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Declaration

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

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Analysis of the Civil Rights Movement

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The civil rights movement of the US was sparked off in 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to obey segregationist laws to give up her seat to a white man after being ordered by the bus driver. This led to her arrest and precipitated the chain of events that encouraged many African Americans to stand up for their constitutional rights. Through the leadership of organisations like the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., peaceful protests and acts of civil disobedience were able to be carried out, despite attempts at suppression by the state governments. The goal of the movement was to gain equal rights and desegregation, and this was mostly achieved when the government passed several pieces of legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and 1964.

1.2 Rationale

The civil rights movement is still relevant to modern society, where the movement has inspired future reform movements, displaying how minority rights can be advanced through collective efforts and large support from the under-represented or mistreated. It has served as a template for other rights movements, such as the LGBT rights movement and later, the Black Lives Matter movement, with these movements emulating the civil rights movement tactics of resource mobilisation to achieve the same level of success. In addition, most researchers attribute the movement's success to its ability to organise and mobilise resources for the protests. However, this paper will argue against these opinions, instead of bringing to light other understated factors

proving that the resource mobilisation of the civil rights movement is not the dominant force for its success.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1) How did economic grievances create mass support for the movement's formation?
- 2) What role did leadership play in rallying participants for the movement?
- 3) How did repressive measures by the Southern States to crack down on the civil rights movements lead to the movement's success?
- 4) To what extent can the resource mobilisation of the civil rights movement be accepted as the primary factor for its success?

1.4 Thesis statement

The Southern states' iron-fisted tactics of suppressing the civil rights movement was most responsible for the movement's success.

1.5 Scope of research

This paper will solely be examining events from 1929 (the start of the Great Depression) to 1964 (the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act). This period was chosen as it witnessed the greatest social and economic shift in the US, which directly affected the Baby Boomer Generation, the largest group of participants of the movement. Furthermore, my discussion is confined to the metropolitan areas where majority of the participants originated and where the demonstrations of the movement also took place. I will look predominantly at 4 factors: Economic grievances, leadership, the violent suppression of the movement, and the mobilisation of resources.

1.6 Significance

This paper seeks to present a new perspective on the factors for the movement's success, moving away from the resource mobilisation argument that scholars have raised. The current literature portrays the civil rights movement as a well-organised and formidable force due to its effective mobilisation of resources. This paper will present a different opinion and show how critical the role of the state government had in determining the outcome of the movement, while also adding other factors contributing to its success.

1.7 Limitations

Only 4 factors for the civil rights movement will be focused on in detail. As the civil rights movement was made up of smaller protests campaigns taking place at different times, I will not discuss events in all the separate southern states, but instead, examine the general trends while raising examples.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Smelser's Theory of Collective Behaviour

Smelser's theory of collective behaviour is a sociological analytic framework first raised in 1962 which helps recognise forces that drive collective action in a society. The theory identifies the social prerequisites that contribute to the success of such actions (Saffer, 2018).

Smelser's theory is structured according to 6 determinants:

- 1) structural conduciveness, where people are in a social setting that allows collective action. In the context of the civil rights movement, the 1st amendment gives the right to protest;
- 2) structural strain, which emerges from a group of people's relative perceived impairment of their treatment;
- 3) generalised beliefs, where possible resolutions are recognised;
- 4) precipitating factor, which is the inciting incident;
- 5) public mobilisation, where the public is organised for collective action;
- 6) the failure of social control, which occurs during the development or after mobilisation. (Smelser, 1962).

2.1.1 Structural strain

Structural strain is defined as a primary source of grievance that motivates people to partake in collective action. For a strain to contribute to a social movement, large segments of society must perceive a sense of strain or dissatisfaction (Smelser 1962). While examining the civil rights movement, the strain will be compared to the standards of the white majority in the nation. Smelser (1962) further suggests that people join movements for the reassurance that action will be taken to redress the strain. The more widespread the perceived level of strain, the larger the support for collective action. Hence, structural strain serves as the basis upon which the social movement is built upon. In the context of the civil rights movement, the identified

structural strain would have served to create grievances, galvanising people to participate in the movement to resolve their problems. Through the lens of this determinant, the role that economic deprivation by the “Jim Crow” Laws played in the movement's success can be recognised.

