices an endless litany of issues are pointed out, reducing the possibility of effectively communicating an agenda. Certain grievances may be introduced, but they are consequently displaced among others. In July 2015 in

Cleveland, Ohio, 1,500 social activists gathered at the first National Convening of the Movement for Black Lives. There, many activists gave speeches on a list of topics ranging from conflict resolution, political organizing, drug decriminalization, to the mindfulness of hip-hop music. Altman noted that Florida State University sociologist, Deana Rohlinger, who studies protest movements noted the problematic nature of having too many issues presented in one social movement is, “that you’re so decentralized that you don’t have a unified message” (p. 24).

Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton met with Black Lives Matter activists while on the campaign trail in New Hampshire and affirmed the validity of their grievances, but she advised the activists to develop a specific set of political goals. “Your analysis is totally fair. But you’re going to have to come together as a movement and say, here’s what we want done about it” (Altman, p. 24). The lack of agenda specificity communicated to the public and political officials ultimately has slowed the progression of the movement, caused confusion, and exposed the Black Lives Matter movement to counterfeits. Alicia Garza expressed to an audience at Old Dominion University, “There are unauthorized people selling Black Lives Matter memorabilia. There are people committing criminal acts, and none of these people are affiliated with either of our official 28 chapters we have established nationwide and in Canada” (personal communication, 2016). Garza noted the movement’s agenda. “Our agenda is rooted in the deep profound love that says that everybody has a role and that we are made better when we can be who we fully are, everywhere that we are” (Garza, personal communication). The lack of adequately communicating what the movement’s activists feel needs to be

done and an expected timeline leaves the Black Lives Matter agenda open to interpretation and criticism.

EFFECTIVENESS OF VIOLENT PROTESTS

In Ferguson, Missouri, after the shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson, violent protests erupted for weeks throughout the city. “Mr. Brown’s death prompted weeks of demonstrations and a response from the police that include tear gas and rubber bullets. Confrontations between protesters and law enforcement officers continued even after Gov. Jay Nixon deployed the Missouri National Guard to help quell the unrest” (Healy, 2015, para. 11). Although the method of peaceful protests is more publically acceptable, this dangerous and controversial tactic by protesters has resulted in a new task force being created to address police reform. “In response to the uprising, the White House convened a new task force on policing. Criminal-justice reform bills have found bipartisan support in Congress” (Altman, p. 22). Senator Bernie Sanders outlined a racial justice and equality platform after being confronted by Black Lives Matter activists while on the campaign trail as a presidential candidate for the Democratic party in 2016. His response was to, “Outline a new racial justice platform and hire a Black activist to serve as a spokesperson” (Altman, p. 24). Sanders understood that representation matters.

Protests for social change in the past have been orchestrated and often times planned weeks or months in advance, setting out with the goal of remaining peaceful. Conversely, the Black Lives Matter movement has taken a far more aggressive approach. Comparing protests and boycotts of eras since passed, Harris noted, “And none, certainly, have adopted the disruptive protest tactics the street marches, die-ins, bridge and tunnel

blockades, and the intense publicity campaigns that have helped Black Lives Matter force these issues onto the national political agenda” (p. 37). This approach speaks to the level of desperation and weariness of a generation that has access to 24-hour news cycles through mobile phones, alerting the public to deaths of unarmed Black people at a rate that often feels overwhelming.

In April 2015 protestors filled the streets in Baltimore, Maryland, following the death of 25-year-old Freddie Gray who suffered a severe neck and back injury while in police custody. While the city of Baltimore settled with the family of Freddie Gray for \$6.4 million, there were additional city funding that will be spent on the, “More than 200 businesses were damaged, with 15 buildings and 144 cars set on fire” (Harris, E. para. 1). Disruption has been a philosophy of the movement to bring about change even if it means causing chaos and destruction. Altman (2015) noted, “One of the guiding principles of the protest movement that has come to be known as Black Lives Matter is that discomfort can bring change” (p. 22). The current generation of Black Lives Matter protester’s approach to achieving social change greatly contrasts their predecessors of the Civil Rights Movement.

#BLACKLIVESMATTER INCLUDES #ALLLIVESMATTER

Kareem Jackson, a St. Louis hip-hop artist, who is best known by his stage moniker, Tef Poe, was interviewed by a BBC talk show host concerning his involvement of Black Lives Matter movement. Hands Up United, an organization created after the murder of Michael Brown, Tef Poe, a leader in the organization noted the necessity of the Black Lives Matter movement. Comparing the Black Lives Matter movement to Civil Rights movement, Tef Poe noted, “One of the negligent areas of the civil rights

movement is that we did not move the moral compass of racism in the right direction” (Harris, 2015, p. 34). Black Lives Matter co-founder, Alicia Garza noted that the sentiment that #AllLivesMatter is an aspirational goal that has yet to be reached, making #BlackLivesMatter necessary to stop the brutalization of black and brown bodies (personal communication, February 2, 2016). Garza also noted that there is a necessity to conversations about racism and that #BlackLivesMatter is not meant to exclude the relevancy of any other race’s humanity. “It’s not racist to talk about race. Racism isn’t people being mean to each other. It’s about systems and patterns and practices and policies that privilege some at the expense of others” (personal communication, February 2, 2016). The All lives matter hashtag will only gain true credibility when its users become vocal in all matters of injustices.

The Black Lives Matter movement involves and for the purposes of survival and progression needs the continued efforts of all races.

Seemingly out of nowhere, a multiracial, multigenerational movement asserting black humanity in response to racist police killings and vigilante violence has ripped across the country. The police brutality and killings are not, to be sure, new; the emerging movement against them, however, is. The upsurge in anti-racist organizing is a break from what we normally consider black activism in the United States. (Harris, 2015, p. 34-35)

Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg sent out an internal memo to the employees of the social media company reprimanding those who had “defaced” the words black lives matter on the company’s wall of signatures, replacing the phrase with the words all

lives matter. In part, Zuckerberg's memo read, "There are specific issues affecting the Black community in the United States, coming from a history of oppression and racism. Black lives matter doesn't mean other lives don't-it's simply asking that the Black community also achieves the justice they deserve" (Curtis, 2016, para. 5-6). The Black Lives Matter hashtag is a rallying cry of an entire community of people who are disenfranchised, over-victimized, dehumanized, and degraded, by an endemic system created to oppress.

STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT PROTESTS

College students have always been relevant in their contributions in social change activism. Their dedication has aided in the progression of past social change movements such as the 1960s civil rights movement (Cohn, 2016, p. 60). "Today's college students are courted by presidential campaigns and organizations ranging from Planned Parenthood to the National Rifle Association (NRA). Students are often at the forefront of widespread movements and hot-button conversations like Black Lives Matter and LGBT rights." (Cohn, p. 60). Cohn (2016) noted that Patrick Walls of North Park University in Chicago, Illinois took part in a yearlong internship program that influenced his understanding of injustice. Walls participated in several demonstrations and petitions organized by the Urban Outreach program that concluded in an expedition to a civil rights site. According to Cohn, Walls went to Ferguson, Missouri, an important site for Black Lives Matter.

Each person was paired with a partner of the same gender but a different race.

This experience was the most important I had in college, unpacking my background and biases as a white man and truly hearing people of color and

women talk about their experiences. It was through that, and my strong belief in empathy and compassion, that I became passionate about issues of race and gender, and that moved me to continue fighting for justice. (Cohn, p. 66)

According to Cohn, the next generation of activist are cultivated on college campuses when there is recognition of historical hastening of activism. “Colleges that recognize the revolutionary history and precipitating force of student involvement in cause-oriented activism are in a strong position to cultivate the next generation of activists” (p. 74). College students are the driving force of the Black Lives Matter movement.

