



# Staff Town Hall

30 July 2020 / 2:00PM / Zoom Meeting

## Updates

### Announcements

- Today's Town Hall continues our BLM Series for the Summer. This meeting is led by Dr. Nyree Berry and will be a conversation about the impact of social media on the BLM movement.
- For more context on this conversion, check out these readings:
  - Scaling Social Movements Through Social Media: The Case of Black Lives Matter  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2056305118807911>
  - How Black Lives Matter Changed the Way Americans Fight for Freedom  
<https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/race-and-criminal-justice/how-black-lives-matter-changed-way-americans-fight>.
- An excerpt of Eyes on the Prize
  - <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Eyes+On+the+Prize+Song&&view=detail&mid=E8C5E25A68B210633FFCE8C5E25A68B210633FFC&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3DEyes%2BOn%2Bthe%2BPrize%2BSong%26FORM%3DRESTAB>

### John R. Lewis

- We begin with a moment of silence to honor all of the work that John Lewis has done for the movement

### Civil Rights Era

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was intended to reconcile the misfortunates of countries past.

- Oppositely, it made racism less visible, fertilized discrimination, and stagnated African American students even more.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made structural racism less visible because the policy failed to examine human behavior.
- Today 56 years after Jim Crow laws were abolished, implicit bias, microaggressions and structural racism is still prevalent.

### **Post-Civil Rights Era**

- President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964. The act outlawed discrimination in public facilities, such as parks, and in public accommodations, such as hotels and restaurants, and it prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender.
- President Lyndon Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The act abolished literacy tests and other tests used by local and state governments to inhibit African- American voting.
- Higher Education Act President Lyndon Johnson signs the Higher Education Act creating the first federally funded college scholarships.
- The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Celler Act, abolished an earlier quota system based on national origin and established a new immigration policy based on reuniting immigrant families and attracting skilled labor to the United States
- Housing Discrimination Ban President Lyndon Johnson signs the Open Housing Act outlawing discrimination in the sale or rental of most privately-owned homes and apartments.

### **BLM - Human Rights Movement**

- Founded on July 13, 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi two of whom identify as queer.
- BLM's focus has been less about changing specific laws and more about fighting for a fundamental reordering of society wherein Black lives are free from systematic dehumanization.
- BLMs movement is, in actuality, the collective labor of a wide range of Black liberation organizations, each with their own distinct histories. These organizations include groups like the Black Youth Project 100, the Dream

Defenders, Assata's Daughters, the St. Louis Action council, Millennial Activists United, and the Organization for Black Struggle, to name just a few.

### **The BLM Movement - Action**

- BLM has compelled Democrats to restructure their national platform to include issues such as criminal justice reform, encouraged Fortune 500 companies such as Adidas, Bank of America PepsiCo, Airbnb, Nike, PayPal, Comcast, Netflix NBA to address systemic racism. And many have committed to donating millions to reduce police brutality and racial equity.
- In academia, the nation's top 25 universities and colleges including Columbia, Brown University, Boston University, Georgetown, Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford, to name a few, have issued a statement and included a plan to address systemic racism.

### **BLM, Millennials, and Gen Z**

- It is predicted that Millennials and Generation Z-ers will ensure the global market embrace ethnic inclusiveness.
- Millennials and Generation Z-ers are the most racially/ethnically diverse generational cohort.
- They are more acculturated to the globally inclusive cultures than any preceding generational cohorts.
- As a highly culturally open-minded group and "less fixed in their identity, Millennials are more inclined to appreciate multicultural globalization efforts rather than demystifying ethnic inclusiveness.

### **The Social Justice Theory**

- The social Justice Theory that the concept of justice goes beyond man-made laws and suggests that all people should have equal access to wealth, public health, public schooling, social insurance, justice, privileges.
- Millennials hold a liberal view about diversity, racial issues and social justice, displaying high levels of nuanced predisposition toward knowing and learning about other cultures and foreign people
- New Social Movement Theory emerged in the 1980s, and it challenged the structuralism and Marxism that was embedded into Resource Mobilization Theory.

