

**THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
ABDERRAHMANEMIRAUNIVERSITY OF BEJAIA  
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



**Cancel Culture in American Society  
Case Study: The Cancellation of the Black Lives Matter Movement in  
Fox News and CNN**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for an M.A. Degree in English Literature and Civilization

**Presented by:**

FatmaZohra KEBOUR

Safia HARROU

**Supervised by**

Mr. Mehdi YOUSFI

**Board of Examiners:**

**Chairman: Dr. Allal BELAID**

**Examiner: Dr. Nouara TOUCHE**

**Academic Year: 2021-2022**

## **Dedication**

They say that beyond every success there is a reason, and my reason of success in this case is dedicated to my parents Khaled and Yamina who brought me to life, loved me unconditionally, and whom I can never repay,

To my Sister Asma with whom I was raised, laughed and shared every sweet and bitter moment,

To Grandma Z, the closest who quit us one day to join the hereafter,

To those who -thankfully - still exist: my other Grandma H and Aunty F,

Last but not least, to my best friends Minou and Pitshou, my sweet cats that contributed to lift me up from the dark days.

Fatma Zohra KEBOUR

This humble effort is dedicated to my parents, who have never relented in providing me with a path of good and happiness,

To my brother, my sister and my husband, with whom I have been sharing my life.

To all my teachers who contributed to my education from the very first step.

Safia HARROU

## **Acknowledgments**

We would like first to express our gratitude to our supervisor and companion during this academic journey for the constructive advice he provided us with.

Our thanks go to Mr MOUHOUBI for his inspiring knowledge and for introducing us to this topic.

Our endless regards and gratitude go to the jury for examining our humble research work.

And a massive THANKS to the teachers whom we approached for help and advice throughout this research work, and those who once were our guides toward new discoveries for the whole 5 years.

## Table of Contents

<b>Dedication.....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Acknowledgments.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>General Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One: Historical Background of Cancel Culture: from a Popular Discourse to Media Discourse.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Introduction.....	11
1. Insights into the History of Cancel Culture .....	11
2. Definition of Cancel Culture.....	15
2.1. Cancel Culture as a Counter-Free Speech of Expression.....	16
2.2. Cancel Culture as a Controlled Narrative.....	18
3. The Evolution of Cancel Culture .....	19
4. Opposite Critics of Cancel Culture .....	20
5. The Victimization of the African-American Community.....	22
5.1. Media Coverage of Trayvon’s Case (Fox News and CNN).....	25
5.2. Insights into Black Lives Matter Movement .....	27
6. Media Engagement in the Portrayal of Black Lives Matter Movement.....	29
6.1. Subjectivity in News Coverage: Social Networks Vs Conventional Media ..	29
6.2. Objectivity in News Coverage.....	32
Conclusion.....	35
<b>Chapter Two: Explicit and Implicit Cancellation of Black Lives Matter Movement by Fox News and CNN.....</b>	<b>37</b>
Introduction.....	37
1. Media Political Discourse .....	37
1.1. Fox News and CNN Political Discourse .....	39
1.1.1. Fox News Political Discourse .....	39
2. Fox News Explicit Cancellation of Black Lives Matter Movement.....	43
3. CNN Implicit Cancellation of Black Lives Matter Movement.....	51
Conclusion.....	58

<b>General Conclusion .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Works Cited List.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>69</b>

## **List of Abbreviations**

AA: African-American

BLM: Black Lives Matter

CC: Cancel Culture

FN: Fox News

## **General Introduction**

Since the dawn of humanity, social acceptance has always been the perfect match for an individual to boost up their levels of belonging. It urges them to do well in a community and in their lives as a whole. However, being always accepted is not ever-lasting since rejection is also part of the natural flow of the human life. Shedding the light on social rejection may take several forms in its function, and its consequences are often unsatisfying. The post-rejection depression may damage the human psychology by reducing their motives of development. Accordingly, the emphasis is not on social rejection alone but on the approaches taken to reject. Traditionally, one of the efficient most used ways is to reject someone without a commotion. Things used to work this way; when someone misbehaved, disturbed or verbally failed to maintain their position as a well reputed, people often withdrew their support from them, unfollowed them and even ignored being acquainted with their news but without the urgency of being publicly exposed.

However, in recent times and with the evolution of technology, social media platforms and media in general, the rejected person becomes out in the open, meaning that their social rejection becomes the hearsay of news feed. It is akin to demonstrate this modern situation as a virtual trial where everyone -without exception- attends and waits for the verdict to be pronounced by some active juries. Nevertheless, the lawyers' function on this online trial differs from the usual one since their job is not to listen, comprehend or seek for a pretext for their clients rather it is for pointing fingers at them without total justice. No evidence is required as long as every present member believes that the case is unacceptable.

This post-social rejection is never easy to recover from or to get over easily, since the aftermaths are often severe. It will not only taint the professional records of the concerned, but will also create a stigma upon their private lives and surroundings. Such trials

condemn their lives as a whole without the least consideration of the arguments of defense. Once the alleged to be rejected are held accountable for something they offensively said or did whether on purpose or unintentionally, they will be displayed as the most popular accused and the least popular followed afterwards.

Subsequently, this online trial has been given the name of Cancel Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century after it had drawn worldwide attention and its fame was recognized everywhere. CC has undoubtedly been dissected into many forms, yet the light is shed on its function. It is renowned for being the inhibitor of free speech to hold someone accountable for an offensive act or speech, but without being comprehensive of the causes behind.

This form demonstrates the way some cases are victims of CC solely because their case is not well identified, movements of independence and racial justice for instance. In this regard, Black Lives Matter Movement is suitable for our case study of CC to be analyzed and examined according to the ongoing allegations it receives. The emergence of this movement and its activism were put into the scope of criticism and skepticism due to the so-called incoherent manner and approaches of the protest, the violated frame of covering the movement as well as the incompatibility to comprehend the activists' objectives.

Since 2014, and following the emergence of the movement, attention was directed to the protest and eventually condemned it as violent. One of the reasons given to misrepresent it was due to its success in agitating the American social and political life as the movement succeeded to attract the public opinion through its rallying cries for justice. Activists felt the need to make their voices heard through protests and marches. They believed that the latter were victims of ongoing police shots and racism in America. An urgent call to action was inevitably needed by protesters to stop or at least reduce the injustice until they sort this



problem out. Despite the recurrent cases of police brutality upon AA from 2014 up to now, activists remained determined.

Additionally, police brutality cases were still in noticeable increase, authorities remained silent, the police were uncharged and AA were the only victims. This paved the way for many to adopt the movement's case and showcase it differently in media. On the one hand, some lenses depicted it as a legal movement calling for racial justice and abolition of racism; this was proved due to the identification of the motives. On the other hand, some condemned it as an inappropriate movement of violence and division. Opinions and interests differed but the consequences were always against the tide.

U.S media adopted the movement and presented it differently. Each one of their sectors selected their best part. However, Fox News and CNN are the most interesting since they are considered the most watched cables in America. Besides their fame in the country and worldwide, they also are the vehicle of their political stances which ultimately form a political force. Their representation of BLM was judged on the basis of objective and subjective traits. Both have the same aim; to prove the efficiency of their favorite political party and draw counter attacks.

### **Literature Review**

CC has been the whisper of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which inspired so many researchers, authors and scholars to put the term into the ground of discussion and explore it from different perspectives. Nonetheless, this following part will cover the most relevant ones.

According to Thibault Rabouin in his article "Cancel Culture, a Rhetorical Construction" CC is put into the scope of discussion and the way it inspires the media to construct a certain fitting rhetoric to attain particular objectives. The concept is examined

according to its historical, social and political context as a reference to the established beliefs of old generations, and how it evolves throughout time as an old inherited tradition to eventually become a prevailing concept in dispute constructed through digital discourses. Rabouin questions whether the term is a matter of power and control because CC is a contradictory term used as a double-edged weapon to claim victimization. He adds that it is used as an ‘instrument’ and a ‘construction’ by politicians and the media (9).

Another study has been conducted by Laura Alvarez Trigo in her article “Cancel Culture: The Phenomenon, Online Communities and Open Letters.” The author examines the phenomenon as predominant, and analyzes it from different lenses. She associates the term CC with Social Justice Warriors movement (SJW) when she discusses virtual wars that take place on media in general and social media in particular (1). According to Trigo, CC is appropriated to any act that seems to be offensive to the online public. SJW is selected as an optimum match to demonstrate the role of CC in social movements. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the effect that this phenomenon has upon the public narrative. As a social movement and despite SJW’s contributions to promote social change and justice in a community, they are still condemned as unwilling attention grabbers (2).

The concept of SJW is considered to be an act that outrages the public opinion as it is associated by the author to the new wave of the social phenomenon of SJW. According to the conclusion made up about CC; the public believes that it seems to be heavy in meaning as it condemns such practices as “narcissists” and “immature”(2).

Another point is discussed by Trigo in her article about the media’s manipulative discourse. Based on her research made upon online activism, she believes that media globally highlight the negative aspects of online interactions and protests, and that media discourse is

based on “selectivity” because the social media users often select what fits their needs, they would follow people matching their mindsets and unfollow those who do not (2-3).

For Trigo, media play a crucial role in manipulating the current online narratives. As far as CC is concerned, media highlight the exclusion of the canceller and the damages brought to them without taking into consideration the weight of their acts. She further explains the diversity found in opinions and behaviours in the show-biz life, and emphasizes the controversial opinions of celebrities that outrage the public opinion. This argument is backed up by placing J. K Rowling, the Harry Potter author as an example of cancellation, when she is judged for the disparities between her beliefs and those of her fandom (6-8).

Hervé Saint Louis in his article entitled "Understanding Cancel Culture: Normative and Unequal Sanctioning" believes that the process of Cancel Culture is deliberate. It should be examined so as to avoid misunderstandings. For him, CC and cancellation are two different elements, where the latter is a segment of the former thus, CC is structured. It evolved according to the social norms established on social media. And cancellation developed from being a form, a cultural act to eventually classify itself as a phenomenon known as CC.

According to Saint Louis in this article, CC is an act of transgression over norms and that the cancelled is denounced on both levels ; publicly and on media. And its effects are severe since it damages the professional and personal record of the concerned through the sanctions practiced. Author argues over the fact that CC occur with the assistance of the third parties (organizations that enforce social norms), that are considered as overseers to sanction their employers (or any individual taking place into their workplace) by cancelling and firing them.

According to the authors’ perception about the phenomenon, he argues about the disparities between CC and cancellation since both are different and unequal. While CC has a long term defamatory effect upon an individual, cancellation has a partial effect. The author

in this article gives a close look into the way some protests and phenomena contribute to the practice of cancellation unjustly, backing this argument with the example of Karens ( women who are cancelled by men).

To prove the efficiency of this perception , author depends on normative social theory to emphasize the way norms are brought into the spotlight to demonstrate the way CC and cancellation violate social norms.

In her research work “Cancel Culture and Cancel Discourse: Cultural Attacks on Academic Ideals”, Mary Gondringer, relates CC to professors and students. She presents the consequences of the phenomenon on scholarly life. She demonstrates that it does not only limit freedom of speech, but also weakens the quality of information shared among academicians. She comes out that it is a threat that hinders researchers’ views and students’ critical thinking and involvement in debates where they can exchange thoughts. In addition of CC being a counter free speech narrative, it is also a negative phenomenon, and the study highlights its dangerous effects on academic life. Moreover, Gondringer in her study asserts that *“the goals cancel discourse attempts to achieve work to reinforce the very social injustices they attempt to tear down”* (2). Thus, she explains the controversy cancellers are creating by demonstrating that they are committing the same mistakes as the canceled inasmuch as they condemn them from expressing their views through speech.

In “Whose Agenda Is It Anyway: An Exploration of Cancel Culture and Political Affiliation in the United States” Christine L. Cook and others focus on the way Americans interact on social media concerning the issue of CC, and they question the reasons behind their contributions to it. The study aims to answer the question whether CC supporters are affected in their engagement according to their cultural virtues, and political beliefs be them *“liberal, conservative, or non-partisan”* (9). To get the answer of their questions, an

experiment which explores the causes behind this phenomenon is conducted, in which they analyze short videos and comments. The results they came up with indicate that conservatives, independents and ethics advocates are, compared to liberals, the most inclined to support CC.

