

RESISTING THROUGH CITIZEN JOURNALISM: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT ON TWITTER

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ABSTRACT

The Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 has emerged through the help of social media and citizen journalism in spreading the news, responding to the incident, and mobilizing the protest against police brutality and racial discrimination against African Americans. Citizen journalism has become an alternative for Twitter users who distrust American journalism from mainstream news media. This study examined tweets of citizen journalism to see the discourse of American journalism on Twitter. Using Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study finds positive and negative aspects of citizen journalism. The first is that citizen journalism is an online resistance tool of protesters against news institutions where they can voice their opinions and deny news institutions' negative portrayal. The second, citizen journalism, is a tool for news institutions in responding to the protesters' resistance. It is because protesters lack a solid and consistent perception of the issue. The rejection of news institutions and journalists is no longer immediate attention for them as soon as police officers attack news crews.

Keywords: *African American; Black Lives Matter; CDA; citizen journalism; Twitter*

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INTRODUCTION

According to The New York Times, the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 is considered the most significant movement in US history (Buchanan et al., 2020). It fights against racial discrimination and police brutality. This racial discrimination is the remains of slavery in the history of the United States. The 2020 Black Lives Matter movement was triggered by the death of George Floyd, where the incident was recorded and spread through social media. On 25 May 2020, George Floyd was attacked, rather than arrested, by the four police officers after being reported to have a counterfeit \$20 bill for a purchase. As Derek Chauvin pressed his neck for eight minutes, he died on the scene. This recording of his death triggers online users to protest the police brutality against African Americans, mostly based on their racist behavior. The first protest sparked in Minneapolis to demand the four police officers, predominantly Derek Chauvin, to be charged with murder and fired. The discussion on police brutality, Floyd's death, and the protest were spread widely through social media, especially on Twitter. Protesters spread the BLM movement with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter to refer to ongoing movements in previous years as it has the same concern on police brutality.

BLM movement has the same effort compared to the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s (Edrington & Gallagher, 2019). It relies on moving the empathy of the mass and transforming "citizens into activists". Moreover, BLM is defined as a "break" of the patterns of racism (Luttrell, 2019). The critical theme of understanding the BLM movement is different from understanding the Civil Rights movement; because of the new digital

technology, social media's presence helps the Black community challenge injustices in society and call people for further action (Ransby, 2019). Without citizen journalists in social media, as Ransby further argued, support, actions, and solidarity for the most neglected and abandoned events have been widely put to mass attention. Within the movement, citizen journalism has increased the potential of BLM protesters to voice out the community's concerns, opinions, and demands. Therefore, the purpose of BLM movements has been optimized, and a large number of supports and help have been received to help the protesters and BLM organizers to reach their goals.

Citizen journalism should be seen as different from professional journalism. The role of citizen journalism is noticed to help the purpose of the movement. Before understanding citizen journalism, it is first important to acknowledge news institutions and professional journalism. News institutions can shape the viewers' perception of the United States. It is acknowledged that the main purpose of journalism itself is to serve information for a better and fuller democracy with its privilege and unique status as the "fourth branch of government" (Schudson, 1995).

Moreover, there is also a protection from the Constitution through First Amendment to guarantee the mass media with "freedom of the press", a privilege among other American industries (Bagdikian, as cited in Dreier, 1982). This biased perspective of news institutions largely produces racism, which works to maintain and legitimate white group power (Van Dijk, 1995). There are numerous pieces of evidence on ethnic coverage where it has the perspective of dominant white elites

and the white population, especially in the coverage of immigration or equal rights policies. Especially in mainstream news media, it is indeed an important tool for communication among elites (Schudson, 2002). It goes along with Van Dijk's explanation that news production works in favor of the white elites. Minority organizations or spokespeople are rarely taken as credible sources. It means that the media is highly involved in the production of racism; it has the power to manage public opinion and shape and manufacture it. It constructs the viewers' views and attitudes toward minorities, especially the majority's view toward minorities. With technological advancement, citizen journalism emerged with a closer relationship with its citizens or the public in today's society. Nah & Chung (2020) argues that citizen journalism allows citizens to participate in writing, publishing, and delivering news-making. It occurs as there is an active role in collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news, and it also implicates the political consciousness of news making, consumption, and media production process (Mythen, 2010). Everyone is allowed to take an active role in reporting the news through their device. It is not required to go through a complex editing process, censorship, and information filters like professional journalists for news institutions. In citizen journalism practice, Korson (2015) found that it progressively functions to shift perceptions and opinions of its use, and it will also affect their action later. Social media, therefore, becomes a platform where all citizens are both producers and consumers, and they will engage in a democratic conversation of the news.

