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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the extent to which, if any, Twitter has a role in transmitting information and giving way to collaborative journalism – that form of journalism in which people actively take part in news construction – and in what ways ideology and consensus are constructed.

The killing of two black people in 2015 by the police, in Ferguson and Baltimore, US, resulted in an explosion of riots and social disorder in which the media showed a great interest, simultaneously mirrored in social media. In particular, Twitter proved to be a successful resource for both popular collaborative journalism and collective social action. Because of this novel role assigned to Twitter, attention has to be paid to the relationship that exists between our society, its stereotypes and prejudices, and social networks (Zappavigna 2012).

Starting with a linguistic analysis of the New York Times and Wall Street Journal editorials about Trayvon Martin's and Eric Garner's deaths (with a contrastive investigation of 'on the surface' and 'beneath the surface' discourse at macro- and micro-levels; cf. Hall 1992: 291, and van Dijk 2000), I will move on to an analysis of tweets related to those same episodes, thematically linked by the #blacklivesmatter and #icantbreathe hashtags in Twitter, in order to see how perceptions and opinions are constructed in texts where space is a severe constraint.

This corpus linguistic analysis, based on more than 2,000 tweets collected with Tweetarchivist (www.tweetarchivist.com), is grounded in CDA (Fairclough 1995, 2015; Wodak 1996; Wodak and Ludwig 1999). The results suggest that while in the newspapers the language used seems to reflect corporate ideologies, tweets mirror the stereotypes existing in the society which is responsible for constructing them.

Key words: CDA, corpus linguistics, news discourse, collaborative journalism, Twitter

1. Introduction: Some Key Points

The aim of this paper¹ is to analyse the extent to which, if any, Twitter has a role in forming an ideology while transmitting information and giving way to collaborative journalism – that form of journalism in which people actively take part in news construction – and in what ways ideology and consensus are constructed.

Before introducing this topic, we need to clarify some key points related to the concepts of news, editorials, audience, the Internet and social networks, and that of collaborative or citizen journalism.

As we all know, the media industry plays a fundamental role in conveying information and forming public opinion. It selects events and transforms them into news by applying a set of criteria which are socially constructed (Bell & Garret 1998).

Amongst printed news items, editorials report the opinions of newspaper editors and, at the same time, 'employ textual strategies which foreground the speech act of offering values and beliefs' (Fowler 1991: 209), thus forming the voice of the newspaper (Conboy 2007: 9).

This is possible thanks to certain textual strategies. First, the syntax of editorials is broken up into short sentences, where we have speech-like pieces of information. Second, the style is both colloquial and authoritative. It presents generic statements to predicate an absolute truth, but it may be argumentative whenever the writer needs to confute anything said by 'opponents' or containing other contrasting ideas. Lastly, the journalist requires solidarity (indicated by the use of *we*, *us*, *our* as opposed to *they*, *them*, *their*) from the implied reader and therefore invokes consensus, which refers to that particularly ideology of consensus – positive and negative values – shared by the implied reader, thus creating and/or reinforcing existing stereotypes (Fowler 1991; Conboy 2007). In this sense, editorials form and construct public opinion (van Dijk 1991) – thus implicitly supporting the idea that all other news items are 'facts'.

In the social process of news construction, the audience has traditionally played a passive role. However, the notion of the hypodermic model of an audience has to be dismissed: indeed, the audience does not passively accept ideologies and attitudes conveyed by the media but is rather actively involved in the process of news construction, since its members dynamically bring their knowledge, experience, expectations, attitudes, evaluations, stereotypes and prejudices to news (Hurcup 2014).

The Internet and social networks, Twitter in particular, have indeed contributed to the development of the audience's role: as a vehicle of information they have become responsible for the rise in collaborative or citizen journalism. Collaborative or citizen journalism is a type of journalism where 'citizen journalists use information to monitor the government and corporations, engage in public debate, set the social agenda and make change' (UNESCO 2013; see also UNESCO 2013a).

2. Literature Review

There is a plethora of literature about news. Attention to news and its social value has always been taken into consideration in the applied linguistics field. For instance, attention to the social construction of news has been paid by Berger and Luckman (1976); similarly, Hartley (1982) focuses on the idea of a news item as a social and ideological product. The same trend is continued by Fowler (1991: 10), who claims that 'news is not a value free reflection of 'facts''. More recently, aspects related to the ideas of newsworthiness and news value in news selection have been taken into consideration by Bednarek (2006, 2012, 2015).

As the construction of the news is socially dependent, attention has also been paid by scholars working in the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) field. Van Dijk (1988), for instance, analyses the language of news applied in a social context and later (1995) moves on to the relationship existing between news and ideology. Wodak and Ludwig (1999), on the other hand, in investigating news items show how discourse interacts with power and ideology; such investigation is also carried out from a diachronic perspective (Wodak 1996). Fairclough (1995), in his seminal work, demonstrates that the language of news is permeated in a sociocultural context, which is ultimately economic, political and cultural. The relation between news, ideology and consensus is at the basis of Fowler's (1991) work. As far as this concept is concerned, Baker et al. (2013: 3) claim the media rather than presenting an accurate and objective report of the events tend to offer a *representation* of it, prioritising certain audience's expectations and opinions over others and in doing this, the press exert a social and political influence. Indeed, as Conboy (2010: 7) argues, '[n]ewspapers have always created readers, not news, as their primary function'.

But now a new form of journalism is taking shape. Citizen journalism is a particular form of mass journalism whereby readers actively take part in the discussion of events and interact thanks to the Internet. It has profoundly changed journalism, via smartphones, the Internet and social media (Allen and Thorsen 2009). In particular, Twitter has proved to be a successful resource for both popular collaborative journalism and collective social action. Because of this novel role assigned to Twitter, attention has to be paid to the relationship existing between our society, its stereotypes and prejudices, and social networks (Zappavigna 2012). While the interaction between new patterns of communication and the construction of (political) ideology has recently been taken into consideration with relation to social media (Zhao 2017), to the best of my knowledge, no research has ever been carried out on the relationship between citizen journalism and the ideology behind it.

3. Research Questions

Because of the lack of research about citizen journalism and the construction of ideology, I decided to concentrate on this issue and, more specifically, to focus on two events which happened in the USA, namely, the killings of Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner, two of the most racially-charged events in recent US history, which inflamed media, political and legal controversies, on the one hand, and active public participation, on the other, and which gave way to strong protests on social media, identified on Twitter by the hashtags #icantbreathe and #BlackLivesMatter.

I therefore construct the following overarching research question as the basis for my pilot study:

Does Twitter play a role in forming an ideology while transmitting information and giving way to collaborative journalism?

In order to answer it, I split my research question into two sub-research questions (and correspondingly divide my investigation into two phases), namely:

- a) What is the ideology behind media discourse in the rise of the protest movement in the US against the police towards Afro-American citizens (after the Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner cases)?
- b) Is this ideology mirrored in the hashtags #icantbreathe and #BlackLivesMatter, which emerged as a protest movement in social networks, such as Twitter, in the form of citizen journalism?

4. Methodological Approach

In order to carry out a pilot investigation and answer sub-research question (a), I collected editorials and commentaries about the Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner cases and related protests published in the New York Times (henceforth NYT) and the Wall Street Journal (henceforth WSJ), six articles from each.

The reason why I chose the NYT and the WSJ lies in the fact that they are the top two newspapers in the US by circulation (Pew Research Centre 2014). Furthermore, the NYT, with a circulation of 2,134,150 copies, is a liberal newspaper; while the WSJ, with a distribution of 2,990,216 copies, is a conservative one. The two newspapers are also selected because they have opposite political orientation: their political orientation, or *ideological spectrum*, shows the extent to which, if any, they may influence the ideological orientation of news (Omics International 2018).

