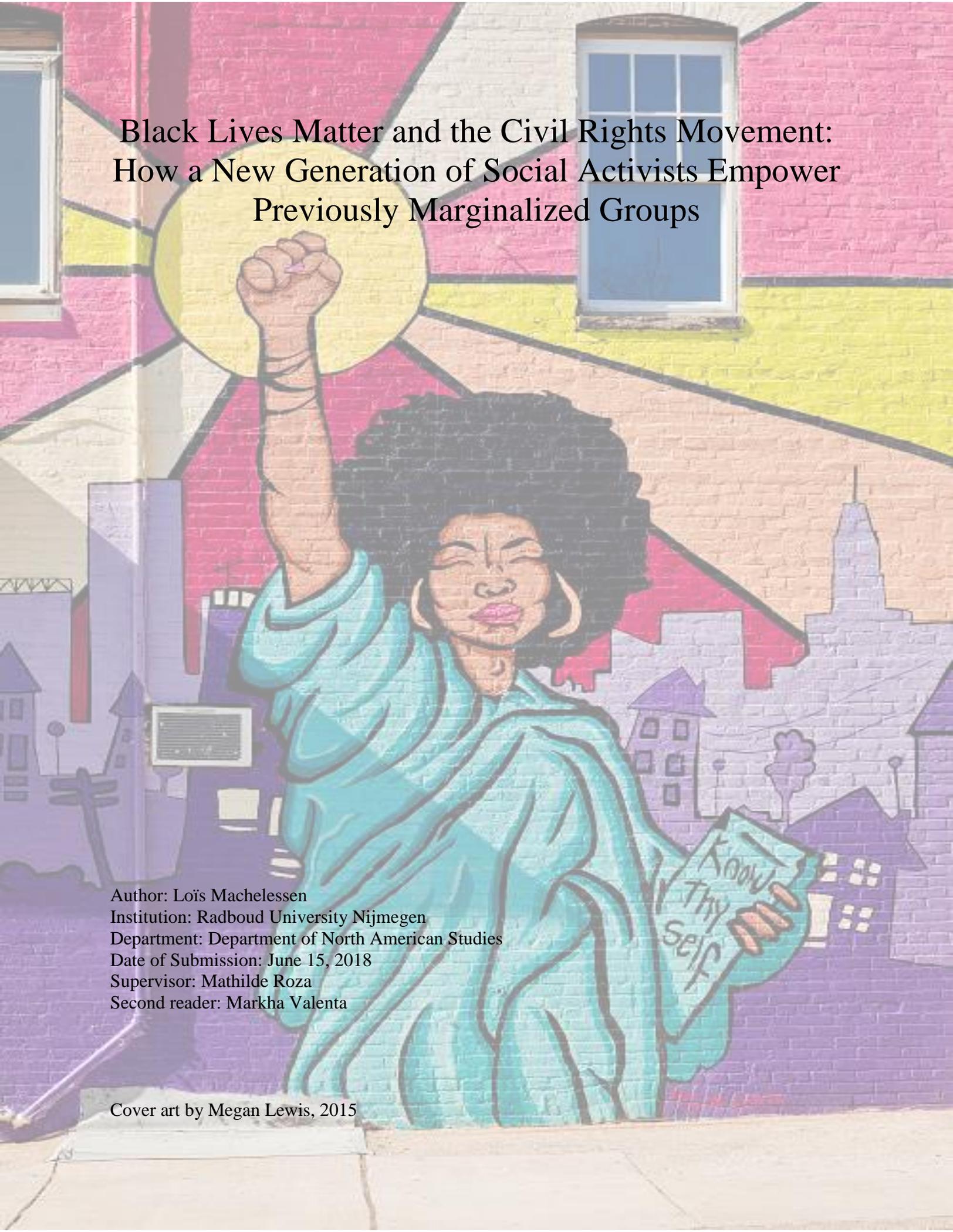


# Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: How a New Generation of Social Activists Empower Previously Marginalized Groups

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Date of Submission: June 15, 2018  
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Cover art by Megan Lewis, 2015



ENGELSE TAAL EN CULTUUR

Teacher who will receive this document: Mathilde Roza

Title of document: Bachelor Thesis Loïs Machelessen

Name of course: Bachelor Thesis

Date of submission: 15/06/2018

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**Abstract**

This thesis discusses the differences between the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter movement. In the fifty years between the movements, race relations in the United States changed and racism took on new forms. Not only that, the role of women and the LGBTQ+ community in these movements also changed. This thesis examines and compares the role of women and the LGBTQ+ community in the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter movement and how racism posed different challenges for the movements. The core research question is as follows: How does the Black Lives Matter movement differ from the Civil Rights Movement concerning the role of women, the LGBTQ community, and the issues they advocate for? The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that the Black Lives Matter movement is a temporary racial justice movement, taking on systemic and institutional racism in contemporary American society while also imploring the theory of intersectionality to counter the specific forms of racism that women of color and LGBTQ+ people of color experience. Racism in America today evolved from the racism that the Civil Rights Movement fought against, but the Civil Rights Movement did not devote special attention to marginalized groups. According to Black Lives Matter, African Americans cannot reach true equality without the marginalized in the African American community being regarded as equal. This thesis will shed light on how the Black Lives Matter movement tries to accomplish equality for all African Americans and how this is different from the Civil Rights Movement.

*Key words: Black Lives Matter, Civil Rights Movement, Black Women, LGBTQ+ community, Mass incarceration*

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## **Introduction**

Racism is dead. That is something many white Americans, 49%, and even some Black Americans, 19%, like to believe (Pew Research Center). After the election of Obama, American society proclaimed to be a color-blind society, where no one is judged on the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. In 2009, only 26% of the American people thought of racism as a big problem, a number that more than doubled in 2017, when 58% of American people saw it as a big problem (Pew Research Center). The Civil Rights Movement is often credited with ending racism in the United States. Starting in the late 1940s and ending after Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968, the Civil Rights Movement battled segregation and inequality in American society. Some major victories and highlights were *Brown v Board of Education*, which declared segregation in school unconstitutional, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which was the foundation for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s rise to fame, the passing of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, and the march on Washington, where Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous 'I Have A Dream' speech. The Civil Rights Movement was critical in the advancement of African Americans in American society, but it did not end racism in the United States. Systemic and institutional racism are at the foundation of U.S. society and are still present today (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). The ongoing police brutality experienced by African American men, women, and children is only one of many ways in which racism is present. The Black Lives Matter movement was founded as a reaction to the police brutality Black Americans face. Trayvon Martin, a 17-year old from Florida, was killed by self-proclaimed neighborhood watch George Zimmerman, who followed and attacked him. Zimmerman was acquitted of all charges, after which Alicia Garza took to Facebook and wrote a love letter to Black people. Based on that love letter she started a movement together with Opal Tometi and Patrisse Cullors, which they called Black Lives Matter. The movement gained a large social media presence, but really started taking shape in Ferguson, after the murder of Michael

Brown. Fighting for the affirmation that Black lives matter, the movement is often compared with the Civil Rights Movement, which also fought for the lives of African Americans. To assume that the movements are similar just because they are fighting for the rights of African American people, however, is too simplistic. At the same time, just because the movements are from different time periods, does not mean they have nothing in common. Therefore, the research question I will try to answer is as follows:

How does the Black Lives Matter movement differ from the Civil Rights Movement concerning the role of women, the LGBTQ community, and the issues they advocate for?

This research question will be answered through a text analysis and a historical analysis. Through extensive use of books and academic articles the Civil Rights Movement will be analyzed. The same goes for the Black Lives Matter movement, however, considering that Black Lives Matter is a contemporary movement with a great social media presence, using online sources when analyzing the movement is a must.

When the Black Lives Matter movement is compared with the Civil Rights Movement, the former is often regarded more negatively, because the image of the Civil Rights Movement is romanticized. In order to make a comprehensive comparison between the two movements, I used Dewey M. Clayton's article *Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: A Comparative Analysis of Two Social Movements in the United States*. In his introduction, Clayton starts by outlining how systemic racism in the United States is the legacy of slavery and the Jim Crow laws. Clayton acknowledges that both movements address some of the same issues, that black people are seen as criminal and black bodies are seen as expendable (2). However, there are also differences in the focus of the movement, as Black Lives Matter focuses on police brutality and the Civil Rights Movement demanded basic equality for African Americans (Clayton, 2). Clayton's analysis examines the following topics: inclusive and exclusive messaging, leadership style, issue framing,

and media coverage. In Clayton's analysis, the Civil Rights Movement is seen as more inclusive than Black Lives Matter but at the same time the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement is hierarchical whereas Black Lives Matter is a grassroots style of organizing, the framing of the Civil Rights Movement is more focused on the U.S. and Black Lives Matter on 'black humanity', but both of the movements were regarded as too revolutionary and disruptive. In retrospect, the Civil Rights Movement is viewed as a positive element in the struggle for equality, but it is too soon to say the same for BLM.

In order to get a comprehensive overview of the Black Lives Matter movement, I used Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor's book *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. The colorblind society the United States became after the Civil Rights Movement is based on institutional and systemic racism, which are responsible for the poverty of African American communities. According to Taylor, white people, and even some black people, believe that the Black community is to blame for the poverty of African American people, but this notion is being fought by the Black community. The Black Lives Matter movement came to be in the wake of multiple police brutality cases, unable to escape the public eye because of social media. The movement started after the acquittal of George Zimmerman, developed further in Ferguson, and eventually "shattered the 'postracial' proclamations" (Taylor, 13) which upheld the notions of a colorblind society. Taylor acknowledges that the BLM movement is still in its early stages and that the direction it is headed is still unknown, but at the same time the potential of the movement is unlimited. The stakes are higher than ever for Taylor, because the inclusion of Black people in economic and political establishments, that was thought to fix the problem of racism, has already come and failed. However, as Black Revolutionary C. L. R. James wrote, Black movements have powers that are transformative (Taylor).

