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Trabajo Fin de Grado

Discovering the Quiet Side of the Panthers: The Black Panther's Survival Programs and Public Image

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Resumen

Durante siglos, los negros han sufrido casos de segregación y discriminación, debido a su pasado como esclavos y al sentimiento racista arraigado en los Estados Unidos. Los prejuicios atribuidos, incrementaron con la imposición de estereotipos, que se utilizaron como método de clasificación y por lo tanto como forma de separar a este grupo del resto de la sociedad. Cansados de su estado de desigualdad y de las consecuencias que esta traía, surgió el movimiento de los Derechos Civiles y posteriormente el Partido Pantera Negra (The Black Panther Party). Desde el inicio los Panteras negras, al igual que la demás población negra, fueron vistos con miedo y sufrieron un trato degradante debido a los prejuicios y estereotipos, que se extendieron mediante los medios de comunicación y el FBI. Resistiendo los intentos por parte del FBI y de la policía de erradicar el partido, los Panteras Negras establecieron como objetivo ayudar a sus comunidades mediante sus programas de supervivencia (Survival Programs) mostrándoles lo que el gobierno les estaba negando. Con este trabajo pretendo demostrar que con el desarrollo y puesta en marcha de estos programas, no solo se consiguió ayudar a estas comunidades que sufrían pobreza, desempleo, brutalidad policial y hambruna, sino que también se limpiase la imagen negativa del Partido Pantera Negra y la de los negros en general, la cual había sido dañada por dichos estereotipos y los prejuicios.

DISCOVERING THE QUIET SIDE OF THE PANTHERS: THE BLACK PANTHER'S SURVIVAL PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC IMAGE

From its very origins, the Black Panther Party was viewed negatively by the FBI and the media. But this negative view of the Black Panthers did not start with this group. In fact, blacks[1] in general, since the foundation of the United States, were not considered human beings nor citizens, but savages and slaves, as part of an institution that was rooted in the American economy (Zinn 171). This history of racism and segregation in this country has conditioned the ability of blacks to improve their status. Due to this American Apartheid, blacks were given the status of "the other" (Davis and Donaldson 215) so whites attributed negative aspects to this group in order to determine that they do not belong in white society (Dyer 14). Some of the negative aspects were given to blacks from the very beginning of slavery (unintelligent, lazy, violent) (Sanders and Sullivan 202,203), and after the abolition of slavery other negative traits were added to them (criminals, drug addicts and dealers) (Balkaran, The U.S. Media and Racism section).

This situation continued for blacks throughout the 18th and 19th century, as slavery was still legal in that period, which left them with little power over their lives, because if they tried to seek freedom they were executed, normally in the presence of other slaves so they would be dissuaded from trying to escape (Foner 144). However, with the abolition of slavery little by little blacks' consciousness and awareness of their situation grew, as well as their actions for freedom. This consciousness culminated in the fifties and sixties with the birth of the Civil Rights Movement, a period in which Blacks throughout the United States were still facing constant discrimination, brutality and segregation, but at the same time were peacefully trying to gain improvements.

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[1] In this dissertation the use of the term "black" instead of the politically correct one, African-American, is due to the political intention this term carries and its use by the BPP members themselves.

However, due to the constant injustices black communities were suffering at the hands of police officers, the Black Panther Party and other civil rights activists discarded the peaceful approaches of the Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King and other civil rights activists, and adopted a more violent one (Faragher et al. 555). This violent approach was justified by the Second Amendment that states the right of individuals to bear arms to defend themselves, which the party used as a self-defense tactic against police brutality (Young 36). The negative image the Black Panther Party had was due to their ideology, all-black attire and police controls (Flood 23). This group was founded at the end of the sixties when civil right activism was heading towards a more militant approach in the seventies. Their militant approach was characterized by their use of all-black uniforms and their ideology of black empowerment. The Black Panther Party also had armed patrols for which members "had to undergo gun training" (Flood 24), which resembles the organization of an army. This militancy created controversy and to eradicate the Black Panthers, the FBI, press and other media influenced the general publics' perception of the Party (Flood 23, Jeffries 75). Therefore, when the Black Panther Party was founded not only did it have to face the prejudices created by the FBI and the media but also the enduring black stereotypes that supported them. They reinforced the stereotypical images that had been imposed on blacks throughout US history to attack the Black Panther Party and emphasize the party's negative public image (Carter). Besides their violent approach, the party's distribution of chapters (offices) throughout the country and their general system of organization with different ranks (Jeffries 71) granted the Panthers with a well-organized system that may have increased the fear of the FBI towards this group, as the Black Panthers wanted blacks to control their own shops, schools and local governments (Alkebulan as cited in Pope and Flanigan 452). This fear was translated

into oppression as well as police brutality, which increased with the heavy police control of black neighborhoods as solution for crime (Seale 6), crime clearly connected with poverty. The press focused on black criminality as a way to create fear of blacks and this organization, whilst the FBI and police concentrated on detaining blacks as a form of control over this situation.

The Black Panther's situation with the police may have increased their hostility towards the group and the efforts they used to dismantle the group. In order to do that the FBI and the white media disseminated this negative public image of the Black Panthers. The FBI took action against the Black Panther Party with COINTELPRO, a Counterintelligence Program with which they tried to disassemble the party by gathering information from within and provoking internal altercations and distrust (Foner 976; Brame and Shriver 501). However, Brame and Shriver (501) also notice that in North Carolina, the details of the Black Panther's activities that the FBI reported to their superiors were often altered so that they matched the negative image that they wanted to convey; that is, they manipulated information so that the Panthers' bad reputation would increase. So, without any doubt the FBI wanted the Black Panthers to be seen as terrorists to justify the dismantling of the Party. This is shown, for instance, in Mario Van Peeble's movie *Panther* (1995), in which the FBI infiltrated agents and blackmailed members to gain inside information about the party.