### **Thesis Statement**

In this research, we demonstrate the way CC is applied on the BLM movement in FN and CNN. Thus, Content Analysis approach is opted to prove the efficiency of this cancellation.

### **Significance of the Study**

CC succeeded to mark its existence as a prevailing issue in modern times. It became a public issue due to the advancement of technology and mass media as proved in the aforementioned data. However, as far as this research is concerned, no study has been undertaken to demonstrate the way CC was used as a means by one of the US prominent channels FN and CNN to cancel BLM. This study demonstrates the perspectives held upon this protest. We are motivated to conduct this research to put stress on this issue, and to show the attempt of American media to cloud the people's vision about the real cause of BLM since their demands are not taken into consideration.

### **Research Questions**

On this basis, the research is trying to answer the following questions:

-What is Cancel Culture?

-How has the BLM movement been cancelled by FN and CNN?

-Has the cancellation of the movement been driven by political inspirations of the channels?

### **Aim of the Study**

The work in hand sheds the light on CC in the lenses of FN and CNN. It highlights the term as a prevailing phenomenon in current times. It shows its historical development and the shift from being a popular narrative to a subversive political tool; and the media engagement in adopting the term to put it into practice upon the AA activists. It will also explore the way media are manipulated to drive the viewer to their objective in order to fit their political leanings. Thus, cancellation is proved a success thanks to political discourse used in the news report.

### **Methods and Materials**

For the fulfillment of this research, our topic is examined through Content Analysis approach which is defined to be an analytical lens into qualitative data. It paves the way for researchers to evaluate information like language, concepts, articles and themes to classify them according to meanings and intentions, and to deduce linguistic deviations. The data are analyzed through the evaluation of language with its different connotations to detect bias in FN and CNN selected videos like “Mayor Scolds Violent Protesters: Not in the Spirit of MLK”, and articles like Black Lives Matter Doesn’t Really Care about Black Lives Lost Unless Group Can Blame Police”.

### **Chapter Division**

The dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first one uncovers the historical construction and development of CC from being a social rejection to a controlled narrative. It also shows the different definitions reached based on different scholarly perspectives, and the

different forms CC takes and a brief comparative demonstration of the concept's usage then and now. A review of the BLM history and media engagement to cancel the movement is presented.

The second chapter analyzes FN and CNN coverage of the movement. This demonstrates the cancellation these channels used to condemn the movement through different mediated techniques via their political leanings. The analysis is sourced from the two channels' official websites and YouTube channels. The results pave the way to draw a conclusion of all the findings concerning this topic.

## **Chapter One**

# **Historical Background of Cancel Culture: from a Popular Discourse to Media Discourse**



## Chapter One: Historical Background of Cancel Culture: from a Popular Discourse to Media Discourse

### Introduction

Back in 1776, by the utterance of the Declaration of Independence content and by the agreement of colonists upon it, a right was granted to Americans that is now embodied as “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances” (First Amendment). However, the right to express opinions, utter accordance or discordance took further dimensions in its connotation since the overuse of this freedom discomposed the social and political canon. Freedom of speech is then condemned as pejorative and sometimes inciting. It went from a right of freedom to the act of infringing on someone's right. This right developed as the decade progressed coinciding with the development of mindsets, technologies, and intentions.

### 1. Insights into the History of Cancel Culture

Flipping through the records of old histories up to the current, there is always a place for logic and motives to individual interpretations as they are part of the human experience. For a better understanding of current social phenomena, it is highly needed to go back to events that took place in old periods since the issue is buried down in the core. Accordingly, it is the case for CC, a newly discovered term that made its way into the American society as an online superpower impacting mindsets to speak up about viewpoints and ideas.

It is a prevailing phenomenon that is taking over rights and decisions as perceived by Mark E. Jiftovic who asserts that “we are under intense social pressure to conform to pre-

*approved narratives of both thought and discourse*” (21). Therefore, it has also made an end to a myriad of businesses and careers, silencing down dissidents, and tainting reputations. For instance, in a CBS News documentary entitled “Speaking Frankly: Cancel Culture”, a man called Adam Smith was a victim of CC; he was canceled because he reacted against the restaurant of Chick-fil-A which holds anti-gay marriage stance. He filmed a video rebuking a Chick-fil-A employee and posted it online. As a consequence, he was canceled, fired, and rejected by other companies (2020). Correspondingly, Nathan Silvester, a police officer in Bellevue, Idaho, was held accountable for a mocking statement against NBA star LeBron James. The latter warned the accused in a tweet, and he demanded equity (Blair 2021).

Shedding the light on the effect of cancelling on reputations, J.K Rowling is the optimum case; despite her credit to art and authorship, she failed to express her thoughts. Therefore, CC jeopardized her reputation and career as a whole. She was criticized to be transphobic as she shared her anti-transgender opinions; as a result, she was canceled (Aviles 2019).

History marked CC as an online 21<sup>st</sup> century trend and referring to the BLM movement as the overlord; the concept of cancellation has been familiar among the AA community when it emerged on social media through Black Twitter as argued by Anne Charity Hudley when she states that “*while the terminology of Cancel Culture may be new and most applicable to social media through Black Twitter, in particular, the concept of being canceled is not new to Black culture*” (Romano 2020).

The term appeared first in a breakup song written by Nile Rogers in 1981 called “Your Love Is Canceled”. It is also seen on screen in a 1991 film entitled *New Jack City*, where Wesley Snipes plays the role of a gangster named Nino who uses the word “cancel”

when saying “*cancel that \*\*\**”. Another appearance of the word cancel was in Lily Wayne’s song “I Am Single” in 2010 as a reference to the same expression used by Wesley Snipes when she said, “*I had to cancel that \*\*\* like Nino*”. Furthermore, it has won its fame from its use in “Love and Hip Hop” in December 2014, and then it became popular and much used, particularly on Black Twitter (2020). However, it is noteworthy that the concept was used in the past two centuries without its current connotation.

Jeff Nilsson, an American history specialist and a writer for Saturday Evening Post, states that “*Cancel Culture is a new name for an old practice- social ostracism*”. He adds that it was practiced as a voice of American colonists to break ties with the British Empire due to the imposition of taxes as included in the 1765 Stamp Act. That resulted in protests by a group in Boston named Sons of Liberty pushing the tax collector to resign; consequently, he quit (2021). This is evidence that CC as an act itself was used in everyday life to show rejection or disagreement; however, the act was attributed to “Cancel Culture” after it gained popularity and was widely spread throughout generations.

As a voice in the Civil Rights Movements, it has never been considered as CC until the activists of the 21st century insisted on their demands, and raised their voices loudly in racial movements. The African-American community is now the primary victim of media-led CC. It emerged as online hashtag #AllLivesMatterMovement. David Smith, a senior lecturer in American politics and foreign policy, believes that “*All Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter are two of the most prominent rhetorical manifestations of the backlash. Both played major roles in the media coverage of political response to Black Lives Matter*” (2017). This shows that both hashtags were generated as a response to each other, while BLM is a voice for racial justice and equity against cruelties, All Lives Matter movement proceeds the call as a backlash to BLM’s function condemning the movement as violent and exclusive.

Therefore, All Lives Matter movement was a fueling movement of white supremacist ideologies and institutional racism toward AA. In contrast, Jeremy Sawyer and Anup Gampa in their article “Implicit and Explicit Racial Attitudes Changed during Black Lives Matter”, argue that the voice of BLM surpassed the expectancy since it raised the public awareness about the necessity to bring the issue of Anti-Black racism into the public opinion (1). Despite the movement’s concern with Black-led activists, people of all races participated in those widespread protests to limit the issue of anti-black racism, achieve racial equality and retrieve the rights which were violated by the oppressors as it *“became the rallying cry of a new social movement that shattered the notion of a “post-racial” America and reoriented national political conversation on anti-Black racism”* (1).

Sawyer and Gampa added that the African-American activism of BLM is proved to adjust the prejudices of media and social narratives held against the AA as criminals whereas their ultimate goal is to seek justice and prove the victimization of the African American community by racism and police brutality(2). Following the discussion of authors on this point, and the way CC was invigorating during BLM was a strong backlash against racism, inequality and discrimination.

Back in the 1950s, American streets were occupied by thousands of AA letting out a rallying cry against the deteriorating living conditions, racism and white supremacy. Back then, those protests were street-led movements denouncing state-sanctioned injustice in public and private places. Henrika McCoy in her article “Black Lives Matter, and Yes, You are Racist: The Parallelism of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries” believes that the African-American activism did not stop there at that point but their voices grew widely and invigorated in a sub-modern movement that is the BLM movement (466). Thus, the issue of

protests is the fruit of constant years of hardships, struggles, slavery, denunciation, humiliation and the worldly rank as a second class category.

Nevertheless, as the media engaged in adapting the concept into the audiovisual world, many definitions, interpretations and analyses were added to the CC dictionary. Media owned the discourse through their adaptation of the term and they owned power to control the public opinion. This control paved the way for scholars like Noam Chomsky who said that *“if you believe in freedom of speech, you believe in freedom of speech for views you don’t like...otherwise, you’re not in favour of free speech”* (Fix 2021).

On the political level, CC has been exaggeratedly used to call out politicians and their discourse, with which Barack Obama does not agree. He declares that CC is not necessarily required to be used regularly for political correctness; however, we use it to denounce offensive institutional and individual behaviours to spread awareness (Cillizza 2019).

## 2. Definition of Cancel Culture

Because the term CC emerged as a striking power within the American society during the 21<sup>st</sup> century as aforementioned, it has undoubtedly been dissected into several definitions regarding the major effects it created upon the canceled and the canceller. Hence, some who have experienced this phenomenon have defined it according to the degree of harm it created or the satisfaction it achieved. While others perform this act depending on the incentives of cancellation be them racial, political, religious, or social.

Demetria Slyt defined the term on Merriam Webster as follows *“Cancel culture refers to the mass withdrawal of support from public figures or celebrities who have done things that aren’t socially accepted today. This practice of “cancelling” or mass shaming often*

*occurs on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook*". Thus, it is a backlash that is an ideological means to reject or prove something unethical or even to take back a social recognition from a popular figure or a celebrity due to offensive actions or verbal imprecision led through media outlets as defined.

From Meredith D. Clark's perspective, an American scholar, in her article entitled "Drag Them: A Brief Etymology of So-Called "Cancel Culture". According to her, CC is an "expression of agency" (1) which is a method of operating power practiced to take back recognition from someone who violated social values. In simple terms, it is an outrageous way and an offensive reaction against speech and actions said and done by the offender.

Another main explanation of CC clarifies that it is "*the practice of collectively blocking someone (usually a public figure) on social media or other venues because of a comment or action- has been in the news lately*" (Nilsson 2021). The latter is usually performed communally to attain social needs because power lies in unity. And it is a threat that affects the fame of a public figure when it is displayed on the news.

### **2.1. Cancel Culture as a Counter-Free Speech of Expression**

The right to free speech is becoming day by day under threat and the fact of expressing one's self without facing consequences be them positive or negative is highly unusual, especially these recent years. CC gained great fame among all segments of society, it did not only affect the ordinary people's world but it has permeated the world of writers, politicians, and scholars. Consequently, its victims are held accountable for the fact of expressing their thoughts as it establishes barriers in the perpetuity of their right to free expression.

In this regard, Nadine Strossen, a leading expert in constitutional law and human rights, in her essay entitled “Resisting Cancel Culture” argues that CC is a phenomenon that goes against the terms of the right of free speech, it restraints individuals' right from participating in a discussion and cutting out some ideas from being recognized. She asserts that CC “*seeks to end discussion, or at least to truncate it, by summarily dismissing certain ideas—or even certain speakers—as ineligible for inclusion in the exchange*” (1).

Although the US government has granted the society the right to free expression, there are still some limitations through communal consent upon the dismissal of free thought and speech. Strossen states that “*the power of cancel culture reflects the fact that pressure by private sector individuals and institutions can silence or punish our speech and induce us to engage in self-censorship, as effectively as the government could do, if not more so*”(08).

CC is used as a weapon to revoke thoughts, expressions and opinions, it goes beyond the concerned scope not only the offender or the “canceled” that was affected but whoever supports them, as stated in the book *Unassailable* by E.Jeftovic, “*Unapproved opinions or inconvenient facts were subject to brutal repression, both of those who produced them and those who consumed them*” (24).

