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Capitalism and Colonialism and the Emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement

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Capitalism and colonialism and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement

By

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2017

Capitalism and colonialism and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement

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In 2012, the death of Trayvon Martin would activate the conscience of Black Americans nationwide. In response to the acquittal of Martin's assailant, a social media movement with the hashtag "Black Lives Matter" was conceived. The Black Lives Matter Movement attempts to impede the recurrent nature of police violence in Black communities. I hypothesize that colonialism and racial capitalism creates an environment for police violence, which leads to social movements like Black Lives Matter. I also argue that the commodification of race, an element of racial capitalism, serves as a distraction from the overall impact of systematic racism. I examine the oppressive nature of capitalism and neocolonialism, and the conditions they produce in housing and education. I examine the role of the two major political parties in suppressing and co-opting movements like Black Lives Matter, and whether or not the two major parties can be effective resources for the movement.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this paper to my cousin, Zachary Ryan Robinson, because his life mattered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am forever grateful for the time rendered and the support I received from my professors; Dr. Ravi Perry, Dr. K.C. Morrison, and Dr. Steve Shaffer. Other faculty and staff have also been a constructive force during my time at Mississippi State University. I would like to thank Dr. James Chamberlain, Dr. Douglas Haugen, Dr. Brian Shoup, Quintara Miller, and Kamicca Brown. I am beyond thankful for the love and support I received from my family during my time at Mississippi State University.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A Historical Synopsis of Racism

Racism in America is as much an individual mentality as it is a methodical

institution. In order to properly understand racism, and its many mechanisms, one must

be able to conceptualize the origins of racism as an organized institution. In the book

Racism: From Slavery to Advanced Capitalism, Carter A. Wilson characterizes racism as

an oppressive economic, political and cultural system. According to Wilson, the

accumulation of wealth for certain individuals requires perpetuating racialized structures

through policy and culture based on pre-conceived notions that are often produced by

symbols and images.[1] The socioeconomic hierarchy that has been assembled by racism

was inaugurated during the institution of slavery. Derrick Bell describes the development

of slavery, first as an institution that included White servants. In the 1600s, wealthy

Whites were dependent on the labor of Black slaves and indentured White servants to

cultivate profitable crops. However, as reliance on Black slave labor expanded, wealthy

plantation elites granted poor Whites a greater sense of freedom.[2] Even with more access

and privileges, poor Whites still remained economically disenfranchised. Yet, the

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[1] Carter A. Wilson, *Racism: From Slavery to Advanced Capitalism* (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1996), 16-25.
[2] Derrick A. Bell, Jr., *Race, Racism and American Law*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), 25.

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inability of poor Whites to suspend indoctrinated sentiments of racism would cause

unifying efforts of the post-Civil War Populist Party Movement to fail.[3]

In Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow*, the political and economic

gains of Black Southerners during Reconstruction infuriated many Whites. The relentless

effort to counteract Black advancement included increased terroristic activities from

groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Alexander expounds on this period of mass

intimidation and violence against Blacks, a period known as Redemption. After federal

troops withdrew from the South, the same practices that defined slavery were used to

disproportionately punish Blacks for petty offenses. Blacks were convicted of crimes,

jailed and sold to private contractors as laborers.[4] Blacks were once again the objects of

free labor that reaffirmed White dominance and Black subordination. The period of

Redemption protected the economic interests of wealthy elites by re-establishing the

racial hierarchy that existed prior to Reconstruction. Alexander describes the motivations

of wealthy elites to ensure that racial hierarchy was the law of the land, such a system

guaranteed that Blacks would always be at the bottom of that hierarchy with poor Whites

occupying a slightly higher position.

The destitution that both Blacks and poor Whites experienced coincided with the

emergence of the Populist Party. The Populist Party engaged poor Whites and Blacks

through radical oratory that both were exploited by wealthy plantation and industrial

Whites whose economic and political model of success was predicated on racial

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[3] Ibid., 26.
[4] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 30-31.

animosity.[5] The Populist Party attempted to unify impoverished Blacks and Whites as a way of dislodging race and class dominance. Alexander notes that as the philosophy of the party spread wealthy elites inflated the implementation of racialized laws and practices:

> Alarmed by the success of the Populists and the apparent potency of the alliance between   poor and working-class whites and African Americans, the conservatives raised the cry of white supremacy and resorted to the tactics they had employed in their quest for Redemption, including fraud, intimidation, bribery, and terror. Segregation laws were proposed as part of a deliberate effort to drive a wedge between poor whites and African Americans. These discriminatory barriers were designed to encourage lower-class whites to retain a sense of superiority over blacks, making it far less likely that they would sustain inter-racial political alliances aimed at toppling the white elite.[6]

The Populist Party could not sustain advocacy efforts, and eventually dissolved as a movement to uplift disenfranchised Whites and Blacks. The post-Reconstruction South embraced the model of oppression that was present during slavery, keep Blacks as the most inferior and economically powerless.

   The exploitation of Black slave labor is the foundation of American capitalism, and the prejudice of poor, working-class, and middle-class Whites to assure that Blacks are not economically competitive has led to the massive underdevelopment of Black Americans.[7] In this paper, I argue that the system of economic subjugation still dramatically affects the lives of Black Americans. I contend that Blacks are only economically valuable when they possess exploitable qualities, otherwise they are viewed as inadequate. I aim to show that deplorable conditions such as poor housing and a

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[5] Ibid., 32-33.
[6] Ibid., 34.
[7] Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 3.

3

meager educational system exist in Black communities because of economic oppression produced by capitalism and colonialism.

The above synopsis does not intend to demean or castigate poor Whites, but to accentuate their role in the colonization of Black people and the development of America as a dominant capitalistic power. The development of White America has coincided with the devaluation of Black America. This is primarily due to Black and White relationships since America's inception. Blacks served as a conquered free labor force, and even after America's transition from a pre-industrial agricultural society to an industrial society Black labor and life was still viewed as cheap and expendable, even when Blacks possessed more valuable skills than Whites.[8] Nancy Leong's theory of racial capitalism explains the commodification of individuals based on their racial identity.[9] I argue that even though Black Americans are now free, they are still viewed as valuable commodities, and consequently still highly undervalued and ostracized as human beings. The devaluation of Black life has given rise to Black Lives Matter activism on behalf of police violence.

The Emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement

The Black Lives Matter Movement has galvanized Black America. The movement is represented by multiple organizations that have the foremost objective of exterminating police violence against Black Americans. After the death of Black teenager Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of Martin's shooter, George Zimmerman, the Black Lives Matter Movement materialized into a crusade that actively advocates for

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[8] Ibid., 7.
[9] Nancy Leong, "Racial Capitalism," *Harvard Law Review* 126, no. 8 (2013): 2153.

equitable law enforcement policies. The movement is decentralized in nature, with no

charismatic leader or centralized spokesperson. The potential of such a movement was

first realized by three Black women; Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi.

The movement began to gain traction in 2013 and 2014 as the social media "Black Lives

Matter" hashtag created by Garza, Cullors, and Tometi began to spread.[10] The Black

Lives Matter National Network started by Garza, Cullors, and Tometi, with chapters

across the country, asserts that its purpose is to fight anti-Black racism, the organization's

website states:

> #BlackLivesMatter is working for a world where Black lives are no longer
> systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. We affirm our contributions
> to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.
> We have put our sweat equity and love for Black people into creating a political
> project- taking the hashtag off of social media and into the streets. The call for
> Black lives to matter is a rallying cry for ALL Black lives striving for liberation.[11]

Furthermore, a collective front of over 50 organizations within the movement

have concentrated their efforts to contrive a plan that addresses police violence and

economic inequality.[12] The collective front refers to themselves as "The Movement for

Black Lives," and their policy demands include; an end to the criminalizing of Blacks in

America, reparations for both past and present injustices, investment in education and

divestment in exploitative enterprises such as prisons, and a redistribution of wealth by

means of restructuring local, state, and federal tax codes.[13] The previously stated policy

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[10] "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement," *Black Lives Matter*, accessed January 28, 2016, http://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/.
[11] "About the Black Lives Matter Network," *Black Lives Matter*, accessed January 28, 2016, http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/.
[12] "About," *The Movement for Black Lives*, accessed August 22, 2016, https://policy.m4bl.org/about/.
[13] "Platform," *The Movement for Black Lives,* accessed August 22, 2016, https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/.

goals are a brief description of the overall plan that the Movement for Black Lives is committed to. The mitigation of societal inequities and long-term progress for Black Americans will not be achievable without the implementation of such policy goals.

Mutuma Ruteere, United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, concluded in a report to the General Assembly in 2013 that the historical disenfranchisement of racial minorities such as slavery, unfair housing practices, and inadequate education has led to generational poverty. The socioeconomic susceptibility of racial minorities is fostered by a system of racism that profoundly affects generational ascension.[14] Racism has created staggering poverty numbers among Black Americans. In 2014, the poverty rate for Black Americans was 26.2% a figure higher than both Hispanic and White poverty rates, even though Blacks represent only 13.2% of the United States population.[15] The system of mass incarceration, poor healthcare, housing discrimination, unemployment, and an unsatisfactory educational system are all systematically instituted in the lives of Black Americans.

