

**ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM**

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**Racially motivated violence and mental wellbeing of Black people**

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The views stated in this thesis are those of the author and not necessarily those of the supervisor, second assessor, Erasmus School of Economics or Erasmus University Rotterdam

## 1 Introduction

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a slogan that has gained a lot of attention and popularity in recent years. As stated on the BLM website, BLM is a movement that started in 2013 as a social media hashtag, #BlackLivesMatter, as a protest against the controversial acquittal of George Zimmerman in the murder of Trayvon Martin. The BLM movement's mission is to put an end to white supremacy and build strong Black communities and mediate in violence inflicted on Black people by the state and vigilantes. According to the website of Howard University, the BLM movement has since then gained a lot of support nationwide after the deaths of Michael Brown in Missouri and Eric Garner in New York in 2014. In 2020 it has become a worldwide movement, this is especially observable after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. In the almost ten years existence of the BLM movement there have been many instances of police brutality and violence against Black people.

In 2020 a video went viral where it shows a Black man, George Floyd, uttering the words "I can't breathe" during the last minutes of his life, while a police officer was holding his knee on Floyd's neck. These three words evoked a heavy feeling for many people worldwide, because this phrase has been already associated with the BLM movement against police brutality. This is the same phrase that was used by Eric Garner, a 43 year old Black man, six years earlier in a chokehold by a police officer that resulted in his death. The video where Eric Garner is being held in a chokehold and killed went viral on different social media platforms. The documentation on video of these tragic events happening to unarmed Black people have helped in raising awareness against police brutality, racism and racial inequalities. It has also pushed people to action and to protest against these issues.

Although experiencing violence because of the color of your skin or seeing it happen to someone else may evoke some negative emotions and may also have an impact on the mental wellbeing. Black people are already being confronted on the daily basis with racism, microaggression or some kind of inequality, hence being exposed to videos of unarmed Black people may have long term psychological effects on them. Pieterse et al. (2012) showed that greater perceived racism is associated with greater psychological distress. In this paper I will explore this idea further and look not only at perceived racism, but also at racially motivated violence and killings by police, in this case specifically the killing of Eric Garner, and its impact on the mental health of Black Americans. Therefore, this study will answer the research

question: *Does racially motivated violence by the police influence the mental wellbeing of Black people in the U.S.?*

The growing awareness against racism and inequalities through the BLM movement sparks a broader conversation about race, representation and investing in black communities and (small) black owned businesses. Another topic that is gaining more notice is the relevance and influence of socioeconomic status in several areas, predominantly in health and also for mental health. Mossakowski (2008) showed that Black and Hispanic young adults had significantly higher levels of mental issues, like depression, than their white peers. This was due to the differences in family background and wealth, thus the socioeconomic status of their families (Mossakowski, 2008).

### 1.1 Relevance

The social relevance of this study stems from the two phenomena that we have seen gain attention over the years, which are the increasing awareness for (institutional) racism, including racially motivated police violence, and the awareness of the importance of mental health in every community, especially the in Black community. Undoubtedly, racism has, for the most part, been part of Black people's history but in recent years the term institutional racism has become more prominent in conversations regarding minority groups and racism. This is not a new term but with the rise of social media as a medium to expose and share experienced racism, racially motivated police violence or other forms of discrimination, this term has become an undeniable part of the vocabulary when tackling any form of racism. Institutional racism is the existence of systems, policies or expectations that results in differential access to good or opportunities for minority groups, it will also results in explicit attitudes or racial bias of individuals in the organizations or institutions with these systems in place (Morgan, et al., sd). Since there have been more media and public exposure on the police due to the racially motivated violence that have been recorded and shared on different social media platforms, there has been more thorough check on the police as an organization to examine what the roots of the racially motivated violences are. By providing an analysis on the relationship between racially motivated police violence, which in most cases is the consequence of institutional racism, and mental wellbeing, this study could be helpful for police and law organizations and governments to assess their policies and systems and modify

or restructure. A way of doing this is to hire an diversity and inclusion specialist to educate the police force on racial relations, microaggressions and racial biases. Another way that could improve the biases in the police force is to have the police more involved in the community in the form of outreach, charities and neighborhood activities. This could help decrease the racially motivated police violence due to more familiarity and engagements with and in the community and subsequently decrease the negative effect of the racially motivated police violence on the mental health of Black people.

