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Doctorate Degree in American Civilization**

***The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the
African American Community in the US (From the
1960's to the Present Time)***

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The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the African American Community in the US (From the 1960's to the Present Time)

Contents

Dedications	I
Acknowledgements	II
List of Figures	III
List of Tables	IV
List of Acronyms	V
Abstract	VI
General Introduction	01
<u>Chapter One: The Historical Background of Civil Rights in the US (1700's-1960's)</u>	
Introduction	10
1.1 The Concept of Civil Rights	11
1.1.1 The history of Civil Rights	11
1.1.2 The Bill of Rights	13
1.1.3 The Principles of Democracy in the US	15
1.2 The Struggle for Civil Rights	16
1.2.1 Slavery in the US	16
1.2.2 The Abolition of Slavery	17
1.2.3 The Civil War	18
1.2.4 The Black Codes	19
1.3 Black people in the Reconstruction Era	19
1.3.1 The Civil Rights Act of 1876	20
1.3.2 The Jim Crow Laws	21
1.3.3 The Right to Education	22
1.3.4 Voting Rights for African Americans	26

1.4 The Early Black Leaders	27
1.4.1 William E. Dubois	27
1.4.2 The Emergence of the NAACP	28
1.4.3 Ida B. Well's Campaign against lynching	30
1.4.4 Marcus Garvey and the UNIA	31
1.5 African Americans since 1900	33
1.5.1 The Impact of WWI on African Americans	33
1.5.2 African Americans in the Great Depression	34
1.5.3 President Roosevelt and Civil Rights	36
1.5.4 The Impact of WWII on African Americans	37
1.5.5 Racial Discrimination after WWII	39
Conclusion	41

Chapter Two: The Successes and Challenges Brought by the Civil Rights Movement (1960's- 1980's)

Introduction	43
2.1 The Emergence of the Civil Rights Movement	44
2.2 The Beginning of the Civil Rights Movement	46
2.2.1 The Montgomery Bus Boycott	46
2.2.2 The Students' Sit-Ins	48
2.2.3 The Freedom Rides	50
2.2.4 The Birmingham Protests	51
2.2.5 The March on Washington	52
2.3 The Role of President Kennedy during the Civil Rights Years	54
2.4 The Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act	55
2.5 The failure of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society	58
2.6 The Impact of the Cold War on Civil Rights Activism in the US	59
2.7 The Impact of the Vietnam War on Civil Rights Activism in the US	60
2.8 The Impact of Martin Luther King's Assassination on the American Nation	61
2.9 The Rise of Conservatism in the US	63
2.10 Crime and Poverty in the African American Community	64
2.11 The Rise of Affirmative Action in the US	67
2.11.1 Segregation in Public schools	67
2.11.2 Affirmative Action in Schools	70
2.11.3 The Fight for Equal Employment Opportunities	72
2.11.4 Affirmative Action and Employment	73
2.11.5 Discrimination and Poverty in the US in the post-Civil Rights Era	75
2.11.6 The consequences of Affirmative Action on African Americans	77

2.12 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Race Relations in the US	79
2.13 The Rise of the Black Middle Class	81
Conclusion	82

Chapter Three: Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Minority Groups in the US (1960's - 2000's)

Introduction	84
3.1 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on African Americans	85
3.2 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Native Americans	86
3.3 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Hispanic Americans	89
3.4 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Asian Americans	91
3.5 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Women's Right	93
3.5.1 The Historical Background of Women's Voting Rights	93
3.5.2 The Emergence of Feminism in the US	95
3.5.3 Black Women's Fight for the Right of Vote	99
3.5.4 The Emergence of Black American Feminism	102
3.5.5 Black Women's Activism in the Black Feminist Movement	105
3.6 The Rise of Black Nationalism in the US	108
3.6.1 The Impact of Malcolm X on the Nation of Islam	109
3.6.2 The Black Panthers' Radicalism in the 1960's	112
3.7 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the Youth Generation in the US	113
3.8 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the Gay Liberation Movement	115
3.9 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on International Liberation Movements	117
3.10 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on American Foreign Policy regarding Women's Rights	121
Conclusion	124

Chapter Four: The Effects of the Civil Rights Movement on the Contemporary Issue of Racism in the US (2001 – the Present Time)

Introduction	126
4.1 The Concept of Racism in the US	127
4.2 The Evolution of Racism in American Society	128
4.3 The Persistence of Racial Discrimination in American Society	131
4.4 The Situation of African Americans in the Post Civil Rights Era	133
4.4.1 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Race Relations in the US	133
4.4.2 The Impact of Hurricane Katrina on the African American Community	135
4.4.3 The Relationship between Poverty and Human Rights	139
4.4.4 The Rising Police Violence against African Americans in the US	140
4.5 The Impact of Racial Politics during the Election of Barack Obama	141
4.5.1 Barack Obama and the Politics of Racial Representation	142
4.5.2 Barack Obama’s Road to the White House	143
4.5.3 The Impact of Black American Voters on Obama’s Election	144
4.6 Barack Obama’s Place in American Politics	148
4.7 Barack Obama’s Presidency and Its Impact on the Problem of Racism in the US	151
4.8 The Ambivalence of Racial Identity in Post-Racial America	154
4.9 Facts about Contemporary Racism within American Society	156
4.10 Civil Rights in the Aftermath of 9/11 Attacks	158
4.11 The Future of Civil Rights in the US	160
Conclusion	163
General Conclusion	164
Chronology of the Civil Rights Movement	170
Appendices	183
Glossary	234
Bibliography	243

Dedications

To my beloved parents

To my husband El Houari

To my sons Belhadj and Ilyes

To my daughter Ghizlene

To my Grandchild Malik

To my sister Djamila and to my brother Mehdi

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In the Name of the Merciful and Compassionate

God **“My Lord! Increase me in knowledge”**

(The Holy Quran, the Chapter of Taha, Verse:

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List of Figures

Figure 1: Black and White School attendance and illiteracy Rates	p. 24
Figure 2: Early African American Colleges and Universities	p. 25
Figure 3: Segregation in public schools has been increasing	p. 70
Figure 4: Disagreement among blacks and whites	p. 138

List of Tables

Table1: Racial Breakdown of vote in South Carolina Primary January 26, 2008	p.145
Table 2: Black Voter Bloc Support for Obama in Key Primaries	p. 145
Table 3: Voters' Support Pattern in Selected Primaries	p.146
Table 4: Black Voters' Preference in Selected States in 2008 Election.	p. 147
Table 5: Perceptions of race relations	p.155

List of Acronyms

ANC	Aid to Needy Children
AWSA	American Woman Suffrage Association
BPP	Black Panther Party
BSPC	Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
CBC	Congressional Black Caucus
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
ERA	Equal Rights Amendment
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
MFDP	Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
MIA	Montgomery Improvement Association
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NACW	National Association of Colored Women
NAWSA	National American Woman Suffrage Association
NBFO	National Black Feminist Organization
NCNW	National Council of Negro Women
NOW	National Organization for Women
NWPC	National Women's Political Caucus
NWRO	National Welfare Rights Organization
NWSA	National Woman Suffrage Association
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
UN	United Nations
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WJWC	Women Journalists Without Chains
WPC	Women's Political Council
WWI	World War First
WWII	World War Second

Abstract

American history has been characterized by four centuries of struggle during which African Americans fought to gain the same social and political rights as White people. With the advent of the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century, Black people have benefited from many victories after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, giving them the opportunity to be full members in American society. However, race has remained the central problem in American politics since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's.

Despite the fact that their situation had improved since Martin Luther King's days, much remains to be done, especially in the domains of education, employment and housing. Their political involvement has become the most important tool of their success. However, the history of racism has been challenged by the election of a Black president to the Presidency of the US.

Obama's election meant the achievement of a dream of equality and justice that fulfilled a historical hope, bringing African Americans a profound sense of victory and success. However, since the election of Barack Obama, some Black people still complain of inequalities in education and employment. The economic crisis of 2008 hit them particularly hard, as most of them were menaced by unemployment.

American society is plagued by racism and this problem persists until nowadays. As a result, one can say that Obama's election does not mean that complete equality has been achieved in the US. My goal in this research work will be to give an answer to the following questions: Has the election of a Black President in the US contributed to the fulfillment of the American dream of equality and justice? Has he brought any responses to the requests of the racially marginalized communities? And has the nation overcome past prejudice?

The introductory chapter will reveal African Americans' struggle for Civil Rights and the victories obtained from these rights. The second chapter will analyze the successes and challenges brought by the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century. In the third chapter, the focus will be on the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on minority groups in the US; and the final chapter will be devoted to the effects of the Civil Rights Movement on the contemporary problem of racism in the US, by drawing the conclusions from the election of a black president and its impact on the most neglected group of people in American society.

Résumé

L'histoire de l'Amérique est l'histoire d'un voyage traversant l'une des périodes les plus turbulentes de l'histoire raciale américaine, aboutissant à un début du vingt et unième siècle où l'Amérique vit encore dans l'ombre des luttes inachevées pour les droits civiques du siècle précédent, mais où les hommes politiques saluent déjà l'apparition d'un ordre post-racial.

L'élection d'Obama en tant que premier Président Afro- Américain des Etats Unis marque l'apogée du mouvement engagé par Rosa Parks et Martin Luther King. C'est le début d'une nouvelle ère post-raciale et la fin d'une époque dominée par la question raciale.

Comprendre la place d'Obama dans l'histoire américaine nécessite de remonter au-delà d'Obama et jusqu'aux liens qui existent entre l'histoire, la mémoire et la politique de la nation. Réaliser la relation qu'entretient Obama avec l'histoire raciale de l'Amérique et comprendre comment il s'y situe, nécessite de replacer sa trajectoire dans le contexte culturel, intellectuel et politique, controversé des années 1960 à nos jours. Néanmoins, la victoire d'Obama en 2008 ne signifie pas pour autant le triomphe d'une ère post-raciale. C'est un Afro-Américain qui sut transcender tous les pièges de l'ethno-racialité se faisant élire comme le président de tous les Américains.

Obama doit son succès à la génération de militants des droits civiques qui l'a précédé. Sa carrière politique va réaliser leur rêve qu'un jour la couleur de leur peau ne constitue plus un obstacle à leur ambition. De plus, la victoire d'Obama donnera toutes les chances à la future génération de noirs Américains.

Notre but dans ce sujet de recherche est de répondre aux questions suivantes : Est-ce que l'élection d'un Président noir a contribué à la réalisation du rêve Américain pour l'obtention de l'égalité raciale aux Etats Unis ? Et est ce que l'Amérique a enfin surmonté le problème du racisme ?

Le 1^{er} chapitre vise à tracer l'historique des droits civiques aux Etats Unis. Le 2^{ème} chapitre sera consacré à l'étude des succès apportés par le mouvement des droits civiques. Dans le 3^{ème} chapitre, nous étudierons l'impact du mouvement des droits civiques sur les autres minorités vivant aux Etats Unis ou ailleurs. Enfin, dans le 4^{ème} et dernier chapitre, nous dévoilerons les conséquences du mouvement des droits civiques sur le problème racial aux Etats Unis.

Intitulé : L'Impact du Mouvement des Droits Civiques des années 1960 sur la Communauté Noire Américaine aux Etats Unis de 1960 à nos jours.

Résumé :

L'histoire de l'Amérique est une histoire qui mêle le personnel et le politique ; l'histoire d'un voyage traversant l'une des périodes les plus turbulentes de l'histoire raciale américaine aboutissant à un début du 21^{ème} siècle où l'Amérique vit encore dans l'ombre des luttes inachevées pour les droits civiques, ayant eu un impact direct sur la communauté noire américaine. Comprendre la relation qu'entretient Obama avec l'histoire raciale de l'Amérique nécessite de replacer sa trajectoire dans le contexte culturel, intellectuel et politique controversé des années 1960 à nos jours. L'élection d'Obama en 2008 marquait la fin d'une époque dominée par la question raciale. Néanmoins, son succès politique ne signifie pas pour autant le triomphe d'une ère post-raciale.

Mots clés : Luites - Droits Civiques – Racisme – Communauté Noire Américaine – 1960 à nos jours

Title : The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the African American Community in the US from the 1960's to the Present time

Abstract :

Since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, African Americans have benefited from many victories after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Right Act of 1965, giving them the opportunity to be full members in American society. However, racism has remained the central problem in American politics since 1960's. Even with the election of an African American President in 2008, Black people still complain of racism in education, employment and housing. As a result, Barack Obama's election does not mean that complete racial equality has been achieved in the US.

Key words : Civil Rights Movement – Impact – African American Community – 1960s to the present – Racism

العنوان : إنعكاس الحركة الإحتجاجية لنيل حقوق المواطنة على الأمريكيين السود منذ الستينات حتى يومنا هذا

الملخص :

منذ الحركة الإحتجاجية التي قام بها الأمريكيون السود في الستينات و التي أفادتهم بعدة إنتصارات كالحق في اللإنتخاب (1965) وكذلك حقهم في التمتع بالمساواة في المجتمع مع الأمريكيين البيض (1964) إلا أن مشكل اللا مساواة بقي يسود في المجتمع الأمريكي خاصة في ميادين التعليم و السكن و التوظيف و كذلك في المجال السياسي حيث أن الأمريكيون السود مازالوا يشكون من عدم مساواتهم مع بقية الطبقات الموجودة في المجتمع الأمريكي و ذلك حتى بعد إنتخاب رئيس من أصول إفريقية على رأس الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. لهذا نستطيع القول أن مشكل الا مساواة لا يزال إلى يومنا هذا يهدد الأمريكيون السود خاصة والمجتمع الأمريكي عامة.

كلمات مفتاحية : الحركة الإحتجاجية – من الستينات إلى يومنا هذا – اللا مساواة – الأمريكيون السود

There have been many developments in American history, from slavery to the Jim Crow system of segregation, then the Civil Rights Movement and the protest against discrimination, and later the fight against terrorism. These series of events have created debates on the question of national values that characterize the American people.

The Jim Crow system had long been in contradiction with the American values of equality, justice, and freedom. The quest for Human Rights and political democracy represented an objective for a great majority of American people, who view the Constitution of the United States as an incarnation of liberty and equality.

Racial inequality in the United States was a direct consequence of the problem of enslavement of Black people of African ancestry, who were prevented from entering into the mainstream of American life, even after slavery was abolished.

Even after the end of slavery, African Americans lived mostly in the South. Aiming to maintain white domination, Southern Whites sought to replace slavery by segregation, giving African Americans an inferior and disadvantaged position. Indeed, African Americans became dependent on Whites, until well after the Civil Rights Movement.

In the years following WWII, African Americans moved to the cities. They settled in urban areas where housing projects were built by the US government for poor people. During the same years, Whites were moving from cities to suburbs. Racism, an ideology inherited from slavery did not allow African Americans to move into homes in the suburbs. Consequently, the two groups of people lived in separate places. Even if schools and other public facilities ceased to be legally segregated after the 1960's, African Americans were separated from Whites, living in poor and isolated cities.

General Introduction

African Americans were innocent victims of the aftermath of slavery. White people claimed their innocence on their responsibility for the legacy of slavery. Therefore, programs such as Affirmative Action aiming at increasing African Americans' share of employment and education sought to benefit Black people at the expense of White people.

Because African Americans and other minorities were not always given full citizenship rights in the American nation, protests have been a frequent feature of the nation's history. The Civil Rights movement to obtain full rights for African Americans was of outstanding importance.

The example of Rosa Parks, whose determination to revolt against discrimination in December 1955, had had a great impact on the African American community in the US. That Black woman refused to give up her seat to a White man on a bus in Montgomery; she was arrested and convicted of violating the Montgomery legislation. A boycott had started giving the Black community a voice in the segregated American South.

Today, people still remember the story of this Black woman who had been a symbol of courage and determination to ban segregation. Her story represents a model of contest in order to achieve equality and protect individual liberty. From generation to generation, African American men and women were committed to the cause of Civil Rights. Also, they influenced Black people around the world.

The Civil Rights Movement was one of the most remarkable and influential movements that the US had ever experienced. It changed the nation forever and had considerable impact on other movements in America and in other parts of the world. Although it occurred in the 1960's and 1970's, its achievements came only later.

After WWII, African Americans left their native South in decline due to the destruction of the cotton industry, searching for potential work in the North and West. Known as the Second Great Migration, this exodus lasted from the 1940's until the 1970's during which more assertive African Americans were moving to the North.

General Introduction

When moving to Northern cities, African Americans' voices were important to political parties; under Truman, both political parties were concerned about America's image around the World. Moreover, when Third World countries gained independence, the mistreatment of African Americans was a clear evidence of the moral flaws of capitalism.

The problem of America's educational system was the most controversial aspect of the Civil Rights Movement. For many African Americans in the North and the South, Black and White children sitting in the same classroom was a complex issue. With the movement growing across the South, one can say that it would awaken American consciousness on the matter of Civil Rights.

One of the turning points in twentieth century US history was the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision destroying the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, which had supported legal segregation. The *Brown Decision* was the starting point for the Civil Rights Movement that succeeded to ban the formal barriers to racial equality and guaranteed the rights of African Americans and other minorities.

Some outstanding leaders emerged, among them Martin Luther King who had led 25.000 people on the March on Washington on Thursday, 25 March 1963. This was the peak of the Civil Rights Movement when leaders of the Freedom Rides, the Freedom Summer, the Birmingham, Alabama movement, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott assembled to support Martin Luther King through his struggle for racial equality.

With the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, America had achieved the legal equality promised and abandoned nearly a hundred years before, by leaders who were convinced of the eradication of Jim Crow laws.

During Lyndon Johnson's Presidency, the American government believed that poverty affecting most African Americans was the primary reason of their suffering. On January 1964, President Johnson introduced a plan starting a "War on Poverty". Based on improving equal economic opportunities, the legislation aimed at assisting poor people, by establishing health centres, social security, and providing health care insurance for the poor (Medicaid) and elderly (Medicare).

However, the Vietnam War began to consume the Johnson's Administration War on Poverty funds, and Civil Rights leaders worried about the War's effect on the US, especially on African Americans who were involved in this war. It can be said that the War was an obvious example of racism within the African American community in the US. In fact, they were killed at higher numbers than whites. Martin Luther King JR had taken a hostile position to this war but he kept silent with the aim of preserving his relationship with President Johnson.

On 4 April 1968, the famous Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King was assassinated by people who considered that his struggle for Civil Rights menaced America's moral conscience. With this assassination, many hopes were drowned, and pessimism replaced optimism concerning the problem of race in America.

Civil Rights organizations such as SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) had joined with the Black Panther Party; CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) was in continuous support of school desegregation. The Black Panther Party and other African American organizations were destroyed by the FBI. It is said that the Reagan's presidency proved to be hostile to the principles of the African American Civil Rights Movement.

During the 1990's, African Americans saw their incomes gradually increase. Indeed, they had made huge progress under President Bush, when Colin Powell, was appointed as Secretary of State. During his second term in office, President Bush appointed Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State; she was the first African American woman to occupy this position.

In 2008, the first African American President was elected as the 44th President of the United States. However, his way to the White House was not as simple as one can imagine due to the problem of racism that characterized his campaign. The fact that some people claimed that he was a Muslim, and not born in the US made him subjected to racism.

In the story of America, we did not witness only one Civil Rights Movement; there have been many stories during which many people tried to improve and reform a country they belonged to. For President Obama, the African American experience was not only characterized by the Black freedom struggle, but also by the American experience itself.

The American nation, whose Constitution protected slavery had elected an African American President. His victory was a historic moment in the life of a nation for which race has always been called “the American dilemma”.

Obama was a lawyer and a lecturer for a dozen years at the University of Chicago; this had influenced his political sensibility and his thinking about law and race. He taught individual rights, such as equal protection, voting rights, and privacy; similarly, he gave seminars on many issues in the Civil Rights era, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments. Moreover, he taught on Plessy v Fergusson, documentations on lynchings, Marcus Garvey, the leading figure of the early Black Nationalism, King’s Letter from Birmingham Jail, and speeches by Malcolm X.

President Obama commemorated the 50th anniversary of the iconic Civil Rights march on March 7th 2015, from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery. Five decades earlier, Black people were brutally attacked by the police simply because they were demanding their right to vote. This site became a holy commemorating ground under the presidency of an African American President. It is true to say that his election was miraculous and would not have happened only fifty years earlier if one thinks of all the white hatred occurring in the US at that time.

From his inauguration, one can say that Obama was considered as a Civil Rights leader and also the leader of all Americans. Indeed, he succeeded to mix the Civil Rights story with the American story. The Obama presidency completed the Civil Rights protests that had occurred in the 1960's. Therefore, he had succeeded to bring about a revolution, or a post-racial society.

Even if Blacks had made absolute gains in income and education since the 1960's, their economic situation declined especially after the Bush years. The rising poverty, unemployment, and violence were all facts of American life. Moreover, White Americans had racially prejudiced relations with Black Americans. That truly explains the persistence of racism in the US.

In terms of national policy, Obama had contributed to reform healthcare, to alleviate poverty, and promote economic development. He had also promised to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and to protect the US economy from another financial crisis. Needless to say that Obama's presidency had the capacity to improve the economic condition of all disadvantaged Americans.

Obama's goal was the fulfillment of King's dream of America as a "beloved community", where Blacks and Whites integrate in both public and private domains. By presenting its humane values, Obama's presidency would present a new vision to America and the whole World. It also reflected not only Obama's ideological beliefs but also his strong character and mental consciousness.

Previous generations of Americans believed it was impossible to imagine that slavery might be abolished, women get the right to vote, or a Black man would become President of the United States. Barack Obama's presidency was a direct proof of those great achievements throughout American history, making him the best example of an American future where everything is possible.

The choice of this subject came from the conviction of the importance of the Civil Rights Movement to relieve the plight of Black people in the United States, and how it impacted other minority groups in America and in other parts of the World. Moreover, this thesis tries to explore the long protest undertaken by Black people in the US, and why racial discrimination remains a controversial issue within the American society.

Towards this end, this research work attempts to tackle the following questions: first, what were the most important events in the Civil Rights Movement? Second, what was the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the African American community in the US? Third, what did the Civil Rights Movement accomplish? Was it successful? Fourth, what gains and challenges had the Civil Rights Movement brought to Black people in the US? Fifth, how did the Civil Rights Movement inspire other reform movements by minority groups? Finally, has the election of an African American President in the US solved the problem of racism in the United States?

The objective is to focus on the role of Black people in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, and the impact of this movement on their daily lives, from social, economic, and political Rights gained by the Black community after the 1960's. One will also give special importance to the effects of Affirmative Action on the lives of African Americans. The aim is to discover how the Civil Rights Movement had inspired other minority movements in the struggle for equality in the US. A particular attention will be given to the role of Black women in the Civil Rights Movement. Finally, there will be the examination of the election of an African American President in the US and its impact on the African American community in the US.

The dissertation will comprise four chapters. The first chapter will be devoted to the historical background of Civil Rights in the United States. It will reveal the developments within the African American community from the period of slavery, Reconstruction, until the advent of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950's.

The second chapter seeks to examine the different events that took place during the 1960's, involving Black men and Black women leaders in the 20th century Civil Rights Movement. Consequently, the chapter is dedicated to the exploration of the successes and challenges brought by the Civil Rights Movement and their impact on African Americans after the 1960's. In this chapter, the concentration will be mainly on the situation of African Americans in the Post -Civil -Rights Era.

Knowing that the sixties witnessed profound changes in American society, the third chapter will discuss, on the one hand, the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on minority groups in the US, among them, Black women, Black Muslims, Asian Americans, and Gay Rights, who were given special consideration, especially after the Cold War. On the other hand, this chapter will shed some light on the impact of the historical election of an African American President, a fact that would never have happened fifty years earlier. One may consider Obama's Presidency as the culmination of the Civil Rights Movement that started in the 1960's.

The fourth and last chapter will deal with the effects of the Civil Rights Movement on the contemporary problem of racial equality in the US. As we can associate the problem of racism with the relationship between Black and White people, and because this problem owes much to the Civil Rights Movement, one will insist on the fact that this problem is still plaguing American society, especially after the election of an African American President. However, after all these battles, the African American community constitutes a minority that is optimistic to achieve one day, equality of opportunity.

