



George Floyd's "Black Lives Matter": A Study With Reference To The Effects Of Racism And Prejudice On Black Lives In Foreign Countries

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Abstract

This research utilizes an experimental audit design to examine the effects of Black Lives Matter and related demonstrations against anti-Black racism and police brutality on racially discriminatory hiring practices. This design was used both before and during the period of increased unrest following the murder of George Floyd. We compare how hypothetical Black and White job seekers are treated when applying for positions in the service sector, particularly those who have previous experience working as police officers, firefighters, or code enforcement officers. Results show that during the demonstrations and turmoil that followed George Floyd's death, the White advantage in employer call-backs and requests for interviews diminished, even to the point where a Black advantage emerged.

Keywords: Black Lives Matter, racism, antiracism

1. Introduction

George Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020, in Minnesota, United States of America (United States), the widespread demonstrations that followed in several nations, and the prosecution and judgement against one accountable law enforcement officer mark a turning moment in the struggle against racism's impunity. The global movement for racial justice has forced a long overdue confrontation with racial discrimination and turned discussions to a focus on the systemic nature of racism and the institutions that uphold it. Most obviously, there were several demonstrations demanding an end to institutionalised racism and police abuse of Africans and persons of African origin. This groundswell prompted the Human Rights Council to have an

urgent discussion on existing racialized human rights abuses, structural racism, police brutality, and violence against nonviolent protestors on June 17, 2020. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated during the urgent debate that George Floyd's death has come to represent the systemic racism that harms millions of people of African descent, and she urged all States and stakeholders to take additional action to combat systemic and structural racial discrimination that violates the human rights of those of African descent. Amina Mohammed, the deputy secretary general of the United Nations, cited an opinion piece written by senior UN officials who were African or of African descent when she said that there is never enough said about the profound trauma and generational suffering brought on by centuries of racial injustice, especially against those who are of African descent. Simply denouncing racist statements and behaviours is insufficient. Going above and above is necessary.⁴

3. Family members of those killed by police and civil society groups from all around the globe submitted a unified open letter to the Human Rights Council members on June 8 in advance of the discussion. In the letter, the Council was urged to conduct a special meeting "with the purpose of demanding an independent investigation." The Council unanimously approved resolution 43/1 on June 19, asking the High Commissioner to compile a thorough report on systemic racism and violations of international human rights law committed by law enforcement agencies against Africans and people of African descent, particularly those incidents that resulted in the deaths of George Floyd and other Africans and people of African descent, in order to help victims receive accountability and redress. As requested by the Council, this conference room document expands on the topics covered in A/HRC/47/53 and is meant to be read in tandem with it. The High Commissioner has formed a team to carry out Human Rights Council decision 43/1 because of how crucial this time is. The Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) has acknowledged the significance of consolidating and advancing the work of UN human rights mechanisms, particularly the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur, in order to build on decades of research, analysis, and recommendations on the issues mentioned in the resolution.

Widespread support exists for the Black Lives Matter movement, which is once again making headlines in the midst of the widespread demonstrations. Three-quarters of American people say they support the movement, with 38% saying they do so enthusiastically. Although the majority of white (60%), Hispanic (77%) and Asian (75%) Americans indicate at least some support, this opinion is especially prevalent among black Americans.

For how he handled the protests over George Floyd's passing, President Donald Trump gets given a failing grade. Six out of ten Americans believe the president has misled the nation in his handling of these demonstrations. When asked about how Trump has handled racial issues more broadly, about half (48%) claim he has made matters worse; 19% claim he has made strides in that direction; 19% claim he has attempted but failed to do so; and 12% claim the president hasn't addressed the matter.

69% of Americans, including majorities from all racial and ethnic groups, report having recently discussed race and racial equality with family and friends. Additionally, 37% of those who use social networking sites claim to have shared or uploaded anything on race or racial equality during this time. Smaller percentages report that they have recently contacted a public figure to voice their opinions on these topics (7%), donated money to a group or organisation that promotes racial or racial equality (9%), or attended a demonstration or protest centred on these issues (6%) Compared to 5% of white individuals, around one in ten (10) black (10%), Hispanic (9%) and Asian (10%) adults report having attended a demonstration.

Just 19% of Americans believe demonstrations and rallies are a very useful tool for organisations and organisations working to assist black people achieve equality, while the majority of Americans (55%) regard them as a very or somewhat effective technique. Individuals of diverse racial origins getting together to discuss race (74%), campaigning to get more black people elected to office (68%) and working directly with black people to address issues in their local communities (82%), are seen to be at least moderately successful strategies.

According to the report, 45% of black Americans claim that they have been stopped by the police unjustly because of their race or ethnicity. Fewer Hispanic (19%), Asian (16%), and white (9%) Americans claim to have experienced this. Black males are far more likely than black women to report being wrongfully stopped by police (64%) compared to black women (32%) However, black women are more likely to report having this encounter than white or Hispanic women.