2.1.2 Failure of social control

Smelser (1962) defines social control as the minimisation of the effects of a social movement. Agencies of social control like governments and private organisations are a major determining factor in success (Smelser, 1962). In the context of the civil rights movement, this would mainly refer to the state governments. If the agents of social control can suppress the movement, it causes the movement to terminally decline, or become less politically threatening. If not, this will lead to a revolution. This holds true in the context of the civil rights movement, as it led to a social revolution. This was characterised by a fundamental shift in the culture surrounding race, with desegregation in transportation, schools, political participation, and residence (Moland, 2002). Hence, by applying this segment of the theory, how the states’ iron-fisted tactics of repression failed can be understood, thus confirming its role in the movement’s success.

2.1.3 Public mobilisation

Public mobilisation refers to the start of collective action, where the community is called to act (Smelser 1962). However, it heavily emphasises the role of leadership. Leaders are believed to be the single most important factor in bringing in participants for collective action. As the civil rights movement was a value-oriented movement¹, according to the theory, the most important disposition of the leader would be charisma, where they would be widely known, trustworthy and persuasive (Smelser, 1962). They would fulfill a “prophet” role, appealing to the people and rallying them under a common goal. With this, leaders would be able to better shape

¹ A movement that is based on ethical principles that are accepted by the group

a more positive image of the civil rights movement, creating mass appeal. Thus, Smelser (1962) views the role of leadership as not one of management skills, but magnetism, with its primary purpose of attracting participants and inspiring confidence in them. Therefore, these characteristics of leaders can be applied to the leaders of the civil rights movement to establish their role in the success of the movement.

2.2 Economic grievances in the 20th century U.S.

The “Jim Crow” Laws refer to the racial segregation enforced by legislation. The discussion on its economic impact has been divided. Some have agreed that the “Jim Crow” Laws failed to produce any economic grievances. Anderson and Halcoussis (1996) concur with this sentiment, believing that by the 1940s, urban areas had become more open, with no law restricting participation in specific occupations. Furthermore, American labour force participation rates and wage differential within occupations were not dissimilar to the whites in urban areas, (Trotter, 1991; Carrunters and Wanamaker, 2016). This supports the idea that there was no major source of economic grievance as there was little wage discrimination in the workplace. However, even though there were no laws explicitly limiting labour opportunities, obstruction of opportunities for economic advancement could have manifested subtly. As argued by Bedell (2018), lower levels of education and skill acquisition were the primary reasons for the overrepresentation of African Americans in low-wage service jobs, However, Bedell (2018) suggested that racial discrimination created this disparity in education levels. Yet, this may not be a sufficient explanation, as by the mid-20th century, there was a general decline in support for discrimination in the workplace and educational institutions (Farley, 1972; Klarman 1994). Therefore, this would suggest that the root of this issue was not racial discrimination on a social level but a

systemic one. Hence, more research has to be done to better explain this gap and how it could have garnered support for the movement.

2.3 Southern state repression of the civil rights movement

Barkan (1984) believes that police violence and legalistic means of control effectively quashing the protests temporarily. Still, it brought about negative publicity, evoked sympathy for the activists, and threatened federal intervention in the long term. Elaborating on this idea, Klarman (1994) and Berrey (2006) agreed that the public office politicians' willingness to violently suppress these non-violent demonstrations often was broadcasted on national media. This appeared to have elicited sympathy within the increasingly liberalised federal government forcing federal intervention. For instance, Morris (1999) argued that presidents such as John F Kennedy and Lyndon B Johnson sympathised with the movement, helping it pass anti-discrimination legislation while protecting its members during the major demonstrations. However, the argument that the federal government aided the movement out of goodwill is not accurate. In general, governments are pragmatic in their policy considerations and the president's sympathies simply may not be enough to get the entire federal government to favour the movement. Skrentny (1998) pointed out that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) continuously kept close tabs and harassed the civil rights leaders and participants for fear of the social unrest they could cause. This could have restrained the movement from being able to carry out demonstrations and its push for desegregation. Hence, the federal government helped the movement succeed while inhibiting its success, thus the argument that the federal government intervened out of sympathy for the movement cannot be accepted.