As a conclusion, CC is a double-edged sword; on one hand, it is an effective way to bring about social sensitivity and to place the responsibility on the person who boosts bigotry; on the other hand, this phenomenon can have adverse effects on the individual and society as previously stated by the President Barack Obama.

## 2.2 Cancel Culture as a Controlled Narrative

CC by all means brings the narrative as a whole whether it is social or political into the scope of criticism. It manages to manifest the obvious condemnation of free speech engaging in more advanced outlets like social media platforms. It becomes a critical communal consensus upon an act or a statement done or said by someone regardless of their intentions. People are subject to the brutal repression of free speech. Their opinions, words, statements, and actions are under constant surveillance, they are deemed negative or positive according to results released by the online public. Often, the targeted will be dismissed, blacklisted, and canceled from the scope of tolerance.

Madalyn Alfonso, an author at the New PaltzOracle, believes that the current CC is akin to holding the form of online trial where the verdict is delivered through social media platforms pronounced by a myriad of online juries because it is the age of technology and competition over news transmission with a simple keyboard click. CC went viral on social media that it could manage to ascend to the throne of digitalized controlled narrative (2019).

She further cites that it is an online civil disobedience, holding the target person as the canceled on digital trial is performed by the marginalized minorities affected by the canceler's wrongdoings, offences and ongoing accusations by providing an open room to the online community where all facts and evidence against the canceled are being exposed to the public opinion (2019).

Since CC is concerned with the power of controlling the online narrative, there is no option for disregard, no chance for the canceled to be pardoned after committing something that would outrage the community since people are aware of the necessity to dust off whatever dissimilates their principals and dignity. It is the case for the current culture wars



where the narrative becomes the cornerstone of power and rebellion; to own the narrative is like to own a whole multitude, because "*Culture wars are all about narrative control. Whoever can shape and influence the current trajectory can steer the entire zeitgeist*" (Jeftovic 25).

### 3. The Evolution of Cancel Culture

It is evident that history repeats itself and there are always reproductions of the past and so is the case with CC and its retrospective. According to the ancient historical records about similar conceptualizations of the term, studies found out that the concept of CC coincides with the same phenomenon in the early 50s when replication of cancellation was put into practice by the law of McCarthyism, although the act was practiced solely upon communists, still freedom of speech and thought were circumscribed.

Alan Dershowitz, an American lawyer and author, in his book *Cancel Culture: the Latest Attack on Free Speech and Due Process*, compared CC as the new McCarthyism, because the common point is "deplatforming". From his perspective, CC's tactic would prevent intellectuals and artists to own a platform, therefore, it "*has been given the name "deplatforming"*" (39). Knowing that the latter does not rely on the government to achieve a dismissal, however, it relies on institutional powers like media and academies to prevent the former victims of cancellation from the right to speak along with influencing their audiences to withdraw their support.

Similarly is the case for McCarthyism's effect upon the individuals and the ones concerned with the cancellation, it put an end to careers, waged family troubles and promoted suicidal attempts. Communists were canceled and blacklisted without taking into consideration that they were presumed innocent until proven guilty. Therefore; Dershowitz

further explained that the effect of McCarthyism went beyond the individual as the anathema of the cancellation follows whoever stands with the canceled. It means that when the person is held accountable for whatever act be them actors, writers or singers, it is evident that their supporters are concerned as well (15).

Irving Louis Horowitz, an American sociologist, author, and professor, asserts that “*McCarthyism is another word for intolerance backed by power*” (365). He believes that the cacophony of McCarthyism negatively affected the democracy of politics by restricting the rights to justify accusations thrown at them as it further extended its noise into the culture by becoming a cultural issue. Erin Bunch believes that the 21st century witnessed a new form of cancellation. Usually, when activists of the movement call out, it is likely perceived as a successful tool to minimize the degree of harm and eventually allows the offender to grasp the moral of the act (2020). However, contradicted views for the BLM’s motives of activism are viewed as suspected as their call-out generates all means of harm, deviance and violence.

Relating CC with the BLM movement, ShriyaMeasala in her article “Cancel Culture: A Societal Obligation or Infringement on Free Speech?” approved that it is an efficient technique to point out inappropriate actions done by individuals or corporations for rectification of errors, for instance, calling out a racist statute (2020). The BLM activists opt for CC as a means for social justice and as perceived by Eve Ng, an associate professor at Ohio University, CC is generally associated with a social justice perspective as a call out against sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, racism, bullying and related issues (623).

#### **4. Opposite Critics of Cancel Culture**

CC is a controversial issue. On one side, it brings about social justice and makes the offender accountable because it is defined to be the cancellation of negative behaviours by

threatening the offenders, like the aforementioned, of losing their position in society. On the other side, it is considered an assault on freedom of speech because people are cancelling whatever disagrees with their own beliefs saying that it is against social norms. Thus, it is a sort of intolerance that leads to social imbalance. This is why many reacted to and are against this issue criticizing it by explaining and arguing their views.

In this sense, in July 2020 about over 150 scholars including Margaret Atwood, J.K Rowling, Noam Chomsky and others criticized this new phenomenon. They signed “A Letter on Justice and Open Debate” rejecting CC. To them, it undermines social relationships. According to their open letter, limitations of free speech have taken further dimensions since they prevent people from doing their job comfortably, as they are under pressure and threat. As indicated in the letter, many journalists are barred by “*the forces of illiberalism*” from writing on certain subjects, and professors are not able to quote from others’ works because “*editors are fired for running controversial pieces; books are withdrawn for alleged inauthenticity; journalists are barred from writing on certain topics; professors are investigated for quoting works of literature in class; a researcher is fired for calculating a peer-reviewed academic study; and the heads of organizations are ousted for what are sometimes clumsy mistakes*” (A Letter on Justice).

They added that silencing and excluding people are not useful to fight against bad attitudes. They clarified their opinion about the so-called CC without naming it when saying that they “*refuse any false choice between justice and freedom, which cannot exist without each other*” (A Letter on Justice).

President Donald Trump, in his July 2020 speech at Mount Rushmore, criticized CC to be a political weapon of operating power led by the leftists who try to spread fear in the

country. He described CC to be “*the very definition of totalitarianism*” he explained the latter to be the fact of firing people for a living, “*shaming dissenters, and demanding total submission from anyone who disagrees*”. He argued that such behaviour has no place in America. Hence, CC is judged to be something negative due to its adverse consequences on society in general and individuals in particular. That is to say, it is against the American ancestral values of freedom and democracy.

According to Amanda Koontz, UCF associate professor of sociology, public shaming, which had lasted decades ago, is about a positive effect and helps to attain equality among people of one society. Thus, CC is a technique used to guarantee impartiality in society and to make sure that people are all following the same social standards to eliminate social marginalization (qtd. in Dudenhoefer 2020).

Pippa Norris, the Paul F. McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics at Harvard Kennedy School, asserts that CC is advantageous when the victims cannot get their rights; in this case, it is a successful way of reaching social justice. She adds that “*public shaming has a legitimate role through criticizing the use of derogatory and offensive language like racial or homophobic slurs*”(2).Accordingly, CC manages to reduce offending speech rates such as ethnic or homophobic offences. Norris adds that free speech is a civilized behaviour in an open society. Even so, inattentive directness can be harmful to some.

## **5. The Victimization of the African-American Community**

CC has developed throughout history as indicated above. Before it became an issue that concerns all segments of society it affected the African American community in particular. Thus this study in most of its parts examines the theme of CC concerning AA. They have suffered throughout history since the age of colonialism and slavery, and racism

towards them has always existed. They fought against white supremacy and many legends are known for their heroism and courage like Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass.

The white cancellation encompassed AA of all categories, men, women, children whatever position they held in the society. Regardless of racism and slavery, further strict procedures were applied against them to provoke, dehumanize, and undermine their dignity as human beings. Racist acts toward them continued to diffuse after the demise of the Civil War. They shifted from civil provocations to law-sanctioned ones embodied in what is called – during Civil War up to the Civil Rights Movements- Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws.

The Black Codes which, in US history, are *“any of numerous laws enacted in the states of the former Confederacy after the American Civil War and intended to assure the continuance of white supremacy”* (Black Code). These codes were proceeded to revive in a form of a racial exclusion called the Jim Crow Laws as defined in *The Laws in Context “a system of racial apartheid in the American South that lasted for nearly one hundred years. It affected every part of Southern life, dictating everything from racial segregation to social etiquette, most famously through racial segregation in schools and public spaces”*(Sturkey).

Subsequently, following the Southern events of the 1950s, AA were in a period of frustration as they confronted governmental and public riots in the streets of the South. In simple terms, their existence was deemed problematic for the American government and society as a whole. They were denounced, blacklisted and discriminated solely due to their skin colour. The civil rights movements were one of the ways used by the minorities to ask for their rights, and among the uprising activists were AA. Nevertheless, African-American activists like Thurgood Marshall espoused the African-American case through the voice of law following the decision of *Brown V. Board of Education*. He succeeded to eliminate

segregation in schools. Eventually, the case was then made viable in the courts to put an end to Jim Crow Laws and segregation.

Martin Luther King Jr. is another uprising figure who marked his presence in the Civil Rights Movement leading a non-violent protest. In the same perspective, he stated that *“negroes have been intimidated and humiliated and oppressed because of the sheer fact that they were Negroes”* (Hoffman et al 366). However, they still maintained peaceful protests and endured the pains, coinciding one of the mainstay cases is Rosa Parks’s arrest in Montgomery in 1955 when the latter refused to give her seat to a white person; consequently, she was forced out of the bus and arrested.

This bus situation witnessed massive support from the African-American community and referring to activists in the vanguard of the list, comes Martin Luther King who maintained violence-free speeches to raise awareness about the necessity of speaking up against violence itself, systemic racism, and the blind spot on segregation. Accordingly, one of his speeches denouncing violence and advocating peaceful protests following the bus incident was when he advised the African-American community to stay strong, venerate Rosa Parks as a strong woman, and avoid violence in such times. Rationality, peace, and the desire to achieve democracy was his ultimate wish to find a middle ground, as he demonstrated *“because we’re tired now. Now let us say that we are not here advocating violence. We have overcome that”* (367).

Despite victories accomplished by previous Civil Rights activists, the African-American community is still a target of marginalization and discrimination. Barriers between races in American society are still felt in the post-civil rights era through the infringements of rights and lives. Barack Obama, in an unprecedented event, is the first African-American to

be elected president of the United States. His election was deemed a winning card for the African-American community to end issues of racism and discrimination. However, since 2012 the US registered an increase in the number of murders performed against AA by the police. According to a study carried out by Danielle Haynes *“Black people are 3,23 times as likely as to be killed by police than white people”*(2020).

Police brutality remains a threat to AA; many incidents proved this. In 2012, an African American teenager called Trayvon Benjamin Martin was killed by a neighborhood watch captain, George Zimmerman, who the court later considered innocent by way of self-defense. The story began when the teenager visited his father in Sanford, Florida. He was walking outside after buying a bag of candies and a soft drink from a nearby store. The policeman profiled him as *“up to no good”* when he called the police department and spoke to the dispatcher (Munro 2012).

The latter ordered him to neglect the pursuit but he followed him. Neither witnesses nor evidence for what happened later existed except Zimmerman’s statements that a fierce fight happened between them, and the sound of the gunshot which was heard by the neighbours. After three minutes of police and firefighters arrival, no sign of life was found in Trayvon’s body. These events of police brutality generated one of the effective and ongoing movements called the BLM where activists contribute to achieving and carrying on the mission of their predecessors to end all types of racism from its roots.

### **5.1. Media Coverage of Trayvon’s Case (Fox News and CNN)**

On December 27th, 2016 an article was published on FN entitled *“Trayvon Martin Attacked George Zimmerman, Report Says”*. Yet, as a first impression, the reader understands that Trayvon Martin is violent and accountable. Thus, instead of discussing

Martin's death and the crime committed against him, the light was shed on the violent effects he left on Zimmerman's body (2016).

Therefore, Joe Oliver, a friend of Zimmerman defended him by asserting that he was innocent and "*doing the right thing*", and "*not a racist*" but his reaction was in self-defense. He also reported Zimmerman's mother-in-law's affirmation that he was "*remorseful*". Following Oliver's claim that his friend was crying all the period after the incident took place. He declared in his response to Martha MacCallum's questions, an anchor on FN, that the shooting was likely unintentional (2016).