Black Lives and Political Participation

Furthermore, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's analysis of the political party system in her work, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, is a meticulous historical reference of how and why Black Americans became strong supporters and participants in

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[14] "Poverty inextricably linked to discrimination and racism-UN Special Rapporteur," *United Nations Human Rights, Office of the Higher Commissioner*, last modified November 4, 2013, accessed September 8, 2015, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13941&LangID=E.
[15] U.S. Census Bureau, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014*, by Carmen DeNavas-Walt and Bernadette D. Proctor, P60-252, Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2015, https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-252.pdf; U.S. Census Bureau, "QuickFacts," http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/00.

parties such as the Democratic Party. Taylor mentions that as urban cities accumulated a greater Black population, in the late 1960s and 1970s, the primary objective of the National Democratic Party was to create a Black political class that could subdue Black Power urban insurrections. Taylor writes, "It was the Black insurgency that created the conditions that allowed Black elected officials to become viable politically. But the more the movement on the streets waned, the greater the distance between ordinary Black people and the elected officials claiming to represent them."[16] The majority of Black Americans identify as Democrats, but cities with the largest Black and White income inequality disparity are cities with mostly Democratic representation.[17] Based on the National Urban League's 2015 State of Black America report, cities such as San Francisco and Oakland, California, ranked last among cities with the most severe income inequality.[18] The political arena of San Francisco and Oakland is dominated by a liberal Democratic constituency.[19] In this study, I state the importance of a fair and transparent political system that is responsive to outside collective action. In this work, the findings I present will hopefully coherently particularize the intricacy of racism in America. It is my intent to reveal how the Black Lives Matter Movement can evolve.

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[16] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016), 89-106.

[17] "A Deep Dive Into Party Affiliation: Sharp Differences by Race, Gender, Generation, Education," *Pew Research Center*, April 7, 2015, accessed April 10, 2015, http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/.

[18] Muriel Bowser et al., *2015 State of Black America, Save Our Cities: Education, Jobs + Justice* (New York: National Urban League, 2015), 51, http://soba.iamempowered.com/2015-state-black-america-book.

[19] Eric McGhee and Daniel Krimm, "California's Political Geography," *Public Policy Institute of California*, February 2012, accessed September 22, 2015, http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1007.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship relating to the economic conditions of Black Americans has assumed many forms, and various theories attempt to unequivocally answer why conditions such as poverty persist. In Stokely Carmichael's and Charles V. Hamilton's book, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, they offer a narrative of racism that is both overt and covert. It is important to understand from their analysis that covert racism or institutional racism is the constrictive force responsible for deplorable conditions within Black neighborhoods. Carmichael and Hamilton argue that Black people are the victims of covert or institutional racism because of their status as colonial subjects. The colonial status of Black Americans is based on a system of exploitation. As Carmichael and Hamilton point out, the subjugation of Blacks as cheap colonized labor coincides with the exploitation of Black neighborhoods as colonies.[20] Carmichael's and Hamilton's understanding of colonialism is one vested in the interests of the White power structure. The perpetuation of certain doctrines that allowed European expansion and justified slavery permits the acquisition of wealth and land for those within the colonizing power structure.[21] The colonizing power is only concerned with products and goods that are economically advantageous. Carmichael and Hamilton state:

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[20] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 4-6.
[21] Ibid., 8.

One is immediately reminded of the bitter maxim voiced by many black Africans today: the missionaries came for our goods, not for our good. Indeed, the missionaries turned the Africans' eyes toward heaven, and then robbed them blind in the process. The colonies were sources from which raw materials were taken and markets to which finished products were sold. Manufacture and production were prohibited if this meant-as it usually did-competition with the "mother country." Rich in natural resources, Africa did not reap the benefit of these resources herself. In the Gold Coast (now Ghana), where the cocoa crop was the largest in the world, there was not one chocolate factory. This same economic status has been perpetrated on the black community in this country. Exploiters come into the ghetto from outside, bleed it dry, and leave it economically dependent on the larger society.[22]

Carmichael and Hamilton also note the process of indirect rule. The White power structure is able to control Black communities indirectly through Black elected officials. They argue that the British Empire maintained its influence over African colonies by appointing Black leaders that were perceived as powerful by the subjects of their country, but only operated as instruments of the White power structure. Black politicians are co-opted and stultified by the political party system, and therefore must meet the demands of the party instead of the demands of the community. Such co-optation allows the White power structure to effectively control Black communities and implement whatever agenda they see fit. In exchange for compliance, Black politicians enjoy status and security.[23] The work of Carmichael and Hamilton is the precursor of institutional racism and concepts of colonialism as it relates to Black people. Yet, Carmichael and Hamilton do not properly articulate the relationship between colonialism and capitalism, which could lucidly explain the market forces that are used to further oppress colonized subjects. As described by Manning Marable, the combination of colonialism and

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[22] Ibid., 17.
[23] Ibid., 10-14.

capitalism led to the repression of Black lives and the development of Western civilization.[24] Marable's work, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, enunciates the devastation that capitalism has caused within Black America.[25] The Atlantic slave trade, as illuminated by Nikhil Pal Singh in his article "On Race, Violence, and So-Called Primitive Accumulation," was the foundation of capitalism's exploitation and devaluation of black life.[26] Singh argues that the period after the Civil War was marked by more racism and racial violence, he writes:

> Freeing slaves enlarged both the instrumental and popular political ambit of racism as a tool of labor discipline (divide and rule), a means of introducing new forms of labor coercion (so-called coolie labor), and a weapon of class struggle (the wages of whiteness) and, of course, empire. It also inaugurated an era of state and private violence that directly seized upon black household formation, sexuality, and embodiment as a means to preserve and reproduce a racial-capitalist political economy with far-reaching, global implications.[27]

The development of capitalism is directly attributed to violence and domination that managed to produce a Black underclass, which since America's inception has led to capital accumulation.[28]

The process of colonizing Black subjects and accumulating capital has led to the commodification of race. Nancy Leong's theory of racial capitalism is concerned with the commodification of race. Leong uses diversity and affirmative action to advance her position that nonwhite individuals are commodified based on some economic benefit that is derivable for White institutions. Leong argues that nonwhiteness has been valued as a

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[24] Marable, 3.
[25] Ibid., 256
[26] Nikhil Pal Singh, "On Race, Violence, and So-Called Primitive Accumulation," *Social Text* 34, no. 3 (2016): 43.
[27] Ibid., 38.
[28] Ibid., 31-43.

commodity since slavery, with less dehumanizing effects. The enslavement of Black

Africans was the sole justification for the depreciation of them as inferior, less valuable

human beings.[29] Leong claims that racial diversity has fostered a new value system for

nonwhiteness. Unlike the institution of slavery and Jim Crow, this new era of racial

diversity has given people of color more inclusive value. Leong writes:

> The efforts of colleges and universities, employers, and other institutions to
> promote racial diversity should be celebrated, not disparaged. But problems with
> racial capitalism arise when white individuals and predominantly white
> institutions seek and achieve racial diversity without examining their motives and
> practices. Striving for numerical diversity, without more, results in awareness of
> nonwhiteness only in its thinnest form- as a bare marker of difference and a signal
> of presence. This superficial view of diversity consequently leads white
> individuals and predominantly white institutions to treat nonwhiteness as a prized
> commodity rather than as a cherished and personal manifestation of identity.[30]

Leong uses various theories of capital to develop an analysis of how race is

valued. Leong relies on elements of the Marxian capital theory to articulate the

exploitable and profitable aspects of race, based on human interaction the

commodification process of race begins. Leong argues, that through social interactions

the racial identity of nonwhites is capitalized by white individuals or institutions. Leong

notes that social interaction or the presence of nonwhites, gives White individuals or

institutions status as nonracist.[31] Furthermore, the presence and capitalization of

nonwhiteness allows white individuals or white institutions to avoid claims of racial

bigotry or discrimination. In her article Leong writes, "For example, President George

W. Bush spoke at the NAACP's annual meeting after harsh criticism of the

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[29] Leong, 2153-2155.
[30] Ibid., 2155.
[31] Ibid., 2179.

administration's response to Hurricane Katrina, including most visibly, Kanye West's blunt statement "George Bush doesn't care about black people." In the speech, President Bush referenced his black "friends" Robert L. Johnson, the founder of Black Entertainment Television, and the Reverend Anthony T. Evans, a prominent pastor in Dallas; he also name-dropped Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice while discussing the then-recent extension of the Voting Rights Act."[32] As previously stated, Leong uses elements of Marxian capital theory to explain her position. Leong insists that Marx's theory of social capital involves, "the transformation of labor into commodities and commodities into money- rather than merely a concrete thing." Leong acknowledges that Marxian capital theory is a class-based theory, but a theory that can be expanded and applied to race. The power yielding dominant class exploits the laboring class, but from a race-based analysis the status of people of color as exploitable commodities produces significant "surplus value" for Whites.[33] Leong uses a law firm scenario as an exemplar of how race is commodified and transformed into a monetary accumulator:

> Suppose, for instance, that a nearly all-white law firm hires a Latina. The firm derives economic benefits from her presence on an ongoing basis. It may improve relationships with its customers who value diversity, which yields economic benefits. It may be able to recruit other employees more successfully (both other employees of color and other employees of all races who care about diversity), giving it access to a broader talent pool and yielding further economic benefits. It may also be able to attract new clients through the enhanced trust and racial credibility it has gained by having a Latina employee- again yielding economic benefits.[34]

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[32] Ibid., 2181.
[33] Ibid., 2188.
[34] Ibid., 2188-2189.