Chapter I

The Historical Background
of Civil Rights in the US
(1700's – 1960's)

Introduction	10
1.1 The Concept of Civil Rights	11
1.1.1. The History of Civil Rights	11
1.1.2. The Bill of Rights	13
1.1.3. The Principles of Democracy in the US	15
1.2 The Struggle for Civil Rights	16
1.2.1. Slavery in the US	16
1.2.2. The Abolition of Slavery	17
1.2.3. The Civil War	18
1.2.4. The Black Codes	19
1.3 Black People in the Reconstruction Era	19
1.3.1 The Civil Rights Act of 1876	20
1.3.2 The Jim Crow Laws	21
1.3.3 The Right to Education	22
1.3.4 Voting Rights for African Americans	26
1.4. The Early Black Leaders	27
1.4.1. William E. Dubois	27
1.4.2. The Emergence of the NAACP	28
1.4.3. Ida B. Wells' Campaign against Lynching	30
1.4.4. Marcus Garvey and the UNIA	31
1.5. African Americans since 1900	33
1.5.1. The Impact of WWI on African Americans	33
1.5.2. African Americans in the Great Depression	34
1.5.3. Roosevelt and Civil Rights	36
1.5.4. The Impact of WWII on African Americans	37
1.5.5. Racial Discrimination after WWII	39
Conclusion	41

Introduction

The history of Civil Rights in the US took effect during the years of American independence, when the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution, giving the American people the freedom enjoyed by few other people in the world. However, the US has still in mind the time of slavery, a period of over two hundred years during which the Black people were considered as second-rate human beings, and suffered from the worst living conditions at that time.

Since the end of the Civil War, African Americans have fought against segregation and discrimination in the US, by asking for their rights to enjoy full American citizenship. However, the effects of two hundred years of slavery and one hundred years of continued prejudice are not as easy to forget. Moreover, two world wars have done little to ban the nightmare of racism in the US.

In the twentieth century, the Civil Rights Movement was considered as a major revolution of consciousness, leading Black people to protest with the humble goal to gain social integration. Many Black leaders emerged, joining the movement, supported by thousands African Americans. Together, they organised sit-ins, marches, and collective protests in order to end the Jim Crow system of discrimination against people of colour.

1.1 The Concept of Civil Rights

The concept of civil rights is based on the belief that human beings have inalienable rights and liberties that cannot be violated by others or by the state. British colonists had been influenced by the revolutionary changes in the seventeenth century caused by the Civil Wars, the Glorious Revolution, and William III's Declaration of Rights. They also carried the concepts of limited government and individual freedom to the New World.

The American and French Revolutions of the eighteenth century inspired the work of the French philosophers Jean Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire. Writings such as the Declaration of Independence, by Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) were considered as the foundations for modern ideas of civil liberties.

1.1.1 The history of Civil Rights

Political theorists make a distinction between civil liberties which guarantee freedom from government interference, and civil rights which give citizens equal treatment in national life. Civil liberties include freedom of speech, assembly and religion. Civil rights include equality of opportunity and freedom to participate fully in civic affairs.

The concept of civil liberties is the product of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Enlightenment. Political philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes³², and John Locke³³ set up the idea that people had formed governments for protection and security. For them, people have certain rights simply because they are human.

³² Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679): English philosopher who provided a secular, rather than religious justification for the political state. Hobbes is controversial because he defended absolute monarchy and condemned democracy. Yet he originated many principles that later were incorporated into the traditions of democracy. From: Concise Encyclopedia of Democracy, 2000. pp 203-204.

³³ John Locke (1632-1704): English philosopher whose writings helped lay the foundations of modern liberal democracy. He supported dividing executive and legislative power to avoid a tyranny by one or a few, and to retain authority with the majority of the people. He had a profound influence on modern political philosophy. From *Ibid*, pp 249-250.

These rights include life, liberty, and property. Governments are formed by the people in order to protect these rights, and those who cannot protect these rights are illegitimate and can be overthrown.

Thomas Hobbes believed that people gave up their sovereignty and their individual rights to an absolute monarch; whereas John Locke assumed that people had certain natural rights, which were inalienable. His thoughts largely inspired both the American and French Revolutions, reflected in their most famous documents: The American Declaration of Independence (1776), the French Declaration of The Rights of Man (1789), and the American Bill of Rights (1791).³⁴

Locke's writings are reflected in the Declaration of Independence which states:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.³⁵

The French Declaration and the US Constitution had broadened the concept of rights by stipulating that citizens expected that it was the role of governments to protect their basic natural rights. These include freedom of religion, speech, press, protection of property rights, and voting rights. In the 20th century, the concept of Human Rights was expanded to include economic and social as well as civil and political rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948 added a number of other rights, including the right to work, free education, social security during unemployment, and old age; these social and economic rights are indeed essential for the dignity and the free development of people's personality.³⁶

³⁴ Concise Encyclopedia of Democracy, Op. Cit., p. 205.

³⁵ Patterson E Thomas, We the People, 2008, p 42

³⁶ Concise Encyclopedia of Democracy, Op. Cit., pp 102-103.

1.1.2 The Bill of Rights

In the first years of the American Independence, the nation benefited from the leadership of many great men who were referred to as the “Founding Fathers”. These men wrote the Constitution and were the first leaders of the nation during its first twenty years of independence.

The civil liberties enjoyed by American citizens are cited in the Bill of Rights, which were added as the first ten Amendments to the US Constitution. Ratified in 1791, these amendments were designed to guarantee fundamental rights against abuse by the national government established under the Constitution.³⁷

The Bill of rights is a vital and living document providing Americans with freedom that few other people in the world enjoyed. The First Amendment assured freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religious exercise, as well as separation of church and state. The Second Amendment gives the people the right to bear arms.³⁸

The Third and Fourth Amendments protect citizens in their homes: people have the right to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures; government cannot force citizens to shelter troops, a British practice that former colonies hated. The Fifth to Eighth Amendments deal with judicial procedures and processes. They guarantee the right to trial by a jury, to call witnesses, and to be counseled.³⁹

The Ninth Amendment stipulates that the rights of the people are not confined to those stated in the Constitution. The Tenth Amendment declares that those powers not delegated to the federal government, not prohibited to the states, remain with the states and the people.

³⁷ Ibid, p 58

³⁸ William O.Kellog, *American History, The Easy Way*, 2003, p 65.

³⁹ *Concise Encyclopedia of Democracy*, Op.Cit, p 59.

In the 1790's, the liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights did not extend to everyone; the nation's Black slaves were a notable exception. Slaves were considered property, not citizens. It was only after a bloody Civil War and a century of struggle that African Americans finally enjoyed the full freedoms stated in the Bill of Rights.

England, the mother country of the United States, was a source for Human Rights declarations. The concept of writing Human Rights into law began in England in 1215.⁴⁰ The same year, a group of noblemen, unsatisfied with the way their country was being governed, compelled King John to sign the Magna Carta.⁴¹ This famous document was the first step toward limiting the power of the King, and stipulated that even the government had to comply with written law.

English people who settled in the American colonies brought with them the belief that citizens are entitled to certain rights that cannot be taken away by the government. The charters of each of the thirteen colonies included a declaration of Rights. The colonists' passion for human rights is clearly seen in the famous words of the Declaration of Independence. The Bill of Rights allows Americans to criticize the government publicly on an issue, including civil rights, economic policies or the rights for disabled people.

⁴⁰ R. Conrad Stein, The Bill of Rights, 1992, p.8.

⁴¹ Magna Carta : A document that King John was forced to sign by the English barons at Runnymede in 1215. It restricted the King's power and gave new rights to the barons and the people. Some of these rights are basic to modern British law, e.g. the right to have a trial before being sent to prison. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p.283.

1.1.3 The Principles of Democracy in the US

Democracies are based on the principle that government exists to serve the people; the people do not exist to serve the government. In other words, the people are citizens of the democratic state, not its subjects. They enjoy the right to join organisations of their choice, and to participate freely in the public life of their society.

The basic freedoms of speech and equal treatment before the law have been extended to employment, education, to one's own culture or nationality, and to adequate standards of living. Democracy is then a promise that free citizens working together, can govern themselves in a manner that will serve their ambitions for personal freedom, economic opportunity, and social justice.

In the phrase of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government “of the people, by the people and for the people”. In short, it is a set of ideas and principles about freedom, with respect to human rights and equality for people, or citizens who are free to elect officials to make political decisions, formulate laws, and administer programs for the public good.

All democracies are systems in which citizens make political decisions by majority rule freely. These decisions must be associated with guarantees of individual human rights that in turn, serve to protect the rights of minorities, whether ethnic, religious or political. The rights of minorities are protected because democratic laws and institutions protect the rights of all citizens. This form of government is a constitutional democracy. Democracy and human rights are closely connected. Although not all democracies respect human rights, the contemporary world reveals that the only regimes that respect human rights are democracies.⁴²

⁴²Concise Encyclopedia of Democracy, Op.Cit. p 206.

1.2 The Struggle for Civil Rights

The civil rights inherent within the Bill of Rights did not extend to all people living in the US, especially not to the 500,000 slaves residents there at that time. The men who wrote the Constitution of the US, however, did not solve the question of slavery.

1.2.1 Slavery in the US

Slavery was a fact in the American life since the first colony. African Americans were brought to Jamestown, in Virginia, in 1619, to work in the tobacco fields because of the economic need of slave labour.⁴³ Slaves were people owned or under the control of others, with no rights of freedom, or movement. They were not paid for their work, and were the property of their masters.

In the years preceding the Civil war, the institution of slavery was deeply rooted in the southern way of life. The economy of the south relied heavily on slave labour because of the harsh working conditions in the fields and the rude climate which rendered difficult the hiring of volunteer workers.

Slaves were viewed as inferior human beings; life was harsh for them, food was monotonous, clothing was deficient, and housing was inadequate. During the American Revolution, people began to accept the idea that slavery was a social evil and ought to be abolished. However, slavery became an important issue after independence.

⁴³William. O. Kellogg, American History, The Easy Way, 2003, p. 137.

It is said that Black people represented 60 percent of a person;⁴⁴ therefore, the civil rights cited in the Bill of Rights did not apply to everyone, especially not to the 750.000 slaves resident in the US by 1790.⁴⁵ After many attempts to abolish slavery, civil rights were in contradiction with all the fundamental texts of the country that was divided into the North against slavery, and the South defending this issue.

1.2.2 The Abolition of Slavery

The Abolitionist Movement was important in the period from 1830 to 1860.⁴⁶ At first Abolitionists were not united in their actions, but in the 1850's, the abolitionist forces became more united. They considered the political developments of the decade as a threat to their individual rights. For them, slavery was immoral, against their religious principles, and in opposition to their understanding of the American ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights.

Throughout the period of slavery, there were rebellions organized by slaves. One of the most important was led by Nat Turner, an African American preacher, in Virginia, in August 1831.⁴⁷ Over 50 white people were murdered, including his own masters. He was finally caught and hanged, with 20 of his accomplices.

Southern states attacked Abolitionists by seizing their literature, the fact that many Northerners considered as a threat to individual civil rights. A growing number of Black intellectuals had denounced the growing hypocrisy of White America. Harriet Tubman, known for her efforts on the "Underground Railroad"⁴⁸, and Frederick Douglas, a former slave, were outstanding African American figures of the Abolitionist Movement.

⁴⁴ Melinda Tims, Perspectives on the Making of America, 2002, p. 71.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 72.

⁴⁶ William O. Kellogg, Op.Cit. p 119.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 120.

⁴⁸ Underground Railroad: An escape route for slaves organized by abolitionists so slaves could travel north, often to Canada, by night and be hidden b day. From Ibid., p. 119.

Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), a self educated slave, who was sent to Baltimore to work as a servant, learned to read and write; in 1838, when he was twenty one, he escaped to the North where he became a member of the “Underground Railroad”, helping other blacks to freedom.⁴⁹ He was also the most famous black man of his time, as lecturer, newspaper editor, and writer.

Before the Civil war, he was already a champion of abolition, and published an anti-slavery journal called the North Star. At the end of the War, he moved to Washington D.C where he participated in international affairs, and was responsible for other publications, encouraging therefore complete emancipation.⁵⁰

1.2.3 The Civil War

The American Civil War (also called the war of Secession) was the most devastating conflict that took place in American history. Slavery was one of the main issues in a country divided into two separate regions: on the one hand, the North with fast developing industries and agriculture, and the South based on the plantation system, relying mainly on slavery.

Black people were still viewed as “private property”, until the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860.⁵¹ During the War, African Americans fought for the Union; however, they fought in segregated regiments. In January of 1863, President Lincoln signed the “Emancipation Proclamation”, which stated that slaves held in states in rebellion against the US would be free.⁵²

After Lincoln’s assassination in April 1863, Congress passed the 13th Amendment to the Constitution which officially ended slavery.⁵³ Following the Emancipation Proclamation, and the ratification of the 13th Amendment, about four millions slaves were freed in 1865.

⁴⁹ Zinn Howard, *A People’s History of the United States*, 2005, p. 180.

⁵⁰ Melinda Tims, Op.Cit. p. 89.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 75.

⁵² William O. Kellogg, Op.Cit. p. 148.

⁵³ Ibid.

1.2.4 The Black Codes

Southern legislatures passed a series of laws in 1865 and 1866 called the Black codes, which discriminated against slaves. States forced Black people to carry special passes, and severely limited their freedom of movement.⁵⁴ Blacks were completely excluded from certain jobs or schools, they were not able to buy land or to serve in juries; they could not own or carry guns, or testify against white people in courts.

The 14th and 15th Amendments were a response to the Black Codes. The 14th Amendment (April 1866, ratified July 9th, 1868), stipulated that citizenship was to be conferred on all persons born or naturalized in the United States. The 14th Amendment not only enunciated civil rights for Blacks, but now stipulated that it was unconstitutional for the individual states to try and take these rights away.⁵⁵

The 15th Amendment ratified in 1870, was designed to guarantee Black men the vote, forbidding any state to deny the right to vote on the grounds of race, or color. The 14th and 15th Amendments clearly enunciated that Blacks were official citizens in 1868, and were therefore legally able to vote in 1870.⁵⁶

1.3 Black people in the Reconstruction Era

One can say that Reconstruction had given Black people many opportunities such as freedom of movement that enabled them to move to the North or West. Moreover, Black people gained the confidence to build their own institutions, such as churches. Also, the right to education was made available to Blacks leading to the emergence of many teachers, lawyers, businessmen, doctors, and political leaders.

⁵⁴ Melinda Tims, Op. Cit., p. 78.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

1.3.1 The Civil Rights Act of 1876

During the Reconstruction Period, which lasted about ten years, the fundamental questions of the time were: "What should be the place of black people in the political and social life of the South? What was the status of the newly freed people concerning political rights?"

Since the vast majority of black people were never able to buy land, many of them worked as sharecroppers⁵⁷. Therefore, they became dependent on white people. One can say that neither their social nor their economic status had been changed by the War or Reconstruction. In addition to discrimination and poverty, Post Reconstruction Southern society created a reign of terror.

Southern states had maintained the Black Codes; moreover, a racist group called the Ku Klux Klan⁵⁸ was organized in 1867.⁵⁹ First, Klansmen's role was to frighten black people and white Republican supporters from voting and holding public office. Then, when their plans failed, they used violence, whipped, shot, hanged, robbed, raped, and lynched Negroes and Republicans across the South in the name of preserving white supremacy.

Congress reacted by voting acts to protect black voters. One of them was the Civil Rights Act of 1876 to provide equal accommodation in public places.⁶⁰ However, by the 1880's, the Supreme Court ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1876, forbidding racial discrimination in public places was unconstitutional.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Sharecropper: One who shares the crops he raises with the owner of the land in return for the right to farm the land. It provides a tenant relationship without exchange of cash, as crops are used instead. From: William O. Kellogg, *OP. Cit.*, p.155.

⁵⁸ Ku Klux Klan: founded in a law office in Pulaski, Tennessee in June 1866. Influenced by the age of Greek classical learning, the founders chose the name Ku Klux derived from the Greek word KuKlos, meaning circle. The word Klan was added because several of the originators came from Irish or Scottish stock. From: Field Ron, *Civil Rights in America, 1865-1980*, 2002, p. 29.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.30.

⁶⁰ William O. Kellogg, *OP. Cit.*, p. 156.

⁶¹ Field Ron, *OP. Cit.*, p. 46.

The Court also ruled that the 14th amendment prohibited state governments from discrimination against people because of race but did not forbid organizations or individuals from using violence. Thus, all public places used segregation, and this had given birth to another type of discrimination under the name of “Jim Crow Laws”.

1.3.2 The Jim Crow Laws

The Jim Crow system refers to the period of discrimination and segregation following the Civil War, until the 1950's. The Jim Crow laws passed in most Southern States, and enforced between 1876 and 1965, used to impose segregation in public places like schools, restaurants, hospitals, or theatres. Before the Jim Crow system, the Black Codes had restricted the civil rights and liberties of black people.

The African American people who used to travel by rail were confined to sit in the so called Jim Crow cars, exclusively reserved for blacks. Indeed, in 1890, the state of Louisiana had created separate train cars for whites and blacks. Homer Plessy, a 7/8ths White, was an example of defiance to these laws. On June 7, 1892, Plessy bought a first class ticket to go from New Orleans to Covington, Louisiana. The train conductor had ordered him to go to the “black section” of the train. Plessy refused, but he was soon arrested; his case was submitted to the Supreme Court as it was a violation to his constitutional rights.⁶²

This case is one of the most famous in the American judicial history. The High Court, in its decision, had considered that even someone who was only 1/8 African American was still Black and did not benefit from the advantages of White people. Furthermore, the judges argued that this was not a violation of the 13th or 14th amendments, as long as the train company offered “separate but equal” traveling conditions to both races.

⁶² Ibid., p. 47.

By 1909, Jim Crow laws were passed in all Southern states.⁶³ Even if they were comparable to the Black Codes, Jim Crow laws were extended to schools and colleges, buses, theatres, hospitals, public parks and restaurants. The Southern states continued to pass discriminatory laws beginning from the case of Plessy, until the middle of the twentieth century because both the federal government and the federal courts had failed to put an end to racial problems.⁶⁴

1.3.3 The Right to Education

In the 1890's, the majority of black children in the south did not attend school;⁶⁵ the question was still if they needed to be educated or not. The South's public school system was underdeveloped, underfunded, and almost inexistent in many areas; the South was poor and rural, and blacks faced racist views for the whole concept of education for blacks.

White people refused the idea that black people would be educated enough to compete with them in economy and politics. They also believed that black schools should be separate and unequal; therefore, they provided them with separate and inferior schools with different curriculums.⁶⁶ Despite Reconstruction civil rights laws, public school systems were still segregated and offered separate schools for black and white children.

Widespread segregation and extreme discrimination had persuaded the civil rights leaders of the early twentieth century to try to improve the precarious situation of African Americans.⁶⁷ Education was the most powerful tool to gain equality and progress. That was the driving force that led Black people to found their own schools, colleges, and universities.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 48.

⁶⁴ Melinda Tims, Op.Cit., p 91.

⁶⁵ Adam Fairclough, Better Day Coming, 2001, p 47.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 49.

⁶⁷ James Ciment, Atlas of African American History, 2007, p. 121.

One black figure who benefited from a chance at higher education was a former slave under the name of Booker. T. Washington, who would become one of the most influential leaders of the late 19th century.⁶⁸

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) was a Virginia slave who started teaching around 1880.⁶⁹ He established a black normal school, Tuskegee in Alabama, which would become the most famous Negro school in the world.⁷⁰ He was widely respected as an educator; moreover, he created an annual “Negro Conference” to discuss black problems. He received a great deal of criticism when he said that black Americans should accept their inferior position by remaining in the south, on their farms, and to accept the society as it was.⁷¹

Washington did not tolerate racial prejudice or discrimination; however, he was convinced that black Americans would fight it only by improving their educational and economic level, not by rebelling or asking for civil rights. They had to master their basic work skills and apply them to the demands of the South's agricultural economy.

Washington's philosophy was called “Accommodation” to the social, economic and political inequalities. He was considered as the most powerful black leader in America. He gave black people a strategy of self-respect, and self-improvement, but he failed in solving the problems of poverty, racism, and many forms of oppression that characterized the life of Black Americans at that time.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 122.

⁶⁹ Melinda Tims, OP. Cit., p. 89.

⁷⁰ Adam Fairclough, OP. Cit., p. 41.

⁷¹ James Ciment, OP.Cit., p. 123.

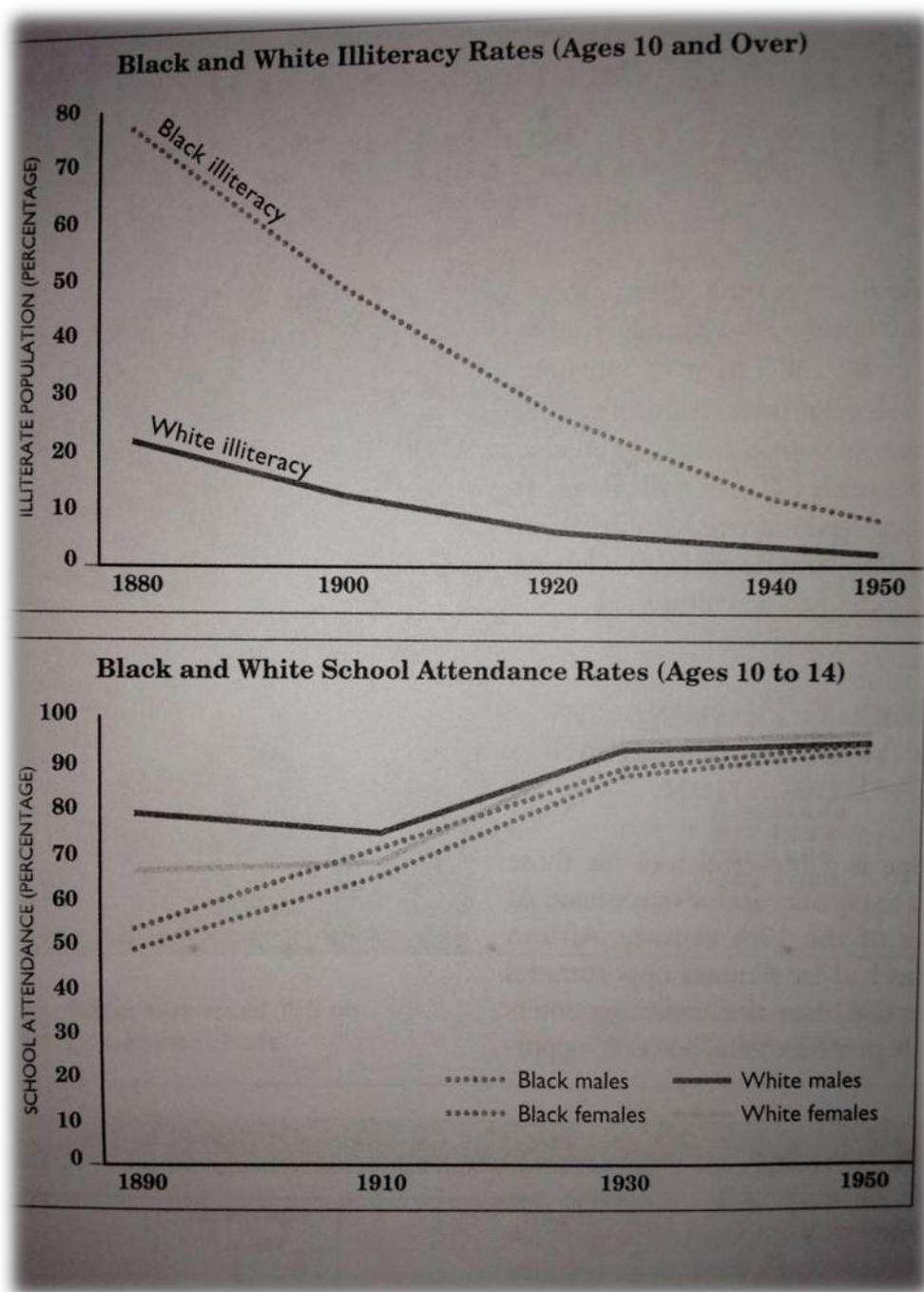


Figure 1: Black and White School attendance and illiteracy Rates

Source: James Ciment, *Atlas of African-American History*, 2007, p.122.