In chapter 1 the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement is compared to the role of women in the Black Lives Matter Movement. The chapter is divided into three parts; the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement, the role of women in the Black Lives Matter movement, and a comparison of role of women in the movements. This chapter describes how leadership models and gender roles impacted the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement. Moving on to examine the role of women in the Black Lives Matter movement, the female face of Black Lives Matter is explained as well as the central role women have in the movement. The Black Lives Matter movement has women in leadership positions, which is opposite from the Civil Rights Movement, where women were held back by gender roles.

Chapter 2 discusses the role of the LGBTQ community in both of the movements. The chapter begins with an explanation that when discussing the Civil Rights Movement, only the letters L G and B will be used. This chapter examines King's attitude towards homosexuality and how Rustin's homosexuality influenced his position in the Civil Rights Movement. Comparing this to Black Lives Matter, where LGBTQ+ individuals are at the forefront of the movement, it is clear that Black Lives Matter is more inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals.

In the third and final chapter, the focus points of the two movements will be discussed. The chapter explains the move from slavery to Jim Crow and how Jim Crow evolved into the system of mass incarceration. The Civil Rights Movement mainly fought against segregation and Jim Crow, whereas the Black Lives Matter movement fights mass incarceration and police brutality. The chapter also explains how racism evolved from openly Jim Crow racism to covert and colorblind racism. In the chapter it is concluded that the Black Lives Matter movement is continuing the fight of the Civil Rights Movement, whose problems of Jim Crow and segregation evolved into mass incarceration.

## **Chapter 1. Women as the backbone of Black Liberation Movements**

*“Intersectionality is about making sure that you don’t have to leave any part of yourself behind” -*

*Alicia Garza*

### **1.1; Women and the Civil Rights Movement**

The beginning of the Civil Rights Movement was, just as the beginning of most revolutionary movements, chaotic and the environment everchanging. People participating in the movement needed to take immediate and decisive action, and there was a sense of urgency to the movement. This urgency to act made the gender hierarchy existent within the African American community more lenient and consequently loosened the patriarchal social structure that had always been set in stone (Hitchcock, 205). The emergent and unstructured nature of the Civil Rights Movement thus created new opportunities for women both as leaders and mass participants (Blumberg, 134). Within the movement, women participated in dangerous actions, “such as sit-ins, freedom rides, and accepting jail rather than bail” (Blumberg, 133). During the Second World War African American women gained greater independence by the greater availability of jobs, and they held onto this independence within the Civil Rights Movement by participating in actions as mentioned above. However progressive this may have been for that time, women still had other jobs within the movement which were considered typical women’s work: “typing, sweeping up, cooking, and (of course) catering to the emotional needs of men” (Blumberg, 133). On top of that, the most well-known people in the movement were men. This does not mean, however, that women did nothing important within the movement but rather it is an indication of the lack of recognition women got for their work in national and grassroots organizations.

While women were not considered leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, they did play an essential role, both inside and outside the home. Inside the home, women “nurtured the civil rights struggle in their familial roles as wives and mothers” (Lawson, 398). Lawson argues that this

support inside the home was vital for getting the Civil Rights Movement off the ground. Outside the home, women organized religious and social activities, which sustained the community. These activities were often organized by women's clubs because politically active women did almost never join organizations such as NAACP, where a woman's role was secondary to that of a man. It was black women who helped with voter registration campaigns in the South after the Supreme Court outlawed the white primary in 1944 and thus helped in the election of black men to office in Atlanta, which culminated in the election of Maynard Jackson as mayor in 1973 (Lawson, 401). However, the role of women is often forgotten and "the official narrative of racial progress featured exclusively the black men who rose to power through the mobilization of African American voters" (Lawson 401).

To understand the (leadership) role of women in the Civil Rights Movement, it is important to recognize different kinds of leadership models. Women often operated behind the scenes and "served as intermediaries between local communities, where their power was greatest, and regional and national civil rights agencies, where their access was much more limited" (Robnett, qtd. in Lawson, 398). Robnett coined the term 'bridge leaders' to describe the role of black women within the Civil Rights Movement (Lawson, 398). This kind of leadership can also be seen as informal leadership. Contrary to formal leaders, informal leaders do not receive the same recognition for their work or are recognized as actual leaders, since they operate in the dark away from the spotlight, yet their influence and importance cannot be underestimated.

Even though it was hard for women to be recognized as leaders within the Civil Rights Movement, women were motivated to take on leadership roles, which they found in grassroots organizing. Robnett's term of bridge leaders comes from her historical research on female grassroots leaders in the Civil Rights Movement. Since women were barred from taking on formal leadership positions, which were reserved for men, they took to organizing events by raising funds,

passing around flyers, and increasing awareness of other actions and boycotts that were happening in their communities (Robnett qtd. in Hitchcock, 204). These actions were vital in getting people in the streets and active in the movement but were not recognized as such because the spotlight was on the action itself, where men were the most visible faces. Grassroots organizers were important in bridging the gap between larger civil rights organizations and under-motivated African American communities. As grassroots leaders, black female activists acted as intermediaries between the two and thus motivated more people to join the Civil Rights Movement. Robnett also argues that African American women were critical in the development of the collective identity of the Civil Rights Movement and “communicating themes of resistance, perseverance, and racial equity to their communities and beyond” (qtd. in Hitchcock, 204). While grassroots organizations have always received less attention than organizations like the NAACP, SNCC, or SCLC, grassroots organizing tactics proved effective in motivating people, especially in the South. The SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, used grassroots organizing tactics in the South, which enhanced the position of women in the SNCC. Women played a large role in grassroots organizing because, as Lawson argues, “women proved adept at organizing projects in the rural South that depended on dealing patiently with local people and winning their trust” (407). However, the effort of women in these grassroots organizations was largely overshadowed by men who were cast in the roles of charismatic speakers and activists, a role regarded as not suit for women (Hitchcock, 201).

Most organizations within the Civil Rights Movements, like the NAACP, were regulated by a top-down leadership model, which means that there is a clear hierarchy within those organizations. The formal leadership positions within those organizations were occupied by men, which marginalized the efforts of women and limited them to mainly secretarial and clerical jobs, which were regarded as traditional women’s work (Lawson, 398). After the dust around the Civil

Rights Movement had settled, men began to take back leadership roles from women because men were considered more experienced and more fit for leading an organization, which created and strengthened a top-down form of leadership. At the same time, the society the Civil Right Movement existed in and had to deal, cooperate, and negotiate with, was led by men as well. As Blumberg points out, “the power structures confronting the civil rights movement were all male, and so it was seen as normal and necessary to have males play the formal leadership roles” (Blumberg, 137).

By occupying the formal leadership positions, men simultaneously occupied the most visible roles, which is in accordance with the patriarchal conditions that existed in the African American community. It was expected that men occupied the role of highly visible leader, while the role of women was more obscure and not as recognized (Hitchcock, 220). Leaders and male heads of the Civil Rights Movement served as spokesmen for demonstrations in which women also participated in large numbers, but the spokesmen attracted most of the limelight and thus got most of the recognition (Lawson, 398). A great example of this is Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Montgomery Bus Boycott (MBB). Rosa Parks had been an activist for a long time before she challenged the bus segregation in Montgomery by refusing to give up her seat to a white man. Portrayed by the media as a seamstress too tired to give up her seat, Parks’ reason for instigating the boycott is diminished to a reason that could be seen as female. Portraying Rosa Parks as the determined activist she was, fed up with the racial injustice, did not fit the narrative of the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement needed strong male leaders, like Martin Luther King who became the center of attention after the MBB as the foremost leader in the struggle for African American civil rights. It did not matter that Martin Luther King, Jr. was far less involved in civil rights activities than Rosa Parks was, or a newcomer to Montgomery, when the bus boycott started in 1955. According to Lawson, the narrative of the MBB was constructed in such a way that

the story only became truly significant when Dr. King and his fellow ministers took control of the protest. He continues with saying that “the boycott and the conventional account of it assume added importance because Montgomery marks the opening salvo of the modern civil rights movement, and its portrayal has reinforced the distorted image that men led and women quickly disappeared into the background” (402). When the boycott was won, it was not Rosa Parks on the front page riding the first integrated bus, but Martin Luther King, Jr. (Blumberg, 135). So, Rosa Parks disappeared into the background and Martin Luther King, Jr. went on as the leader of the Civil Rights Movement. During the peak of the Civil Rights Movement, all the major organizations, NAACP, SCLC, CORE, and SNCC, were led by men, on whom the media also focused their spotlight. Reverend King was head of SCLC, which organizational structure was the tightest of the aforementioned organizations. The hierarchical command structure led directly to Dr. King. This leadership model with one charismatic male at the head of an organization made it impossible for women to gain “equal authority with men” (Lawson, 407) because within this leadership model, women were assigned secondary roles or honoree roles instead of being valued as partners within the Civil Rights Movement.