Following up on social interaction, the surplus value of this relationship is directly attributed to the exchange relationship, established by the nonwhite individual and the White individual or institution. The methods of this exchange incorporates the payment the nonwhite individual will receive and the profit the White institution will receive.[35] Leong also states that businesses engage in the practice of showcasing nonwhite employees in high positions. Leong contends that showcasing advances the attractiveness of a business as well as their credibility and reputation as a diverse and tolerable institution. This prescribed tokenism is often displayed while businesses maintain a culture of racial subservience within the workplace.[36] Additionally, the economic benefits of commodifying race are not always in the form of money. Those that practice the commodification of race, understand the litigation struggles that can ensue from discrimination.[37] Leong applies Walmart's diversity initiative, she elucidates:

> For example, beginning in 2003 Walmart undertook a well-publicized initiative to diversify its own ranks and to insist on diversity in its business partners. Walmart has achieved some striking numerical results. It wrote to each of its top one hundred law firms, stating that to retain Walmart as a client that firm had to "demonstrate a meaningful interest in the importance of diversity;" it also required each firm to submit a slate of candidates to serve as the "relationship attorney" with Walmart, with at least one female and one person of color on the slate. The initiative resulted in changing forty relationship attorneys and shifting $60 million worth of Walmart's legal work to management by female or nonwhite attorneys. These diversity measures have accompanied- and, one might infer, are designed to respond to- a wave of employment discrimination allegations against Walmart.[38]

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[35] Ibid., 2175.
[36] Ibid., 2194-2195.
[37] Ibid., 2196.
[38] Ibid.

www.manaraa.com

Cheryl Harris's article, "Whiteness as Property," also mentioned by Leong, uses historical antecedents to describe how race was evaluated as property. Harris maintains the argument that whiteness as property is a status symbol, status that was legitimized by the ability of Whites to subordinate Blacks and Native Americans through colonialism.[39] Furthermore, Harris states that whiteness is based on "racial subjugation" and "exclusivity." She argues that whiteness as property is not physical but metaphysical, it is the categorization of race that allows whiteness to operate as an identity of privilege.[40] The intangibles of whiteness are deployed through rights and liberties. The ability to function as a sovereign individual without any restraints by a racialized legal structure or society at-large.[41] Leong's theory of commodification does not venture into the depths of whiteness as property. Leong mentions Harris's theory of whiteness as property to establish the rationale that race is commodified. She does not state that whiteness as the ultimate status symbol and a valuable, deployable resource could explain the socioeconomic struggles in Black communities or other communities of color. The process of commodifying nonwhites is a limited process. The nonwhites that are given value by White institutions are done so in small increments. This provision maintains whiteness as the most commodifiable and beneficial racial identity, and it also disseminates the impression that we live in a society that has reconciled race relations.

The core of American society is based on a racialized structure, a structure that subjects racial minorities to an inferior status, only allowing members of racial minority communities to advance socially and economically over a period of time in small

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[39] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1715-1716.
[40] Ibid., 1725 & 1737.
[41] Ibid., 1724-1725.

numbers.[42] The racial identity of people of color is commodified, but once a White institution achieves a certain level of economic success, or generates a credible reputation as an inclusive organization the commodification of more nonwhites is no longer needed. This does not insinuate that Blacks that are commodified and advance incrementally are free of discriminatory and racist government and private business policies. Michael Dawson's black utility heuristic in his book, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*, is a theory that assumes that Black Americans operate politically based on racial group interests. Dawson states, "The central assumption of the black utility heuristic is that the more one believes one's own life chances are linked to those of blacks as a group, the more one will consider racial group interests in evaluating alternative political choices."[43] Based on this theory regardless of social or economic status, all Black Americans are still susceptible to systemic racism.[44]

Leong's underlying argument about the effects of racial commodification is the destruction of one's identity. The racial identity of people of color is quite different than that of whites. By contrast, the racial identity of nonwhites is a characteristic of self that has often been shunned by society, or manipulated to meet the standards of a broader White society. Leong's exposition states the following, "First, because racial capitalism requires and reinforces the commodification of race, it results in alienation of racial identity in the sense that identity may be bought and sold on the market. It also results in alienation of racial identity in the sense that individuals are distanced from that aspect of

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[42] K.C. Morrison, *African Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 5.

[43] Michael C. Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 75.

[44] Ibid., 7.

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their personhood."[45] Her analysis is indeed correct, a solid racial identity is an important aspect of our being as humans. Despite the fact that it can be argued that there is only one race, the human race, the construction of race as a mechanism of socioeconomic hierarchy has substantiated race as the primary indicator of our identity. Charles Taylor persuasively describes the significance of recognition in his article, "The Politics of Recognition." Taylor's argument states the following, "The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves."[46] Taylor's politics of recognition is based on the reasoning that misrecognition or nonrecognition can have an extremely negative impact on the psyche of an individual. Taylor argues that such misrecognition impairs the advancement of a person or a group of people. Taylor utilizes the historical oppression of Black Americans as an example of how a degrading and repressive White society has often led to Black Americans becoming the co-conspirators of their own oppression. Because of misrecognition and nonrecognition, Black Americans now internalize a sense of inferiority and worthlessness. Thus, a sense of self-appreciation is only possible when Blacks receive the validation of Whites.[47] As colonized subjects of their own oppression, Black Americans have attempted to maneuver through a capitalistic society that is inherently disadvantageous.

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[45] Leong, 2205.
[46] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25-27.
[47] Ibid., 25-26.

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The need for economic survival and societal validation has contributed to the involvement of Black Americans in mainstream politics. As aforementioned, Carmichael and Hamilton analyze what would be considered commodification by Leong. The ability of European colonizers to indirectly rule African nations through appointed Black officials, is a prime example of how the racial identity of those African officials was commodified to ensure the continuation of European control. In exchange, African officials were given recognizable positions of perceived power. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's book, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, summarizes the rise of "black faces in high places:"

> The utility of Black elected officials lies in their ability, as members of the community, to scold ordinary Black people in ways that white politicians could never get away with. Black elected officials' role as interlocutors between the broader Black population and the general American public makes them indispensible in American politics. Moreover, it gives them authority as people with particular insight into the "Black community," which they often use to do more harm than good while deftly escaping the label of "racist."[48]

Taylor's analysis of Black politicians provides a striking argument that unravels the connection between mainstream politics and depressed conditions in Black communities. Taylor writes that the emergence of Black political power was a direct result of the Black Power movement, initiated by groups such as the Black Panther Power. Political ascendance for Black Americans, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, was the key strategy among those entering the political arena as it was possibly the only means of achieving a certain level of opulence. Taylor notes that the limitations of this strategy stems from the economic crisis that was still experienced by the majority of

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[48] Yamahtta Taylor, 78-79.

Blacks. Moreover, as the Black political class gained more prominence, liberation strategies become more divergent resulting in different sets of beliefs or values between ordinary Black Americans and Black political and economic elites. This is not to minimize class differences that existed among Black Americans before the late 1960s, but as Taylor strongly argues the affable welcoming of Blacks into the mainstream two-party system and the creation of a larger Black middle-class absolved capitalism of any suspicion or blame as a racist, oppressive system of economic governance.[49] Aligned with Leong's commodification theory, the American political party system has commodified certain Black Americans to legitimize America as an egalitarian society where hard work and effort not innate privilege is fundamentally what decides who progresses.

Fredrick Harris's book, *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Rise and Decline of Black Politics*, illustrates the "public philosophy" of respectability within Black politics. The politics of respectability is an ideological framework embraced by Black elitists, often disguised as "tough love" the politics of respectability aims to correct the bad behaviors of the Black poor as a means of achieving societal acceptance. According to Harris, the politics of respectability first emerged among Black intellectuals such as W.E.B. DuBois in the early 1900s. DuBois's talented tenth concept called on other Black elites to uplift as many Blacks as possible.[50] Harris argues that uplifting as many Blacks as possible was not solely an objective to achieve absolute liberation, he writes:

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[49] Ibid., 80-82.
[50] Fredrick C. Harris, *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Rise and Decline of Black Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 101-103.

Elites engaged in the politics of respectability; they "equated public behavior with individual self-respect and with the advancement of African-Americans as a group," believing "that 'respectable' behavior in public would earn their people a measure of esteem from white America." The strategy of linking blacks' public behavior with whites' recognition of blacks' humanity meant that black elites "strove to win the lower class's psychological allegiance to temperance, industriousness, thrift, refined manners and Victorian social morals." Guided by the hands of the Talented Tenth, less fortunate blacks could be taught how to be upright people, exemplars in a society dominated by white-supremacist views on the inferiority of black people.[51]

The fundamental notions of the politics of respectability was that the Black poor was to blame for his or her status as a deprived and unfortunate member of society. The immorality and the lack of accountability and personal responsibility were the definitive factors that cultivated a life of poverty. Harris writes that the politics of respectability has become a solution to deal with the problems of the poor. Instead of addressing economic and social barriers, dilapidated housing, poor educational achievement, and crime are attributed to the moral shortcomings of the Black poor.[52] Harris mentions that Black politicians are effective manipulators of the politics of respectability, focus on government inaction and ineptitude on behalf of the Black poor is diverted to the victims as the architects of their own destruction.[53] Harris notes that the politics of respectability has dual personalities among some Black politicians; not only does respectability rhetoric provide cover for inaction but it also attempts to appeal to White working-class voters. In the case of President Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign:

Obama's widely acclaimed Father's Day speech on June 15, 2008, at the Apostolic Church of Christ on the South Side of Chicago, illustrates the dual purposes of the politics of respectability as public philosophy during the campaign. Delivered during the final days of the Democratic Party primary

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[51] Ibid., 102.
[52] Ibid., 104-108.
[53] Ibid., 104-105.

season, when Hillary Clinton's decisive wins in Kentucky and West Virginia were raising questions about whether Obama "could close the deal" without the support of white working class-voters, the speech railed against black men's lack of responsibility as fathers. As Democratic Party pollsters discovered decades ago, the more Democratic Party candidates talk about personal responsibility and government's limited role in addressing poverty and the plight of minorities, the more supportive white working-class voters are of Democratic presidential candidates.[54]

Respectability politics fits into the fold of Leong's commodification theory. Harris's book details the mandated efforts of some historically Black colleges and universities to modify the image of their students. The politics of respectability on Black college campuses is deliberately practiced to enhance the commodification value of its students as Harris writes, "Though the twentieth-century Uplifters at black colleges groomed students to be shining examples of racial progress in the fight for citizenship, today the politics of respectability at Black colleges is designed to prepare students to become marketable individuals in the corporate world." Rules that prohibited certain hairstyles and dress code policies were implemented to ensure students exhibited appropriate behavior and image.[55]

In order to understand the development and insurgency of the Black Lives Matter Movement one must understand social media activity. Online social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook serve as platforms for activists to spread their message.[56] As a result of many 21st century technology advancements such as smart phones, notebooks, and an array of laptops, the Black Lives Matter Movement is unlike any other Black

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[54] Ibid., 128-129.
[55] Ibid., 120-124.
[56] Fredrick C. Harris, "The Next Civil Rights Movement?" *Dissent*, Summer 2015, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/black-lives-matter-new-civil-rights-movement-fredrick-harris.

insurgency movement. However, certain fundamental aspects of the movement are similar to elements that initiated the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Doug McAdam uses the political process model to adequately explain the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement. The political process theory identifies the powerlessness of certain groups within society, and as a means to alter that state of powerlessness and exclusion from the benefits of mainstream society movements develop. Excluded groups that seek to expand political opportunities mobilize like-minded individuals or organizations. Such communal and organizational mobility results in the interconnectedness of organizations working towards progress. McAdam expresses that the birth of social movements dramatically changes the consciousness of those marginalized. Furthermore, as a result of "cognitive liberation" the system of governance is viewed as illegitimate. Cognitive liberation increases the effectiveness of social movements as those involved are clearly able to define an agenda and course of action.[57]

The Black Lives Matter Movement uses social media as a tool of cognitive liberation. The Internet can reach millions of people in a matter of seconds, which often allows activists or bloggers to rapidly release information. People are now able to capture protests and share them as they happen or circulate ideas and opinions about the movement.[58] The immediate release and accuracy of such news can replace segmented television airing of police violence protests. Not only has social media served as an

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[57] Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, 1930-1970, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 36-51.
[58] Harris, "The Next Civil Rights Movement?"