The media also contributed to the already existing prejudices against blacks by using derogative terms that reinforced their negative public image. The Black Panther Party members were, and still are, portrayed as "'terrorists', 'negroes', 'inciters', 'blacks', 'angry', 'criminal', 'gun-wielding thugs', and 'militant anti-Americans'" (Carter). And this image reached many whites: "To many white Americans, one of the most fearsome of the new groups was the Black Panther Party. […] What particularly

worried white parents was that some of their own children agreed with the Panther" (Norton 938). In addition to the media and literature spreading negative stereotypes about blacks, the press also influenced society's view of them. Dixon (as cited in Sanders and Sullivan 205), states that the news often contribute to the perpetuation of the criminal image of blacks because this group usually appear in news stories that have to do with recreation, sports and crimes. He further explains that due to the constant prejudices against blacks presented by whites, the latter were most likely to preserve this negative view of blacks and to judge them more harshly. However, although whites shared the media's and the FBI's point of view of the Panthers, an FBI report indicated that blacks were more supportive of the Party, mainly because of their survival programs and the protection they provided to black communities.

The Black Panthers' survival programs were created to meet blacks' demands and help the communities where they were implemented in order to "change the social conditions that make it impossible for the people to afford the things they need and desire" (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 3). But the survival programs also served to counterbalance the negative image of the Panthers, and blacks in general. Poverty, an issue clearly derived from the long history of brutality, discrimination and segregation (Balkaran, The U.S. Media and Racism section), was one of the main targets of the Party's struggle. Thus, the survival programs aimed at both the eradication of police brutality, and oppression and the promotion of "radical activism and cooperation among oppressed people everywhere" (Flood 22) to appease the various problems derived from poverty. Nevertheless, little attention has been given to these programs as the media and the FBI opted to focus and emphasize on aspects that would offer a negative perception of the Black Panther Party –armed group, police controls, dark clothing and their paramilitary aspect– so that they would influence the public opinion against the

party. However, the aim of this dissertation is to counterbalance the negative and unfair image given to the Black Panther Party by examining their survival programs and seeing how their reach extended beyond their immediate objectives by fighting also against enduring prejudices embodied in many black stereotypical figures. Rather than insisting on the view of the organization as radical and brutal, this essay will bring to the fore a more sympathetic view of the Black Panthers by looking at their survival programs and how they aimed at helping blacks face enduring problems like unemployment, hunger, poverty and violence, whilst deconstructing negative stereotypes of the black population.

Survival programs to help the community and the Panther's public image

The Black Panther Party, since its foundation in 1966, sought to cover their communities' needs by means of their survival programs. These survival programs were born because black communities soon realized what they were lacking –employment, food, equal opportunity, and proper education amongst others- which were the real cause of black suffering and the Black Panthers established as one of their aims to help blacks overcome those problems. Hence, the "Ten-Point Program" was designed, which was a list of demands and needs that the Black Panthers advocated to improve their city and communities. There were many survival programs that differed from city to city. They also covered all type of services: medical, for the community, for the youth, for the elderly or for the unemployed. Each program had a defined purpose to deal with a necessity that would improve the black community's quality of life. However, Newton (as cited in The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 4)

states that "all these programs satisfy the deep needs of the community but they are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution." Therefore, these programs served to create consciousness of the social inequalities and unequal treatment they were receiving compared to whites. This consciousness was achieved because participation of BPP members in these programs was mandatory (Flood 24), which reminded the Panthers of their purpose, as one of the recruits Abu-Jamal (Young 43) recalls:

> "Getting up early to serve neighborhood kids and spending some time with them before they were bundled up for school gave many Panthers a real example of what we were working for –our people's future."

Not only did they raised consciousness of their situation within the group, but these programs also showed the communities where they were implemented what the government was denying them and how the Panthers were the ones satisfying those needs (Pope and Flanigan 446). So within the community the Black Panthers were spreading a positive image of their party: "approximately 25% of the black population has a great respect for the Black Panther Party, including 43% of blacks under 21 years of age" (Zinn 464). Moreover, as the image of the government and their institutions were deteriorating, the image of the Black Panthers was improving by means of their newspaper, *The Black Panther Intercommunal News,* in which they talked about important matters, covered relevant news for black communities (Jeffries 72) and informed about the survival programs to members and non-members. Their newspaper tried to reverse the negative image the police and the media were projecting

of them by depicting the police as "pigs" (Flood 32) and by reporting cases of racism and mistreatment at the hands of the police (The Dr. Huey P- Foundation 49).

Despite the dominant violent image attributed to this paramilitary organization, the Black Panther Party carried out some social programs that contributed very effectively to help black communities –a more agreeable side of this organization that is usually ignored. Their survival programs have been overshadowed, however, by what appeared to be their most controversial activity, patrolling the police, as has been shown in movies and documentaries such as Mario Van Peeble's *Panther* (1995) and Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* (2013). This is also seen in Boykoff and Gies' examination (cited in Brame and Shriver 503), Portland's newspapers gave more attention to the criminality or violence of the Black Panther Party than speaking about their survival programs positively. Although these programs were designed to help blacks with major issues such as health, education, social and legal programs, they could have helped neutralize the Party's own stereotypes and misconceptions, as well as the black population as a whole, if more attention was given to them.