2.4 Resource mobilisation of the movement

Resource mobilisation refers to the effective organisation of various resources for a movement. Many researchers have attributed the civil rights movement's success to the effective mobilisation of the public by civil rights organisations (Morris et al, 1999). The core idea of this argument is that any social movement cannot be sustained on dissent alone, and resources are needed for it to be a capable threat. This camp of the argument believes that the movement stemmed not from dissent but from the ability to organise resources (McAdam, 1999; Andrews, 2006). This resource in question can be split into 2 categories: 1) Economic resources and 2) Social networks.

The literature on economic resources seems to acknowledge that the movement was relatively well supported. With increasing migration to urbanised areas due to the massive industrialisation of World War 2 (WW2), more economic opportunities were theoretically available (Landry and Marsh, 2011). Hence, the African Americans affluence increased across the board, creating a new middle class with a higher disposable income. Coupled with increasing awareness for social change, it increased financial resources to various civil rights organisations (Morris 1999; Shu, 1996). Thus, it was argued that this would give the movement a more robust indigenous economic base, increasing the practicality of sustaining extended demonstrations. This appeared to have the secondary effect of assuring potential participants that success was possible, inspiring more to their cause. In line with this belief, Murno (2014) argued that the 1963 Birmingham demonstrations succeeded as the movement had sufficient funds to bail the arrested protesters and leaders. Some proponents of this idea have argued that the protests campaigns were more

likely to occur in areas where resources were sufficient, showing the key role that the mobilisation of materials has in ensuring the formation of social movements (Andrews 2006).

Social networks also played a role in the mobilisation of the movement. Jenkin (1983) and Beyerlein (2008) believe that civic organisations and social institutions were large and well-funded, allowing them to gather participants for demonstrations through fostering social networking. They served to connect with the people, empowering them while allowing coordination of collective protests. It was through this that 250 000 individuals were able to be mobilised for the March on Washington in 1963 (Garrow, 1986; Sertima, 1988). Killian (1984) furthers this argument, pointing out that the movement was centralised, with all actions directed and organised by these organisations. Henceforth, through establishing social networks, activists could be called up quickly for a demonstration, and with sufficient directive, this would provide a formidable force for social change. Furthermore, in line with this view, Morris (1981) and McAdam (1982) believe that the organisations contributed by supplying activists who ignited the protests campaigns, proposing that the resources provided by these organisations were directly responsible for the start of these campaigns. However, a flaw with this approach is that it views social movements as taking place in a vacuum. It assumes that the very presence of resources will automatically draw in participants. Furthermore, it fails to account for the reaction of opposing parties, assuming that there will not be any attempt to stop the movement. In line with this idea, Piven and Cloward (1995) et al argued that social movements can still succeed in bringing social change with minimal resources.