Male leadership was the default within the Civil Rights Movement because of the patriarchal structure in the movement, in the African American community, and in mainstream society at large. Patriarchy was reinforced through gender roles within the movement, which dictated the roles men and women fulfilled. As Lawson points out, women in civil rights organizations were automatically assigned a ‘female’ job such as cooking, library work, typing, telephone work, or an assistant role, but never were they considered for the executive job (Lawson, 409). Within the African American community, patriarchal conditions “stipulated that men were expected to occupy roles of traditional and highly visible leadership” (Hitchcock, 219), which resulted in women not holding leadership positions “lest they might undermine the security and

threaten the masculinity of Black men” (Hitchcock, 219). Religion also strongly reinforced the patriarchal structures within the African American community and Civil Rights Movement. The church was powerful in the African American community, and many male pastors went on to occupy leadership positions, as they were running their ministries. Black male pastors also did not have to fear any economic reprisal for being outspoken for the civil rights cause, since they depended on the black community for their livelihood (Blumberg, 136). Ministers were less at risk than Black women who worked for or with white people, since they could lose their jobs for supporting the Civil Rights Movement. This made it easier for male ministers to take on leadership roles and, again, pushed women into the background.

There were a few women, however, who took on leadership roles, even though they were unable to maintain these throughout the course of the Civil Rights Movement. Ella Baker, who was part of the NAACP, administered the offices of the SCLC until a man could be found, because even though “Ms. Baker had the experience and ability [she did not have] the credentials “male” or “minister”” (Blumberg, 134). The most effective way of organizing for Ella Baker was via grassroots activities and through organizing people in local communities. While serving as a director of branches in the NAACP in the 1940s, she tried to organize black men and women through these grassroots activities, in which women excelled. Ella Baker did leave the NAACP in 1946 because “the hierarchical form of leadership conflicted with her more democratic approach” (Lawson, 403), in which she saw leadership and decision making as group centered, an idea that would bring more opportunities for women to lead. Baker was able to convey her views on leadership and participation to the young organization SNCC, which encouraged women’s participation and leadership more than any other major civil rights group (Lawson, 407).

SNCC was the forerunner in the student sit-ins of 1960. Diane Nash, sit-in leader of in Nashville, played a “decisive role at crucial times, insisting that Freedom Rides continue despite

violent opposition, and then coordinating volunteers for the rides” (Blumberg, 134). According to Blumberg, Diane Nash was also one of the first to volunteer for going to jail rather than let herself be bailed out (134). Even though Diane Nash had a leadership role in a local chapter of SNCC, she, nor any other woman, was ever elected to a top leadership position in the organization.

Another important woman in the Civil Rights Movement was Fannie Lou Hamer. Hamer was a grassroots activist from Mississippi, advocating for voting rights. Democratic Representative Bennie G. Thompson who represent Mississippi’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District, says the following about Hamer: “Ms. Hamer taught black Mississippians how to read and write in order for them to pass discriminatory voter tests designed to prevent black Americans from utilizing their right to vote” (qtd. in Brown, par. 10). When Hamer joined SNCC as a community organizer, she helped found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and as a candidate for that party decided to run for Congress in 1964. She did not get elected and lost every other election she entered but “by the 1980s her fellow Mississippians could boast the largest number of Black elected officials in the country. Hamer had paved the way” (Greene, 174). All these women were instrumental in the Civil Rights Movement, even though none of these women would officially occupy a leadership position. Just as countless other women in the movement, they were important, if not instrumental, in the fight for equal rights but failed to receive the recognition they deserved.

### **1.2: Women and the Black Lives Matter movement**

When discussing the Black Lives Matter movement, the following names often come up in the conversation: Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Eric Garner, John Crawford III, Ezell Ford, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, and Freddie Gray. These are names of only a handful of people who died by police brutality in the heydays of the Black Lives Matter Movement, but whose names are probably the best known, in and outside of the movement. What stands out is that there are no women found in this list and it might suggest that the only lives that matter are male lives. The opposite is true,

however, for the Black Lives Matter movement. On their website, the Black Lives Matter movement state their guiding principles, one of those is about black women. The website states: “we build a space that affirms Black women and is free from sexism, misogyny, and environments in which men are centered” (blacklivesmatter.com). Black women are central in the Black Lives Matter movement, both as leaders and participants, but also as a special interest group in different campaigns by the movement. As a matter of fact, it is the Black Lives Matter movement that brings black women into today’s conversation on racism and police brutality, the latter one of the problems the movement is most vocal about. As Bridewell argues, “it is because (...) women are on the front lines readying to address the issues Black women face that the stories of Black women being killed at the hands of police brutality (i.e. Sandra Bland) are recognized” (n. page). Police brutality is a widespread problem in the United States but, as Taylor argues, “most murders of Black people at the hands of the state go unnoticed by the public and unreported by the mainstream media [and] the few cases that do come into public spotlight often involve black men or boys” (163). Women do also face police brutality and are actually more at risk than men are, because police view black women’s lives with suspicion and as less valuable, making death and brutalization more likely (Taylor, 164). When discussing police brutality, the Black Lives Matter Movement also includes sexual violence. Chatelain points out that there are conversations about how sexual violence and sexual intimidation are part of black women’s experience with racist policing, which also shows that police brutality is a women’s issue (56). Black Lives Matter tries to refocus the attention on how police brutality affects marginalized groups within the black community, like black women, “poor, elderly, gay, and trans people” (Asoka and Chatelain, 54). It is because of actions by the Black Lives Matter movement that we know the names of Sandra Bland, Tanisha Anderson, Rekia Boyd, Shelley Frey, Natasha McKenna, Meagan Hockaday, and many others.

This focus on inclusivity is needed in today's racial justice movement, especially since it has been missing from previous movements. Black women in the Civil Rights Movement, like Fannie Lou Hamer, could not speak about their sexual assault or rape without the fear of reinforcing the pejorative stereotypes of Black women (Greene, 171). Looking back at the history of racial justice movements, most of those movements have framed the "question of equality as one that could be answered by men" (Asoka and Chatelain, 57) and many of the key issues were framed around the question of masculinity. Black Lives Matter goes against the grain by setting up specific actions that focus, for example, on women. One of those actions is the Say Her Name initiative. Launched in May 2015 as an initiative by the African American Policy Forum and supported by the Black Lives Matter movement, Say Her Name was an effort to call attention to the violence Black Women and Femmes experience in the United States. To understand the intersectionality of the violence Black women experience is important, because black women's reality is unique to those of Black men (Ashburn-Nardo, 701) and without Say Her Name "we fundamentally fail to grasp how the laws, policies, and culture that underpin gender inequalities are reinforced by America's racial divide" (Asoka and Chatelain, 54). Say Her Name is in stark contrast with an initiative set up by Obama, called My Brother's Keeper. My Brother's Keeper was set up to "address the persistent opportunity gaps facing boys and young men of color" (iammbk.org). This initiative thus specifically excludes Black girls and Black women, underestimating the challenges they face and simultaneously valuing opportunities for Black men and boys more.

While the focus of the public lies with men, Black Lives Matter also tries to divert attention to the struggle of women and other marginalized groups within the movement. Not only does the movement state their commitment to women, the queer community, and other marginalized groups in their guiding principles (blacklivesmatter.com), they also set up and support actions like Say Her Name, as mentioned above, and most importantly, they include the marginalized in their

conversations about societal issues. The focus on women and other minority groups in the Black Lives Matter movement is a consequence of the abundance of women leading and participating. The movement started out of a hashtag, coined and created by three women, Alicia Garza, Patrice Cullors, and Opal Tometi. After the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin, Garza wrote in a Facebook post, what she called, ‘a love letter to black people’ and ended the letter with the words “black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter.” (Garza qtd. in Cobb, par 7). Cullors took the last three words and created the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, and together with Opal Tometi, the three began to turn the phrase into a movement with the help of social media (Cobb). Women stood at the cradle of the Black Lives Matter movement, and from the beginning the movement was advocating for minorities within the Black communities. Garza and Cullors are both part of the LGBTQ community, Tometi is an immigration-rights organizer, and all three were at the time of founding the Black Lives Matter movement active as community-based activists. They made sure that the movement was inclusive from the beginning. Even though they are the founders of the movement, it does not mean they are the leaders of the movement. The issue of leadership within the Black Lives Matter movement is a contested issue, with people arguing that the movement is actually leaderless. The movement, however, can be compared to the Occupy movement, in the sense that both movements are ‘bottom-up, collaboratively organized movement[s]’ (Asoka and Chatelain, 57). Black Lives Matter is organized in chapters. Twenty-two cities throughout the United States and Canada have a Black Lives Matter chapter, which organizes protests, meetings, and other actions on a community level. There is not one leader of all chapters and each chapter has his own staff and volunteers. Marcia Chatelain strongly disagrees with the notion that Black Lives Matter is leaderless, saying:

“If there are no leaders, then who is getting the word out? Who is getting the young people on buses and cars to appear before state houses and to lie down in train stations? Who is

sending out the calls for protests? Who is managing the social media presence? Leaders, that's who. I think women are leading without suggesting they are the only leaders or that there is only one way to lead" (Asoka and Chatelain, 60)

This could be explained by a generational difference, according to Chatelain (60). The people wondering if Black Lives Matter is leaderless are the same people who experienced strong male leaders in the Civil Rights Movement, like Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, or more recently Al Sharpton as head of the NAACP. The fact that women stood at the cradle of the Black Lives Matter movement has everything to do with calling the movement leaderless, according to Chatelain. She continues: "It isn't a coincidence that a movement that brings together the talents of black women—many of them queer—for the purpose of liberation is considered leaderless, since black women have so often been rendered invisible" (Asoka and Chatelain, 60). Taylor seconds this, by saying that "where organizing and struggle have emerged, they have, for the most part, had a male face" (164), and this male face was also the most visible face. This thus all changed after Ferguson, when the Black Lives Matter movement gained national (and even international) attention and recognition. Women moved into the spotlight during Ferguson and even "the media have been particularly cognizant of the women of Ferguson as central to turning a string of protests into a movement by seamlessly shifting between the roles of peace-keepers, disrupters, organizers, and leaders" (Taylor, 165). As Brittney Ferrell, a Black Lives Matter organizer who participated in the Ferguson protests, points out, "if it were not for Black women, there would be no movement" (qtd. in Taylor, 165). Women have played integral roles in racial justice movements and other black freedom struggles before but never with such recognition.