The growing awareness and support for BLM goes beyond the social issues that need to be challenged and repaired. It is also of economic relevance. On June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020, roughly a week after the death of George Floyd, was a different type of protest against racism and police brutality. This protest was the initiative of the music industry but it quickly gained a lot of attention worldwide on social media. This initiative was for big brands, like Spotify and TikTok to cease operations for one day and therefore bring light to how these brands have benefited from the talents, struggles and successes from Black people (Coscarelli, 2020). This in turn have created a different wave of action on social media with the hashtag #buyblack. This encourages people when buying products and services to consciously make the choice to buy from Black-owned businesses. This is an action that if done collectively, will have major impact on more opportunities for small businesses. The average black household in America has a tenth of the wealth compared to a white household in America (The Economist, 2020). Black people, in most cases when starting a business, start at a disadvantage, including financially. Being more intentional about buying products from Black-owned businesses could help promote the economy but also improve the wealth for Black households and have a lasting impact regarding their socioeconomic environment.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

Research on interaction with the police and the mental health of Black Americans has already been done. (Bor, Venkataramani, Williams, & Tsai, 2018) studied the spillover effect of police killings of unarmed Black Americans on the mental health of Black Americans. They observed the amount of police killings of unarmed Black Americans that occurred during the three months prior to their interview of the respondents and the outcome was the number of days in the previous month that the respondent's mental health was reported as "not good". (Bor, Venkataramani, Williams, & Tsai, 2018) found that exposure to police killing of unarmed Black American is statistically significant associated with additional 0.14 poor mental health for Black people. This study will add on this research by focusing on one single police killing and the impact of this event on the mental wellbeing of Black people compared to non-Black people. Bor et al. (2018) observed various police killings in the three months prior to the interview. I will focus on an interval of one month after the killing of Eric Garner to close the window of other factors having an impact on the outcome variables. Furthermore, the impact of the increasing awareness for racism and racially motivated violence against Black people through the BLM movement will also be considered in this paper.

### 2.1 Literature overview

#### Racism and police brutality

As mentioned above, racism has been a black page in the history of Black people, a page that perhaps we have been stuck on for a while since we are still dealing with racially motivated violence by the police. One definition of racism is that it is "the belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The bridge that connects racism and the police is the fact that black men are still being killed at a disproportional rate by the police. Black people account for 13 percent of the U.S. population and account for 27 percent of the people that were killed by the police in 2021. According to Mapping Police Violence, the total number of people killed in 2021 was at least 1055 (Bunn, 2022).

There has been numerous research made on the association between racism and the police. One explanation as to why the number of Black people killed by the police in the U.S. is so high, is that the police perpetuates racial stereotypes (The Economist, 2022). This is a sign that

racism is embedded into the police system. This in turn will result into actions, when under pressure, that will result in the racially motivated violence that we have been more and more exposed to in recent years. According to Kostić (2013), a possible solution for this bias in attitude and behavior is to create an environment where there is tolerance and understanding for everyone, including minority groups. A way to implement this is to offer education and trainings on human rights issues to law enforcements (Kostić, 2013).

### Racism and mental health

As previously mentioned awareness and conversations regarding mental health issues have been on the rise in recent years. This is especially the case in the Black community, where it culturally has been a taboo topic for many years. When discussing physical and mental health, it is also of importance to include racism. Oftentimes the impact of this issue on the wellbeing of Black people goes unnoticed.

According to Mayfield (1972), there are differences between a poor white individual and a poor Black individual, due to racial discrimination in for example the labor market, Black people often remain in the same socioeconomic environment. The struggles and challenges of being in this type of environment and constantly have to deal with racial discrimination and injustices may affect the mental wellbeing. Predominantly black neighborhoods are overly policed, which can also add to the stress. For example an interaction with the police or being exposed to racially motivated violence may also impact the mental wellbeing.

Adams & Boscarino (2005) evaluated the effect of an exposure to a stressful nationwide event on the mental health of different races. One year after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, they assessed the impact of this event on PTSD, depression, panic attacks, and physical and mental wellbeing of white, Black and Hispanic respondents. They found no significant results that supports the hypothesis that Black or Hispanic people are more likely to experience poorer psychological or physical wellbeing after stressful events compared to white people (Adams & Boscarino, 2005).

## 2.2 Hypotheses

Based on the literature mentioned above, I will hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1: The treatment negatively affected mental wellbeing and happiness

Adams & Boscarino (2005) have not find statistically significant effect that Black people are more likely to experience poor mental wellbeing compared to white people after a stressful event. The stressful event that they used was the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, this event however was not racially motivated. With racially motivated events we may expect different results regarding the mental wellbeing of Black people.