The importance of stereotypical images resides in their capacity to set apart the group or persons they are referring to, usually in a bad way. A stereotype is defined as "a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing". Scholars Dyer (11) and Dixon (as cited in Sanders and Sullivan 202) agree that stereotypes often carry negative aspects that may not be true. Stereotypes assign all members of a group the same qualities even though every member has a different background. Thus, in order to be able to understand all the members of the group easily, they are all unfairly given the same features. Moreover, socially, stereotyping has been used as a way to establish social distance between whites and blacks and also to

categorize and make sense of this group (Dyer 12, 16; Dixon as cited in Sanders and Sullivan 202). Furthermore, Dyer (16) states that "that role of stereotypes is to make visible the invisible, so that there is no danger of it creeping up on us unaware", so politically stereotypes serve to bring awareness about the stereotypical group to the people without these stereotypical features. For instance, in the slave period masters drew racist opinions of their slaves, deeming them as "shiftless and sensual, loyal but lazy […] docile and childlike" (Barney 197) to set them as an inferior group and dominate them. However, with these stereotypical features came inaccurate representations of the black population, which often offered a negative depiction of them and materialized in the form of racism and segregation. So, by the year 1966, young blacks had grown up witnessing and experiencing violence and injustices towards themselves and their black communities (Young 28-29), due to the inferior position whites had given to them.

The imposition of stereotypes on blacks led to the assimilation of these stereotypical features by their victims and often blacks unconsciously or even deliberately emphasized these stereotypical images. The deeply rooted sense of racial inferiority made it difficult for blacks to fight the negative view people had of them and often saw how these stereotypes were detrimental to their improvement (Balkaran, The U.S. News, Media and Race section). For instance, many black students were uninterested in trying to perform well academically due to the discrimination they suffered at school and because they felt they would be betraying their culture and identity. Arthur Whaley and La Noel (152) explain this as the oppositional culture theory, one of the two theories they propose to explain poor academic success. The other theory is stereotype theory, which claims that blacks feel pressured to do well academically as they do not want to reaffirm the already existing stereotypes, but the

pressure hindered their academic performance, therefore reinforcing the stereotype (Whaley and Noel 153). However this can be applied to other areas and not only to the academic field.

Dixon (as cited in Sanders and Sullivan 205) proposes four typical stereotypes[2] that blacks were caricaturized into and that transcended to literature and the media: "the mammy, the coon, the Tom and the Buck (brute)". These characters had little to do with how blacks were in reality, and the characters they portrayed reinforced negative stereotypes[3] that would later be associated with the word "nigger" (Pilgrim). However, there are more stereotypes created by the media, literature and other fields, such as the 'Sambo', 'Sapphire', 'Jezzebel' and 'Pickaninny' (Pilgrim) that have conditioned blacks by hindering their public image. To counterbalance these stereotypes this dissertation will analyze how the Black Panther Party's Survival Programs helped attack with the stereotypes that had been imposed on blacks, besides dealing with the consequences they provoked such as unemployment, violence, poverty and segregation.

Schooling the black masses: educating Toms and Mammies

The Black Panther Party created several programs that focused on the education of young blacks and young adults as a way to help them academically and also as a way to spread black consciousness to them: Liberation Schools and the Adult Education Program. They considered important to teach them Black History because there was a negative view of their culture in white schools and therefore it was not even taught (Seale 8). In order to teach young blacks their history and culture, as well as other subjects, without the oppressive atmosphere they experienced in white schools, the Black Panthers created liberation schools throughout the country. The one in Oakland,

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[2] See appendix for visual representations of the stereotypes.

[3] Stereotypical features such as stupidity, ugliness, anger, violence, laziness, ignorance and family neglect.

California, due to its increasing popularity, changed to a bigger building and changed its name to Intercommunal Youth Institute in 1971 and to Oakland Community School in 1974 (Huggins). This program helped them in such a way that in 1974 it received an award for "having set the standard for the highest level of elementary education in the state" (Jackson). As William James, a black musician, once said, "You can rule ignorance; you can manipulate the illiterate; you can do whatever you want when people are uneducated," so the Panthers wanted to prevent these young blacks from remaining oppressed in the future by fostering their education. Moreover, to do so, the Black Panthers also created an Adult Education Program in their Community Learning Center to help adults who had dropped out of school obtain their High School General Equivalency Diploma (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 12), as they believed that with a better education, employment opportunity would increase and with that the chances of improving their economic and social situation.

These programs attacked two stereotypical images that the media had created for blacks, the Tom and the Mammy, both portrayed as "intellectually childlike, physically unattractive, and neglectful of their biological families" (Pilgrim). So, a stereotype drawn out of this caricature is that blacks were unintelligent or had the intelligence of a child and did not value education. This view of blacks was so deeply rooted in the United States that according to Hudley and Graham (as cited in Varner & Madara 878) young students from different ethnicities considered black boys to be the ones that had the worse academic performance. This view of black boys' academic performance may be or may not be true, but this prejudice affected the way white students and teachers

determined students' intelligence by their skin color. (Feagin as cited in Sanders and Sullivan 203). Moreover, Huey Newton (*Revolutionary Suicide*) as well as Varner and Mandara (878) affirm that teachers and the school system looked at young black students through these stereotypes and belittled their abilities many times, making them feel worthless and inferior. Whaley and Noel (151) confirm that stereotyping blacks in a negative way is common in the American education system.

