Black Lives Matter (2013) and the Civil Rights Movement (1960s) in the United States of America: A Same Story with a different name and Strategies

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Abstract— The article examines with a fine-tooth comb the evolution of the civil rights movements of African Americans by making a comparative study between the civil rights movement of the sixties and the Black Lives Matter Movement in 2013. After the great hopes raised by Barack Obama's election in 2008, the series of savage and often unpunished killings of young African Americans between 2012-2020 sparked the ire of the black community gathered around the Black Lives Matter Movement. Although the ideological foundations of both movements remain the valorization of black lives in all areas of daily life in the United States, the Black Lives Matter Movement (2013) and the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s did not embrace the same strategies of struggle and the same leadership. From the centralization of leadership of the sixties, the decentralization of leadership in the Black Lives Matter Movement has been more efficient and practical. The use of new information and communication technologies by the Black Lives Matter Movement has significantly contributed to the visibility and massification of the movement in the United States and around the world.

Keywords— Civil rights movement, Black Lives Matter Movement, leadership, ICTs, race

Résumé— L'article passe au peigne fin les évolutions des mouvements de revendications des droits civiques des Africains Américains en faisant une étude comparative entre le mouvement des droits diviques des années soixantes et le Black Lives Matter Movement de 2013. Après les grands espoirs suscités par l'élection de Barack Obama en 2008, les séries de tueries sauvages et souvent impunies de jeunes Africains Américains entre 2012-2020 déclenchèrent l'ire de la communauté noire réunie autour du Black Lives Matter Movement. Même si les fondements idéologiques des deux mouvements demeurent la valorisation des vies des noires dans tous les secteurs de la vie quotienne aux États-Unis, le Black Lives Matter Movement (2013) et les Mouvement des Droits Civiques des années soixantes n'ont pas adopté les mêmes stratégies de lutte et le même leadership. De la centralisation du leadership des années soixantes, la décentralisation du leadership du Black Lives Matter Movement a été plus efficace et plus pratique. Le recours aux nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication par le Black Lives Matter Movement a significativement contribué à la visibilité et à la massification du mouvement aux États-Unis comme partout dans le monde.

Mots-clefs— Mouvement de revendication des droits civiques, Black Lives Matter Movement, leadership, NTIC, race

I.   INTRODUCTION

When Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), one of the most outstanding leaders of the African American community during the 1960s through his commitment and leadership, on August 28, 1963, took the podium at the March on Washington and addressed the gathered crowd, which numbered 200,000 people or more, in these clear-cut words *''We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality''*, Alicia Garza (1981), Patrisse Cullors (1984), and Opal Tometi (1984); the three founding mothers of the #Black Lives Movement (2013) which expresses its fed up with the killings of young African Americans by the American police, were not yet born. But race issues such as white supremacist violence and police brutality against African Americans are the common denominators between the Black Lives Matter Movement and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Modeled after the Freedom Rides that went through the south in the 1960s, bringing organizers and supporters to help register Black people to vote, the Black Lives Matter Freedom Ride was designed to gather together Black people from other parts of the country to go to St. Louis and support the Black people there who were being attacked and maligned by the State for standing up for their rights to live with dignity.

In the same line of thought, on July 13, 2013, the acquittal of George Zimmerman inspired feelings of anger and disillusionment throughout the Black community, which, in turn, inspired action and activism outside of the courtroom, in much the same way that the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* inspired the direct action campaign of the early 1960s. Following *Brown*, many young African Americans felt that the legal system could not supply the large-scale reform that more direct, non-legal action could. This feeling led to the sit-ins and large-scale public demonstrations that are commonly associated with the civil rights movement in the 1960s. These same feelings are inherent in Garza and Cullors's social media posts, as well as many others, following the Zimmerman verdict. And, as they did in the 1960s after *Brown*, these feelings ultimately inspired the activism outside of the courtroom.

However, the black movements of the 1960s and 1970s and the #BLM movement differ on several levels, particularly in terms of the objectives and the organization of the movement, but also in the tactics used and the challenges faced by mobilizers. During the Ferguson protests, these differences were salient in the tense exchanges between young #BLM activists and older activists from the black movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Taylor, 2016: 158-163). Besides, Opal Tometi, one of the

key leaders of the movement, specified that the aspirations of the movement go beyond civil rights and that the movement characterizes itself as a human rights movement for "*the full recognition of [Blacks'] rights as citizens; and it is a battle for full civil, social, political, legal, economic and cultural rights as enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights''*. Generally defined as the ability to motivate, inspire and positively influence people, the different conceptions of the role and practice of leadership remain one of the converging points of the two movements.