Hypothesis 2: The treatment negatively affected mental wellbeing and happiness for Black people more than it negatively affected mental wellbeing for non-Black people.

(Mossakowski, 2008) found that Black and Hispanic young adults have significantly higher levels of depression compared to white young adults. This is due to racial stratification in the U.S. that perpetuates unfair treatment due to race and which in turn preserve the poor mental wellbeing of these groups (Mossakowski, 2008). By expanding on this, I will hypothesize that the difference in mental wellbeing between Black people and non-Black people is also the case when dealing with racially motivated violence.

## 3 Data & Methodology

### 3.1 Data

To help answer the research question I will evaluate the relationship between the killing of Eric Garner and the mental health of black people. To assess this relationship I will implement different linear regressions using the cross-sectional dataset from 2014, provided by the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS have been interviewing American individuals since 1972 to monitor and explain changes in social characteristics and attitudes being conducted in the U.S (GSS, sd) The data is collected using a standard questionnaire. The fieldwork for the GSS of 2014 was conducted from March 31, 2014 until October 11, 2014. As stated in the introduction part, the killing of Eric Garner occurred on July 17, 2014.

The method that was used for the sampling was a multistage sampling area probability design. The premise of this type of design is that it chooses respondents in households across the United States. This entails that a small area of the total area of the population is randomly sampled at each stage. For this dataset the areas, covering all 50 states, were first stratified by region, age and race and after that block groups were selected in the areas and these block groups were stratified according to race and income. Ultimately, the GSS contains of respondents that are a mix of urban, suburban and rural geographic areas. . After sub-sampling of the non-respondents, all final non-respondents are eliminated from the dataset. Participation in the study is strictly voluntary.

The GSS of 2014 was chosen because the period in which the fieldwork was conducted gives the opportunity to draw, on one hand, a control group from the sample containing respondents that have been interviewed before the killing and, on the other hand, the treatment group which contains respondents that have been interviewed after the killing of Eric Garner. We can assume that the treatment group does not differ from the control group, other than the exposure to the event of interest. This will make it possible to evaluate the relationship between the killing of Eric Garner and the mental wellbeing of the respondents. The dataset contains 2538 English and Spanish speaking Americans that are 18 years or older. From the 2538 respondents, 1890 are white and 386 are black, the remaining respondents answered with 'other' regarding race.



The variables that I will use in this study as a measurement for mental wellbeing are mental health and happiness, which are the dependent variables in all the regression analyses in this study. The variable mental health observes the amount of days in the past thirty days that the respondent experienced poor mental health. The survey question that is associated with this variable is: "Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?" Regarding the questionnaire, there were 1288 respondents that this question was not applicable to, three respondents answered with 'don't know' and six respondents did not answer the question, which resulted in a total of 1241 respondents for this survey question. The variable happiness observes the general happiness of the respondents. The survey question that is associated with the variable happiness is: "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days--would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" In the database, the option very happy takes the number 1, the option pretty happy takes the number 2 and the option not too happy takes the number 3. From all the respondents, six answered the question with 'don't know' and two respondents did not answer this survey question, bringing the total respondents to 2530.

### 3.2 Methodology

The main independent variable that I will use in the regressions is treatment. I created this dummy variable which takes the value zero if the date of interview was before July 17<sup>th</sup> 2014 and the value one if the date is after July 17<sup>th</sup> 2014. To create the variable treatment, the date of interview was filtered with an interval of 30 days before July 17<sup>th</sup> and 30 days after July 17<sup>th</sup>. The 30 days before and after the event interval is to prevent a large difference between the control and the treatment group so the outcome of the regressions can be interpreted as causal effects. Furthermore, a smaller interval gives a more accurate measure of the effect. The control group consists of individuals that were interviewed before July 17<sup>th</sup>. When an individual is treated, I consider this individual to have been exposed to the racially motivated violence, in this case the killing of Eric Garner, and the following media attention to this on July 17<sup>th</sup> 2014. There are 208 respondents in the treatment group, meaning that these respondents have been interviewed within 30 days after the killing of Eric Garner. The control group consists of 312 individuals that have been interviewed no more than 30 days before the killing of Eric Garner.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of all the variables that will be used in this research.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Treatment	565	.4	.49	0	1
Mental health	307	3.121	6.853	0	30
Happiness	562	1.778	.636	1	3
Black	565	.161	.368	0	1
Sex	565	1.563	.496	1	2
Age	564	47.152	16.813	18	89
Marital	565	2.596	1.678	1	5
Income	369	10.556	2.68	1	12
Region	565	5.283	2.402	1	9