SUMMARY

In this chapter the Black Lives Matter movement and its relevancy, and a comparison to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement were discussed. This chapter examined the necessity of adequate communication of the movement’s agenda in order for the movement’s successful progression. The effectiveness of violent protests is somewhat of a guiding principle for today’s social change activists. Their belief that change is hastily made through discomfort and destruction if necessary was also analyzed in this chapter. The comparison between #AllLivesMatter, and #BlackLivesMatter was presented, asserting that #BlackLivesMatter is not meant to exclude any other race’s relevancy.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of Chapter III is to detail the methods and procedures used to gather data from participants for this study. This chapter discusses the demographics and personal beliefs of the population. The statistical analysis used to examine the data will be evaluated. Additionally, Chapter III will also describe the instrument used to gather data in a random sample, sampling technique, and why this method of data collection was chosen. The methods and procedures to conduct the study were assessed by the Old Dominion University College of Education Human Subjects Review Committee (see Appendix A for the letter of Determination of Exempt Status).

POPULATION

The primary population of this study was a random sampling of Old Dominion University Students. The Office of University Counsel and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment were contacted in order to obtain email addresses of Old Dominion University students who were enrolled during the Spring 2016 semester to request participation in the study to respond to an electronic survey about the Black Lives Matter movement. It was reasoned that Old Dominion University students would take interest in this matter, particularly since President John R. Broderick invited Alicia Garza, co-creator of the Black Lives Matter movement to the President's Lecture Series on February 2, 2016.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The instrument used to collect data from the participants was created during the course Foundations of Research 612 taught by Dr. John Ritz's in the Spring 2016 semester consisting of ten questions. The survey questions were formatted to include multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The Likert scale questions were based on the study's research questions. Additional questions probed each participant in order to gather data about their beliefs as related to this subject. The participants were instructed to choose answers between *strongly agree*, *agree*, *undecided*, *disagree*, and, *strongly disagree*. See Appendix B for the full survey.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

In order to reach the desired population, students' and affiliates' email addresses were collected from the Old Dominion University's Office of University Counsel and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. Initially a letter of invitation was sent, inviting participants to respond to a minimal risk survey. The surveys were distributed electronically. The answers to the survey were collected through the online software platform Qualtrics. The link to the survey was sent in an email along with the invitation in the body of the email. In the invitation, the purpose of the questionnaire and why it is important to gain feedback was stated. After sending an initial invitation, and a follow-up email, data was analyzed. Please see Appendix C-E for the letter of invitation, follow-up email, and the thank you letter for participating.

STATYSTICAL ANALYSIS

When the surveys were returned, the data was analyzed to produce findings. Qualtrics provided data analysis and reports to display the percentage totals for each response. Using qualitative data from Qualtrics, a descriptive qualitative analysis was conducted.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the methods and procedures used to gather information about beliefs pertaining to the relevance, necessity, or lack thereof of the Black Lives Matter movement was discussed. The population was described as a random sampling of Old Dominion University students and affiliates. Chapter III also explained the instrument design, the survey, and the methods that were used to gather information. In Chapter IV, the answers to the survey questions are examined in detail.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to compare Old Dominion University students' and affiliates' attitudes of the Black Lives Matter protests to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement to determine what is believed to be a more effective approach to achieving positive social change. In this chapter data collected is presented and analyzed according to participants' answers to an online survey.

DATA COLLECTION

Initially, the Office of University Counsel of Old Dominion University was contacted and supplied the researcher with 182 email addresses in order for the survey to be distributed. These addresses were of those who attended University President John R. Broderick's Lecture Series featuring social activist and co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Alicia Garza on February 2, 2016. After the initial email invitation was sent to the 182 people who had provided their email addresses through an RSVP, 22 participants started the survey; however, only 18 participants completed the survey. This was 9.8% of the email population. One week later a reminder email was sent to the remainder of the 182 attendees who had not responded. No additional participants responded to the survey invitation, still leaving only 18 surveys completed.

In order to achieve statistical significance and reach the estimated 1,500 attendees of the President's Lecture featuring Alicia Garza, Old Dominion University's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment was contacted to assist with accessing more email addresses from a larger number of the student body, specifically students who were

registered during the Spring 2016 semester when the event took place. An additional 10,082 survey invitations were sent to students who were enrolled during the Spring Semester of 2016. It was reasoned that because the President's Lecture Series that featured co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Alicia Garza, took place during the Spring 2016 Semester, students who were enrolled at Old Dominion University during that time would be interested in participating in the survey. Of the 10,082 email invitations sent, 1,409 participants started the survey. However, only 644 of the 10,082 participants completed the survey. The total number of completed surveys was 662. This was 6.5% of the total number of enrolled students, and 44% of the estimated attendees of the President's Lecture Series.

Online surveys have a number of variables to be considered when determining an effective response rate. Some of these variables include number of email addresses bounced, total number of questions, number of people opting out, length of invitation, number of reminders, and many more (Archer, 2008). According to Hamilton (2009), an online survey analyst from Ipathia, Inc., the average response rate for an online survey is 32.52%.

The study consisted of 10 questions with three different formats. The formats were multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions were used to determine specific demographics from the participants, such as what race and gender the participant most closely identified with, and recommendations to improve the racial climate. Questions 1-6 were the Likert scale questions and the scoring was as follows: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree. The open-ended question was asked so that the participant could

identify their expected semester of graduation. This question did not have any bearings on the conclusions and recommendations. Rather it was asked to gain insight into whether the participant was currently enrolled at Old Dominion University during the time of their participation in the survey.

DATA ANALYSES

Survey Question 1: Does the lack of identifiable leadership discourage students who support social change from actively participating in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?

Figure 1 shows the responses to the survey question 1, in which fifty-three participants (8.17%) strongly agreed, one hundred sixty-five participants (25.52%) agreed, one hundred twenty-six participants (19.41%) were undecided, one hundred seventy-eight participants (27.43%) disagreed and one hundred twenty-seven participants (19.57%) strongly disagreed that the lack of identifiable leadership in the Black Lives Matter movement is a factor that prevents them from actively participating. While (33.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the lack of identifiable leadership in the Black Lives Matter movement is a factor that prevents them from actively participating, the majority of respondents (47%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Q1 - Lack of Identifiable Leadership