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instant news source, but also as a mobilizing force that resembles the mobilizing strength

of Black churches and colleges during the Civil Rights Movement.[59]

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[59] McAdam, 230-231.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

Methodology

In this paper, I rely on empirical evidence that has been gathered from

quantitative and qualitative sources that properly address and substantiate my theory that

colonialism and racial capitalism are the architects of Black disenfranchisement. The

descriptive analytical sources in this paper will underline specific conditions within Black

America, and how they directly relate to the Black Lives Matter Movement. The theories

and case studies used in this paper will pull from the work of political, social, and legal

scholars that articulate the multifarious dimensions of racism.

Black Lives Matter and Police Brutality

The nature of police violence is a common reality for Black Americans. It is a

legacy of violence and intimidation that characterizes police relationships with Black

Americans. As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor notes in her book, *From #BlackLivesMatter to

Black Liberation*, police have always been used as agents of the state to viciously

suppress Black masses. The actions of modern police closely resemble the actions of

slave patrollers and law enforcement officials that enforced post-Civil War Black code

laws.[60] Policing the actions of Black masses reinforces indoctrinated racism, it produces

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[60] Yamahtta Taylor, 108-109.

the image that Blacks are inherently prone to criminality and therefore a general consensus can be established that condones the control and subordination of Black Americans. With the implementation of Black codes the reliance on a slave economy could be reimagined. Under Black codes, Blacks were arrested for virtually any offense and leased to individuals or companies that demanded slave-like labor.[61] Racializing crime secured a free workforce for Southern States that heavily relied on convict leasing for revenue.[62] The Black codes established the foundation for future discriminatory police practices and violence justified by the manipulated criminality of Blacks.

The Black Lives Matter Movement is based on the fundamental premise of ending state sanctioned police violence. It is this premise that led to the summer 2014 protests in Ferguson, Missouri. In reaction to the death of Black teenager Michael Brown, by police officer Darren Wilson, protesters gathered on the streets of Ferguson to demand justice not only for the death of Brown but to also voice concern over systematic exploitation and profiling by the Ferguson police.[63] Similar insurrections occurred in Baltimore, Maryland after the death of Freddie Gray. It is the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Brown, Gray, Tamir Rice, Rekia Boyd, and many others that has ignited a movement that is committed to publicizing as well as ending police violence. According to *The Guardian's* investigative reporting project, The Counted, young Black males were nine times more likely to be killed by police than any other American in 2015. They also report that even though Black males between the ages of 15-34 account for only 2% of the American population, they comprised 15% of all deaths committed by police in 2015.

[61] Ibid., 109-112.
[62] Ibid., 111.
[63] Ibid., 153-155.

Overall, more White Americans were killed by police in 2015, but based on *The Guardian's* study when adjusting for population, per one million, Black Americans were killed at more than twice the rate of Whites.[64] Mapping Police Violence, a research collaborative that collects data on police killings in the United States, released a 2015 report that reviewed police killings by 60 of the nation's largest police departments. The report concluded, "41 of the 60 police departments disproportionately killed black people relative to the population of black people in their jurisdiction." As previously mentioned, innate Black criminality is often deployed to justify police violence or other instances of violence based on race. Mapping Police Violence, however, found no correlation between "community violence" and police violence. The report states, "Over the past several years, police departments in high-crime cities such as Detroit and Newark have consistently killed fewer people per population than police departments in cities with much lower crime rates such as Austin, Bakersfield, and Long Beach."[65] Contrary to the criminality narrative, Mapping Police Violence discovered that 37% of unarmed people killed by police in 2015 were Black, even though Black Americans only represent 13.2% of the U.S. population.[66]

Furthermore, racial disparities persistently exist throughout the entire criminal justice system. Arrest related deaths might act as the primary depiction of a racially biased criminal justice system, but under close examination the criminal justice system as

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[64] Jon Swaine et al., "Young Black Men Killed by US Police at Highest Rate in Year of 1,134 Deaths," *The Guardian*, December 31, 2015, accessed January 7, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/31/the-counted-police-killings-2015-young-black-men.
[65] "2015 Police Violence Report," *Mapping Police Violence*, accessed May 23, 2015, http://mappingpoliceviolence.org/2015/.
[66] "Police Killed More Than 100 Unarmed Black People in 2015," *Mapping Police Violence*, accessed May 23, 2015, http://mappingpoliceviolence.org/unarmed/.

a wholesale institution disproportionately punishes Black Americans. In, "Black Lives Matter: Eliminating Racial Inequity in the Criminal Justice System," Nazgol Ghandnoosh identifies the racially charged nature of the criminal justice system. Ghandnoosh writes that based off of nationwide surveys, Blacks are more likely than Whites to be searched and arrested by police during stops, even though, "…officers generally have a lower "contraband hit rate" when they search black versus white drivers."[67] Blacks are also more likely to be charged more harshly, more likely to be convicted, and more likely to face long sentences as compared to Whites. Ghandnoosh argues that the current high property and violent crime rates among Blacks, is attributed to socioeconomic disadvantages. The criminal justice system, she argues, inflames the severity of socioeconomic inequality by implementing policing policies that appear neutral but have a racially disparate impact, such as New York City's stop and frisk policy.[68] It is also important to note that those arrested are often uneducated, unemployed, or low-income. Economically disadvantaged Black Americans are more likely to be detained by police because they cannot afford their bond, Blacks in general are more likely than Whites to be denied bail altogether. Ghandoosh also discusses the allocation of resources to public defender offices, which are often underfunded and the primary source of representation for low-income Black defendants.[69]

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor identifies three phases of policing in American history: President Reagan's War on Drugs, President Clinton's tough on crime order, and

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[67] Nazgol Ghandnoosh, "Black Lives Matter: Eliminating Racial Inequity in the Criminal Justice System," *The Sentencing Project*, February 3, 2015, accessed February 15, 2016, http://sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Black-Lives-Matter.pdf.
[68] Ibid., 11-13.
[69] Ibid., 17.

President George W. Bush's War on Terror.[70] Over the years, the effects of all three periods have drastically altered lives of Black Americans. These three regimes have indisputably led to a system of mass incarceration that is unrivaled by any other nation. According to Michelle Alexander, President Reagan redefined the federal government's role in fighting crime. The preliminary stages of the War on Drugs was initiated by President Nixon in the mid-1970s, but under Reagan the War on Drugs would flourish. As previously mentioned, it is usually the responsibility of states and local governments to fight crime, but Reagan's War on Drugs announcement, in 1982, coincided with the expansion of federal law enforcement budgets.[71] Alexander writes, from 1980 to 1984, antidrug funding for the FBI increased by $87 million, and from 1981 to 1991 federal antidrug funding for the Department of Defense and the DEA skyrocketed. While antidrug enforcement funding was on the rise during this period, agencies responsible for drug rehabilitation and education were allocated less money. Between 1981 and 1984, the budget for the National Institute on Drug Abuse was reduced by $217 million and antidrug funding for the Department of Education was reduced by $11 million.[72] Furthermore, to advance the effects of the War on Drugs the Reagan administration and the media were purveyors of anti-Black propaganda and the crack cocaine epidemic prevalent in Black neighborhoods. Alexander states, "Thousands of stories about the crack crisis flooded the airwaves and newsstands, and the stories had a clear racial subtext. The articles typically featured black "crack whores," "crack babies," and "gangbangers," reinforcing already prevalent stereotypes of black women as

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[70] Yamahtta Taylor, 119.
[71] Alexander, 47-49.
[72] Ibid., 49.

irresponsible, selfish "welfare queens," and black men as "predators"-part of an inferior and criminal subculture." As a result of mass hysteria over the crack epidemic, President Reagan signed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 into law.[73] The law established more severe sentencing for crack related offenses than it did powder cocaine. Alexander argues that crack was associated with Blacks and powder cocaine with Whites, which explains the sentencing disparity. The law established mandatory minimums for crack cocaine offenses, expanded the death penalty for drug related offenses, and imposed restrictions on federal benefits that those convicted of a drug crime could receive.[74]

The Clinton administration was a continuation of tough on crime, law and order policies that would triple Black incarceration rates. Yamahtta Taylor argues that Bill Clinton wanted to demonstrate to conservatives that his presidency could be as tough if not tougher on crime, which would disrupt any storyline that portrayed Democrats as tenuous crime fighters. Clinton's War on Drugs policies were a significant victory for his presidency, as Alexander notes, Clinton received a bi-partisan applause at the 1994 State of the Union Address because of his law and order rhetoric. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 was Clinton's prized crime policy that appropriated billions of dollars to states for prison construction and law enforcement enhancement, and effectively created new provisions for criminalization by expanding the death penalty and the creation of new federal offenses that could potentially lead to a life sentence under the "three-strikes" rule; the law also advanced the militarization of police by distributing military equipment to local police departments across the United States.