The Liberation Schools helped young blacks overcome these stereotypes by helping them with difficult subjects, helping build up their confidence and improving their chance of obtaining a quality education that would increase their probabilities of finding a good job later on. The support the students received also avoided students to rebel by dropping out of school as a way to escape the oppressiveness they were suffering (Newton *Revolutionary Suicide*), therefore attacking the stereotype that blacks were not intelligent and did not perform well academically was a key social and political goal for the BPP. So these programs were successful in helping their students excel and in overcoming stereotypes that had been imposed, thus proving the importance of the training and education of future generations.

In search of employment: attacking the Coon stereotype

Black communities faced long-lasting economic issues such as poverty and unemployment, which the Black Panthers sought to overcome by creating programs that granted these poor unemployed blacks the opportunity to have an income to deal with poverty. As a way to decrease unemployment rates and to improve unequal salaries, the Black Panther Party created the People's Free Unemployment Program (Black Panther Party Legacy & Alumni). But other programs also dealt with the issue of unemployment, like the People's Free Pest Control Program or the Free Plumbing and Maintenance Program, which trained black community members to increase their

working skills so that they could find employment (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 69, 72). With these programs the Black Panther Party was not only providing jobs for unemployed blacks, but they were also providing free services to the community as a way to improve their neighborhood and were also demonstrating whites that blacks were capable of learning professions and carrying them out.

The fact that whites had this perception of blacks comes from the coon caricature, which portrayed black men as "lazy, easily frightened, chronically idle, inarticulate, buffoon" (Pilgrim). Added to the reality of blacks having little or no education at all, this prejudice was an important part of the Party's struggle against black unemployment. It seemed that they were lazy and did not want to work, but the fact is that during the 1960s the number of unemployed blacks doubled that of unemployed whites (Foner 974, Franklin and Moss, Jr. 477) and in the 1970s the unemployment rate for young black adults exceeded 30 percent (M.A. Jones 581). Blacks, especially males, have seen how their abilities in their academic and professional careers have been belittled, as they were considered to be lazy and welfare-dependent (Sigelman and Tuch as cited in Sanders & Sullivan 202). Besides this negative perception, what also hindered blacks' job opportunities were their living conditions and criminality, as employers were less likely to hire people who lived in poor communities or public housing (Bobo and Charles 251) and to hire a black person with a criminal record (Foner 1071).

Whites who saw blacks as the Coon's materialization –which derives from the behavior of black slaves who tried to do the least amount of work possible without receiving punishment from their master (Pilgrim)- likely affected blacks' possibilities of finding a job, creating a never-ending cycle that emphasized the stereotype. However, the Black Panthers' survival programs by granting these individuals the chance to work

and gain a salary were indirectly fighting against the prejudices that had been given to them and were at the same time restoring their image by proving that they were hard-working individuals who just had not been given the opportunity to work.

Calming the violent savages: the Brute stereotype

Criminality by young blacks was an alarming issue present in black communities throughout the United Sates (M. A. Jones 578), which the BPP also sought to tackle in some of their survival programs. There were also excessive incarcerations by Police patrols who many times stopped blacks and arrested them by using petty excuses to put them in jail (Newton *Revolutionary Suicide*). Police patrols, Legal Aid and Education, Pocket Lawyer and Drug/Alcohol Abuse Programs focused on preventing blacks from engaging in criminal activities or educating them on their rights so that they could avoid unfair detentions. Blacks when aware of being treated unfairly often protested and had confrontations with the police, who under state order used violence as a form of social control (Brame and Shriver 502). This is why the Black Panther Party created their Police Patrols. They sought to survey the police to avoid any unnecessary mistreatment of blacks, because with their presence the police were most likely to deal with the situation differently.

Nevertheless, it is true that blacks committed crimes but due to they were related to their condition of poverty, they were and are still prone to be incarcerated and receive worse treatment from the criminal justice system than the richer whites (Zinn 516). Since it was difficult to attack the roots of criminality because of its interrelation with other issues –unemployment, poverty, segregation, drugs, discrimination-, and the unfair treatment of the criminal justice system, the Black Panther Party sought to prevent illegal activities such as the use or distribution of drugs, and even alcoholism, with their Drug/Alcohol Abuse Program (The Black Panther Party Research Project).

These illegal substances often led to the disruption of black families which further deteriorated blacks' social and economic condition, as it increased domestic violence and the probability of users engaging in criminal activities to obtain money for this addiction (M. A. Jones 577). However, because many blacks were convicted the Black Panthers tried to help them with any legal issues they had through the Legal Aid and Educational Program (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 80). In addition, to prevent police officers from taking advantage of blacks' unfamiliarity with the law to arrest them, the Party designed a pamphlet, featured in their newspaper, called the "Pocket Lawyer" that people could carry around in which they informed them of their rights, and how to react when stopped by the police (The Black Panther Party *The Black Panther,* 1969*).*

Studies show that the reality of black males is that they are condemned to be seen as "aggressive, hypersexual, and prone to criminality" (Thomas and Stevenson as cited in Varner and Mandara 879). This image of the black male coincides with the stereotype of the black brute: "savage, animalistic, destructive and criminal" (Pilgrim), both depictions in the media and literature were most likely to cause fear within the white community, hindering even more their perception of blacks. So this could have led whites to think that blacks were violent and committed crimes because it was in their nature to do so. However, it was poverty and the use of drugs that led blacks to pursue a criminal career, which decreased their chances of finding employment, or at least one with decent income. This brought about a situation that only reinforced their poor economic condition and caused a sort of poverty trap. Furthermore, in the media, black criminality was often reported both on television and

newspapers, which also contributed to the whites' negative perception of blacks (Sanders and Sullivan 205; Boykoff and Gies as cited by Brame & Shriver 503).

