Call for contributions to a special number

‘Black Lives Matter: a transnational movement’

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Deadline for the submission of summaries: 1 July 2021
Deadline for the submission of articles: 1 October 2021

Since its first appearance in 2013, Black Lives Matter (BLM) has become a widespread social movement dedicated to denouncing and dismantling systemic racism in the United States. As the hashtag #BLM went viral on social and other media, a broad political coalition on the international front was developing, aiming to identify and condemn police violence against young Afro-Americans, and, more generally, the persistent racism targeting black and ethnic minorities of colour in the United States. (Célestine & Martin-Breteau 2020; Recoquillon 2020; Taylor 2016).

The commitment of activists and those supporting Black Lives Matter and the Movement of Black Lives (M4BL) has led to frequent discussion by political commentators and social scientists of the aims of these movements, their political objectives, their identities and personal motivations, their agendas and modes of action, their political and social influence etc.

While under Donald Trump’s presidency BLM found itself in a much more hostile environment than during Barack Obama's second term, its campaigns were to take on a new dimension, not only in the United States but well beyond its borders, particularly as a consequence of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020. Across the Americas, in Europe, and also in Asia and Oceania, numerous demonstrations in support of BLM were organised and followed up, despite the prevailing pandemic (De Genova 2018; Geia 2020; Kennedy-MacFoy & Zarkov 2020; Zaveri 2020).

The aim of this special number is therefore to bring together articles analysing the growth of BLM to a transnational movement. Defence of black lives and the struggle against anti-black racism outside the United States existed long before the emergence of BLM; the transnational dimension of movements in favour of black and other populations discriminated against can thus be seen as part of a long-term development (Niang 2020; Smith 2017; Hajjat 2014; Pregololato 2017). Moreover the movement has given new impetus to old campaigns in Brazil, Canada, Great Britain
and France, with the support of the action initiated by the family of Adama Traoré (Davis & Traoré). In 2015 BLM helped to call attention to a draft bill which posed a threat to the citizenship of people of Haitian origin in the Dominican Republic Baptiste (2015). In October 2020 BLM activists across the world demonstrated in support of young people protesting against police violence in Nigeria (Ojedokun et al. 2021), rallying under one of the emblematic slogans of BLM: ‘Stop killing us’.

It is intended that the transnational outlook of this number should embrace analysis of movements inspired by BLM beyond the frontiers of the United States, taking their many different local roots into account (Siméant). Such campaigns are not simply reactions to the legitimate emotions stirred up by media coverage of the many cases of police violence against black people in the United States. Following different timelines, they also belong to the specific contexts of earlier campaigns, and to mappings of meaning and practice which have been able, thanks to the BLM movement and/or the demonstrations of summer 2020, to find fertile soil and a language to launch themselves afresh. Accordingly, the challenges faced by these campaigns may lead them to favour structures, strategies and spokespersons —often women in BLM —sometimes different from, sometimes similar to, those adopted by the movement in the United States.

In other words, this call is for papers addressing one or several of the following themes with the aim of investigating the transnational nature of BLM:

- the transnational circulation of BLM, including the study of the political, media and scientific networks and exchanges between activists and supporters or opponents of the movement inside the United States and those situated beyond its borders.
- the local appropriation of BLM’s political demands, militant vocabulary and means of action, with analysis of the ways in which the movement is reconfigured by local actors—rather than simply being exported from the United States or imported wholesale—but also analysis of the adaptation of BLM to local conditions by pre-existing social movements, parties and political organizations, trade unions, student unions etc.
- the political repercussions of BLM for popular movements, public policies, media discourse, scientific research etc. in the country, region or group under study.

Contributions are invited from across the human and social sciences (HSS); they should show awareness of the concrete modes of circulation and appropriation, and to the repercussions of campaigns linked to BLM, but also of the historical and political ruptures and continuities implied and explained by them. Contributions bearing on the role of new information and communications technologies (NITC) and social networks, especially in the spreading of images (videos of police violence, artworks etc), and their role in the transnational development of the movement will be given close attention (Cox 2017; Ince et al. 2017; Schneider 2017).
Guidelines for submissions

Short summaries of proposed articles (500-800 words) must be sent by 1 July 2021 to ciresc_redaction@cnrs.fr. The articles themselves (maximum of 45,000 characters, inclusive of spaces and bibliography), which may be in French, English, Spanish or Portuguese, must be submitted by 1 October 2021. They should be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 3,600 characters. Comprehensive guidance for authors is accessible here.

The editorial committee will announce its decisions on 5 November 2021. The articles which have been selected will be published in the journal Esclavages & post-esclavages in April 2022.

References


SMITH, Christen A., 2017. « Battling Anti-Black Genocide in Brazil: For over a decade, antiracist movements in Brazil have sought justice for the killing of Black Brazilians by state forces », NACLA Report on the Americas, No. 49/1, pp. 41-47.