The first purpose of this article is to show that the notion of the '*'color line'* that Dubois warned that it would matter in the 21st century is not only the Achilles heel of living together in American society, but also to pinpoint the extent to which the #Black Lives Movement and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s can be seen as a same story. The second aim of our communication is to lay the emphasis on the different strategies that the two movements have used in different contexts to deal with the issue of race in the United States. If the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s had opted for centralization by being deeply embedded in Black communities and equipped with strong leaders, the Black Lives Matter is a loose collection of far-flung organizations. The movement is thus decentralized, democratic and apparently leaderless. Like other contemporary protest groups such as the Occupy Wall Street (2011) and the Arab Spring (2010), the #BLM network has used ICTs in its mobilization, coordination and communication work. One of these tools, the hashtag #black lives matter, has been a central element in the mobilization of this movement whose main objective is to reaffirm the value of " black lives " in the face of state violence, racism and socio-economic inequalities.

II.   RACE IS STILL THE ACHILLES HEEL OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY

The 2008 historical election of Barack Obama as the first African American President in the United States of America and his reelection in 2012 caused much ink to flow not only in the USA but also around the world. Many people believe that the United States of America has moved beyond race and racism because it could not be racist if a Black man was twice elected into the nation's highest office. The positive symbol of Obama's successful election has signaled to the black community that some barriers to success have been removed and their opportunities in the United States have improved. It has also changed the blacks' views of the American Dream. According to Dawson (1995), blacks often assess their own levels of success and opportunities not solely on the basis of their

own achievements, but on the overall progress that the black community is making. In so doing, even if blacks are performing poorly economically in recent years, the symbol of Obama breaking ''the glass ceiling'' may be a glimmer of hope about their own prospects in the future. This suggests that even if Obama's policies did not fully succeed in addressing the plights of the black community, the symbol of his success may continue to resonate with African Americans who will perceive their opportunities to be growing. On the eve of the inauguration day, Barack Obama confided to a journalist from the Washington Post the hope of see his electoral victory initiate a "radical" change in the way of understanding race relations, especially among young Americans.

> There is an entire generation that will grow up taking for granted that the highest office in the land is filled by an African American. I mean, that's a radical thing. It changes how black children look at themselves. It also changes how white children look at black children. And I wouldn't underestimate the force of that […] Race relations become a subset of a larger problem in our society, which is we have a diverse, complicated society where people have a lot of different viewpoints. (Fletcher, 2009)

However, the ongoing murders of unarmed Blacks under the presidency of Barack Obama and just after his presidency unveil the persistent dynamic of racism that render black lives in the USA less valuable. These murders of Blacks explain clearly that the dynamics of segregation and discrimination from the era of Jim Crow have not completely disappeared but transformed. For instance, Trayvon Martin's murder and the subsequent trial have been identified as "a turning point" in the evolution of what is now known as the Black Lives Matter movement (Smith, 2015). Parallels were drawn to the infamous case of Emmett Till, an African American teenager from Chicago visiting relatives in Mississippi in 1955, brutally murdered after reportedly flirting with a white woman (Haygood, 2012). Some trace the modern civil rights movement to the outcry over the acquittal of Till's killers by an all-white jury.

The police witnesses add salt to the injury of the systemic racism in the United States because they strongly believe that Zimmerman has just performed a public service by ridding the neighborhood of a threatening menace. On the side of the government, five unchallenged versions were put forward before the jury to justify Zimmerman's self-defense. The sympathetic nods and helpful prompts from the police witnesses are sufficient elements that explain that white American racism is incrusted in their daily attitudes and behaviors. In each step of the process interviews, Zimmerman was permitted to connect Martin to previous burglaries in the neighborhood, even though he admitted in a later interview that Martin was not the same person who had been arrested for those break-ins (the only connection being their race). At some points, the police interviewers helped Zimmerman with gaps in his story. Officer Singleton openly lends a hand to Zimmerman when he says: *"I don't want to put you on the spot, but these are the questions they're going to ask you,"*. Besides, when Singleton tells Zimmerman after an obvious contradiction: "*You see where the obstacle is here. I want you to think about that. I'm speaking for you. I'm trying to protect you the best I can. I'm here working for you"*, the biasness of the American judiciary system toward black people is laid bare in full view of everyone.