*Table 1 Descriptive Statistics*

A two-sample t- test is performed to assess whether the control group and the treatment group statistically significantly differ from each other in observed characteristics. This balance test is done to observe whether the means of the variables of treatment group and control group differs and whether the difference is significant. The t-test will be performed on the variables: sex, marital and age, income and region. If there are not significant differences between the two groups, I will assume that the treatment and control group are similar to each other in observable as well as unobservable characteristics. If there are significant difference between the two groups, control variables need to be added to the regression to control for various characteristics as to prevent these variables to influence the outcome which improves the internal validity of this study. Including the control variables in the regressions helps with the interpretation of the causal relationship between the treatment and in this case the mental wellbeing or happiness of the respondents. There are variables that influenced both the independent variable and the outcome variables. These are the confounding variables. Income is an example of confound variable because it could affect the mental wellbeing or happiness of an individual, but it also affects the area in which an individual lives and with that the day on which the respondent will get interviewed. Another confound variable is region, where you live has the potential to affect your the mental wellbeing but it also determines when a respondent will get interviewed. Therefore, I will control for the variables income and region.

I will analyze and answer the research question through the following hypotheses:

H1. The treatment negatively affected mental wellbeing and happiness

H2. The treatment negatively affected mental wellbeing and happiness for Black people more than it negatively affected mental wellbeing for non-Black people.

A linear regression in STATA will be performed to analyze the relationship between the dependent variable mental health and the independent variable treatment. The linear regression analyses will be used to test the two hypotheses in order to answer the research question. For both hypotheses I will analyze two regressions, one regression will have mental health as dependent variable and the second regression will have happiness as the dependent variable. The independent variable, which is treatment, and control variables will be the same for the regression analyses for both hypothesis. The first regression equation for the first hypothesis that the treatment negatively affected mental wellbeing is:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \rho T_i + \beta B_i + \theta X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where  $Y_i$  is the dependent variable, mental health and happiness.  $T$  is zero before the killing of Eric Garner and  $T$  is one after the killing of Eric Garner.  $B$  is for race being black and  $X$  is a vector of control variables, being age, sex, marital and income. For the second hypothesis that the treatment negatively affected mental wellbeing for Black people more than for non-Black people, an interaction term is added to the regression equation:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \rho T_i + \beta B_i + \gamma T_i * B_i + \theta X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

This equation will help observe the extent in which being black affected the change in mental wellbeing due to treatment.

## 4 Results

First, I did a balance test, to check whether the control group looks similar to the treatment group on observable characteristics. If there is no difference on observable characteristics, we assume that there is no difference on unobservable characteristics between the groups, and that the randomization worked. The results of the t-tests are shown in table 2. The t-test for the variable sex has a null hypothesis that the mean difference between the control group and the treatment group for sex is zero. The p-value for this hypothesis is 0.4680. The null hypothesis is not rejected at a significance level of 5%, which means that we can conclude that there are no significance evidence that sex between the treatment and control groups vary from each other. As it can be observe from table 2 this is also the case for the variables age, marital status, income and region in which the interview occurred. For all these variables the p-value is higher than the significance level of 0.05 which means that for all the above mentioned variables, the hypotheses that the mean difference between the control group and treatment group is zero, cannot be rejected. So from the results of the t-tests we can state that the treatment group and control group are similar in the observed characteristics mentioned above. This is the reason why these variables are not included in the regressions since they do not influence causal relationship between the treatment and the outcome variables. However, as mentioned in the previous section, I still controlled for income and region to prevent omitted variable bias.

<b>Two-sample t test with unequal variances</b>								
	obs1	obs2	Mean1	Mean2	dif	St Err	t value	p value
sex by treatment2:~1	339	226	1.575	1.544	.031	.043	.7	.469
<b>Two-sample t test with unequal variances</b>								
	obs1	obs2	Mean1	Mean2	dif	St Err	t value	p value
age by treatment2:~1	338	226	46.819	47.651	-.831	1.429	-.6	.561
<b>Two-sample t test with unequal variances</b>								
	obs1	obs2	Mean1	Mean2	dif	St Err	t value	p value
marital by treatme~1	339	226	2.696	2.447	.249	.143	1.75	.081
<b>Two-sample t test with unequal variances</b>								
	obs1	obs2	Mean1	Mean2	dif	St Err	t value	p value
income by treatmen~1	312	208	10.872	11.245	-.373	.194	-1.95	.054
<b>Two-sample t test with unequal variances</b>								
	obs1	obs2	Mean1	Mean2	dif	St Err	t value	p value
region by treatmen~1	339	226	5.248	5.337	-.088	.204	-.45	.664