Citizen journalists then significantly impact bringing news to many people. Without

a cell phone and social media, the Black Lives Matter movement and news that news institutions ignore would not be covered and rather silenced (Ransby, 2019). As Ransby further observed, Twitter is a venue for African Americans to follow and engage each other on vast and various topics, ranging from political to nonpolitical issues. It is often referred to as "Black Twitter". Importantly, Black Twitter involves hundreds to thousands of African Americans and mobilization of political occurrences. Twitter can be considered a place for the community to build, spread, and mobilize their political movements. In the BLM movement in 2020, Twitter became the most engaging platform, and protesters could gather and spread news or information during the protest. It allows the African-American community to acknowledge the issue and allows other Americans to be more aware of racism in society. According to Cohen (2020), there were 3,7 million tweets per day during the first two weeks of BLM protest in 2020, and in total, there were 47,8 million tweets from 26 May 2020 to 7 June 2020. There is a high engagement on Twitter, and it motivates the community or other Twitter users to participate on the streets. It transformed Twitter users into protesters. Buchanan et al. (2020) stated that large crowds are showing up in 550 places across the country. It is estimated that 15 to 26 million people are participating in it. The exact numbers themselves are large enough. For example, the protest in Philadelphia with at least 50,000 participants, the Golden Gate Bridge with at least 10,000 participants, and Chicago's Union Park with at least 20,000 participants. This large number of protesters is similar to the movement in 2014, where the protest itself results from the spread of awareness on Twitter.

Thousands of Twitter users who became protesters reported and disseminated stories or news directly to the public on Twitter. Citizen journalists are important because they have a different and raw perspective in reporting an event (Ransby 2019). For example, the police execution of Walter Scott would be reported as an act of self-defense if there was no proof from cell phones and social media. The case of George Floyd is similar as it was sparked by a video report on social media and initiated the BLM movement into the biggest movement after Civil Rights Movement. Hence, it should not be ignored that citizen journalism is a tool for the protesters to report an event from their perspective.

Nevertheless, while news from mainstream news media is prohibited from stating feelings and opinions for “objectivity”, citizen journalism allows people to report, think, and react to an event from their perspectives. Citizen journalism offers a different way for people to voice their opinion. Twitter itself is crucial to the movement because Twitter has become a place to mobilize the people.

Studies concerning racism in American journalism have been done to see the issue differently. Mourão & Kilgo (2021) conducted a study entitled “Black Lives Matter Coverage: How Protest News Frames and Attitudinal Change Affect Social Media Engagement”. It results in a fresh perspective of news coverage affecting social media engagement during the BLM protest. From the study, legitimizing news tend to increase support for BLM. There is an increasing engagement of social media users to read, like, share, and comment about the issue.

Moreover, Walker (2021) conducted a study entitled “There’s a Camera Everywhere”: How Citizen Journalists, Cellphones, and Technology Shape Coverage of Police Shootings”. It mainly focuses on analyzing citizen journalism in shifting speed, accessibility, and accuracy in journalism and challenges the police authority. As a result, there is an evolution in technology. Professional journalists are affected, and citizen journalism has changed the idea that professional journalists are allying with the police.

It is important to understand that citizen journalism is crucial to 2020’s BLM protest. The video of George Floyd getting handcuffed, his neck kneeled, and seeking help by screaming “I can’t breathe” becomes a trigger to the movement. Moreover, looking at how BLM protest occurs from year to year, citizen journalism functions to help mobilize the protest, especially in terms of speed and accessibility (Walker, 2021). Citizen journalism has become an alternative for Twitter users who distrust American journalism from mainstream news media. Thus, this study is conducted to see the discourse of American journalism on Twitter. That is the research problem of this study. In the context of BLM movements, it is also important to understand the position of citizen journalism in American journalism, especially in the discussion of racism. By conducting this study, the presence of citizen journalism in the discourse of racism should bring more conversations in American society, especially in journalism. It also means that the role of citizen journalism in the discussion of racism in America and American journalism should be well understood.