Figure 2: Early African American Colleges and Universities

Source: Ibid. p.123.

1.3.4 Voting Rights for African Americans

The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, known as the Civil Rights Amendments were supposed to give civil and political rights to the former slaves.⁷² In 1866, the Civil Rights Bill defined that “all persons born in the United States were to enjoy their rights, without regard to race”. No states could apply laws like the Black Codes, which discriminated between black and white citizens.

During the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877), Black people voted in the South.⁷³ However, Southern state leaders used discriminatory laws to keep African Americans from the polls. In the 1890's and 1900's, most Black people could not read well enough, and were too poor to pay poll taxes;⁷⁴ therefore, most of them were not allowed to vote.

Congress passed a Civil Rights Act in 1876, providing all people regardless of race and color, equal accommodation in public places like hotels, theaters and other places; however, this act did not allow Black people to gain neither economic power nor improve their social status. Southern states found ways to deny Blacks their right to vote, for example, the Grandfather Clause⁷⁵ said that if your grandfather had not voted, you could not; obviously, no slaves had grandfathers who had voted.

⁷² Concise Encyclopedia of Democracy, Op.Cit., p. 110.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 377.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Grandfather Clause: Gave the vote to all male adults whose fathers or grandfathers had voted before first January 1867. From: Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 49.

As former slaves were given the right to vote until the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, these measures were used to exclude Blacks from the vote until the 1960's. Therefore, Reconstruction had failed to provide Black people with political power.

1.4 The Early Black Leaders

During the 20th century, African Americans would fight restrictions on voting by founding the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in 1909, witnessing the emergence of the most influential Black leaders of this century.

1.4.1 William E. Dubois

William Edward Bughardt Dubois (1868-1963) was of mixed heritage (French, Dutch and Afro- American).⁷⁶ He studied at Fisk University in Tennessee; then he joined the University of Harvard in Massachusetts to study history and sociology. He was one of the most important African American intellectuals and activists of the 20th century.

He was the first African American to receive a PhD from Harvard University. His dissertation on “the Suppression of the Slave Trade” was published in “Harvard Historical Studies”. From 1896 to 1910, he became a professor of economics and history at Atlanta University, a black institution in competition with Tuskegee Institute, founded by Booker T Washington.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Melinda Tims, OP. Cit., p. 90.

⁷⁷ Field Ron, OP. Cit., p. 61.

Dubois was a Northerner who studied and worked in the South. Being a member of an excluded minority, he was deeply affected by the brutality of racism. He wrote, spoke, marched and fought against injustice and inequality from the beginning of his long and distinguished career. Dubois was also influenced by what was happening in Africa, its partition, and its brutal exploitation by European powers.

In 1903, he criticized the basic ideas of Booker T Washington, challenging his accomodationist views, and proclaiming that Blacks must ask for their rights.⁷⁸ He argued that African Americans had to fight against injustice and achieve equality, which would lead them to freedom not only in the United States but also in Africa. In 1909, he founded the “National Association for the Advancement of Colored People”, a militant association, fighting for black rights.⁷⁹

1.4.2 The Emergence of the NAACP

The NAACP was one of the most prominent organisations in American history. The men and women who founded it were most of them businessmen, social workers, teachers, writers and journalists. Its main objectives were to publicize lynching, to denounce injustice, and to make clear the achievements of black people who asked for their rights.

The founding of the NAACP was the beginning of the modern Civil Rights Movement. The first meeting was held on Lincoln's birthday, February 12th in 1909, and Dubois was a founding member of this militant association to promote black rights.⁸⁰ Dubois and other black activists asked not only for the right to vote for African Americans, but also for the abolition of segregation and the removal of discriminatory laws. They also demanded equal educational opportunities for all.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, 2001, p. 73.

⁸⁰ Melinda Tims, OP. Cit., p. 90.

The most famous people who attended the founding were Ida. B. Wells Barnett,⁸¹ and Mary Church Terrell.⁸² Their program consisted in the launching of a magazine “The Crisis”, edited by Dubois to protest against lynching. Dubois had written in one of his newspaper articles:

First ...we want full manhood suffrage...Second. We want discrimination in public to cease...Third. We claim the right of freemen to walk, talk and be with them that wish to be with us. Fourth, we want the laws enforced against white as well as black. Fifth ...We want our children... trained as intelligent human beings should be.⁸³

It is said that “The Crisis” was the official means of propaganda used to attack lynching and to denounce Jim Crow laws. It had a great success; it first appeared in 1910, and by 1911, it had sold 16,000 copies a month.⁸⁴ However, the NAACP was considered as a radical organization to millions of whites, who tried to limit the number and power of black people working for this organisation.

The goal of the NAACP was to integrate the races from the moment of its emergence. The main process adopted by this organisation was the use of the Constitution and the Court system of the US to achieve civil rights for African Americans. It had 274 branches and over 90,000 members by the early 1920's. However, it was mainly run by whites who gained the key leadership positions.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Ida B Wells: An outspoken Black journalist who attacked the core of racist ideology. She forced a national debate on lynching and aroused international condemnation of American mob violence. From: Adam Fairclough, *OP. Cit.*, p. 29.

⁸² Mary Church Terrell: A strong advocate of civil rights. Born in Memphis in 1863, she dedicated herself to the Colored Women's League and formed with other Black women the National Association of Colored Women. She was also a founding member of the NAACP. From: James Ciment, *OP. Cit.*, p. 125.

⁸³ James Ciment, *OP. Cit.*, p. 126.

⁸⁴ Adam Fairclough, *OP. Cit.*, p. 79.

⁸⁵ Adam Fairclough, *OP. Cit.*, p. 72.

1.4.3 Ida. B. Wells' Campaign against Lynching

Among the early Black leaders who denounced the horrors of lynching was the famous journalist Ida. B. Wells Barnett (1862-1931). She was born a slave during the Civil War.⁸⁶ She wrote about the rising violence against African American men and women. In 1898, she wrote a letter to President McKinley in which she demanded Federal authorities to put an end to the illegal practice of lynching. She declared:

Nowhere in the civilized world save the US of America do men, possessing all civil and political power, go out in bands of 50 to 5,000 to hunt down, shoot, hang or burn to death an individual, unarmed and absolutely powerless.⁸⁷

Ida. B. Wells denounced lynching as racial terror. The issue of lynching became first a national, then an international issue.⁸⁸ Wells made tours in Northern and Western states throughout America, and organised lectures on the horrors of lynching; moreover, she carried her anti-lynching campaign to Great Britain in 1893, because she was convinced that an international pressure would contribute to the anti-lynching cause.⁸⁹ She gave anti-lynching lectures in front of large audiences through which she helped organize the British Anti-Lynching Society.⁹⁰ Wells gained respect from the British public opinion which condemned lynching as barbarous.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.29.

⁸⁷ Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 63.

⁸⁸ Adam Fairclough, Op. Cit., p.23.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

Ida. B. Wells had contributed to the civil rights struggle. She was an anti-lynching leader and a civil rights activist. Like W.E.B. Dubois, she disagreed with Booker. T. Washington, and was among the first women to join the NAACP. Later in her life, she abandoned that organization and supported Marcus Garvey, who called for Black pride, convincing Black people to return to Africa.⁹¹

1.4.4 Marcus Garvey and the UNIA

It is said that Marcus Garvey was the first Black Nationalist who made Black Americans feel that they were proud of their past, and heroic of their present. He was feared by Great Britain and the US, whose governments considered him as a dangerous person who would destabilize colonial empires in Africa and America.⁹²

Born on 17 August 1887 in Jamaica, he became involved in the Jamaican Nationalist Movement at the age of 14.⁹³ Between 1910 and 1914, Garvey noticed the bad treatment of Blacks. He founded the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association). This organisation followed the same philosophy of integration, promoting industrial education as established by Booker T. Washington's Institute.

Garvey went to the US in 1916, and became a successful public speaker among the African American community in the US. He formed a branch of the UNIA in Harlem, New York, and in a year, nearly one thousand members were recruited. He also publicised a weekly newspaper, "The Negro World", which was widely read in the US, South America, the Caribbean Islands, and Africa.

⁹¹ John Hope Franklin and August Meier, Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century, 1982, p. 42.

⁹² Adam Fairclough., Op. Cit., p. 112.

⁹³ Ron Field., Op. Cit., p. 64.

Garvey's Black Nationalism was based on the motto "Africa for Africans".⁹⁴ The fact that Blacks in the New World had been deprived of their African language, heritage and culture, and because Africa had been depicted by whites as being a dark and uncivilized continent, the basic aim of the UNIA was to destroy that image. It is well known that Garvey considered the establishment of a "free and independent Africa", as the best way to improve the situation of Blacks in the world.⁹⁵

Booker T. Washington and Thomas Fortune were strong supporters of the UNIA, which was mainly composed of businessmen, lawyers, politicians and scholars. The UNIA was entirely led and financed by Black people; The UNIA was not only a male organization but also Black women were active members; Among them Garvey's first wife Amy Ashwood who was an active founder, and his second wife Amy Jacques, who was an editor of the Negro World.⁹⁶

Marcus Garvey also established "The Black Star Steamship Line", whose aim was to create an independent transportation network for Blacks and to provide passage to African Americans who wanted to return to Africa. However, Garvey was convicted of mail fraud in 1922,⁹⁷ and was condemned to a five year jail. After a release from prison after three years, he was deported to Jamaica. He moved to London in 1935 where he died of a stroke in 1940.

⁹⁴ Adam Fairclough, *Op. Cit.*, p. 117.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁹⁷ James Ciment, *Op. Cit.*, p. 132.

1.5 African Americans since 1900

Being the victims of violence in the South, Black people had little protection, and suffered from inequality especially in the South where lynching was still unpunished. Moreover, Black people were dominated by Southern whites, who controlled education and law enforcement. However, the Black community's status began to improve, giving Black people more opportunities, especially after the advent of the World War I.

1.5.1 The Impact of WWI on African Americans

The First World War was considered as a disaster for Europe, as it generated hunger, poverty, despair, and political dislocation. Britain and France who were the only victorious nations from that war were deeply traumatized and impoverished; however, the US emerged from the war much stronger than Europe, because it represented the motive of democracy among the great powers.

The First World War affected profoundly Americans, who were enlisted to work and fight. Black Americans were given opportunities in this war for democracy and they expected that white America would reward their efforts in the fight against racial discrimination in the US and overseas.

The most important effect of WWI on Black Americans was the Great Migration, this mass movement of people from the South to the North. From 1914 to 1920, between 300,000 to 500,000 African Americans left the rural South to the North, in search of better economic opportunities after WWI.⁹⁸ However, they were given the most common labor and therefore were confronted with racial discrimination in employment.

⁹⁸ John Mack Faragher, Out Of Many, A History of The American People, 1997, p. 708.

Being excluded from most Northern industries, Black people were offered only low wage and unskilled jobs. They were hired mostly in automobile factories, and railroad construction, earning therefore two or three times what they used to earn in the south.⁹⁹

Reasons for this migration were decades of oppression, lynching, segregation, disenfranchisement, and inadequate schooling. Yet even if they were excluded and discriminated, migrants were determined to move forward. To survive, they had to find a job and earn money. They formed their own communities, and the great majority found their way in manufacturing industries.

1.5.2 African Americans in the Great Depression

It is well known that African Americans suffered during the Great Depression of the 1930's, particularly from unemployment and starvation. By 1932, Black unemployment represented over fifty per cent, and coloured people did not succeed to keep their jobs.¹⁰⁰ In the South, Black people could not find jobs until white people were employed. As a result, they applied only for the lowest-paying factory jobs.

Poverty, unemployment, and economic reform were the most urgent political issues during the Depression. When Franklin D. Roosevelt became President in 1933, he promised a "New Deal"¹⁰¹ for the American people in order to help the nation to work. He realised that the Depression was an economic disaster, which required a series of New Deal programs.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Adam Fairclough, Op. Cit., p. 90.

¹⁰⁰ Robin DG Kelley and Earl Lewis, *A history of African Americans*, 2000, p. 411.

¹⁰¹ New Deal : The program begun by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930's to end the Great Depression. It introduced new economic and social measures, and made the national government more powerful. From: *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture*, p. 327.

¹⁰² Adam Fairclough, Op. Cit., p. 146.

Segregation was still present during the New Deal; Black workers were often refused to be employed by white-owned departments. As a result, they formed their own organisations to protect themselves. The most powerful example of these organisations was the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSPC).¹⁰³

Philip Randolph,¹⁰⁴ who was viewed as the architect of the Civil Rights Movement in America, had been the leader of this organisation. He forced the labor movement to accept blacks into their unions, and treat them fairly. He urged Blacks to fight for freedom and justice; He worked on an eight point program which asked for the right to vote for blacks, the abolition of segregation in transportation, schools, housing, public accommodations, and the Armed forces.

It is said that in the South, lynchings of Blacks which had fallen in the 1920's had risen once again in the 1930's.¹⁰⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt had finally admitted that lynching was a murder, and by 1939, African Americans began to improve their economic situation with the New Deal programs.

Roosevelt saw the growing importance of the Black vote; therefore, he appointed a great number of African Americans to federal posts. The "Black Cabinet" had improved African American positions in a variety of New Deal Programs.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ BSPC : an organisation formed in 1925 to protect the rights of Black workers. It was the first Black labor union. Sleeping Car Porters were men, almost always African Americans, who attended to passengers in the overnight Pullman train cars. From: Diane Mc Worther, *A Dream of Freedom*, 2004, p. 91.

¹⁰⁴ Philip Randolph : (1889-1979), he forced the organized labor movement to accept Blacks into their unions, which led to the formation of a Black middle class in America. From: Sheila Hardy and P. Stephen Hardy, *Extraordinary People of the Civil Rights Movement*, 2007, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ James Ciment, Op.Cit., p. 138.

¹⁰⁶ Robin DG Kelley and Earl Lewis, Op. Cit., p. 417.

1.5.3 Roosevelt and Civil Rights

When President Roosevelt came to office in 1933, the nation was going through its worst depression in history. He came with the New Deal, and the roots of twentieth century civil rights legislation may be found in the New Deal years.¹⁰⁷ More than three million Blacks benefited from these reforms and were employed in factories. Roosevelt became very popular by visiting and sending messages to African American institutions and organisations.¹⁰⁸

In June 1941, he signed Executive Order 8802, which prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of race, colour, or national origin.¹⁰⁹ In 1938, he created the civil rights division that helped Southern Blacks to gain the right to vote, and to fight police brutality. However, the New Deal years were devoted to provide economic benefits rather than to advance the cause of civil rights.

The Roosevelt's Administration was helping the Black population to recover from the economic crisis. The National Industrial Recovery Act provided for a minimum wage of twelve to 15 dollars a week, a forty hour week, and the abolition of child labour under the age of sixteen.¹¹⁰

The New Deal Housing Program helped Blacks to keep their homes and to gain better living conditions. During the Depression, only a small number of Black people could get loans in order to make payments on their homes; moreover, they were excluded from the Social Security Act in 1935, because most of them were agricultural and domestic workers.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 75.

¹⁰⁸ John Hope Franklin, Alfred A. Moss JR, From Slavery to Freedom, 2004, p. 426.

¹⁰⁹ Christopher Bigsby, Modern American Culture, 2006, p. 164.

¹¹⁰ John Hope Franklin, Alfred A. Moss, Op. Cit., p. 429.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 434.

1.5.4 The Impact of WWII on African Americans

One knows that WWII sought to preserve democracy and eliminate racism. It was a war that made African Americans confronted to a real problem: to improve social justice in America. Black people aimed at a double victory, first to end racial inequality and segregation in America, and second to abolish dictatorship abroad.

It has been reported that the involvement of Blacks in the war production led to the employment of nearly two million African Americans in industry plus 200,000 in the Federal civil service. NAACP membership also grew from 50,000 to 450,000 during the years 1942 to 1945.¹¹²

World War II ended unemployment, changed the face of the South, and about 900,000 blacks were recruited in the army.¹¹³ It had not only brought a new meaning to the ideal of democracy, but also made the US the most powerful nation in the world. It led to the founding of the United Nations¹¹⁴ defending human rights for all. We can say that WW II was a turning point in race relations. Black Americans benefited from this war, as it was a unique opportunity to ask for equal citizenship.

¹¹²Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 76.

¹¹³Adam Fairclough, Op. Cit., p. 185.

¹¹⁴United Nations: An international organisation, based in New York, which aims to preserve peace around the world and solve international problems. It was formed in 1945, and replaced the League of Nations. Most of the world's independent states are members, and each has one vote in the General Assembly. The United Nations Security Council has the power to take military or economic action to settle international disputes. Other branches of the United Nations include the World Bank, the International Court of Justice in the Netherlands, and the United Nation's Children's Funds (UNICEF). From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p. 492.

Black organizations worked hard for equality within armed services. The military was a clear personification of democratic values for which Black Americans fought. They wanted to end discrimination in the Armed forces. Most military bases were located in the South, and Blacks were asked to obey Jim Crow laws.¹¹⁵

During the 1941-42 years, the police of Birmingham, Alabama, witnessed many incidents confronting white and Black passengers. Very often, they refused to give up their seats by sitting in the white section. Black people in the South were still deprived of the right to vote. During WW II, great efforts were made to gain the vote for African Americans. NAACP branches worked hard to allow blacks to vote.¹¹⁶ However, at the end of WW II, blacks had not achieved their goals because the basic race relations remained unchanged.

One has to point out that WWII had provided the seeds of revolution in the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, the contradiction that existed between fighting a war against racism abroad while it was a fact of American society, had provoked a protest movement, involving the Black community's social and political activism. Black people had declared:

Our war is not against Hitler and Europe, but against the Hitlers
in America¹¹⁷

Therefore, a sense of revolt increased among the black community whose main goal was to abolish all forms of discrimination existing in their daily lives. Segregation had increased in the postwar years, and would provide an example for other minorities to carry out the struggle for ending racism in the US.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 191.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 196.

¹¹⁷ Rudrick. P. Lois, American Identities, 2006, p.81.

1.5.5 Racial Discrimination after WWII

American participation in the Second World War helped to improve race relations, and gave the opportunity for African Americans to defend their cause. Nearly 500,000 African Americans who had fought for the American Forces returned from the war, finding the same segregated South. However, the aftermath of the War brought the decline of European colonialism and a wave of independence movements in African nations.¹¹⁸

After the events of WWII, there was a contradiction between American ideals of democracy, and the treatment of Blacks in the US. Black people questioned themselves after WWII: What was the true meaning of democracy? Did Black people have the same rights as white people in America, the land of freedom and democracy, or were they considered as second class citizens? Could they eat in the same restaurants as white people? Could they sit in the same school, bus, theatre as White people? Was lynching lawful in a country defending Human Rights?

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's is considered as one of the most famous liberation movements of modern times.¹¹⁹ It sought to apply the Fourteenth Amendment equal protection clause,¹²⁰ and Fifteenth Amendment voting rights to African Americans in the South. One knows that they were subjected to humiliating traditions consisting of separate "coloured" and white schools, restaurants, and public transport. African Americans were also violently lynched and assaulted under the reign of Jim Crow laws.

¹¹⁸ William R Scott and William G. Shade, Upon These Shores, 2000, p. 223.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 222.

¹²⁰ Equal protection clause: a clause in the 14th amendment that requires that states provide citizens "equal protection of the laws". From: Theodore J Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, American Government, 2011, p. 94.

In 1896, in the case of Plessy v Ferguson,¹²¹ Black people traveling by rail were confined to the so-called Jim Crow cars. Homer Plessy became a model of disobedience that happened 70 years before the 20th century Civil Rights Movement.

Great changes have occurred in the 1950's; the Supreme Court had taken an important decision regarding minority groups. Brown v Board of Education¹²² declared that racial segregation in public schools was an unconstitutional violation of the fourteenth amendment. This decision was the landmark of what called for the desegregation of all public school systems throughout the nation. The Supreme Court implied that all forms of segregation were illegal.

¹²¹Plessy v Ferguson: a court case in 1896, which was decided by the US Supreme Court. It stated that segregation on trains was legal if black and white people received equal services. Southern states also used this idea of separate but equal in schools, public buildings, etc. The ruling was replaced in 1954 by the Supreme Court's decision in the case of Brown v Board of Education of Topeka which stated that segregation in schools was illegal. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, p. 366.

¹²²Brown v Board of Education: a law case in 1954 which was held after a school for white children in Topeka, Kansas, refused to accept a black girl called Linda Brown. The case led to a decision of the US Supreme Court that made segregation in public schools illegal. The decision ended the idea of separate but equal schools for whites and encouraged the civil rights movement. From: *Ibid*, p. 59.

Conclusion

The US underwent great transformations from the period of slavery, until the end of the Second World War. A long battle for gaining civil and political rights after the Abolition of slavery, and two World Wars had deeply affected the lives of African American people. The willingness and determination of the African American community to resist discrimination during that period had finally changed their lives, providing them with an unprecedented feeling of liberty and equality within American society.

However, the Black community's struggle for equal rights would last for decades after the Second World War, involving many Black activists, men and women, in a series of protests designed to achieve equality and justice in social, economic, and political spheres for African Americans. It is through constant activism that an oppressed community in the US would survive to the ravages of slavery, and the harsh laws imposed by the Jim Crow system of discrimination.

One can conclude that the African American struggle for Civil Rights was one of the most important events that had marked American history. Indeed, the extraordinary revolt of the black community in the US would raise other people's consciousness, in America and abroad, to ask for equality of rights within American society.

Chapter II

The Successes and Challenges
brought by the
Civil Rights Movement
(1960's – 1980's)

Chapter Two: The Successes and Challenges brought by the Civil Rights Movement (1960's – 1980's)

Introduction	43
2.1 The Emergence of the Civil Rights Movement	44
2.2 The Beginning of the Civil Rights Movement	46
2.2.1 The Montgomery Bus Boycott	46
2.2.2 Student Sit-Ins	48
2.2.3 The Freedom Rides	50
2.2.4 The Birmingham Protests	51
2.2.5 The March on Washington	52
2.3 The Role of President Kennedy during the Civil Rights Years	54
2.4 The Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act	55
2.5 The Failure of Johnson's Great Society	58
2.6 The Impact of the Cold War on Civil Rights Activism in the US	59
2.7 The Impact of the Vietnam War on Civil Rights Activism in the US	60
2.8 The Impact of Martin Luther King's Assassination on the American Nation	61
2.9 The Rise of Conservatism in the US	63
2.10 Crime and Poverty in the African American Community	64
2.11 The Rise of Affirmative Action in the US	67
2.11.1 Segregation in Public Schools	67
2.11.2 Affirmative Action in Schools	70
2.11.3 The Fight for Equal Employment Opportunities	72
2.11.4 Affirmative Action and Employment	73
2.11.5 Discrimination and Poverty in the US in the Post Civil Rights Era	75
2.11.6 The Consequences of Affirmative Action on African Americans	77
2.12 The impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Race Relations in the US	79
2.13 The Rise of the Black Middle Class	81
Conclusion	82

Introduction

The 1960's witnessed profound social, intellectual, economic, and political changes within American society. On the one hand, this decade was characterised by repression and rebellion; on the other hand by emancipation and freedom. In this way, the second chapter will analyse the ups and downs of the Civil Rights Movement by exploring the successes and challenges brought by this movement.

Disadvantaged groups living in the US have achieved great success in their battle for equal rights. Through Acts of Congress, and Supreme Court decisions, most forms of discrimination have been eliminated. However, these laws failed to solve all the problems encountered by these groups of people, who are still suffering from inequalities within the American society.

The Affirmative Action programs emerged in the late 1960's to try to provide full and equal opportunities mainly in employment and education for minorities. However, these new measures had disappointed white people because they felt their rights had been threatened. Affirmative Action policies and programs were beneficial to Blacks at the expense of whites. Moreover, these measures seemed to be in contradiction with the principle of equality upon which the nation had been founded.