The search engine of the NYT evidenced 37 editorials with ‘Trayvon Martin’ as a keyword between 2012 (the year when the killing occurred) and 2016 – of these, only 11 are strictly related to Trayvon’s case. The same search engine found 36 articles with ‘Eric Garner’ as a keyword between 2014 (the year when the killing occurred) and 2016 – of these, 13 deal with Eric Garner’s case, and one with a protest about the jury’s decision to let his alleged killer go free.

The WSJ search engine found 13 articles with ‘Trayvon Martin’ as a keyword; of these, only three are opinion articles dealing with racial issues. The same query was made with ‘Eric Garner’ as a keyword and this found 12 articles, of which only one is an opinion article. The query was made for the same time span as the NYT.

The need to compare opinion articles or editorials related to the same topic obliged me to select only six amongst all the collected articles, as indicated in Table 1, below, where we can see in the first column editorials collected from the NYT and in the third column those collected from the WSJ.

NYT	#	WSJ	#
The Curious Case of Trayvon Martin (16/03/2012)	1a	The Trayvon Martin Tragedies (27/03/2012)	2a
A Search for Justice in the Eric Garner Case (03/12/2014)	1b	Mobs of New York (10/12/2014)	2b
Stop Hiding Police Misconduct in New York (29/07/2015)	1c	A City of Mourning and Demonized Police (06/01/2015)	2c

Table 1. List of collected editorials including their titles and dates of publications

In order to check how newspaper ideologies are mirrored in Twitter, I downloaded all the #blacklivesmatter and #icantbreathe tweets related to the Tavon Martin's and Eric Garnet's cases² for the period 12–20 April 2015, via Tweet Archivist, a 'Twitter analytics tool to search, archive, analyze, visualize, save and export tweets based on a search term or hashtag' (<https://www.tweetarchivist.com/>). In addition, on 14 April, BlackLiveMatters demonstrators protested in cities across the USA following the death of Eric Harris (2 April 2015) and the arrest (12 April) and death of Freddie Gray (on 20 April), while in Baltimore protests were rising (19 April), so the hashtag #HandsUpDontShoot was included. This resulted in more than 2,000 tweets, which called for a manual check of all tweets to exclude retweets, images etc. to obtain 1,765 tweets (31,562 tokens, grouped into two classes: pro-#blacklivematters – 28,365 tokens; anti-#blacklivematters – 3,197 tokens).

The tweets analysis is corpus-driven and mainly based on collocation and concordance analysis. This means that, different from a corpus-based investigation, where existing linguistic patterns can be tested and validated, preconceived linguistic frameworks, categories or theories are not used to identify language patterns, rather the CL approach helps the researcher to elaborate the patterns themselves (see Tognini-Bonelli 2001: 84–5; McEnery and Hardie 2012: 6).

The CL investigation uses WordSmith Tools 6.0 (Scott 2012), a corpus-analysis toolkit software for concordancing and text analysis; the investigation is based on keyword and concordance analyses. A keyword list is generated with a log likelihood test, set by default by WordSmith Tools to $p \leq 0.001$.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Background

5.1.1 #blacklivesmatter

The hashtag #blacklivesmatter was created in 2012, after the murder of Trayvon Martin, whose killer, George Zimmerman, was set free. Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old man, came out of a shop and was walking along a road in Sanford Florida. He met Zimmerman (the neighbourhood watch coordinator for the gated community where Martin was temporarily staying), who suspected Trayvon for some reason and followed him in his car. Instead of waiting for the police, he confronted Trayvon and shot and killed him (26/02/2012). Zimmerman was charged with murder six weeks after the killing, which had previously been dismissed on the basis of the 'Stand your Ground' law. During the trial, there were quite a number of demonstrations against the police. In 2013, the hashtag #blacklivesmatter began to be nationally recognized after the acquittal of Zimmerman, later going viral in 2014 with the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in NY.

5.1.2 #icantbreathe

The hashtag #icantbreathe was created in 2014 after the killing of Eric Garner. During his arrest, he was suffocated with a chokehold. He was thrown to the ground by some policemen and in a video the arrested man's voice can be heard saying 11 times, 'I can't breathe', before dying. The cause of death was confirmed as death by suffocation. However, the jury let the policemen go free; as a consequence, the town was outraged. Twitter was flooded with the hashtag #icantbreathe, with more than 16,000 tweets; and more than 70,000 tweets with the hashtag #EricGarner, soon after the sentence was issued. What is more, the hashtag #CrimingWhileWhite spread rapidly, conveying the idea among Afro-American people that if you are white you can commit any crime and go scot-free.

5.2 Frame Analysis and CDA

As stated above, in the first phase of my investigation I try to answer sub-research question (1), which is:

What is the ideology behind media discourse in the rise of the US protest movement against the police towards Afro-American citizens (after the Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner cases)?

In order to detect media ideology, I applied frame analysis from Goffman (1974). According to Goffman (1974: 21), a frame is a 'schemata interpretation allowing to perceive, identify and label events, thus rendering meaning, organizing experiences and guiding actions'. Our life and society, in other words, is composed of various levels of frames which are linked to each other and we move into them by interpreting each frame on the basis of other frames as well as of our limits. This means that if something is too complex to understand, some people tend to simply ignore it rather than to face it and think. Whenever we ignore a complex issue, we are inclined to divert its complexity into stereotypes and ideologies.

When the same problem is approached with different frames, we have so-called *framing effects*: viewpoints are created, which encourages the elaboration of interpretations. Such interpretations, thanks to CDA (Fairclough 1995, 2006), may be neutral, negative or positive. An interpretation is negative whenever there is no support for the people involved in the editorial, while the interpretation is positive if there is support for the involved people.

Each opinion article is later analysed according to *diagnostic and prognostic framing strategies* (Snow and Bamford 1988): in diagnostic framing, a problem is identified and two results can be obtained: (1) if levelling occurs, then blame is put on somebody/something (and stereotypes are formed); (2) if thinking occurs, a reason for the problem is attributed. In prognostic framing, a solution to the problem is normally detected.

While frame analysis is necessary to interpret trends, by means of which certain phenomena are interpreted within society, CDA is fundamental to explain the linguistic strategies by means of which such phenomena are socially explained and justified – thus emphasising ideologies and the power

imbalances behind them. The levels of analysis are also based on *discourse on the surface* (macro-level discursive features; Hall 1992) and *discourse beneath the surface* (micro-level discursive features; cf. Doty 1993). Hall (1992: 291) claims that discourse on the surface is:

...a kind of knowledge about [a] topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way.

Doty (1993: 305), on the other hand, highlights that, on a micro-level, textual interpretation is not an individual and subjective interpretation but rather a more in-depth interpretation of 'what the discursive practices do'.

5.2.1 Discourse on the surface: the analysis of headlines

One result emerging from a *surface* frame analysis of a superficial reading of the NYT and WSJ editorials collected is that these newspapers, though having a positive tone with regard to Afro-American people, deal with events in a completely different tone: this is evident in the headline choice. Let us consider the NYT editorial entitled, *The curious case of Trayvon Martin*, published on 16/03/2012 (1NYT). Interestingly, it makes an intertextual link to *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, dealing with the story of a man who regresses from adulthood to infancy: by comparing Trayvon to the absurd story of a man who pretends to be of a different age (than his own), and who cannot live, which makes him forever unhappy, the journalist is implicitly denouncing the absurdity and devastating action against Trayvon.

In the WST, the headline chosen for the (1WSJ) commentary *The Trayvon Martin Tragedies* published on 27 March 2012, on the contrary, shows subtle irony through plural 'tragedies': how many tragedies can there be, but the killing of a boy? Only the sub-headline explains the 'tragedies' and gives priority to the tragedies themselves: *The recent killing of Trayvon Martin needs more investigation. But where's the outrage over the daily scourge of black-on-black crime?* However sad a killing may be, it *needs more investigation*. It is the second part that reveals the real tragedy, thanks to the rhetorical question and the words 'outrage', 'scourge' and 'crime' – a type of crime that is, incidentally, 'black-on-black'. The attention is thus moved from the killing of an Afro-American boy to the murders of black people by black people.