This study will analyze Twitter users' tweets concerning the BLM movements. Tweets relating to Black Lives Matter, racism, and critics of American journalism will be taken as primary data to answer the research questions. The tweets range from 25 May 2020 to 7 June 2020. Tweets from the particular date and discussion are collected with a total of 255 tweets, and they are divided into two categories; tweets from protesters (identified by P) and tweets from self-identified professional journalists (identified by J). Furthermore, the collected data will be analyzed with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to van Dijk (2001), CDA focuses on uncovering the relation between power in society through text. It relates the reader to the social and political context where the text is produced and targeted. Complex social structures, political issues, and social problems within the society should be uncovered through CDA and finding such confirmation, reproduction, legitimation, and challenge of power and dominance. The central focus of CDA is power in which it controls society. The study on racial inequality within CDA lies in the racist representation of mass media, literature, and film. It portrays the Others' inferiority negatively while emphasizing the dominant power of certain groups. CDA objectively takes a side on the powerless groups and tries to reveal the harmful effects of the dominant power. While racism issues in journalism will be the main focus of this study, it should be first understood that news institutions or journalism in the United States have contributed to maintaining the racist perspective of society.

DISCUSSION

Citizen Journalism as an Online Resistance

For African Americans, Twitter becomes a venue to have their voice. Citizen journalism, therefore, becomes an alternative for them to fix the 'wrongs' of society. They try to address the police brutality and violence against African Americans and fix the negative portrayal of the community, as citizen journalism has the freedom to be subjective in reporting events and presenting facts to the public (Walker, 2021). It allows the African American community to give their perspective in reporting an event without reducing their opinions or feelings. Protesters on Twitter are transforming into citizen journalists to report and respond to the issue. By this understanding, citizen journalism should be seen as an online resistance. They show their opposition against the US police department and the news institution. According to (Korson, 2015), social media should be seen as a tool to identify and acknowledge social problems, public perception and find a solution for the problems. This means that citizen journalism in the BLM movement should be seen as a tool to identify the racial issue in the United States, and citizen journalism should be seen as a tool to find the solution to the racial issue.

Given the understanding that citizen journalism is a tool to acknowledge public perception, efforts to change the public perception of the African American community are shown on Twitter. Yet, as citizen journalism allows the reporters to show their feelings and opinion, it tends to be subjective. They express emotion as unavoidable characters, and it fills the atmosphere of the protest on Twitter. The unavoidable emotion, expression, and reaction

of citizen journalists in reporting events on Twitter are mostly apparent to give more meaning to the racial issue being addressed. Anger is the most apparent reaction of the protesters during the BLM protest in 2020. This anger expression also dominates the first weeks of the BLM protest in 2020. This is a response to police violence, brutality, and killings of African American community. Anger expressed explicitly is mainly addressed to the US department and the government, while a few also addresses the news institution. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter is often used by the protesters to give more stress and highlight the serious problem that should be paid attention to.

P4 : we were doing nothing wrong. the organizers of this protest put so much fucking effort into keeping it as peaceful as possible and look at what these pos cops CHOSE TO DO TO US #columbusprotest #BlackLivesMatter

P19 : @kcpolice WE are disappointed. This man was using his WORDS and was responded to with WEAPONS. #BlackLivesMatter #JusticeForGeorge

As anger is mainly employed by protesters or citizen journalists on Twitter, there are several ways to express the feeling. As seen in P4 and P19, protesters express anger by using capitalization to give stress and highlight the important thing that they want the readers to be more aware of. The use of capitalization is purposed to emphasize that the readers are not missed out on the important thing. According to (Zappavigna, 2012), capitalization is one of the efforts to show an upscaled emotion, both positive and negative. It functions to express anger or yelling and intensify intonational focus in speech positively and negatively (Heath, 2018).

Expression and meaning are intensified with capitalization in the tweets, and upscaled emotions of the P4 and P19 are rather seen as negative. This negative emotion, or anger, is seen by giving the tweet context, where they picture a confrontation between protesters and police officers. The capital letters in P4 'CHOSE TO DO TO the US' indicate their disappointment with the violence of the police officers toward the protesters. It highlights the action of the police toward the protesters as something that they cannot see positively, that they use violence against the protesters.

Meanwhile, P19 expresses anger by putting the word 'WORDS' and 'WEAPONS' in capitalized words. Capitalization in P19 gives more comparison to the objects. It also gives an irony that a peaceful protester responded to the violence of the police. Moreover, looking at the coherence of the *tweet*, the citizen journalist wants to highlight the unlogical police response to the peaceful act of the protesters. The words are not equal to weapons, and a peaceful act only results in a violent response. Yet, capitalization of the word 'WE' is different from anger. 'WE' capitalization is instead to stress the protesters' collective emotion while addressing the Kansas City Police Department (@kcpolice). It aims to represent the protesters in general.