In an updated article on CNN on May 23rd, 2012, entitled "What Happened the Night Trayvon Martin Died" a photograph of the shooter was illustrated at the top of the article. It shows the harm Martin caused to the police officer, his nose was bleeding and some wounds on his head, as reported on CNN "*He had blood on his nose --with one officer saying it appeared "broken," while noting "swelling" of his face --and, as photographs showed, blood on the back of his head. His back was wet and soiled, as if he'd been in grass*". However, investigations say that Martin did not face any physical harm except a light scratch on his finger and the bullet shot (Botelho 2012).

Zimmerman called 911 to express doubts that the boy is under drugs influence. He was proved to be right, as quoted from CNN "*A medical examiner's report later found trace elements of THC, an element of marijuana, in his system*", in addition, he was previously suspended from school for depicting drug residue in his bag. Moreover, a 911 call recorded 38 seconds of help ask. Martin's father was asked whether he was his son, and "*an emotional Tracy Martin*" quietly responded 'no'" (2012).



Correspondingly, when analyzing the language used in the event's coverage by FN and CNN, we believe that police brutality is the sort of behaviour. As a result, both channels are defending the accused more than the victim each in its way. They cleared him of the charge and proved him innocent and victim while Martin was held accountable for his actions, holding drugs and being violent.

## 5.2. Insights into Black Lives Matter Movement

The quest for a hospitable environment, equal rights and a fair consideration in America, have always been the dream of AA. However, this is always deemed impossible when AA are likely to be outsiders and are considered the perpetual target of police brutality and racism. Constant shootings of AA by the police and these ongoing acquittals agitated activists to immediate action. They headed to social media platforms and created a hashtag under the name of #BlackLivesMatter to spark a life-changing movement in African American history.

Racial exclusions and racism forced AA out of the usual frame of normal citizens since these acts were perpetuated within the USA for decades. Thus, the BLM movement has emerged to embody the battle of AA for liberation, equity and a collective call for the discontinuance of police abuse toward them as prior victims. BLM activists' main focus is on the issue of systemic racism that destabilizes their lives compared to other races. The movement stands for equity in all aspects of life as well as the call in the first position to end the police brutal behaviour that is responsible for thousands of killings of AA.

The movement did not emerge as a form of protests and marches ;however, it *“has grown from a hashtag to a network that now encompasses over 30 chapters in the United States and other countries”* (Clayton 2). Unlike other movements' objectives and despite the

means and approaches held to perform it, BLM “*engages in a nonviolent direct action to bring attention to police killings and abuse of African Americans*”(2).

American streets were teeming with BLM activists after the unjust court verdict in the case of Trayvon Martin. The case was widely spread in 2013 that outraged the African American community for the injustice that pronounced the accused an innocent after committing the crime of murder upon another individual. The movement was initially led by three African American women Alicia Garza, a civil rights activist and writer, Opal Tometti, an American human rights activist, writer, strategist and community organizer and finally PatrisseCullors, an American activist and writer.

These female activists succeeded to make a movement out of a social media hashtag from being a minor group to a major one with several activists. Knowing that the crimes committed against AA by police abuse were countless and unfairly murdered in the American streets; the BLM movement has grown over time, and has lately been displayed on mainstream media. It has also evolved to be the most tackled issue in political debates and different discourses because race is the cornerstone of the action as it “*pierced a big hole in the ideology of post-racial America and exposed the deep and persistent patterns of racism in the United States*” (2).For this case, BLM is recognized as a race-related issue influencing current narratives because it uncovers the way race is tackled and discussed in political and social contexts. It shifts the focus on its racial narrative and its significance in nowadays discourses. BLM as a social movement is still remained as critical when it is a race-related issue, for such movements are unable to confront hegemonic power that is police (Umamaheswar 8).

## **6. Media Engagement in the Portrayal of Black Lives Matter Movement**

Media are means to reconstruct what has interested and attracted the population with easy-to-digest stories of the current epoch. The major events occurring in the virtual world of social media platforms made it possible for media to take it forward in their spheres by tackling and debating up-to-date issues that went viral. However, there are still doubts over the credibility of media coverage when it comes to the violation of the fundamentals of journalism, referring to subjectivity and objectivity in particular.

### **6.1. Subjectivity in News Coverage: Social Networks Vs Conventional Media**

On one hand, over the last decades, social networks have become a serious rival to traditional media. They happened to change the course of news transmission by paving the way for self-reported citizens to say a word, capture videos and record ongoing issues and movements on platforms where the majority of the public is responsive. The media's influence lost its weight among the audience as it led to more subjective strategies in their news reports.

Relating this issue to BLM, it is inevitable for viewers to skip the issue of the AA' accusation, violence and racism reported through broadcasts and articles. It became a matter of reporting the things believed or seen based on current social issues of race and gender regardless of the cause itself. This type of news inhibits the movement's efficiency to attain social justice as well as hinders a logical explanation of the protest's motives. Eventually, their coverage stands for the marginalization of AA.

As Joy Leopold and Myrtle P. Bell believe in their article entitled "News Media and the Racialization of Protest: An Analysis of Black Lives Matter Articles", some news shift

the focus from the issue to the actions. In simple terms, the coverage is mainly about the way protesters are behaving rather than the real cause. Consequently, the public response is often based on the negative portrayal of the protest as pointless (722).

Locke and Wright in the book *The American Yawp* state that "*the easy accessibility of video capturing and the ability for stories to go viral outside traditional media, for instance, brought new attention to the tense and often violent relations between municipal police officers and African Americans*" (435). Based on this viewpoint, the interaction of the individual with technology and media witnessed a massive change in its course, because this public-social media immersion paved the way for media dwellers to adopt new forms and shape political debates and questions.

It is imperative to indicate that the reason behind partiality in some media outlets in their news is derived from political tendencies. Their coverage of news and information mainly advocates favourable political parties and official sources and discourses. Accordingly, there is no disregard to implement these political inspirations into their on-air discussions, particularly in rebel movements. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the coverage of movements in such media to grasp the factors leading to partiality.

In terms of the movement's coverage, the BLM initiates the top of lists as its echo agitates political chairs in the United States including Republicans and Democrats in particular. The media's linkage with politics breaks the neutral frame of news as their prior task lies in the defense of a certain party. Consequently, As Megan Palmer exemplifies in her article entitled "Black Lives Matter in the National Media: Analyzing Coverage of Legacy Newsrooms and Digital-First Outlets", counter-frames of the BLM become a matter of defending conservative ideologies and that the rise of movements contradicting the BLM

movement is a result of those political ideologies whose aim is to render the movement deviant, problematic and threatening (14).

As examples of these negative portrayals of African American activists in the media lenses in a respective implicit manner, Glenn Beck is an optimum figure through which we can demonstrate the accusation of BLM. He is an American polemicist and commentator at FN. On his show “Glenn” is likely to reveal his political tendencies once it comes to BLM. The movement tends to be problematic and often outraging as most results are blatantly subjective and conservatively led. Results leading to the issue of the African American case on “Glenn” are explained as critical and problematic in the way it is conceived. Most research conducted under the name of BLM on Glenn Beck’s website resulted in negative portrayals of the African American community as “scams”, “terrorists” and “bad activists disguised in the name of racial justice”.

Beck depended throughout his programs and radio shows on his conservative influences. In 2021, he hosted Bob Woodson, a former named Civil Rights activist, to highlight the deficiencies of African American activists’ intentions in the movements. Consequently, based on findings conducted about his podcasts about the BLM, it is crucial to mention his negative portrayal of the movement shedding the light on acts without a fair consideration for the main cause.

On another level of forcing the cause out of its place, comes another conservative political commentator called Rush Limbaugh, the host of the Rush Limbaugh Show through which he misleads the fact about the BLM by selling inadequate facts about the movement and its activists. He has backed up his allegations with illogical sources that may affect the movement's solidarity and real objectives. A video is displayed on his website under the

name of " YouTuber Makes White Women Kneel to Black Lives Matter" (2020), and from his analysis, he emphasized the fact that BLM activists tend to force white people to bend over their knees as a sign of showing support or else further strict procedures "implemented violence" will be taken in case the white women as shown in the video refuse to obey.

As a result of Limbaugh's show and analysis, he dismantled the BLM foundation by creating a deviant image as well as transmitting a message to people leading to averse the movement as a whole. Allusions and doubts about the movement continued to spark along with another analysis headlined "Black Lives Matter Doesn't Want Unity". On another politically inciting level, a conclusion was made to depict BLM as a "*manufactured left-wing agitator group made to look like an organic, neighbourhood, community-organized group*" (2016).

## **6.2. Objectivity in News Coverage**

On the other hand, some other media outlets are still maintaining an ethical process of news transmission. They focus on restraint to make sure their relationship with the audience is balanced and fair. This type of media outlet is aware of the necessity to provide credible and logical information regarding the issue tackled. Ultimately, it is worth mentioning that their opinions are not biased toward a political tendency because their mission is to focus on the cause instead of the action. Consequently, this mission of media is believed to be the most accurate to fuel the message of movements in all neutrality.

While others failed to side with the BLM movement or even to provide its audience with fair news coverage, other organizations maintained the notion of impartiality while portraying the protest. It is worth mentioning that their framing does not necessarily mean standing on the protest side. However, it can be a manner to avoid societal issues or a public

cancellation as it can be an implicit political tactic to provoke the other side through objectivity.

Megan Palmer in her aforementioned article asserted that “*academic studies have shown that coverage and framing of Black Lives Matter has been anything but negative*” (15). Based on Palmer’s analysis, it is clear that some media outlets' coverage of the moment was void of all negativity and bias. For example, both New York Times and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch employed a positive frame of the protest with peacefulness rather than deviance. In addition, claims are protesters-based quotations rather than official or government-related sources.

While many rushed for portraying the movement as deviant and violent solely through images and posts published on-air, others opted for transparency to accompany the process of their news coverage of the movement. It is not a matter of selling political traits; however, it is a matter of national solidarity as well as breaking the barriers of racial conflict.

As an example of media outlets advocating the movement as a call for racial justice, a CNN website article entitled “Meet 9 Activists Leading the Call for Racial Justice” (James 2021). The article clarifies that BLM has come to function as a call for justice unlike what is propagated outside the protest's real frame. Moreover, it justifies the African American pain as a “*purposeful rallying cry*” that aims to eradicate police brutality toward them. It also describes the activists as the voices of the movements, reported as “*peaceful and passionate voices*”. Also, activists are depicted as their real intentions in leading their protest, a rising generation striving to change the African American community into a better one void of all the stereotypes held against them, as well as the fight against an ill-structured system of systemic racism.

Additionally, an NBC website's article entitled "A Movement, a Slogan, a Rallying Cry: How Black Lives Matter Changed America's View on Race", glorified the movement as powerful due to its capacity to gather all walks of life for the same purpose including the white race. It further registered an increase in the support from the white population compared to the early days following the impact of George Floyd's death and the movement's evolution into a strong one (Adams 2020). The article sheds the light on the BLM's global network whose aim is to serve the African American community and the people affected rather than racing over fame and popularity as it was propagated.

From the aforementioned articles posted by some American media, it is noteworthy that their coverage of the protest was conducted in all transparency void of all subjectivity or marginalization of the African American case; they managed to put forward the purpose behind leading this movement beyond boundaries.



## **Conclusion**

This chapter uncovered CC as a serious phenomenon which discomposes the American values of free speech. Accordingly, CC evolved throughout history and impacted individuals and communities. The study of this chapter was mainly based on the case of AA in 21st century activism.

During the period of African American activism, the BLM has been put into the spotlight to be one of the uprising critical movements; it highlights the irrational practices performed towards them as an excluded category ever since slavery. Despite the prevailing democracy in America, AA have always been victims of racism, social ostracism, marginalization, and police brutality.

Since 2012 a new wave of legal inequality has prevailed to unjustly oppress them. The victims of this systemic racism are endless from Trayvon Martin to no end. From this regard, BLM is seen from opposite lenses. Some perceive it as a means for racial justice and others consider it as a violent incitement.

Consequently, media adopted CC as a form of controlled narrative to create a discourse out of the different representations provided in a subjective and an objective coverage. Our investigation is dedicated to one of the famous and critical media channels in the USA as known as FN and CNN.