Another murder that gives a heavy blow to the theory of a post-racial America was that of Michael Brown. On August 9, 2014, Michael Brown, an 18-year-old, unarmed African-American teenager, was shot and killed in Ferguson, Missouri by Darren Wilson, a white police officer. According to Shawn, a Ferguson resident, the death of Michael Brown may have been shocking, but it was not surprising simply because similar tragedies have plagued the United States in its recent past. The names of the victims and the killers may have been different, but the outcome in each case was the same. On August 14, 2014, on BBC, Shawn expressed the common frustration of the African American community in these terms: *"It's power. They have the power, they feel we don't. That's why they do the things that they do. What they did to young Michael Brown, that's unnecessary. That's overkill."* Seemingly, fatality at the hands of police brutality has become so prevalent in today's society that one could argue it has become a societal norm. *"[I have] been harassed by police so therefore I definitely know where a lot of people are coming from when they say police can stop you and just harass you and say, 'Where you coming from or where you been?', "* an unidentified male resident told the BBC. The harmful effects of police brutality reach far beyond the physical and psychological injuries of victims. The role of police testimony is critical in trials prosecuting police officers for violence and brutality against minorities. It is often noticed in the USA a judge who instructs the jury to take the police testimony at face value. Accepting police testimony without weighing its evidentiary value is another very subtle way of cementing racism against African American. From another perspective, this instruction has the devastating effect of preventing juries from questioning or challenging police findings.

Michael Brown's murder (2014) is now part of a tragic legacy that can be connected to the murder of Emmett Till (1955). These killings illustrate the historically hostile and -often times-deadly relationship between the American police and the African American community. While police are meant to protect and serve all United States citizens in order to be in line with its motto '' Courtesy - Professionalism – Respect'' written on the policemen's car, police have become a source of fear, quick to resort to physical violence. The story of Michael Brown and others like him is a patterned one, rooted in police culture. And, while there are various proposals for reform, one area requiring immediate attention is the role the police play in the courtroom more specifically, the role of police testimony in minority prosecution.

The forgoing cases of race motivated killings and injustices against Black people prove that they are still systemically being oppressed in America, even though in theory, they have a bundle of human rights and deemed equal with white people. George Floyd's murder in 2020, an unarmed black man also highlights the mistreatment of Black people in the United States of America. White mobs often come into the Black neighborhoods in town looking to wreak havoc on the homes and the people inside. *"You either shot or you were incinerated. If you were caught on the street, you were lynched,"* said Dhati Kennedy, whose ancestors experienced the violence firsthand. Contrary to the police report accusing him of resisting arrest, video records from nearby CCTVs showed that Mr. Floyd was calm and cooperative during the arrest. However, he was thrown to the ground and pinned strongly by two of the officers. The scene is all the more irritating than another officer helped to stave off any possible interventions by onlookers. An opportunity which provided Derek Chauvin, a white police office, the comfort to use his knee to pin Floyd's neck on the tarmac for about nine minutes, the last three minutes being after Floyd was no longer responsive.

In a nutshell, the American government, from the civils rights movement of the 1960s until the #black lives matter in 2013, has failed to adequately protect and provide for Black people the same way it protects and provides for their white counterparts. In 2015, 307 Black people in America were killed by law enforcement alone, according to *The Guardian's* '' *The Counted*'' project, and 266 Black people were killed in 2016. This number does not include murders by vigilantes and security officers, and since police departments are not required to disclose this data in the first place, we really do not have an idea of how widespread the problem is. Although struggle and resistance by oppressed groups can be found across locations and throughout history, the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the black lives matter movement in 2013 have received considerable attention in American sociology. Since leaders are critical to social movements because they inspire commitment, mobilize resources, create and recognize opportunities, devise strategies, frame demands, and influence outcomes, an emphasis will be laid on the role and practice of leadership in the two movements.