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[73] Ibid., 51.
[74] Ibid., 52.

Moreover, George W. Bush's War on Terror would mark the evolution of crime fighting in the United States, evolution that would increase federal policing power and the authority of state and local law enforcement under the guise of safety and protection from foreign enemies. Taylor argues that any concern over the legitimacy of the criminal justice system was silenced by the anti-terrorist movement following the 9/11 attacks. The militarization of police under Bush was the same as militarization efforts in the Clinton administration. Taylor writes, "In 2006, the Pentagon distributed "vehicles worth $15.4 million, aircraft worth $8.9 million, boats worth $6.7 million, weapons worth $1 million and 'other' items worth $110.6 million" to local police agencies." The expansion of militarized police forces can result in public cynicism especially in the Black community.[75] The protests and riots that ensued after the death of Ferguson, Missouri teenager Michael Brown were quelled by police that utilized heavy military equipment and armored vehicles, the protesters and rioters were also met with a barrage of rubber bullets and tear gas.[76] Various media outlets capitalized on the violence and looting that occurred at the riots. Even though frustration and distrust of the police caused the riots, some media pundits fed the Black criminality stereotype. Black *CNN* news anchor Don Lemon reported the sights and sounds in Ferguson after it was announced that Darren Wilson would not be indicted for killing Michael Brown. As unrest and anger began to unravel after the announcement, Lemon stated, in a live broadcast outside the Ferguson

[75] Monica Anderson, "Vast Majority of Blacks View the Criminal Justice System as Unfair," *Pew Research Center*, August 12, 2014, accessed August 21, 2015, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/08/12/vast-majority-of-blacks-view-the-criminal-justice-system-as-unfair/.
[76] Amy Goodman. "Rubber Bullets, Tear Gas and Jail: Ferguson Police Crack Down on Journalists Covering Protests," *Democracy Now!* August 20, 2014, accessed August 20, 14 http://www.democracynow.org/2014/8/20/rubber_bullets_tear_gas_and_jail.

police department, that there was "…the smell of marijuana in the air." Lemon's statement about marijuana is a reinforcing implication to White viewers that Black Americans and drug use are harmoniously linked.[77] The American Civil Liberties Union 2013 report, "The War on Marijuana in Black and White," concluded that the usage rate for marijuana among Blacks and Whites was almost equal, but Blacks were more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession.[78]

The racial bias within the criminal justice system paired with economic inequality in the present system of capitalism has induced the creation of the Black Lives Matter Movement. The movement addresses the prevalence of implicit bias within the criminal justice system. The movement intends to reverse the effects of implicit bias and overt racism by reforming the laws and policies that govern the criminal justice system. The following graph (Figure 1) is an illustration of the racial incarceration disparity that the movement has vociferously denounced.

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[77] Catherine Taibi. "Don Lemon Sparks Outrage with Marijuana Comment in Ferguson," *The Huffington Post*, last modified November 25, 2014, accessed May 16, 2015 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/25/don-lemon-marijuana-ferguson-cnn-darren-wilson_n_6218074.html.
[78] Ezekiel Edwards et al., "The War on Marijuana in Black and White," *American Civil Liberties Union*, June 2013, accessed March 4, 2016, https://www.aclu.org/report/report-war-marijuana-black-and-white.
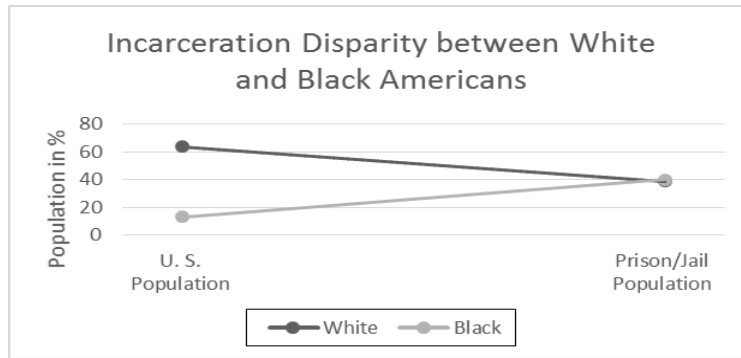
Figure 1   Incarceration Disparity between White and Black Americans.

Source: Peter Wagner and Bernadette Rabuy, "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2016," *Prison Policy Initiative*, March 14, 2016, accessed April 13, 2016, http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2016.html.

In the book, *Ferguson's Fault Lines: The Race Quake that Rocked a Nation*, the implicit biases of American law enforcement officers and the over policing of Black Americans is discussed. The book uses Ferguson and other municipalities throughout St. Louis County, Missouri, as a case study since this area is uniquely linked to the Black Lives Matter Movement and the origins of its protests. L. Song Richardson and Phillip Atiba Goff define implicit racial biases as "automatic associations connected with social groups." They argue that people are often cognitively unaware of their racial prejudice, and as a result interaction with certain groups precipitates emotional and behavioral responses that resemble conscious racial antipathy.[79] As aforesaid, the idea of Black Americans as distinctively criminal and inferior are stereotypical notions that have been intact throughout American history. Richardson and Goff argue, based on research, that racial biases "can cause individuals to interpret identical facial expressions as more

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[79] L. Song Richardson and Phillip Atiba Goff, "The Psychology of Racial Violence," in *Ferguson's Fault Lines: The Race Quake That Rocked a Nation,* ed. Kimberly Jade Norwood (Chicago: American Bar Association, 2016), 18-20.

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hostile on black faces than on white faces, and to perceive identical ambiguous behaviors as more aggressive when engaged in by blacks as opposed to whites."[80] The study, "The Influence of Stereotypes on Decisions to Shoot," examines the role of racially embedded stereotypes and an individual's decision to shoot based on perceived danger. The researchers used a videogame simulation in order to depict Black and White criminals in hostile scenarios. The first wave of participants, seventy nonblack undergraduate students, were assigned to read identical newspaper articles about either Black or White criminals prior to the simulation. The researchers concluded that the articles had no effect on how participants responded to Whites in the simulation but augmented the Black link to criminality "…reading about Black criminals dramatically increased the participants' tendency to make stereotypic pattern of errors (shooting unarmed Blacks, failing to shoot armed Whites)."[81] The next group of participants manifested the same racial biases as the first group as the decision to shoot Blacks as opposed to Whites did not change.[82] Richardson and Goff cite studies that have been conducted by Goff and others. One study orchestrated by Goff and colleagues was the implicit dehumanization test, Goff describes implicit dehumanization as "the tendency to unconsciously associate blacks with beasts, particularly apes, not only facilitates racial violence, but can also help people feel more comfortable with it." The study tested police officers on the basis of implicit dehumanization and concluded that officers with the highest implicit dehumanization scores "were more likely to have used force on the street against black as

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[80] Ibid., 19.
[81] Joshua Correll et al., "The Influence of Stereotypes on Decisions to Shoot," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 37, (2007): 1114.
[82] Ibid., 1108-1111.

www.manaraa.com

opposed to white youth."[83] The seemingly ubiquitous nature of implicit bias and implicit

dehumanization as it relates to Black Americans has led to investigations of various

police departments by the United States Department of Justice. In the department's

report about the New Orleans Police Department a perpetual cycle of discriminatory

policing was uncovered. The report reveals data that policing in New Orleans

disproportionately affected and violated the constitutional rights of Black Americans and

other minorities by means of unlawful arrests and illegal search and seizures.[84] Among

the data was 2009 and 2010 arrest statistics, the New Orleans Police Department arrested

500 Black males and over 60 Black females under the age of seventeen in 2009 for

offenses that included: homicide, robbery, larceny over $50, forcible rape, burglary,

aggravated assault, vehicle theft, and arson. During the same year, the department

arrested one White female and eight White males under the age of seventeen for the same

offenses. In 2010, almost 500 Black individuals, within the same age group, were

arrested for the previously mentioned offenses as opposed to eleven White individuals

arrested. The 2010 figures result in an 11:1 overall arrest ratio when adjusted for

population according to the report.[85] The report also explored the use of force disparity,

the report states, "Of the 27 instances between January 2009 and May 2010 in which

NOPD officers intentionally discharged their firearms at people, all 27 of the subjects of

this deadly force were African American." The report also discovered that over 80% of

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[83] Norwood, 20.

[84] U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, "Investigation of the New Orleans Police Department," March 16, 2011, accessed September 6, 2016, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2011/03/17/nopd_report.pdf.

[85] Ibid., 10-11.

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individuals that were exposed to force during resisting arrest incidents were Black.[86] The same pattern of racially biased unconstitutional policing were customary in cities such as Baltimore, Maryland. The Justice Department's Baltimore report asserts that Blacks were disproportionately stopped and searched, and allegations of police officers directing vitriolic language and racial epithets at Black Baltimoreans ranged over 100.[87]

The Black Lives Matter Movement is precisely a movement that attempts to transform the mainstream conceptualization of race and the differential treatment of Black Americans. Within the American paradigm of political and social study is Black politics, which essentially follows the development of movements such as Black Lives Matter. Subsequent chapters will venture into colonialism, capitalism, the commodification of race, and the effectiveness of the two major party system. All of these areas solidify the emergence of the Black Lives Matter and how it will evolve.

Capitalism and Colonialism

It could be argued that Black Americans still operate as colonized subjects in America. As aforementioned, colonialism is a system of exploitation. The dominant class exploits subordinate classes for labor or any other profitable commodity they possess on their land or in their neighborhoods. In "Reassessing the Internal (Neo) Colonialism Theory," Robert L. Allen explains that colonies are not just external entities controlled by foreign ruling powers, but they are also internal such as the Black ghetto.[88]

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[86]Ibid., 11.
[87] U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, "Investigation of the Baltimore City Police Department," August 10, 2016, accessed September 6, 2016, https://www.justice.gov/opa/file/883366/download.
[88] Robert L. Allen, "Reassessing the Internal (Neo) Colonialism Theory," *The Black Scholar* 35, no. 1 (2005): 4.