In the NYT, the headline *A Search for Justice in the Eric Garner Case* (2NYT), published on 3 December, 2014, asks for justice and, doubtless, transforms Eric Garner into a victim. The sub-headline *The Staten Island grand jury must have seen the same video everyone else did: the one showing a group of New York City police officers swarming and killing an unarmed black man, Eric Garner* clearly shows Eric as the patient to whom actions are done; he is 'unarmed', while police are 'killing' him in a 'swarming', animal-like way. Undoubtedly, the blame is on the police.

The WSJ, once again, tells a completely different story with its *Mobs of New York* (2WSJ), published on 10 December 2014: the protests in New York are

not seen as a normal right that people have to demonstrate against something, because they are carried out by ‘mobs’.

In *Stop Hiding Police Misconduct in New York* (3NYT), published on 29 July 2015, the ‘police’ are the agent and they are regarded as responsible for the situation. The presence of the word ‘misconduct’ has negative connotations, which is at odds with the behaviour the police should have. This position is completely the opposite in the commentary article of the WSJ *A City of Mourning and Demonized Police* (3WSJ), published on 6 January 2015: the police here are not the agent but rather the *affected participant*, with the role of a patient. Furthermore, a metaphor is used to stress the victim role police play in the events.

A surface analysis reveals interesting aspects: the headlines of the NYT and the WSJ seem to reveal opposite positions as to the events under consideration. Their interpretations, even at a surface level, are fundamental because how headlines are read gives the angle from which the audience will approach the rest of the commentary: it creates in the audience a biased background against which to interpret the whole text.

5.2.2 Discourse beneath the surface: editorial frame analysis

The results emerging from a beneath the *surface* frame analysis evidence the creation of diagnostic and prognostic frames, drawing from Snow and Bamford (1988). Indeed, in both the NYT and the WSJ we see the identification of a problem, thanks to diagnostic framing strategies, and the subsequent realization of prognostic framing strategies which can develop into levelling by putting the blame for the problem onto somebody or something, or reasoning, by finding a solution to the problem and suggesting a proactive behaviour.

The first case of diagnostic-prognostic framing strategies is shown in Table 2, below. In the first row, we can see the names of the newspapers, in the second the headlines 1a and 1b and, in brackets, the date of publication. In the first column, there is an indication of framing strategies, which can be diagnostic (first column, third row), with an indication of the problem (second column, third row), or prognostic (first column, fourth row), with an indication of a solution (second column, fourth row), accordingly followed by an NYT text (third column) or a WSJ one (fourth column).

The NYT editorial (1NYT) presents the PROBLEM as a series of unanswered questions that represent the tragedy of the killing. The rhetorical strategy, beginning with three unexplained ‘whys’, seems to be a cry for justice, which becomes much more urgent if the reader perceives it as a case that ‘has reignited a furore about vigilante justice, racial-profiling and equitable treatment under the law, and it has stirred the pot of racial strife’, a case where fathers feel impotent as regards safeguarding the lives of their sons: ‘This is the fear that seizes me whenever my boys are out in the world’, and ultimately, but not the least, a case ‘where the law might prove insufficient to salve [the father’s] loss’. And it is precisely this point which shows where to look for blame, that the law is insufficient, not only juridically, but above all humanly. A SOLUTION seems to be absent, as the ‘racial sensitivity of this case is heavy’; and yet it is implicitly here that the legal system has to work.

Newspaper		NYT	WSJ
Diagnostic framing strategies	Headline	The Curious Case of Trayvon Martin (1NYT) (16/03/2012)	The Trayvon Martin Tragedies (1WSJ) (27/03/2012)
	Problem	Trayvon was buried on March 3. Zimmerman is still free and has not been arrested or charged with a crime. Yet the questions remain: Why did Zimmerman find Trayvon suspicious? Why did he pursue the boy when the 911 operator instructed him not to? Why did he get out of the car, and why did he take his gun when he did? How is it self-defense when you are the one in pursuit? Who initiated the altercation? Who cried for help? Did Trayvon's body show evidence of a struggle? What moved Zimmerman to use lethal force?	The shooting death of Trayvon Martin in Florida has sparked national outrage, with civil rights leaders from San Francisco to Baltimore leading protests calling for a new investigation and the arrest of the shooter. But what about all the other young black murder victims? Nationally, nearly half of all murder victims are black. And the overwhelming majority of those black people are killed by other black people. [...]
Prognostic framing strategies	Blame/ reason	<u>This case has reignited a furor about vigilante justice, racial-profiling and equitable treatment under the law, and it has stirred the pot of racial strife. As the father of two black teenage boys, this case hits close to home. This is the fear that seizes me whenever my boys are out in the world: that a man with a gun and an itchy finger will find them 'suspicious'. That passions may run hot and blood run cold. That it might all end with a hole in their chest and hole in my heart. That the law might prove insufficient to save my loss. That is the burden of black boys in America and the people that love them: running the risk of being descended upon in the dark and caught in the cross-hairs of someone who crosses the line.</u>	<u>Less than half of black students graduate from high school. The education system's failure is often a jail sentence or even a death sentence. The Orlando Sentinel has reported that 17-year-old Martin was recently suspended from his high school. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Office, in the 2006-07 school year, 22% of all black and Hispanic K-12 students were suspended at least once (as compared to 5% of whites). This year 22% of blacks live below the poverty line and a shocking 72% of black babies are born to unwed mothers. The national unemployment rate for black people increased last month to over 13%, nearly five points above the average for all Americans.</u>
	Solution	<u>The racial sensitivity of this case is heavy.</u>	<u>The killing of any child is a tragedy. But where are the protests regarding the larger problems facing black America?</u>

Table 2. Diagnostic-prognostic framing strategies in 1NYT-1WSJ

The WSJ commentary (1WSJ), on the other hand, presents the case from a completely and opposite perspective. The PROBLEM is surely the killing, but there is a bigger problem in society: other killings. By exploiting a *tu quoque* strategy, by using a fallacious logic, the journalist justifies his reasoning by hinting at other similar crimes committed in completely different contexts and by other people: killing by black-on-black. He therefore moves the attention to a completely different target and puts the BLAME on the education system, poverty and single parents. The blame, in other words, is first on the school system and second on social status. By closing with a rhetorical question, the WSJ journalist does not offer any solution, but hideously underlines that people are not protesting for the right causes.

The editorial frame analysis presented in Table 3 below offers interesting perspectives on the two editorials published by the NYT and the WSJ.

The 2NYT editorial evidences a huge legal PROBLEM: despite the evidence the grand jury 'have declined to bring charges', which has caused a power 'imbalance' in a case of 'homicide', where we have the counterposition between 'vicious' police and an 'innocent' man. The REASON lies in the fact that all this 'certainly seem[s] like violations of Mr. Garner's civil rights'. The SOLUTION is nothing but the fact that reform of the police system has to be enacted. Indeed, as the journalist argues: 'Any police department that tolerates such conduct [...] needs to be reformed.'

The 2WSJ commentary article again applies the *tu quoque* strategy: starting by criticising the support of politicians for the protest following the Grand Jury's decision, the journalist strongly condemns a protest which paralyzes New York. The PROBLEM is giving the mob too much democracy. The REASON behind this criticism is based on the idea that 'it is a sign that a society is veering off the rails'. The SOLUTION, according to the author of the commentary, is posed in the rhetorical question: 'Where is it written that a city has to put up with this?' In other words, where is written that people have to protest. By moving the attention from real reasons related to the protest (the killing of an unarmed citizen by police who did not have proof and who were charged just by chance and only because a person recorded everything with a camera) to the protest itself as a form of social disorder, the journalist does not focus on the real problem.