2.4 Leadership

Similarly, effective leadership has been raised as a factor for the success of the movement. Most of the literature believes that prominent and influential leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr played a limited role in the actual execution and logistical preparation of the protests (Carson et al, 1994). This suggests that individual leaders' primary purpose was to connect with the people and aid in mobilising manpower for the movement. As such, the main type of leadership in the movement would be charismatic leadership. They appealed to wide ranges of audiences, drawing on religious beliefs, philosophy of nonviolence and pragmatic values to expand the popular support of the people (McAdam, 1996). Thus, in light of the supporters' situation, they would have received his message well, increasing the popularity of these leaders. Furthermore, leaders highlighted by contemporary media coverage became synonymous with the movement and was widely publicised all around the nation (Nelson, 1971; Lapin, 2015). Hence, this could have increased awareness, giving the movement's participants a notable figure to rally to, therefore increasing the movement's mass appeal. Yet these sources focus on the individual leaders' personal charisma, rather than what they did to promote the movement. It assumes that the popularity of the leaders of the movement will automatically equate to mass appeal for the movement.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This paper will predominantly use secondary sources, such as books, articles, journals and newspapers for data collection and analysis. Primary sources such as official statistics and laws will be used in smaller quantities. Through this, qualitative research can be carried out. By applying Smelser's theory of collective behaviour, we can identify how economic grievances generated through the "Jim Crow" Laws served to create widespread support for the movement. In addition, the role of leadership and how the states' violent tactics of repression failed to defeat the movement can also be established. Finally, an examination of the validity of the resource mobilisation argument will be done. Therefore, with this research, an evaluation of the importance of these factors can be achieved.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis

4.1 Economic impact of “Jim Crow” Laws

I argue that educational segregation through the “Jim Crow” Laws had economic ramifications on African Americans, causing the majority of the population to support the civil rights movement.

By 1960, 58% of African Americans lived in urban areas, up from 36.5% in 1940. This move was done to gain greater economic opportunity (Landry and Marsh, 2011). However, in the metropolitan areas, school segregation was commonplace, with distinct inequality. With the decentralisation of budgeting, states would be able to allocate unequal resources relatively free from restrictions (Margo 1990). All Southern states had some form of these laws in place.

For example, Florida statutes, Volume 1 section 228.09 states:

“Separate schools for white and negro children required. The schools for white children and the schools for negro children shall be conducted separately. No individual, body of individuals, corporation, or association shall conduct within this state any school of any grade (public, private, or parochial) wherein white persons and negroes are instructed or boarded in the same building or taught in the same classes or at the same time by the same teachers”

Pressing the separation of educational institutions could be interpreted as a move to cut costs while allocating unequal resources by race, ensuring that most African Americans could not gain the same qualifications. Hence, school segregation would favour the white population, allowing

them to attain higher-skilled jobs while relegating the African Americans to menial occupations. In the 1931 Census of the US, African Americans made up 42% of the population. However, in a report by the Florida Department of Public Instruction in 1934, White school property was valued at \$70,543,000 while African-American school property was only valued at \$4,900,000, showing a clear systemic inequality in state investment. Using a study based on the 1940 US Census, Carrunthers and Wanamaker (2017) concluded that if the Blacks had received equal resources in education, wages differential would have been 27%, compared to the reported 51% in the 1940 Census. Thus, this shows the key role education segregation had on the economic livelihood of the African Americans, while it also suggested that racial employment discrimination played a less crucial role in their lower economic standing. Consequently, this would further strengthen the argument that the African Americans' economic deprivation boiled down to unequal skills due to educational segregation. With reference to the theory of collective behaviour, the large African American population moved to the urban areas to attain better economic opportunities yet were hampered by unequal educational resources through school segregation. Compared to the White majority in the city, their occupational opportunities would have been significantly lower, creating economic grievances. Therefore, educational segregation through the "Jim Crow" Laws could serve as a widespread structural strain. Ergo, when the civil rights movement called for the overthrow of the "Jim Crow" Laws, they would support the movement to redress this strain. Compared to the idea that dissent stemming from the lack of a political voice caused support for the movement, this argument portrays African Americans' more pragmatic and pertinent concerns. With their basic ability to sustain their lifestyles threatened, the vast majority of the African Americans were concerned. Thus, considering that large segments of the African American Community were affected, economic grievances

generated through the Jim Crow Laws would have been responsible for creating mass support for the movement. As such, this would answer the first research question.