2. Review of literature

Social transformation is discussed prior to it happening. This is why social scientists who research how protests turn out emphasise agenda-setting. Allies in the media, the government, and the commercial sector may create laws that institutionalise a movement's ideals once protests and direct action have brought attention to them. Because of this, social movement researchers in sociology, political science, and the study of mass communication have looked into the relationship between divisive political activity and public speech.

There is a wealth of literature that describes the various ways that protests draw attention to political issues. Guillion's studies of the Civil Rights Movement show that protests for Black rights were connected to more discussion of voting and housing rights by the White House, which was followed by a wide range of administrative policies and legislative initiatives. McAdam and Su (1) show that increased anti-Vietnam War protest led to more congressional hearings (4). The 18th Amendment was enacted in 1919 as a result of anti-alcohol activists' ability to project their message into newspapers in the late 19th century, according to political scientist Hans Noel (4).

Although academics have long recognised that protest can influence political agendas and public discourse, the emergence of Black Lives Matter (BLM) and antiracist culture in the 2010s raises new concerns about the relationship between activism and discourse transformation (2, 5–8). How do protests affect how people behave on websites like Google, Twitter, and Wikipedia?

This study answers a number of queries about how significant shifts in public attention as recorded by internet platforms follow street protest. By doing this, we add to the growing body of academic research on the BLM movement. Early studies explored the movement's emergence and provided a history of it (9, 10). Research on the Black Lives Matter movement has since studied protest patterns, identified the social conditions that spur protests, such as police shootings, and investigated whether protests are connected to Black political organisations, such as NAACP offices or Black mayors (11). BLM research has recently evaluated the movement's political and electoral effects. Previous research has demonstrated a link between the BLM protest and Democratic vote shares in the 2020 presidential election (12), as well as the decline in fatal police shootings (13).

We add to this evaluation by examining how BLM demonstrations affect the amount of anti-racist language used across various internet channels. There is a dearth of prior large-scale quantitative study on the movement's cultural effects. Several earlier studies looked at the use of BLM-related hashtags on Twitter, while others asserted that BLM lessened bias in society using data from volunteers who took an online test for implicit bias (14–17).

We demonstrate how political movements affect society beyond the political arena by drawing a connection between BLM's political protests and an increase in the use of antiracist vocabulary. According to academic research, protest has nonpolitical effects that include altering educational programmes (18), promoting "ethical consumerism" (19, 20), and lowering the stock values of companies that engage in unethical labour practices (21). Similar to this, BLM wants to alter American culture by promoting the usage of antiracist concepts like "structural racism," "White supremacy," and "mass imprisonment." According to this theory, social institutions like the criminal justice system create racial inequalities by punishing social activities associated with minority groups and fostering differences that persuade the general public that racial disparities are normal and unavoidable (22, 23). One notable aspect of anti-racism speech is that it does not consider racism to be a personal pathology or malfunction.

3. Research methodology

It is crucial to note that our audit experiment's time period overlapped the Covid19 pandemic. The pandemic caused the labour market in the year before Mr. Floyd's death (i.e., our first time period) to differ from the labour market in the year following his death (i.e., time period 2). For instance, the average unemployment rate in Boston was 2.65% in the first time period of our analysis (May 2019 to March 2020) and 5.85% in Philadelphia, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In the second time frame, which covered June and July 2020, the average unemployment rate in Boston was 12.1% and in Philadelphia it was 18.95%. Therefore, we advise that comparisons of the level of employment between historical periods be taken with a grain of salt. Instead of focusing on the quantity of employer responses, our study places more emphasis on the disparity between White and Black callback rates. According to research, discrimination will cost employers more when there are few qualified job seekers and a tight labour market [30, 31]. In contrast, a weak labour market can make discriminating employers less expensive. Therefore, given the slack in the market during the early stages of the epidemic, we may anticipate that employers would have been more likely to discriminate against Black applicants. If it turns out that the protests over Mr. Floyd's murder resulted in a reduction in the White-Black call-back disparity, it might not be as significant as it would have been in a "normal" labour market without pandemic-related slack.

4. Result and discussion

Our findings show that, prior to the murder of George Floyd, only 17.9% of otherwise comparable Black job applicants in Boston and Philadelphia received a call, text, or email response from sampled employers to discuss the job opening or to interview for the position, resulting in a statistically significant difference of 6.6 percentage points (see Fig 1, with corresponding coefficients and standard errors in Table 2). The differential described in a recent meta-analysis of audit investigations by Quillian and colleagues [8] is almost identically matched by the White-to-Black ratio in terms of call-back rate, which is 1.37 (24.5 / 17.9). The authors of that study conclude that there was no change in the levels of employment discrimination against Black job applicants in the US between 1989 and 2015 and that White job applicants received 36% more callbacks from potential employers on average than Black job applicants with comparable qualifications. While we concentrate on entry-level job candidates with a history in law enforcement, firefighting, or code enforcement, we notice a pattern of