Besides capitalization, anger is also shown by using the swearing word. In P19, the swearing word 'fucking' emphasizes protesters' effort. Swearing has been used to intensify the emotive effect of an utterance as it is a part of lexical infixing or syntactical interposing between uninterruptible or interruptible collocation (McMillan, 1980). Even without capitalization, swearing words are taboo words that also intensify the meaning of the words. Swearing words

provides a more profound expression of an individual's feelings in the communication activities even though it is not appropriate and does not have politeness (Friyanto & Ashadi, 2020). The absence of politeness indicates the negative emotion of the protester, leading back to anger. As swearing is being addressed to the police officers, this also implies the absence of respect toward the police. Swearing words is used purposely by citizen journalists to show their anger toward them and show their impoliteness and the loss of respect to the public institution that was supposed to be protecting the African American community instead of harming them.

Through P4 and P19, citizen journalism becomes a tool for protesters to express their anger toward the police. Protesters on the streets cannot speak directly and entirely to the police, and thus, they do not have the space to voice out their concerns besides on social media, such as Twitter. It allows protesters to be loud and show their true expression on Twitter through citizen journalism. Twitter is used purposefully to express their anger, reaction, and feelings in any way possible to the public. It is a venue full of opportunities to speak without being interrupted while reporting the police's attitude in handling the protest. However, anger dominating the atmosphere on Twitter benefits the protesters. To spread the events, mobilize the protest, and create more awareness among the public, anger is the fuel for the protesters. As anger spreads faster in social media, it creates more national and global awareness of the existence of police brutality against unarmed African American men. Stürmer & Simon (2009) found that group-based anger is likely to increase the awareness and participation of social movements. Anger in the social movement itself strongly connects with the

collective experiences of collective identity emotionally and politically. African American community, as a community, has their collective anger derived from the politicization of their collective identity. Particularly, they are often marginalized and criminalized by the majority of American society in many sectors of life. Hence, the BLM movement grew larger because of collective anger caused by the marginalization of African American community. There is an individual emotional experience in every African American community. They live in fear of being killed by police officers, and there is the politicization of identity because they are seen as bad, threatening or criminal.

J24 : Protest ends at the Miami-Dade County Pre-Trial Detention Center, where organizers have kept most protestors away from police. One protestor has been speaking to officers, trying to get them to converse. "We are not afraid of you ... drop your badge and fight me like a man."

J41 : Protesters have arrived outside the 67th precinct where cops have set up a barricade and are standing in formation with shields. Chants of "WHO KEEPS US SAFE? WE KEEP US SAFE!" and "FUCK THE POLICE"

Besides protesters, the employed journalist also turns themselves into citizen journalists on Twitter. Self-identified professional journalists post the tweets above, not carrying their institutional names. Their reports can be considered citizen journalists because they do not go through the institution's editing, censorship, and filtering of information. Indeed, there are differences

between protesters as citizen journalists and employed journalists as citizen journalists because of their professional backgrounds or experiences. First, as seen from J24 and J41, journalists avoid using first-person in reporting the protest. They describe them as ‘protesters’ regardless of their participation and presence in the protest itself. It is different from P19 which uses the word ‘we’. They put themselves in a neutral position purposely to maintain objectivity. Yet, it should be understood that pure objectivity cannot be achieved entirely. Especially on Twitter, journalism between professional and personal communication lead facts and opinions in a position that can be shifted easily (Brems et al., 2017). The use of ‘protesters’ rather than ‘we’ may not include the journalists in protest participation, but their focus on the protesters’ perspective shows the journalists’ subjectivity. The journalists choose the topic because they also believe in it. They focus on the protesters’ dialogue with the police officers during the protest. J24 cites a protester’s dialogue, “We are not afraid of you ... drop your badge and fight me like a man”, to the police officers on the scene. The journalist’s choice to put the dialogue to their report portrays the bravery of the protesters, which is against the police officers as opposition and to aim the ultimate goal of the protest. J21 also cites the bravery of the protesters who chant, ‘WHO KEEPS US SAFE? WE KEEP US SAFE!’ and ‘FUCK THE POLICE’. Their choice to cite the dialogue of the protesters gives more portrayal of their anger, and it highlights the general atmosphere of the protest. Supporting the protesters’ tweets like P4 and P9, they choose to put anger as the main emotion of the protesters. It will also maintain the general atmosphere of the protesters both on Twitter and on the streets. Journalists’ choice to put

their dialogue in their report works as a motivation to increase engagement on Twitter users and increase the number of. Participation in social movement activity. Hence, transforming Twitter users into protesters on the streets.