With this frame of thought, present-day Black ghettoes or "the hood" can be described as concentrated internal colonies. It is within these concentrated internal colonies that resources and opportunities are limited, and any form of assistance or upward mobility is achieved outside of the colony. As a form of institutional racism, it is important that Black communities are controlled or maintained as internal colonies, as this reduces the level of competition for the dominant society. Black communities as an internal colonies is seen with for profit policing. Municipalities across the nation actively and disproportionately target Black citizens for traffic stops as a means of generating revenue, and among municipalities in St. Louis County, Missouri, the racial profiling of Black citizens has become one of the most lucrative and reliable revenue sources. The practice of for profit policing affects impoverished Black Americans the most, as they are more likely to be jailed because they cannot afford to pay excessive fines and fees.[89]

It is of great importance that the Black Lives Matter Movement continues to disseminate information about the repressive structure of colonialism and capitalism. The amalgamation of colonialism and capitalism maintains racially oppressive structures that are beneficial for members of the capitalistic hegemony. Carter A. Wilson describes capitalistic exploitation as a mode of production that accumulates wealth for some while many suffer.[90] Colonialism can be described as an oppressive relationship between individuals that serves as the catalyst or the portal that allows a suppressive economic system like capitalism to take root. Racial capitalism and internal colonialism have

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[89] Thomas Harvey and Brendan Roediger, "St. Louis County Municipal Courts, For-Profit Policing and the Road to Reforms," in *Ferguson's Fault Lines: The Race Quake That Rocked a Nation*, ed. Kimberly Jade Norwood (Chicago: American Bar Association, 2016), 57-67.
[90] Carter Wilson, 17-19.

created the climate for societal injustices like mass incarceration, which is simply the removal of a disenfranchised and exploited labor force.[91] Another exemplar of how institutional racism has attempted to maintain Blacks as concentrated colonial subjects or individuals with no access to capital is the housing market crisis. The American Civil Liberties Union's 2015 report, "Impact of the US Housing Crisis on the Racial Wealth Gap Across Generations," is a perfect research based illustration of how essential homeownership is in the lives of Black Americans, and why the loss of homeownership is a devastating phenomenon that has the potential of creating generational regression for Black families. The report asserts that during the Great Recession, precisely from 2007 to 2009, household wealth for both White and Black families, excluding home equity, dramatically declined. However, the recovery period, from 2009 to 2011, was only a recovery period for White families. As White families began to recover wealth or eliminate wealth loss, the household wealth of Black families continued to decline. The study states, "During the 2009-2011 period, however, the typical white family's losses slowed to zero, while the typical black family lost an additional 13 percent of its wealth."[92] The study expounds on the differential outcomes of the recovery process, and what type of implications the recovery differentiation could have on the future. Since Black Americans did not benefit from the wealth loss recovery, the study states that future generations of Black Americans will also feel the effects of the housing market crisis. Based on the report's projections, because of the Great Recession and because

[91] Sarah Burd-Sharps and Rebecca Rasch, "Impact of the US Housing Crisis on the Racial Wealth Gap Across Generations," *American Civil Liberties Union*, June 2015, accessed February 3, 2016, https://www.aclu.org/files/field_document/discrimlend_final.pdf.
[92] Ibid., 2.

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Blacks did not benefit from the recovery, the wealth of a typical White household will be 4.5 times that of the typical Black household by 2031.[93]

In the article, "The Political Economy of Black Housing: From the Housing Crisis of the Great Migrations to the Subprime Mortgage Crisis," Ruby Mendenhall explains how housing discrimination throughout America's history has affected the upward mobility of Black Americans. Starting with the Great Migrations, Mendenhall gives an explicit overview of the economic policies that ostracized and dispossessed Black Americans. In the American political economy, Mendenhall identifies two types of capital that help create and keep resources; consumption capital and investment capital. She describes consumption capital as income that individuals use to purchase basic necessities such as food. Investment capital, she describes, as money put into property ownership such as a car or house. Equity and interest is what differentiates investment capital from consumption capital and Mendenhall explains how African Americans have been deprived of both.[94] Mendenhall writes that as Blacks began to leave the agricultural South in the early 1900s to pursue large-scale manufacturing jobs in the North, efforts were made to marginalize Blacks by limiting housing resources. Mendenhall asserts that Blacks in cities like Chicago lived in segregated and concentrated communities that where essentially cut off from the rest of society. Black Americans could not follow the same model of assimilation that was used by European immigrants like the Irish and Polish, and as a result their blackness was a constant reminder of why they lived in segregated communities. Various strategies were used to deny Black Americans

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[93] Ibid., 3.
[94] Ruby Mendenhall, "The Political Economy of Black Housing: From the Housing Crisis of the Great Migrations to the Subprime Mortgage Crisis," *The Black Scholar* 40, no. 1 (2010): 20-21.

homeownership from discriminatory covenants to inflated home prices. The overtly

racist and discriminatory policies would only worsen after the creation of the Federal

Housing Administration in the 1930s. America's wealth evaporated as a result of the

Great Depression and the Federal Housing Administration was created to revitalize the

economy by providing long-term mortgages with low interest rates. Other government

sponsored programs through the Home Owners Loan Corporation offered assistance to

needy families that defaulted on their mortgages.[95] However, Blacks were denied access

to these programs as explained by Mendenhall:

> After its creation, HOLC institutionalized redlining and the denial of credit to
> black neighborhoods. It developed four categories of risk associated with loans in
> urban areas. Most of their loans were made to neighborhoods in the top two
> categories. The first category include new and (white) homogenous communities
> with business and professional residents. The second category involved
> communities that had peaked but remained desirable and stable. The third
> grouping, which seldom received loans, involved racially or ethnically diverse
> communities in close proximity to black belts because of their attraction to blacks.
> Black neighborhoods received the lowest code, seldom received funding from
> HOLC, and were represented by the color red.[96]

The structural inequities that were embraced during the 1930s and 1940s would

resurface during the 21st Century. However, unlike the 1930s and 1940s, Blacks were

systematically targeted by banks and mortgage officers through predatory lending. As a

result of the Great Recession, the housing crisis peaked in 2006. This inadvertently

uncovered a trail of predatory lending, and thousands of Black Americans witnessed the

foreclosure of their homes as they were the primary victims of the subprime mortgage

crisis.[97] Mendenhall describes predatory lending as "reverse redlining," the process of

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[95] Ibid., 24-26.
[96] Ibid., 26.
[97] Ibid., 31-32.

distributing subprime loans to economically vulnerable groups as a means of generating more profit for private financial institutions. As a result of these subprime loans, Blacks paid higher interest rates and accumulated less equity than Whites. To show the racialism of the subprime mortgage crisis, Mendenhall explains that even Blacks with great credit credentials received subprime loans, and upper income Blacks received subprime loans at twice the rate of low income Whites.[98]

Furthermore, the American Civil Liberties Union identified the discriminatory lending practices as creating a dual mortgage market where Blacks are systematically disenfranchised with long-term ramifications. The aforementioned report states, "As of 2010, African Americans and Latinos (were), respectively, 47 percent and 45 percent more likely to be facing foreclosures than whites."[99] The report states that Blacks suffered tremendous losses during the Great Recession, and unlike Whites, Black Americans relied heavily on retirement savings account which quickly decimated. The report states, "In 2007, total white median wealth, or the wealth of the typical white household, was $244,000; for blacks, it was just over one quarter that level, or $63,060."[100] Moreover, median wealth during the same year for Blacks, excluding equity, was a little over $14,000 compared to almost $93,000 for Whites.[101] The report states that Black families rely more heavily on home equity as a part of their wealth portfolio. Mendenhall defines a home as a "transformative asset," an asset that can effectively change the circumstances of an individual or family through location and

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[98] Ibid., 28-31.
[99] Burd and Rasch, 9.
[100] Ibid., 11.
[101] Ibid., 12.

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wealth-building.[102] Homeownership is the primary source of wealth for African Americans, and as the Urban Institute pointed out the decline in homeownership damaged young Black Americans the most. The Urban Institute reports that the homeownership rate for Blacks ages 35 to 44 fell from 45% in 1990 to 33% in 2015. One can speculate that individuals between 35 and 44 are young professionals with young families, a major wealth setback that can indeed impact the future of their children.[103] It is also important to note that the foreclosure crisis affected Blacks throughout the class structure. According to *The Washington Post* article, "Broken by the Bubble," Black residents in one of the nation's most affluent Black counties, Prince George's County, Maryland, lost a considerable amount of wealth and lost more wealth than Whites in neighboring communities during the housing crisis. The newspaper chose a fairly young and affluent subdivision as a case study, the Fairwood subdivision.   The article states that the neighborhood is over 70% Black with an average household income of more than $170,000. However, even though Black residents of this neighborhood enjoyed middle class status, half the loans on homes in the neighborhood ended up in foreclosure. The article states that Prince George's County was "…the epicenter for mortgage failures in Maryland." Homeowners in Fairwood saw their equity disappear and their homes devalued. The article states, "31% of borrowers in Prince George's County with incomes higher than $200,000 a year received subprime loans."[104] The

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[102] Mendenhall, 21.

[103] Laurie Goodman, Jun Zhu, and Rolf Pendall, "Are Gains in Black Homeownership History?" *Urban Institute*, February 14, 2017, accessed February 14, 2017, http://www.urban.org/urban-wire/are-gains-black-homeownership-history.