- New Social Movements Theory aims to understand how dimensions of identity and interpersonal relations incentivize actors to be involved in a social movement.
- Mediated mobilization is 21st century by using the tools of social media, BLM was the first U.S. social movement in history to successfully use the internet as a mass mobilization device. The recent successes of movements, such as #MeToo, #NeverAgain, and #TimesUp, would be inconceivable had it not been for the groundwork that #BlackLivesMatter laid.

### **Social Media and Coalition Building**

- The handful of scholars who explore the role of social media in shaping coalitions suggest that its role is to create space for online social networks that allow activists to strengthen connections and build social capital. Scholars argue that social media can create “weak ties” that draw together protesters with different identities, but who come together against a common enemy.
- In addition to building connections among groups within the BLM movement, group administrators highlighted the salience of social media for mobilizing resources from outsiders and lay movement members.
- For instance, given that social media pages are largely accessible without the need to sign-up or attend in-person meetings or events, BLM groups online can quickly build and link-up large numbers of followers, and several mentioned gaining followers simply through maintaining an online presence.
- Online networking features such as “likes” or “followers” also augment the profile and status of a group with the click of a button.
- Existing research indicates that social media can help shape discourse on relevant political issues. As a “public space,” social media is not used solely to disseminate information about movement tactics or actions but also plays a role in shaping the very discourse on issues that social movements raise. By creating opportunities for recurring interactions among activists, social media serves as
- A vehicle of meaning work, adjoining and to some extent replacing other traditional intermediaries such as alternative and mainstream media and face-to-face interactions. In other words, it became the process through which the symbolic takes form, rather than its mere physical (or virtual) representation.

### **All Black Lives Matter**

- Millennials hold a liberal view about diversity, racial issues and social justice, displaying high levels of nuanced predisposition toward knowing and learning about other cultures and foreign people.
- Coalition building, personal networking, and resource mobilization all speak to significant roles social media can play in scaling movements such as BLM.
- Thus, creating awareness and visibility for the issues that the movement addresses. This stands in contrast with the way BLM activists discussed portrayal of the movement in traditional and mainstream forms of media.
- As millennials and Generation Z-ers emerge as global leaders we will unapologetically dismantle global institutions that do not embrace racial equity, ethnic inclusiveness and social justice.

## Q&A

Q: Social Media allows those who don't have a platform to speak, to have a voice. That voice is not always kind or supportive of the BLM movement. Do these kinds of comments and ideas distract from the movement itself?

A: It is a teaching moment and opportunity for explanation of why things are not so. It is dependent upon us to change the perspective. You will find negative, and dissenting information.

Q: How do we keep allies engaged and committed to supporting BLM? Also, how do we keep each other accountable?

A: It's all about accountability within. There is no right or wrong way of what is right for humans. We have to be honest about the racial profiling etc. and hold each other accountable. It's up to us. We can create allies by understanding one another. We all come from different places and experiences, but we all connect in the fact that we are all human.

Q: Doesn't social media also spread negative, untrue information? How to know who and what to believe?

A: When you're on social media, you have a preference just like if you're watching the news and prefer CNN over FOX. They know who the trusted voices and sources are on these social media platforms based on their record of posts.

Q: Why do you think Latinx police brutality isn't as heard of?

A: Recently we had a LATTC/LACC student who was murdered by the police who was Latinx Andres Guardado. These cases definitely exist and can be easily found if you search for them on the web. Again, we are focusing on race and the focus needs to be human rights.

Q: Wouldn't browsing the web be more sufficient with facts than social media?

A: Yes, but that's also a generational thing. I [Nyree] would likely look something up on Google Scholars, whereas someone of another generation would search for information in a library, and someone from generation Z would look to social media. It's not about how or where the information is coming from, it's about "is it a fact, and is it right?" For each generation, the lived experience is different, so the approach is different for each generation.

Q: What's the best way for us to find information about local protest? Can we get in trouble with our employers here if we participate and are injured or arrested in protests?

A: I [Nyree] was able to find protest via social media. Contrary to the display in mass media, it was not dangerous as believed. There were some individuals who, after the

protest was completed, who had different intentions but for the most part it was very safe and well organized. As far as being arrested, as mentioned earlier John Lewis was arrested 45 times and still made it to congress. Good trouble.