Both journalists and protesters tend to show anger in their reports. For protesters, the anger itself should be expressed, while the journalist rather covers the anger. Despite being known as taboo words, Swearing words helps an individual express their emotion and feelings easily while the personal and social goals of communication are not reduced (Jay, 2009). Therefore, it is crucial to notice how anger impacts the flow of the protest and atmosphere on Twitter and impacts the flow of the report by the journalists. Citing anger-based dialogue and chants of the protesters is done purposely by the journalists to convert more participation and more reactions of the readers into protesters on the streets. Besides the anger itself fitting the atmosphere of Twitter hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, it also helps to encourage and maintain the community’s motivation while protesting against the police officers. It indicates that swearing words invite the readers to feel the emotion and anger of the reporter or protesters and the readers to participate in the protest on the streets.

It is important to notice that swearing words are often used in reporting the protest. In a formal organization like a news institution, swearing words in news coverage are prohibited for the good of child-rearing practice (Jay, 2009). However, citizen journalists are not part of news institutions, and they have their own choice of words. There is no prohibition in using any words as there is no editing or censorship. The

journalist's decision to put protesters' swearing chant in their report provides them with a way to portray the atmosphere and emotion aroused during the protest. Besides anger and frustration, swearing words function as insults directed toward their interlocutors (Jay, 2009). Apparently, 'FUCK THE POLICE' in J41 insults the police department. Therefore, while they show an effort to be neutral in the word choice of 'protesters' instead of 'we', citing swearing words directed at the police department still show their subjectivity. They are taking the side to the protesters. Swearing words in their report is an important point because it fits the goal, the motivation, and the agenda of the BLM movement against police violence. It is purposely put to express or maintain the spirit. By using citizen journalism, the protesters' emotion and atmosphere are well portrayed for the readers on Twitter without reducing the main goal of the protest itself. Moreover, besides addressing their anger to the police officers, anger to news media are also found in many *tweets*. During the BLM protest, the role of news institution and their news coverage in shaping the narrative is being addressed and challenged to a wider audience. Still, protesters show their opposition to news institutions without separating their intensified or upscaled emotions.

P77 : The words "unarmed black man/woman" makes me SCREAM. White NRA members throw entire temper tantrums on national TV over 2nd amendment protection when CHILDREN are massacred at school ...but UNARMED has to be tossed in front of "black" to prove they didn't deserve death.

In P77, anger is still seen and dominates protesters' *tweets*. It is apparent that in 'SCREAM', capitalization is used to express the protester's anger. It criticized the word 'unarmed black man/woman' used by the news coverage by news institutions to imply innocent African Americans. P77 suggests comparing two events to add more irony to the event. Those are the white NRA members who demand more of their rights, children who are massacred at school, and the innocent African Americans who are being shot while unarmed. From the *tweet*, it can be assumed that NRA members are armed and may be harmful, but the word 'unarmed' is not being given to prove that they are harmless. Meanwhile, there is a tendency for news institutions to give African Americans the word 'unarmed' to prove their innocent and harmless. P77 shows the protesters' awareness of this problematic tendency of news institutions to cover the protest. To achieve the movement's goal, a direct call and address toward this problematic practice are taken by a protester in P77. Creating more awareness on this issue becomes fundamental in understanding that news institution is one of the factors that this systemic racism is maintained.

While anger is shown in capitalized words, their confidence and no hesitation are implied by their choice of words. Expressing confidence is shown by stating 'SCREAM' rather than 'CRY' or 'SAD'. Scream, compared to another expression, requires more physical energy. It implies the power the protester has in responding to this issue. Anger and confidence are the main emotional atmosphere and become a source of power or motivation of the protesters. This comparison in P77 invites the readers to think critically about the unequal portrayal of NRA members and African American community.

J59 : Remember, this nationwide rebellion is NOT ABOUT GEORGE FLOYD. It's about the ENTIRE SYSTEM of ANTI-BLACK RACISM. The "authorities" and the media will try to focus on individual victims, instead of focusing on the victimizers. #protests2020 #BlackLivesMatter #AtlantaProtest

Besides anger, citizen journalism has a significant role in mobilizing the protest. It also brings protesters' awareness and attitude toward the news institution. The *tweet* above, for example, tries to remind us about the goal of the movement. Capitalization is found in the tweet. The phrase 'NOT ABOUT GEORGE FLOYD' is purposed to tell its readers that besides George Floyd, other unarmed African Americans are killed by police brutality. It informs the reader that the death of George Floyd is only a trigger for the 2020's movement. Meanwhile, the words 'ENTIRE SYSTEM' and 'ANTI-BLACK RACISM' emphasize the main problem that needs to be reformed or removed. In contrasting positions, the media and authorities against the protesters, the precise categories of parties are given in the tweet.