The last case of diagnostic-prognostic framing strategies is offered in Table 4. The 3NYT editorial deals with the fact that police records could not be presented as proof in the trial of the police officer who apparently caused the death of Eric Garner with a choke hold. It presents a juridical PROBLEM, consisting of the fact that an 'officer's personnel record cannot be publicly released or cited in court without judicial approval'. In the editorial this is seen as provocative, as a consequence of the police's misconduct. Indeed, in the article (not mentioned in the table for lack of space), the presence of New York's disclosure laws, 'points once again to the distressing fact that [it] gives the public far less access to information about police officers than workers in virtually any other public agency'. There were indeed complaints against the police, but they were released 'after the city law department said it violated state law'. The REASON lies in 'the definition of 'personnel record' [which] has grown so broad that some courts and municipalities have interpreted it to shield almost any information'. As the audience can see the reasons behind

Newspaper		NYT	WSJ
Headline		A Search for Justice in the Eric Garner Case (2NYT) (03/12/2014)	Mobs of New York (2WSJ) (10/12/2014)
Diagnostic framing strategies	Problem	The Staten Island grand jury must have seen the same video everyone else did: the one showing a group of New York City police officers swarming and killing an unarmed black man, Eric Garner. Yet they have declined to bring charges against the plainclothes officer, Daniel Pantaleo, who is seen on the video girdling Mr. Garner's neck in a chokehold, which the department bans, throwing him to the ground and pushing his head into the pavement. The imbalance between Mr. Garner's fate, on a Staten Island sidewalk in July, and his supposed infraction, selling loose cigarettes, is grotesque and outrageous. Though Mr. Garner's death was officially ruled a homicide, it is not possible to pierce the secrecy of the grand jury, and thus to know why the jurors did not believe that criminal charges were appropriate. What is clear is this was vicious policing and an innocent man is dead.	How did we get to the point in the United States where street protesters are treated as sainted figures, no matter what they do? How did it happen that important public leaders — the American president, the mayor of New York, college presidents — feel obliged to legitimize these protests, no matter what they do to a city, its citizens or owners of private property? [...] On Wednesday last week, the day of the grand jury decision in the Eric Garner case on Staten Island, hundreds of people marched through New York City's main streets and highways, blocked bridges, invaded the crowds of parents and kids gathered for the lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree, and spread themselves on the floor as 'die-ins' amid commuters in Grand Central Terminal. Despite the massive inconvenience, many New Yorkers, who like to think they live in a tolerant city, more or less accepted this venting. Message sent and absorbed. Whatever political course the controversial Garner case would take next, it was time for everyone to resume their lives on Thursday. But no. [...] The protesters decided that immobilizing city streets wasn't enough to make their point. They marched into the Apple store on Fifth Avenue. They did it at the huge, crowded Macy's on Herald Square. They entered an H&M store and blocked the escalators. Inside a Forever 21 store in Times Square, they surrounded a display taxi cab and covered it with a sign: 'The system is guilty. Burn it down.'
	Blame/ reason	[...] And though the chance of a local criminal case is now foreclosed, the Justice Department is right to swiftly investigate what certainly seem like violations of Mr. Garner's civil rights.	If we have learned anything in the past century, it is that when politically approved mobs start invading shopkeepers and smashing their windows in the name of politics, it is a sign that a society is veering off the rails.
Prognostic framing strategies	Solution	[...] Any police department that tolerates such conduct, and whose officers are unable or unwilling to defuse such confrontations without killing people, needs to be reformed.	Where is it written that a city has to put up with this?

Table 3. Diagnostic-prognostic framing strategies in 2NYT-2WSJ

	Newspaper	NYJ	WSJ
	Headline	Stop Hiding Police Misconduct in New York (3NYT) (29/07/2015)	A City of Mourning and Demonized Police (3WSJ) (06/01/2015)
Diagnostic framing strategies	Problem	The state statute says that an <u>officer's personnel record cannot be publicly released or cited in court without judicial approval.</u>	[...] the impact of two nonblack lives snuffed out with <u>murderous deliberation</u> would come blasting into the continuing <u>carnival</u> of staged 'die-ins', blocked highways and chanting marchers, including the contingent shouting 'What do we want? Dead cops.' Nothing more instantly transformed the atmosphere in New York than the Dec. 20 killing of police officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, shot as they sat in their police car. It broke the hearts of New Yorkers, it demolished whatever shard of public sympathy was left for the marches and denunciations of the police.
Prognostic framing strategies	Blame/reason	It was enacted in 1976 to prevent criminal defense lawyers from using the state's Freedom of Information Law to request personnel records for information to use against the police in trials. But the definition of 'personnel record' has grown so broad that some courts and municipalities have interpreted it to <u>shield</u> almost any information.	[...] the two police officers had been killed by an assassin inspired by the <u>antipolice fervor</u> of the demonstrators and by the <u>image of police as a major danger</u> to young black men. [...] The murders had nothing to do, really, with any response to the cases of Michael Brown in Missouri and Eric Garner in New York – or, more to the point, with any incitement by the <u>nonstop flow of accusations</u> by demonstrators casting the police as racists and killers. [...] how little Mr. de Blasio knows about the city of which he is the mayor.
	Solution	The law is the only one of its kind in the nation. [...] The state Legislature needs to bring New York's disclosure laws in line with the 41 states that apply the same standard to all state employee misconduct records, including police officers. In the meantime, <u>the courts and cities should interpret state law in a way that brings transparency to the disciplinary process.</u>	

Table 4. Diagnostic-prognostic framing strategies in 3NYT-3WSJ

this, they can see also the absurdity which turns into BLAME on the part of the juridical system which, by shielding information, seems to follow a code of silence: the legal system is adopting an illegal code. The SOLUTION, therefore, is nothing but changing the system to a legal interpretation of statute law in a transparent way.

The 3WSJ commentary deals with the same key word ‘police’ from another perspective. The police here are the victims of a social group who demonize them. Indeed, after the release of the police officer accused of killing Eric Garner, numerous protests, marches and ‘die-ins’ gave way to such feelings of racial hatred that two policemen were killed. Indeed, the whole protest is carnivalesque and staged, as the excerpt explains: ‘the impact of two nonblack lives snuffed out with murderous deliberation would come blasting into the continuing carnival of staged ‘die-ins,’ blocked highways and chanting marchers, including the contingent shouting ‘What do we want? Dead cops.’’ White people are killed with ‘murderous deliberation’. This is the real PROBLEM: to pretend to protest, while actually longing to kill. The BLAME is on ‘antipolice fervor’, which has nothing to do with the killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, or with the protest itself. The BLAME, suggests the journalist implicitly, also lies in the lack of awareness of this status quo by the Mayor of New York. As no solution is offered, such an interpretation seems to be more inclined to reinforce an existing stereotype (black people are criminals) than to a real interpretation of events.

The positive, negative or neutral framing effects resulting from the diagnostic-prognostic analysis of these six editorials following my CDA investigation are summarized in Table 5, below, where we have, in the first column, indications of positivity, neutrality or negativity, in terms of interpretation of the people involved in the editorial, as explained at the beginning of § 5.2. above:

	1NYT	1WSJ	2NYT	2WSJ	3NYT	3WSJ
Positive	AA	P	AA	P	AA	
Negative	P		P - JS	AA	P - JS	AA
Neutral		AA	AA	P		P

Legend: AA = Afro-American people’s conduct; JS = Judicial system; P= Police’s conduct

Table 5. Framing effects. Positivity, negativity and neutrality in editorials.

As we can see from the table above, there is a tendency to stereotype people and systems.