III.   DECENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP VS CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP

The successes and failures of social movements are intrinsically linked to the forms of leadership adopted to best accomplish the goals set and transform the ways power operates. In recent decades, the study of leadership has become a topic of interest in the literature of social movements and organizations, and it has become important to understand the influence of leadership on the outcomes of social movements and explore how it contributes to social change. According to Alicia Garza, no one form of leadership is superior, but the forms that we adopt must be honest and adaptable for the environment they are being deployed in. In this perspective, the examination of the notion of leadership in the #black lives matter and the civil rights movement of the 1960s lays the emphasis on the notions of decentralized and centralized leadership.

When it comes to the role and practice of leadership, there are some distinct differences between the Black Lives Matter movement and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Right at the beginning, Black Lives Matter, often compared to Occupy Wall Street, was described as a '' decentralized leaderless movement''. In the minds of Patrisse, Opal and Garza, decentralizing leadership is not synonymous with having no leaders. Decentralization means distributing leadership throughout the organization rather concentrating it in one place or in one person or even a few people. In so doing, they see eye to eye with Ganz (2000) who defines leadership as accepting responsibility to create interpersonal, structural and procedural conditions to enable others to achieve a shared purpose in the face of uncertainty. Ganz conceives leadership as a process, a relationship that is created between leaders and their constituencies: leaders are the individuals who provide resources to their constituencies to address their interests and vice versa. Like Ganz, a Harvard-based sociologist says, leadership requires engaging the "heart" (the values), the "head" (a strategy) and the "hands" (actions) of people, and it requires mobilizing their feelings and values (Ganz, 2010).

This conception of leadership differs from that of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s which was not only largely male, largely heterosexual, largely white and largely educated at elite universities, but also centralized on the

iconic trio of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Huey Newton. Each of these leaders oversaw decision-making and strategy for their respective organizations. For King, it was SCLC; for Malcolm X, it was the Nation of Islam; and for Huey Newton, it was the Black Panther for Self Defense. One of the limits of centralized leadership is that it is a position that is held by a single, charismatic individual in the traditional Weberian sense (Weber, 1978). When each of these leaders was assassinated, so in large part were the movements they led. The struggle continued, but those specific movements, without their most recognized leaders, were never the same. The heroic leaders of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s use the power of their position to make decisions unilaterally. By contrast, the leaders of the Black Lives Matter are facilitators. They use skillful questions to draw ideas out of others to develop shared solutions. Both styles of leadership have the authority to make decisions for the groups they manage. The difference between them is their decision-making style: one is autocratic, the other is participative. Both are positional leaders; they lead from a position of authority.

In the Black Lives Matter Movement, everyone is a leader and no one is a leader. This decentralized leadership values the input, opinions, and contributions of many and challenges the ways that the leaders have been conditioned to value the input of some over others. When leaders organize, they tell a new story or adapt a public story that is based on their past personal experiences; this story is the collective story of "the us" and the story of the present situation that requires change now, which Ganz calls a public narrative. According to Ganz, this is a leadership art and the discursive process through which individuals, communities and nations make choices, construct identities, and inspire action. Thus, leaders use narratives to motivate people to act (Ganz, 2009). Ganz conceives leadership not only as the capacity to create a public narrative but also as a collective relationship, or leadership as a team. According to him, leaders can be at different levels and all of them can contribute to the formulation of a strategy, which is a core category in the process of organizing (Ganz, 2000).

Patrisse and Garza were trained in an organizing tradition in which activists are taught to develop other leaders. This philosophy of leadership asserts that many leaders are needed to create transformative change, and those leaders should come from communities that have traditionally been excluded from power. In this perspective, the differences in strategic capacity can be attributed to the specificities of each leader's life experiences, the networks and repertoires of collective actions and the deliberative process, and the resources and accountability structures of their organizations (Downey, 2006). More recently,

storytelling and social relations have been identified as key tools of leadership in social movements. Ganz also addresses the importance of leaders' background and the likelihood that they will develop an effective strategy.

The decentralized leadership of the Black Lives Matter Movement moves away from the theory that the "great man" embodied in the centralized leadership of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s has the answers to a shared, distributed and fluid concept of leadership. This is based on the belief that depending on the need, situation and requirements, different people assume the leadership role and that everyone has leadership potential. Collaborative leaders create supportive and open environments that encourage initiation, facilitate the sharing of information and value each person's contribution. At the same time, individuals are encouraged to learn and stretch their leadership potential. Leadership, therefore, is assisting people to grow and learn. In Scott Peck's work on building community, for example, the "leader" is a facilitator whose role is to create and hold the "safe space" where people can discover themselves and learn to relate to one another authentically. The focus is shifted from the individual leader to the group, community or organization.