So by attacking the problems that caused criminality or by educating blacks in legal matters, they were also counterbalancing the prejudices that emphasized black's portrayal as overaggressive, drug users, beast-like and always mad. The police patrols prevented the police from abusing their authority and treating blacks unfairly and avoid violent confrontations. This measure attempted to undermine the perception of this group as troublemakers who did not obey the police. Also, the Pocket Lawyer helped with this purpose because blacks would become educated in their rights and know what to do and what not to do when stopped by the police. However, sometimes it was too late for the Black Panthers to try and help their community members avoid prison, so with their Legal Aid and Educational Program they helped convicts in jail or people that had legal issues to sort out (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 80). Many Panthers and black community members in general were in need of legal assistance because of the presence of drugs within black communities. The film *Panther* (1955) shows how the police took advantage of these issues to incarcerate Black Panther members, although the Panthers' policies condemned the consumption or distribution of drugs by its members. So with the Drug/Alcohol Abuse Program addicts were treated to prevent blacks' from committing illegal activities or violent acts, which increased with the use of these substances (Lafree et al. 80), and also from being viewed as drug dealers and drug users –a perception that was emphasized on television with the portrayal of blacks as "criminals, drug dealers, and gang members" (Smith as cited in Sanders & Sullivan 205).

Protecting Black Women: Combating the Sapphire and the Jezebel Stereotypes

The Black Panther Party created several programs for black women and their children as they were particularly vulnerable groups in black communities. Some programs entertained the children of single mothers after school since they could not supervise their children whilst they were working or had no one to babysit them (Ousey, Sampson as cited in Lafree et al. 78). These type of programs dealt with sports –such as martial arts, yoga, baseball, basketball or soccer (The Black Panther Party *The Black Panther*, 1976, 4), screening of free movies in the Youth Film Program, or drama, dance and music classes (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 10). Other programs, such as the Women's Self-Defense Class, were designed for black women who were often victims of oversexualization, rape and abuse. The Black Panther Party created it to alleviate the issue of violence, which was often translated into domestic abuse in the household and to the objectification that black women suffered as they were often seen as sexually immoral (Higginbotham as cited in Barney 189). The problem of violence, such as domestic or other instances, often led to the imprisonment of the husband or partner, which left the children of these couples fatherless and under the care and supervision of their mother (Acs et al. 19).

This reality of single-parented families was a reflection of the Sapphire stereotype which portrays black women as independent, self-sufficient, not afraid to express their opinion, stubborn and even as emasculators (Pilgrim). Moreover, another stereotypical image of black women is the Jezebel, an alluring black woman, often oversexualized, who was used to justify white relationships with black women in the slave period, mainly through rape (Pilgrim). The view of women as emasculators could be due to the increase of women as the head of single-parent families because of the disruption of family structures (Moynihan as cited in Flood 25). This new family

structure was the consequence of the increasing number of divorces and children born outside marriage in the 1960s (Acs et al. 3), which clashed with the ideal view of the family in the 1950s, which consisted in a male "breadwinner" and a female "homemaker" living in a house in the suburbs full of appliances (May 15-16). However, this family structure was far from the reality that black families lived in the 1960s and onwards, as they could not afford a house in the suburbs because of their poor economic condition, which was usually worsened by the fact that the male was either unemployed or incarcerated. The perception of black women as independent that do not need or have a partner comes from the fact that women were becoming the "breadwinners" and the head of the family on their own (Acs et al. 9). This creation of a matriarchal society was due to the emasculating racism men suffered in a white society rather than to the emasculating force of black women (Sapphires) (Flood 25). The fact that women were now in charge of both keeping the household and bringing bread to the table meant that their children spent many hours without any type of supervision. This, along with the increasing poverty of teenagers reported by Faragher et al. (598), caused the crime rate among young blacks with ages from ten to seventeen to increment in the 1970s. So, criminality started spreading to younger blacks as they were following the patterns of their older community members.

On the one hand, with the help of the Black Panthers' Survival Programs, these women's children and teenagers were entertained with different activities after school, preventing them from engaging in criminal activities which they would likely continue as they grew older. Having young blacks concentrate on programs that they enjoyed would increase the chances of them having a crime-less life and therefore not leaving their partners alone because of incarceration. On the other hand, if these programs failed to prevent blacks from criminality or to reform criminals, the Women's Self-Defense

Class helped black women defend themselves against their partners or any delinquents they could encounter. By doing so, black women could fight against their oversexualized image and the perception as objects to be used and abused.