*Table 2 t-tests for different variables*

I assess the extent in which mental wellbeing and happiness changed after the killing of Eric Garner compared to mental wellbeing and happiness of the respondents before the event. First, I run a simple regression without any control variables. Table 3 shows the two outcome variables, namely mental health and happiness, on the top row. As mentioned above, treatment is a dummy variable and takes the value 1 for all individuals that have been interviewed after July 17 and the value 0 for individuals that have been interviewed before July 17. The constant in column 1 of Table 3 shows that on average, respondents reported that 2.9 days out of the last 30 days they did experience a poor mental health. Furthermore, the result shows that the coefficient for the mental wellbeing of individuals who have been interviewed after July 17 is 0.391. This means that, on average, the effect of being in the treatment group increased the average amount of poor mental wellbeing by 0.4 compared to the control group. This coefficient tells us that the killing of Eric Garner had a negative effect on the mental wellbeing of individuals that were interviewed after this event. However, with a p-value of 0.62 this effect is not statistically significant at the 5% significance level. With regard to happiness, on average, the individuals in the treatment group had 0.007 points lower on the happiness scale than individuals in the control group. This coefficient tells us that the killing of Eric Garner had a positive the effect on the happiness of individuals that were

interviewed after this event. This coefficient has a p-value of 0.897, which indicates that the effect is also not statistically significant at the 5% significance level.

	(1) Mental health	(2) Happiness
Treatment	0.391 (0.620)	-0.00708 (0.897)
Constant	2.947*** (0.000)	1.780*** (0.000)
N	307	562
R-sq	0.001	0.000
adj. R-sq	-0.002	-0.002

p-values in parentheses \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001  
*Table 3 linear regressions without control variables*

The first hypothesis: the treatment negatively affected mental wellbeing and happiness, is tested through a linear regression analysis with the outcome variable mental health and a linear regression analysis with the outcome variable happiness. The results of these two regressions are shown in table 4. The first second row shows the coefficients for the treatment. For mental health the estimated coefficient is 0.305, this means that, on average, for the treated population in this sample, The average amount of poor mental health days in the last 30 days increased by 0.3 after the killing of Eric Garner compared to the control group. This corresponds with the hypothesis, however the p-value of 0.62 for this coefficient is not statistically significant.

For the individuals that have been exposed to the killing of Eric Garner, happiness decreased an average of 0.003 points compared to the individuals in the control group. This means that, on average the individuals in the treatment group reported their general happiness being ‘very happy’ less times compared to the control group. The coefficient for happiness has a p-value of 0.966, which also indicates that the effect of the treatment on happiness for the treatment group is not statistically significant at the 5% significance level. The results of the linear regression analyses does not corresponds with hypothesis 1, hence hypothesis 1 is rejected. There is no significant effect of the killing of Eric Garner on mental health or happiness. This

means that there is no significant difference between the treatment group and the control group on mental wellbeing and happiness.

According to the regression analyses results, being Black has a negative effect on mental health and happiness. The coefficients for these two outcomes are, 0.513 and 0.078, respectively. However, both of this coefficients are not statistically significant at the 95% significance level.

	(1) Mental health	(2) Happiness
Treatment	0.305 (0.712)	0.00278 (0.966)
Black	0.513 (0.678)	0.0779 (0.367)
Income	-0.259 (0.231)	-0.00855 (0.453)
Region of interview	0.119 (0.494)	-0.0188 (0.153)
Constant	5.011 (0.052)	1.931*** (0.000)
N	277	369
R-sq	0.013	0.010
adj. R-sq	-0.002	-0.001

p-values in parentheses\* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001  
*Table 4 linear regressions*

To test the second hypothesis: H2. The treatment negatively affected mental wellbeing and happiness for Black people more than it negatively affected mental wellbeing for non-Black people, a linear regression analysis with an interaction term is performed. This interaction term will show if Black people responded differently to the killing of Eric Garner, regarding mental health and happiness, compared to non-Black people. The results are shown in table 5. The coefficient for the treatment effect with the interaction term Black people is -0.317. For Black people the effect of treatment on mental health on average is 0.3 lower than for non-

Black people. This means that a Black person in the treatment group, reported on average, 0.3 less days of poor mental health in the past 30 days compared to a non-Black person in the treatment group. This results implies that the killing of Eric Garner positively affected the mental health of Black people more compared to non-Black people. However, this coefficient has a p-value of 0.905, which is higher than the significance level of 5%. Hence, the effect of the treatment is not statistically significant.