[104] Kimbriell Kelly, John Sullivan, and Steven Rich, "Broken by the Bubble," *The Washington Post*, last modified January 25, 2015, accessed March 23, 2016, http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/2015/01/25/in-fairwood-dreams-of-black-wealth-foundered-amid-the-mortgage-meltdown/?utm_term=.42dc01e60002.

above analysis reinforces Michael Dawson's black utility heuristic theory, a theory that states Black Americans are inherently linked regardless of class. The linkage shows that no matter how stratified Black Americans become financially, there is always a constant denominator that dictates economic outcomes; the predatory and unjust nature of institutional racism. The underlining implications of discriminatory and predatory lending will possibly affect future generations of African Americans. Homeownership as a "transformative asset" not only affects wealth-building, but also the quality of schools children attend.[105]

The ruling in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 was a historic legal victory for Black Americans that wanted the same educational opportunities and quality as Whites. However, the legal ruling in this case, over 60 years ago, has still not mitigated the effects or the covert tactics of racialized education. States like Mississippi, still suffer from racial educational disparities, and as historian Robert Luckett alludes to in his article, "From Council Schools to Today's Fight for Public Ed," Mississippi's modern school choice reform is reminiscent of past educational reform after Brown v. Board of Education. As Luckett explains, Mississippi enacted "Freedom of Choice" after the Brown v. Board of Education decision which allowed segregationists to send their children to all White public schools. Financial assistance was also allocated to White students that attended council schools, named for the White Citizens' Council. Mississippi's advocacy for charter schools and voucher programs while defunding and underfunding public education dramatically affects the educational achievement of Black Mississippians, as Black majority school districts often do not have the local tax base that

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[105] Mendenhall, 21.

can properly sustain public schools.[106]   This is, however, a national epidemic that

weakens the country as a whole. In a 2016 report by the U.S. Government Accountability

Office, the percentage of poor school districts with majority Black or Hispanic students is

growing. The report found that schools that were the most racially concentrated and poor

offered fewer advanced courses and students at these schools were more likely to fail the

9th grade and experience school suspension. The report states that some school districts

have tried to reverse the trend of racial concentration by investing in magnet schools that

attracted students from different economic and racial backgrounds, however, states and

local districts that have implemented such initiatives often neglected other schools in the

district that were poor and racially concentrated.[107] The report shows that America's

schools are still racially and socioeconomically segregated, and the lack of resources for

these schools is the underlining explanation behind the achievement gap. One would

probably assume that the days of separate but equal are behind the nation, but a closer

look at racial educational disparities tells a different story. In cities such as Little Rock,

Arkansas, which has a turbulent racial history, Black student marginalization is still a

problem. According to *The Atlantic*, Roberts Elementary School is almost 60% White

and is equipped with a "state-of-the art computer lab." The school is also equipped with

other educational amenities that foster an effective learning environment. On the

contrary, Wilson Elementary School is over 70% Black with crumbling infrastructure.

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[106] Robert Luckett, "From Council Schools to Today's Fight for Public Ed," *Jackson Free Press*, last modified February 15, 2017, accessed February 15, 2017, http://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2017/feb/15/council-schools-todays-fight-public-ed/.

[107] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Better Use of Information Could Help Agencies Identify Disparities and Address Racial Discrimination," GAO-16-345, April 21 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-345.

Attorneys in the state filed a lawsuit, in 2015, which accused the Arkansas Department of Education of racial discrimination. The lawsuit alleged that schools in the district were treated unequally, White schools in the district were allocated more resources while the problems faced by Black schools were ignored.[108]

Research conducted by U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights illuminates the disparities present in education across the country. The report contained data from the 2013-2014 school year, and the research states, "Black, Latino, and American Indian or Alaska Native students are more likely to attend schools with higher concentrations of inexperienced teachers."[109] The report also states that Black students are 1.2 times as likely to attend a school with no counselor as compared to White students. The report also meticulously maps out the college and career readiness disparities in school districts across the country, Black children, on average, have less opportunities in their schools that aid preparation for the next level of learning.[110] In an article by the Brookings Institute, non-black teachers have lower educational expectations for Black students. This has the possibility of dramatically affecting the psychological security of Black students in regards to their educational attainment. If they perceive that their teacher is pessimistic about their ability to acquire information or succeed in future endeavors, then the desire to focus on achievement might diminish.[111]

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[108] Alana Semuels, "How Segregation Has Persisted in Little Rock," *The Atlantic*, April 27, 2016, accessed April 27, 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/04/segregation-persists-little-rock/479538/.

[109] U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, "Key Data Highlights on Equity and Opportunity Gaps in Our Nation's Public Schools," last modified October 28, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf.

[110] Ibid., 6-7.

[111] Liz Sablich, "7 Findings That Illustrate Racial Disparities in Education," *Brookings Institute*, June 6, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2016/06/06/7-findings-that-illustrate-racial-disparities-in-education/.

In regards to higher education, racial discrepancy is also a problem. The Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University released a 2013 report, "Separate and Unequal: How Higher Education Reinforces the Intergenerational Reproduction of White Racial Privilege." The report found that, "The American postsecondary system is a dual system of racially separate and unequal institutions despite the growing access of minorities to the postsecondary system." The report also states that since 1995, a large percentage of new White enrollees have gone to top tiered schools while a large percentage of new Black enrollees have gone to lower tiered schools, even among Black and White students that are equally qualified. The report explains the intergenerational mobility gap, Black students are more susceptible to socioeconomic disadvantages, and because of the economic status of their parents have a less chance of attending high quality schools. Parental education is also a determining factor in how well Black students are able to overcome an economically disadvantageous environment, but even with parents that are educated Black students are still more likely to drop out of college than White students. Even when comparing data based on class structures, low-income Whites receive Bachelor's degrees at twice the rate of low-income Black students and drop out less often.[112] Racial disparities exist even after Black and White students receive degrees and enter the workforce. College educated Black Americans have a higher unemployment rate than similarly educated White Americans,

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[112] Anthony P. Carnevale and Jeff Strohl, "Separate and Unequal: How Higher Education Reinforces the Intergenerational Reproduction of White Racial Privilege," *Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce*, July 2013, accessed December 15, 2016, https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/separate-unequal/.

and when employed, earn less.[113] As Manning Marable states in his book, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, early Black leaders and lawmakers saw education as a tool that could eradicate the "racial underdevelopment" of Black America.[114] The key to capital accumulation involves access to opportunities and resources that make idealistic economic goals a reality. As a consequence of racial capitalism, Black Americans have been systematically denied access to resources that help accumulate capital, education is one of those resources.

Black Lives Matter and the Two Major Parties

The Black Lives Matter Movement is a movement with an unorthodox structure. The movement is one of the first of its kind to reject the centrality of male leadership and normalized gender roles. It is within this unorthodox structure that some organizations within the movement have rejected "establishment politics" as a mode of achieving any considerable gains. President Barack Obama issued an executive order, in 2014, which established the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.   The task force was assembled to address racially biased practices in policing, and how police and the communities they serve could alleviate sentiments of cynicism and disgust. In February of 2016, President Obama met with activists from the movement and other Black leaders to discuss plausible solutions about how the nation could collectively move forward to ensure impartiality and accountability in police practices. Activists from the movement

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[113] Valerie Wilson, "Black Unemployment is Significantly Higher than White Unemployment Regardless of Educational Attainment," *Economic Policy Institute*, last modified December 17, 2015, accessed January 10, 2017, http://www.epi.org/publication/black-unemployment-educational-attainment/; Eileen Patten, "Racial, Gender Wage Gaps Persist in U.S. Despite Some Progress," *Pew Research Center*, July 1, 2016, accessed August 4, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/01/racial-gender-wage-gaps-persist-in-u-s-despite-some-progress/.
[114] Marable, 215-216.

voiced their concerns and presented their agenda to President Obama.[115] On the contrary,

not every activist from the movement was enthused by President Obama's gesture.

Aislinn Pulley, a Black Lives Matter activist in Chicago refused to meet with President

Obama. In an Op-Ed she writes:

> I respectfully declined the invitation to the White House to discuss criminal legal
> reform and to celebrate Black History Month. I was under the impression that a
> meeting was being organized to facilitate a genuine exchange on the matters
> facing millions of Black and Brown people in the United States. Instead, what
> was arranged was basically a photo opportunity and a 90-second sound bite for
> the president. I could not, with any integrity, participate in such a sham that
> would only serve to legitimize the false narrative that the government is working
> to end policy brutality and the institutional racism that fuels it.[116]

Pulley's brand of activism rejects traditional norms of political participation. Her form of

activism is based on "antagonism of the system," the excoriation of establishment politics

that seems to consolidate power in the hands of a few while the populace remains

vulnerable to state sanctioned police violence and deteriorating neighborhoods. Pulley's

radicalism is consistently linked to the overall message of the movement; a movement

that is viscerally incredulous of capitalism and the commitment of the two major political

parties to all people.

In *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America*, Paul Frymer

articulates the significance of race in national politics. He argues that two-party

competition creates a climate where Black voters are essentially ignored or captured, and

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[115] Maya Rhodan, "Black Lives Matter Activist Says Obama Meeting Was Positive," *Time*, February 18, 2016, accessed February 18, 2016, http://time.com/4229987/obama-black-lives-matter-meeting/.
[116] Aislinn Pulley, "Black Struggle Is Not a Sound Bite: Why I Refused to Meet With President Obama," *Truthout*, February 18, 2016, accessed February 19, 2016, http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/34889-black-struggle-is-not-a-sound-bite-why-i-refused-to-meet-with-president-obama.

in some instances both.[117] The Democratic Party has captured the Black vote by

engaging Black voters through rhetoric of inclusivity and incremental social change.

However, as Frymer argues, once the Democratic Party neutralizes competition and

secures the support of Black voters, the interests of Black voters are no longer prioritized.

Parties are based on the fundamental conviction of attaining power through the promotion

of viable and loyal candidates; and developing a successful strategy that appeals to a

multitude of groups is how parties win the competition battle. Black voters, as a

historically powerless and disenfranchised voting base, do not possess the same political

power as other groups in American society. This is why Frymer argues that parties often

neglect the socioeconomic interests of Black voters. He argues that in 1992, President

Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party distanced themselves from any agenda that

attempted to stultify racial injustice. Frymer writes, "Party leaders believed that the

Democrats' identification with policies explicitly designed to integrate blacks more

completely into the nation's social, economic, and political institutions damaged their

party's appeal among key groups of white voters." Clinton's rhetoric was a clear

indicator to White voters that he would not fight politically to unravel or challenge the

status quo. Frymer elucidates, "In perhaps the defining moment of his campaign, Clinton

seized upon the Los Angeles riots as an opportunity to articulate his differences with

Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition and to attack an obscure rap music artist, Sister

Soulja, for allegedly advocating black-on-white violence. According to public opinion

polls, whites not only were aware of Clinton's speech- twice as many knew about the

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[117] Paul Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 27.