The NYT presents a type of sympathetic discourse, and with a victim-scheme model calling for social action, in which we see stereotypical representations of *black people* portrayed, in general, as helpless victims, the *police* as brutes, and the judicial system as inefficient if not conniving. In particular, Afro-American people are portrayed as:

- innocent (2NYT)
- unarmed (2 NYT)
- not acting belligerently (2 NYT)

- (note the editorials in which we see descriptions of ‘wrenching phone calls’ (1NYT), ‘nightmare scenario’ (1NYT), ‘full of ache’ (1NYT));

while the police are depicted as:

- vicious (3NYT)
- brutalizing citizens (3NYT)
- officers swarming and killing innocent people (2NYT)

and there is portraying of the judicial system and the law as fallacious people (2NYT and 3NYT).

The WSJ, on the contrary, tends to offer a negative perspective on Afro-American people because they are criminals (1 WSJ); they create disorder (2WSJ, 3WSJ); from protesters they become rioters (2WSJ, 3WSJ); they become murderers (2WSJ) and are eventually guilty (3WSJ).

5.3 From Readers to Citizen Journalists: Twitter Analysis

Wordlists for the two classes of tweets, the pro-#blacklivesmatter (Pro#BLM) and the anti-#blacklivesmatter (Anti#BLM), were run through the keyword tool suite of WordSmith Tools, one against the other, to generate a list of keywords, the first 20 of which can be seen in Tables 6 and 7, below:

n	keyword	freq.	keyness	p
1	breath	146	31.26	0.00000
2	fuck	112	12.98	0.00031
3	your	177	12.52	0.00040
4	video	53	11.33	0.00076
5	my	81	11.10	0.00086
6	unarmed	50	10.69	0.00010
7	murder	45	9.62	0.00192
8	f	45	9.62	0.00192
9	police	271	9.01	0.00268
10	as	122	8.93	0.00280
11	him	88	8.79	0.00302
12	officer	68	8.66	0.00324
13	justice	40	8.55	0.00345
14	walterscott	175	8.33	0.00390
15	this	201	8.27	0.00403
16	icantbreathe	117	8.19	0.00421
17	ericharris	886	8.05	0.00455
18	dying	36	7.69	0.00554
19	taser	61	7.38	0.00659
20	america	56	6.48	0.01090

Table 6. Pro#BLM keyword list

As we can see, those who take part in the Pro#BLM debate focus their attention on the *breath* denied Eric Harris³ with cruelty (line 1; keyness value: 31.26). These people have to cope with the anger caused by the taboo word *fuck* (line 2; keyness value: 12.98)⁴ and their desire to have *justice* (line 13; keyness value: 8.55), because of the *murder* (line 7; keyness value: 9.62) of an *unarmed* victim (line 6; keyness value: 10.69) by *police* (line 9; keyness value: 9.01).

In a completely opposite view, the Anti#BLM people concentrate on the *selling* (line 1; keyness value: 73.31) of something, an *illegally* (line 2; keyness value: 6.930) perceived fact. Such illegal selling seems to be done by *black* people, involving *kids* (lines 3 and 4; keyness values 49.08 and 44.90 and 7.342) and *guns* (line 5; keyness value 32.07). As we can see, keywords are also related to *crime*, *felony*, *rape* and other *illegal* activities.

N	Key word	Freq.	Keyness	p
1	selling	24	73.31	0.0000
2	illegally	14	52.54	0.0000
3	blacks	21	49.08	0.0000
4	kids	15	44.90	0.0000
5	guns	20	39.35	0.0000
6	repeat	7	32.07	0.0000
7	rape	7	32.07	0.0000
8	black	61	27.73	0.0000
9	neighborhood	7	26.25	0.0000
10	illegal	8	24.40	0.0000
11	lie	11	22.25	0.0000
12	crime	11	22.25	0.0000
13	felon	6	18.92	0.0000
14	forward	4	18.32	0.0000
15	run	10	18.06	0.0000
16	felons	5	17.71	0.0000
17	gang	5	14.96	0.0001
18	when	31	14.37	0.0001
19	handsupdontshoot	29	14.26	0.0001
20	thats	3	13.74	0.0002

Table 7. Anti#BLM keyword list

Interestingly, the keywords *black*, *#blacklivematters*, *guns*, *#handsupdontshoot*, *#icantbreathe*, *illegal*, *kids*, *knife*, *lie*, *look*, *man*, *neighbourhoods*, *people*, *police*, *race*, *racist*, *selling*, *victims*, *weapons* and *white* are present in both Pro#BLM and Anti#BLM sub-corpora. Apart from the hashtags, there is the remarkable fact that the same keywords tend to be positive in one sub-corpus but negative in the other. So, for instance, *victims* is a positive keyword in Anti#BLM, but a negative one in Pro#BLM. And vice versa, *police* is a positive key word in the Pro#BLM subcorpus, but a negative

one in the Anti#BLM one. WordSmith Tools assigns negativity to keywords that are significantly and infrequently unusual. Intuitively, they reflect the ways in which people in the two sub-corpora perceive their identity or assign themselves or others roles.

In the following paragraphs, however, I only analyse those keywords in both sub-corpora that have a $p \leq 0.001$, and which are therefore statistically significant – which means that the first eight items only will be considered in each sub-corpus; I will examine the co-text in which they appear to better understand the context they are used in. Since the keywords with $p \leq 0.001$ are the first eight in the Pro#BLM corpus, and all of them in the Anti#BLM corpus, in order to be consistent I will analyse the first 8 keywords in both subcorpora.

5.3.1 Pro#BLM keyword analysis

The keywords with $p \leq 0.001$ of Pro#BLM are the first eight, as said above, and precisely: *breath*, *fuck*, *your*, *video*, *my*, *unarmed*, *murder* and *F*.

The concordance of *breath*, the top keyword (keyness 31.26), is shown in Table 8, below:

N	Concordance
1	Tulsa cop screams "F*ck your breath" at dying #EricHarris It's
2	#EricHarris #EricHarris breath mattered. #ICantBreathe He
3	dying #EricHarris "FUCK YOUR BREATH". Anyone know his address?
4	evil. I can't believe "F*ck your breath" is all he has to say to a
5	is the cop who said "fuck your breath" not also being charged? #
6	tells dying man, 'F*ck your breath' #EricHarris #ericharris w
7	Harris was told "Fuck Your Breath" by one of the officers as
8	his cry for help with "fuck your breath" The way cops treated #Wal
9	it's ok to tell a man "fuck your breath" after you shot him Come o
10	explain to me how "F**k Your Breath" is considered an accident
11	by police. Cop yells 'f*** your breath' as suspect #EricHarris la
12	breath" as a man takes his last breath is just unbelievable TulsaP
13	video. To say "fuck your breath" as a man takes his last b
14	blatantly told him "f**k your breath" like wow. Accidentally sh
15	check laws. Doh. F--k your breath. If that doesn't tell you
16	police officer says, "fuck your breath" after he guns you down, t
17	in the force. "fuck your breath," said cop to dying #EricH
18	keep ringing fuck your breath? no fuck your job and the
19	accident" #EricHarris F* your breath the new #ICantBreathe The
20	now let's charge "fuck your breath" guy with a hate crime The

Table 8. Concordance list of *breath*

Breath is mainly found in the expression ‘fuck your breath’ (69 hits), i.e. with the other two top keywords, and it refers to what the police said in reply to Eric Harris when he whispered ‘I can’t breathe’ just a few seconds before dying. Incidentally, the keyword *F* (last keyword with $p \leq 0.001$ in Figure 3, above) refers to the same taboo word.

This is confirmed by the collocates in Table 9 below, in which we can see 146 hits for *breath* in the centre with *your* (109 hits) and *fuck* (73 hits) one and two positions, respectively, to the left.