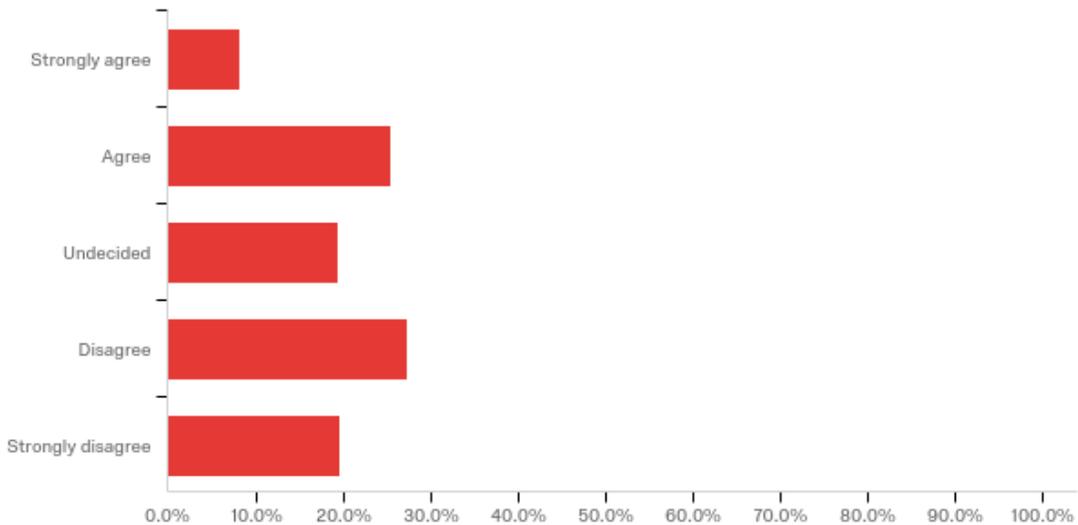


Figure 1. Participants' responses to Survey Question 1 "Does the lack of readily identifiable leadership like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis of the Civil Rights Movement discourage students who support social change from actively participating in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?"

Survey Question 2: Would the presentation of a specific agenda improve the likelihood of more active involvement in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?

Figure 2 shows the responses to survey question 2, in which one hundred twenty-four participants (19.25%) strongly agreed, two hundred twenty participants (34.16%) agreed, one hundred ten participants (17.08%) were undecided, eighty-three participants (12.89%) disagreed, and one hundred seven participants (16.61%) strongly disagreed that the presentation of a specific agenda would improve the likelihood of more active involvement in protests and rallies. While (29.5%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the presentation of a specific agenda would improve the likelihood of more active involvement in protests and rallies, the majority of respondents (53.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

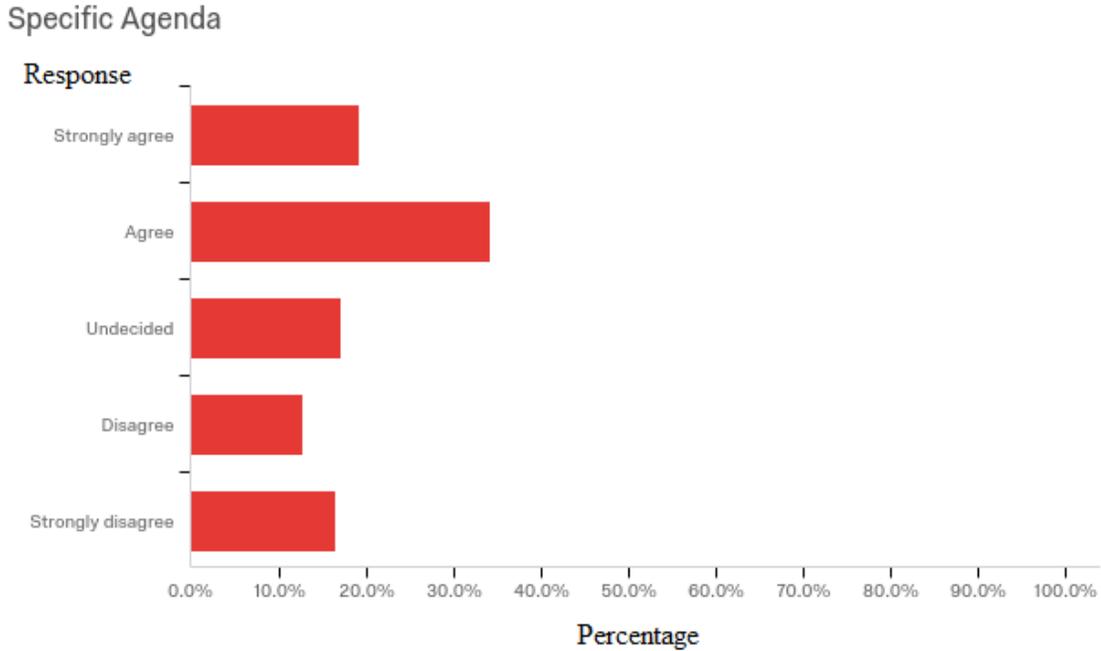


Figure 2. Participants’ responses to the Survey Question “Would the presentation of a specific agenda that supports positive, non-divisive social change improve the likelihood of more active involvement in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?”

Survey Question 3: The international 2017 Peace Prize Award that recognizes peacemakers around the world will be awarded to the three co-founders of Black Lives Matter Movement. Does this news, although not widely reported, help to inform your perception of the movement?

Figure 3 shows the responses to survey question 3, in which one hundred eighteen participants (18.44%) strongly agreed, one hundred seventy-two participants (26.88%) agreed, ninety-five participants (14.84%) were undecided, one hundred twenty-two participants (19.06%) disagreed, and one hundred thirty-three participants (20.78%) strongly disagreed that the news of the Black Lives Matter movement’s co-founders being awarded the 2017 Peace Prize did not help to inform their perception of the movement. While (39.8%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the news of the

Black Lives Matter movement’s co-founders being awarded the 2017 Peace Prize did not help to inform their perception of the movement, the majority of respondents (45.3%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Peace Prize Award

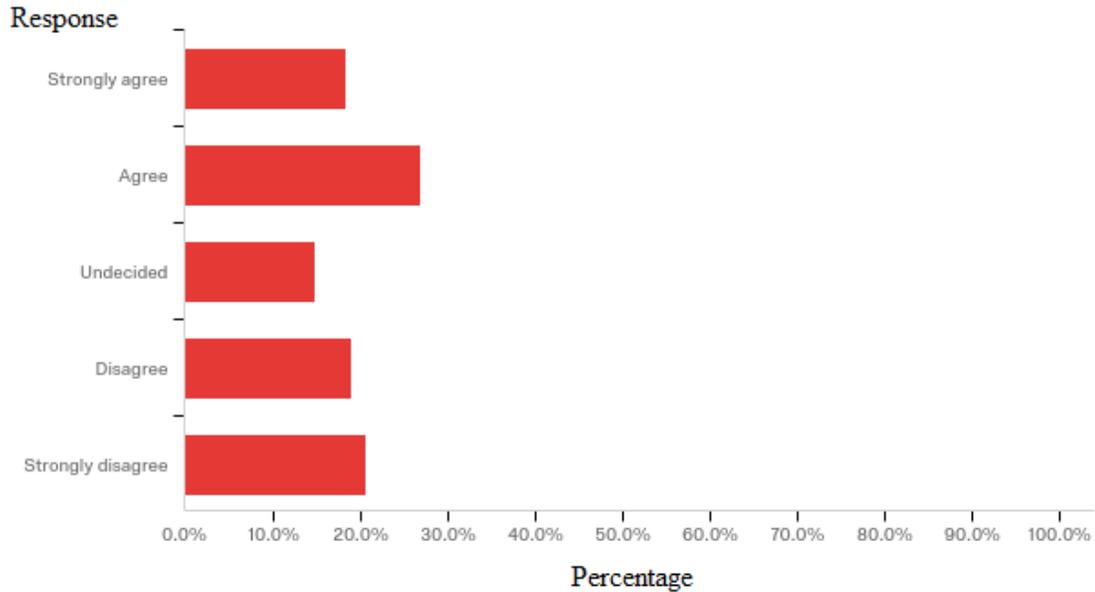


Figure 3. Participants’ responses to the Survey Question “The prestigious international 2017 Sydney Peace Prize Award that recognizes peacemakers around the world for promoting human rights, nonviolence and peace with justice will be awarded to the three co-founders of Black Lives Matter Movement. Does this news, although not widely reported, help to inform your perception of the movement?”