One has to focus on the fact that the post- World War II era had brought emancipation to most American people, young, old, rich, poor, black, and white. Moreover, the Cold War had made the US the leader of the "free world". Therefore, one has to find an answer to some questions: What did the Civil Rights Movement achieve? And had this movement been a success for the American nation?

In this chapter, one has to focus on Americans' reaction to the wars that were pervading the American Nation at that time. Moreover, a special interest will be given to the failure of Johnson's Great Society, the impact of President Kennedy on the Civil rights revolution, and also the impact of the assassination of Martin Luther King on the American nation. By understanding the different events that characterized American society in the 1960's, one will have a clear vision about the importance and the objectives of the Civil Rights Movement.

2.1 The Emergence of the Civil Rights Movement

One knows that the Civil Rights Movement emerged as a response to the limited gains made by African Americans during WWII. With the hope of finding better jobs in the North, African Americans had migrated from the South; however, they were confronted to the harshest forms of discrimination, overcrowded housing and the worst living conditions.

The African American community in the US did not have the right to vote in the South; moreover, segregation in public places was still a fact of daily life for most of these people who were considered as second-class citizens. Therefore, one can say that the 20th century Civil Rights Movement sought to secure full political, social, and economic rights for African Americans in the decades following WWII.

The United States, being considered as the greatest country in the world, had to defend its universal values of freedom within the American society and in the rest of the world. However, the ambivalence of American foreign policy to spread democracy around the world, and oppression at home, would give birth to social protests, involving mainly young people.¹

¹ Stephen J. Whitfield, A Companion to 20th Century America, 2004, p. 92.

It is known that universities in the US had expanded in the post-War years, creating a mass movement led by students, who protested against the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and the many forms of injustice that characterized Black peoples' lives. These young people participated in marches, rallies, and demonstrations in order to desegregate schools, universities, and other public places. Most of these revolts were broadcasted, showing demonstrators attacked by dogs and fire bombs, causing strong reactions from the national and international communities around the world.²

One knows that the US entered the Cold War³ against the Soviet Union, with a military strategy aiming to attack communism. This war was also a direct consequence of WWII. The protest against the Cold War's anti-Communism, and the emergence of the revolutionary generation of the 1960's, who supported the Cuban Revolution⁴, the Black Revolution, and the Women's Liberation Movement, were at the forefront of a Civil Rights activism that would last for many decades, constituting one of the historical revolutionary movements of the 20th century.

² Ibid., p.93.

³ Cold War: the political conflict between the capitalist countries of the West (The US and Western Europe), and the Communist countries of the East (The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe) that began after WWII. Both sides had large military forces which were kept ready for war, and threatened each other with nuclear weapons. They also tried to find each other's secrets using spies. There was no actual fighting, except where the US and the Soviet Union supported different sides in conflicts such as the Korean War. The Cold War ended in the early 1990's after the Soviet Union had begun to break up, and agreements were made to reduce military forces on both sides. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p. 94.

⁴ Cuban Revolution: or the Cuban Missile Crisis which was a dangerous political situation that developed in 1962 between the US and USSR. President Kennedy became aware that there were Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba and sent the US Navy to stop Soviet ships from bringing more. It seemed possible that there would be a nuclear war between the two countries, but the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev ordered the Russian ships to turn back and later removed all the weapons. From: Ibid., p. 111.

2.2 The Beginning of the Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement in America is the history of the Black American struggle to realise the American Dream. Black Americans, whatever their jobs, began to speak out against discrimination and racism in the US. They devoted much of their life to struggle for Civil Rights. Moreover, the persistence of urban inequality, and discrimination had given birth to a revolutionary protest characterized by non-violent direct action, such as sit-ins, freedom rides, and marches that sought to bring equality and justice among oppressed people in the US.

2.2.1 The Montgomery Bus Boycott

The famous decision “Brown v Board of Education” in 1954, was followed by the most active period of struggle for Civil Rights. Moreover, the Jim Crow system in the South had made African Americans suffer from extreme forms of segregation in every aspect of daily life, including public transportation; for example, bus companies forced Blacks to sit in separate sections from whites, and obliged them to sit at the back of buses, whereas White people sat at the front.

In 1955, an NAACP activist in Montgomery, named Rosa Parks refused to surrender her seat to a white passenger, as required by the law. As a result, the city's black population organised a boycott of buses, marking the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.

Refusing to obey the driver who had ordered her to give up her seat, Rosa Parks was arrested, and had to pay a fine of ten dollars.⁵ Her act of defiance symbolised resistance against racial discrimination, and generated the historic Montgomery Bus Boycott that lasted more than a year, and was the longest protest organised by Black people in the 20th century.⁶

⁵ Douglas Brinkley, Rosa Parks, 2000, p.2.

⁶ Nell Irvin Painter, Creating Black Americans, 2007, p. 271.

Working as a secretary of the NAACP, Rosa Parks' primary goals were first the desegregation of the city buses in Montgomery, and second to gain the right to vote for Black citizens. The boycott had proved that African Americans were ready to sacrifice their jobs and their lives in order to defend their rights by gaining their dignity.⁷

One knows that the Montgomery Bus Boycott was considered as the turning point in the history of Black America because it gave the opportunity for Black people to expose their daily sufferings, and to end the humiliation they endured.⁸ Out of the boycott emerged an eloquent Civil Rights leader under the name of Martin Luther King. JR.

It is well-known that Martin Luther King was inspired by his Christian faith, and by the non-violent, and civil disobedience of India's leader Mohandas Gandhi. Moreover, he had earned a doctorate at Boston University's school of theology.⁹ His goal was clear to all Americans: to embrace the cause of justice, to reject racism, and to realise the American Dream of equality and justice. He had asserted that the conflict was not between "white and negro", but between "justice and injustice".¹⁰

On the first day of the boycott Martin Luther King addressed more than 5,000 Black people by saying:

We are here this evening...because first and foremost we are American citizens, and we are determined to apply our citizenship to the fullness of its means...We are not wrong in what we are doing. If we are wrong, then the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, the Constitution of the US is wrong. If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong...If we are wrong, justice is a lie...We, the disinherited of this land, we who have been oppressed so long, are tired of going through the long night of captivity. And now we are reaching out for the daybreak of freedom and justice and equality...

⁷ William H Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey*, 2007, p. 156.

⁸ Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 2005, p. 969.

⁹ Miller Jones, *Almanac of American History*, 2007, p. 278.

¹⁰ Field Ron, *Op. Cit.*, p. 87.

Right here in Montgomery, when the history books are written in the future, somebody will have to say, there lived a race of people, a black people, a people who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights. And thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and of civilisation.¹¹

The Black Civil Rights movement was the quest for freedom, this word which had many meanings for blacks, among them to enjoy the same political rights and economic opportunities as white people. It also meant eradicating segregation, disenfranchisement, violence, and gaining better paid jobs.

The Bus Boycott gained victory when in November 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that the Montgomery bus policy of segregation was a violation of the US Constitution.¹² The company ended segregation on buses; moreover, Black drivers were employed and Black passengers could sit wherever they wished. The Montgomery Bus Boycott had been a success, and had produced an outstanding leader of the Civil Rights movement, who had contributed to a great struggle for racial equality in the United States.

2.2.2 Student Sit-Ins

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, racial discrimination was maintained in the South, imposing on black people a strict segregationist policy.¹³ Black people could shop in stores of the South like Greensboro or Woolworth's, but were not allowed to eat at its lunch counters by fear of contaminating white people. They were also barred from theatres, hotels, and restaurants which allowed them to sit in separate and inferior sections.

¹¹ Eric Foner, Op. cit., p. 968.

¹² Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 87.

¹³ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 159.

It had been reported that on February 1, 1960, four Black college students Franklin Mc Cain, Joseph Mc Neil, Ezell Blair JR, and David Richmond, asked for lunch at the Woolworth's counter in Greensboro, but were refused service.¹⁴ However, they persisted and were supported by hundreds of other black students.

Starting from Greensboro, in North Carolina, and spreading to many other cities, black students from colleges and high schools organised sit-ins advocating desegregation of lunch counters and other public places. They were courageous enough to defy Jim Crow laws, and to occupy seats primarily reserved to whites.¹⁵

These protests involved about 50,000 participants, among them 36,000 protesters were sent to prison for creating riots in 1960; indeed, these demonstrations provoked violence, leading white people to beat up the demonstrators; these events were often transmitted by the news media, spreading the importance of the movement.¹⁶

A new Civil Rights organisation was born, the SNCC (Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee);¹⁷ its aim was to organise sit-ins and demonstrations throughout the South. Its members were inspired by the Gandhian approach of non violent action, and were supported by the Black woman civil rights activist Ella Baker¹⁸, who taught Black students how to assert their autonomy and independence.

¹⁴ Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 88.

¹⁵ Miller Jones, Op. Cit., p. 280.

¹⁶ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 159.

¹⁷ SNCC: an independent organization, emphasizing on voter registration and "Freedom Schools" in the South. From: Sheila Hardy, OP. Cit., p. 46.

¹⁸ Ella Baker: (1903-1986), she was an early and influential proponent of direct action. A tireless community organizer committed to economic and racial justice, Baker constructed a national foundation for local activism that would manifest itself from the ground up, in contrast to the NAACP's legal strategy, which was a top-down approach. In addition, Baker was a female in a movement totally dominated by male leadership with its fair share of male chauvinism and misogyny. From: Henry Louis Gates, JR, The African Americans, Many Rivers to Cross, 2013, p. 209.

2.2.3 The Freedom Rides

The "Freedom Rides"¹⁹ were used to challenge racial discrimination in public facilities at the interstate level. The first Freedom Rides were organised by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE),²⁰ a multiracial pacifist organisation founded to protest segregation in Chicago in 1942. It began using the tactic of sit-ins and in 1947, it sent 16 white and black bus riders to the Upper South to confront segregation in interstate bus facilities throughout the south, from Washington D.C to New Orleans.²¹

It is said that on May 4, 1961, CORE's director James Farmer started the Freedom Rides.²² The process consisted in sending small interracial groups to challenge segregation in restaurants, waiting rooms, and other public facilities. However, the buses that transported them were attacked by white people who broke windows, and threw firebombs into buses; passengers were beaten as they fled from the burning buses.

These conflicts created a real crisis. The Kennedy administration started a series of negotiations with the bus company. Robert Kennedy wanted to protect the Freedom Riders by sending six hundred federal marshals for protection and ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission to set laws against segregation in transportation facilities.²³ The Freedom Rides were at the centre of the nation's political agenda, and also proved that southern practices were outrageous, provoking national and international reactions.

¹⁹ Freedom rides: The Congress of Racial Equality (COE) dispatched black protestors to ride on interstate buses in the spring of 1961 as a way of publicizing the South's defiance of a year-old Supreme Court ruling desegregation interstate transportation. Members of the Ku Klux Klan beat the freedom riders and burned their bus in Anniston Alabama, and a white mob attacked the protesters in Birmingham. From: Harvard Sitkoff, Post-War America, 2000, p.108.

²⁰ CORE: a US organisation that supports equal rights for African Americans by peaceful actions. It was established in 1942 in Chicago by James Farmer. It became well known in the 1960's for encouraging African Americans to vote and for leading freedom riders into the southern states. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, p. 99.

²¹ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 160.

²² William R Scott and William G. Shade, Op. Cit., p. 229.

²³ Ibid., p. 230.

2.2.4 The Birmingham Protests

It is known that the Birmingham protests aimed at eliminating local segregation in lunch counters, parks, and other public facilities. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was organised in 1957 by Martin Luther King.²⁴ It was based in Atlanta, Georgia, and its role was to relate between the local organisations working for the full equality of African Americans.

During April 1963, leaders of the SCLC organised peaceful protests in Birmingham, Alabama, which was the most segregated city in the South.²⁵ Indeed, there were constant bombings in the Black community of this town, giving this city the name of "Bombingham".²⁶ The police commissioner Eugene Bull Connor had used attack dogs, and fire hoses to attack protesters. Televised images, newspaper articles, and pictures of people being beaten and arrested had a deep influence not only on American people, but also on people all over the world.

Martin Luther King was arrested, and while in jail, he wrote "Letter from Birmingham Jail" to justify his protest activities:

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed...For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" it rings in the ear of the negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We have waited for more than 340

years for our constitutional and God-given rights...Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained.²⁷

²⁴ Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 90.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 163.

²⁷ Schulke Flip, Martin Luther King, JR, 1976, p. 64.

In the aftermath of the Birmingham protests, President Kennedy addressed the nation on the evening of 11 June 1963 by declaring:

We are confronted primarily with a moral issue...The heart of the question is whether all Americans are going to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities; whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated...Today we are committed to a worldwide struggle to promote and protect the rights of all who wish to be free. And when Americans are sent to Vietnam or West Berlin, we do not ask for whites only. It ought to be possible, therefore, for American students of any color to attend any public institution they select without having to be backed up by troops²⁸

Kennedy's words had paved the way to the most powerful piece of legislation, known as the Civil Rights Act of 1964.²⁹

2.2.5 The March on Washington

One knows that the March on Washington was organised by black leaders of different organisations, among them SCLC, CORE, SNCC, and the NAACP. More than 250,000 black and white participants had attended the March, gathering on 28 August, 1963, at the base of the Washington monument.³⁰ They were present to show their faith and confidence in a democratic government. Waves of marchers sang: "We want freedom" as they walked towards the Lincoln Memorial. Their goals were the passage of the Civil Rights bill, fair employment, and public school integration.

²⁸ Field Ron, Op. Cit., P 91.

²⁹ Civil Rights Act of 1964 : the US law that forced the southern states to allow African Americans to enter restaurants, hotels, etc, which had been reserved for white people only, and to end the practice of having separate areas of black and white people in theatres, train stations, buses, etc. The act was mostly the result of the civil rights movement and was strongly supported by President Lyndon Johnson. It was followed the next year by the Voting Rights Act. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, p. 88.

³⁰ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 165.

The March on Washington was the best demonstration in support of the Civil Rights movement that spread across America. The March organisers spoke with President Kennedy about the passage of a strong Civil Rights legislation, demanded by most protestors. Martin Luther King had made an emotional and unforgettable speech that day in which he said:

I have a dream, I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood... I have a dream that little children will one day live in a nation where they will be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character... I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice... Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!³¹

One can say that the March on Washington was a real success, because it had united black and white people, asking for their rights. Nevertheless, violence had persisted in the South, and President Kennedy was assassinated three months later in Dallas, on November 1963.³² Lyndon Johnson, the nation's first Southern President since Reconstruction,³³ had the duty to continue and to pass that Civil Rights legislation, so long yearned by black people.

³¹ James Ciment, *Op. Cit.*, p. 166.

³² Field Ron, *Op. Cit.*, p. 93

³³ William R. Scott and William G. Shade, *Op. Cit.*, p. 237.

2.3 The Role of President Kennedy during the Civil Rights Years

One has to understand President Kennedy's position during the Civil Rights Revolution of the 1960's. It is known that Kennedy, as a Democratic Senator, was deeply interested in Civil Rights for African Americans. During his Presidential campaign, John F. Kennedy had spoken of racism as an international issue that worsened America's image abroad.

It is known that President Kennedy came to office during a tumultuous era of protests among the African American community in the US. Suffering from segregation in housing, schooling, and transport, especially in the South, black people were considered as a marginalised category of people within the American society.

The situation in the North was even worse for black people who lived in ghettos, under deteriorating conditions, low life expectancy, and high rates of unemployment. President Kennedy had worked for better wages for the poor, and also for better health conditions; however, his failure in promoting civil rights did not improve the lives of African Americans.³⁴

It had been reported that President Kennedy had ordered the employment of many black people to higher positions; for example, five black federal judges had been appointed under his presidency; he had also invited black people to the White House, in order to prove his commitment to racial equality.

³⁴Vivienne Sanders, Civil Rights in America (1945-1968), 2008, p.133.

One of the main achievements of President Kennedy was the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), aimed at employing more blacks; however, it was a failure because it did not increase black employment.³⁵

One can say that President Kennedy had failed in domestic affairs. Moreover, he did not give much importance to Third World countries and the Soviets; finally his involvement in the Cold and the Vietnam Wars had been the main causes of his decreased reputation.³⁶ Therefore, President Kennedy did not succeed to achieve equality in the American society, especially in an era of radical activism characterized by violence in America and abroad.

It is well known that President John Kennedy had been more popular in foreign policy than in domestic affairs. He had successfully managed the Cuban Missile Crisis³⁷, giving him international recognition. His assassination on November, 22, 1963 had left the American nation with an unfinished business concerning civil rights.

2.4 The Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act

It has been reported that from the beginning of his presidency, President Lyndon Johnson put civil rights at the top of his agenda, including Federal support for education, and legal protection for blacks deprived of voting rights.

³⁵ Ibid., p.135

³⁶ Stephen Whitefield, *A Companion to 20th Century America*, p.93.

³⁷ Cuban Missile Crisis: Just months after John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as President in 1961, he faced his first foreign policy crisis. A mounting fear of the Communist presence in Cuba had led Kennedy to approve a CIA plan, originally conceived during Dwight Eisenhower's administration, to invade Cuba. In mid April 1961, some 1500 anti-Castro exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs on Cuba's southern coast. It was hoped that their arrival would foster a general wave of revolt against the government, ultimately resulting in the overthrow of Fidel Castro. The invasion failed and Kennedy accepted the blame. But he did not halt his plans to oust Castro, leading to a major crisis in October 1962. From: Harvard Sitkoff, OP. Cit., p. 81.

In June 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act that was signed by President Lyndon Johnson.³⁸ This act prohibited racial discrimination in restaurants, snack bars, hotels, motels, swimming pools, and other public places throughout America.³⁹ It also outlawed job discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, religion and sex.

Title Two, Section 201 of the Act declares that : “All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages, and accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin”.⁴⁰

It is well known that African Americans had won the right to vote with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869.⁴¹ Until the sixties, between 1961 and 1963, when CORE and SNCC leaders tried to register black voters, they were often met with violence, and were still obliged to pay poll taxes and pass literacy tests.

Calling their plan “Freedom Summer”, black leaders had registered hundreds of blacks especially in Mississippi where only 6.2 percent of blacks could vote in 1962.⁴² Despite the bombing of their homes and churches, more than 80,000 black people registered and joined the MFDP (Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party).⁴³

Another march was organised from Selma to Montgomery on 7 March 1965, in protest against the deprivation of black people from political participation.⁴⁴ Marchers were attacked by tear gas as they refused to disperse; one has to point out that the Selma March became an important event in the struggle for Civil Rights in the US.

³⁸ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 167.

³⁹ Field Ron, Op. Cit., p.94.

⁴⁰ Elreta Dodds, OP. Cit., p.71.

⁴¹ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 167.

⁴² Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 93.

⁴³ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 169.

⁴⁴ Field Ron, Op. Cit., p. 95.

In response to the violence against black people, President Johnson addressed a session of Congress and asked for a Voting Rights Act for African Americans. He declared:

I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy...What happened in Selma is part of a larger movement which reaches into every section and state of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life. Their cause must be our cause too. It is not just Negroes, but all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome!⁴⁵

Consequently, President Johnson secured the passage of the Voting Rights Act within a few months, and signed it into law on August, 1965.⁴⁶ It banned the literacy tests and poll taxes, and enforced the Fifteenth Amendment of 1869. By the end of the 1960's, the South had become a "New South", in which black and white Americans formed one section previously segregated by Jim Crow laws.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act⁴⁷ of 1965, became historic reforms that would continue to inspire other struggles to fulfill the American Dream of full freedom for all Americans. One can assert that the Civil Rights Movement had increased rights' consciousness and was considered as highly significant in the American history. It had achieved many victories for marginalized people; however, it had not achieved many economic changes.

⁴⁵ Schulke Flip, Op. Cit., pp. 146-147.

⁴⁶ James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 171.

⁴⁷ Voting Rights Act of 1965: a US law passed during the Civil Rights Movement, signed by President Johnson. It made illegal a number of restrictions that had been used in the South, to keep African Americans from voting. These restrictions included a test of people's ability to read and write. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, p. 502.

In 1945, African Americans were mostly unable to vote, and their social and economic opportunities were limited, having no protection within the American legal system. Thanks to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, they had the opportunity to participate more fully in the American society; however, much remained undone on the problem of racial equality in the US. White racism was still present in American society, putting a real obstacle to the emancipation of Black Americans.

2.5 The Failure of Johnson's Great Society

It is known that President Johnson, Kennedy's successor, wanted to eradicate poverty and spread prosperity throughout the American nation. In his program to secure civil rights for African Americans, the most important legislation passed during his mandate was the Civil rights Act of 1964.⁴⁸

In the same year, he announced his economic program, that he named "The Great Society". President Johnson wanted poor young people to benefit from decent jobs in a process he used to call "The War on Poverty".⁴⁹ That program aimed at helping poor people, and providing them with decent housing, health care, and educational programs.

⁴⁸ Outline of US History, 2011, p. 286.

⁴⁹ War on Poverty: It was a major component of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program, a legislative agenda that stands as one of the farthest-reaching federal reform movement of the 20th century. Declaring "unconditional war on Poverty" in 1964, Johnson proposed a wide array of training programs and support services for the 40 million poor people in the United States. Other aspects of the Great Society program also sought to eliminate the barriers that stood in the way of the poor. This was accomplished by fighting for equal economic opportunities for racial minorities; supplying legal services and a food stamp program for the poor; and extending aid for education and medical insurance for welfare recipients and the elderly (Medicare and Medicaid). But increasing political opposition to the community action programs and diminishing financial support caused by the escalation of the Vietnam War brought the War on Poverty to an end before it could achieve more than a modest victory. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *OP. Cit.*, p. 265.

It had been reported that the Great Society had improved the lives of millions of American people; however, the life in black ghettos was still plagued by racism and violence, causing African Americans in most cities to continue their non-violent protest.⁵⁰ Moreover, unemployment had fallen to its lowest level in 1965, as President Lyndon Johnson had made great efforts to eradicate illiteracy, and create employment for young people.⁵¹

Despite all these efforts, one can say that the “Great Society” was not successful, because disadvantaged Americans, especially poor blacks, did not benefit from job training programs.

In addition, the Great Society program was threatened by the social and political divisions caused by the War in Vietnam. The Anti-war movement that emerged had made politicians and Civil Rights leaders more preoccupied by the War in Vietnam than by the Great Society.⁵²

2.6 The Impact of the Cold War on Civil Rights Activism in the US

One knows that the Cold War was the direct consequence of WWII. There were tensions between the US and the Soviet Union; Americans wanted to spread their values of equality and democracy around the world, whereas the Soviets hoped to spread a Communist ideology.

The US, that was considered the greatest nation in the world, had to defend its universal values of freedom, within the American nation and abroad. Beginning from the middle of the 20th century, the US was in competition with the Soviet Union to support African and Asian newly independent countries.⁵³ During the same period, social activism was a growing concern, especially among young people, for whom the issue of racism was an obstacle to American democracy.

⁵⁰ James Miller and John Thompson, *Almanac of American History*, 2006, p. 287.

⁵¹ Virginia Bernhard, *Firsthand America*, 1994, p.870.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.876.

⁵³ Elizabeth Betita Martinez, *We Have Not Been Moved*, 2012, p. 309.

One has to focus on the fact that the issue of racism was an obstacle to American democracy, because racism and democracy were opposing ideologies. Moreover, the practice of segregation in the US was contradictory with the position of this country, as a champion of freedom and human rights. Therefore, the US sought to secure civil rights for all Americans.

It is known that the Cold War anti-Communism gave birth to Conservative ideologies. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the end of Ronald Reagan's presidency, the Neo-Conservative ideology became part of American foreign policy. Neoconservatives saw the US as a land of opportunity, praising capitalism, and defending anti-communism.⁵⁴

2.7 The Impact of the Vietnam War on Civil Rights Activism in the US

One knows that the black community in the US had suffered a lot during the Vietnam War, during which a great number of African Americans were mobilized. The Anti-war movement had been a success; it is said that half of the American population was against the Vietnam War, which they considered as a waste of men and money.