Interestingly, the use of quotation in 'authorities' carries a deeper meaning. According to (Washington, 1992), there are three basic things to understand a quotation. Those are expression and roles, the type of object mentioned, and the semantic value. The quotation in J59 refers to the institution with power in controlling society. In the *tweet*, quoting 'authorities' is used to express the disappointment toward the US government or US law enforcement, the institutional group that has the authority to protect the society. This use of quotation indicates the doubt of the

journalist in the role of the institution. The journalist questions the main role of authority, in which they are supposed to serve and protect the American society. Ironically, the African American community is fighting against them as they kill many unarmed and innocent African Americans. Besides US law enforcement, the journalist addresses news institutions' subjectivity in covering the protest by mentioning 'the media'. The victimizers are not being focused, and instead, the African Americans themselves are portrayed as the ones guilty for their violence or even death.

However, journalists focus more on the 'authorities' rather than the media, as the use of quotation is only put to 'authorities'. This indicates that the journalist does not question the role of the media and that the subjectivity of the media may have been normalized, in which the media's role in practising racism is rarely realized. According to Jakaza & Visser (2016), attitudinal and manipulation of news advances the writer's ideology to its readers' ideology. The news's judgments and opinions are considered facts for its readers, and they receive them unconsciously. The absence of quotation marks for the media in J59 indicates that the journalist does not stress the news institution's role in its subjectivity to produce and maintain systemic racism. Instead, the journalist aims to bring more awareness to how the 'authorities' work as they were supposed. However, *tweets* like J59 hahatheirs role mobilize the flow of news during the protest as well as tmobilizingze the protesters' perspective or opinion about their opposition. Awareness being built about the media should be the main concern to reach the main goal of the BLM movement.

P99 : They are not #Riots this is an #Uprising a #BlackUprising.

This is not #Violence this is righteous indignation a #Rebellion. We are not #Thugs we are standing up to #Tyranny and #Fascism we are #FreedomFighters. #B1 #BlackUprising #BlackRevolution #JusticeForGeorgeFloyd

To bring more awareness, P99 shows an effort to provide knowledge to its readers. P99 is a *tweet* responding to J59. P99 confirms information given by J59 by giving details of how the protest should be seen. It tries to correct the misportrayal given by the news institution. It corrects words described by news institutions, such as violence, riots, and thugs, and replaces them with rebellion, Black uprising, and freedom fighters. The effort to list the words that should be corrected is important in the protest. It is similar to P77, which tries to prove the innocence of African Americans by addressing the problematic use of ‘unarmed’.

Moreover, hashtags are also used in P99 continuously. Hashtags became crucial on Twitter, especially during the protest, to mobilize and spread the news. People can track and search for information or conversation on particular topics through the hashtag. Zappavigna (2015) called it “searchable talk”, online discourse is easier to find through semiotic strategies. Numerous hashtags occur during the BLM movement from years to years. In the movement’s early days, general hashtags occur such as #BLM2020, #GeorgeFloyd, #BlackLivesMatter, #BLM, and #JusticeforFloyd. Hashtags based on more context occur in later days of the movement, such as #NoJusticeNoPeace, #BlackUprising, #JusticeforBreonna, #SayTheirName,

#IcantBreathe, #BlackUprising, #BlackRevolution, and many more. City-based hashtags occur to organize tweets in particular cities, such as #BLMLA, #AtlantaProtest, #SeattleProtest, #JacksonvilleProtest, etc.

Moreover, hashtags against police officers are likely to occur, such as #DefundThePolice and #DemilitarizeThePolice. But hashtags against news institution is rarely found during the protest. There are indeed expressions of dissatisfaction with news institutions. However, hashtags are given specifically to the news institution. They are most likely to use it only to demand the police department’s reformation, which they see have proof of the most problematic and harmful evidence. It means that problems in news institutions are as urgent as in police institutions. However, employed journalists on Twitter may contribute to the lack of hashtags directed to news institutions. Thus, hashtags directed to police institutions, such as #DefundThePolice and #DemilitarizeThePolice, intensify the situation. It creates hardship in addressing the problems of news institution as hashtag directed to news institution is absent; this also makes an effort to address systemic racism in news institution harder.

The high number of *tweets* being addressed mainly to the police department indicates that news institutions’ problem is insufficient attention. Indeed, efforts to spread awareness against media are shown in various tweets. However, there is a lack of urgency from the community because of the absence of hashtags toward news institutions. News media successfully affect the mental representation of the public (Gutsche Jr., 2015) because it does not create any physical proof or harm, while police’s physical harm to the community has been shown in the most

obvious way. Protesters, therefore, see more urgency to address the problem of police brutality rather than news institutions. Indeed, anger is also discussed in news institutions, but the effort to address new institutions cannot be separated from police institutions' concern.

