

Influence of black lives matter



The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter has been circulating in the media since 2013 when it was created. The Black Lives Matter Movement was created after the murderer of the teenage African American boy, Trayvon Martin was acquitted. He was an unarmed teenager walking home from 7-11 when George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer, approached him. There are several witness statements for the altercation, in the end, we have the body of an innocent African American teen and murderer that was not put behind bars.

The death of Trayvon Martin wasn't the first hate crime associated with injustice. Unfortunately, we live in a country where racial profiling exists and ends up taking the lives of many innocent people. It was this form of injustice that drew the line and brought together a group of people to protest. The mission statement for the group goes as follows: Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression. (Garza, 2016).

Recently we have seen the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter in the sports media. Professional athletes are using their social platform to support the cause and protest alongside them. This has led to the involvement of other celebrities and even politicians. Take Colin Kaepernick for instance, former quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers. He refused to stand up for the national anthem instead he took a knee. In an interview, Kaepernick says, I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid

leave and getting away with murder. This act caused so much controversy in the United States, people started taking sides.

Kaepernick was not the first and only athlete to protest a social injustice, however, with his media platform, he was able to bring a lot of attention to this social issue. Another prominent athlete to stand alongside this movement is Serena Williams. Serena Williams, an American tennis player who has revolutionized women's tennis, spoke out on Twitter after the wrongful murder of Philando Castile. Williams tweeted, In London, I have to wake up to this. He was black. Shot 4 times? When will something be done- no REALLY be done?!?!, along with a picture of three paragraphs which summarizes what happened to Philando Castile. After Williams won in Wimbledon she raised her fist. This was an example of appropriation of the iconic 1968 Olympics Black Power salute. In the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, John Carlos and Tommie Smith not only competed in the Olympic but took the gold and bronze medal. They also took this as an opportunity to protest for, all the working-class people- black and white (Carlos, 1968).

They protested by putting their fist in a black glove and putting it in the air, they also wore beads and a scarf to protest lynching. Yet another example of an athlete protesting through sports is Huston Street. Huston, the former professional baseball pitcher, tweeted, Pray for #PhilandoCastile and #AltonSterling families and then demand justice, my nephews are young black men and their future depends on it.(Street, 2016). It is important to note that Street himself is not an African American, he is a white former baseball player.

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This shows that the Black Lives Matter movement is, in fact, a diverse group and that everyone should stand together because after all, we are all the same. These are just a few of the many examples that show people taking a stand for what they believe in even if it means they could lose it all. As Spider-Man once said, with great power comes great responsibility.

Therefore is important for people who have the ability to influence the public to use their social status to inform the public and to take a stand in what they believe in.