From rags to "riches": feeding and clothing the Pickaninnies

The most popular and most important program created by the Black Panthers was the Free Breakfast for Schoolchildren Program, because it provided a healthy and nutritious breakfast to children before they went off to school so they could perform better academically (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 30). The reality was that many families in these black communities lived in poverty and could not afford many meals. In fact, poverty amongst children of black communities was a common issue as in the sixties fifty per cent of the black population was under the poverty line (Zinn 458), so the Black Panther Party designed this program which soon spread out to other communities in other cities throughout the nation. The popularity of this program reached such extent that the FBI sought necessary to shut it down by trying to persuade the churches not to participate in hosting these breakfasts or food store owners in not donating food (C. E. Jones 183). Moreover, Bobby Seale (227) reports that LA Police and from other cities had tried to scare the children participating in those programs and intimidate the Panther members by showing them their guns. These encounters with the police at such a young age could later increment their hatred towards them when they grew older, increasing violence and disrespect for power structures, this inciting the stereotype of disrespect for authorities. However, because of the popular demand this program and despite the FBI's attempt to end the program, the Panthers continued with feeding their communities' children (Alkebulan 33).

The Panthers also created the People's Free Clothing Program and the People's Free Shoe Program because not only did families of black communities struggle to feed

their families, but also could not spend any money in buying new clothes, which often led to children wearing hand-me-downs or clothes that were in very poor condition (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 66). These programs provided and distributed clothing for children and adults of the community according to their needs such as job interviews or, warm clothes for winter, and supplied shoes to poor families that could not afford them (The Black Panther Party *The Black Panther*, 1973, 17).

These children that struggled to overcome hunger and were dressed with clothes in poor condition resembled the depiction of the pickaninny and reinforced this stereotype of black children. Due to stereotypes permeating to different fields, the image of the pickaninny found in the media found its origins in the field of literature, specifically in the book *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1899) which stood out for its polemical illustrations and because the term 'Sambo' was later used to refer to the stereotype of the calm and reliable black servant (Pilgrim as cited in Jeyathurai). The pickaninny is a young version of the coon that is characterized for being dressed in few rags or nude, which emphasizes the impression that poverty is common amongst children of black communities (Pilgrim).
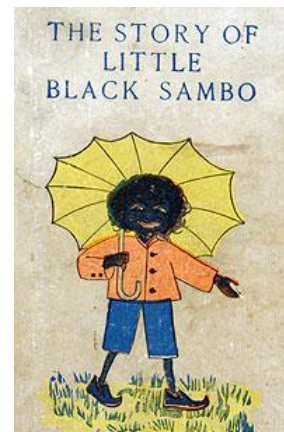
The programs that the Black Panther Party designed attacked the stereotypical image of the Pickaninny by providing children with clothes that were new or in good condition to prevent them from reinforcing the stereotype. Moreover, the Free Breakfast for Schoolchildren Program helped black children perform better academically after a good breakfast, therefore also attacking the stereotype that blacks were lazy or unintelligent. By helping black community members in their early years, the possibility of a better life in the future increased as they would have more opportunities to excel.

Black sense of community vs. white sense of individuality

The Black Panthers Survival Programs are a demonstration of their need to help each other and as a way to strengthen their sense of community, so that their members would not commit acts of violence against each other and help one another instead. This is why the SAFE (Seniors Against a Fearful Environment) Program was created. More often than not, the community's elderly were the most vulnerable part of society, so 33% of the offenses committed in Oakland were against them (The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 17). To avoid this, Panthers drove the elders to their retirement homes, and escorted them while they ran their errands (Black Panther Party Legacy & Alumni), creating this way a bond with the elderly and gaining consciousness of the problems they suffered as well.

This program shows blacks' sense of community, something that has been present, even in the past and especially since the slave period when they created communities to help each other economically and spiritually (Halttunen 104). However, it seems that when some blacks improved to middle-class status, they tried to move away from poorer blacks so the stereotypes that affected this lower class would not permeate to them (Barney 189), therefore acquiring the sense of individualism which is emphasized by white American society (Wiececk and Hamilton 1118). Barney further explains that despite the consequences of black social mobility, blacks still felt the need to help the lower classes they were trying to separate themselves from. This is shown in black communities as shop owners and people from higher classes often helped the Black Panthers' Survival Programs by donating goods or funds as The Dr. Huey P. Foundation explains in *The Black Panther Party: Service to the People Programs*.

Creating distance between neighborhoods

Because of the creation of ghettos due to their overpopulation of the city centers, it was difficult to find a decent place to live for a fair price, so the Black Panther Party created the People's Cooperative Housing Program. This program consisted in obtaining Federal aid to fund housing facilities for poor blacks who were forced to relocate because of the demolition of their residences due to "urban renewal", which was the consequence of whites having fled these neighborhoods and leaving only blacks in these places (May 11). So, the Black Panther Party designed this program because the government's urban renewal process was simply relocating poor blacks in areas with low-rent houses and therefore, creating new ghettos and freeing space so they could build new facilities (Davis and Donaldson 217), which did not solve the issue. Also, the Black Panthers with this program sought to eliminate the inequalities that were being created in black-only neighborhoods and the distances that whites were trying to establish.

As whites wanted to move away from blacks they tried to establish social distance –distance in social class-, as well as physical distance –by moving to different neighborhoods- as a way to avoid integration (Bobo and Charles 250). In the 1970s, the rate of racial residential segregation was 85 per cent due to whites' belief that "white people have a right to keep Negroes out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and Negroes should respect that right" (Bobo and Charles 249). Thus, blacks were forced to live in inner-city neighborhoods, forming ghettos in which buildings were run-down and in terrible conditions. Wilson (as cited in LaFree et al. 77) claims that due to the changes experienced in the city centers' black neighborhoods, they have accumulated disadvantages that make them inferior to other neighborhoods. Blacks from the middle classes fled the ghettos in order to escape the oppressing environment but when they left

these neighborhoods they stopped receiving the social benefits the government granted them (LaFree et al. 78).