N	Word	With	Total	L5	L4	L3	L2	L1	Centre	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
1	BREATH	breath	154	2	1	1			146			1	1	2
2	YOUR	breath	116					109			1	4	2	
3	FUCK	breath	80			2	73			3	1	1		

Table 9. Collocates of *breath*

Clusters, too, indicate that *breath* is to be found in connection with both the taboo word *fuck* and the possessive adjective *your*. It is also found with the keyword *my* (top fifth keyword position) and with *Eric Harris*, as visible in Table 10, below:

N	Cluster	Freq.	Set	Length
1	FUCK YOUR BREATH	72		3
2	F CK YOUR	15		3
3	CK YOUR BREATH	15		3
4	K YOUR BREATH	12		3
5	F K YOUR	12		3
6	LOSING MY BREATH	10		3
7	SAID FUCK YOUR	10		3
8	F YOUR BREATH	9		3
9	YOUR BREATH AS	7		3
10	YOUR BREATH ERICHARRIS	7		3
11	SAY FUCK YOUR	6		3
12	I'M LOSING MY	5		3
13	YOUR BREATH AFTER	5		3

Table 10. Clusters of *breath*

Indeed, the expression is generally inserted in tweets where people are shockingly trying to cope with a death which, to their eyes, is nothing but cruel, as indicated in the following tweet:

Like, I'm still trying to process the #EricHarris video. To say ‘fuck your breath’ as a man takes his last breath is just unbelievable [sic]

So, the taboo word *fuck* is inserted in direct speech, presumably that of the policeman, who cruelly replies to a dying man ‘fuck your breath’. This amplifies the audience’s dismay. ‘Your’ and ‘my’ clearly refer to Eric Harris’

breath, the latter as indicated by the concordance lines of *my* in Table 11, below:

N Concordance			
1	have mistaken my wallet for	my	checkbook#EricHarris Capt Bi
2	if I go to sleep tonight of	my	own accord. #BlackLivesMatte
3	w many times I have mistaken my wallet for	my	checkbook#Eric
4	usable homicide" #EricHarris	My	mother is 76.....NO WAY she
5	rutality murder. Sad con vo	w/my	kids after #WalterScott: #Bl
6	I confused my Snickers with	my	gun?#EricHarris The racist p
7	ke hold) #EricHarris "losing	my	breath". Cops "Fuck your bre
8	s lane, can I say I confused my Snickers with	my	gun?#EricHa
9	ter Is the "I thought it was	my	Taser not my gun" now going
10	thought it was my Taser not	my	gun" now going to be referre
11	ricHarris saying "I'm losing	my	breath." #March2Justice" "Al
12	.É #EricHarris : "I'm losing *	my	breath."#policeofficer : "F
13	eams: 'Oh my God, I'm losing	my	breath,' an officer responds
14	f blackness being destroyed.	My	brothers and sisters have a
15	im, #EricHarris screams: 'Oh	my	God, I'm losing my breath,'
16	haMcKenna #EricHarris That's	my	pt, nothing but another trig
17	#WalterScott Everyday I open	my	news feed I see another POC'
18	still trust #JodiArias with	my	children before I'd trust so
19	upset about #EricHarris that	my	thoughts are a mess...police
20	murderer! @tcs0 #EricHarris	My	cousin posted this in respon

Table 11. Concordance list of *my*.

Similarly, the clusters of *my* clearly show that the item is linked to the expression 'losing my breath':

N	Cluster	Freq.	Set	Length
1	LOSING MY BREATH	9		3
2	I'M LOSING MY	6		3
3	I'M LOSING MY	6		3
4	OH MY GOD	5		3

Table 12. Clusters of *my*

We can therefore say that most keywords in Pro#BLM are actually centred around a few expressions: 'fuck your breath' or 'F your breath' and 'I am losing my breath', and since the taboo word *fuck* has a higher keyness than the others, this suggests that tweeters are incredulous at the police's lack of piety, as they can hear in the video.

The fourth top keyword, *video* (keyness 11.33) is indeed another keyword and as the concordance lines show, it refers to the video of Eric Harris' death:

N	Concordance		
1	r watching that #EricHarris	Video.	No minor crimes are punis
2	ing and it won't stick. The	video	pretty much tells the whol
3	he news not play the entire	video	#EricHarris If only he had
4	: disgusted as I watch this	video	of #EricHarris death. This
5	cHarris if it weren't 4 the	video	and the social media. #Eri
6	I Just Saw The #EricHarris	Video,	My Heart Just Dropped. So
7	thinks that the #EricHarris	video	is funny. I just fucking s
8	saying that the #EricHarris	video	was edited by the Tulsa Co
9	breath?" Tough call on this	video,	looks like shooting was a
10	s disgusted as I watch this	video	of #EricHarris death. This
11	ust watched the #EricHarris	video	. Absolutely terrifying. We
12	over this shit #EricHarris	Video	showed differently.#EricHa
13	t he's waiting for the full	video	When the police make a mis
14	harris If it wasn't for the	video	- someone would've been af
15	ulsaPolice Just watched the	video	of #EricHarris being muste
16	even watch this #EricHarris	video.	Sickening. Last week, it
17	Hows that for irony... the	video	of the #EricHarris shooting
18	est we forget they said the	video	stopped because the BATTER
19	Harris If there had been no	video	of #WalterScott or #EricHarris
20	#EricHarris #nw the full	video	of #EricHarris in Tulsa be

Table 13. Concordance list of *video*

The concordance shown above evidence the situation from a Pro#BLM perspective: it is thanks to the video that people can see Eric Harris' real cause of death, police cruelty– in short, facts as they really occurred.

The video shows facts that speak for themselves, i.e. the killing of an unarmed black man, as evidenced by the concordances of the keyword *unarmed*.

N	Concordance		
1	f the system of oppression.	Unarmed.	Pinned to the ground. An
2	nd, Tulsa police killed an	unarmed	man "Fuck your breath" wa
3	The systematic killing of	unarmed	individuals can only be s
4	is "F_Your Breath" Another	unarmed	black man killed #EricHarris
5	e case of #EricHarris, the	unarmed	man who was shot by police
6	eople. #EricHarris Another	unarmed	black man dead! #EricHarris
7	Rest in Peace #EricHarris	Unarmed	#EricHarris is shot, says
8	y happening people!Another	unarmed	black man murdered at the
9	BRUTALITY AND KILLINGS OF	UNARMED	MEN #Ferguson #ICantBreathe
10	oma police killings+44% of	unarmed	police killings. #EricHarris
11	e care and compassion than	unarmed,	dying people do in our p

12	l gunshot wound Cop shoots	unarmed	#EricHarris. Eric says he
13	Thinks Gun Is Taser, Kills	Unarmed	Black Man: #FuckYourBreath
14	or their life.#EricHarris #	Unarmed	#Tulsa #Shot #Dead They'v
15	nother cop on video shoots	unarmed	black man in the back. Po
16	: "Oh, not again." Running	unarmed	shouldn't be a death sent
17	tired excuses for killing	unarmed	black men.#FreddieGray #E
18	tality. Okay. #EricHarris	'Unarmed	black man' has been the m
19	eant Says #Cop Who #Killed	Unarmed	#EricHarris Is a "#TrueVi
20	ed of waking up to another	unarmed	black man shot and killed

Table 14. Concordance list of *unarmed*

As *unarmed* occurs mostly with *black man*, I expanded the concordance query to *unarmed black man* and found that it primarily appears in the expressions 'another unarmed black man shot', 'another unarmed black man killed', 'another unarmed black man dead!', 'another unarmed black man murdered at the hands of a police officer' and 'another unarmed black man being shot and killed by police', i.e. with a verb in which 'unarmed black man' is the patient of a fatal criminal act committed by those who should protect the population. So the unarmed victim is killed like a criminal while the criminal is the one who would have been set free if it had not been for the video.