4.2 Mobilisation of resources

4.2.1 Financial resources

Contrary to other sources, I believe that the civil rights movement had severe limitations in acquiring material resources. Usually, participants would be affluent enough to contribute to their movement (Dodson et al, 2015). In the civil rights movement, most of the participants appear to have lacked significant financial resources. By 1962, South African Americans' average income per annum was \$1604, compared to the national average of \$4,291 (US Census Bureau, 1962). Hence, this shows a limitation to the economic resources that the participants could have directly committed to the movement. Instead, "elite funding" (charities, cooperations, philanthropic organisations, etc.) and rallies appeared to have contributed more to the financial resources for the movement. From 1962 to 1963, the largest source of income for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) which organised demonstrations was from appeal letters to philanthropic organisations and companies (Duffy, 2012). However, these sources were not as sustainable as the direct financial support from the movement participants. For instance, during the 1962 demonstrations in Albany, the SCLC ran out of funds to bail out its participants after 8 months of protests, leading to the end of most demonstrations in the city (Barkan, 1984; Nelligan, 2009). This could be due to the time lag needed for such funds from these parties, thus reliance on these sources was not dependable, especially considering that large demonstrations often drained resources quickly. Ultimately, this would suggest that participants' direct fiscal contributions were the most reliable source of economic support during the execution of the demonstrations. Therefore, although the movement did possess adequate financial resources, its

model of funding was unsustainable for mass demonstrations, thus the mobilisation of economic resources can be considered a less important factor for the movement's success.

4.2.2 Social networks

In the case of the movement, most of the demonstrations were primarily initiated by local civil rights organisations. Pre-existing organisations were established decades before the civil rights movement, providing communication networks and organised groups (Killian 1984; Ling,2006; Biggs 2015). These organisations already had an affiliation with churches, school and worker's unions (Andrews 2006; Andrews 2004). This would suggest that these pre-existing civil rights organisations were already actively attempting to defend the interests of the African Americans before the start of the movement. As such, these organisations would have been viewed as credible, perhaps encouraging more to join and expand the organisation's social network. In addition, the organisations' connections with other bodies would have given the movement access to a wide audience. Coupled with the people's grievances, the call for participation would have reached more people, increasing the number of potential participants who could be notified and called up for mass demonstrations. Hence, these organisations had the existing infrastructure and connections to pull participants together and lead them, allowing large numbers of protesters to be called up and used in demonstrations. As such, this would have made their calls for desegregation louder, while also theoretically reducing the cases of police retaliation as there is strength in numbers.

Therefore, even though the movement had adequate social networks to coordinate and direct the demonstrations, it could not effectively support extended protests campaigns economically, thus showing an overall deficiency in its ability to mobilise resources to carry out

the movement. Hence, the mobilisation of resources can be considered a less important reason for the movement's success, thus resolving the second research question.

4.3 Southern violent repression of the civil rights movement

This paper argues that the Southern states' iron-fisted tactics of repression allowed the movement to succeed. By the start of the civil rights protests, most states responded through confrontation through police brutality as an immediate solution to suppress it. The perpetuation of violence against generally non-violent protesters served as a powerful image, eliciting federal intervention on the side of the protesters

One such example would be the police crackdown of the Birmingham campaign of 1963, during which the 3,000 protesters in the city took to the streets (Mahn, 2014). Violent means of repression such as dogs, fire hoses and batons were ordered to be used to disperse the protesters gathered. This move was also mirrored in other protest campaigns such as those in Selma and Montgomery. This could be interpreted that the law enforcement was brash due to their eagerness to see a quick resolution to the protests. In addition, as early as 1943, Southerners were already aware that racial violence resulted in the federal intervention (Payne 1995). Therefore, this suggests that most of the South's law enforcement was relatively inexperienced in dealing with mass protests, hence resorting to the more straightforward violent tactics to deal with the campaign despite their knowledge that the federal government might intervene. The events were covered by the media at the time, with images of dogs assaulting children making headlines on multiple domestic and international papers (New York Times, 1963). Therefore, this brought attention both abroad and locally, leading John. F Kennedy to threaten dispatching troops if an

agreement was not reached. Eventually, it resulted in the passage of desegregation legislation (Barkan 1984). As stated previously, the movement was limited in economic resources, thus carrying out these prolonged demonstrations was not sustainable. Intervention by the federal government would have forced the state government to the negotiating table, allowing the demonstrators to demand desegregation reforms in return for the end of these disruptive demonstrations. Thus, these minor achievements would raise public confidence in the movement, expanding its popular support. Therefore, this would escalate the movement into a credible threat in the long run, giving it leverage for social change.

