Black Lives Matter Discourse Community

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Abstract

This paper discusses the Black Lives Matter discourse community. It explores each component of a discourse community such as common goals and interest, genre and communication. This community was established in order to seek justice for blacks and people of color across the United States. This essay uses various articles, journals and websites to provide information on the goals and tactics used to achieve those goals. I elaborate on the social injustices that have been committed against this group of people with no consequences for the prosecutors. The essay does a good job in conveying the overall purpose of this discourse group and how they function as a whole. I discuss the purpose and how the community was assembled together for one common goal.

Black Lives Matter is a community of outraged blacks working toward the betterment of their people. For years blacks have been treated unlike equals. This group finally steps up and challenges whites in society to notice the privilege they are receiving and demand blacks and other minorities receive the same.
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**Black Lives Matter**

Many people may recognize this movement as nothing more than a hashtag that bombarded social media after the unfortunate death of 17 year old Trayvon Martin. This hashtag soon turned into a nationwide movement to empower people of color in the United States and act as a voice. The creators of this movement are three women, Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors. According to co-founder Garza they were enraged to hear that murderer of Martin, George Zimmerman, was not charged for the crime he committed. As a result the birth of this very large and thriving community occurred. Black Lives Matter is a group that works toward the betterment of blacks and many other minorities across the nation. They believe everyone

**Methods**

For primary research I used two different methods. The first one I conducted was close observation on how this community communicate with each other and people outside the community. I also conducted an interview with a member of the Black Lives Matter group here on campus. In the interview I was mainly focused on what were the main goals of this community and how they work toward accomplishing them. What I took from the interview is that blacks in this community feel that they are not equals in today’s society.

**Interview Questions**

Do you identify with the Black Lives Matter community, why/why not?

How was this community/movement formed?
What is the common goal of the group?

How is rank earned, if there are any ranks in this community?

What is the main cause of the problem the black community is facing?

**Interviewee 1.** The first person I interviewed was Brandon Lee who is a second year member of the Black Lives Matter community here on UC Davis the campus. He often goes out and participates in any peaceful protest he can. Lee stated “Whatever it takes to help the cause.” He believed the common goal is to just stop the injustice going on in America. “We just want the equal amount of justice a white person would get.” Lee mentioned he often does not feel as if he is equal to his white peers. We discussed how “[He] doesn’t feel safe around the police anymore, they could take [his] life with no consequence.” He believed the cause of the social injustice is just the lack of respect for people of color.

**Purpose**

The Black Lives Matter movement that focuses primarily on social injustices and unfair treatment due to race. “For example, being Black (a race category) does not tell us much about one’s health risks. However, being Black in America (a racially stratified society) has negative implications for educational and professional trajectories, socioeconomic status, and access to health care services and resources that promote optimal health, which in combination, may reduce or exacerbate health risks. In a racially stratified society, White lives are inherently valued over Black lives.” (Jee-Lyn, 2015). In this quote the author is saying that the stigma of
being Black can raise some health issues because your health as a black person just simply is not valued. As a black citizen you are not seen as someone who should be shown respect so you are more vulnerable to being harmed. This community is very much trying to bring to light, “…racism in our legal, social, and political systems that enable police officers to disproportionately stop people of color, often without cause…” (Jee-Lyn, 2015)

The purpose of this community is to empower Blacks and other minorities to stand up and demand equal rights from society, primarily whites. Blacks and other minorities feel that their lives are not as important, for example deaths like Eric Garner and Michael Brown who were both killed by the hands of white police officers who received no penalties for their inhumane behavior. As Larson discussed in his journal, “Today, blacks are killed by the police at about the same rate as lynching’s one hundred years ago.” (Larson, 48). This is a very alarming rate and Blacks are very fearul for their public well-being in this country. This is the main cause of the formation of Black Live Matter, blacks are being killed and antagonized with no consequences. This community is making sure this behavior is being seen as barbaric and wrong.

Communication

Through primary research I observed this community uses various forms of communicating with outsiders and those in the discourse community. Black Lives Matter’s primary platform for communication is through social media. After following their official account on Twitter and Tumblr I learned this is where they post majority of their upcoming events and inform each other on recent social issues. Their second form of communication I noticed is protesting. “We believe that collective efforts can help evoke social change and more generally reduce racialized health disparities and inequality.” (Jee-Lyn, 2015). Black Lives Matter movement is known for their ability to go out and address social issues head on in the
streets of prevalent cities. Lee mentioned that most of these protest are peaceful and nonviolent. They go out and do whatever it takes to reach out to other blacks and black families to help them feel safe again. In my interview, Lee discussed how they felt protesting was a great way to just get people to listen. These protest are a safe place for anyone of any decent can just get together and vent about the social injustices against blacks.

**Genre**

The main genre used within this community is social media. They communicate through post on Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. According to Dirk “a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered . . . on the action it is used to accomplish” (Dirk, 252). Their main focus in these posts, blogs, and even videos are to raise awareness for the betterment of the black community. I find this genre very helpful for the goal this community is trying to accomplish. It enables them to reach a very large amount of people almost instantly. It is also a good platform to reach the youth and spread awareness from the root.

**Common Goals**

The main goal of Black Lives Matter is to bring to the light injustices that happen to blacks. “Undermining or disguising the impact of racism on racialized health disparities enables the perpetuation of these inequities.” (Jee-Lyn, 2015). As stated if we continue to ignore racial issues they will simply continue to worsen. The Black Lives Matter community take racial issues head on, by simply acting like they do not exist will not change anything. Their common goal is to bring attention to racial inequality that is rampant in today’s American society. They work towards accomplishing these goals in various ways. My interviewee mention, “Black Lives Matter is a huge community with many resources.” With this being said this community is no
only tackling the streets with peaceful and powerful protest but are also represented politically
and socially by many people of great influence. For example professional athletes, famous
entertainers, etc. all these people work together to spread a common message.

Conclusion

The Black Lives Matter community is seeking social justice for people of color. They use
various tactics to communicate to everyone what they are trying to accomplish and will not stop
until justice is served. I believe what this group stands for is very important. They are doing all
the heavy lifting for the people who are too afraid to stand up for themselves. They are effective
in staying connected and sharing a common goal consistently throughout the country.

In my opinion this group is very important for today’s society. It’s been too long blacks
have been oppressed and scared to have a voice for themselves because of the consequences that
may follow. This group is anything but afraid, they will call out the privilege that whites receive
over blacks and many other minority groups. For a better future everyone should work toward
the goals and beliefs that the Black Lives Matter community embodies.
References


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