Murder is also a keyword. The killing of these black people is not seen as accidental, but rather as *murder*, as clearly indicated in Table 15, below:

N	Concordance		
1	devil activity...still the	murder	is not excusable not to so
2	about police brutality or	murder.	We ain't even have time t
3	#TULSAOKLAHOMA#ERICHARRIS	#MURDER	The sad reality about this
4	sn't give you the right to	murder	someone #EricHarris When t
5	by mistake-#DoOver #idiot	#murder	#WHY? With #EricHarris Dow
6	ride along to go down for	murder!	#EricHarris What Really K
7	tatement was so pitiful. A	murder,	caught on tape and this g
8	ten POC and rly say "I can	murder	you and undoubtedly will b
9	; another #PoliceBrutality	murder.	Sad convo w/my kids after
10	DOWN TODAYEVERYWHERE.STOP	MURDER	BY POLICE!#ShutDownA14 #Er
11	s Stun Gun Mixup?!! It was	Murder.	#PoliceTerrorism #FTP #Eri
12	with cowboy fantasies can	murder	you at any time. #EricHarr
13	who are clearly guilty of	murder	get away with it? Not all
14	rds, should now be charged	murder...	When all you have is a
15	r News media is making the	murder	of #EricHarris about the r
16	obertBates training in the	murder	of #EricHarris when they s
17	!" Is no justification for	murder.	#EricHarris #TrayvonMartin
18	Worst part of #tulsapolice	murder	of #EricHarris (besides hi

19	of hell for their bullshit	murder	of #EricHarris. A fake cop
20	How many more videos of the	murder	of Black men do I have to

Table 15. Concordance list for *murder*

The keyword *murder* refers, in particular, to ‘the murder of Eric Harris’, as the cluster indicates. It is negatively connoted, since the murder is defined as *idiot*, *policebrutality*, *bullshit*, *unjust*, and *coldblooded*. What emerges between the lines is a racial and social issue: on the one hand, people believe an unarmed black man is killed only because he is black; on the other, people are convinced the police abuse their own power.

5.3.2 Anti#BLM keyword analysis

As said above, we will analyse the first keywords of the Anti#BLM subcorpus, i.e. *selling*, *illegally*, *blacks*, *kids*, *guns*, *repeat*, *rape* and *black* (cf. Table 7 above).

The concordances of *selling* (top keyword, keyness 73.31) were checked in Anti#BLM and it was found that it most commonly appeared in the phrases ‘Eric Garner was illegally selling guns’, ‘selling weapons’ and ‘selling arms’, as indicated by the concordance list for *selling*:

N	Concordance
1	WAS #EricHarris ILLEGALLY SELLING GUNS IN A NEIGHBORHOOD WI
2	#EricHarris was illegally selling guns in a neighborhood wi
3	the repeat felon illegally selling guns in a neighborhood wi
4	#EricHarris was illegally selling guns in a neighborhood wi
5	the repeat felon illegally selling guns in a neighborhood wi
6	from arrest and illegally selling guns #EricHarris U ARE SI
7	na sell cops a gun. He was selling them a taser... Right..?
8	s is #EricHarris allegedly selling weapons to undercover off
9	s not a convicted felon or selling guns in the first place O
10	repeat felons are illegally selling guns and u sell them out 4
11	nda #EricHarris SHAME ON U SELLING OUT BLACK KIDS N DANGER O
12	DANGER OF A FELON ILLEGALLY SELLING GUNS N #TULSA NEIGHBORHOOD
13	hat #EricHarris was caught selling guns right? How many of h
14	en he was busted illegally selling arms. #BlackLivesMatter I
15	BlackLivesMatter ILLEGALLY SELLING GUNS AND RUNNING FROM COP
16	cops out + PETTY crime of selling loose cigs They are putting
17	it when he fled vehc after selling a gun to an UC. No child
18	o longer be on the streets selling handguns lol give me a br
19	BE INFORMED REPEAT FELONS SELLING GUNS ILLEGALLY IS A THREAT
20	from arrest and illegally selling guns #EricHarris U ARE SI

Table 16. Concordance list for *selling*

Interestingly, the expression “Eric Garner was illegally selling guns”, found in one of the concordance lines, contains three out of eight keywords: apart from *selling*, as we have seen, it is also linked to *illegally*⁵ (keyword No.2, keyness 52.54) and *guns* (keyword No.5, keyness 39.35). Attention is thus drawn to the fact that, according to the Anti#BLM movement, Eric Harris was not a victim but rather a criminal, and as such the police had to react.

N	Concordance		
1	arris WHY WAS #EricHarris	ILLEGALLY	SELLING GUNS IN A NEIGHB
2	, running from arrest and	illegally	selling guns #EricHarris
3	And the repeat felon	illegally	selling guns in a neighb
4	why they think #EricHarris was	illegally	selling guns in a neighb
5	know #EricHarris tried to	illegally	sell a gun to kill somebody
6	kids where repeat felons are	illegally	selling guns and u sell t
7	And the repeat felon	illegally	selling guns in a neighb
8	KING GUD NOW! #EricHarris	illegally	selling a gun? Sounds li
9	selling arms. #BlackLivesMatter	illegally	SELLING GUNS AND RUNNING
10	ass ran when he was busted	illegally	selling arms. #BlackLive
11	FELONS SELLING GUNS	ILLEGALLY	IS A THREAT TO SOCIETY #
12	why they think #EricHarris was	illegally	selling guns in a neighb
13	WHY WAS #EricHarris	ILLEGALLY	SELLING GUNS IN A NEIGHB
14	, running from arrest and	illegally	selling guns #EricHarris

Table 17. Concordance list for *illegally*

There is an interesting excerpt which explains the role *kids* plays as a keyword (line 13):

WHY WAS #EricHarris ILLEGALLY SELLING GUNS IN A NEIGHBORHOOD WITH KIDS?

This clearly adds emphasis to the negative role that Eric Harris plays: not only was he a petty criminal selling weapons, but he also was selling weapons in a place where children lived.

Kids is another keyword (top 4th keyword, keyness 44.90) and refers to either ‘innocent’ child as indicated in the excerpt above or, ironically, to black kids who repeatedly commit felonies, as indicated in the example below:

#BlackLivesMatter- except when they are black kids where repeat felons are illegally selling guns and u sell them out 4 propaganda #EricHarris

Similarly *repeat* (top 6th keyword, keyness 32.07), was found seven times and used in the expression ‘repeat felon(s)’, to underline that both Eric Harris and other black people or kids are known criminals.

The concordance list of the keyword *blacks* (3rd keyword, keyness 49.08) shows the occurrence of *blacks* with *gang rape*, which includes keyword no.7 (keyness 32.07).

N	Concordance		
1	lacks too Hundreds watched	BLACKS	gang rape WHITE GIRL in Pa
2	it what do you think about	blacks	murdering blacks? the numb
3	blacks who are killing other	Blacks	too Hundreds watched BLACK
4	blacks kill blacks blacks kill	blacks	kill blacks at 10x the rate of whites
5	d 2 say that to our fellow	blacks	who are killing other blac
6	LOOK FORWARD TO A DAY WHEN	BLACKS	STOP RAPING, CHEATING, ASS
7	#stayinschool Why did the	Blacks	in the #Florida gang rape
8	LOOK FORWARD TO A DAY WHEN	black	BLACKS STOP LYING, MURDERING
9	think about blacks murdering	blacks?	the numbers are exponential
10	ntShoot stupidity?? #moron	Blacks	kill #HandsUpDontShoot Can
11	when blacks kill blacks	Blacks	kill blacks at 10x the rat
12	or blacks because of other	blacks.	Let's talk about how rapp
13	kLivesMatter No one treats	blacks	worse than they treat each
14	Africa is no safe haven for	blacks	because of other blacks.
15	n tho over 90% of murdered	blacks	are killed by other blacks
16	blacks are killed by other	blacks.	That's like.... #BlackRap
17	ays #BlackLivesMatter when	blacks	kill blacks Blacks kill bl
18	vesMatter when blacks kill	blacks	Blacks kill blacks at 10x
19	t truth! hat can you say -	blacks	are a civilized people. On
20	ain, to hell with the 7700	blacks	killed by blacks. Cause #BlackLivesM

Table 18. Concordance list of *blacks*

Blacks are therefore negatively connoted as they belong to gangs who rape. However, the cluster shows that *blacks* in particular occurs in the phrase *blacks kill blacks*, as indicated in Table 19:

N	Cluster	Freq.	Set	Length
1	BLACKS KILL BLACKS	7		3

Table 19. Concordance list for *black*

Also, the keyword *black* (top 8th keyword, keyness 27.73) shows similar results (see Table 20): we have *black gang rape*, *black criminal*, *black crime rates* etc.