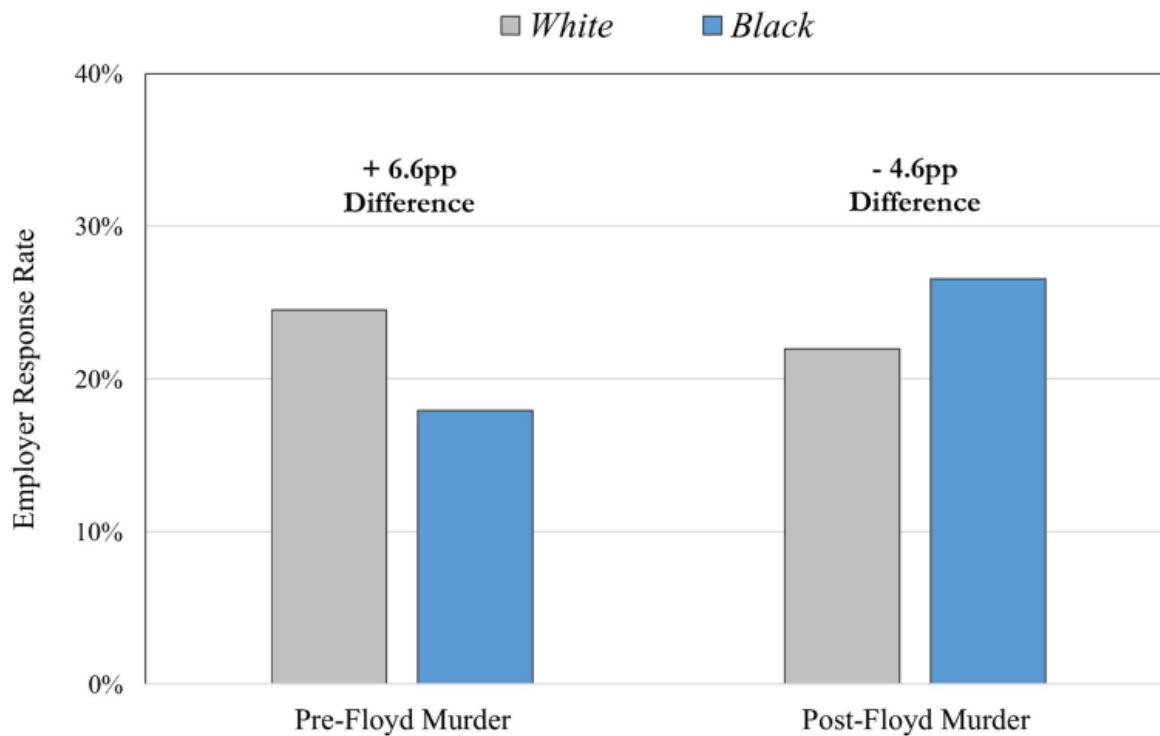


Fig 1. Results from two time periods of an audit experiment to gauge employer responses to race among otherwise similar fictitious job applicants

Similar to comparable audit studies on job discrimination conducted in the United States Our study differs from previous studies in that it replicated the design in the wake of widely reported police violence. The racial differential in employer responses flipped to a 4.6 percentage point advantage for Black candidates in the six weeks following George Floyd's death (22 percent vs. 26.6 percent; White-to-Black ratio of 0.83). The equivalent interaction variable in Model 1 of Table 2 shows a marginally significant ($p = 0.075$) 11.2 percentage point shift from the White advantage in time period 1 (6.6pp) to the Black advantage in time period 2 (4.6pp). With results that are comparable to those from Model 1 in terms of the race by time period interactions, Model 2 incorporates controls for gender, location of the job, online job platform, job type, past occupation, and the month and day of the week of the application. Additionally, we observe that callbacks from employers for roles in sales, office, and customer service were less frequent than for driver positions. To see if there has been an increase in one particular profession over time in the racial difference in employer answers, we add three-way interactions between race, time period, and prior profession to Model 3. For example, given the study's context—the killing of a Black man by a White police officer—it is plausible that the reverse of the White advantage in employment depicted in Fig. 1 reflects a declining preference for hiring White police officers rather than an increasing preference for Black job applicants regardless of race.

Former vocation. While the White advantage in employer responses reversed from Period 1 to Period 2, the lack of statistically significant three-way interactions in Model 3 (i.e. the Race x Time Period 2 x Firefighter coefficient or the Race x Time Period 2 x Code Enforcement coefficient) suggests that the reversal of the White advantage reflects lessening discrimination against Black applicants rather than declining employer preferences for White former police officers.

Conclusion

After Floyd's death, there was a wave of protests across the country and around the world. These protests have resulted in the removal of racist symbols like flags and statues, as well as changes in corporate policies and the promise of long-overdue reparations to African-Americans and other victims of police brutality.

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