Survey Question 4: Have the images of sometimes violent protests contributed to a lack of interest in support of Black Lives Matter?

Figure 4 shows the responses to survey question 4, in which two hundred thirteen participants (33.13%) strongly agreed, one hundred participants (15.55%) agreed, thirty-five participants (5.44%) were undecided, one hundred forty-one participants (21.93%) disagreed, and one hundred fifty-four participants (23.95%) strongly disagreed that images of violent protests contributed to their lack of interests in support of Black Lives

Matter. While (45.9%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that images of violent protests contributed to their lack of interests in support of Black Lives Matter, the majority of respondents (48.7%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Images of Violent Protests

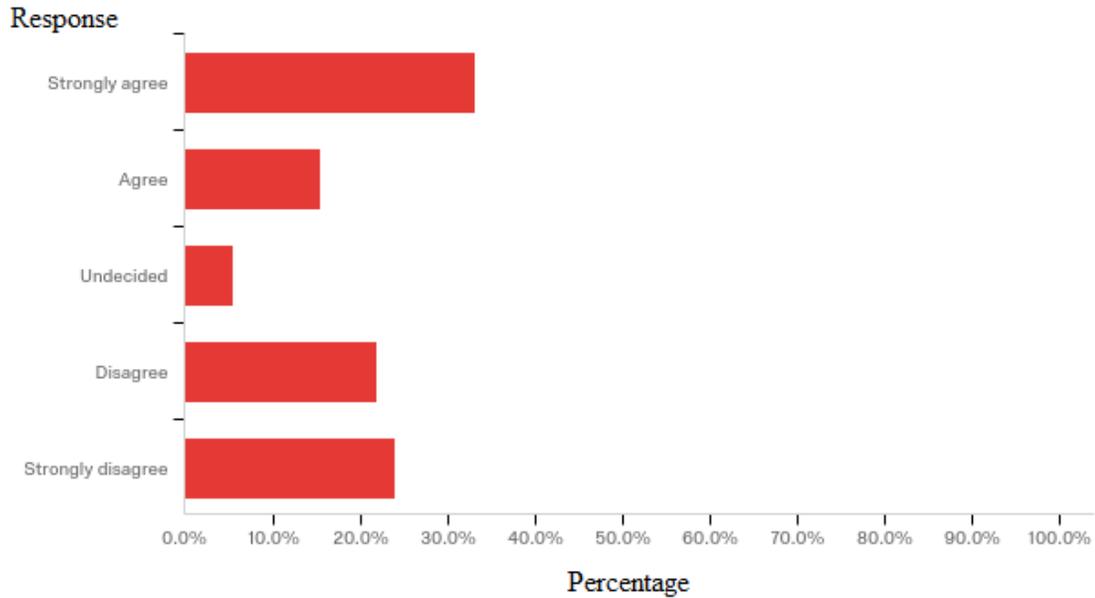


Figure 4. Participants' responses to Survey Question "The images of sometimes violent protests in places like Baltimore, Maryland, and Ferguson, Missouri, contributed to your lack of interest in support of Black Lives Matter?"

Survey Question 5: Have reports of the murders of unarmed African-Americans changed your thoughts about police reform through the Black Lives Matter movement?

Figure 5 shows the responses to survey question 5, in which one hundred eighty-five participants (28.86%) strongly agreed, one hundred fifty-two participants (23.71%) agreed, sixty-one participants (9.52%) were undecided, one hundred twenty-two participants (19.03%) disagreed, and one hundred twenty-one participants (18.88%)

strongly disagreed that the media reports of the murders of various unarmed African-Americans changed their thoughts concerning the necessity of social change and police reform through the Black Lives Matter movement. While (37.9%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that reports of murders of unarmed African-Americans changed their thoughts about police reform, the majority of respondents (52.5%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Murders of Unarmed African-Americans

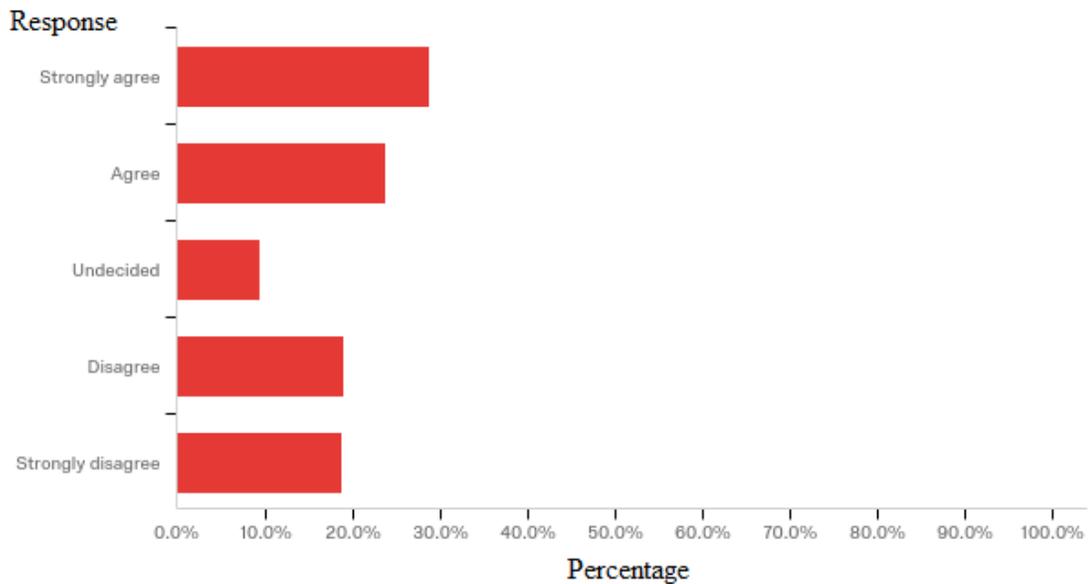


Figure 5. Participants’ responses to Survey Question “The media reports of the murders of various unarmed African-Americans changed your thoughts concerning the necessity of social change and police reform through the Black Lives Matter movement?”

Survey Question 6: Is the phrase Black Lives Matter polarizing to White people, making them less likely to get involved?