## **Chapter Two**

# **Explicit and Implicit Cancellation of Black Lives Matter Movement by Fox News and CNN**

## Chapter Two: Explicit and Implicit Cancellation of Black Lives Matter Movement by Fox News and CNN

### Introduction

Countries are led by a specific force in which media contribute to transmit their domestic and foreign policies. As far as this study is concerned, the US media play a prominent role in controlling the public opinion's thinking. This is through presenting CC from different perspectives. FN and CNN are one of the channels selected to carry out this study in this chapter as they are the weapon which influences minds and fuels the political tendencies. They foster the term CC in unusual manner which is different from the one applied on social media platforms. FN and CNN happened to tackle the issue without naming it, and this will be achieved through series of TV talks, videos and articles.

### 1. Media Political Discourse

Media, in recent times play a crucial role in influencing the social narrative they do " *not only have a good effect on them, but they have an adverse effect too*" (Saragi 26). They are perceived as a two-edged sword that could ideologically harm, as they can positively impact the individual depending on media techniques and type of discourse used. FN and CNN are one of the channels most watched in the US which received a special attention, and their political leanings are one of the successful reasons which influence people.

Since the main focus is on political discourse, it is often defined as being a mixture of language and power where mainly power is the overlord upon language. It is a "*language in politics*"(Kampf 3) .Thus, political discourse in general includes all types of written or spoken forms of a conversation that are built on political matters and "*produced in regard to concrete political issues*"(3).

On media political discourse, it is evident that media discourse is not infallible of criticism since this in fact has a specific aim when it is used. Their main objective is to create a bridge between political ideologies and actions following a desired direction and this happens mainly when a media outlet belongs to or favours a political party. As discussed in chapter one, most media outlets unbalanced the scale of neutrality and shifted to polarization as a means to practice their political influences through a selective language in politics.

Media circle of influence upon politics is considered as biased and often becomes harmful, not only on politics but also on different sectors like discourse. Media managed to change the normal course of news and “*corrupted political life, civic commitment, or political discourse*” (Schudson 250). Their aim from their news coverage shifted to reinforce the bond between their audiences and political parties through their discussions of common topics because “*they try to establish a common ground between the Party and the people*”(252).

Noting that the stress is put on the news coverage, it is believed to be the vehicle of leading thoughts toward different directions, precisely politics. As stated by Robinson “*the media does not create policy but rather that news media is mobilised (manipulated even) into supporting government policy*” (301). Depending on this statement, we understand that a relationship of interest relates media and politics, and the word “manipulate” is a key element which shows the nature of news reported by the media, meaning that they are not directly indicating their political leaning, but rather encoding speech and tacitly influence the viewer.

Joshua Kalla and David Brookman investigated the effect of partisan media on people’s views. They explained that media coverage of events depends on the channel’s political ideology. They stated that partisan media “*selectively cover particular information but not other information in a manner that conveys more information favorable to a network’s*

*partisan or ideological side and neglects information unfavorable to its side” (7), we understand that politics play their role in running media for their own interest.*

Maintaining the position as a reliable media source is often skeptic due to its biased sources and news. Reactions differ from the audiences because it depends on the type of viewers the media target. Jonathan S. Morris in his article believes that the media's political reinforcement is by all means accomplished according to a set of factors like the presenter's level of persuasion, and the results achieved are either to push audiences to react positively or negatively which eventually leads to credibility or distrust(91-92). Television news is deemed to be the most prominent source for viewers to grasp serious phenomena in politics. It *“powerfully influences which problems viewers regard as the nation’s most serious” (57).*

Mark Kamlet and others conducted a study on The Conversation, a website, to analyze the language and audiences’ comments on FN, CNN, MSNBC and One America News Network, and findings illustrated that those media outlets were ranked as left-ness and right-ness (2020). Based on this perspective, this analysis shows that main television networks are polarized and politically driven. Another study was conducted by Morris Lauren to estimate the biasing of media channels like FN and CNN, the results reached stated that *“at least 35% of the American public perceives FNC [Fox News Channel] as being overtly conservative and at least 26% perceive CNN as being liberally biased” (95).*

## **1.1. Fox News and CNN Political Discourse**

### **1.1.1. Fox News Political Discourse**

For decades now, several American channels have been competing to win a place in the American media field. Many of them emerged but very few remained credible .And among these, FN is one of the well known and most watched cables in the US. It is a biased

media network that grabbed the public opinion about its ties with Republicanism and the chances it created to tackle politics-based talks. It was not new for this channel to lead political influences through multiple selections of news advocating and favouring Republicans, because this was proven since 1990, the year it marked its existence in the market, its "*business strategy was to provide news with a more conservative slant*" (Martin and Yurukoglu 7).

FN was able to break neutrality by explicitly incorporating politics as an essential factor and "*has established itself as the most successful cable news operation in the United States*" (Jones 184). Diversity in news coverage by FN and the choice of subjects discussed are multi-functional as they can develop, raise awareness, support, and challenge or incite an issue that can shape the viewpoints of their audiences, and ultimately generate a specific narrative to transmit their beliefs in the name of media values. Along the following pages, there will be insights into the ideological narrative which FN has adopted to influence its audiences and fuel its established system of thoughts.

FN's discourse is established on stories aimed to invoke the public opinion by deciphering the foregrounded message. Therefore, it allows the viewers to establish an output or a conclusion based on their understanding of those hidden intentions. FN is an instance of an ideological narrative. According to S. Morris, it is evident that the news frame plays a crucial role in influencing beliefs and mindsets of the audiences. Its frame centers on episodic or thematic traits where the former emphasis is on individual and phenomenal cases whereas the latter concerns the social and political issues. Thus, this forms an effective frame of news story upon the viewers' reactions (58). FN's frame of stories impacts individuals to change their viewpoints as "*it isn't clear whether this effect is happening because it's actually*

*changing viewers' minds about something, or if it's simply making some issues more relevant to the evaluation at hand" (Cassino 157).*

In the case of BLM, FN's discourse pushed many to react differently toward the movement, changing BLM's narrative of race and shifting the focus of its oppressions in a sense that serves its interests. From the aforementioned information about FN, it is easy to capture a visual demonstration of the channel's strategy in presenting the movement and the impact it creates upon viewers. Janani Umamaheswar supports the idea that media's role is impactful when it is concerned with the portrayal of social protests and the way the audience is responsive and is also a vehicle that circulates information about it (3).

From this perspective, FN was opted as a sample to translate the intended political discourse presented through its own respective sources as well as the focus on its hidden intentions regarding BLM. Thus, in the analytical part various examples of FN and its contributions to frame the BLM will be presented according to its ideologies. It incites a discussion about the uncertainty of the movement being a racial movement for social justice and by reframing the story to distort the real cause behind.

### **1.1.2. CNN Political Discourse**

Kalla and Brookman experimented media's influence by paying for a group of FN viewers to watch CNN from August 31st to September 25th, 2020. As a result, they noticed changes in the thinking of people who shifted from FN to CNN (Cummings 2022). Through their analysis, it's clear that these channels have an effective impact on people's thoughts and political tendencies. After analyzing information and subjects reported by FN and CNN, they found that *"FN was far more likely to report facts favorable to Republicans while CNN was far more likely to do the same for Democrats"* (17).

ZainaHarb and others in their “Comparative Content Analysis of the Coverage of Black Lives Matter by CNN and OAN from May 26, 2016 to November 8, 2020” demonstrate that both channels “*covered these protests based on their political inclinations*” (18). Thus, CNN news frame is driving viewers to think in a favorable way, this is to support its political leaning.

In regard of CNN political discourse, it is found out that it has a liberal leaning according to its viewers’ political beliefs (Nie et al 429). They reinforced their argument by giving results achieved by Mardenfeld and others in 2006. The results demonstrate that people of liberal beliefs and moderates usually watch ABC, CBC, NBC, and the most concerned with this study, CNN (429).

Moreover, based on their own analyses, they proved that “*CNN viewers are more liberal/Democratic than the viewers of any other TV station*” (432). And in order not to be the only ones to prove so, they supported this idea by showing the same results found by other researches. For instance, the results reached by Pew Research Center in 2004 about politicized media which demonstrated that CNN is the opponent of FN according to the viewer’s political identifications (432). They added that a study at the University of Connecticut demonstrates that “*an equal percentage of respondents view CNN as liberal as view FOX as conservative*”. As a result, their analysis comes up that “*Liberals/Democrats*” consider and believe CNN compared to “*Conservatives/Republicans*”(432).

In the same respect, Natalie Jomini Stroud asserts that “*choosing either CNN or MSNBC is considered consistent exposure for liberals and Democrats*” she explained that during the presidential campaign, viewers were divided into liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans to watch CNN or MSNBC and FN respectively (350).



## **2. Fox News Explicit Cancellation of Black Lives Matter Movement**

Among the prominent channels of changing frames to reach a certain point of interests, FN initiates the list. Highlighting BLM as an African-American movement seems to be violating the channel's line. And being biased cable news and a republican advocate clarifies the urge behind its news choice of counter frames. Consequently, in the upcoming analysis, FN opts for a violent and hostile approach to unleash racist prejudices, discursively withdraw the support and denounce the movement with disregard to their explications and objectives through a series of articles and visual sources taken from their official channel.

It is imperative to go back to past records in the AA' history and their ongoing hardships with race issues for, for decades, it was impossible for an African American person to have full independence in any aspect of life, and most importantly they were cruelly excluded from any activity. In the same perspective and on a talk show broadcast on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 on FN's official YouTube channel under the title "Black Lives Matter Throws "Black Only" Memorial Day Party." Tucker Carlson hosted Lisa Durden, a BLM supporter. Carlson commenced the debate by introducing the subject in question with an opening statement posted on Twitter by BLM activists. Based on his opening speech, it is sufficient to prepare the audience's psychology for a cancellation. Carlson begins his infamous critique with the issue of the white race being excluded from the Memorial Day party of AA, with an ignorance of the fact that despite Durden's justifications that the Memorial Day was not launched to throw a dance party but rather to pay homage to millions of Black souls lost in the hands of the whites themselves.

Holding AA accountable for organizing one day of homage among only their own community has, according to Lisa Durden, been contextualized. From the start of BLM, and with reference to the above chapter, multiple and global voices joined the movement standing

for the same case. It does not make the movement less valuable to have an exceptional occasion as long as they are the most concerned. Carlson showed extreme blame for the AA and effectively used his “intelligence” to incite and draw the attention to this issue because Americans are known for their sensitivity toward “race”. He was able to play the race card upon the public to convince them about condemning the movement as violent, divisive, and considered Durden’s justifications unacceptable and deviant while Carlson’s successfully escaped every kind of interruptions engaging in white accusations and reminders of the past. Carlson during the conversation pointed a finger at the activists for being outlaws. According to his arguments, he believes that there is a transition of beliefs and acts by considering BLM leaders as segregationists after they had been the voice for abolishing segregation. He seemed to analyze the Party’s day from a personal point of view as being intruder and not acceptable for a racial movement like BLM. With respect to his opinion, restraint is also required in such cases to examine the case based not only on given hypotheses but also on context, urges and circumstances.

Carlson’s arguments were backed up with BLM tweets in which they asked the public to provide space only for the African American community to participate in the party. The aim from the tweet is, according to Durden, for no reason but to assure security, precaution, and prevention from having clashes during the Memorial Day. As exists in every protest and assemblies, it is needed to prevent extremists and ill-behaved subjects from any occurrence of friction between protesters and outsiders. She further carried on that the aim can never be as Carlson has mentioned, to “divide” but rather to unite the African American community together, recall the dark past, set goals for a fair future of AA where they will not be the prior targeted.

Based on the identification of intentions and results reached from this talk show, there is a direct repression of free speech as well as the fact of holding AA accountable for things

that are misrepresented. The video also shows an explicit provocation from the Right-wing media to cancel the person in question and turning their discourse into their scope of interest. According to the findings of this analysis, we came up with evidence where the cancellation game of FN upon BLM was a success proved in the discussion forum where most of responses stand for canceling activist Lisa Durden for her responses.