The largely queer and female face of Black Lives Matter might be an outcome of deeply racist policing that black men experience in Ferguson (Taylor, 165). According to the US Census Bureau, there are 1,182 African American women between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four

living in Ferguson, while there are only 577 African American men in that age group living in Ferguson. More than 40 percent of Black men in Ferguson between the ages of 20-24 and 35-54 are ‘missing’ (Taylor, 165). Racist policing has an effect on the population of Black men in the whole of the U.S., since 1.5 million Black men are ‘missing’, due to imprisonment or premature death, both of those consequences of racist policing (Taylor, 165). This does not mean in any way that, were the men present, they would take over the roles women played in the Ferguson protests, and later in the Black Lives Matter movement, but “it does provide a concrete example of the impact of the hyper-aggressive, revenue-generating approach to policing in Ferguson” (Taylor, 166). It is fair to assume that women stepped into leadership roles because of the devastating impact racist policing and police violence on the whole black community in general (Taylor, 166). They felt a need to take action and stepped up to make a change in their communities. Because women are leading in the movement, issues that women face get more attention, but the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality are also more exposed within the movement and it is recognized that “the oppression of African Americans is multidimensional and must be fought on different fronts” (Taylor, 167). Black Lives Matter can also be seen as a Black feminist movement. Chatelain summarizes the movement as “feminist in its interrogation of state power and its critique of structural inequality [and at the same time] forcing a conversation about gender and racial politics that we need to have—women at the forefront of this movement are articulating that “black lives” does not only mean men’s lives or cisgender lives or respectable lives or the lives that are legitimated by state power or privilege” (Asoka and Chatelain, 57).

### **1.3: Comparison**

Both the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement advocated for the lives of African American people. The way they did this, however, differs greatly and the role women played in both movements is not the same either. The first aspect to look at when comparing the

role of women in the two movements is leadership and leadership models. The Civil Rights Movement was a top-down, hierarchical movement, in which formal leadership positions were occupied by men. It was expected of men to lead the movement and they earned respect and visibility when leading, something women did not get. This hierarchical structure of the Civil Rights Movement differs vastly from the decentralized leadership on which Black Lives Matter is based. The Black Lives Matter movement is a bottom-up movement, in which grassroots organizing and community-based action is the key. These two different leadership models affect the role women play in both movements. Ella Baker had discovered that women fared better and had more possibilities to lead in a group-centered or decentralized movement, than in a top-down movement where men took the leadership positions (Lawson, 407). Black Lives Matter is familiar with this history and states on their website:

“Black liberation movements in this country have created room, space, and leadership mostly for Black heterosexual, cisgender men—leaving women, queer and transgender people, and others either out of the movement or in the background to move the work forward with little or no recognition. As a network, we have always recognized the need to center the leadership of women and queer and trans people. To maximize our movement muscle, and to be intentional about not replicating harmful practices that excluded so many in past movements for liberation, we made a commitment to placing those at the margins closer to the center” (blacklivesmatter.com).

Not only do women occupy leadership positions within the Black Lives Matter movement, women started the movement and are also the faces of the movement. This is different than the Civil Rights Movement where “Black women, including Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Diane Nash, and countless and unknown others, were critical to the development of the civil rights movement, but [the] movement is still primarily known by its male leaders” (Taylor, 165).

Another reason that women play a bigger role and are more visible in the Black Lives Matter movement than in the Civil Rights Movement, has to do with the importance of intersectionality within Black Lives Matter. A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality describes how different systems of oppression and discrimination overlap (Crenshaw). Failure to understand the intersectionality of problems, leads to the inability to solve said problem. Black Lives Matter is an intersectional movement and “Black women in the movement understand that their liberation from oppression is connected with the liberation of others” (Bridewell n. page). Intersectionality was missing in the Civil Rights Movement, making that movement less of a movement for all African Americans including Black women, who are oppressed by both racism and sexism. The Civil Rights Movement battled racism but not sexism and thus Black women, who experience both, did not profit as much from the Civil Rights Movement as Black men did. As Chatelain argues, “Black Lives Matter pays close attention to how the systems of oppression work together to oppress Black women and those who are marginalized [and] Black Lives Matters roots itself in acknowledging intersectionality with Black women” (qtd. in Bridewell, n. page). Thus, Black Lives Matter understands and acknowledges the intersections of both race and sexism and focuses on both as oppressive systems that bar society from reaching true equality.

## **Chapter 2, the matter of LGBTQ+ rights**

*“We marched in 1963 with Dr. Martin Luther King and dared to dream that freedom would include us, because not one of us is free to choose the terms of our living until all of us are free to choose the terms of our living” – Audre Lorde, 1983*

In this chapter, the LGBTQ+ community will be discussed in the light of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement. LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Plus. The plus encompasses another whole variety of sexualities and genders, in order to make the acronym as inclusive as possible, without making it impossible to use. While the acronym LGBTQ+ is now in popular use, in the 1960s the “common expression became gay and lesbian to describe all queer folk” (Zak, par. 2). While bisexuality was also already acknowledged, lesbian and gay still were the most common terms used when talking about same-sex desires. The letter B and T were added in the late 1990s and made the acronym LGBT, which was in the 2010s further expanded to LGBTQ+. Therefore, when discussing the Civil Rights Movement in this chapter, only the L, G and the B of the LGBTQ+ acronym will be part of the discussion.

The focus of homosexuality and the Civil Rights Movement will be on Martin Luther King’s relation with Bayard Rustin and King’s stance on homosexuality. King was not the embodiment of the Civil Rights Movement but he was a powerful and important voice in the movement. His attitude towards homosexuality served as an example for many others and was also followed by others and will thus serve as an indication of the overall stance of the Civil Rights Movement on homosexuality. The focus will also be on Bayard Rustin. Rustin was a gay man who was relatively open about his homosexuality. Beside of Rustin there were very little LGB people in the Civil Rights Movement who were out while they were active in the movement. Rustin’s homosexuality in the movement was known but at the same time a thing that was not talked about.

He was important enough to not be directly shoved aside for his homosexuality, something that did happen eventually. Not every LGB person in the Civil Rights Movement had that luxury however, and many people were not out at that time. Many also became active in the Gay Liberation movement after the Civil Rights Movement. But during the Civil Rights Movement it was Rustin of whom most people knew he was gay.

### **2.1 The Civil Rights Movement and the LGB community**

The Civil Rights Movement is viewed by many as a movement for the advancement and rights of all African Americans. The time, however, in which the Civil Rights Movement was at its height, was not one of great sexual freedom or acceptance of different sexuality. In fact, in 1952, homosexuality was included in the DSM-I, the first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, which was published by the American Psychiatric Association. Homosexuality was pathologized and seen as a disease, something to be cured. More acceptance for homosexuality started to come during the Sexual Revolution and later in the Gay Liberation Movement, which started in the late 1960s. The moment when the Gay Liberation Movement became a mass movement is often credited to the Stonewall Riots of 1969, which was after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., which is also seen as the end of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. Even though these two movements seem to just miss each other, they were both extremely important in the advancement of civil rights for people in the United States and there were people who participated in both. While the public face of the Civil Rights Movement is male and straight, this does not go for all the people who participated in the movement. Jared Leighton gives numerous examples of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals who were part of the Civil Rights Movement. Leighton names people like Aaron Henry, a black bisexual man who was part of the NAACP and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Jane Stembridge, lesbian and first full-time staff member of SNCC, Pauli Murray, lesbian and important contributor to the *Brown v. Board of*

Education case, Rodney Powell, a gay man who worked with Diane Nash in the Freedom Rides, and, of course, Bayard Rustin.

Bayard Rustin was a longtime advisor of Martin Luther King, Jr., even though the relationship between the two was not always easy. Before he became an advisor, Rustin had been involved in the struggle for civil rights for a long time. He worked for FOR, Fellowship of Reconciliation, in the youth secretary from 1941 through 1952 and “then led its race relations efforts; he followed that with a stint with the War Resisters League” (Terrance, 108). It was Rustin who helped “train King and others in the philosophy and techniques of nonviolence” (Long, 76). There were, however, two things that made Rustin’s role in the Civil Rights Movement more complicated, namely his one-time membership with the communist party and his homosexuality. Leighton argues that Rustin was often criticized within the Civil Rights Movement for his homosexuality (114). However, some caveats need to be made:

“First, many in the movement firmly supported Rustin. Second those who opposed Rustin did not do so solely because of his sexual orientation [but] were also concerned about his prior involvement with the Young Communist League and his refusal to serve in World War II. Third, those who opposed him were primarily concerned about protecting the image of the movement, which was always vulnerable to criticism. Fourth, those who were concerned about his sexuality were primarily concerned about it because he was caught having sex in public. They were not opposed to homosexuality *per se*” (Leighton, 114).