Citizen Journalism as A 'Switching Tool' to American News Media

While news institutions work cooperatively with the police department to maintain white superiority, there are also times when both institutions do not work together. The clash between news institutions and police departments also happened during the BLM movement in 2020. Nick Waters, a journalist, reported more than 140 police violence against the press. Indeed, this is contrary to the idea that the police department and news institutions work cooperatively together. Police violence or police brutality target the press unexceptionally regardless of their profession or race during the BLM protest 2020. It is, therefore, a disruption of their relationship (Walker, 2021). There is a shifting long-held tradition and routine between police department and journalism, where police are no longer a truthful journalism source. They are now an opposed party that physically abuses them. It creates a shifting perspective that news crews or journalists are no longer immune to police violence.

J141 : At this point I identified myself as part of the press (citing my press credentials and bright yellow media vest) but was told to "fuck off" and shot again over a dozen times at close range by officer Becker of BPD who swiped at my camera as I took a picture of his nameplate

In J141, journalists use citizen journalism to report police violence against them. They appear to be powerless in front of the police and pictures police officers as ignorant as their credentials, and press privilege is not considered. It reveals the non-harmonious relationship between the media and the police. J141 describes the details of police's violence regardless of their press status; driving out the press, swiping the press' camera, and shooting a dozen times. It is an effort of the journalist to give a general picture of powerlessness in front of the police. The journalist does not identify themselves as a journalist from the first time because 'At this point at the beginning of the *tweet* shows the hopelessness of the journalist; they may want to identify themselves as protesters. The police do not give protection to protesters, and 'At this point' indicates their despair to identify themselves as the press. This despair proves the opposing position of police toward news crews and that news crews stand in the same place with protesters. Hence, this provokes empathy for the journalist and shows Twitter users' opinion that any effort to report the protest objectively is not taken by news institutions.

Twitter alternatively becomes a venue for journalists to report their newsworthy coverages, contributing to future reports because every journalist is in a race to report or update the same issue (McGregor & Molyneux, 2020). The journalist uses Twitter to build their personal and professional brand (Brems et al., 2017). Interestingly, an employed journalist on Twitter remains loyal to their news institution even though they present news and report individually on Twitter. Indeed, this will advantage news institutions. Employed journalists on Twitter are gaining more trust from the public, and it

will have an impact on the news institution they are working for. Therefore, the violence against the news crews strengthens the entire blame on the police department because they harm news institutions' protesters and news crews.

J132 : This is the moment Minneapolis Police fired on our CBS News crew with rubber bullets. As you can see, no protesters anywhere near us- we all were wearing credentials and had cameras out. Our sound engineer was hit in the arm. #cbsnews

Moreover, J132 is a *tweet* posted by a journalist when they are targets of police violence. They report on Twitter as citizen journalists while working for CBS News. It suggests to Twitter users as their readers that they are victims of police brutality by using 'As you can see. It proves that they are in the place to fight with the protesters by emphasizing the event where police officers are against the press. The news crews' different treatment of police officers leads the entire attention and blame only the police. They are portrayed as the only institution against the BLM movement. While the journalists report individually, it speaks on behalf of news crews in general that they are fighting and struggling against police violence and walk together with the protesters. Respectfully, this may be correct if the journalist reporters are reporting the event individually without carrying their institutional name and fighting against racism at the institutional level. In J132, the hashtag #cbsnews at the end of the *tweet* indicates that they represent their institution. It wants to suggest that CBS, as a news institution, is a target of police violence, struggling while reporting. Indeed, employed journalists carry

out their news institution's task in a different venue in citizen journalism, social media. It allows gatekeeping, breaking the news, spreading news, and maintaining their relationship with the audience (Brems et al., 2017). News institution is likely to be advantaged as the viewership of the institution is increased. This victimization of themselves, portraying news institutions as also the target of police violence, is an effort to show that they are on the same side as protesters. This individual self-report of employed journalists through citizen journalism put the entire blame on the police. It portrays the US police department as the only violent and racist institution responsible for the entire issue. It presents an opportunity used by news institutions to reclaim public trust.