The effect of treatment on happiness for Black people has a coefficient of -0.046. The difference in effect of the killing of Eric Garner on happiness is on average 0.05 lower than for non-Black people. This means that Black people in the treatment group reported on average 0.05 times less 'not to happy' for the variable happiness compared to non-Black people in the treatment group. This coefficient shows that the killing of Eric Garner had a more positive effect on happiness for Black people compared to non-Black people. The p-value for this effect is 0.794, which is not statistically significant at the significance level of 5%. Hence, the second hypothesis is rejected.



	(1) Mental health	(2) happiness
Treatment	0.351 (0.689)	0.0102 (0.886)
Black	0.617 (0.687)	0.0936 (0.388)
Treatment x Black	-0.317 (0.905)	-0.0462 (0.794)
Income	-0.259 (0.233)	-0.00841 (0.459)
Region of interview	0.118 (0.502)	-0.0189 (0.150)
Constant	4.995 (0.054)	1.927*** (0.000)
N	277	369
R-sq	0.013	0.010
adj. R-sq	-0.005	-0.003

p-values in parentheses\* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

*Table 5 linear regressions with interaction term*

## 5 Conclusion

The main variables of interest are treatment, mental health and happiness. The question that this study answers is: Does racially motivated violence by the police influence the mental wellbeing of Black people in the U.S.? Data from the 2014 GSS was used to answer this question through the two hypotheses. The hypotheses were formed through previous research on the topics of police brutality, mental health and racism.

To test both hypotheses, a linear regression analysis was performed. Before the regressions were executed, a balance test was performed and according to the results of the balance test we assumed that the control group and treatment group did not differ in observable characteristics. But I controlled for the variables income and region.

The effect of the killing of Eric Garner was negative, but not significant at the 5% significance level, on mental health and happiness of the respondents. Which resulted in rejection of the first hypothesis. This means that the event did not impact the treatment group differently than the control group. These results are in line with the research of Adams & Boscarino (2005). However, due to the independent variable being racially motivated, it was expected that the negative effect on mental wellbeing and happiness would be significant.

For the second hypothesis, the effect of the killing of Eric Garner was positive on the mental health and happiness of Black people compared to non-Black people, but this effect was also not significant on the 5% significance level. This means that the killing of Eric Garner did not affect Black people more negatively than non-Black people. This is not in line with the research of Mossakowski (2008) and also not in line with the expected outcome of this research.

In conclusion, people who have been exposed to racially motivated violence does not differ from people who have not been exposed to such event regarding mental wellbeing and happiness. Furthermore, racially motivated violence does not influence the mental wellbeing of Black people differently than it does non-Black people in the U.S.

## 6 Discussion

An explanation for the insignificant effect for all the regressions may be the sample size. Due to the small interval of 30 days, the treatment group and the control group are relatively small. Furthermore the treatment group contained of 100 less respondents compared to the control group. This in turn might not be a good representation of the whole population.

Another possibility is that the answers to the survey were self-reported and the total respondents for the question related to mental health were much lower compared to that of happiness. This is because more respondents chose to not answer the question related to mental health. Respondents could still see this topic as taboo or be shameful about it and chose not to answer the question or to not be totally honest when answering the question which could result in biased answers and unreliable outcome. The dataset in this research was of 2014, the conversations on mental health and racism were not as dominant and accessible as it is now. Respondents might not have been as educated then as they might be now about these topics.

Furthermore, in the database there was no variable that specified in which city or area the respondent lives. This may also be a variable that could influence the independent and the dependent variables.

Another limitation is that the research is done based of data from the U.S., the outcomes of this research cannot be applied to a different country as the cultural, social and political differences are play a major role.

For further research, I would advise to use a more recent database and with more respondents. This may help with obtaining a more precise causal effect with a sample that is more representative of the whole population.

For future research on this topic, an interesting angle on this topic might be to look if the BLM movement has indeed improved the overall position of Black people in society by bringing awareness to the root issues of racism or that it has done more harm to Black people.

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