So, both Rustin’s stint with communism and his homosexuality gave him opponents within the Civil Rights Movement. It was, however, “Rustin’s homosexuality [that] did preclude him from the higher echelons of leadership that he might have reached had he not been gay” (Leighton, 115). While people within the movement might not have been against his homosexuality, between Rustin’s old communist ways and his homosexuality, his homosexuality was the thing he was

mostly judged for. His arrest in 1953, after being caught engaging in oral sex with a man, was also something that hindered him in his Civil Rights work. While the arrest was not a moral problem for him, it was a practical one; “it created the ever-looming possibility that his enemies would republicize the arrest as a way of undermining the credibility of any movement he helped to lead” (Long, 78). This was a real possibility and something which would also affect his relationship with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rustin was King’s long-time advisor and Rustin taught King the importance of techniques of nonviolence, something King is now hailed for. King knew of Rustin’s sexuality. As Long states, “there is little doubt, given Rustin’s insistence on being open and honest in his presentation of himself that King would have failed to sense his gay sexuality during their initial meeting” (78). This means that even though homosexuality was not accepted in that period, King still wanted Rustin working next to him because then he could “tap into Rustin’s vision and skills” (Long, 95). Rustin, being active in the struggle for civil rights for a long time, had a lot of experience that King found important to use. Whether or not King himself agreed or disagreed with homosexuality was not important, because King put what was best for the movement first, which in this case was working together with Rustin. The two liked working together and Rustin enjoyed diverting the public’s attention to King, while doing important behind the scene work. King even “floated the idea of hiring Rustin as SCLC director” (Long, 81). However, King took his distance in 1960. King and Rustin were planning to protest both the party convention of the Democrats and the Republicans before the election of 1960 but Adam Clayton Powell, a Baptist pastor, American politician, and Civil Rights activist, objected to this idea. He objected to the idea because he “did not want to hurt the relationship between black civil rights leaders and white liberals” (Leighton, 116). He threatened that “he would tell the press the two were having a homosexual affair” (Leighton, 116), if King and Rustin did not call off the protest and Rustin left the SCLC. Because

of Rustin's arrest in 1953, the threat of a rumored affair was a real concern and could actually be believed. Advised by Stanley Levison and Clarence Jones, King cut ties with Bayard Rustin and "for the next two years, King, too, treated Rustin differently; no longer did the civil rights leader turn to him as a trusted advisor" (Long, 76).

This changed again in 1963 with the March on Washington. A. Philip Randolph came up with the idea for another March and asked Rustin for his help. While Randolph believed that Rustin should be in charge of the march, other civil rights leaders did not agree with this idea. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, for example, did not want Rustin to be the organizer because "of his communist past, his imprisonment as a conscientious objector during World War II, and his homosexuality" (Leighton, 115). Martin Luther King, Jr. did not agree with Wilkins and asked why "Rustin's past should prevent him from directing the march" (Leighton, 115). Eventually, Randolph became the director and he made Rustin his deputy. It is noticeable however, that opposition to Rustin's homosexuality and gay people in the movement came from the need to preserve the image of the movement and not necessarily from fear of homosexuality (Leighton, 115). But Rustin became an important and visible figure in the March on Washington nonetheless. Bayard Rustin is a great example of how, "if a civil rights activist who was gay [...] was essential to organizing effort, that superseded concerns that homosexuality could be used against the movement" (Leighton, 116).

While King was now supporting Rustin in public, this does not mean that he himself agreed with homosexuality. He admitted in a private conversation that "he had gotten rid of Rustin in 1960 because his homosexual behavior toward student protestors, fueled by alcohol, was reflecting badly on him" (Long, 87). In public, King did not speak about homosexuality or his opinion on this subject. Long states that:

"His silence is not altogether surprising. After all, he was focused on advancing civil rights as they related to race and ethnicity, and homosexuality was an issue that no doubt would

have proved divisive in his efforts to gain support from Christians who were fundamentally opposed to homosexuality, especially those in black and white evangelical churches.”

(Long, 70)

The fact remains, however, that King never offered public support for gay rights in the sixties and this had also to do with the role religion played in his life. Long argues that black Baptist ministers in and around the Civil Rights Movements and the SCLC were homophobic (72). While this does not mean that King was homophobic too, it did probably affect his stance on either homosexuality or public support for homosexuality. Plus, looking at his teachings on sex in marriage “as well as his silence on liberalism’s approach to homosexuality, the Martin Luther King Jr. of 1966 actually sounded more like Billy Graham and other conservative Christian ministers (at least in relation to sexual ethics) than like the Christian liberal he purported to be” (Long, 71). At the end of his life, around the time of his assassination, the gay liberation movement gained momentum but King failed to align himself with the movement. At the same time, King did want to expand the notion of civil rights. According to Long, “guiding and underlying King’s deliberate efforts to expand the notion of civil rights was the religious and philosophical principle of human personality” (106). This principle of human personality is also known as the triparte principle of personality, which says that:

“first, the individual person— each person in every time and place—is sacred and equal in value to all other persons. [...] Second, that the essence of the human individual is freedom. It is freedom that makes each of us uniquely human—not just freedom of the human will but freedom of the entire person. [...] Third, it sees each person as part of a community of people. Each person is in solidarity with others, bound together by similar characteristics, needs, and desires. And because all human life is interrelated, no one person can become wholly fulfilled while others are oppressed” (Long, 107).

By this logic, African Americans could not become free from oppression without homosexuals being free from oppression. While King might not have been a public supporter of gay rights, following his philosophical principle of humanity, gay rights have to be supported if African Americans want to be free from oppression themselves. On top of that, while we cannot say with any certainty if King was or was not a supporter of gay rights, we can say that from 1964 to 1968, he “treated Bayard Rustin, a relatively open gay man, as a trusted advisor on the most important issues affecting the civil rights movement” (Long, 95). King put the Civil Rights movement first and so whatever his stance on certain subjects like homosexuality was, it was in his eyes the best way to get equal rights for African American people.

## **2.2 Black Lives Matter and the LGBTQ+ community**

From the beginning of the Black Lives Matter Movement, the connection with the LGBTQ+ community was apparent. As mentioned before, the movement was founded by three women, Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors. Both Garza and Cullors identify as queer and were active in the LGBTQ+ community as organizers. When building up the Black Lives Matter Movement, their pasts as LGBTQ+ organizers was not forgotten, and the LGBTQ+ community became an integral part of the Black Lives Matter Movement. Black Lives Matter labels itself as queer affirming, stating on their website that:

“We are guided by the fact that all Black lives matter, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status, or location. We make space for transgender brothers and sisters to participate and lead. We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence. (...) We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the

intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise)” (blacklivesmatter.org).

Because Garza and Cullors are queer, they “see the purpose and importance of including queer politics into the movement [and] they understand that ‘men lives or cis-gender lives’ are not the only ones of importance” (Bridewell, np). For BLM, queer-affirming means being a movement where people from the LGBTQ+ community have a powerful voice, in which their concerns are heard, and their struggles listened to, and where they can lead while being proud of who they are. The incorporation of the LGBTQ+ community in the struggle for black lives is important in the intersectional identity of the BLM movement. So “Black Lives Matter affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, Black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum” (Garza, par. 10) because one of the main ideas of the movement is to center those who were previously marginalized in Black Liberation movements.

As mentioned earlier, Black Lives Matter is a movement that is steeped in Black feminism. The difference between black and white feminism is that in white feminism “the status quo of racism remains unaddressed” (Bridewell, np). This means that black queer women, a marginalized group within a marginalized group, are excluded from white feminism. Black Lives Matter acknowledges that heterosexuality causes oppression because it is seen as normative. By using black feminism and the insertion of queer politics within black feminism, Black Lives Matter is using queer politics in their movement (Bridewell, np). This means that they recognize LGBTQ+ individuals and address issues important for Black LGBTQ+ individuals. One of these issues is the murder of African American transgender women in the United States.

In 2017, GLAAD, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, reported the murders of 26 transgender people, 23 of those people were transgender women of color (glaad.org). Their website explains:

“Victims of anti-transgender violence are overwhelmingly transgender women of color, who live at the dangerous intersections of transphobia, racism, sexism, and criminalization which often lead to high rates of poverty, unemployment, and homelessness. While some homicides have not yet been identified as hate crimes due to lack of information about the perpetrators or motives, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs reports an alarming multi-year trend showing that transgender women experience a greater risk of death by hate violence than any other group” (glaad.org).

These numbers were alarming, also for the Black Lives Matter Movement. Together with the GetEQUAL foundation, they started an action via social media with the hashtag #protecttranswomen. On March 15, 2017, which was turned into the National Day of Action to Celebrate the Lives of Black Trans Women and Protect All Trans Women and Femmes by among others Black Lives Matter; the movement tweeted “Over 80% of murdered trans people in the U.S. are women of color. Today, join @GetEQUAL to #ProtectTransWomen” (@Blklivesmatter qtd. in Le Miere). The hashtag trended all over the United States, and the tweet reached a broad audience since the online presence of Black Lives Matter is great. Different chapters of the movement also took to the streets and organized marches, vigils, and protests for the matter of transgender lives of color.