The prominent comments noticed in the discussion forum illustrate the impact of FN's discourse on the public opinion and the way they outraged against Durden is one score to consider the discourse efficient. One commentator stated *"Arguing with someone wise is difficult, arguing with someone stupid is impossible. And this crazy lady just proved that"* (Nope). Another element left a comment stating that *"this lady was just plain rude! totally passive aggressive & self loathing, that's what I got from her"*(Jess). Another feedback alluded the fact of excluding Durden and that she shall not be invited again, as *"She basically acknowledged at the very end that her outrageous statements were so Tucker's rating would go up and she'd have to be invited back. TUCKER: please don't invite her back"* (Teach a Man). These comments proved the way FN shapes the opinion by convincing the public to adopt the same perspective as the channel's that is to cancel the canceled.

On another talk show released on June 24, 2020 on FN channel entitled "Black Lives Matter Leader States if US 'Doesn't Give Us What We Want, Then We Will Burn Down This System.", hosted by Martha McCallum on her program *The Story*, the BLM leader Hawk Newsome was the invitee to comment on BLM's objectives. The issue in question is the manner FN opted for a single part of the conversation put in quotation marks. Relying on one part and ignoring the bulk of a conversation might imply misunderstandings, threat, danger and warning. The selected language and discourse on this talk attempt to create a critical, perilous frame about activists and their intentions. However, the title is in fact a quarter the whole conversation is about.

During the debate and to embroider the discourse, the host used a selective language to address and draw the leader's attention about "violence" the host's investigation was about questioning the leader about adopting violence as an approach by BLM activists with disregard to the violence they are receiving. Apart from accusations, blaming, and the attempt to hold them accountable, constant interruptions proceeded by the host to neglect issues of their victimization by directing a special focus on violence as means used by activists to attain their objectives and not with the violence practiced on them. As indicated in the title, leader Newsome justified his statement of activists using violence as "hypocritical" and what he meant through violence is based on prior observations of the American achievements and victories in the past which were achieved by violence itself, for instance, the American Revolution and that their liberty was gained through the same source.

Another misinterpreted statement in Newsome's talk when he stated that "*if this country doesn't give us what we want, then we will burn down this system and replace it*", was dramatically interpreted by the host with a sole consideration of its literal meaning. Newsome was recurrently excluded from having the right to justify himself so that the whole organization will not be held accountable for things not done. The reason behind his cast from providing justifications was due to the ongoing turnings the host had taken to change the topic. Nonetheless, he continued his explanation that the highlighted statement in the title is "*a matter of interpretation*", knowing that this statement implies the fact that it is not logical to live under a system that disrespects and violates the American lives and such a kind must be substituted with another fair one in case violence is only practiced on AA. Newsome's claims to violence seem to be for a good cause which is self-defense, since according to his arguments, it came within the Second Amendment that is about the "*individual right to arm yourself. The amendment also firmly establishes that the government cannot infringe on that right*" (What Is).

Newsome was able to change the host's dramatic discourse about violence that is considered as a prospect if things get worse, and this is applicable according to the Second Amendment Right and nothing more, again for self-defense. His theory about using violence centers on saving and protecting lives, and upholding the Second Amendment. From Newsome's perspective and arguments, it is violent and unfair to blame only AA for arming themselves for self-defense. He believes that "*when black people start talking about arming themselves and defending themselves, that talk is 'violent'. But when white people grab assault rifles and go to our nation's, their state capitals, it's all good.*"

FN dramatized the narrative of violence by selecting the most offensive part, but the least understandable to the audience. FN's aim was to turn the narrative into its favour, as well as grabbing the public attention to cancel AA for violence. The quoted title attempts to stigmatize AA as being violent, with huge disregard to the endless cases of police violence practiced to marginalize them.

On September 9<sup>th</sup> 2020, an article of an African American political analyst Rob Smith was published. It is entitled "Rob Smith: Black Lives Matter Doesn't Really Care about Black Lives Lost Unless Group Can Blame Police." Smith presented a wide range of arguments to render the movement as too demanding, exaggerating and violent solely because BLM activists are against police agency.

Rob Smith, in one argument considered BLM as a political force driven by Left wing media. The commentator is proved efficient in turning the speech in his favour by applying double standards to the movement and their political rival that is the Left wing to weaken their non ability to control the so-called violence and pave the way for the Right wing to come up with a solution resume to the situation and the unrest.

Previously, Rob claimed that the rates of Black souls are "*far smaller number*", however, based on researches made on this topic, findings show that "*African Americans are*

*an even higher percentage of unarmed civilians shot and killed by police(34%), which is a potential sign of bias”(VerBruggen 2022).*

Rob Smith stated that “*no race is monolithic*”. He means that no race is rigid and unchangeable, but as American history shows, this seems to be critical in its sense since the whites, compared to non whites, have been the most privileged and eligible to have diversity in their beliefs whereas the coloured race is often restrained. In the same regard of Rob Smith’s view about race, he believes that races are flexible and able to change according to nature and circumstances; contrarily, he seems to refuse the idea of AA to own the same values of flexibility, diversity and different needs and beliefs in their activism. He stated that BLM activists are “*criminals. BLM is their cult. It is their religion. It is what gives them purpose. And that should make Americans of any color deeply uncomfortable*”.

BLM seems to conform his beliefs of “no race is monolithic” since the group did not stagnate instead it is flexible and changing. The more violence and racism is practiced upon AA, the more option for defensive strategies is required for self-defense and protection. The group cannot stick to the same perceptions and motives of those from the beginning, because things get worse than before, mindsets evolve and more violent approaches are always held to turn the movement into something frustrating. The reason behind the movement’s evolution is the result of ongoing encounters with police and violent forces that pushed it to take further procedures to protect themselves and not to worsen the situation.

Rob Smith was not satisfied with labeling AA as criminals, but he preferred to highlight it in bold to reinforce his cancellation. There was a noticeable stress upon the AA’ alleged violence on the American streets which, according to him, harms and disturbs the whitescomfort.

From another angle, defunding the police for Rob Smith is something bad because this would increase the number of crimes in neighborhoods, but he also states that“*many crime*

*victims are black*". It is clear that Smith seems to be lost in his contradictions, on the one hand he asserted that few AA are victims of police encounters but on the other hand, he believed that a wide range of Black victims are killed by criminals where in this case, he means either Black criminals or normal ones except policemen.

BLM's calls for defunding the police are not what was propagated by diverse opinions, rather they outrage against this systemic racism for one clear reason. The police tend to achieve safety but never choking someone to death despite their endless cries. They tend to save lives and not cause them to be lost. Most importantly, BLM as a movement with well acquainted leaders of the American society's fragility, are aware of the necessity to maintain peace so to prevent the loss of more victims.

Rob Smith seems to have failed to grasp the real message of the movement. He rather opted for misplaced frames to describe the movement as he jumped from the objective scope. The headline and Smith's content alludes to distort the movement's image by relating it to violence as well as his persuasion to push the audience to withdraw the support from BLM since it is condemned as a toxic movement.

On another video posted on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 on FN responding to one of BLM's leader Hawk Newsome's talks about police defund, host Martha MacCallum left the mike for Pete Hegseth to comment. The video is entitled "Black Lives Matter Movement Supports Crime and Division." Hegseth seemed to be offended by "the white privilege" cliché made by Newsome in a previous video about police defund. The white privilege issue argued by Newsome pushed Hegseth to outrage back at BLM as a whole. Hegseth called out BLM leader for defunding the police for, according to him, protesters and their "ill-formed intentions" to punish the police are unacceptable in America. According to his alleged arguments, these reckless acts protesters intend to destruct this beautiful city -New York-

rather than building it. For Hegseth, abolishing the police department is by all means an action to more crimes and criminals released. Police for such advocates are the pillar of the country.

Hegseth considered BLM as a collective voice for destruction and social unrest. For him, such protests neither call for justice nor for a fair social change, however, they are intended to construct deeper problems in America where they affect every aspect of life. He came up with conclusions highlighting that the aftermath of these misplaced protests will end up in businesses closing down, riots and mobs igniting the streets and children being the victims for such ill-behaviours.

Hegseth showed great support for Eric Adams, according to him, Adams is a great Mayor that sustained the country with his arguments against riots and mobs. The fact is that Hegseth was not comfortable with the way Newsome attacked the mayor. A sense of preference in Hegseth's discourse and his inspiration by the former mayor Adams where contrarily he resents the proceeding mayor "communist" for letting his views being submitted by the gangs also the fact that he undercuts police everywhere in the city which ultimately will lead to many severe consequences where in this case he alludes to Newsome and his fellow. Since he, at the end of this idea, tried to play emotionally upon the audience so as not to consider him canceling AA, he combined the two parties and the African American community to be spiritually united under a fair system. However, this game is nothing, but to blur the fact that what he previously mentioned as "gangs" was not actually meant to be about real gangs, but the gangs Newsome is defending. Nevertheless, mobs and riots that are the downs of a country leading to more problems than solutions, but it is irrational to generalize that every protest is harmful and every protester is criminal.

Hegseth proceeded with his offensive cancellation of AA as being dividers and criminals. From his talk, he wants to transmit the message to police advocates to speak up against such protests, and support law enforcement as they are the ones restraining crimes



from spreading. He also calls to arrest them referring to BLM activists as the “*gangs that are responsible for most of these fights*” alluding to AA since they are the highly ranked criminals on the list.

The misinterpretation of BLM rhetoric is one reason Hegseth coming up with such conclusions, the focus should be directed to the motives leading to such protests as well as the emphasis on the police performances and friction with every individual. It seems that the public responded to the impact of FN by following its tide. The comments section is evidence that FN’s discourse impacts the public opinion and the resounding success it made when cancelling BLM. Some comments were launched to cancel Newsome for his thoughts, one element states that “*I think Hawk Newsome needs to really do some soul searching and figure out who matters more children or criminals if he has any brains in his head the choice would be easy*”(Ryan Hedges). Some reinforced their withdrawal of support by showing distrust and the non belief in the movement, as stated “*I honestly can't understand why so many people believe in this movement, they have shown time and time again that they don't actually stand for what they are promoting*”(Hellsbells). Others were responsive to Hegseth’s statement that BLM activists are by all means dividers and criminals, “*Good headline, absolutely right*” (Virtual Vince).

### **3. CNN Implicit Cancellation of Black Lives Matter Movement**

CNN is of a Democratic tendency, this is why it welcomes everyone who wants to share their ideas on its platforms. Therefore, being objective and reporting every single detail or giving the chance to anyone to express their thoughts is a weapon to attack Republicans. However, in another perspective, it is an effective method to indirectly convey hidden messages like cancelling BLM by giving the chance to anyone who disagrees to speak up their thoughts without emphasizing the real message of BLM. Thus, the implicit cancellation

of the movement on CNN platforms seems effective, and many factors contribute to influence the viewer's mind in a deliberate way. In order to prove so, we randomly selected some articles and videos to be analyzed and to investigate the different tactics used.

After three police officers were killed in Baton Rouge, Don Lemon on breaking news hosted Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke to have a debate on police safety. On July 18, 2016 a video was posted on You Tube under the title "Don Lemon, Sheriff Spar over Police Shootings". Clarke is a Black African American who is not accidentally chosen. Throughout the discussion he was defending the issue of police by accusing BLM. He clearly declares his view on the matter by using offensive words to define BLM asserting that "*this anti-cop sentiment from this hateful ideology called Black Lives Matter has fuelled this rage against the American police officer.*" And he repeats that "*this anti-police rhetoric sweeping the country has turned out some hateful things inside of people that are now playing themselves out on the American police officer.*" He repeats and repeats again "*this hateful ideology*" and "*purveyors of hate*". Therefore, he explains that BLM is inciting people against police and spreading a misconception about them, and throughout his statements we understand a direct accusation of BLM.

After all these claims, no defense from the journalist is observed as he justifies himself that "*as a journalist sitting on television,*" he does not "*have to condemn anyone*" and this is to show the liberal stance of CNN which permits anyone to express their thoughts without any limitations. Moreover, Lemon's statement highly represents the Democratic leaning of the channel. In addition, it is a chance to highlight BLM's downsides without being interrupted and accused of being racist. CNN takes advantage from its invitees to implicitly desecrate the movement's reputation. Moreover, along the discussion, he was stammering and not answering the questions of the sheriff, and this behavior could be doubtful in the eyes of the viewer, and makes David Clarke right in his views.