Conclusion

Racism has been deeply rooted in US American society since the very foundation of the nation; a prejudice that justified slavery, discrimination and segregation of blacks and other minorities. Along with these ways of establishing social distance between whites and blacks, whites also created stereotypes and imposed them on blacks as a form of generalization and categorization found in stereotypes. So, people with black skin were attributed certain characteristics that could be true or not. The stereotypes mentioned before may have caused fear and uncertainty in whites towards blacks, which has been translated in even more segregation, discrimination, and racism. Moreover, these actions have derived into consequences such as poverty, unemployment, poor academic performance, violence and unfair treatment in different institutions, all of which have hindered blacks' possibilities in overcoming the difficulties they encountered in their communities. However, the Black Panther Party sought to overcome not only the issues of poverty, hunger, criminality and many others, but also to fight the prejudices against them and blacks through the design and implementation of survival programs.

Although the main aim of the Black Panther Party's Survival Programs was to help black communities, indirectly these programs helped seek integration within white society and tried to overthrow any prejudices against blacks to show that they were not as the stereotypes depicted them. By counterbalancing these stereotypes and by whites living along with blacks, the former would see that not all blacks follow the stereotypes given to them and therefore would not fear blacks, ridding them of any prejudices and alleviating their issues.

The long-standing negative stereotypes and prejudices against blacks were reinforced and exploited by the media and the FBI to attack the BPP and emphasize the negative image they already had. Despite the Black Panther Party's negative image and the fact that they were active for a short period of time, their 15 years of activity left an important political legacy. The party's programs have been adopted by many organizations and institutions throughout the United States, or have influenced the creation of many others. This means that they were a positive influence in helping poor neighborhoods and black communities, and that their efforts for improving blacks' condition transcended any struggles the party encountered. Therefore, the stereotypes imposed on blacks by whites were challenged in order to make way for these survival programs, which they saw were useful for black communities and therefore for their own.