N	Concordance		
1	months has accomplished MORE	BLACK	MEN SHOT DEAD. ASSHOLES ST
2	BlackLivesMatter why do 71% of	Black	babies lack fathers? Why a
3	babies lack fathers? Why are	Black	children abandoned by their
4	lities know #AllLivesMatter	Black	lives only seem to matter
5	rappers talk about killing	black	men and they make money of

6	ckLivesMatter - Except when	black	mobs attack other black people
7	hen black mobs attack other	black	people for no reason whats
8	do they only matter when a	black	person is shot by a white
9	t by a white cop ? All this	black	on black crime in the world
10	ed with white supremacy are	black	supremacists Not just #Bla
11	only only controversial to	black	people, white people have
12	have respected the value of	black	lives Tania Harris was cha
13	sponsibility. That msg is 4	Black	folks just as much.
14	nuinely think that a lot of	black	guys only refer to black M
15	of black guys only refer to	black	MEN by that hashtag. From
16	dent Shot Dead 'For Fun' By	Black	Teens - #racism #diversity
17	illers. Every time an armed	black	man who threatens police i
18	n race is not white people!	Black	folks are their #1 enemy!
19	Matter when a white kills a	black?	We need 2 say that to our

Table 20. Cluster of *blacks*

The cluster for *black*, on the other hand, shows that a typical key expression is *black on black crime*:

N	Cluster	Freq.	Set	Length
1	BLACK ON BLACK	8	3	
2	ON BLACK CRIME	6	3	

Table 21. Cluster for *black*

Anti#BLM people write their tweets on the basis of common sense and stereotypes: black people are criminals who primarily and repeatedly commit crimes against (black) people, such as raping and selling weapons. The implication is that their killing by the police is unprejudiced.

In a side note, the FBI (2014) published a report⁶ on race offenders in 2014, which is summarized in Table 22:

Race/ethnicity of victim	Total	Race of offender			
		White	Black or African American	Other ¹	Unknown
White	3,021	2,488 (82%)	446 (14%)	35	52
Black or African American	2,451	187 (0.7%)	2,205 (89.3%)	15	44
Other race ¹	168	47	25	93	3
Unknown race	63	34	17	3	9

Table 22. FBI on race offenders – 2014

It is true that black offenders with white victims has double the percentage of white offenders with black victims (14% against 0.7% – cf. columns four and

three, respectively, but the percentages are minimal when considering the *white on white crime*, with 82% of white offenders, which almost corresponds to the *black on black crime* percentage (89.3%) of Afro-American people who committed crimes against Afro-American victims.

These official figures help us to put out linguistic data, especially those represented in Tables 19 and 21, in the right perspective and which can be summarized in one sentence: *black on black crime* exists exactly as *white on white crime*; therefore, *black on black crime* and *black gang rape* as found on Twitter in the Anti#BLM sub-corpus is the result of existing stereotypes.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this pilot study is summarised in the sub-research questions I posed in paragraph 3, it tries:

- a) to identify the ideology behind media discourse in the rise of the protest movement in the US against the police towards Afro-American citizens (after the Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner cases)
- b) to detect the extent to which this ideology is mirrored in #BlackLivesMatter, which emerged as a protest movement in social networks, such as Twitter, in the form of citizen journalism

As we have seen, the first sub-research question has been answered by analysing some editorials taken from the NYT and WSJ, where I investigated the ideology behind the #BlackLivesMatter movement, with the application of CDA and *frame analysis*, (*framing affect, prognostic and diagnostic framing strategies, discourse on and beneath the surface*).

The NYT, for all its liberal orientation, by recurring to a victim-scheme, generally blames the judicial system and the police, while supporting the #BlackLivesMatter movement, and believes that problems can be solved if profound change to societal aspects can be achieved.

The WST, with its conservative political perspective, tends to offer a negative perspective on Afro-American and believes that the #BlackLivesMatter movement is a source of vain protest, which will result in more uncontrollable problems, and the blame has to be put on black people and #BlackLivesMatter movement supporters.

Apparently, the two trends are mirrored on Twitter in the Pro#BLM and Anti#BLM, respectively. On Twitter, Pro#BLM twitters see things as unjust: the police are guilty of killing innocent people simply because they are black and this is a huge unsolvable social and racial issue. In contrast, Anti#BLM supporters see the action of the police as justified by the fact that they acted legally, also considering that those black people are criminals.

The multidisciplinary approach to this investigation and in particular CDA have helped me to depict the Afro-American issue in a better position within the US context, although I acknowledge that my being a white, European scholar may result in biased pre-conceived position. In this study, the key point is not 'who benefits' (cf. Baker et al. 2013: 22-24) but how this issued is constructed via the media and reproduced on Twitter, how ideology and

consensus are further elaborated from traditional media to social media. From the analysis in this limited study, the views of the NYT and WST, Pro#BLM and Anti#BLM seems to be based on stereotyping two social groups: Afro-Americans and the police. The consensus and ideologies which are behind these stereotypes are reflected in the tweets. In particular, as regard the traditional press industry and participative journalism created on Twitter, I would say that here we are dealing with an issue of *decoupling* (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Decoupling is a concept which describes the creation and maintenance of a gap between a political plan and real action. This concept, which was originally elaborated in sociology, has also been adopted in studies related to racism because it explores the relation existing between rhetoric and reality. The so-called *sympathetic discourses* related to black citizens lack any real discussion about the way in which they can reinforce their own situation. As far as their supporters are concerned, the discourse analysis carried out using CDA and frame analysis has revealed that anti-racist discourses are not really counterclaiming racism: almost paradoxically, anti-racism seems to exist only rhetorically rather than practically. This is something I would not expect: the ideologies behind the NYT and WSJ are transformed into slogans by both the Pro#BLM and the Anti#BLM. No social or political action is proposed. From this, nobody would benefit.

Although I acknowledge that my investigation certainly has some limits, as it is based on limited numbers of editorials and tweets, this is, nevertheless, the springboard for further research on the way in which minority groups are *represented* by the press and the extent to which these representations mould the consensus of the audience as *reproduced* on social media thanks to these forms of participative journalism. The aim will be to offer better insights into new ways of performing journalism, expressing beliefs and values in order to see whether existing stereotypes can be challenged or not.

Notes

- 1 I acknowledge Dr Daniela Occhipinti's valuable help with data collection, particularly with Tweet Archivist.
- 2 The hashtag #blacklivesmatter was created in 2012, after the murder of Trayvon Martin, when his killer, George Zimmerman, was set free. The hashtag #icantbreathe was created in 2014 after the killing of Eric Garner who was arrested in July.
- 3 Eric Harris was a black man who was fatally shot by a policeman who mistakenly used a gun instead of a taser. Eric Harris' death was video-recorded.
- 4 We will see later why.
- 5 WordSmith Tools yielded only 14 concordance lines of *illegaly*.
- 6 As from 2015, statistical data have no longer been available for ethnic groups but rather for population size.

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