Figure 6 shows responses to survey question 6, in which two hundred twenty-three participants (34.63%) strongly agreed, one hundred ninety-three participants (29.97%) agreed, sixty-four participants (9.94%) were undecided, one hundred six

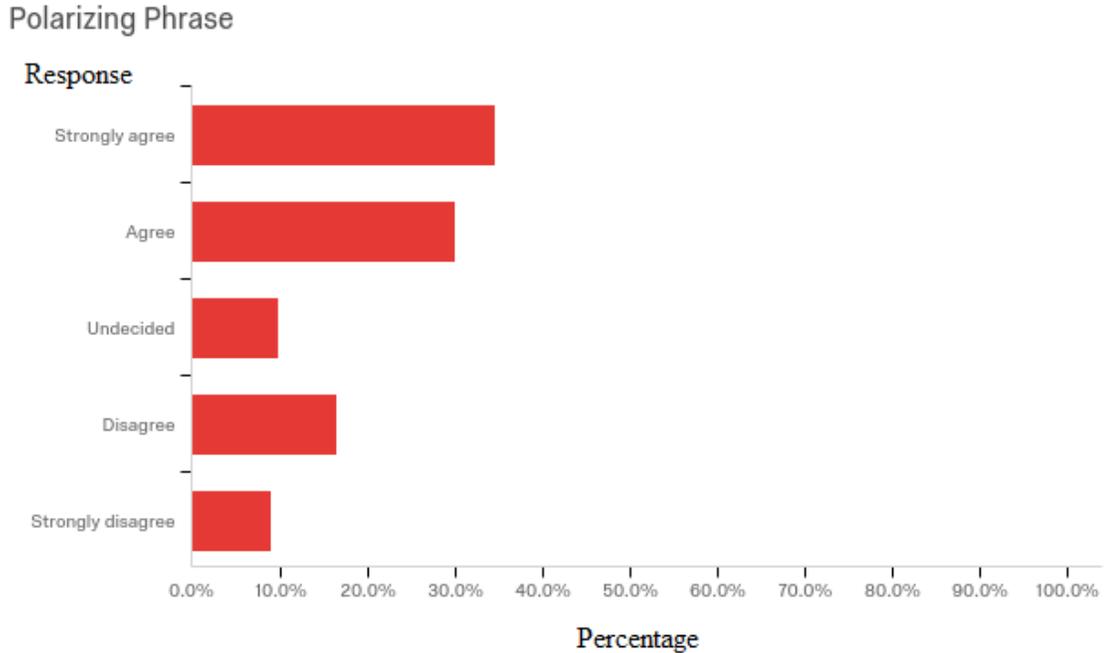


Figure 6. Participants' responses to Survey Question "The phrase Black Lives Matter is polarizing for many White people, making them less likely to get involved?"

participants (16.46%) disagreed, and fifty-eight participants (9.01%) strongly disagreed that the phrase Black Lives Matter is polarizing to White people, making them less likely to get involved. While (25.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the phrase Black Lives Matter is polarizing to White people, the majority (64.6%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Concerning the race of the participants who responded to this question, seventy-two Black participants (11.3%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, seventy-three White participants (11.4%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, five Hispanic participants (0.7%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and ten participants (1.5%) that identify as an Other race either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the phrase Black Lives Matter is polarizing to White people, making them less likely to get involved. While the majority of the participants, one hundred twenty-nine Black

participants (20.2%) either agreed or strongly agreed, two hundred ten White participants (33%) either agreed or strongly agreed, seventeen Hispanic participants (2.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed, twelve Asian participants (1.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed, and forty-three participants (6.7%) that identify as an Other race either agreed or strongly agreed that the phrase Black Lives Matter is polarizing to White people, making them less likely to get involved.

Survey Question 7: Do you identify more closely with the male or female gender?

Figure 7 shows the responses to survey question 7, in which three hundred sixty-three participants (56.81%) identified with the female gender and two hundred seventy-six participants (43.19%) identified with the male gender.

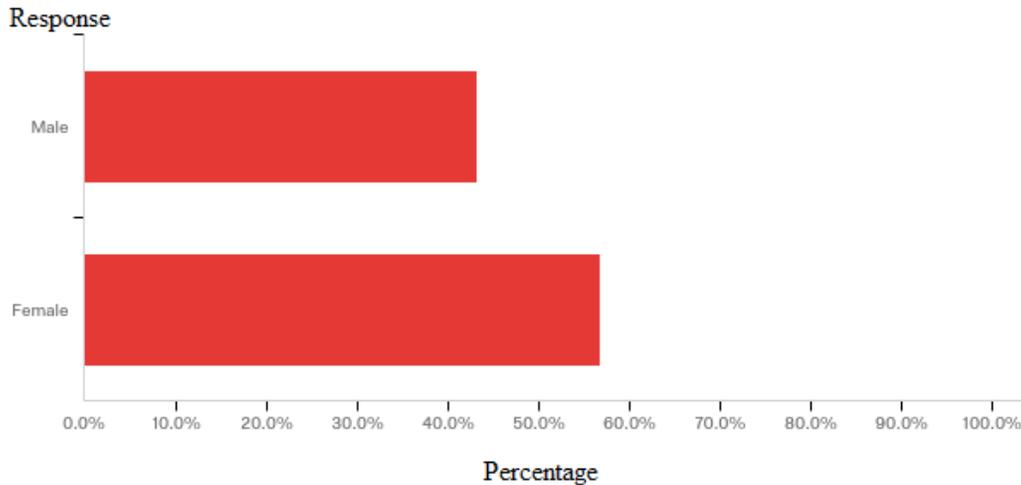


Figure 7. Gender distribution of participants in the study survey.

Survey question 8: What race do you most closely identify with?

Figure 8 shows the responses to survey question 8, in which two hundred twenty-six participants (35.31%) identified with the Black or African-American race. Three hundred ten participants (48.44%) identified with the White race. Twenty-five

participants (3.91%) identified with the Hispanic race. Sixteen participants (2.50%) identified with the Asian race. Sixty-three participants (9.84%) identified with an Other race labeled or identified on the survey.

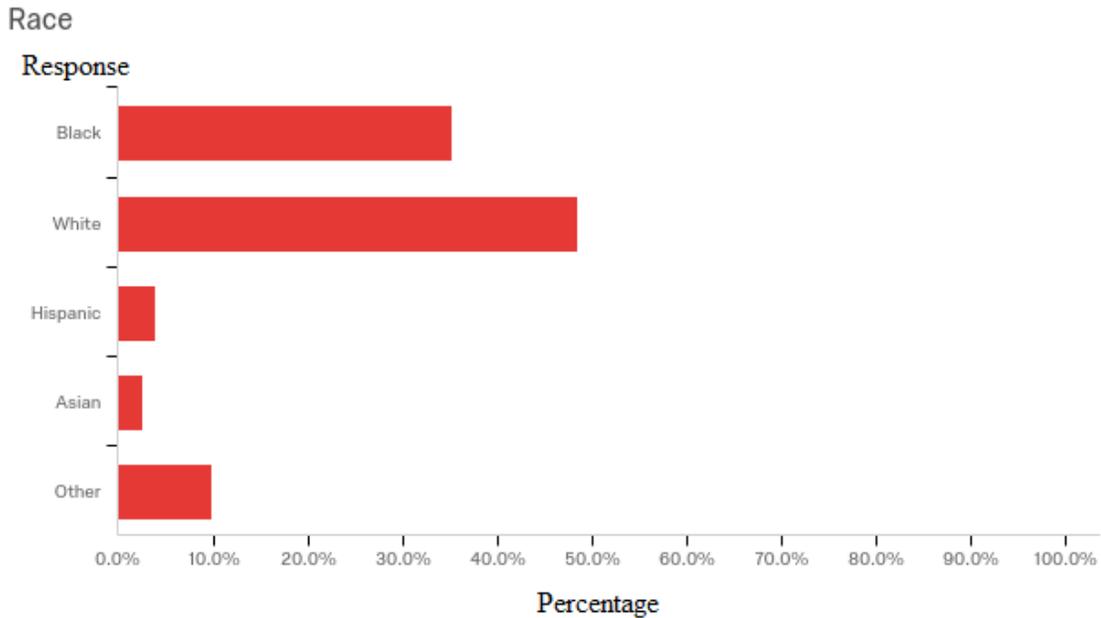


Figure 8. Participants’ responses to the Survey Question “What race do you most closely identify with?”

Survey Question 9: What is your expected date of graduation?