Here, the initiative that was mentioned in chapter one of this thesis, the Say Her Name initiative, also comes into play. Even though the initiative was an effort to bring attention to violence against black women, it became clear that the use of “women and femmes” made this an LGBTQ+ inclusive initiative of the BLM movement. The term “femmes” or the singular form

“femme,” is used to describe someone whose identity or representation leans toward femininity. In this case, identity and representation are two different things. Someone’s identity is how they identify to themselves, what is between someone’s ears, so to say, while representation is how they present themselves to the outside world. These two do not necessarily have to line up. Someone can identify as genderqueer, but present as strictly feminine. The fact that the Say Her Name initiative chose the term “femme” thus includes more people than just MTF (male-to-female) transgender women. This term, femme, could be used for MTF’s, genderqueer people, stereotypically feminine men and, technically, women. The term femme is usually most associated with feminine queer women (in comparison to masculine queer women), which would make the initiative less inclusive. However, movement posters like the one of Taja DeJesus, who was a 36-year-old transgender woman stabbed to death in San Francisco in 2015, confirm that the Say Her Name initiative meant to include more than just queer women.<sup>1</sup>

While the murders of transgender people, especially transgender women of color, are a key issue in the Black Lives Matter Movement, Chatelain argues that “gendered police violence against (...) trans women” is also a key issue (Asoka and Chatelain, 58). While the issue of police brutality in general will be discussed later, the specific violence transgender women of color face by the police is an issue that falls under the LGBTQ+ concerns of Black Lives Matter. The policing of prostitution, as explained by Ritchie and Jones-Brown, “is a primary gender-specific context for racialized policing of the bodies, sexuality, and reproductive autonomy of women and LGBT people of color” (23). Transgender women of color are disproportionately affected when it comes to the policing of prostitution because many work as sex workers, which for them is ‘survival economics’ (Larson, 52). Transgender women of color go into either prostitution or selling drugs

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<sup>1</sup> See figure 1 in the appendix

to sustain a living but because these “survival economics are criminalized, and transgender people face discrimination in labor markets, including because of past felony conviction” (Larson, 52) they are more vulnerable for abuse. The policing of prostitution by police often includes the confiscation of condoms, an action which often leads to the arrest of the person being searched. This means that transgender women, who are most often the target, are also at a higher risk for HIV or other risks to their health. On top of that, LGBTQ+ women of color also experience disproportionate amounts of sexual harassment by police officers. As Ritchie and Jones-Brown argue, “young women, women of color, homeless and low-income women, lesbian and transgender women, women who are or are perceived to be engaged in drug or sex trades, and immigrant women have been found to be particularly vulnerable to sexual misconduct by law enforcement” (25). LGBTQ+ women of color experience harassment to ‘correct’ their sexual orientation, which means that they are treated that way because of their sexuality. Since intersectionality looks at the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, it is logical that Black Lives Matter pays special attention to the struggle of LGBTQ+ people of color, also in the larger context of police brutality.

While LGBTQ+ people are marginalized within the Black community, Black people are marginalized within the LGBTQ+ community (Lightsey). Since Black Lives Matter is queer affirming, one would assume the relation with the LGBTQ+ community is good. However, Black Lives Matter is addressing the racism present in the LGBTQ+ community. One way they addressed the problem of racism in the LGBTQ+ community was in 2016, by stopping a pride parade in Toronto for 30 minutes. By stopping the parade, Black Lives Matter protested the participation of the uniformed police in the pride parade. Janaya Khan, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter chapter in Toronto, explains that “Toronto Pride, now shaped by corporate sponsors, as well as city funding and heavy police participation, has strayed farther and farther away from the margins that

birthed it in the first place” (par. 5). The relationship between the police and the LGBTQ+ community has been tense since the beginning of the Gay Liberation movement. The Gay Liberation movement started with the Stonewall riots in 1969. The riots started when the people in Stonewall, a gay bar, stood up to the police, who yet again raided the bar, because of the LGBTQ+ clientele. The Stonewall riots protested the police brutality against the LGBTQ+ community. The Gay liberation movement grew out of these riots, and Pride Parades became a widespread phenomenon. So, the fact that uniformed police are participating in these pride parades now might be a sign of progress for some. Black Lives Matter does not agree with this. The relationship between the Black community and the police is a tense one and “there's a power imbalance between police, who enjoy legal protections ordinary citizens do not, and black communities who are often the victims of police violence” (Levinson-King). On top of that, Walcott shows that it is “queers, trans people and sex workers, people with mental health issues, poor people and people who are marginalized in a white capitalist heteropatriarchal society (...) that modern policing most often subject to its brutal mechanisms of control, arrest, and incarceration” (par.8).

This power imbalance and the negative connotations the police bring to the Black community is what led Black Lives Matter activists to stop the Pride parade in Toronto for 30 minutes. The movement had nine demands “including more representation of black, trans and indigenous queer people in Pride, more programs for black queer youth and most controversially, no uniformed police marching in future pride parades” (Levinson-King, par. 5). As Levinson-king states, “the latter (...) was necessary for black queer people to feel safe and included in the parade” (par. 6). African American people are disproportionately targeted by police, and since Pride should be a safe celebration for all LGBTQ+ people, including LGBTQ+ people of color, more police officers does not mean more safety for people of color. Inclusion is important, because as Kahn says “people of colour have not felt included in Pride for a number of years; in the last several

years that I have attended membership meetings, it has been overwhelmingly gay white men, reflected in a majority white board, staff and director of Pride” (par. 20). So not only is BLM bringing inclusion to Pride, but they are also advocating for more diversity.

### **2.3 Comparison**

When comparing the Civil Rights Movement with the Black Lives Matter Movement, it becomes clear that Black Lives Matter is far more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people of color and actually advocating for LGBTQ+ rights. Part of the reason is that Black Lives Matter is a movement from a time period half a decade after the gay liberation movement. The gay liberation movement started at the end of the of the Civil Rights Movement, but the two movements never worked together. The Stonewall Riots, credited as the moment the gay liberation movement became a mass movement, happened after Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination. When the gay liberation and the LGBT movement became influential in the United States, the Civil Rights Movement was more or less gone. The connection between the two was therefore also not as pronounced or strong. The Black Lives Matter Movement, on the other hand, did come after the height of the gay liberation movement and is actually partially continuing the fight; the focus of the gay liberation movement was mostly on white gay men and queer black people were mostly forgotten. Black Lives Matter is now continuing the fight for LGBTQ+ people of color who were forgotten or ignored in both the Civil Rights Movement and the gay liberation movement. The goal of both of the movements is also different. The Civil Rights Movement’s main goal was advancing the rights of African Americans. There was no special attention to special interest groups or thought given to the intersectionality of the African American identity. That is also why there sometimes was a sense of tolerance towards homosexuals or homosexual behavior. If it did not distract from or jeopardize the eventual goal of equality and equal rights, the issue of homosexuality was ignored. For Black Lives Matter, the main goal is to get equal rights for all African Americans and they do focus on

marginalized groups within the African American community. They embrace the LGBTQ+ community and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights. This thus makes Black Lives Matter a more intersectional and inclusive movement.

The Black church was also very active within the Civil Rights Movement. Many pastors and clergies occupy leadership roles and thus shaped the course of the movement. Research has found that the black church fosters a negative attitude towards homosexuality and that this negative attitude is passed along in the congregation (Irizarry, Perry, 885). So, the involvement of the church in the Civil Rights Movement also shaped the opinion on homosexuality within the movement. Religion has no pronounced role, however, in the Black Lives Matter movement. There are churches and congregations that support Black Lives Matter, but because the movement is of itself queer-affirming, the religious institutions that support them are so as well (Lewis, 142). Examples of these churches are the Unitarian Universalist Church and the United Church of Christ.

### **Chapter 3 Advocating for the Matter of Black Lives**

*“People say all the time, ‘well, I don’t understand how people could have tolerated slavery?’ ‘How could they have made peace with that?’ ‘How could people have gone to a lynching and participated in that?’ ‘That’s so crazy, if I was living at that time I would never have tolerated anything like that.’ And the truth is we are living in this time, and we are tolerating it.” -Bryan Stevenson*

In this chapter, the problems of segregation, mass incarceration, and police brutality will be discussed. When talking about the Civil Rights Movement, the move from slavery to the Jim Crow era and the subsequent challenge to the Jim Crow laws by the Civil Rights Movement will be discussed. For the Black Lives Matter movement, mass incarceration and police brutality will be the focal point. In my analyses of the move from slavery to Jim Crow to mass incarceration, I draw heavily on the book *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander and the documentary *13<sup>th</sup>* by Ava DuVernay. For my discussion about race, I follow up on Alexander’s work.

#### **3.1 From Slavery to the End of Jim Crow**

Slavery was abolished in 1865, after the end of the American Civil War. Although slavery ended, racism did not. The demand for plantation laborers was met through slave workers from Africa. Native Americans tribes were in a position to fight back and were thus unsuitable for slavery, and European immigrants were unsuitable because slavery would interfere with the voluntary immigration to America (Alexander, 23). Since Africans were relatively powerless, they made good slaves (Alexander, 24). Contrary to common perception, Africans were thus not chosen on the basis of their race. Indeed, as Wacquant said: “racial division was a consequence, not a precondition of slavery, but once it was instituted it became detached from its initial function and acquired a social potency all its own” (qtd. in Alexander, 26). In the reconstruction era that followed, the South adopted Black Codes, laws that were modeled after former slave laws, in order

to ensure that African Americans kept working on the lands. These laws heavily restricted the rights of African Americans and some foreshadowed the Jim Crow laws that followed later. Michelle Alexander, writer of *The New Jim Crow* explains that in the Reconstruction Era, “the black codes were overturned, and a slew of federal civil rights legislation protecting the newly freed slaves was passed during the relatively brief but extraordinary period of black advancement” (29). The Reconstruction Era ended in 1877 with the Congressional Compromise (Grau, 168). Samuel Tilden had won the popular vote in the 1876 presidential election for the Democratic party but the electoral votes were divided between Tilden and Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes. Hayes brokered a deal with Southern democrats and he got the presidency in exchange for the removal of the federal troops from the South (Vann Woodward). At the end of the Reconstruction Era segregation became normalized throughout the South, which was later fueled by the Jim Crow laws. The Jim Crow laws “enforced a rigid racial segregation, consigning black citizens to inferior schools and other public services, imposing poll taxes and literacy tests aimed at preventing blacks from voting, and providing official support for a culture of segregation and discrimination” (tracingcenter.org). While Jim Crow laws were present in the South, it did not mean Black people were regarded as equal in the North and the rest of the U.S. As a matter of fact, in other parts of the United States, “there were fewer formal, legal barriers [than in the South], but rigidly enforced social norms still produced widespread, often blatant segregation and discrimination in employment, housing, schools, churches, and most other aspects of life” (tracingcenter.org). So everywhere in the United States Black people were regarded as second rang citizens or not even citizens at all. The Jim Crow laws were defied in the case *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) but the Supreme Court ruled the ‘separate but equal’ standard as in accordance to the constitution and thus supported racial segregation. The Civil Rights Movement challenged Jim Crow and segregation on all levels. Rosa Parks arrest was turned into the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and school segregation was challenged in the court by