J29 : EXCLUSIVE: "These officers are the elite of the elite". A look at @MiamiPD's Bike Response Team- a specialized unit deployed to handle large crowds and protests. I'm LIVE at 6 on @nbc6

J39 : WATCH: I was recording when the first clash between police & protestors broke out in Atlanta. @cbs46 #cbs46 #news #GeorgeFloydprotest

Similarly, J29 and J39 are *tweeted* portraying police officers negatively, and they promote their institution name in the same *tweets*. J29 and J39 show that employed journalists remain loyal to their institutions despite their effort to present themselves individually on Twitter. They take advantage of citizen journalism to exclusively promote their institution's name, program, and positions without forgetting to portray themselves on the same side of the protesters. The word "EXCLUSIVE:" and "WATCH:" aims to increase the engagement of their report

and promote their news program on television. As protesters' feelings are dominant with anger, a negative portrayal of police officers is given to increase engagement. The "These officers are the elite of the elite" portrays police officers with a judgmental attitude as they can both control and ruin the protest in a violent and non-violent way. This judgment is addressed using sarcasm to provide irony to the fact in their statement. Moreover, J39 positions the journalist as part of the protestors because there is a sense of participation in the phrase "I was recording", suggesting to the readers that the journalist is on the same side of the streets as the protestors. These *tweets* participate in the discussion of police brutality while ignoring the participation of news institutions in disadvantaging the community. Ironically, it is gatekeeping the protestors and Twitter users in the urgency to change the news institution's systemic racism.

Nevertheless, it should not be disregarded that journalists, reporters, and news crews have reported news on behalf of the protestors. The journalist has successfully gotten the attention of protestors, especially in giving empathy toward them. However, protestors should be careful in giving empathy to news institutions because there are possibilities for white agenda. The confrontation between the journalist and the police may be newsworthy. News institution is controlled by white elites in which white power and white superiority are highly maintained. However, the journalist also has an ideology to fight for their beliefs whether they are against systemic racism or not. Indeed, there are dilemmas for journalists in this matter. They are; sharing personal information and remaining professional, remaining factual and opinionated, promoting self implicitly and explicitly, broadcasting information and interaction (Brems et al.,

2017). Regardless of the employed journalist who carries their institution, several journalists brand themselves as individual journalists to voice their voices during the protest. They join collective goals with the community. Reports of injuries, the confrontation between them and police officers individually without their institution. Thus, they purely use citizen journalism to inform the events without any agenda against the African American community or the BLM protestors.

J137 : Myself, photographer, and producer just made it back to the car. We were with a group of media and thought we were in a safe spot. We kept saying we're media. Police tear gassed and pepper sprayed the entire group. Everyone ran. It was insane. It happened so fast.

J137 is one of the tweets in which the journalist purely uses citizen journalism to inform and report the events to the public. It is still reporting police violence and brutalities like J29 and J39. However, they do not attach their institutional name. It provides information that the privilege of the press is no longer applied to police officers. J137 does not bring any representation of the news institution to the *tweet*. It reports the event and information in detail purposely to gain the empathy of the protestors only toward the individual or a small group of the press. Hence, there is no white agenda as the news institution's position or effort is not pictured or mentioned.

From the tweets above, police violence remains the center of the *tweets*. Blaming the police is still the central atmosphere for protestors and journalists, even news institutions. Even more, violent police response to the protest helps news institutions

escape the blame and be responsible for the protest. They escape from how African Americans are constructed as criminals and how peaceful protest is constructed as a violent protest. Focus on the power of news institutions is easily distracted, especially by the protesters and Twitter users. It brings advantages to news institutions where they can regain public trust. Journalists, especially the employed ones, indirectly give space for news institutions to appear positive in front of the protesters and the African American community. Uniquely, they change the public's perception through the power of citizen journalism and blaming 'all' to the police.

Given this understanding, citizen journalism is vulnerable without a collective and robust understanding of Twitter users. It can be a resistance tool, but it can be easily shifted. News institutions find their way to gatekeep Twitter users' attention and protesters' attention by seeing news institutions as problematic. A strong statement from BLM organizers to maintain a solid and unwavering goal should be developed to distinguish the power of news institutions in both television and social media.

CONCLUSION

Citizen journalism has brought advantages for African Americans, especially in fighting against powerful institutions by using public spaces in online social media, such as Twitter. Indeed, citizen journalism becomes a tool for their resistance and rejecting racism in news institutions. While they report the news without neglecting their objectivity and emotion, they show an effort to deny the media's portrayal of African Americans and the media's portrayal of the protest that often gatekeepers the public's

perception of the community. Unfortunately, citizen journalism also shows the lack of having a solid and consistent perception of the issue. Their bias is easily shifted because police violence targets news crews. The rejection of news institutions and journalists is no longer the primary attention as soon as police officers attack news crews. Concerning their empathy in responding to this issue, employed journalists and news institutions find the gap between reclaiming the attention and reshaping protesters' perspectives of this issue. While citizen journalism has brought many advantages to the movement, its most effective use has not been yet achieved.

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