On a 30 May 2020 breaking news on CNN, on Cuomo Prime Time, ChrisCuomo reports Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms where she criticizes BLM attitudes. She expresses fear for her son when she hears about BLM protests, and says that she does what any mother will do in such a case. Thus, the use of mother's emotions is an effective weapon which plays on the viewer's mind. Moreover, it is an indirect accusation that BLM protesters are doing something illegal which scares the population. Then she adds that this kind of protests do not represent Martin Luther King, Civil Rights, nor the African American community's legacy. Moreover, she clearly criticizes the way the protests are held, and asserts that if they really worry about their city they should stop their acts; so she calls and repeats several times to "go home" "go home".

Mayor Bottoms directly blames BLM for being violent in the streets. She explains that they have been the reason behind the arrest of the black CNN correspondent Omar Jimenez, who they should be thankful for, because he is helpful in transmitting their message to the world via CNN whereas in return for his favor they "*are disgracing*" CNN building. She angrily expresses her view on their protests by asserting that "*the story is no longer about the murder of an innocent man but about burning police cars on the streets of Atlanta, Georgia.*" Hence, she is clearly emphasizing their violence and keeping away the issue of police brutality. She suggests if they "*want change in America,*" they have to go to "*register to vote*".

From Mayor Bottoms's statements we understand that the reason behind reporting her declarations is CNN's common purpose which is the cancellation of BLM. Cuomo commented that the words which came from "*an African American mother and leader*" are powerful. He took advantage of demonstrating the harm BLM violent protests cause to mothers. The video also shows how on a video call Van Jones, a CNN political commentator and former Obama administration official, encourages and agrees with Mayor Bottoms in her

statements when he says *“I applaud the mayor, she is calling people up to a higher standard”*. To them, BLM are doing something substandard and reckless. Thus, we come out that a call to stop BLM protests is highly recommended by CNN reporters.

Another prominent article gained our attention, published on CNN on July 23, 2020 written by Ray Sanchez entitled *“Black Lives Matter Protests Across America Continue Nearly 2 Months after George Floyd’s Death”*. Similarly to videos, it holds fierce language against BLM, and indicates that *“the protests in Portland were mostly peaceful, though they have at times devolved into violence, vandalism and arson”*. The verb *“devolved”* is used to hint what will happen in the future of BLM, it will extend into something aggressive. *“Violence”* and *“vandalism”* are key influential words to affect the reader’s mind. The writer then underlines that *“protesters last weekend pulled down barricades, moved them into streets and attempted to set a building on fire. On Sunday, federal law enforcement officers dispersed protesters with gas, police said”*, the event is reported to give the reader the most detailed information about what is happening whereas it is a counter attack against protesters; the writer here is trying to sabotage BLM’s reputation, and by saying that police have solved the problem, it means that BLM had been out of control.

Along the same article, the author claimed that *“one day after violent clashes left police and demonstrators injured CNN affiliate WLS reported”*, the message in this expression is crystal clear, it assumes that the violent clashes resulted from the BLM protesters injured the police in particular; this is what we interpreted from the use of the word *“police”* first and *“demonstrators”* second.

Another quote from the same article reinforces the idea of CNN cancelling BLM. The author says that *“the demonstrators accused police of using excessive force to quell a protest on Friday which targeted a statue of Christopher Columbus at Grant Park”*. According to

our analysis and interpretation, the word “accused” in this statement conveys a powerful message to the population. It obviously denies the idea of police being brutal, knowing that BLM’s main objective is to put an end to the latter. We inevitably found out that CNN is against BLM at all. Moreover, the intent explicates that police are defending and preserving a nation’s symbol like “Christopher Columbus Statue” from BLM’s vandalism.

Sanchez adds that “*police said 18 officers were injured after some people in the crowd used rocks, fireworks, frozen bottles and other objects to attack officers, according to a statement.*” After reading these claims, we observed the offensive language used against BLM, which we believe that it is used to intentionally build confusions about the movement.

In Christina Carrega’s article on CNN “BLM Protesters Were Targeted by Federal Government with Stiffer Punishments, an Analysis Shows”, based on this latter, she conveyed the prevailing conditions amid BLM march after the death of George Floyd, including protesters and police reactions toward each other. The title cites that BLM demonstrators were victims of harsh punishments; however, whilst we delve into the subject, we note that the most frequently cited points are the offensive attitudes of BLM. When speaking about the reasons that led to the arrest of some protesters, the author mentioned the following figures: “*105 for arson, 49 for civil disorder, 45 for assault against an officer and 30 felon-in-possession of a weapon cases.*” Consequently, the use of such violent and offensive arguments against BLM is considered questionable comparing to the title’s interpretation.

Another clash was detected in the author’s attempt to express the wrongdoing committed by the protesters, where she describes them as “*non-violent offenses*”, “*offenses that were potentially hazardous*” “*property destruction, not violence against people.*” These words are deemed to be subversive, and might not be anything else, but driving the reader to

negatively think about the movement; because their acts are underlined to be offenses and not simple defense of rights and they are accused of being violent, if not against people, they are against property.

The same article underlined the severity of penalties to which protesters may be subjected. This is a form of conveying events, however, from another perspective it makes indirect threats against them. In this respect, Carrega's report analysis indicates that "*Federal arson charges carry a minimum sentence of five years in prison,*" and that in "*state court there are different degrees of arson charges, including some that can be classified as misdemeanors carrying up to one year in a local jail*". Consequently, what we understand from this is that when demonstrators will be aware of these punishments, they will probably retreat from their marches under fear's influence. Besides, people will think that severe sanctions are proof that the movement is not following a peaceful path, and that will result a negative view against BLM, which will lead to its cancellation by citizens.

In regard to imprisonment of protesters, Princess Masilungan of the Creating Law Enforcement Accountability and Responsible Clinic expresses a further view in the same article. She stated that there is no opportunity for the arrestee to defend himself, as quoted from her statement "*Every day Americans are now facing prison sentences in more distant locations, higher maximums and mandatory minimums, and no chance of parole as a result of exercising their First Amendment rights*". She also explains some of the effects that could result from such cases when she stated that "*incarceration often leads to income and job loss along with the separation of families. It not only harms the individual but also their families, organizations, and communities.*" These statements could be seen as a call to think twice before being a BLM member or a protester.

After analyzing the aforementioned article, we observe that the title shows that BLM is a victim, while the content shows only the opposite. Thus, this contradiction is proof that CNN's goal is an attempt to manipulate words to indirectly accuse the BLM movement. In addition, instead of defending the BLM's being victims of strict penalties for claiming their rights, an over-emphasis was put on the downsides of BLM protesters; from crimes and violence to the negative consequences they can cause to themselves and society. From this, we conclude that CNN is trying to implicitly cancel BLM, demotivating its members and give it a negative intention.

## **Conclusion**

This second chapter constitutes the practical part of our research work, through which we have come up with the answers to our fundamental questions. It is through it that we were able to know both FN and CNN political tendencies. It has also enabled us to confirm that the latter have an impact on the channels' credibility and common interests.

To sum up, throughout the analyses of the videos and articles published on FN and CNN, we have concluded that CC is differently practiced against the BLM movement. Thus, the news frame, the choice of presenters and guests, titles of shows and most importantly, the language and arguments used to defend or attack the movement play a prominent role in charting people's mindset. FN is clear in its position against the movement, and it directly indicates its downsides without any encodings whereas CNN objectively expresses the topic, it does not give the chance to be accused of racism or tendency since it relied on influencing its audience by giving each one the opportunity to express their opinion, and the cancellation of BLM is not obvious but understandable through the points the crew emphasized in the videos and articles.



## **General Conclusion**

Our main topic centers on one of the current cultural practices in America, and the issue chosen to relate this phenomenon to, is the BLM movement. We started our investigation by giving a close look into CC, its definitions, critics and historical development which was identified despite the disputes and the buzz made over this concept. Findings circled over a main idea that CC is a weapon against freedom of speech that restrains people's freedom to unveil their opinions. Globally, the canceled is often tracked until tainted; however, there is no area for discussion over reasons leading to such an act. CC includes not only ordinary people but also those with fame. The concept is not new but is an old practice in ancient times. People of authority used to cancel others taking jobs from them, closing businesses and it was sometimes used to impose opinions and decisions over them. And in other times, it was used as a means to achieve liberty, an example of the American Revolution was given to demonstrate the way US colonists disagreed with the British Empire to gain their independence and establish their own state.

The concept of CC is broad and in order to narrow it down, we have investigated about media involvement in adopting the concept through the selection of BLM through which we could demonstrate the practice of CC through media lenses. BLM, as shown in the top sections of this research, is a movement which created a new chapter in the African American anti-racism struggle and most precisely police brutality that ended many lives. It has also provoked political disputes and debates. According to the findings reached in this research, we managed to point out the different types of selectivity that media outlets used to cancel the movement, through several analytical approaches that are depicted in the portrayals of BLM and the way CC is practiced to cancel it.

However, the approaches adopted for the framing of the movement were different since FN explicitly presented the movement through the lens it fits. There was a salient defense of political stances from FN through a selective language which emboldened the presenters to put their skills into practice. The channel managed to distort the movement's image, weaken its activism and influence the public for an outrage against BLM. The techniques and manners of presenting news were a winning card for this line to impose itself and promote its service in the market whereas CNN used a more tactical approach in framing the movement as implicitly inciting. In spite of the disparities between these two channels, tactics differed. CNN was able to deliver its news about the movement, approximately, in an objective manner. However, the more you deepen into the content the more truths and intentions will be exposed. Thus, the movement was condemned as pejorative and threatening from the lenses of these two channels. Eventually, BLM movement was portrayed as a violation of American rules and values.

## Works Cited List

### Primary Sources

“Black Lives Matter Throws Black Only Memorial Day Party.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Fox News, 7 June. 2017. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfNIgvOFhMw>>

“Don Lemon, Sheriff Spar Over Police Shootings”. *YouTube*. Uploaded by CNN, 18 June. 2016. <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRen8nI8\\_aM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRen8nI8_aM)>

“Hegseth: Black Lives Matter Movement Supports Crime and Division.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Fox News, 14 Dec. 2021. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAWd3JCX6JI>>

“Mayor Scolds Violent Protesters: Not in the Spirit of MLK.” *YouTube*. Uploaded by CNN, 30 May. 2020. <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sbBj\\_6QncQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sbBj_6QncQ)>

Carrega, Christina. “BLM Protesters Were Targeted by Federal Government with Stiffer Punishments, an Analysis Shows.” *CNN Politics*. Cable News Network, 21 Aug. 2021. Web. 1 May 2022.

Garcia, Victor. “Black Lives Matter Leader States if US Doesn't Give Us What We Want, Then We Will Burn Down this System.” *Fox News*. Fox News Network, LLC, 24 June. 2020. Web. 1 June 2022.

Sanchez, Ray. “Black Lives Matter Protests across America Continue Nearly 2 Months after George Floyd's Death.” *CNN*. Cable News Network, 23 July. 2020. Web. 11 May 2022.

Smith, Rob. Rob Smith: “Black Lives Matter Doesn't Really Care about Black Lives Lost Unless Group Can Blame Police.” *Fox News*. Fox News Network, LLC. 9 Sept. 2020. Web. 29 May 2022.

## Secondary Sources

- , "Black Lives Matter Doesn't Want Unity." *The Rush Limbaugh Show*. Premiere Networks, 12 July. 2016. Web. 16 May 2022.
- "Black Code." *Britannica*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. Web. 14 May 2022.
- "First Amendment." *Constitution Annotated*. Lib of Congress, Web. 30 May 2022.
- "Letter on Justice and Open Debate." *Harpers Magazine*. Harpers Magazine Foundation, 7 July. 2020. Web. 14 May 2022.
- "Speaking Frankly: Cancel Culture." *YouTube*, uploaded by CBS News, 13 Aug 2020.
- "Travyon Martin Attacked George Zimmerman, Report Says." *Fox News*. Fox News Network, LLC, 27 Dec. 2016. Web. 9 June 2022.
- "What Is the Second Amendment". *NRA-ILA*. National Rifle Association For America. Web. 1 May 2022.
- Adams, Char. "A Movement, a Slogan, a Rallying Cry: How Black Lives Matter Changed America's View on Race." *NBC News*. NBC Universal, 29 Dec. 2020. Web. 16 May 2022.
- Alfonso, Madalyn. "Culture Critique: The Power of Cancel Culture." *The New Paltz Oracle*. WordPress Theme by MH Themes, 28 Mar. 2019. Web. 14 May 2022.
- Aviles, Gwen. "J. K Rowling Faces Backlash after Tweeting Support for 'Transphobic' Researcher." *NBC News*. NBC Universal, 19 Dec. 2019. Web. 26 May 2022.
- Bijan, Stephen. "Social Media Helps Black Lives Matter Fight the Power." *Wired*. N.p. Nov 2015. Web. 15 May 2022.
- Blair, Douglas. "12 People Canceled by the Left After Expressing Conservative Views." *The Heritage Foundation*. The Heritage Foundation, 20 Sept. 2021. Web. 13 May 2022.