*Brown v Board of education*. In this court case, the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional and violated the Fourteenth Amendment. According to the decision, the 'separate but equal' doctrine was actually inherently unequal and had to be rejected. The court ruled that public schools had to be integrated, but schools in the South remained almost completely segregated until the late 1960s (Duignan, par. 4). In 1961, Freedom Rides were organized, in which black and white people rode buses together to the American South to protest segregation, where they were met with violence. Most of the violence that civil rights activists endured happened in the South. The violence in Birmingham, Alabama was captured and broadcast on television and the nation and the world watched as "the local state personified in the person of Sheriff Bull Conner viciously attacked peaceful civil rights marchers including children [and] as the terrorist organizations of the Klan bombed churches leading to the death of four young black girls" (Dawson, n. page). President John F. Kennedy introduced the legislation that would become the Civil Rights Act of 1964, not long afterward. The international news coverage of the aforementioned violence was not the only thing that triggered Kennedy's response. As explained by Alexander, "between autumn 1961 and the spring of 1963, twenty thousand men, women, and children had been arrested. In 1963 alone, another fifteen thousand were imprisoned, and one thousand desegregation protests occurred across the region, in more than one hundred cities" (37). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended legal discrimination and segregation in education, housing, jobs, and public facilities. It did not, however, mean that the Civil Rights Movement had reached its final goal. Discrimination was still rampant in American society and the Civil Right Act did not take any strong measures concerning voting rights. Southern states and cities imposed rules for voting that effectively barred many African Americans from voting. The Civil Rights Movement, with Martin Luther King, Jr. at the front, organized a march from Selma to Montgomery to demand voting rights for African Americans. When the activists reached the Edmund Pettus bridge,

hundreds of state troopers and deputies attacked them, in an event which is now called Bloody Sunday. A week after the march and the consequent attack, President Lyndon B. Johnson sent the Voting Rights Act to Congress.

The progress that the Civil Rights Movement had made was apparent in both social and political realms. However, economic progress was lacking and the Civil Rights Movement thus turned their attention to economic problems. The most famous demonstration “in support of economic justice is the March on Washington for Jobs and Economic Freedom in August 1963” (Alexander, 38). The march’s most famous image now might be Martin Luther King Jr., giving his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech, but the march also brought white and black people together. The shift in focus to economic problems, aligned poor and working-class whites with the goals of the Civil Rights Movement. According to Martin Luther King, “Genuine equality for black people (...) demanded a radical restructuring of society, one that would address the needs of the black and white poor throughout the country” (Alexander, 39). The Civil Rights Movement began to change into a Poor People’s movement (Alexander, 39), something that was challenging the racial order. After the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the end of the Civil Rights Movement, it became clear that the racial order was still alive and kicking. As Alexander explains, “A new race-neutral language was developed for appealing to old racist sentiments, a language accompanied by a political movement that succeeded in putting the vast majority of blacks back in their place [and] proponents of racial hierarchy found they could install a new racial caste system without violating the law or the new limits of acceptable political discourse, by demanding “law and order” rather than “segregation forever.”” (40). A new Jim Crow had begun, a system of control that Black Lives Matter is now trying to dismantle.

### **3.2 Mass Incarceration and Police Brutality**

After Jim Crow, a new kind of racist ideology became dominant in the United States, namely colorblind racism. According to Bonilla-Silva, colorblind racism is the ideology that “explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics” (2). This means that “whereas Jim Crow racism explained blacks’ social standing as the result of their biological and moral inferiority, color-blind racism avoids such facile arguments [and] instead, whites rationalize minorities’ contemporary status as the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks’ imputed cultural limitations” (Bonilla-Silva, 2). Colorblind racism is related to systemic and institutional racism. Systemic racism is “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity” (Aspen Institute, par. 1). Systemic racism is not a choice but one of the building blocks of the social, political, and economic systems present in society and it is based on stereotypes that cross all major systems. Institutional racism “refers to the policies and practices within and across institutions that, intentionally or not, produce outcomes that chronically favor, or put a racial group at a disadvantage” (Aspen Institute, par. 5). The problem of mass incarceration of people of color is a consequence of both systemic and institutional racism, and one of the focal points in the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Mass incarceration is not a new phenomenon. It is the new racial caste after racial castes as slavery and Jim Crow. According to Michelle Alexander, a racial caste is “a stigmatized racial group locked into an inferior position by law and custom” (12). This thus makes Jim Crow and slavery caste systems. The system of mass incarceration can be considered a caste system because it functions as a new system of racial control by targeting black men through the ‘War on Drugs’. The problem of mass incarceration did not start after Jim Crow ended but started at the end of slavery and kept evolving, eventually replacing Jim Crow as a racial caste system.

Ratified in 1865, the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment abolished slavery in the United States after the end of the Civil War. What many people tend to forget, however, is that there is a loophole in the amendment. Slavery was still a valid punishment for crime. This loophole was immediately exploited. As explained in the documentary *13<sup>th</sup>*, slavery was an economic system which, when abolished, left the Southern economy in tatters. People who were formerly property were all of a sudden free. By exploiting the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment loophole, African Americans were arrested in masses for minor crimes and were basically made slaves again. This way, they had to rebuild the economy of the South (DuVernay, 0:03:04-0:04:19). At the same time, the Ku Klux Klan was reborn, for which the movie *Birth of a Nation* was also partly responsible. The film showed the Ku Klux Klan in a romanticized way and enforced negative stereotypes about black men. The rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan caused a new wave of terrorism for African Americans. As an effect many African Americans fled from the South to cities like Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, Oakland, Cleveland, and Boston. When this open form of racism became unacceptable it shifted to something more legal (DuVernay, 0:09:05-0:09:25), namely segregation and Jim Crow. As mentioned before, it was the Civil Rights Movement that challenged segregation and Jim Crow. In the media the Civil Rights activists were portrayed as criminals who deliberately violated (segregation) laws but what they did was to change the notion of criminality: being arrested for the cause of Civil Rights was a noble thing to do (DuVernay, 0:11:13-0:11:20). At the same time as the Civil Rights Movement gained steam, crime rates in America were beginning to rise. While this was due to the baby boom generation growing up, politicians blamed the Civil Rights Movement for contributing to the rising crime rates (DuVernay, 0:13:19-0:13:57). In the 1970s, Nixon begins to call for law and order and a war on crime, in which crime begins to stand in for race. This war on crime was integral to his Southern Strategy. The Southern Strategy entailed that Nixon began to recruit Southern whites, who were formerly staunch democrats, into the Republican fold, by talking to poor and working-

class whites in a non-racist matter, which was actually thinly veiled racism (DuVernay, 0:17:17-0:17:30). Nixon also coined the term war on drugs, which treated drug addiction and drug dependency as a crime issue, instead of a health issue. After Nixon, it was Reagan who turned the term into a literal war. When Reagan assumed presidency, he made drugs America's number one problem. He raised the budgets of drug law enforcement, which tripled from its 1981 size, put millions of dollars to prison and jail facilities, and targeted specifically crack cocaine (DuVernay, 0:19:14-0:21:06). Crack cocaine was a drug that was a relatively cheap drug, which could be marketed in small doses and was popular in mostly African American communities. By targeting crack cocaine, Reagan actually targeted the African American community, because at the same time cocaine was also a problem but since that was a white people drugs, it was less criminalized. Because of Reagan mandatory sentencing penalties for crack became harsher than those for powder cocaine, which specifically increased the black prison population. He eliminated parole for most federal prison, allowed agencies to confiscate assets in drug arrests in the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, and introduced the death penalty for drug kingpins (Crick, par.6). The prison population grew from 513,900 in 1980 to 759,100 in 1985. George WH Bush escalated the war on drugs, with his 1033 program which gave surplus military-grade equipment to police (Lopez) and increased overall police power. Prison population rose to 1,179,200 in 1990. After the Nixon, Reagan, and Bush presidency, Democrats acknowledged that it was impossible to win the presidency without being tough on crime. In 1992, Bill Clinton becomes president and assumes the same tactics as his predecessors by being tough on crime. He passed the Three Strikes law, the Truth in Sentencing law, Federal Crime Bill of 1994, and he installed new mandatory minimums. These new regulations made it easier for people to go to prison, made prison sentences longer, and ended the possibility of parole in the whole prison system. Law enforcement gained new material and more freedom and police departments were militarized. More people were arrested at every

level. This caused an explosion of the prison population, with a 1990 prison population of 1,179,200, and a 2000 prison population of 2,015,300 (DuVernay,0:36:07-0:40:31). African Americans were disproportionately represented in the prison population.