The decentralized leadership of the Black Lives Matter Movement is both more practical and political than the centralized leadership of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. It was more practical in the sense that the leaders of the Black Lives Matter Movement were each committed to their own work outside Black Lives Matter, as well as within it, and needed and wanted more hands to share the load of building a strong network. It was also political because it could level the playing field of power. Contrary to the centralized leadership of the 1960s, decentralized leadership of the Black Lives Matter Movement allowed people who were often marginalized or blocked from exercising leadership to lead in public and out loud. Decentralization would allow for a different practice of power, where many people rather than a small few determined the direction of the project.

The centralized leadership in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s or the fact of having one leader closes organizations to the contributions of everyone. This leadership favors the notion that one leader or even three can speak for all or make decisions for all. The SCLC, the Nation of Islam, and the Black Panther for Self Defense did not allow for a plurality of political worldviews. Hierarchies also open themselves up to corruption and abuse when one person or a small group of people have too much power. If the Black Panther Party for Self Defense had functioned as a decentralized organization, it would not have been as easily decimated as it was under a centralized leadership

framework. In the United States of America, there is good reason to be suspicious of centralized leadership, particularly as they relate to Black people. Racism inherent in systems, structures, and practices in government, institutions, and like has meant that Black people are often on the losing end of hierarchies.

In examining the notions of decentralized leadership in the Black Lives Matter Movement and centralized leadership in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, we aim at drawing people's attention to the shift of paradigms in the study of leadership over time. Becoming a leader is an ongoing process of self-development (Lowney, 2015: 294-295). According to Chris Lowney, leadership is a never-ending work in progress that draws on continually maturing self-understanding. Patrisse, Opal and Garza understood right at the beginning of the Black Lives Matter Movement that environment change, people change, priorities shift. These changes call for continual adjustment and recommitment to no one becomes a leader by accident. Strong leaders welcome the opportunity to learn about oneself and the world and look forward to new discoveries and interests. A leader is essentially a pilgrim, not one who has ''arrived'' at some idealized state of perfection. Apart from their differences in the embodiment of leadership, the Black Lives Matter Movement and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, the use of new technologies was a central element in the literature dealing with social struggle through communication.

IV.   USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO FORM A NEW COLLECTIVE SINGULAR

Nowadays, platforms, pedestals, and profiles are part of the new versions of the old models used to bring people together. Today, about two-thirds of Americans report that they read at least some of their news from media platforms (Shearar and Gottfried 2017). During the 2016 presidential primaries 62% of adults reported getting their news from social media. During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, a platform for Martin Luther King might have been a church congregation, whereas today a platform could be a social media page. Profiles in Rosa Park's day revolved around who knew you and what they knew you for. Community members might have described Parks as a seamstress who became active in the NAACP in 1943, gaining the respect of her peers for her work registering Black people in Montgomery, Alabama, to vote.

Today, a profile is still based on who knows you and what they know you for, but instead of your community knowing '' who your people are,'' a profile might be a well-curated social media timeline of opinion and responses to the latest news, and the curation of relationships and

visibility online. A pedestal is what we place people on because we hold them in high regard. Malcolm X was placed on a pedestal by Black communities in particular, mostly for his ability to speak unapologetically about the effects of white supremacy on Black society, and also for encouraging Black people to defend ourselves and seek liberation ''by any means necessary.'' Placing people on pedestals can result in making people symbols without substance. Today, being placed on a pedestal can occur when you have built strong enough brand- and yet the substance it is connected to may or may not be part of , or accountable to, a movement.

The emergence of new communication technologies (such as the Internet and social media networking sites and platforms) has strongly affected social movement activism. Victoria Carty address the influence of ICTs through a series of recent social movement organization (SMO) case studies. She provides an overview of social movement theory, and then draws from the cases to explore the constitutive power and effects of technology on the ways people organize themselves to promote or protest public policy. In the same line of thought, Voirol (2005) notes that the mediatized visibility of social movements depends on their level of visibility on the "mediatized scene"