The African American anger was expressed through urban riots in more than 150 cities over the Vietnam War. On March 31, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson had been forced to abandon the presidency.⁵⁵ A week later, Martin Luther King had been assassinated, leaving America and the black community more traumatised than ever.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.310.

⁵⁵ Outline of American History, 2011, p. 268.

It had been reported that Senator Robert Kennedy, President's John F. Kennedy's brother, had gained support from African Americans on the withdrawal of the US from Vietnam. Unfortunately, he was assassinated in June 1968.⁵⁶

One can mention that the growing anti-war protests, and the urban riots that occurred in the different cities of the US, had made the American nation live in a period of turmoil at the end of the 1960's. Therefore, one can conclude that the War in Vietnam was a deep tragedy for the United States. In his determination to achieve peace, President Richard Nixon, Johnson's successor had urged US troops to retreat from Vietnam.

2.8 The Impact of Martin Luther King's Assassination on the American Nation

Martin Luther King's accomplishments during the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties were extremely recognized and strongly supported by the white community in the US and abroad. He was also praised for condemning foreign policy regarding the Vietnam War and American racism. With his philosophy of non-violence, King became the most respectable African American leader of the Civil Rights Movement, gaining a specific place in the hearts of the American people, especially after his assassination.

The assassination of Martin Luther King had left a Black American community frustrated by the persistence of racism; however, black people were more determined in their struggle for equality and justice. As a consequence of his assassination in 1968, a national uprising occurred. Black Nationalism preached by Malcolm X gained popularity, and the civil rights struggle became more radicalized.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ William O. Kellogg, *The Easy Way*, 2003, p. 323.

⁵⁷ Stephen J. Whitfield, *A Companion to 20th Century America*, 2004, p. 96.

It is well known that the end of the 1960's was a period of disillusion against the War in Vietnam, and the persistence of racism within the American society. Therefore, the early 1970's gave birth to a radical and revolutionary protest, marked by violence, in the United States and abroad.⁵⁸ Americans were traumatised by the assassination of Martin Luther King; this violence that characterised the American society at that time, led to the emergence of the counterculture⁵⁹, and the moral transformation of a great number of American people.

The non-violent philosophy of Martin Luther King had greatly influenced the minds of white Americans; indeed, the Black protest inspired many other liberation movements. One can say that the movement for Women's Liberation and other minorities' movements in the US were considered as the fruits of the Civil Rights Movement.

Martin Luther King's speeches and accomplishments are still in the minds of people, who continue their action by asking for racial progress. To commemorate his struggle, the US has honored him with a National holiday. Moreover, his life had inspired many other great leaders in their fight against injustice throughout the world.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.95.

⁵⁹ Counterculture: Many of the disillusioned young people of the 1960's replaced the values of their parents and the "Establishment" with the "sex, drugs, and rock and roll" associated with the counterculture. Historian Theodore Roszak coined the term counterculture to describe "a culture so radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions of our society that it scarcely looks to many as a culture at all, but takes on the alarming appearance of a barbarian intrusion. The counterculture grew out of the Beat movement of the 1950's, but it went much further in scope. Its adherents rejected the conformity and materialism of the 1950s, expressing their contempt by wearing tie-dyed shirts, old-torn clothes bought from army-navy surplus stores, and shaggy beards and unkempt long hair. The music of the 1960's reflected the counterculture's celebration of "peace and love". The end of the 1960's saw the end of the counterculture. From: Harvard Sitkoff, OP. Cit. p. 79.

2.9 The Rise of Conservatism in the US

It is known that Conservatism in the US emerged after WWII, when the American nation stood against the expansion of Soviet Communism. With the objective of keeping America's values of liberty and freedom, Conservatism gained momentum in the late 1960's, in reaction to the social ills affecting the American society. In the 1970's, Conservatism became synonymous with individualism, and limited government.⁶⁰

One knows that Ronald Reagan had stood against the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. However, when he assumed the Presidency in 1982, he made an allusion to the former Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King, who organized a struggle for racial equality resulting in a great transformation of American society. In 1987, at Tuskegee University, he had declared:

In the 1950's and 1960's, great strides were made through political action. The legal sanctions of bigotry and discrimination were torn away, laws protecting the civil rights of all Americans were put in place, and racism was, in effect, outlawed. These great achievements did not come easy. They were the result of the struggle and commitment of generations of outstanding leadership of individuals like Martin Luther King. The civil rights movement earned the respect and gratitude of all good and decent Americans even some who may at first have had reservations about what was happening.⁶¹

President Ronald Reagan had focused on the fact that Martin Luther King's struggle was a real challenge that had made of the American nation "a land of freedom, equality, liberty, and justice for all". Moreover, he insisted that his Administration worked to enact civil rights laws in order to prevent any discrimination against any American. He had also urged Americans to continue their fight for racial equality by saying:

⁶⁰ Joseph Margulies, What Changed When Everything Changed, 2013, p.74.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.76.

Never, never abandon the dream. Never forget that this is
America, the land where dreams come true.⁶²

It can be said that a culture of conservatism was born, asking for moral values and the return to traditional American ideals. Reagan's policy of conservatism triumphed in the 1980's, when he stood against the liberal system of the New Deal Program and the Great Society.⁶³

2.10 Crime and Poverty in the African American Community

Despite the Civil Rights gains of the 1960's, repression and discrimination remained significant factors in American life. The distribution of wealth and income had known great inequality during the 1970's and 1980's even after President Johnson had declared a "War on Poverty". Crime in America was a serious problem affecting mainly the African American community.⁶⁴

Unemployment, poor education, racism, and all other social problems were the main reasons for African Americans to commit crimes. They seemed to have lost their identity as American citizens because of their color. Black people had first to understand their culture, history and heritage; they were also different from other ethnic groups who were proud to say that they were Irish Americans, German Americans, Jewish Americans, or Polish Americans, because they were identified with a motherland. It is this lack of identification that caused African Americans to be plagued with crime.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., p.77.

⁶³ Harvard Sitkoff, *Post-War America*, 2000, p.77.

⁶⁴ Garry A. Mendez, Jr, *Crime and Policy in the African American Community*, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1045708>. Source: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 494, Policies to Prevent Crime: Neighborhood, Family, and Employment Strategies (Nov., 1987), p. 106.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.108.

The conditions of life in racial ghettos were totally different from that of white people. In these ghettos, crime rates were higher in Negro areas. The crime rate was also related to the income; indeed the lower the income in an area, the higher the crime rate would be.⁶⁶

It had been proved that most crimes in racial ghettos were committed by a small minority of the residents, and the main victims were residents themselves. All over the US, African American victims of crimes were most of the time victimized by other African Americans. Generally speaking, violence occurred between people of the same race.⁶⁷

Therefore, one can say that crime created a climate of insecurity and fear throughout Negro neighborhoods causing a bad relationship between Negro residents and the police. It is said that crime rates throughout the US rose by 37% from 1960 to 1966 whereas poverty rates rose by 50%.⁶⁸ Moreover, the arrest rates were about four times for Negroes than those for whites.⁶⁹ As a result, this category of people would suffer from higher mortality rates, higher rates of mental diseases, and lower availability of medical services.

As far as poverty was concerned, absence of medical care, inadequate housing and clothing were social ills from which the black community suffered. It had been proved that the proportion of poor Negro families represented 41% in 1966, as compared with that of white families representing about 12% in the same year.⁷⁰ Many poor families had low or unstable incomes. It was racial discrimination that made them unable to escape from poverty.

⁶⁶ Anthony J. Cooper, The Black Experience 1865-1978 A Documentary Reader, 1995, p.311.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.313.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Black people were denied access to decent jobs, had always been poorly paid by occupying low status occupations. Moreover, they were constantly deprived of buying decent homes, or obtaining loans to move out of the ghettos and bring up their children in middle class neighborhoods.⁷¹

One can say that poverty in America is related to the unequal distribution of economic and social opportunity between the rich and the poor, blacks and whites, old and young, men and women. How can the USA, the world's most economically and politically successful country endure such alarming rates of poverty among its diversified population? High levels of poverty and inequality are problematic for democracy for a number of reasons. Increased levels of social alienation are directly related to a rise in economic inequality.

Today, it is reported that rates of inequality and poverty in America are disappointing. Income differences between the rich and the poor remain dramatic especially after the 1980's. Poverty rates reached a peak in 1993.⁷² They have declined in recent years, reaching 12.7% in 1998, 11.8% in 1999 and 11.3% in 2000.⁷³ The recent decline of poverty rates was attributed to economic recovery following the recession of the early 1990's.

At the turn of the 21st century, black Americans still suffer from poverty. In 2011, 9.8% of the white population was poor, 27.6 of blacks, 25.3% of Hispanics, and 12.3% of Asians.⁷⁴ For these people, the majority do not benefit from Medicaid. Medicaid is a health system which was set up in 1956,⁷⁵ providing aid for poor people who do not benefit from insurance or cannot pay their medical treatment.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.323.

⁷² Robert Singh, Governing America, The Politics of a Divided Democracy, 2003, p.324

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Marie Christine Pauwels, Civilisation des Etats Unis, 2005, p.184.

⁷⁵ David Mauk and John Oakland, Op. Cit., p. 259.

After the economic crisis of 2008, when jobs were lost and prices increased, most Americans were unable to purchase as they did previously. It is said that growing unemployment from 2008 led more and more American people into poverty because welfare reform had reduced the number of people who received government assistance.⁷⁶

2.11 The Rise of Affirmative Action in the US

Although the Civil Rights movement expired by the end of the 1960's winning some victories, African Americans demanded that government apply Affirmative Action⁷⁷ measures to try to ban the effects of slavery and segregation.⁷⁸ Yet, these measures would produce more ambiguous results than the victories won by the Civil Rights Movement. Affirmative Action is a series of programs designed to provide full and equal opportunities in employment, education, jobs for disadvantaged groups, making sure that all candidates are treated equally.⁷⁹

2.11.1 Segregation in Public Schools

Education was considered as the key to success for African Americans; indeed, they assumed that education was the best way to ameliorate their lives. During the battle for Civil Rights, Black people fought segregation to gain political and educational rights, so long denied to them.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 260.

⁷⁷ Affirmative Action: is a policy that allows race and gender to be considered among other factors in decision on hiring, promotion, public contracting, and public school admissions. The program had its roots in President John f. Kennedy's 1961 executive order requiring federal contractors not to discriminate in hiring practices. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and President Lyndon B. Johnson's Executive Order 11246 in 1965 committed the federal government to actively enforcing equality of opportunity. Johnson's action required federal agencies to adopt, hire, and promote individuals without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. Sex discrimination was later banned also. Opposition to Affirmative Action increased in the late 1970's as some whites charged "reverse discrimination". Affirmative Action programs suffered a series of setbacks in the mid 1990s as politicians began to call for their end . From: Harvard Sitkoff, OP. Cit., p. 13.

⁷⁸ William R. Scott and William G. Shade, Upon These Shores, 2000, p 390.

⁷⁹ Thomas E. Patterson, We the People, 2008, p.180.

Segregation in public schools persisted well in the early 1970's. For almost twenty years, from 1955 to 1974, the Court tried to desegregate America's public schools.⁸⁰ Forty years after the Brown Decision, segregation of African Americans remained problematic. One is aware that African Americans had given much importance to their children's education, and would persist in asking for equality in the educational system.

It was noticeable that the nation was separated into two societies, one Black and one White, separate and unequal. As a result, job opportunities decreased, public schools deteriorated, and segregation reached its peak.⁸¹

During the 1960's, American education became the focus of an important issue about both the quality of education and its social impact. In the 1970's, the courts considered that busing was a way to achieve integration.⁸² Across America, black children were transported to white schools, and white children to black schools. This system spread all over the country, and was used to improve the quality of education.

Fifteen years after the Brown Decision that ended segregation in public schools, no more than 5% of America's black children attended schools that were mostly white. This compelled white people to be in constant contact with blacks. In 1972, there was a considerable progress toward integration in rural areas and small cities in the South; however, in large cities, schools remained highly segregated.⁸³

⁸⁰ William R. Scott and William G. Shade, *Op. Cit.*, p. 390.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.387.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.379.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.390.

Given this reality, *Swann v Charlotte- Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971),⁸⁴ the Supreme Court proclaimed that the busing of children was the best way to integrate schools that were previously segregated.⁸⁵ We have to refer that *Brown* affected mainly the South, whereas *Swann* corresponded to northern cities where blacks lived separately from whites.

Swann was established by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc;⁸⁶ it helped reduce the level of segregation in America's schools. For example, nearly 40 per cent of black children could go to a school where most of the students were white.⁸⁷ School integration that occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's was increasing, but by the early 1990's, schools in big cities where most black people lived were more segregated than they used to be in 1968.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ *Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of education: Following its ruling in Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education* (1969), which ordered an immediate end to segregated dual school systems, the Supreme Court in its 1971 *Swann* decision permitted busing as a remedy for fashioning interracial schools in districts that had practiced segregation by law. James Swann, a black man, had sued to force the Charlotte Mecklenburg, North Carolina, school board to bus black students into white schools and vice versa. The district court ruled against the school board, which then appealed the decision all the way to the Supreme Court. The Court sided unanimously with the local court. President Richard Nixon denounced the decision in a televised address and asked Congress to place a moratorium on busing. His proposal failed, and the *Swann* decision led to the widespread use of busing in the South to achieve integration in education. By the mid 1970s, 47% of the African American students in the South were attending schools with a white majority, a higher percentage than in the North. From; Harvard Sitkoff, *OP. Cit.*, p. 245.

⁸⁵ Thomas E. Patterson, *Op. Cit.*, p. 185.

⁸⁶ William R. Scott and William G. Shade, *Op. Cit.*, p. 390.

⁸⁷ Thomas E. Patterson, *Op. Cit.*, p. 186.

⁸⁸ William R. Scott and William G. Shade, *OP. Cit.*, p.392.

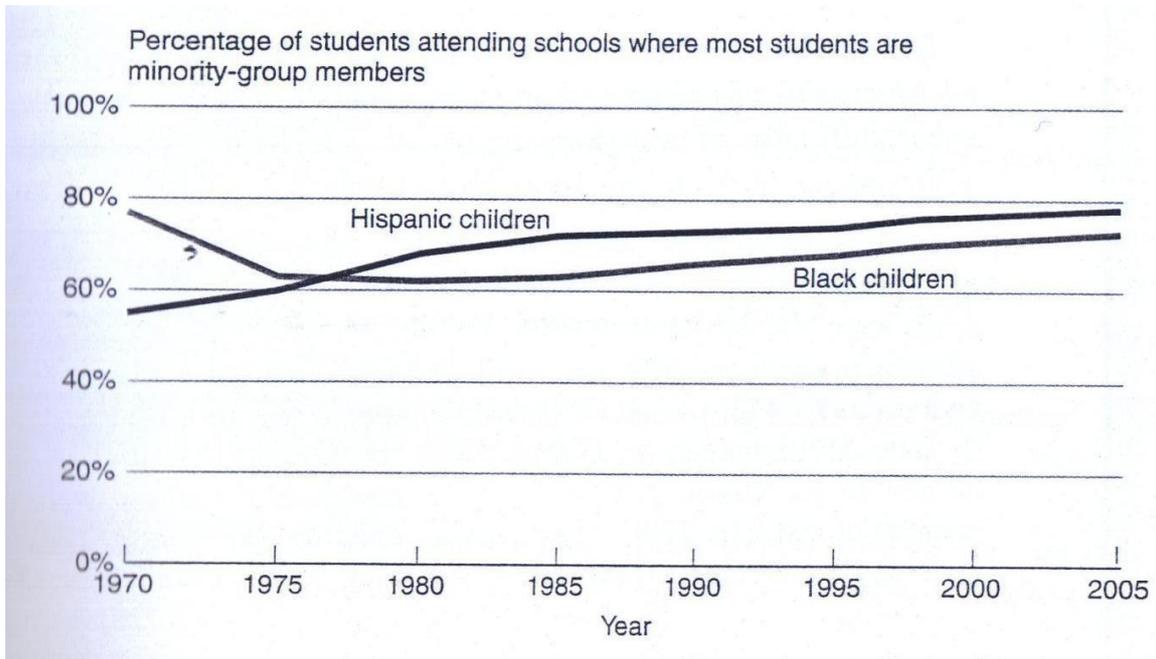


Figure 3: Segregation in public schools has been increasing

Source: US Department of Education, 2004. From Thomas E. Patterson, Op. Cit., p. 186.

More than two thirds of black and Hispanic children today attend a school in which most of the students are members of a minority group. An increase in the number of white non-Hispanic students attending private schools and a decrease in race-based busing are factors in the trend.

2.11.2 Affirmative Action in Schools

After fighting segregation for nearly twenty years, from 1955 to 1974, the Court adopted busing as the best solution to integrate the schools, and to establish a racial balance in all city schools.⁸⁹ However, this system became ineffective for desegregating schools. Indeed, by 1974, the American people were against busing, and in the late 1980's, resegregation of the schools began.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ David Mauk and John Oakland, *American Civilization, An Introduction*, 2009, p. 284

⁹⁰ Ibid.

It had been reported that in 2006, more than 40 percent of schools were mostly racially segregated black schools.⁹¹ Moreover, the end of busing, and the growing immigration of non-whites, Latinos and Asian Americans led to the resegregation in schools. Affirmative Action programs were used to improve women's and minority groups educational programs during the early 1970's.⁹² It consisted mainly in rectifying teaching programs and textbooks. Moreover, there was a change in history and literature books that had reported the contribution of women and minorities to American history and culture.

The American government required the hiring of more teachers from minority groups, such as professors at universities and colleges. Affirmative Action programs had helped to afford teacher-training programs, and to increase the number of students completing university degrees. These programs fostered US Supreme Court decisions, among them the famous Bakke Decision (1977),⁹³ ruling that it is unconstitutional to increase the number of students from racial minorities in university programs by establishing numerical quotas.

In the 1990's and the first decade of the 21st century, several Affirmative Action programs were eliminated; busing was put aside, racial separation increased and Affirmative Action had more controversial effects than ever before.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., p.285.

⁹³ Bakke Decision: Allan Bakke, a white applicant to the University of California at Davis School of Medicine, was denied admission due to the school's Affirmative Action policy. He sued on the grounds that his outstanding academic record was ignored through "reverse discrimination". In 1978, the US Supreme Court ruled in his favor and ordered the university to enroll him. From: James Ciment, Op. Cit., p. 194.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.286.

2.11.3 The Fight for Equal Employment Opportunities

Employment discrimination had forced civil rights advocates to make more efforts in order to gain more efficient measures banning discrimination. Indeed, African Americans in the North as well as in the South lived in the poorest neighborhoods, being confined to the unskilled, and low-paying jobs, contributing to a high rate of poverty among Black people.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was entitled to prohibit discrimination in employment, by setting up the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).⁹⁵ We have to mention that the Civil Rights Act had banned most forms of discrimination in employment and made African Americans benefit from higher earnings among the black population during the late 1960's and early 1970's.⁹⁶

However, discrimination persisted and became harder to solve within American society. One can say that the 1970's was a less prosperous decade than the 1960's, witnessing a slow economic growth, a rising inflation alarming most Americans who became convinced of the deteriorating economic situation at that time.⁹⁷ White people felt threatened by measures that promised higher benefits for African Americans. As a result, the issue of employment discrimination became a source of controversial views.

Further to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of 1964, Congress adopted the Equal Employment Opportunity Act in 1972, allowing the EEOC to launch lawsuits against employers or unions refusing to ban discrimination in employment. Moreover, in 1976, the Supreme Court encouraged employment discrimination suits under a federal statute, first established during Reconstruction. This law allowed federal courts to give money as a remedy to victims of discrimination cases.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ William R. Scott and William G. Shade, *Op. Cit.*, p. 393.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Consequently, employment discrimination increased between 1970 and 1981, helping African Americans to gain more victories concerning equal employment opportunities from the EEOC.⁹⁹ In 1971, *Griggs v. Duke Power* was a new case seeking to ban discrimination in employment, in which the Supreme Court proclaimed that requirements that excluded African Americans (for example requiring employees to have a high school diploma or to pass an aptitude test) were unacceptable;¹⁰⁰ it also encouraged employers to ban unnecessary employment conditions that used to exclude African Americans. It was cited in that case that:

The objective of Congress in the enactment of Title VII is plain from the language of the statute. It was to achieve equality of employment opportunities and remove barriers that have operated in the past to favor an identifiable group of white employees over other employees. Under the Act, practices, procedures, or tests neutral on their face, and even neutral in terms of intent cannot be maintained if they operate to freeze the status quo of prior discriminatory employment practices.¹⁰¹

Therefore we can say that *Griggs* was considered as the landmark for Affirmative Action. Politically the end of the sixties with the 1967 and 1968 race riots in a number of US cities, the assassination of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and the growing anti-Vietnam war movement pushed the nation toward a conservative ideology.

2.11.4 Affirmative Action and Employment

In the early 1970's, Affirmative Action programs presented effective yet controversial views in the workplace. These programs were adopted by the EEOC during the early 1970's.¹⁰² Employers were required to increase the number of minorities in their workforce by developing recruiting methods.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

¹⁰¹ John Hope Franklin and Genna Rae MC Neil, *African Americans and the Living Constitution*, 1995, p.216.

¹⁰² William R. Scott and William G. Shade, *Op. Cit.*, p. 394.

However, this system was criticised by white American citizens who considered that African Americans and women were given special preferences, and therefore, it produced a reverse discrimination. They also argued that Affirmative Action was a threat to the advancements achieved during the civil rights movement.

It had been reported that white Americans admitted that Affirmative Action programs did not establish formal quotas, and forced employers to recruit black people or women, even if they had no qualifications. This system made race an important condition in recruitment decisions, and transformed American society into a land of mediocrity. On the other hand, proponents of Affirmative Action proclaimed that discrimination against African Americans and women was a sad reality; also, they considered that Affirmative Action was unable to achieve equality between people because high rates of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment were continuous facts of American life.

Affirmative Action consisted in measures designed for hiring decisions especially in education, government, and businesses. Illiteracy, unemployment, and high rates of poverty were the context from which these measures emerged.¹⁰³ Indeed, black people used to live in ghettos where inadequate schooling and high unemployment rendered more difficult to acquire work experience.

Affirmative Action offered African Americans new opportunities in business, labor, education, government, and many professions. African Americans were moving into the mainstream by acquiring the black middle class status.¹⁰⁴ Students graduated more than ever before from colleges and professional schools. Consequently, they were recruited by businesses, universities, and government.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.396.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.397.

However, while some blacks were entering the middle class, poverty and unemployment rates grew among black people during the late 1970's and early 1980's. Affirmative Action could do little for those who had neither skills nor little education. Moreover, the decline of basic industries, like automobile and steel during this decade, had denied access to this category of unskilled black population.

2.11.5 Discrimination and Poverty in the US in the Post Civil Rights Era

It had been reported that racism, discrimination and poverty remain bitter realities in the US. By the end of the 1990s, the median income of Black families reached 28,000 dollars a year, 16,000 dollars less than that of white families.¹⁰⁵ Black people lived in largely segregated communities where they encountered discrimination in jobs, schools, and health. These conditions made their socio-economic status deteriorate more than ever.

Black people often experienced police brutality, and poverty affected about one in four Blacks, many of them in the inner cities. These cities were places where we could find crime and drugs, making Black people confronted to murder or imprisonment. During these years, they had suffered from slum housing, inadequate medical care, and also decayed public schools.

The struggle for racial equality became a priority for the majority of Black people, and Civil Rights activists sought to raise the nation's conscience, by organising massive demonstrations against unfair employment practices and segregated public facilities in most parts of the country. President Kennedy had spoken of a "moral crisis", and had contributed to the passage of a strong bill to end segregation in public places.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Pauline Maier and Merritt Roe Smith, *Inventing America, A history of the US*, 2006, p. 961.

¹⁰⁶ Robert D Marcus, *A Brief History of the US since 1945*, 1975, P. 122.

The most important of these demonstrations was the March on Washington for jobs and freedom that took place in August 1963, involving some 200,000 people in a huge protest for equality of opportunity.¹⁰⁷ Martin Luther King was the leader of this March, he had declared:

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal....I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood...I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.¹⁰⁸

After President Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, President Lyndon B Johnson signed the most powerful piece of legislation, and was enacted by Congress in 1964.¹⁰⁹ After that date, discrimination in public places was not tolerated, and the government controlled employment practices.