- Botelho, Greg. "What Happened the Night Trayvon Martin Died." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 23May.2012. Web. 9 June 2022.
- Bunch, Erin. "The Cancel-Culture Glossary for Canceling, Boycotting, Calling out, and Calling in." *Well+Good*. Well+Good LLC, 23 July. 2020. Web. 15 May 2022.
- Cassino, Dan. *Fox News and American Politics: How One Channel Shapes American Politics and Society*. Ed. Howard Lavine. New York: Routledge, 2016. *Z Library*. Pdf.
- Cillizza, Chris. "What Barack Obama Gets Exactly Right about Our Toxic 'Cancel' Culture." *CNN Politics*. Cable News Network, 30 Oct. 2019. Web. 13 May 2022.
- Clark, Meredith D. "Drag Them: A Brief Etymology of So-Called " Cancel Culture"." *Communication and the Public* 5.3-4(2020): 88-92. *Sage Journals*. Pdf.
- Clayton, Dewey M. "Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: A Comparative (2018):1-33.*Z Library*. Pdf.
- Cook, Christine L. "Whose Agenda Is It Anyway: An Exploration of Cancel Culture and Political Affiliation in the United States." *SN Social Science* 1:237 (2021): 1-28. *WordPress*. Pdf.
- Cummings, Mike. "Partisan Media? Cable Viewers Shift Attitudes after Changing the Channel." *Yale News*. Yale University, 13 Apr. 2022. Web. 26 Apr 2022.
- Dershowitz, Alan. *Cancel Culture: The Latest Attack on Free Speech and Due Process*. New York: Hot Books, 2020. *Z Library*. Pdf.
- Dudenhoefer, Nicole. "Is Cancel Culture Effective?: Centuries Ago, It Was Tarring and Feathering. Today; It's a Hashtag. It Is Evolving, but Is Cancel Culture Effective?." *Pegasus* 2020. Web. 9 June 2022.
- Fix, Blair. "Free Speech For Me, Not You." *Economics From The Top Down*. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License, 6 May 2021. Web. 13 May 2022.

- Garcia, Victor. "Black Lives Matter Leader States if US Doesn't Give Us What We Want, Then We Will Burn Down this System." *Fox News*. Fox News Network, LLC. 24 June. 2020. Web. 29 May 2022.
- Grondinger, Mary. "Cancel Culture and Cancel Discourse: Cultural Attacks on Academic Ideals." Diss. U of St. Cloud State, 2021. *The Repository at St Cloud State*. Pdf.
- Harb, Zaina, et al. "Comparative Content Analysis of the Coverage of Black Lives Matter Protests by CNN and OAN from May 26 2016 to November 8 2020." *KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 1.3 (2020): 12-24. *Kampala International University*. Pdf.
- Haynes, Danielle. "Study: Black Americans 3 Times More Likely to Be Killed by Police." *UPI*. United Press International, 24 June.2020; Web. 16 May 2022.
- Hedges, Ryane. "I Think Hawk Newsome." *YouTube Comment*. "Hegseth: Black Lives Matter Movement Supports Crimes and Division." *YouTube*. YouTube, 14 Dec.2021.
- Hellsbells. "I Honestly Can't Understand." *YouTube Comment*. "Hegseth: Black Lives Matter Movement Supports Crime and Division." *YouTube*. YouTube, 14 Dec. 2021.
- Hoffman, Elizabeth Cobbs, Edward J. Blum, and Jon Gjerde, eds. *Major Problems in American History*.3<sup>rd</sup>edition. Vol 2. Boston, USA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2010.*Z Library*. Pdf.
- Horowitz, Irving Louis. "Culture, Politics and McCarthyism: A Retrospective from the Trenches." *William Mitchell Law Review* 22.2(1996): 1-12. *Mitchell Hamine*. Pdf.
- James, Chris. "Meet 9 Activists Leading the Call for Racial Justice." *CNN.com*. Cable News Network, 29 Mar. 2021. Web. 16 May 2022.

- Jeftovic, Mark E. *Unassailable: Protect Yourself from Deplatform Attack, Cancel Culture and Other Online Disasters*. Cont. Charles Hugh Smith. Canada: AxisOfEasy Media, 2020. *Z Library*. Pdf.
- Jess. "This Lady Was Just Plain Rude." *YouTube Comment*. Black Lives Matter Throws 'Black Only' Memorial Day Party." *YouTube*. YouTube. 7 June 2017.
- Jones, Jeffery P. "Fox News and the Performance of Ideology." *Cinema Journal* 51.4(2012):178-185. *JSTOR*. Pdf;
- Kalla, Joshua L. and David E. Brookman. "The Manifold Effects of Partisan Media on Viewers Beliefs and Attitudes: A Field Experiment with Fox News Viewers\*"(2022): 1-A83. *Z Library*. Pdf.
- Kamlet, Mark. Ashique, Khudabukhsh, and Tom Mitchell. Fox News Viewers Write about 'BLM' the Same Way CNN Viewers Write about 'KKK'. *The Conversation*. The Conversation Africa, Inc, 28 Oct. 2020. Web. 16 May 2022.
- Kampf, Zohar. "Political Discourse Analysis." *International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Sciences* (2015): 1-17. *Wiley Online Library*. Pdf
- Leopold, Joy, and Myrtle P. Bell. "News Media and the Racialization of Protest: An Analysis of Black Lives Matter Articles." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 36.8(2017): 720-735. *Z Library*. Pdf.
- Limbaugh, Rush. "YouTuber Makes White Women Kneel to Black Lives Matter." *The Rush Limbaugh Show*. Premiere Networks, 4 June. 2020. Web. 16 May 2022.
- Locke, Joseph D., and Ben Wright, eds. *The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook*. Vol 2. Stanford, California: UP of Stanford California, 2019. Print.
- Maguire, Sarah. "How Cancel Culture Gone Too Far?." *The Lighthouse*. Macquarie University. 30 June. 2020. Web. 15 May 2022.

- Martin, J. Gregory, and Yurukoglu, Ali. "Bias in Cable News: Real Effects and Polarization." *NBER Working Paper* (2014):1-68. *Z Library*. Pdf.
- McCoy, Henrika. "Black Lives Matter, and Yes, You Are Racist: The Parallelism of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries." *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* 37(2020):463-475. *Springer Link*. Pdf
- Meesala, Shriya. "Cancel Culture: A Societal Obligation or Infringement on Free Speech?." *UAB Institute for Human Rights Blog*. The University of Alabama at Birmingham, 4 Dec 2020. Web. 14 May 2022.
- Morris, Jonathan S. "The Fox News Factor." *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 10.3(2005): 56-79. *Research Gate*. Pdf.
- Morris, Lauren. "Effects of Media Bias on Credibility of Political News." *Xavier Journal of Undergraduate Research* 4.1-6(2016): 91-109. *Xavier University*. Pdf.
- Munro, André. "Shooting of Trayvon Martin". *Britannica*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc, 26 Feb. 2012. Web. 9 June 2022.
- Ng, Eve. "No Grand Pronouncements Here...: Reflections on Cancel Culture and Digital Media Participation." *Television and News Media* 21.6 (2020):621-627. *Z Library*. Pdf
- Nie Norman H., et al. "The World Wide Web and the U.S. Political News Market." *American Journal of Political Science* 54.2 (2010): 428-439. *Wiley Online Library*. Pdf.
- Nilsson, Jeff. "How Cancel Culture Started the American Revolution: during the Revolutionary War, Cancel Culture Was Powerful Enough to Unite the American Colonies and Bring the First Continental Congress to Session." *The Saturday Evening Post*. Saturday Evening Post Society, 25 Feb. 2021. Web. 13 May 2022.
- Nope. "Arguing With Someone Is Difficult." *YouTube Comment*. "Black Lives Matter Throws ' Black Only' Memorial Day Party." *YouTube*. YouTube, 7 June. 2017.



- Norris, Pippa. "Close Minds? Is Cancel Culture Shifting Academic Freedom and Intellectual Debate in Political Science." *Faculty Research Working Paper Series* (2020):1-28. *The Harvard Kennedy School*. Pdf.
- Palmer, Megan. "Black Lives Matter in the National Media: Analyzing Coverage of Legacy Newsrooms and Digital-First Outlet." *Minnesota Undergraduate Research and Academic Journals* 4.4:1-33. *Muraj*. Pdf.
- Rabouin, Thibault. "Cancel Culture, a Rhetorical Construction." Translated by Clémentine Gallot. *Generation For Rights Over the World*. (2021):1-14. *GrowThinkTank*. Pdf.
- Robinson, Piers. "The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?." *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999): 301-309. Pdf.
- Romano, Aja. "Why Cant We Stop about Cancel Culture: Is Cancel Culture a Mob Mentality, or a Long Overdue Way of Speaking Truth to Power." *Vox*. Vox Media, LLC, 25 Aug. 2020. Web. 13 May 2022.
- Saint Louis, Hervé. "Understanding Cancel Culture: Normative and Unequal Sanctioning". *Open Journal Systems* 26.5-7(2021). Web. 25 July 2022.
- Saragi, Veronica et al. "Seeing the Media Education from the Lens of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Journal of English Language Studies* 2.1(2020): 26-31. *Elsya*. Pdf.
- Sawyer, Jeremy and AnupGampa. "Implicit and Explicit Racial Attitudes Changed During Black Lives Matter." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (2018):1-21. Sage Journals. Pdf.
- Schudson, Michael. "The News Media as Political Institutions." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5(2002): 249-269. Annual Reviews. Pdf.

**Secondary Sources**

- Slyt, Demetria. "Cancel Culture." *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, Web. 13 May 2022.
- Smith, David. "The Backlash against Black Lives Matter Is Just More Evidence of Injustice." *The Conversation*. The Conversation Africa, Inc, 1<sup>st</sup>Nov. 2017.Web. 13 May 2022.
- Strossen, Nadine. "Resisting Cancel Culture: Promoting Dialogue, Debate, and Free Speech in the College Classroom." Cont. Jonathan, Rauch. Washington DC: American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2020.1-18. Pdf.
- Stroud, Natalie Jomini. "Media Use and Political Predispositions: Revisiting the Concept of Selective Exposure." *PolitBehav* 30 (2008): 341-366. Pdf.
- Sturkey, William. "The Laws in Context." *On The Books*. University Libraries. Web. 14 May 2022.
- Teach a Man To Fish. "She Basically Acknowledged." *YouTube Comment*. "Black Lives Matter Throws 'Black Only' Memorial Day Party." *YouTube*. YouTube. 7 June.2017.
- Trigo, Laura Alvarez. "Cancel Culture: The Phenomenon, Online Communities and Open Letters." *PopMec Research Blog* (2020): 1-13. *Research Gate*. Pdf.
- Umamaheswar, Janani. "Policing and Racial (In) Justice in the Media: Newspaper Portrayals of the Black Lives Matter Movement." *UP of California* (2020): 1-13. *Research Gate*. Pdf.
- VerBruggen, Robert. "Fatal Police Shootings and Race: A Review of the Evidence and Suggestions for Future Research." *Manhattan Institute*. Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, 9 May. 2022. Web. 29 May 2022.
- Virtual, Vince. "Good Headline Absolutely Right." *YouTube Comment*. "Hegseth: Black Lives Matter Movement Supports Crime and Division." *YouTube*. YouTube, 14 Dec. 2021.

**Abstract**

For years now, Cancel Culture has become one of the most famous trends due to the worldwide dimensions it has taken. This study aims to explore the development of this trend within the modern American society, and specifically investigates its impact on African-American community. Adopting the approach of Content Analysis, the chapter underscores a number of videos broadcast on Fox News and CNN YouTube channels, and articles published on their websites to analyze the language and arguments used to influence the American public opinion.

**Key words:** Bias, Black Lives Matter, Cancel Culture, CNN, Fox News, police brutality, victimization.