These programs provided the community with everything necessary to meet their basic needs and improve their conditions so that they could grow aware of how the government was not helping them and join forces to change this situation. The programs, however, also helped counterbalance the prejudices that the people had of the black community and the negative image of the Black Panthers, by showing them that their problems were the consequence of enduring racism and inequality. The attributes of being unintelligent, criminals, oversexual, lazy and used to define the members of the black community were challenged through programs like the Liberation Schools, the People's Cooperative Housing, Free Breakfast for School Children and the Seniors Against a Fearful Environment Program. Although these programs encountered difficulties because of the FBI and the police, the Party was able to overcome these issues and accomplish their direct goal of helping the black community and their indirect one of counterbalancing their negative image created by the media.
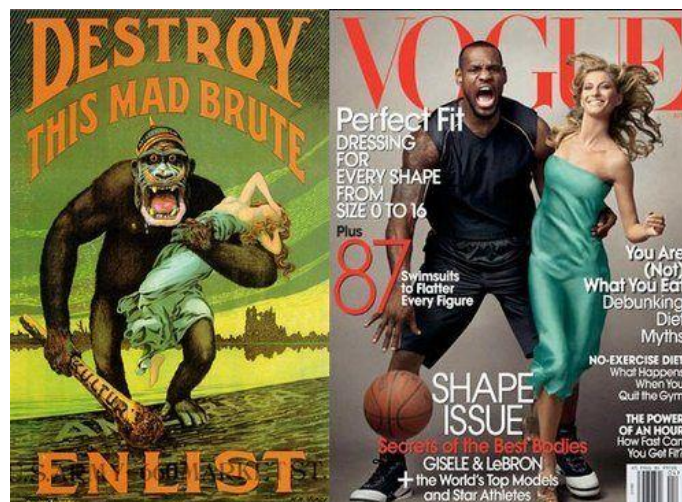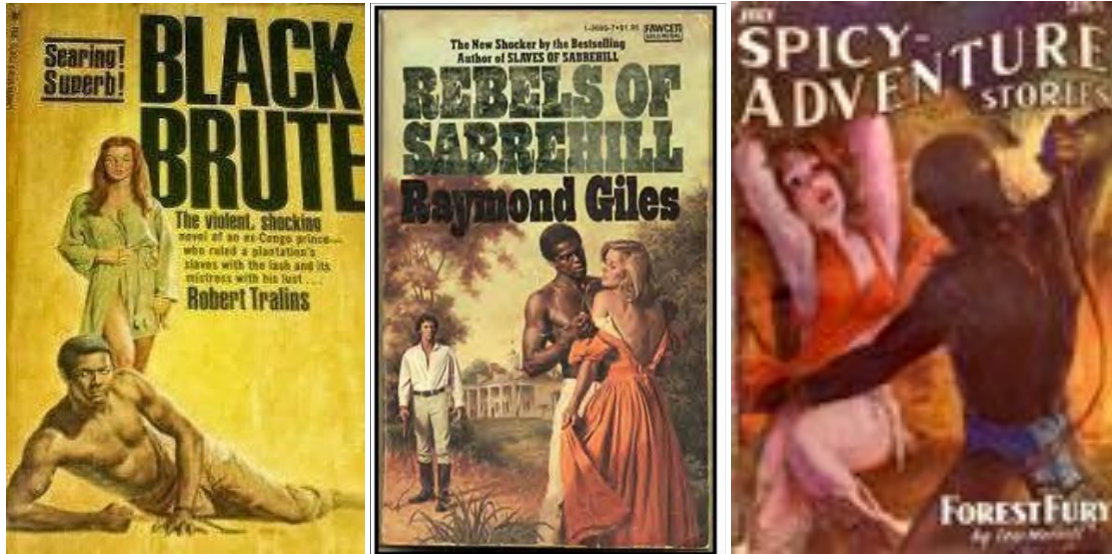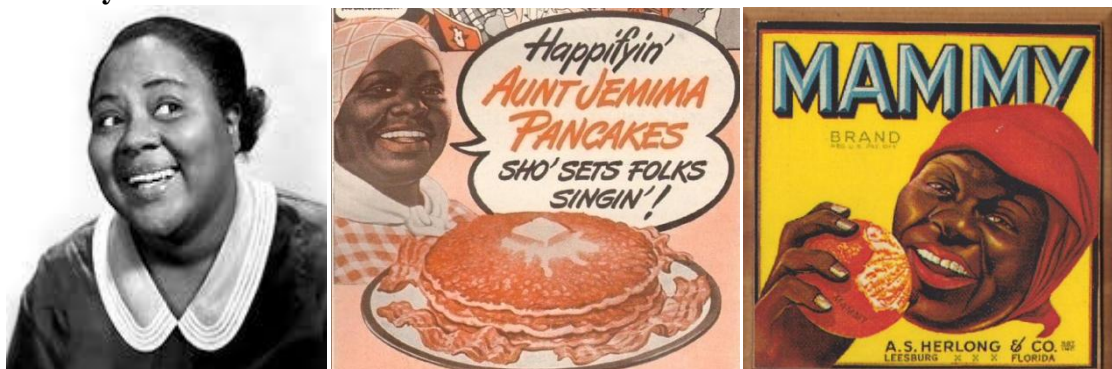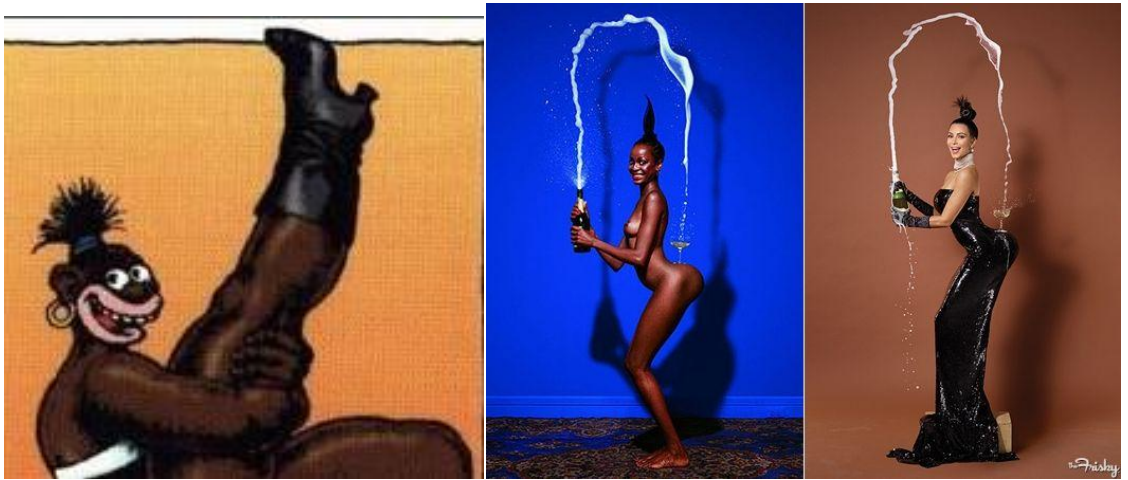
Appendix

Black Sambo
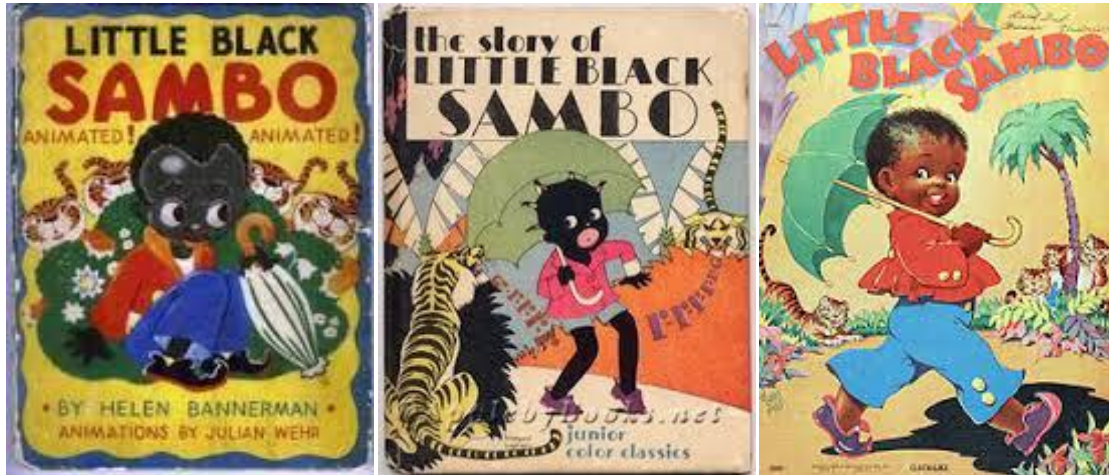
Coon

Brute

Mammy

Pickaninny

Jezzebel

Sapphire

Uncle Tom

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