One knows that President Kennedy aimed at eradicating poverty in the US; moreover, Congress had passed many anti-poverty laws by providing aid to economically distressed people. These laws sought to increase both the minimum wage and social security benefits.¹¹⁰

However, after Kennedy's death, President Johnson continued the anti-poverty program, and by the end of 1964, employment had risen to 1.5 million.¹¹¹ The Gross National Product was up to 500 billion dollars; however, the war on poverty proved to be unsuccessful as funds were insufficient.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Simon Sebag Montefiore, Speeches That Changed the World, 2005, P. 142.

¹⁰⁹ Robert D Marcus, Op. Cit., p. 122.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 125.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.127.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 129.

Black people were still suffering from poverty and white discrimination. In northern ghettos, black unemployment was three times that of whites.¹¹³ In 1965, Blacks participated in riots where hundreds were injured, complaining against poverty and unequal economic opportunity.¹¹⁴ At that time, Black people were dreaming of a peaceful society of human dignity and equal opportunity.

One has to report that the 1980's was a decade of prosperity for most people in the US;¹¹⁵ however, by the end of the decade, recession appeared again. The South, where race and ethnicity continued to be problematic remained the poorest of the nation. In 1992, the highest majority of poor people were African Americans; however, poverty extended to the white community due to the slow growth of the American economy in the late 1980's and early 1990's.¹¹⁶

2.11.6 The Consequences of Affirmative Action on African Americans

The US had experienced a revolution concerning the social status of minorities in the American society. Since *Brown v Board of Education of 1954*¹¹⁷, these groups have been offered equal protection under the law, especially in education, employment, and voting. However, racism had not been eliminated from American life.¹¹⁸

Affirmative Action programs have achieved equality for black people, and other minorities. However, they encountered the opposition of many white people. Therefore, one can say that despite these advances, true equality for the American nation still remained an unattainable goal.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 131.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 132.

¹¹⁵ James T Patterson, *America's Struggle Against Poverty*, 1994, p. 224.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 230.

¹¹⁷ *Brown v Board of Education*: a law case in 1954 which was held after a school for white children in Topeka, Kansas, refused to accept a Black girl called Linda Brown. The case led to a decision of the US Supreme Court that made segregation in public schools illegal. The decision ended the idea of "separate but equal" schools for whites and African Americans, and encouraged the civil rights movement. From: *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture*, 2005, p. 59.

¹¹⁸ Thomas E. Patterson, *Op. Cit.*, p.188.

It had been reported that African Americans did not have a higher income than whites, in spite of the economic growth, and the emergence of the African American middle class.¹¹⁹ Thanks to the benefits of Affirmative Action policies, African Americans were hopeful to find middle income jobs in the public field. In 2003, blacks had the same opportunities as whites to be employed in city, state, or federal government.¹²⁰ However, middle class blacks were confronted to economic and social obstacles that whites did not have to face. For example, in black households, black women were obliged to work full-time in order to have a middle-class status, as opposed to white women.

It is said that black people had about 80 percent of white people's assets.¹²¹ Moreover, whites benefited from social security and pension checks more than black people did. Discrimination continued in housing and banking as most African Americans were refused loans to buy homes.¹²² Even if Affirmative Action had encouraged integration of black workers, white people still assumed that they were employed on the basis of race not qualifications.¹²³ As a result, African Americans were often isolated and worked much more hours than white people.

One can say that job discrimination remained a serious problem in the US even after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was the same case with housing discrimination that remained permanent even after the Civil Rights Act of 1968 that made housing discrimination illegal. The most important case of housing discrimination was documented in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, in August 2005, showing the destruction of most Black people's homes.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.221.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.222.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.223.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., p.224.

¹²⁴ David Mauk and John Oakland, Op. Cit., p. 98.

2.12 The impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Race Relations in the US

One has to be aware that the issue of racial discrimination had been and remains a major problem in the American society. The Civil Rights movement of the 1960's had transformed American life; however, racism constitutes a dominating problem making the gains toward equality unachieved. The Civil Rights Movement was able to overthrow the Southern Jim Crow regime and served as a model for other movements both in America and in the rest of the world.

One wonders what would be the future of Black people without the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. The latter was the proof of the long struggle towards securing the rights of people of color in America, and is considered as one of the major political and social developments of the twentieth century.¹²⁵

The Jim Crow regime had characterised American society in the 1950's.¹²⁶ This system was designed to control Blacks politically, socially, and to exploit them economically. African Americans had launched protests to attack directly racial inequality. As a result, the passage of the Brown v Board of Education ruling declared racially segregated schools unconstitutional.

African Americans were filled with hope by this ruling, believing that it was the end of legal racial segregation. During the Cold War years, the issue of American racism was an impediment to an American foreign policy trying to persuade African nations to align with America. Indeed, America's treatment of Black people was an obstacle to become the major superpower because racism and democracy were opposing ideologies.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Aldon D Morris, *A Retrospective on the Civil Rights Movement : Political and intellectual Landmarks*, , available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/223515>. Source: Annual Review of Sociology, Vol 25 (1999), p 517.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.518

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.522.

One has to understand why a movement led by a relatively powerless group was able to overthrow the Jim Crow system and how it became a model for other protest movements in America and abroad. The example of the Montgomery Bus boycott shows that it had mobilised an entire community to protest racial discrimination. It lasted for over a year and revealed that Black culture was rooted in protest tradition. Consequently, the Montgomery Bus Boycott gave power to Black people, requiring them to engage in collective action.

Other protests occurred throughout the South including sit-ins, freedom rides, and mass marches. It was during the mid 1960's that the modern Civil Rights Movement became a powerful weapon against segregation.¹²⁸ These protests led White people to react violently in order to defeat blacks' protests; however, this brutality was diffused by national and international media, as was the case in Birmingham, Alabama, 1963, when the world was watching images on their screens of Black people being attacked by White policemen with dogs and fire bombs.¹²⁹

These images had outraged both the national and international communities as well. Therefore, one can say that the Civil Rights Movement had taught the nation and the world an unforgettable lesson, that a minority group in the US that is sufficiently organised, was capable of producing an important social change within the American society.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.525.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 526.

2.13 The Rise of the Black Middle Class

It can be said that one of the most important challenges of the Civil Rights Movement was the rise of the black middle class. This was the result of the New Deal of the 1930's, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt had allowed a great number of African Americans to benefit from jobs, and also after Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" programs afforded government employment to black people.

It had been reported that the proportion of Black people attaining the middle class status rose from 13 to 27%, and in the following decades, black people had new job opportunities in the public sector.¹³⁰ The rise of the black middle class had led to the migration to the suburbs; for example, in New York, the proportion of the black population living in the suburbs went up from 7% to 17% between 1970 and 2000.¹³¹

Black people had escaped from ghettos, where they had endured the harshest living conditions, from overcrowded schools, and inadequate housing. It is known that the percentage of Blacks living below the poverty line remained constant since 1968. Moreover, the poverty rate had fallen from 40% in 1968 to 30% in 2012.¹³²

It had been calculated that the black middle class had grown from 27% in 1968 to 47% in 2012.¹³³ Despite that growth, poverty continues to affect the African American community. Indeed, this marginalized group of people is the victim of socio economic contradictions that threaten the future of race relations within the American nation.

¹³⁰ Michael Wayne, *Imagining Black America*, 2014, p.140.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.141.

¹³² Henry Louis Gates JR., *The African Americans*, 2013, p. 236.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

One can say that the period of the 1960's was a period of mobilisation of different categories of people, who fought for their basic social and political rights in the American society. People of colour have struggled during two long centuries in order to be treated equally and fairly by laws that prevented them from sitting at the same public places as white people, from owning a house in the same areas as white people, and particularly from voting. However, with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, African Americans assumed a significant role in American politics. This act had allowed Black people to gain political rights and to elect other Black people of their choice.

It can be argued that the 1960's was the decade that witnessed the unfinished John F. Kennedy's Presidency, and the failed Lyndon Johnson's term in office. Moreover, the assassination of Martin Luther King, and the great Civil Rights March on Washington were the major events that characterised this decade. This march had inspired other people to protest all over the world; however, racial prejudice against people of colour continued to exist within the American society.

The Second World War, the Cold War and the Vietnam War, had involved many young people in street protests, and a great political activism that would later inspire many other minorities in the US. The 1960's had also witnessed the birth of Conservatism and the New Left.

In the second half of the 20th century, Affirmative Action programs had led to a high level of integration of Black and White people within the American society. This was the greatest social revolution in the history of the United States, leading Black people to reach the upper middle class status. However, even with these improvements, some Black people found themselves still suffering from unemployment, poverty, incarceration and segregation.

Chapter III

The Impact of the Civil
Rights Movement on
Minority Groups in the US
(1960's – 2000's)

Chapter Three: The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Minority Groups in the US (1960's – 2000's)

Introduction	84
3.1 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on African Americans	85
3.2 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Native Americans	86
3.3 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Hispanic Americans	89
3.4 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Asian Americans	91
3.5 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Women's Rights	93
3.5.1 The Historical Background of Women's Voting Rights	93
3.5.2 The Emergence of Feminism in the US	95
3.5.3 Black Women's Fight for the Right to Vote	99
3.5.4 The Emergence of Black American Feminism	102
3.5.5 Black Women's Activism in the Black Feminist Movement	105
3.6 The Rise of Black Nationalism in the US	108
3.6.1 The Impact of Malcolm X on the Nation of Islam	109
3.6.2 The Black Panthers' Radicalism in the 1960's	112
3.7 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the Youth Generation in the US	113
3.8 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the Gay Liberation Movement	115
3.9 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on International Liberation Movements	117
3.10 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on American Foreign Policy regarding Women's Rights	121
Conclusion	124

Introduction

One knows that the Civil Rights movement was able to overthrow the Southern Jim Crow regime and served as a model for other movements in American society. The Jim Crow system had characterized the American society in the 1950's. It was designed to control Blacks socially, politically, and economically. Therefore, one has to understand why a movement led by a relatively powerless group (African Americans) had been able to put an end to this system of segregation, and how it became a model for other movements in America and abroad.

It was during the mid 1960's that the modern Civil Rights Movement became a powerful weapon against the Jim Crow system of discrimination. Indeed, it inspired other movements such as the Women's Movement, Black Nationalism, the Gay and Lesbian movements, and Black feminism in the US.

The American Civil Rights Movement had had a serious impact abroad. It had an influence on major international protest movements; for example, Gandhi had used non-violent direct action in the mass movement that overthrew British Colonialism in India. Moreover, Gandhi became a hero and had been inspired by Martin Luther King in the use of non-violent protest. This strategy had enabled diverse oppressed groups such as Arabs in the Middle East and Black South Africans to conduct collective action.

It is assumed that these leaders had been taught valuable lessons from the Civil Rights Movement; for instance, in South Africa, many of the leaders of the National African Congress (NAC) used their knowledge of the Black protest, by reading the literature concerning the Civil Rights Movement. In addition, these leaders were inspired by Martin Luther King, who gained international recognition, after winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Oppressed people in distant regions from the US used tactics of the African American Civil Rights Movement to apply them in their own struggles. Working on the same national Anthem: "We shall overcome", these people were able to strengthen their action in social movements worldwide.

In this chapter, one will try to answer questions related to the importance of the Civil Rights Movement and its impact on minority groups in the US, and also on the rest of the world. The first question will be: how did Civil Rights change America? The second question will be: how did the Civil Rights Movement influence other minorities to carry out their activism in search for a better life and full citizenship? By answering these questions, one will understand the deep impact left by the civil rights Revolution on American society.

3.1 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on African Americans

One knows that the African American community in the US is one of the most important minorities, representing about 13% of the American population.¹ The consequences of the Civil Rights Movement on this category of people were tremendous. Beginning from the mid twentieth century, the determination of black leaders such as Martin Luther King to achieve racial equality, and the activism of anti-discrimination organisations such as the NAACP or SNCC, had conducted the American government to pass Civil Rights Acts outlawing discrimination, and advocating integration of African Americans.

Thanks to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and Affirmative Action policies that offered blacks and other minorities opportunities to benefit from higher education and better paid jobs, African Americans became more integrated within American society.

Unfortunately, one has to mention that even though African Americans have made great advances since the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, they still suffer from economic discrimination. It has been reported that about 25% of African Americans have low-paid jobs; as a result, a high proportion of them have decided to work on their own, founding their own businesses.²

¹ Marie Christine Pauwels, *Civilisation des Etats Unis*, 2013, p.71.

² Ibid.

It is said that black people's income represents 60% that of white people; moreover, unemployment and poverty remain the major problems affecting African Americans.³ Black people are also victims of crimes often committed by the black youth as a result of the deteriorating housing conditions, the use of drugs, and other social ills. Consequently, a large number of African Americans are imprisoned.

The African American community in the US lives mostly in the South, where only a small minority benefits from adequate housing. Moreover, this community is the most affected by the rising police violence, contrary to other minorities, who are better integrated within American society.

One has to mention that American Southern cities are less segregated, especially since the Civil Rights revolution. However, the situation of African Americans today is a controversial subject for debate. It is true that black people have made great progress in social, political and economic fields, but, one has to make clear that the black population in the US is not as united as during the mid twentieth century, as a result of large waves of immigration from African countries, like Nigeria, Kenya or Senegal.⁴

3.2 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Native Americans

It is well known that when white settlers arrived in America in the 17th century, about 10 million Native Americans were living on the land that would become the United States of America. Illnesses caused by the wars and massacres that occurred at that time, had made the Native American population fall to about one million in 1900.⁵

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p.73.

⁵ Thomas E. Patterson, 2007, We the People, p.162.

The African American protest for equality had influenced the Indian community in the US. During the twentieth century, and especially after WWII, Native Americans living in the States of Oklahoma, Arizona and California escaped from illiteracy, unemployment, and other social ills, and moved to larger cities such as San Francisco, or Los Angeles where they continued to endure discrimination and poverty.⁶

In the 1950's, the Indian community lived in deteriorating conditions concerning housing, had poor education, low-paying jobs, and suffered from extreme poverty. Illnesses such as tuberculosis had threatened to kill thousands of Indians; in addition, a high suicide rate menaced their community. As a result, a great number of American Indian leaders emerged to end the sufferings of these people.⁷

After the achievements of the NAACP⁸, Indians created their own organisation, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in 1944 that worked on the same principles as the NAACP, regarding discrimination in employment, schooling and housing. NCAI's goal was not the integration of Indians in American society, but the creation of a separate Indian cultural identity.⁹

⁶ Field Ron, OP. Cit., p. 114.

⁷ Vivienne Sanders, OP. Cit., p. 157.

⁸ NAACP : National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, is considered as the oldest civil rights organization in the United States, and played a central role in the civil rights revolution of the 1950's and 1960's. The NAACP was founded in 1909 by a group of black civil rights leaders, including the scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, and prominent white progressives. The organization quickly surpassed other racial protest groups, doggedly promoting civil rights by investigating lynchings and other violence against blacks, lobbying lawmakers, publicizing efforts to improve civil rights, and, most important, by challenging racist laws in the courts. After decades of a few hard-won legal and political battles, the NAACP's legal strategy paid off in 1954 when the Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of public schools in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, decision. Under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall and Roy Wilkins, the organization continued to fight legal battles and successfully lobbied for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In the 1990's, the organization was plagued by controversy under the leadership of Benjamin Chavez, who was accused of financial mismanagement and sexual harassment and who courted the support of radical black nationalists, including the Nation of Islam's leader, Louis Farrakhan, Myrlie Evers Williams, widow of slain NAACP organizer Medgar Evers, replaced Chavez in 1995. In 1996 Kweisi Mfume, who had represented Maryland in the House of Representatives for ten years, gave up his seat there to become president of the organization. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *Post-War America*, 2000, p. 195.

⁹ Vivienne Sanders, OP. Cit., p. 157.

Native Americans became more militant in the 1960's. The National Youth Council (NIYC), an organization of young, educated Indians, was created in 1961, in order to protect American Indians rights. The American Indian Movement (AIM),¹⁰ another organisation had emerged in 1968, with the objective of improving ghetto housing, education, and employment to neglected Native Americans in the cities.¹¹

In 1973, the AIM liberated the South Dakota Village of Wounded Knee, when Indians protested against the massacre of about 300 Indian soldiers in 1890. As a result, government officials had taken measures, providing Native Americans with a series of Acts including the Education Assistance Act of 1975, the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act of 1976, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, and the 1996 Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act.¹²

Another association was founded in 1970, the California Indian Legal Service (CILS). Its aim was to support legal issues faced by Native Americans. In 1971, it was headquartered in Colorado, under the name of NARF (National American Rights Fund) in order to relieve the plight of Native Americans by establishing poverty programs.¹³

¹⁰ AIM: American Indian Movement: In 1968 a group of militant Chippewa Indians in Minnesota started the American Indian Movement, calling for self-determination for American Indian tribes, initially just the Chippewa, and cash payments by the US government for lands AIM considered stolen from the Indians. It also established armed patrols to combat police brutality. Soon joined by Indians from other tribes, the group began a campaign of confrontational protest in 1969 by occupying Alcatraz Island near San Francisco. AIM members also occupied the Washington office of the federal bureau of Indian Affairs in 1972 and a trading post at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, the site of a 19th century US Army massacre of Indians in 1890. AIM's protests drew attention to the dire plight of American Indians and influenced the federal government to end its policy of dismantling Indian reservations and relocating Indian inhabitants to nonreservation cities and towns (a policy called "reservation termination". At the same time, the US government gave more control of Indian affairs back to the tribes. The movement still exists, although it is not as active as it was during the 1970's. It has local and regional chapters throughout the United States and Canada. From : Harvard Sitkoff, OP. Cit., pp. 19-20.

¹¹ Field Ron, OP. Cit, p. 115.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p.116.

Native Americans' activism was victorious only in the end of the twentieth century. Indeed, Native Americans won tribal independence after the passage of the Indian Civil Rights Act in 1968 that had provided them with all the rights proclaimed by the American Constitution. Beginning from this date, Native Americans benefited from US funding destined to ameliorate their lives, on social issues like child care, housing, healthcare, and education.¹⁴

As a conclusion, it can be said that Native Americans' activism gained power from the mid 1960's onward. It was in that era that they used direct action to protect their rights and gain American citizenship. However, their militancy was not as important as the African American activism perhaps because of their inferior number. Moreover, their activism was welcomed by the White community, as they did not consider them as threatening as Black people.

3.3 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Hispanic Americans

Hispanic Americans are all people of Caribbean, Central and South American Latinos. Latinos represent the recent immigrants to the USA, whereas Mexican Americans immigrated from the beginning of the 1900s, including the early Spanish settlers from the 1500s.

It has been calculated that about 46 million people (15% of the population was Hispanic or Latino in 2006), meaning that this minority is larger than African Americans. Nearly 60% of Latinos are Mexican Americans, living mainly in Chicago. Puerto Ricans represent 8.6% of Latinos, and live mostly in New York City, followed by the other two largest groups, which are Cubans and Dominicans.¹⁵

It is said that the Hispanic American community in the US had occupied isolated rural areas where they lived mainly on agriculture; however, since the 1920's, many of them were deported, and suffered from extreme forms of racism and discrimination in public places: schools, restaurants, and hospitals.¹⁶

¹⁴ David Mauk, *American Civilisation, An Introduction*, 2009, p. 92.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.105.

¹⁶ Vivienne Sanders, *OP. Cit.*, p. 160.

One knows that Mexican people migrated to the US in the first decades of the twentieth century. The need for cheap labour in agriculture, mines and railroads was the principal cause for Mexican immigration to the US. However, with the Great Depression of the 1930's, hundreds of thousands Mexican Americans left the US, being sacked by American authorities.¹⁷

After WWII, Mexican and US governments had welcomed 4.5 million Mexicans in the US. They got jobs in defense industries and agriculture. They had benefited from Affirmative Action programs that provided them with social privileges such as employment and legal immigration. Therefore, discrimination against Hispanics decreased in the 1960's, when President Johnson had banned quotas on Hispanic immigration.¹⁸

During the 1960's, Hispanic Americans organized their own Civil Rights Movement. Protesting against high unemployment, poor housing, segregated schools, and poverty, they wanted to found a Civil Rights Organisation to protect their rights as American citizens. Moreover, they organized social movements denouncing White labour leaders' prejudice.

In 1962, Cesar Chavez¹⁹, a former Mexican migrant labourer formed a union of farmers called the "United Farm Workers". This organization led a strike against the San Joaquin Valley grape growers, by boycotting table grapes. They were supported by Senator Robert Kennedy and the American actor Paul Newman. Finally, their action was recognized by the grape growers by 1968.²⁰

¹⁷ David Mauk, OP. Cit., p. 106.

¹⁸ Vivienne Sanders, OP. Cit. p.161.

¹⁹ Cesar Chavez: (1927-93), he led the first successful farm worker's strike in US history. Founder of the United Farm Workers of America, Chavez was called "one of the heroic figures of our time" by Robert F. Kennedy. He was also regarded as the most influential Latino leader in modern US history. A migrant worker as a child, Chavez knew firsthand the deprivations suffered by farm labourers. Like Martin Luther King JR., Chavez was an advocate of nonviolent protest, and he organised food boycotts that eventually caused agricultural firms to improve wages and working conditions for farm workers. In 1994, Chavez was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor an American can receive. From Thomas E. Patterson, We The People, 2008, p.164.

²⁰ Vivienne Sanders, OP. Cit., p. 161.

In the late 1960's, Latinos wanted to use Spanish as their official language; as a result, this problem was at the centre of debates, questioning the fact of whether Latino communities would be educated in Spanish, their mother tongue, or English, or both. In 1982, the Supreme Court declared that immigrant children had the right to public education, and this represented a victory for Latinos.²¹

It is said that at the beginning of the 21st century, poverty, unemployment, and crime rates remained high among Hispanics; however, their political power had grown, especially during the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections. The Hispanic community was paid much attention, particularly in Florida where most of them live. A great number of Latino Americans were elected in the US Senate; moreover, a superior number of Latinos had participated in the 2008 election, as compared with the White or Black communities.²²

Today, one can say that Hispanics represent less than African Americans in Congress; however, despite a large Latino population, Hispanics are still underrepresented in political office.

3.4 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Asian Americans

It is known that Chinese people immigrated to the US between the late 1840's and 1882.²³ Only a minority of them settled in Hawaii, whereas the majority took refuge on the West coast, principally in California. In the same period, large numbers of Japanese, Koreans, East Indians, Vietnamese, and Filipinos arrived to the American country.

Most Asian Americans worked on sugar plantations, under very hard conditions. Suffering from segregation and low wages, they were prevented from forming any labor movement; however, they were provided with adequate housing, schooling, and medical care.

²¹David Mauk, OP. Cit., p.106.

²²Ibid., p.109.

²³Ibid, p.101.

Asian Americans did not suffer much from discrimination as African Americans did. This was due to the fact that they were a large majority living on the Hawaii Island, and working in most fields of the Hawaiian economy. From the 1930's until the 1960's, Asian Americans held major posts in politics, representing this state in Congress.²⁴

Discrimination was not perceived against Asian Americans until the mid 1940's, when they were segregated by white people. Indeed, they were prevented from racial mixing, that is to say marriages between Asian people and whites were forbidden at that time. Moreover, the Supreme Court applied a series of laws, excluding them from American citizenship, from owning lands, and finally from immigrating to the US.²⁵

Asian Americans' fight for citizenship started in the 1940's, when they stood up to protect their rights as American citizens. They founded new businesses, providing their community with new jobs. Moreover, they created their own organizations, and led strikes in order to protest against social discrimination.²⁶

It was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that provided Asian Americans with rights and privileges demanded by African Americans and other minorities in the US. From 1965, a huge number of Asians of many nationalities migrated to the US, especially after the Vietnam War, when Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees had come to the US.²⁷

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., p.103.

²⁷ Ibid.