Sister Soulja incident as knew about Clinton's economic plan- but they approved of it by a three-to-one margin."[118] The damaging effects of such platform decisions has the same damaging effect of the politics of respectability, which Black politicians invoke to vindicate their party for their abandonment of Black policy concerns. The Democratic Party's current platform is reflective of a more progressive, racially conscious agenda, but would this be the case without an active pursuit and pressure from activists within the Black Lives Matter Movement?[119] During the 2016 presidential campaign cycle, Democratic candidates Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton were confronted by members of different Black Lives Matter organizations. These public confrontations that challenged both Sanders and Clinton to recognize the validity of the Black Lives Matter Movement led to both Sanders and Clinton addressing institutional racism on a more consistent basis.[120] Mothers of the Movement, a group of mothers who have lost children to police or vigilante violence, spoke at the 2016 Democratic National Convention to express their support for Hillary Clinton and the hope they have for effective policy reform.[121] Yet, one should still ask is this a genuine gesture of concern from the Democratic Party, or is this an example of the commodification of race? Is it an

[118] Ibid., 4-5.
[119] "The 2016 Democratic Platform," *Democratic National Committee,* accessed December 13, 2016, https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Democratic-Party-Platform-7.21.16-no-lines.pdf.
[120] Tyler Tynes, "Black Lives Matter Activists Interrupt Hillary Clinton at Private Event in South Carolina," *Huffington Post*, February 24, 2016, accessed February 24, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/clinton-black-lives-matter-south-carolina_us_56ce53b1e4b03260bf7580ca.
[121] Eric Bradner and Eugene Scott, "Mothers of the Movement Makes Case for Hillary Clinton," *CNN*, July 26, 2016, accessed July 26, 2016, http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/26/politics/mothers-movement-dnc-hillary-clinton/.

instinctual response to showcase the Mothers of the Movement in order to maintain a loyal voting bloc?

Furthermore, one must also evaluate the Republican Party. Even though the majority of African Americans vote for Democratic candidates, the Republican Party's role in the covert and overt subordination and marginalization of Blacks cannot be understated. Michelle Alexander argues that the Republican Party's embrace of racial conservatism, in the late 1950s and 1960s, appealed to White voters that feared egalitarianism. Anti-black code words like "law and order" used by Republican presidents such as Richard Nixon resurfaced with the ascendancy of President Donald Trump. President Trump's aggressive denunciation of "black on black" crime in cities such as Chicago is a way to market his authoritarian-like qualities in regards to being tough on crime.[122] Even though Trump's nationalistic rhetoric is corrosive, he has essentially mobilized and galvanized poor and working class White Americans. It is his embrace of vitriolic speech that has unified a large segment of America's population behind him, while ostracizing African Americans and other people of color.[123] The Republican Party as a whole has not embraced the Black Lives Matter Movement, and party's platform is devoid of any exhaustive policy stances that address institutional racism as an economic and social system that impedes the progress of Black Americans.[124] The Republican Party recognizes African Americans as a Democratic

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[122] Alexander, 40-45.

[123] Richard Fausset, Alan Blinder, and John Eligon, "Donald Trump's Description of Black America Is Offending Those Living in It," *New York Times*, August 24, 2016, accessed January 11, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/25/us/politics/donald-trump-black-voters.html?_r=0.

[124] "Republican Platform 2016," *Republican National Committee*, accessed December 13, 2016, https://www.gop.com/the-2016-republican-party-platform/.

Party "captured group," and therefore any extensive outreach that identifies racial injustices is redundant. As Frymer states, "If a nation is divided by race, with one group indelibly in the minority, the two-party system places the center of conflict and attention around the majority group. In turn, the minority group becomes further demobilized and, in the process, loses most semblances of representation in American politics."[125]

Both the Democratic and Republican Party have isolated any agenda that speaks directly to economic empowerment for Black Americans. The existing hierarchies within the American political system can only be challenged by groups like Black Lives Matter. The greatest political and economic gains for African Americans have been due to outside activism and mobilization on the part of individuals and organizations that believed in a message of change and racial liberation. Fryer states that the Abolitionist Movement and the Civil Rights Movement were both movements that applied external pressure to the political system and were ultimately met with a certain degree of success. Activists within the Black Lives Matter Movement fear the co-optation of their message by mainstream political actors. This is a legitimate concern as the co-optation of one's message can be used to sanitize or delegitimize their campaign, as was done with the Black Panther Party. However, parties remain even after movements dissolve. The Black Lives Matter Movement does not have to endorse the Democratic or Republican Party, but organizations within the movement should apply pressure to both parties.

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[125] Frymer, 139.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The Black Lives Matter Movement should capitalize on the shifting opinion of the electorate, as individuals become more and more anti-establishment the Black Lives Matter Movement should function as an institution that is engaged in influencing public opinion.[126] External pressure and strategically shaping public opinion will change the functionality of institutional racism, the major parties under their own direction will not. It is essential that as factional divides plague both parties, such as the progressive and centrist contention in the Democratic Party, the Black Lives Matter Movement reinforces the message of whichever ideological faction has the best interests of Black Americans in mind.[127] The movement must operationalize under the mentality of achieving long-term pragmatic gains. Capitalism and Colonialism, systems of racial hierarchy and exploitation, will not be assuaged unless institutions of power and privilege are coerced into accepting the reality of institutional racism and their complicit role in the formation and operation of said systems. The Movement for Black Lives disseminated an agenda that they hope to achieve. The agenda includes a call for reparations, The Movement for Black Lives website states:

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[126] Robert Reich, "The Endgame of 2016's Anti-Establishment Politics," *Huffington Post*, April 25, 2016, accessed May 10, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-reich/the-endgame-of-2016s-anti_b_9770982.html.

[127] Molly Ball, "No, Liberals Don't Control the Democratic Party," *The Atlantic*, February 7, 2014, accessed December 1, 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/02/no-liberals-dont-control-the-democratic-party/283653/.

> We demand reparations for past and continuing harms. The government, responsible corporations and other institutions that have profited off of the harm they have inflicted on Black people- from colonialism to slavery through food and housing redlining, mass incarceration and surveillance- must repair the harm done.[128]

The question must be asked, is reparations a practical political proposition? It is important to note that U.S. Representative John Conyers (D-MI) has introduced H.R. 40, Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act, since 1989 with no significant action or support from Congress. According to Conyers, the commission would acknowledge slavery and study its present-day economic ramifications on African Americans, and formulate remedies that could compensate for years of racial and economic injustice. The bill has been supported by other Black lawmakers and civil rights organizations.[129] The 115th Congress is Republican controlled, and since Black voters are not a "captured group" for Republican lawmakers and the Republican Party, the query becomes, can external pressure from the Black Lives Matter result in any significant concessions while there is a majority Republican led Congress? This could lead to a dead end for the movement and Republican lawmakers could cite the commodification of race as an example of why Conyer's proposition is unreasonable. Republican lawmakers could publicly showcase or mention successful Black bureaucrats, athletes, entertainers and other professional Black Americans that have socially and financially trounced or circumvented institutional barriers without any specific programs or initiatives aimed at their race. It is then imperative, as

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[128] "Reparations," *Movement for Black Lives*, accessed August 22, 2016, https://policy.m4bl.org/reparations/.
[129] John Conyers, "My Reparations Bill-HR 40," *Institute of the Black World*, accessed December 1, 2016, http://ibw21.org/commentary/my-reparations-bill-hr-40/.

aforementioned, for the movement to strategically organize opposition to the actions of Congress by influencing public opinion. Organizations within the movement could use a wide variety of political consulting and strategic communication firms that master in manipulating the way people perceive certain political issues. It is the utilization of resources that can propel the movement forward. The movement should be cognizant of legislation proposed and passed as ammunition that can be used to animate the electorate before mid-term elections. Mid-term election voter turnout has been significantly lower than turnouts during presidential elections since the 1840s. The voter turnout during the 2014 mid-term election was the lowest in 72 years.[130] The Black Lives Matter Movement has to use such political voting trends to its advantage. The movement must use mid-term elections as leverage in order to win political and legislative battles. Vociferously stating the movement's position will not be enough. There must be a concerted effort to work within the system even if activists in the movement do not agree with establishment politics. The unhinged corporatism of today's government will not pause and give the movement recognition without the movement's involvement in attempting to adequately change governmental processes and priorities.

The Black Lives Matter Movement emerged as a movement to combat systemic inequality in America. The movement uses social media as a tool to spread awareness and information about the various protests and activities. The evolution of the Black Lives Matter Movement will be marked by its ability to remain grassroots oriented with the same radical message, but with a willingness to engage and work with those within

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[130] David Becker, "2014 Midterms Defined by Low Voter Turnout," *The Pew Charitable Trusts*, November 13, 2014, accessed August 14, 2016, http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/analysis/2014/11/13/2014-midterms-defined-by-low-voter-turnout.

mainstream or establishment politics. Capitalism, colonialism, and the commodification of race are all reasons why the movement was born. The movement can defeat racial capitalism and internal colonialism, but it cannot be done if the movement has no legitimate allies within the different reaches of government. It is also important that the movement realizes that state and local governmental affairs can play an integral role in the movement's success. The Black Lives Matter National Network has chapters across the country. Members in these chapters could become vocalized forces in local and state politics. These chapters could also run and endorse their own candidates on a local and state level that are committed to racial equity and reform. Racism as an institution will not be resolved by the two major party system. It is an archaic institution that is embedded in the very foundation of American society. The Black Lives Matter Movement can make a difference, but the movement has to engage power, policymakers, and influence public opinion if the movement is to be successful moving forward.

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