> un espace où les acteurs peuvent sortir de 1'invisibilité et exister aux yeux des autres sans entrer concrètement en contact avec eux [...] la scène de visibilité médiatisée est structurée par un ordre du visible qui inclut autant qu ' il exclut, qui promeut à l' avant-scène autant qu ' il relègue aux coulisses, qui confère de la reconnaissance publique autant qu'il condamne à l'insignifiance. Dès lors, elle ne saurait être comprise autrement que comme une scène traversée par des rapports de force et des mécanismes de domination, mais aussi [...] par des luttes pour la visibilité. (Voirol, 2005 : 99-1 00)

Black Lives Matter Movement has provided a way for people to share their full experiences without stereotypes or controlling images influencing their stories. Social media is a tool BLM uses to reach its goal: to have a world where African Americans have the power to thrive socially, economically and politically, connecting diverse groups to act in their communities. BLM has produced what Pamela Paxton argues is evidence of high social capital: political participation and volunteering (Paxton 1999). Online, according to Pew Research, from July 2013 through May 2018, the BLM hashtag was used an average of 17,002

times per day. Furthermore, BLM has spurred other hashtags related to events or political issues that have emerged throughout time, including #MeToo and #Resist (Anderson et al. 2018).

BLM has moved beyond the virtual space to political engagement and social activism. For example, after police shot Mike Brown in 2014, social media users organized a national ride called the Black Life Matters Ride. Within 15 days It brought together over 600 people to support those in Ferguson. As a result of the online movement, African Americans have been able to call out anti-Black politicians, win critical legislation, and influence the talk about African Americans around the world. The movement has expanded throughout the U.S. and to other countries including Canada and the UK. By using the hashtag, people are able to share their personal stories and are exposed to first-hand occurrences without the spin brought by television or the newspaper. The movement has provided an avenue for people with similar to meet, to get to know each other, and to act upon their beliefs.

The same elements Putnam found are needed to build social capital in face-to-face interactions - social networks, norms of reciprocity, and trust - can also exist in online exchanges (Putnam 1995:66). Black Lives Matter is an example of how social capital can be built online because all three of these elements are present. First of all, BLM not only brings people together, but it also connects individuals, forming the social networks on which social capital relies. One of the participants, Lee, is an attorney who has been part of BLM since 2015. Lee said that BLM makes local issues global because it is heavily interconnected,

> "It amplifies and elevates voices because a lot of activists have hundreds or thousands of followers, because when you have a network that potentially has over 10 million followers, you can get your story out very quickly...What mainstream media fails to realize is that Black Lives Matter is not an organization, it's a network, so there are numerous organizations that comprise the movement."

According to Putnam, networks are the social bonds that create norms of reciprocity and encourage social trust, facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved. Networks provide a space for people to support and educate one another, share ideas, reach a common goal, and in this case, keep each other accountable. For Lee, social media is a tool that connects him with the community,

> "It [social media] helps me educate people on what the law actually says and how the law actually works. It engages me directly with the community, so they understand that the movement of oppression didn't end in the 60s, it just transformed."

Lee said social media connects him with young people. His social media accounts are filled with videos regarding current events where he explains what is going on in each situation and the legal procedures that need to be taken. Lee said that he uses these platforms to teach youth how to channel their passion to create change. Without social media, he would not be able to networks with this community and reach as many people as he currently can.

V.   CONCLUSION

In 1895, the activist and civil rights icon Ida B. Wells wrote a research pamphlet called *The Red Record*. In it Mrs. Wells tabulated the number of lynchings in the United States since the emancipation of African slaves. The conclusion was that little had changed for the Negro in America by the end of the 19th century. The Emancipation Proclamation and federal programs like the Freedmen's Bureau did not prevent the death of thousands of Negros by the end of the 19th and early 20th century. Ida B. Wells writes, *"In slave times the Negro was kept subservient and submissive ... but with freedom the Negro is whipped, scourged, he is killed."* Fredrick Douglass, in a review of Mrs. Wells' groundbreaking study, wrote, "*If American moral sensibility was not hardened by the persistent infliction of outrage and crime against colored people, a scream of horror, shame and indignation would rise from heaven."*

America's sensibility is still hardened in the 21st century. Black Americans still scream in horror. We still cannot breathe. Black lives still do not matter. One hundred twenty-four years later, we are still writing the same story! African American men, women and children are still being lynched, murdered and executed for playing with a toy gun, watching television in one's own home, and mistaken identity, driving or jogging while black and being choked to death in cold blood by law enforcement officers who have sworn to serve and protect.

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