Since the mid 1960's, Asian Americans were considered as highly successful in many domains, such as education, business, and academic performance. Despite their success, Asian Americans still suffer from poverty, and discrimination in jobs. Even if their educational achievements are high, they are often recruited in low-level professional jobs. This kind of discrimination did not allow them to acquire top business positions; moreover, Asian Americans remained underrepresented in political office.²⁸

3.5 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Women's Rights

In the history of the United States, women have always been relegated to a lower position than men. In a society dominated by males, Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, women, and other minorities sought to assert themselves as full American citizens. Consequently, these people's struggles for equality have shaped American history, as one of permanent resistance against discrimination and prejudice.

3.5.1 The Historical Background of Women's Voting Rights

Historically, American women did not possess any right to sign documents, or to own property; their existence was under the control of their fathers, brothers, or husbands to whom they owed complete obedience. From the early colonial days, they were used to perform only manual work, earning about one quarter of men's wages. Women's awakening started in the 1820's, when Frances Wright, a Scottish lecturer and journalist, visited the US and spoke publicly about women's rights in the US. Two decades later, the American society witnessed the emergence of an American women's rights movement, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton²⁹ as its leader.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., p.104.

²⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902): she was an ardent champion of sexual equality and co-founded with Susan B. Anthony the "National Woman Suffrage Association" just after the Civil War. She joined the Temperance and anti-slavery movements. In 1890, she was elected president of the newly formed NAWSA, until 1892. From: Melinda Tims, Perspectives on the Making of America, 2002, p.188.

³⁰ Outline of American History, 2011, p.122.

In 1848, both Cady Stanton and her friend Lucretia Mott³¹, decided to found a women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York.³² For the first time in American and world histories, American women asked for equality with men, in education, employment, and mainly for the right to vote.

One has to mention that the "Seneca Falls convention" was the starting point of what came to be known as the "Women's Liberation Movement"³³, that aimed at promoting the cause of racial and sexual equality in the US.

In the 1870's, when Susan B. Anthony,³⁴ an American woman abolitionist, wanted to cast her vote, she was accused of illegal voting. With Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), with the aim of providing white American women with the right to vote.³⁵ It is said that women wanted an improvement in their lives, and their unique objective was to join the movement in order to gain social, economic, and political rights within American society.

³¹ Lucretia Mott : (1793-1880) : she founded, and became president of the Philadelphia Female anti-slavery society. She joined Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the fight for women's equality. She lectured on Abolition of slavery, equal rights, temperance, and world peace. She was named president of the American Equal Rights Association in 1866, a group devoted to African American and women's suffrage. From: Sheila Keenan, Scholastic Encyclopedia of Women in the United States, 2002, p.48.

³² Outline of American History, Op. Cit, p.122..

³³ Women's Liberation Movement: It grew out of abolitionism. It began with the Seneca Falls Convention on July, 19th, 1848.. It continued with the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, granting American women the right to vote, also called the first wave of feminism; it was carried on with the second wave of feminism of the sixties. It was one of the most powerful forces shaping the nation in the 1970's. Feminists challenged society's ideas about work, family, love, and sexuality. Women staged hundreds of rallies across the country to publicise their demands for equality. From: Sheila Keenan, OP. Cit., p.158.

³⁴ Susan B. Anthony: (1820-1906) Susan B. Anthony's name is nearly synonymous with women's right to vote and well it should be. She spent her much of her adult life fighting for women's suffrage, even at the risk of arrest. When she was in her twenties, she moved to upstate New York and almost immediately became politically active. Like many of the women who would lead the movement for women's rights, her first crusade was with the temperance movement, which sought to ban the sale of alcohol because of the hardship alcoholism imposed on women and children. She next joined the abolitionist movement, which sought an end to slavery. After the Civil War, she teamed up with an old friend and fellow activist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, to demand equal pay and voting rights for women. She twice went to the polls in her hometown of Rochester, New York, to assert her right to vote and was twice arrested. By then, Anthony was a national figure who lectured widely on women's suffrage. She died a decade before women gained the right to vote in the United States, but she, as much as any American, made women's suffrage a reality. From: Thomas E. Patterson, OP. Cit., p. 226.

³⁵ Ibid. p.224.

After successful efforts performed by women abolitionists and activists in the United States, the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment finally granted women the right to the ballot in 1920.³⁶

In 1921, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)³⁷ was proposed by Alice Paul.³⁸ This amendment aimed at improving working conditions for women. For example, women were not allowed to perform certain jobs, to work by night, and had the lowest paid jobs. The ERA was introduced into Congress in December 1923, as women needed new laws against social and economic discrimination.

3.5.2 The Emergence of Feminism in the US

After American women had gained the right to vote in 1920, first wave feminism was followed by hard economic conditions during the Great Depression; however, with the advent of the Second World War, the situation had changed. Indeed, it gave more importance to working women and a new interest in the ERA, as a great number of women entered the labour force.

By the end of the Second World War, the US witnessed the baby-boom, during which large numbers of women workers returned to their homes, and had more babies; however, most of them were not satisfied with this situation. Simone de Beauvoir's³⁹ famous text, "The Second Sex" was translated into English in the 1950's, and was widely read in the US.

³⁶ David Mauk, Op.Cit., p.80

³⁷ ERA: Equal Rights Amendment: an Amendment to the US Constitution, which gave women equal rights to men. It began in congress in 1923, and was finally passed in 1972. In 1982, only 35 out of 38 states had ratified the amendment. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p.145.

³⁸ Alice Paul: (1885-1977), she split from NAWSA in 1913, and formed the National Woman's Party in 1917. Her efforts were important to the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which gave women the right to vote. She also wrote the first Equal Rights Amendment, and called it the Lucretia Mott Amendment; she got it introduced in Congress in 1923. From: Sheila Keenan, OP. Cit., p. 83.

³⁹ Simone de Beauvoir: (1908-1986) A French writer and social philosopher, who was among the leaders of the modern existentialist movement and a champion of women's rights. Her long commitment to ameliorate the status of women occasioned her highly popular, though controversial book, "The Second Sex" (1949) which takes the view that women are relegated to an inferior position by male-dominated society, and not by any biological or psychological determinant. From: Encyclopedia Americana, V3, 2006, p.419.

Simone wanted women to understand and determine their biological nature and roles; she also wanted them to participate fully in a male's world without having the status of the "other". She wrote:

What peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman is that she- a free and autonomous being like all human creatures, nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the other⁴⁰

In 1963, the American author Betty Friedan⁴¹ published her best-seller "The Feminine Mystique", in which she urged women to seek new roles and responsibilities by leaving their jobs as wives and mothers and having professional careers of their own.

However, the book was dedicated to white, well-educated women, not to black women, who had more serious problems than the ones evoked by Friedan. This book had given American women a new sense of freedom, which would allow them to acquire a greater concern for economic and social equality, and a deeper protection against discrimination.

In 1966, the National Organisation for Women (NOW)⁴² was born, with Betty Friedan as its first president. This organization claimed that women should be active participants in politics, business, and its primary goal was to achieve legislative, educational, and economic equality for women. A large majority of them joined the organization because they were underemployed and underpaid. They organized large marches, demonstrations, and meetings in order to achieve their goals. In her book "Rebirth of Feminism", Judith Hole stated:

⁴⁰ David Chalmers, *And The Crooked Places Made Straight*, 1996, p.160.

⁴¹ Betty Friedan: Born in 1921, she was a journalist and studied to become a psychologist. After getting married, she became a housewife; the success of her book changed Friedan's life personally and politically. She gave up being a housewife and divorced. In 1966, she, Paul Murray and several other feminists founded the National Organization for Women (NOW). From: Sheila Keenan, OP. Cit, p.138.

⁴² NOW : National Organisation for Women, a large organisation that works for women's rights. It is a civil rights advocacy group that has fought for gender equality and helped raise awareness of women's issues. From: *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture*, 2005, p.332

The National Organisation for Women was born with a clear statement of purpose; to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, assuming all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men⁴³

“Now” had organized the first national feminist march in New York City’s Fifth Avenue on August 26, 1970, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of suffrage;⁴⁴ the most important demands of this march were equal opportunities in employment, education, and free abortion which was finally accepted as a national issue.

In 1967, “NOW” passed a Bill of Rights for women; its aim was to afford them with equal job training opportunities, equal rights to education, and child care facilities. With a membership of over 500.000 people in 2005, NOW became the largest feminist organization in the US.⁴⁵

One knows that the feminist movement in the US aimed at equality in social, educational, and political fields. Therefore, feminists’ roles were to examine the different elements that divided them, such as race, and social class. Throughout their activism, women had worked for the legalization of abortion, and the elimination of violence against women and children.

⁴³ Lois P. Rudrick, *American Identities*, 2006, p. 177.

⁴⁴ Howard Sitkoff, *Postwar America*, 2000, p. 104.

⁴⁵ George Sullivan, *The Day the Women Got the Vote*, 1994, p.69.

Consciousness raising groups⁴⁶ were formed to address issues such as women's health, child care, violence, and pornography. New institutions were created like child care centers, shelters for battered women, and women's health clinics. Consciousness raising focused on the fact that feminists were dealing with the most intimate aspects of personal life.⁴⁷

It is well known that by the 1980's, the American feminist movement became more controversial, as ethnic minorities were divided into sub-groups. We can say that the second wave of feminism gave birth to what we called as "feminisms" because feminists from different racial and ethnic groups formed distinct feminist movements. There were Black women, Jewish women, and Asian feminists; other sub-groups were formed as for the elderly, the obese people, the physically handicapped, all of them dealing with specific feminist issues.⁴⁸

One can assert that the Women's Liberation Movement developed in the 1970's, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that outlawed discrimination in American society.⁴⁹ Radical feminists had worked on social issues, such as birth control, battered women, and the right to abortion. In 1973, the Roe v. Wade⁵⁰ was authorized by the Supreme Court, making abortion a legal issue.

⁴⁶ Consciousness-raising groups: In the late 1960's and 1970's, small groups of women held regularly scheduled meetings where they would share intimate details of their lives with each other. These women, who were mainly fairly young, middle to upper middle class, well educated, and white, found that when they discussed their lives and their feelings, common patterns emerged. Most of them shared experiences of oppression that they realized came from being female in a male-dominated society, and from that realization came the idea that "the personal is political"; in other words, that experiences that seem to be deeply personal often have roots in the surrounding culture and thus do not have to be repeated if the relationships and assumptions from which they develop could be changed. Consciousness raising groups grew out of the civil rights and anti-war movements, and had an important effect on the newly re-emerging feminist movement. They flourished for a short time but then withered, the victim of their own ideology. Because participants tried to avoid the kind of hierarchy that they thought represented the male world they did not want to have leaders, but without the kind of organization that leadership represents the groups fell apart. However, from the groups came many new insights into how relationships between men and women and between women and other women could be improved. From: Harvard Sitkoff, OP. Cit., P.75.

⁴⁷ Lois P. Rudrick, OP. Cit., p. 180.

⁴⁸ Melinda Tims, OP. Cit., p.194.

⁴⁹ David Mauk, OP. Cit., p.83.

⁵⁰ Roe v. Wade: a US Supreme Court case (1973) which ended in a decision making it legal to have an abortion. The judges said that a state must allow any woman, if she wishes, to have an abortion within the first three months after becoming pregnant. The decision divided US society and caused a lot of discussion all over the country. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p. 405.

One can conclude that from the 1960's until nowadays, women have achieved considerable progress in employment and political office. Indeed they acquired highly paid jobs, running their own businesses, and gaining high degrees in academic research. In the 2000's, Hillary Clinton became the first lady to run for the Presidency of the US. However, women's economic situation remains a subject of debate in the 21st century because of the gap existing between the rich and the poor in American society.

As far as the feminist movement is concerned, one has to give importance to the plight of black women, and whether they had shared in the feminist activism of the 1960's. Our goal is to focus on this minority group in the US, and discuss some of their achievements in American society.

3.5.3 Black Women's Fight for the Right to Vote

It is said that white women had a segregated attitude on the right to vote for black women. Although white women ignored them and excluded them from white organizations, black women supported the cause of women's suffrage. For both of them, the vote represented the key for gaining political power; however, white women wanted to gain the vote for themselves, and keep black women far from this goal.

Black women's battle for suffrage obliged them to confront white women who were discontented about their eventual enfranchisement. African American women assumed that the right to vote would solve race problems among them: segregation and lynching. Moreover, this right would enable them to improve their working conditions, and to raise the status of blacks, both male and female.

Black women knew it was the beginning of a long struggle in order to gain the ballot. In spite of the discrimination they faced, black women were registering in large numbers in the South. It is said that they had to wait long hours until they registered. Moreover, they were required to pay taxes, and to have educational tests.⁵¹ Any woman who failed to read, who could not sign her name, who did not own a minimum amount of property, or who could not pay a tax, lost her right to vote. Indeed, most women failed these tests because they were the poorest and the least educated, especially in the South.

It is known that white suffragists were discriminating against black women in the suffrage campaign, and wanted to pass an amendment to eliminate them from the vote.⁵² Moreover, they discouraged them to apply for membership in organizations such as the NAWSA (National American Woman Suffrage Association), or in the NACW (National association of Colored Women).

The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) was another important organization concerned with the vote of black women. The latter worked in the NAACP's suffrage department, and their job consisted in designing voter education programs, denouncing cases of discrimination, and focusing on black women's desire to vote.

⁵¹ John Murrin, *Liberty, Equality, Power*, 2006, p. 765.

⁵² Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 1984, p.160.

Famous black women activists like Harriet Tubman⁵³ and Mary Church Terrell were determined to fight for the enfranchisement of black women. It is said that in 1919, Mary Church Terrell stood against Alice Paul, the head of the Woman's Party to denounce the fact that she refused black women's vote in the state of Carolina.⁵⁴ As a result, black women attended a meeting with Alice Paul, challenging her by declaring:

We have come here as members of various organizations and from different sections representing five million colored women of the country. We have come today to call your attention to the flagrant violations of the intent and purposes of the Susan B. Anthony amendment in the election of 1920. We cannot believe that you will permit this amendment to be distorted in its interpretation, that it shall lose its full power and effectiveness. Five million women in the US cannot be denied their rights without all the women of the US feeling the effect of that denial. No women are free until all women are free.⁵⁵

It was during the second half of the 20th century that black women performed the greatest effort for suffrage. More than twenty black women suffrage associations were formed such as the NACW⁵⁶ (National Association of Colored Women), the NFAAW (National Federation of Afro-American Women), and the Northeastern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. They supported woman suffrage, and were represented by thousands African American women.⁵⁷

⁵³ Harriet Tubman: (1820-1913), in her lifetime, Harriet was called General Tubman and Moses because she rescued more than 300 enslaved African Americans. She believed God had commanded her to help free the slaves. During the Civil War, Tubman served as a nurse, a cook, and a spy, crossing Confederate Army lines to get information from slaves in South Carolina. From: Sheila Keenan, OP. Cit., p. 57.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.120.

⁵⁵ Sheila Keenan, OP. Cit., p.169.

⁵⁶ NACW: in 1897, the National Association of Colored Women had over five thousand members devoted to women's advancement, justice, and equality for all blacks. Black women leaders of this organization included Sojourner Truth, Mary Church Terrell, Harriet Tubman, and Ida B. Wells. It had been central to black suffragists' efforts and had linked black clubwomen in communities across the nation. It included more than 200,000 members in forty on states in the mid 1920's. From: Zita Allen, Black Women Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, 1996, p.14.

⁵⁷ Sheila Keenan, OP. Cit., p.130.

The experience of black women in the suffrage movement showed that even if they shared common goals with white women, they faced many difficulties to work together as long as the race problem persisted. They would carry on their fight with different and opposite aims, but they were aware that the contribution of women, both black and white, will finally give both of them racial and political equality.⁵⁸

3.5.4 The Emergence of Black American Feminism

One knows that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's had encouraged black women to start a new, radical, feminist movement, which clearly defined their new roles in American society. They created a black feminist movement, challenging the male-dominated Black Power movement, and white-dominated women's rights organisations. They fought for voting rights, organized protests, and motivated other minorities to ask for their rights. With the Civil Rights Movement, African American women had to accomplish a divine mission involving them in the long struggle for equality and justice.

Black and white women's fight in the Civil Rights Movement had given birth to the "second wave of feminism", which made people aware of the role of women in society, and also of family issues, such as marriage, sexuality, and abortion. It started with the battle for suffrage that was called the "first wave of feminism". Historically, Black women had a strong desire to participate in politics.

One of them was Sojourner Truth, the abolitionist and preacher, who fought against injustice, defying therefore white feminists. Sojourner Truth was not viewed as a feminist, but her activism created an anti-racist and an anti-sexist political movement, that now characterizes black American feminism.⁵⁹ Black women leaders were determined to reaffirm their position by starting a new, radical feminist movement that would bring great changes in views concerning black women in American society.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.170.

⁵⁹ Melinda Tims, OP. Cit., p.190.

One knows that Black feminism emerged during a time when other social movements characterized American society, among them the conflict over the Vietnam War, and the struggle for racial equality. Through this challenge, Americans were seeking to redefine the true meaning of democracy, giving a new definition to the social and political life of women, both black and white within American society.

The feminist movement of the 1960's, also called "mainstream feminism", dealt with the struggle of women in order to gain the same economic, political, and social rights as men. It was led by women of all races who wanted to improve their social lives by asking for liberty, and equality.

The Women's Liberation Movement, born out of the Civil Rights Movement, focused on the fact that discrimination was immoral, and that the protest became legitimate for women to protect their rights. The movement was started by female students who had been active in the Anti-Vietnam War, and in the Civil Rights Movement.⁶⁰ It is well-known that the Women's Liberation Movement aimed at defending women's rights, including full economic and political participation of women in American society. At first, this movement was concerned only with white, middle class women, who tried to find solutions to problems such as poverty and racism; in the 1960's, this movement drew both black and white women to carry on their action.

One has to make an analogy between the status of blacks and that of women; as a result, one can say that the black feminist movement grew out of the Black Liberation Movement and the Women's Movement. It was formed on the basis that black women felt they were racially oppressed in the Women's Liberation Movement, and sexually oppressed in the Black Liberation Movement.

⁶⁰George Sullivan, The Day the Women got the Vote, 1994, p.71.

The Black Liberation Movement included several different movements for black liberation (The Civil Rights Movement, Black Nationalism⁶¹, the Black Panthers,⁶² and others). Living with the double burden of being both African American and women, black feminists had largely contributed to the success of feminist activism. As a matter of fact, they were able to motivate other feminisms that concerned other racial minorities; consequently, the liberation of black women meant the freedom of all people.

It is well known that any feminist movement deals with political ideas that make clear the position of different groups of women in society. In this way, black feminism emerged with the second wave of feminist activism. It is based on the fact that sexism, class oppression, and racism are bound together.

By the mid- 1970's, black feminism had influenced the whole feminist movement. During that era, black women achieved many successes in social, economic and political fields. Their accomplishments occurred in every field, from sports, to politics, science, and show business. As an example, Doctor Mae Jemison, a physician from Houston, Texas, was chosen as the first black woman astronaut in 1987.⁶³

⁶¹ Black Nationalism: A philosophy that exalted black cultural expression, pride in blackness, and often separation from white society, has been an important current within African-American intellectual history since the 19th century, when some free blacks advocated emigration to Africa. Frustrated by violence, discrimination and the slow progress in gaining rights at the start of the 20th century, some African Americans had lost hope of ever achieving equality in the United States. Led by the Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey, black nationalists advocated the creation of a new African-American nation, a black homeland in Africa. In 1914 Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to encourage African American economic independence and to organize his "Back to Africa" cause. His movement declined after he was jailed for mail fraud in 1925. The most visible agent of Black Nationalism has been the Nation of Islam and its adherents, including the outspoken and controversial Malcolm X, who converted to Islam in prison and was assassinated in 1965. Malcolm called on blacks to separate themselves from "white devils" and defend themselves by any means necessary. Malcolm's ideas spread beyond the black Muslims and influenced the "Black Power" movement. A variety of activist groups adopted nationalism of different sorts in the later 1960's, from the Black Panthers, who sought to gain black power "through the barrel of a gun", to soul singer James Brown, who affirmed black pride by singing "Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud". Influenced by black nationalism, members of other racial and ethnic minority groups, including Native Americans and Chicanos, adopted similar positions. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *Post-War America*, OP. Cit., p.38.

⁶² Black Panthers: An organisation of African Americans who supported legal action and even violence to gain better conditions to black people. It was formed in 1966. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, p.44.

⁶³ Alfred A. Moss, Jr., From Slavery to Freedom, 2004, p.613.

One has to mention that feminism continued with another wave, called third wave feminism. It arose in the early 1990's, as a result of the failure of second wave feminism. It focused primarily on developing the different achievements of women in America.

3.5.5 Black Women's Activism in the Black Feminist Movement

Black women had a long feminist tradition dating back to the 19th century; they became the leaders of the Anti-Slavery movement, the Black liberation movement, and finally of the contemporary feminist movement. They were victims of racism in the white women's movement, and sexism in the Black Liberation Movement. These sufferings had provided them with the force to create a feminist movement, in which they sought to fight against race and gender inequality.

At first, black women did not participate fully in the feminist movement. As they were born in slavery, they felt compassion for all oppressed peoples; in addition, they wanted to help black men for the liberation of black people, men and women. It is said that black feminists did not consider white feminists as their enemies; however, they were frustrated by the fact that white women were indifferent to the problems of black women.⁶⁴

One knows that black women's activism began at the same time as white women's, but they were not cited in the white feminist movement because they were in small numbers. Moreover, black feminists were unable to have leadership roles within this movement as it was under the control of white women. Thanks to their strong determination, African American women formed "black feminist" groups, created their own feminism, and new black feminist organisations. They devoted their time asking for women's rights in the domains of education, healthcare, childcare, security in ghettos, and many other issues.

⁶⁴Bell Hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, Black Women and Feminism, 1981, p. 188.

Knowing that they had a great revolutionary task to perform, black women's unique objective was to rebuild an American society, based on human, rather than material values. Their main actions consisted in achieving equality for women in politics, education, the workforce, and on issues of sexuality and reproduction.⁶⁵ However, they were often met with racism; for example, they were most of the time excluded from meetings, and their writings strongly criticized because they represented only the black experience. In spite of this, black women developed feminist writings, defending their cause on issues such as racism, and sexism.

Black women activists fought for women's rights without neglecting the rights of black men, whom they did not consider as their enemies. A famous black activist, called Angela Davis, was born in 1944, in Birmingham, Alabama. Two of her friends were killed in a church bombing in September, 1963. The murder was committed by white supremacists who wanted black people to leave Birmingham. Angela Davis herself moved to New York when she was fifteen, in order to escape from this violent city. In 1967, she went to California where she earned a Ph. D in philosophy.⁶⁶ It is said that Angela Davis was deeply concerned with the plight of black people, and soon became active in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). However, she had suffered from sexist attitudes on the part of several male leaders, and also realized that SNCC and other Black Power organisations did not solve problems faced by the black community, such as poverty or racism.

One has to draw the conclusion that the seventies was a decade in which African American women activists created a black feminist movement defying both male-dominated Black Nationalism and white-dominated Women's Rights organisations.⁶⁷ Black feminism was a direct response to male chauvinism within the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, and Student movements. Tired of black male sexism, and white women racism, black women built their own movement, the black Feminist Movement, which aimed at combating all forms of oppression from which they suffered.

⁶⁵ Melinda Tims, *OP. Cit.*, p. 192.

⁶⁶ Sheila Keenan, *OP.Cit.*, p.166.

⁶⁷ Robin D. G, Kelley, *OP. CIT*, p. 561.

The seventies offered more opportunities for black women, especially after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. With the massive registration campaign engaged by organisations like the SNCC, African American women had finally gained more and more political victories, creating their own institutions to support their cause.

It is well-known that the most important organization of the seventies was the National Organisation for Women (NOW); many famous black women were active members in this organization, among them Fannie Lou Hamer,⁶⁸ and Shirley Chisholm.⁶⁹ It is said that in 1970, Aileen Hernandez, a Black woman replaced Betty Friedan as President of NOW.⁷⁰

In 1973, the most important institution founded by black women was the National Black Feminist Organisation (NBFO).⁷¹ It asked for political, social, and economic equality for black women; moreover, it focused on the prejudices that women of color faced like racism, sexism, classism, and lesbianism. Black women's activism consisted in discussing issues such as violence, rape, abortion, and also sought to define Black feminism as different from white feminism.