Six hundred nineteen participants responded to this question. This question did not have any bearings on the conclusions and recommendations made in this study. It was asked to gain insight into whether or not the respondents were students currently enrolled or if they had already graduated.

Survey Question 10: What recommendations would you make to improve the racial climate of this country? A.) Peace rallies B.) Police/community outreach programs C.) Police de-escalation training D.) All of the above

Figure 9 shows responses for survey question 10, in which participants were asked for recommendations in a multiple-choice format. Fifty-four participants (8.74%) recommended peace rallies as a means to improve the racial climate in this country. One hundred thirty participants (21.04%) recommended police and community outreach programs as a means to improve the racial climate in this country. Sixty-four participants (10.36%) recommended police de-escalation training as a means to improve the racial climate in this country. Three hundred seventy participants (59.87%) recommended all options (a) peace rallies; (b) police and community outreach programs; and (c) police de-escalation training, as a means to improve the racial climate in this country.

Recommendations

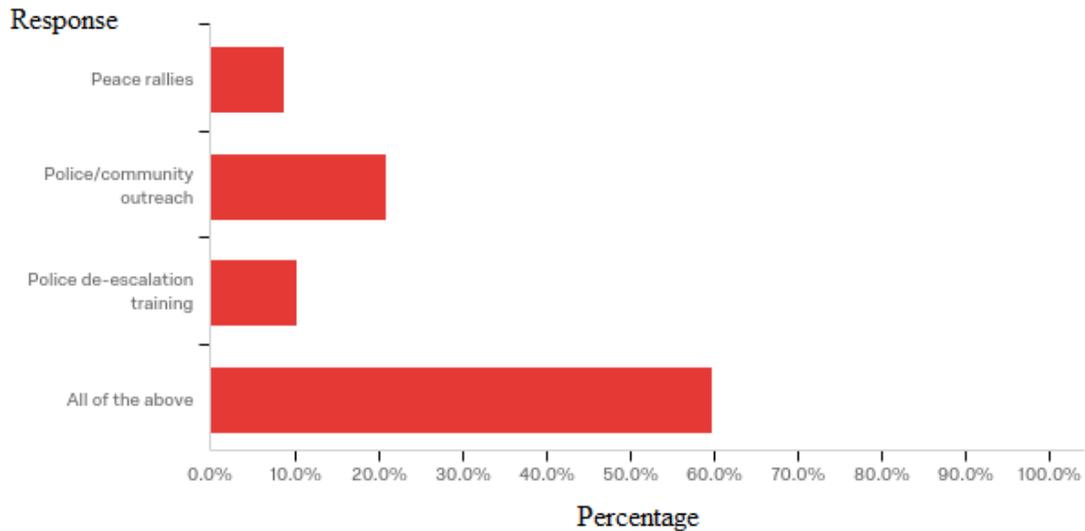


Figure 9. Participants' responses to the Survey Question "What recommendations would you make to improve the racial climate of this country?"

Table 1 summarizes the responses to questions with a Likert scale in the survey.

Table 1 Summary of Likert scale questions and responses.

Questions	Response Counts			Responses		
		SA	A	U	D	SD
Lack of identifiable leadership	649	8.17%	25.42%	19.41%	27.43%	19.57%
Specific agenda	644	19.25%	34.16%	17.08%	12.89%	16.61%
Peace Prize Award	640	18.44%	26.88%	14.84%	19.06%	20.78%
Images of violent protests	643	33.13%	15.55%	5.44%	21.93%	23.95%
Murders of unarmed people	641	28.86%	23.71%	9.52%	19.03%	18.88%
BLM is a polarizing phrase	644	34.63%	29.97%	9.94%	16.46%	9.01%

The majority of participants (27.43%) disagree that a singular identifiable leader is necessary. The majority of participants (34.16%) agree that a specific agenda needs to be better communicated. The majority of participants (26.88%) agreed that their perceptions of the movement changed with the knowledge that Black Lives Matter is being honored with a peace award. The majority of participants (33.13%) strongly agreed that images of violent protests contribute to their disinterests. The majority of participants (28.86%) strongly agreed that murders of unarmed African-Americans changed their thoughts concerning the necessity of social change and police reform. The majority of the participants (34.63%) strongly agree that Black Lives Matter is a polarizing phrase.

Table 2 presents the demographic information of participants in the study.

Table 2 Demographic data collected from participants.

Demographics	Response Count	Response Percent
Gender		
Male	276	43.09%
Female	363	56.81%
Race		
Black	226	35.31%
White	310	48.44%
Hispanic	25	3.91%
Asian	16	2.50%
Other	63	9.84%

Most participants identified with the female gender at (56.81%). More participants identified more closely with the White race at (48.44%). It was reasoned that White women are the demographic, according to the survey participant percentages, most concerned with the state of racial tensions in this country that want to be involved in a solution, but feel alienated and excluded by the polarizing phrase Black Lives Matter.

Table 3 presents the responses of participants on recommendations to improve the racial climate in this country.

Table 3 Participants' responses on recommendations to improve the racial climate.

Questions	Response Count	Response Percent
Peace rallies	54	8.74%
Police/community programs	130	21.04%
Police de-escalation training	64	10.36%
All of the above	370	59.87%

The majority of the survey participants, three hundred seventy participants (59.87%) recommended that peace rallies, police and community outreach programs, and police de-escalation training are all best practices for improving the racial climate in this country. It was reasoned that the majority of the survey participants believe that law enforcement and the community at large are responsible for helping to ease racial tensions in this country.

SUMMARY

In this chapter participants' answers to the survey were provided. Initially, the Office of University Counsel of Old Dominion University was contacted and supplied the researcher with 182 email addresses in order for the survey to be distributed. After the initial email was sent to the 182 people who had provided their email addresses through an RSVP to the Old Dominion University President's Lecture Series featuring social activist, Alicia Garza, 22 participants started the survey; however, only 18 finished the survey. This was (9.8%) of the population who sent a RSVP for the event. One week later, a reminder email was sent to the remainder of the 182 attendees who had not responded. No additional participants responded to the survey invitation, leaving only 18 surveys completed. For statistical significance Old Dominion University's Office of

Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment was contacted to assist the researcher with accessing more email addresses from a larger number of the student body. An additional 10,082 survey invitations were sent to students who were enrolled during the Spring Semester of 2016. The demographic data from respondents of the survey show that 56.8% of participants were female and 43.2 were male. Also, regarding race, 35.3% of respondents were Black or African American, 48.4% White, 3.9% Hispanic, 2.5% Asian, and 9.8% identified with Other race labeled in the survey. The majority of participants (27.43%) disagreed that a singular identifiable leader is necessary. The majority of participants (34.16%) agreed that a specific agenda needs to be better communicated. The majority of participants (26.88%) agreed that their perceptions of the movement changed with the knowledge that Black Lives Matter is being honored with a peace award. The majority of participants (33.13%) strongly agreed that images of violent protests contribute to their disinterests. The majority of participants (28.86%) strongly agreed that murders of unarmed African-Americans changed their thoughts concerning the necessity of social change and police reform. The majority of the participants (34.63%) strongly agreed that Black Lives Matter is a polarizing phrase.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of Chapter V is to summarize the research that was conducted as well as report the findings collected from the survey. Each of the research questions were reexamined with findings provided from Chapter IV. Proposed recommendations are based on participants' answers in order to improve the racial climate in this country.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to compare Old Dominion University students' and affiliates' attitudes of the Black Lives Matter protests to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement to determine what students believe to be a more effective approach to achieving positive social change. This study was completed to answer the following research questions:

RQ₁: Does the lack of identifiable leadership discourage students who support social change from actively participating in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?