4.3.1 Shifting public opinion on race

The federal government reacted on the side of the protesters due to the rising sympathies for the civil rights movement. Considering that the US is a democratic constitutional republic, the people would be able to influence Washington's policies towards the movement. By the 1960s, due to a new generation and shifting demographics away from the more conservative rural areas, the nation as a whole was seeing a paradigm shift to modern liberalism (Solvey, 2012). This was compounded by the shift in the US's political landscape after WW2, where ideas of racial supremacy were appearing antiquated due to public revulsion of Nazi racial theories and practices (Klarman, 1994; White, 2016). Therefore, this would suggest that by the time of widespread demonstrations during the civil rights movement, the nation's white majority would have had more enlightened views on issues of race, with more lax views on civil liberties, while supporting an egalitarian society. And as the movement's goals were also to bring about more social equality for all Americans, there was less resistance against the movement's actions. Combined with the appeal to pathos made by the demonstrations in the media when the law enforcement resorted to violence, this sparked outcry among the public. Hence, to maintain

people's support, the federal government would be compelled to step in on the side of the movement.

4.3.2 International politics on race

I argue that there was a more pragmatic reason to side with the protesters. During the civil rights movement, the US was in the midst of the Cold War. This confrontation with the USSR was characterised by competing interests for influence in the Third World (Painter, 1995; Wills 1999). As such, the US portrayed itself as the champion of “freedom” and “rights” for all people, therefore theoretically winning the hearts and minds of the Third World (Chisem, 2012). Yet, the US's domestic treatment of the minority African Americans appeared to contradict the values it professed to the world, opening opportunities for the USSR to discredit the US. For example, after the “Little Rock Crisis” where the Arkansas government used the National Guard to block 9 African Americans integration into the Central High School, the Soviets publicised the conflict. *Izvestia*, a Soviet newspaper reported:

“Right now, behind the facade of the so-called ‘American democracy,’ a tragedy is unfolding which cannot but arouse ire and indignation in the heart of every honest man.”
(Dudziak, 2011)

Ergo, this appeared to have sent a strong message that the mistreatment of the African American minority would underscore the hypocrisy of the US ideals, tarnishing the US's global image while also reducing trust with predominantly non-white developing nations. Thus, this would diminish the US's appeal to the Third World, affecting the US's position in the Cold War. The brutality of the southern states' law enforcement would have further enforced this idea, delegitimizing the US, proving that it failed to respect the minorities. Hence, for the pragmatic

purposes of maintaining their global image, the federal government had no choice but to intervene on the side of the protesters when publicised violence was used against the civil rights demonstrators.

Applying the theory of collective behaviour, the majority of the state authorities attempted to use violence as a direct method to mitigate the threat of the civil rights movement. However, due to foreign politics about the domestic treatment of African Americans and the sympathies of the public, it failed to send the movement into a state of terminal decline or reduce its political threat. Instead, in line with what Smelser defines as the failure of social control, the state authorities' reaction assisted the movement in pushing through desegregation where there was a fundamental change in the structure and nature of society as a whole, resulting in a social revolution. Hence, in this way, repressive measures by the Southern States to crack down on the civil rights movements led to the movement's success, thus answering the third research question.