The system of mass incarceration is interconnected with the prison industrial complex. The prison industrial complex is “a set of bureaucratic, political, and economic interest that encourage increased spending on imprisonment, regardless of the actual need” (Schlosser, par. 7). Private prisons have contracts with states that their prisons have to be filled. CCA, or CoreCivic, is a private prison company and is part of ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council. ALEC is a corporation in which lawmakers, mostly Republicans, and companies work together to draft new bills that will then be proposed in Congress. ALEC is a way for companies to influence American politics, and in the case of the CCA, this worked out great. The Three Strikes law and mandatory minimums were proposed by ALEC, which helped to keep prisons filled and provide a steady influx of bodies to generate profit that would go to the shareholders of CCA (DuVernay, 0:57:52-0:58:42). So, through ALEC, CCA had a hand in shaping crime policy across the United States, not just in prison privatization but also in the rapid increase in criminalization. ALEC pushed forward a number of policies to increase the number of people in prison and to increase the sentences of people who are in prison (DuVernay, 0:59:07-0:59:57). Today the American prison population is made up of 2,3 million people. The number of African Americans locked up is so disproportional that in 2010, of every 100.000 African Americans, 2,207 were locked up, while for white people this was 380 for every 100.000 (prisonpolicy.org). According to the Black Lives Matter website, the movement is “an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise” (blacklivesmatter.com). Mass incarceration is one of the institutions where Black lives are systematically targeted and thus disproportionately affects the black community. Black Lives Matter has been active in prison reform

and the connection “between the prison reform and the Black Lives Matter campaigns intersect on issues of the reform of policing and its procedures, decriminalization of certain drugs, and demanding justice in specific cases of murder, committed by police and found unjust by the general public” (Farmer, par. 3).

Patrisse Cullors is taking action against the problem of mass incarceration. She helped create JusticeLA, a project that proposes plans to spend \$3.5 billion to build two new jails in LA County. Instead of building prisons, the project is trying to reallocate the money into the community and starting at the roots of the incarceration problem. Patrisse Cullors says in an interview with Complex,

“Up to 60% of [Black and Latino prisoners] are inside LA county jails only because they are poor; they have not been convicted of any sort of crime. So what we are saying is the county will be investing a significant amount of money in a population that’s most vulnerable, and instead that money can be used towards mental health care facilities, job creation, and the houseless and homeless population” (Cosme, par.7).

So instead of putting money to prisons, Black Lives Matter and JusticeLA work together to keep people out of jails rather than investing in jails themselves.

Besides trying to reallocate money, Black Lives Matter is directing attention to issues such as “adequate living and rehabilitation conditions for prisoners and inmates, decreasing levels of mass incarceration, lessening the harshness of certain drug laws, and strengthening communal police control and accountability through means outlined in a list of demands entitled Campaign Zero” (Farmer, par. 2). Campaign Zero is mainly trying to end police violence, an issue that is closely related to mass incarceration.

The problem of police brutality entails that people of color are much more likely to be shot and or killed by police than white people. People of color are disproportionately targeted. As Vox

researched, “racial minorities made up about 37.4 percent of the general population in the US and 46.6 percent of armed and unarmed victims, but they made up 62.7 percent of unarmed people killed by police” (Lopez). But police brutality does not only have to do with violence. After Michael Brown’s murder in Ferguson, Missouri, the matter of police brutality and the problem of racism in police forces got national attention. After Brown’s murderer was not indicted, a wave of protests went through the city that lasted for weeks and the police responded with teargas and rubber bullets, things they got through the aforementioned 1033 program. The Department of Justice investigated the Ferguson police department and they “found a pattern of racial bias at the Ferguson Police Department – typically in an effort to ticket as many low-income black residents as possible in an attempt to raise local budget revenue through fines and court fees” (Lopez). The report also described “a city that used its police and courts as moneymaking ventures, a place where officers stopped and handcuffed people without probable cause, hurled racial slurs, used stun guns without provocation, and treated anyone as suspicious merely for questioning police tactics” (Buchanan et al, par.12). Ferguson was a model city when it came to police brutality. Campaign Zero proposed ten points that would help to end police brutality. These ten points are the following: end broken window policing, community oversight, limit use of force, independently investigate and prosecute, community representation, body cams/film the police, training, end for-profit policing, demilitarization, and fair police union contracts ([joincampaignzero.com](http://joincampaignzero.com)). Through these ten points Campaign Zero, and consequently Black Lives Matter is trying to end police brutality. The problems of police brutality and mass incarceration are closely related, both are fueled by systemic racism and Black Lives Matter is trying to remedy both of the problems.

### **3.3 Comparison**

When comparing the issues the Civil Rights Movement and Black Lives Matter advocate for, it seems like their fight did not change, the problem just evolved. The Civil Rights Movement was

advocating for equal rights for African Americans. They were fighting legal segregation and discrimination and experienced a lot of violence in their struggle for civil rights. Racism in the 1950s and 60s was overt racism, it was pronounced and clearly present in society. After the ratification of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendment, two crown achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, the way racism showed itself changed. It became more and more covert and changed into colorblind racism. Black Lives Matter is fighting against police brutality and mass incarceration, both problems are caused by systemic and institutionalized racism but also colorblind racism. Mass incarceration is a problem that came up in the years after the Civil Rights Movement but has its roots in slavery, the effects of which, the Civil Rights Movement also fought against. The problem of mass incarceration has long been ignored because of colorblind racism. Colorblind racism is a system in which the existence of race and its effects are denied. Since mass incarceration is a racialized issue, it has been ignored in the colorblind society as a real problem. It was thought that the Civil Rights Movement ended racism, and in a way they did end a system of racism, namely Jim Crow. After the Civil Rights Movement ended, however, Jim Crow had ended and was already beginning to evolve into covert racism. Black Lives Matter is taking action against the system of mass incarceration and police brutality, the latter being an issue that activists from the Civil Rights Movement also dealt with. By taking action against the system of mass incarceration, which could be seen as the new Jim Crow, Black Lives Matter is continuing the fight of the Civil Rights Movement, stating once again that Black Lives Matter.

## **Conclusion**

Maya Angelou once said “the truth is, no one of us can be free until everybody is free.” Linking this to the marginalized communities in America, not one of those communities can be free until all are free. Take for example women. Women experience oppression based on their gender. There are, however, women that also experience oppression based on their race, sexuality, and ability. Systems of oppression intersect, and so one cannot be free until all are free. The same thus goes for the African American community. In order for the African American community to reach freedom and equality, minority groups like women and LGBTQ+ individuals also have to be free from oppression. However, the African American struggle for equality did not always focus on marginalized groups. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s was important in the advancement of civil rights legislation, like the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and ending segregation. It did not, however, further the specific conditions of marginalized groups within the African American community. The Black Lives Matter movement, an African American civil rights movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, could change the tide, however, by focusing on these marginalized groups. It led me to the following research question “How does the Black Lives Matter movement differ from the Civil Rights Movement concerning the role of women, the LGBTQ community, and the issues they advocate for?”

When comparing Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement on grounds of the issues they advocate for, it became clear that Black Lives Matter can be seen as a continuation of the Civil Rights Movement. While the Civil Rights Movement rallied for law reforms to end racism, the Black Lives Matter movement is fighting against problems that are consequences of systemic and institutional racism. This implies that the problem of racism is not going away by simply adopting new laws. Racism evolves and changes and thus the ways we have to counter racism also changes.

Comparing the role of women and the LGBTQ+ community in the Civil Right Movement with the Black Lives Matter movement, it stands out that both women and the LGBTQ+ community play a bigger role in the Black Lives Matter movement. In the Civil Rights Movement, women were often degraded to secondary roles and their actions restricted by gender roles. Men occupied leadership positions and were thus recognized as such. Women did have an important role in grassroots activism and, using a term coined by Robnett, can be considered bridge leaders. This is in stark contrast with the Black Lives Matter movement, a movement founded by women, where women are visible leaders, and where special attention is devoted to the issues black women face. The movement is sometimes accused of being leaderless, while women are actually leading, which renders women invisible, similar to the Civil Rights Movement. The LGBTQ+ community also plays a bigger role in the Black Lives Matter movement than in the Civil Rights Movement. While Martin Luther King, Jr. had a personal philosophy that all people were bound together and no one could be free from oppression when others are oppressed, the Civil Rights Movement in general did not devote special attention to intersectionality of the struggle of African American women and African American LGB individuals. Black Lives Matter is not only founded by queer women, it also creates space for LGBTQ+ individuals to participate and lead. The reason for this difference between the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter movement is the importance of intersectionality for Black Lives Matter.

By being a more intersectional movement, Black Lives Matter includes previously marginalized groups and provides them a voice, making Black Lives Matter a more inclusive movement than the Civil Rights Movement. No longer is equality a question that could be answered by men but has to be answered by women and LGBTQ+ individuals.

In my thesis, I was able to give an overview of the role of women and LGBTQ+ people in both the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter movement. This led me to the

conclusion that the Black Lives Matter movement is more inclusive of marginalized groups in the African American community. To reach true equality for all Americans, means incorporating marginalized groups like women and LGBTQ+ individuals in the conversation of what equality means. However, because of time issues I had to make certain compromises. I focused on the role of black women and LGBTQ+ individuals of color in both of the movements. The role of white people in both movements is another topic that should be explored, since I often came across evidence that white people were more involved in the Civil Rights Movement than in the Black Lives Matter movement. I also focused on the groups of women and the LGBTQ+ community as marginalized groups in the African American community. Further research should also go into the role of other marginalized groups like disabled people in both movements. Black Lives Matter is the latest movement in a long history of movements fighting for Black freedom. However, the focus on women and LGBTQ+ individuals is different from previous movements like the Civil Rights Movement. Black Lives Matter confirms over and over again that black women's lives matter, black queer lives matter, and truly all black lives matter.

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Appendix

-DO NOT POST-

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Figure 1, Say Her Name Initiative Poster