RQ₂: Would the presentation of a specific agenda improve the likelihood of more active involvement in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?

RQ₃: Is the phrase Black Lives Matter polarizing?

In order to conduct this study, the researcher attended the President's Lecture Series at Old Dominion University on February 2, 2016, where Alicia Garza, co-creator of the Black Lives Matter movement spoke to an audience of more than 1,500. A survey was distributed to collect data from Old Dominion University students and affiliates who

attended the lecture series or who were interested in the subject matter. The survey specifically targeted Old Dominion University students who were enrolled during the Spring 2016 semester. The survey consisted of a list of questions that pertained to today's beliefs of the effectiveness of the Black Lives Matter movement compared the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The study consisted of 10 questions with three different formats. The formats were multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The multiple choice questions were used to determine specific demographics from the participants, such as what race and gender the participants most closely identified with, and recommendations to improve the racial climate. The open-ended question was asked so that the participant could identify their expected semester of graduation. The survey was sent out to participants through email. Included in the email was a cover letter explaining the study. The participants were informed that their participation in the survey was voluntary and that their identity would be anonymous. Reminders for participants who had not responded to the survey were sent by email with an electronic link for convenience to accessing the survey. The thank you also explained the purpose of the study and informed participants that their participation was completely voluntary and anonymous.

During the data collection process thirteen students responded to the survey request to express their contempt that such a study was being conducted. These students expressed their belief that Black Lives Matter is a terrorist group whose agenda is focused on inciting violence and fueling racial tensions. These views were expressed despite research question 3 which stated, "The prestigious international 2017 Sydney Peace Prize Award that recognizes peacemakers around the world for promoting human

rights, nonviolence and peace with justice will be awarded to the three co-founders of Black Lives Matter Movement. Does this news, although not widely reported, help to inform your perception of the movement?”

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study are based on findings from the survey. In order to achieve statistical significance more students were contacted than those who actually attended that President's Lecture Series featuring social activist and Black Lives Matter co-creator, Alicia Garza. A total of 10,264 email survey invitations were sent. 1,431 surveys were started. However, less than 700 surveys were completed. The survey completion total represented 6.5% of the total number of enrolled students, and 44% of the estimated attendees of the President's Lecture Series. In this section each research question will be listed with recommendations made based on those who agreed and those who disagreed.

Survey question 1 asked the participant, “Does the lack of readily identifiable leadership like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis of the Civil Rights Movement discourage students who support social change from actively participating in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?” One hundred seventy-eight respondents (27.43%) disagreed and one hundred twenty-seven respondents (19.57%) strongly disagreed. It was concluded that the majority of the respondents do not believe that a readily identifiable leader of the Black Lives Matter movement would aid in easing racial tensions. However, one hundred sixty-five respondents (25.42%) agreed and fifty-three (8.17%) strongly agreed that readily identifiable leadership is necessary to encourage students who support

social change to participate in protests and rallies. It was concluded that these survey respondents find value in identifying a singular leader in matters of social change.

Survey question 2 asked the participant, “Would the presentation of a specific agenda that supports positive, non-divisive social change improve the likelihood of more active involvement in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?” Two hundred twenty respondents (34.16%) agreed and one hundred twenty-four respondents (19.25%) strongly agreed. It was concluded that most respondents would like an agenda to be communicated with more clarity, outside of rallies and protests. However, one hundred seven respondents (16.61%) strongly disagreed and eighty-three respondents (12.89%) disagreed that the presentation of a specific agenda will improve the likelihood of more students being actively involved. It was concluded that these survey respondents believe that in matters of social change and racial equality an agenda is not necessary because it is inherent.

Survey question 3 asked the participant, “The prestigious international 2017 Sydney Peace Prize Award that recognizes peacemakers around the world for promoting human rights, nonviolence and peace with justice will be awarded to the three co-founders of Black Lives Matter Movement. Does this news, although not widely reported, help to inform your perception of the movement?” One hundred seventy-two respondents (26.88%) agreed and one hundred eighteen respondents (18.44%) strongly agreed that knowledge of the co-founders of Black Lives Matter being awarded the 2017 Sydney Peace Prize Award helped to guide their perceptions of the movement’s intentions. It was concluded that though this information is not well-known, if more widely publicized, perceptions of the movement would be more positive in other

communities outside of the African-American community. However, one hundred thirty-three respondents (20.78%) strongly disagreed and one hundred twenty-two respondents (19.06%) disagreed that knowledge of the co-founders of Black Lives Matter being awarded the 2017 Sydney Peace Prize would inform their perceptions of the movement. It was concluded that knowledge of the co-founders being awarded a peace award would not change perceptions of the movement because many are aware that the movement was founded with peace in mind through a letter posted to social media by Alicia Garza.

Survey question 4 asked the participant, “Have the images of sometimes violent protests in places like Baltimore, Maryland, and Ferguson, Missouri, contributed to a lack of interest in support of Black Lives Matter?” Two hundred thirteen respondents (33.13%) strongly agreed and one hundred respondents (15.55%) agreed that the images of sometimes violent protests contributed to a lack of interest in support of Black Lives Matter. It was concluded that the majority of respondents, though interested in improving racial tensions, are not willing to participate in rallies and protests because they believe that the violent acts are helping to fuel racial tensions and broadening racial divides. However, one hundred fifty-four respondents (23.95%) strongly disagreed and one hundred forty-one respondents (21.93%) disagreed that images of violent protests contributed to their lack of interest. It was concluded that images of violent protests do not deter some people who are interested in social change.

Survey question 5 asked the participant, “Have the media reports of the murders of various unarmed African-Americans changed thoughts concerning the necessity of social change and police reform through the Black Lives Matter movement?” One hundred eighty-five respondents (28.86%) strongly agreed and one hundred fifty-two

respondents (23.71%) agreed with the statement that media reports of the murders of various unarmed African-Americans changed their thoughts concerning the necessity of social change and police reform through the Black Lives Matter movement. It was concluded that most of the respondents were oblivious to the reality of the common dangers and subsequent fear that people in the African-American community face on a daily basis when interacting with law enforcement. However, one hundred twenty-two respondents (19.03%) disagreed and one hundred twenty-one respondents (18.88%) strongly disagreed that media reports of unarmed African-Americans being murdered changed their thoughts about the necessity of social reform. It was concluded that these respondents already possess an awareness of the necessity of police reform.

Survey question 6 asked the participant, “Is the phrase Black Lives Matter polarizing to White people, making them less likely to get involved?” Two hundred twenty-three respondents (34.63%) strongly agreed and one hundred ninety-three respondents (29.97%) agreed that the phrase Black Lives Matter is polarizing to White people, making them less likely to get involved. It was concluded that although the intention of the movement was not to alienate other communities, rather to assert the humanity of an oppressed people who are justifiably murdered by law enforcement at rates that exceed any other, Black Lives Matter is a polarizing phrase. However, one hundred six respondents (16.46%) disagreed and fifty-eight respondents (9.01%) strongly disagreed that Black Lives Matter is a not polarizing phrase. It was concluded that these respondents understand that #BlackLivesMatter includes #AllLivesMatter.