4.4 Leadership

Generally, leaders are recognised to play a critical role in the success of any movement (Valls, Aubert, Puigvert and Flecha 2017). This holds true in the context of the civil rights movement. With reference to the theory of collective behaviour, leaders in this type of movement will have to be charismatic, well known, and persuasive. In the case of the movement, most leaders were prominently featured on local and international media, standing out for their outspoken speeches on racial justice and other social issues such as poverty. Most newspapers like the New York Times portrayed Martin Luther King sympathetically (Brodroghzoky, 2012; Abdiladif, 2019). Regardless of the motive, this would have made these leaders a household name, demanding a

level of credibility from the wider population, giving the movement a recognisable face. With these figures endorsing the movement, this would have assisted the movement in drawing attention and supporters. Furthermore, the most influential leaders were generally oratorically skilled. Through the use of emotive language and strong themes, Malcolm X painted the movement as a “revolution of decolonisation”, gaining the support of pre-existing movements of self-determination and the more radical African Americans. Up to that point, they disassociated themselves with the movement because of its more passive approach in demanding racial equality. (Tyner, 2004). In addition, the use of extended metaphors to advocate for common identity as equal Americans in the acclaimed “I have a dream” speech aided Martin Luther King Jr in gaining the trust of not just the African American community, but the American people as a whole (Ciesinski, 2010; Vail, 2006). These oratorical dispositions would have helped public relations with the different factions with different agendas while effectively promoting the civil rights movement as moral and egalitarian. This would have assisted in improving the movement’s image with the public, thus increasing its mass appeal. Therefore, the major leaders of the movement were prominent and able to gather popular support. Thus, they played a fairly significant role in building up the movement's power base and can be considered a factor in its success.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, the mobilisation of resources, the violent suppression of the movement, leadership and economic grievances generated through the “Jim Crow” Laws are significant factors for the civil rights movement's success. The violent suppression of the movement was the most important reason for its success. The state governments had comparatively better resources and the backing of the law, which created a significant imbalance of power between the state governments and the movement. The movement would not have been able to afford extended demonstrations, thus limiting the impact that it could achieve by itself. However, due to the inexperience of the law enforcement, more crude methods of violent repression were used, inciting public sympathies and federal response on the protesters' side. Thus, the state governments' direct violence to quell the protest ironically helped the movement push through with desegregation. While leadership was important in increasing the movement's appeal and ensuring that mass demonstrations were possible, it was still secondary to the Southern states' government iron-fisted repression. Even if the movement was able to gain popular support and had cadres of activists, if the Southern states had limited outright violence towards the protesters, the movement may not have attracted the same level of attention and sympathy from the people. Furthermore, since the federal government intervened as publicised violence against people of colour affected foreign politics, the federal government would not have been as compelled to arbitrate on the demonstrators' side.

Economic grievances generated through the “Jim Crow” Laws would have been responsible for spurring the people to join the civil rights movement. However, this may not have been the dominant factor for the success of the movement. These economic grievances stemmed from

monetary inequality compared to the white population. While this may have served to generate mass participation in the movement, it also inhibited the African Americans ability to obtain resources that they needed to carry out a social movement. Therefore, economic grievances can only be considered a factor for the initiation of the movement, but not the primary reason for its success.

Lastly, the resource mobilisation argument as raised by others may be considered as a less important factor. Even into the mid 20th century, African Americans across the board were still not affluent, showing a clear struggle in mobilising financial resources, which played an essential role in initiating and sustaining the protests campaigns of the movement. The civil rights movement did have adequate social networks in the form of various civic organisations that coordinated and directed the demonstrations of the civil rights movement. Yet, without the financial means, the movement would have encountered difficulties in expanding. Thus, overall, the mobilisation of resources could be considered a less important factor.

Therefore, this paper argues that the predominant factor for the success of the movement was the iron-fisted tactics of repression by the Southern state governments. This paints a more realistic view of the civil rights movement. Contrary to beliefs today, the movement appears to succeed more so because of its opponents' mistakes, rather than its inherent strength, emphasizing the vulnerability of the civil rights movement in the face of the Southern authorities.

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