Survey questions 7 and 8 were demographic inquiries to examine the respondents’ gender and race. Three hundred sixty-three respondents (56.81%) more closely identified

with the female gender. Three hundred ten respondents (48.44%) more closely identified with the White race. It was concluded that the majority of the survey participants identified as White females. It could be reasoned that although White female participants were the majority of the survey population, this group is concerned about race relations, but feel conflicted by the phrase Black Lives Matter.

Survey question 10 asked the participant, “What recommendations would you make to improve the racial climate of this country? A.) Peace rallies B.) Police/community outreach programs C.) Police de-escalation training D.) All of the above.” Most respondents, three hundred seventy (59.87%) selected (D.) All of the above to include (a) peace rallies (b) police and community outreach programs (c) police de-escalation training, as a means to helping to improve racial tension in this country. It was concluded that the majority of the respondents believe that law enforcement and the community at large have a shared responsibility in working toward improving racial tensions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the survey, the following recommendations are made:

1. Though it was not the intention of the movement’s founders to create a polarizing phrase that alienates other communities, it may be necessary for the movement to implement a name change. Changing the name from Black Lives Matter to Black Lives Matter Too would help to (a) assert the humanity of oppressed people who have for centuries been subjugated and murdered with immunities granted to the murderers; (b) eliminate the alienation of other communities who want to actively

work alongside civil rights and social activists in the African-American community; (c) eliminate the belief that the Black Lives Matter movement is to assert that Black lives are the only lives that matter (d) openly involve members outside of the African-American community who could assist in creating legislative change.

2. Unlike the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, a singular identifiable leader is not necessary nor is it necessary to consistently reiterate the intended message of Black Lives Matter. However, sharing a specific agenda is the responsibility of community leaders, social activists, and concerned citizens. This approach would assist in communicating the intended message to a large and broad audience. Additionally, in the current state of the country, many professional athletes have joined protests against racial injustice and police brutality in order to give a voice to the disenfranchised by kneeling during the singing of the national anthem. This form of peaceful protests created a social media movement with the #TakeAKnee. Kneeling during the singing of the national anthem sparked a national debate about athletes disrespecting the flag and military personnel. However, #TakeAKnee was created to reiterate the original intention of the gesture which was to bring awareness to racial injustices and police brutality.
3. In order for change to take place in this country, there is a responsibility that law enforcement and the citizens of this country share. Therefore, peace rallies, police and community outreach, and police de-escalation training is needed.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE IRB

**OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH****Physical Address**

4111 Monarch Way, Suite 203
Norfolk, Virginia 23508

Mailing Address

Office of Research
1 Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia 23529
Phone(757) 683-3460
Fax(757) 683-5902

DATE: July 21, 2017

TO: Karina Arcaute, Ph.D.
FROM: Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee

PROJECT TITLE: [1091034-1] Black lives matter: The movement relevance and comparison to the 1960s civil rights movement

REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: July 21, 2017

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 6.2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact Jill Stefaniak at (757) 683-6696 or jstefani@odu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee's records.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ONLINE SURVEY

Relevance of Black Lives Matter Study 2017

Please answer the following questions by choosing the answer that best describes your beliefs. SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree.

1. The lack of readily identifiable leadership like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis of the Civil Rights Movement discourages students who support social change from actively participating in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?

SA A U D SD

2. The presentation of a specific agenda that supports positive, non-divisive social change improves the likelihood that you would be more actively involved in Black Lives Matter protests and rallies?

SA A U D SD

3. The prestigious international 2017 Sydney Peace Prize Award that recognizes peacemakers around the world for promoting human rights, nonviolence and peace with justice will be awarded to the three co-founders of Black Lives Matter Movement. Does this news, although not widely reported, help to inform your perception of the movement?

SA A U D SD

4. The images of sometimes violent protests in places like Baltimore, Maryland, and Ferguson, Missouri, contributed to your lack of interest in support of Black Lives Matter?

SA A U D SD

5. The media reports of the murders of various unarmed African-Americans changed your thoughts concerning the necessity of social change and police reform through the Black Lives Matter movement?

SA A U D SD

6. The phrase Black Lives Matter is polarizing for many White people, making them less likely to get involved?

SA A U D SD

Directions: Please check the box that best applies:

7. Do you identify more closely with the male or female gender?

Male Female

8. What race do you most closely identify with?

Black White Hispanic Asian

If other, please indicate here: _____

9. What is your expected date of graduation? Please indicate semester and year.

Example: Spring 2018

10. What recommendations would you make to improve the racial climate of this country?

A.) Peace rallies B.) Police/community outreach programs C.) Police de-escalation training

D.) All of the above

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

Date: 08/28/2017

Dear Old Dominion University Alum or Current Student,

You are invited to participate in a brief 10-question survey that will collect information about you and your beliefs as related to the Civil Rights movement and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. I am conducting a research project that seeks to compare Old Dominion University students' and affiliates' attitudes of the BLM protests to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, in order to determine what students and affiliates believe to be a more effective approach to achieving positive social change.

Your beliefs are relevant as University President John R. Broderick invited co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Alicia Garza to speak at a lecture series on Tuesday, February 2, 2016; an event that had more than 1,500 students, faculty, and staff members in attendance.

I, the researcher, would like to gain insight into whether students and affiliates believe the BLM movement is relevant and necessary. Also, I am seeking to discover what students and affiliates believe can be done to effectively contribute to positive social change. A survey will be conducted to collect data to answer questions related to this problem.

Your participation is voluntary and your information will be kept confidential. If you complete and return the survey, you are authorizing your participation. I look forward to your participation. If you should have any questions, please email me at sjenkin@odu.edu.

Please note: The Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee has determined this project is exempt from IRB review according to federal regulations.

Sincerely,

Stacy Jenkins-Robinson
Graduate Student
Old Dominion University

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE REMINDER LETTER

Date: 09/19/2017

Dear Current Old Dominion University Student/Affiliate,

*This is a gentle reminder that your participation has been requested and/or you have started the survey but have not yet completed your responses. **If you have already participated in this study, your help is appreciated and you may disregard this email. If you are NOT interested in participating, simply disregard this request.***

I am conducting this research project in order to fulfill the requirements for my Master's degree in Occupational and Technical Studies from Old Dominion University. This is the second and final portion to complete my research requirements.

Your help is needed in gathering information about your beliefs as it relates to the relevance of the Black Lives Matter movement and how it compares to the 1960s Civil Rights movement. In order to make adequate recommendations I would like to request your participation. The purpose of this study was to compare Old Dominion University students' attitudes of the Black Lives Matter protests to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement to determine what students believe to be a more effective approach to achieving social change.

This is a brief survey that will collect information about you and your beliefs as related to the Civil Rights movement and the Black Lives Matter movement. Your information will be kept confidential. If you complete and return this survey, you are authorizing your participation. **Your participation is voluntary.**

Your beliefs are relevant as University President John R. Broderick, invited co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Alicia Garza to speak at a lecture series; an event that had more than 1,500 students, faculty, and staff members in attendance.

Sincerely,

Stacy Jenkins-Robinson
Graduate Student
Old Dominion University

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Date: September 25, 2017

Dear Old Dominion University Alum or Current Student,

Thank you for your participation in the brief 10-question survey that was used to collect information about you and your beliefs as related to the Civil Rights movement and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Please note that no identifiable markers were used and your responses will be kept confidential.

Your feedback will help me in completing my research and will help to make Old Dominion University even more of an inclusive institution.

Sincerely,

Stacy Jenkins-Robinson
Graduate Student
Old Dominion University