⁶⁸ Fannie Lou Hamer: (1917-1977), she was an active member in the SCLC and SNCC. Her commitment to Civil Rights caused her to lose her home and job, and a severe beating while jailed for Civil Rights activities, left her permanently disabled. She founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and worked primarily for the disenfranchisement of Southern Black voters. From: Sheila Keenan, OP. Cit., p.140.

⁶⁹ Shirley Chisholm: (1924-2005), she was the first African American woman elected to Congress. She was active in the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and the League of Women Voters. She was deeply angered by the injustices faced by women, children and African Americans. She served in the House of Representatives for seven terms. She retired from Congress in 1983, to pursue a teaching career. From: Charles Gulatta, Extraordinary Women in Politics, 1998, p. 118.

⁷⁰ Paula Giddings, OP. Cit., p. 306.

⁷¹ Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis, OP. Cit., p.553.

Shirley Chisholm, who had actively supported equal rights, and Affirmative Action policies, had declared in a conference on women's employment:

Women in this country must become revolutionaries. We must refuse to accept the old, the traditional roles and stereotypes... We must replace the old, negative thoughts about our femininity with positive thoughts and positive action affirming it, and more. But we must also remember that we will be breaking with tradition, and so we must prepare ourselves educationally, economically, and psychologically in order that we will be able to accept and bear with the sanctions that society will immediately impose upon us.⁷²

3.6 The Rise of Black Nationalism in the US

Black Nationalism had its roots in the separation of the black race from the white society, culturally, politically, and economically. It is well known that this ideology goes back to the establishment of the Black Church, known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church by Richard Allen in 1786. This was the first body that gave blacks in America the need to worship independently from whites.

Later, in the 19th century, Black Nationalism emerged with the emigration of free blacks from the USA to their ancestors' lands. It was a means of escape from a society that enslaved them to Africa, Canada, or South America. At the beginning of the 20th century, Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican immigrant had created a movement which focused on black unity, self-determination, and activism among the black communities of the US and Africa.⁷³

⁷² Ibid., p.557.

⁷³ John Mc Faragher, Out of Many, 1997, p. 747.

After the foundation of the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association) by Marcus Garvey, his popularity increased, and he gained support of millions of followers who considered this movement as a way to improve their situation in a white racist society. Black people were killed, abused, and terrorized by the lynchings that occurred in the beginning of the 20th century, especially after WWI.⁷⁴ It was against this background of black sufferings, that the Garvey movement amassed its greatest membership, paving the way to other black leaders within this movement.

3.6.1 The Impact of Malcolm X on the Nation of Islam

It is well-known that the Black Power⁷⁵ Movement that developed out of the nationalist movement of the early 20th century, had given birth to the Nation of Islam (NOI), founded by Wallace Fard in Detroit in 1930. Later, in 1934, Elijah Poole became the new leader of this religious and nationalist organization. Changing his name to Elijah Muhammad, he guided the Nation of Islam from 1934 to 1975.⁷⁶ One has to say that this institution worked on the same principles as the UNIA, such as the separation of blacks from whites, and the improvement of their economic situation.

It is said that by the late 1950's, NOI had a membership of about 50.000 people, who started to embrace Islam.⁷⁷ Their strong faith in this religion made them aware of the problems resulting from many social ills, such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Malcolm X became NOI's most brilliant leader. Born in 1925, under the name of Malcolm Little, he experienced a hard childhood. In fact, he became a drug dealer, then a thief, and while in prison, he converted to Islam. In 1946, he had a sentence of 10 years imprisonment, during which he joined the NOI. In 1952, he was released from prison and adopted the name of Malcolm X.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ron Field, OP. Cit., p. 64.

⁷⁵ Black Power : A controversial term with different meanings for different people, for example, black pride, black economic self-sufficiency, black violence, black separatism, black nationalism, black political power, black working class revolution, black domination. From: Vivienne Sanders, OP. Cit., p.122.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.113.

⁷⁷ M.J. Heale, OP. Cit., p.122.

⁷⁸ Vivienne Sanders, OP. Cit., p.116.

Malcolm rejected King's integrationist belief, that non-violent action was the best solution to deal with white violence. Instead, he adopted the Nationalist ideology, saying that blacks deserved their own social, economic, and political lives. He had declared:

It is not integration that Negroes in America want, it is human dignity. Why should blacks strive to fit into society that detested them when they could use their talents building an independent black nation⁷⁹

There's no such thing as a non-violent revolution...The only revolution in which the goal is loving your enemy is the Negro Revolution. It's the only revolution in which the goal is a desegregated lunch counter, a desegregated theatre, a desegregated park, and a desegregated public toilet; you can sit down next to white folks on the toilet, that's no revolution. Revolution is based on land. Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality. Revolution is bloody, revolution is hostile, revolution knows no compromise...revolution overturns and destroys everything that gets in its way⁸⁰

⁷⁹ James Ciment., OP. Cit. p.175.

⁸⁰ Lois P. Rudnick, American Identities, 2006, p. 122.

Malcolm X also had his own ideas on White and Black nationalism; he was interested in anti-colonial struggles in Africa. He had delivered a speech, "Message to the Grass Roots" in Detroit, on November 10, 1963, two years before his death. He said:

When you want a nation, that's called nationalism. When the white man became involved in a revolution in this country against England, what was it for? He wanted this land so he could set up another white nation. That's white nationalism. The American Revolution was white nationalism. The French Revolution was white nationalism. All the revolutions that are going on in Asia and Africa today are based on what? Black Nationalism. A revolutionary is a black nationalist. If you're afraid of black nationalism, you're afraid of revolution. And if you love revolution, you love black nationalism.⁸¹

It is known that Malcolm X went to Mecca in 1964, where he met people of all races.⁸² Therefore, he rejected the racist ideology of the NOI, believing in equality of all races, including whites. During the same year, he established the OAAU (Organisation of African American Unity), whose objective was to unite all people of African origins, and to afford them with social, economic, and political independence.

Malcolm X was an icon of the Black Power movement of the 1960's. He dedicated his life to improve the black ghetto community, becoming a model for black leadership. However, in March, 8th 1964, he resigned from NOI, and founded a new Islamic Movement, the Muslim Mosque Inc. In 1965, he was assassinated by his former colleagues from NOI.⁸³

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Vivienne Sanders, OP. Cit., p.116.

⁸³ James Ciment. OP. Cit., p.175.

The OAAU grew weaker, and the NOI's leadership was carried out by Elijah Muhammad and his sons until the 1970's. After Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, the Nation of Islam was divided into two groups, the first led by Wallace Muhammad, and the other by Louis Farrakhan until the twenty-first century.⁸⁴

One has to conclude that Malcolm's activism had left a profound impact on the African American community in the US. His militancy in the Black Power Movement has influenced other radical leaders to lead the battle of Civil Rights for black people. Moreover, it is necessary to point out that the Black power Movement brought a psychological revolution among the black community in America, and was a violent and unnecessary overreaction to the nonviolent protest of the Civil Rights Movement.

3.6.2 The Black Panthers' Radicalism in the 1960's

It is known that the Black Panther Party (BPP)⁸⁵ was another organization claiming black radicalism in the US. It was founded by black activists, Huey Newton, 24 years old, and Bobby Seale, 30 years old, who advocated black self-defense, and a restructuring of the American society on more egalitarian rules.⁸⁶

Being influenced by Malcolm X, Newton and Seale linked their movement to the liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and South America. Moreover, their objectives were the same as those of Marcus Garvey and Elijah Muhammad. They wanted to eradicate police brutality, to improve the black ghetto life, and to free unjustly imprisoned black people.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Vivienne Sanders, OP. Cit., p.117.

⁸⁵ Black Panther Party: An organization of African Americans with extreme views, formed in 1966. They supported legal action and even violence to gain better conditions for black people. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p.44.

⁸⁶ James Ciment, OP. Cit., p.177.

⁸⁷ Vivienne Sanders, OP.Cit., p.124.

It is said that Civil Rights organisations like SCLC and Core had failed to improve matters for black ghetto life in Northern cities of America. In February 1968, the Black Panthers' leaders had allied with SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), believing that the Civil Rights Movement was ineffective to the deteriorating conditions of ghetto dwellers, and criticizing Martin Luther King's interest in the Southern cities of the nation. However, a year later, there were clashes between both organisations, because they worked on different principles; whereas SNCC advocated separatism and nationalism, the Black Panther's ideology consisted in a multiracial struggle against oppression.

It is true that Black Power activists and Civil Rights activists alike, wanted to improve ghetto life, and the desegregation of the South; however, the Black Power movement had declined by the ends of the 1960's, because its supporters had differing and contradictory ideas. Moreover, their advocacy of a separate black nation within the USA proved to be an impossible mission.

3.7 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the Youth Generation in the US

The sixties were a decade of social unrest, especially for young people who were influenced by the counterculture movement. This movement was undertaken by young people who embraced new standards of dress and sexual behavior that were visible in the late 1960's and early 1970's. During an era characterized by the use of drugs and rock music, young people underwent a social transformation called the youth counterculture.⁸⁸

It can be said that the decade witnessed the rise of the New Left, represented by young students, called New Leftists, who saw themselves as an oppressed category; therefore, they took part in the Civil Rights Movement, fighting against poverty. Moreover, their opposition to the Vietnam War, and the demonstrations they led against this War constituted their most important achievement.

⁸⁸ Outline of American History, 2011, p. 281.

One knows that the Civil Rights Movement would not have happened without the mobilization of thousands of young people. In quest of a better world and a better life, they became concerned about a multitude of issues, initiating different social movements throughout the decade, among them the anti-Vietnam War movement, the anti-nuclear movement, and later, the environmental movement.

One has to point out that an anti-war movement began, when President Lyndon Johnson authorized the bombing of Vietnam.⁸⁹ Students had started “teach-ins”, against the war all over campuses in America. Conscious of nuclear energy and its dangers, a great number of students attended conferences held on university campuses in order to inform the American youth on the dangerous effects of nuclear energy. Therefore, one has to say that the Vietnam War stimulated the various rights movements of that period, having a particular impact on the student protest.

The first protest against American foreign policy occurred in April 1965, when the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) had assembled some 20.000 people on a march to the White House, most of them students. It is said that membership of that institution increased to reach 10.000 members by October 1965.⁹⁰

The Vietnam War was mainly opposed by students, women, black militants, and middle-class whites, who were involved in anti-war demonstrations. Moreover, campuses became a fertile ground, supporting the anti-war cause.⁹¹ Opposition to nuclear technology became an important part of the anti-war movement, attracting young students in the anti-nuclear demonstrations that proliferated in the sixties.

⁸⁹ M.J. Heale, *OP. Cit.*, p.137.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.142.

The social involvement of youth in that period had changed American values towards gender, race, and nature. As a result, the need to protect nature became one of the most important values of the counterculture, giving birth to the modern environmental movement at that time. Young American people became aware of the danger of environmental pollution, especially with the use of pesticides causing cancer; in addition, pollutants produced by automobile emissions, or oil and industrial spills constituted a serious threat to the environment.⁹²

It is known that students all over the country celebrated “Earth Day” on 22, April 1970. On the same year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began to increase its efforts to control abuses concerning environmental problems, and imposed laws upon water and air quality.⁹³

3.8 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the Gay Liberation Movement

Being inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, another revolutionary institution was formed, asking for justice for homosexuals in the US. Under the name of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), this category of people sought to break the taboo of homosexuality within American society. Throughout the 1960's, the media were authorized to publicise sexual matters on magazines and newspapers, giving importance to the gay world; moreover, homosexual characters were included in novels and Hollywood movies.⁹⁴

⁹² John Mack Faragher, *OP. Cit.*, p. 282.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Lois P. Rudnick, *OP.Cit.*, p.213.

It is said that groups of Lesbians and homosexuals had formed a homophile movement,⁹⁵ with the aim of challenging the laws denying them employment. Despite police harassment, they carried out their protest in front of government buildings, in search of the support of the police and the Federal Courts.⁹⁶

Following the same model of protest as the Student Movement, the counterculture, or the Women's movement, the Gay youth, who had long hidden their homosexuality were given the opportunity to launch their own social movement. It is known that during anti-war demonstrations that occurred in the late 1960's, Gay activists rallied in campuses and universities to join the anti-war movement.

Being considered as one of the oppressed minorities in the US, and working on the same bases as the New Left,⁹⁷ the Gay youth had clearly defined their goals, seeking for a more egalitarian society. They declared:

We are a revolutionary homosexual group of men and women formed with the realization that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about unless existing social institutions are abolished. We reject society's attempt to impose sexual roles and definitions of our nature...Babylon has forced us to commit ourselves to one thing...revolution.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Homophile movement : or Gay Liberation movement: it was influenced by African American civil rights and student anti-war protestors. In the 1960's, it became more militant, and some activists began picketing government agencies, demanding civil rights and opposing police brutality. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *OP. Cit.*, p.

112.

⁹⁶ Lois P. Rudnick, *OP. Cit.*, p.214.

⁹⁷ The New Left: A group of people who developed left-wing political ideas in many countries, especially the US, in the 1960's. They protested against the conditions of poor people in society, and against the Vietnam War, but they did not support the Soviet Union. The New Left included many students and writers. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p. 328.

⁹⁸ Lois P. Rudnick, *OP. Cit.*, p. 214.

One knows that Gay activists had joined the Black Panther Party (BPP) in their protest against the Vietnam War. The Gay Liberation Movement had adopted the motto of “coming out”, alluding to self-acceptance and pride. This movement gained strength in the 1970's, when sexuality was no longer considered as a means of marital duties and procreative ends, but a form of sexual liberalism, and self-affirmation.⁹⁹

By the end of the 1970's, thousands of Gay and Lesbian organisations worked for the well-being of this minority group in the US. They became more integrated within American society; for example, in 1975, the US Civil Service Commission had authorized the employment of Gay and Lesbians; moreover, Gay activists succeeded to have their own Gay rights platform within the Democratic Party Convention.¹⁰⁰

3.9 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on International Liberation Movements

The Civil Rights Movement of the sixties was one of the most remarkable movements in American history. Playing a major role in America and abroad, it had inspired other movements such as the Women's Liberation Movement, the Gay and Lesbian Movement, and the environmental Movement, among others. One has to mention that it was the Civil Rights Movement that introduced the use of marches, sit-ins, and boycotts used by other movements in their quest for change.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.215.
¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 216.

The American Civil Rights Movement had had a serious impact abroad. It had an influence on major international movements for freedom against colonial rule; in the 1960's, the decade of African decolonization by European powers, African Americans' destiny was closely related with that of other African nations. Black leaders and organisations were preoccupied by the international aspects of the struggle for freedom, which sought to achieve peace and equality. It is known that Martin Luther King, and other Civil Rights activists were mostly interested by African matters, mainly in the South African system of Apartheid. Moreover, the African American community in the US had been mobilized to relieve the sufferings of the South African population. With the aim of asserting their African origins, African American activists had a particular attention for Black Liberation movements overseas.¹⁰¹

It can be said that the Black anti- Apartheid struggle was inspired by the African American Civil Rights revolution. It is known that the South African system of Apartheid resembled the American Jim Crow system of oppression, and was used against the black revolt in South Africa.¹⁰² Moreover, African Americans were conscious of Black South Africans' sufferings through their own fight for racial equality. Finally, the similarities that existed between white racism in Africa and in America had awakened African Americans' consciousness to help eradicate racism in South Africa.

One has to make clear that oppressed people in distant regions had used the same tactics of the Civil Rights Movement to apply them in their own struggles. The anti-Apartheid movement was also supported by the African American elite in the US. It has been noted that African Americans created a national multiracial front against Apartheid, known as the Free South African Movement (FSAM), in which black activists organized marches and sit-ins to call for justice in South Africa.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹William R. Scott & William G. Shade, *OP. Cit.*, p. 426.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, p. 429.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, p.428.

Moreover, African Americans had organised a sit-in in the South African embassy in Washington as a means of refusal of the discriminatory system of Apartheid imposed on black people in South Africa. Lasting for more than a year, this protest resulted in the incarceration of hundreds of African Americans, who supported the black population in South Africa in their fight for their rights.

In his long way for democracy, Nelson Mandela¹⁰⁴ became the heroic figure of the black freedom struggle, not only in South Africa, but also in all parts of the world. One knows that he had been jailed for 26 years, after a long fight against Apartheid in South Africa. The end of white supremacy on the African continent had contributed to the election of Nelson Mandela to the presidency of the South African nation. During a speech on 2 May, 1994, after ANC election victory he had declared:

The lack of human dignity experienced by Africans is the direct result of the policy of white supremacy. White supremacy implies black inferiority... Pass laws (limiting black South Africans' freedom of movement), which to the Africans are among the most hated bits of legislation in South Africa, render any African liable to police surveillance at any time. Hundreds and thousands of Africans are thrown into jail each year under pass laws. Even worse than this is the fact that pass laws keep husband and wife apart and lead to the breakdown of family life.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Nelson Mandela: Born on 18 July, 1918 in Umata, South Africa. He attended a Methodist school (from 1937), took correspondence courses with the University of South Africa, and studied law at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He joined the African National Congress in 1943, helping to found its youth league. The apartheid era proper began in 1948, following the National Party's election victory. In 1952, he opened a legal practice with Oliver Tambo, who later led the ANC while Mandela was in prison. In 1956, he was arrested with others for treason, but acquitted after a long trial. After the Sharpeville Massacre (1960) and a government state of emergency, he co-founded Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's armed wing. He received a five-year prison sentence in 1962 for fomenting strikes and breaking travel restrictions, and in 1964, he and others received life sentences for sabotage and treason. He remained in prison for 26 years, the majority spent on Robben Island. He was released in 1990 and became leader of the ANC. With the historic ANC victory in

South Africa's first fully free elections, Mandela became President of South Africa in 1994, until retiring in 1999. He was praised for ensuring that stability and reconciliation prevailed in South Africa rather than civil war or retribution. From: Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Speeches that Changed the World*, 2010, p. 147.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p.148.

Above all, we want equal political rights, because without them our disabilities will be permanent. I know this sounds revolutionary to the whites in this country, because the majority of voters will be Africans. This makes the white man fear democracy.¹⁰⁶

One has to conclude that African Americans in the US had been aware of the plight of overseas black communities. Indeed, since the 1960's, the cooperation of the African American community in the US with African nations against white racism, were part of the Black Liberation Movement that characterized the American nation during the last century.

On the same pattern as the South African Revolution, the Algerian Revolution is another example of how African nations had been inspired by the Black American Liberation movement. It is well known that Algeria was the first Arab state to be under colonial rule in 1830. The Algerian people were tyrannized by the colonial system, suffering from extreme forms of oppression and discrimination. Facing poverty and poor living conditions, their determination to confront the French colonizer came more than half a century later, in 1954, when Algerian men and women decided to launch a revolution, with the aim of gaining peace and liberty in their country.

The movement for independence in Algeria started as a reaction of Algerian People's dissatisfaction with their treatment as second-class citizens by the French government. French people confiscated Algerians' lands, employing them as farmers, or as servants; therefore, the Algerian farmer became a sharecropper on a land owned by his coloniser, and even if he moved to larger cities, he had to perform only menial jobs, with the lowest wages.

It is known that the French coloniser offered to give Algerian people full citizenship, only if they renounced to their religion. However, their refusal to abandon Islam had caused the birth of Algerian's Nationalism. By fear to destroy their values and culture, Algerian people would fight the bloodiest war for independence.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 149.

The nationalist struggle in Algeria lasted for eight long years (1954-62), during which Algerian men and women devoted their lives for their country's liberation. It had been reported that Algerian women played an active role by providing help, food, medicine, and care for fighters. They transported weapons, cared for the wounded, and acted as information agents and spies.

A number of men's and women's organisations were founded to support their militancy, the most important was the National Liberation Front (FLN). Djamilia Bouhired, one of the most famous activists during the Algerian Revolution had declared:

We are still in a struggle to make our new country work, to rebuild the destroyed family, and to preserve our identity as a nation¹⁰⁷

One has to mention that since the Civil rights Movement of the 1960's, the United States gives more importance to women's rights all over the world in order to promote democracy; at the same time the American Nation sought to fight extremism and terrorism. As an example, America became aware of oppressed Afghan women, especially since the events of September, 11, 2001. Therefore, it made gender equality an urgent issue of American foreign policy.

3.10 The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on American Foreign Policy regarding Women's Rights

The success of the American Feminist Movement that occurred in the 1970's had made the issue of women's rights around the world as the main concern of US foreign policy. One knows that the first Lady, Hillary Clinton, was much more preoccupied by women's rights. In 1995, on a trip to Beijing, she had declared at the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women:

Human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Mounira cherrad, States and Women's Rights, 2001, p. 188.

It had been reported that Hillary Clinton's call to end gender discrimination and violence against women had led to the emergence of the United Nation's Security Council's Resolution 1325, giving importance to the role of women throughout the world. As a Secretary of State in 2009, she personally ran the Office of Global Women's Issues, by increasing its budget, and dealing with various issues concerning women, such as health, violence, and child marriage.¹⁰⁹

Hillary Clinton had treated the case of Guatemalan women who had long been victims of rapes especially during the 1960-96 Civil War.¹¹⁰ Moreover, she denounced the high murder rate for women in this country. Consequently, Clinton became deeply interested by the plight of women in the Middle East and Africa.

International organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are working for the inclusion of women in the workforce in countries such as the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt. They also try to limit laws that prevent women from owning property, signing contracts, or accessing credits.¹¹¹

One can assume that the American nation had achieved the greatest efforts to set an ambitious program to integrate women in the labor force all around the world. Women's economic participation represented the key for the advancement of nations, as well as the promotion of gender equality around the world.

One has to assert that African women had defined their struggle against all forms of oppression. As they belonged to the Third World, they were much worried about hunger, thirst, or war; moreover, their highest priorities remained peace and development. It has been reported that in October 2011, three African women had fought injustice, dictatorship, and inequality, in Liberia and Yemen. These women had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition for their struggle for women's rights.

¹⁰⁸ Foreign Affairs, Suzanne Nossel, A Feminist Foreign Policy, March/April 2016, p. 163.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.164.

¹¹¹ Foreign Affairs, Rachel Volgestein, Let Women Work, January, February 2018, p. 119.

As an example of women's activism in Yemen, one can refer to Tawakkul Karman, 32, one of the leading figures of the protest against Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, for his authoritarian regime. The Nobel Peace Prize had been awarded to this woman in recognition to the Arab spring movement that had overthrown dictators in North Africa, and the Middle East. Karman was the youngest Arab laureate, and the first Arab woman to win the Prize.

The Liberian women's rights activist, Leymah Gbowee, 39, was the head of the "Women Peace and Security Council", an organization seeking to bring an end to the long war in Liberia, and to encourage women to participate in elections. Throughout her struggle, she campaigned for women's rights, revolting against inequality, oppression, and rape. She considered that the Nobel Peace Prize was a proof of the struggle led by women to defend their rights, not only in Liberia and Yemen, but also in any country where women were oppressed. In the Nobel Audience city hall she declared:

We used our pains, broken bodies and scarred emotions to confront the injustice and terror of our nation. We must continue to unite in sisterhood to turn our tears into triumph; there is no time to rest until our world achieves wholeness and balance, where all men and women are considered equal and free.¹¹²

The first woman Liberian President, elected democratically in 2005, named Ellen John Sirleaf, had made efforts to achieve peace in a country devastated by two civil wars. At 72, she struggled to strengthen the position of women by promoting social and economic developments. These women were the best example of women's activism in oppressed nations.

¹¹² Retrieved at: <http://dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2073078/Nobel-Peace-Prize-Ellen-Johnson-18/01/2018>.

Conclusion

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's is considered as one of the most distinctive liberation movements of the 20th century. The use of non-violent action by the African American community in the US gave birth to other social movements, among them the Student movement, the Women's Movement, and the Black Power Movement that reawakened Black Nationalism. Moreover, these marginalized groups in the US had inspired other nations around the world in their struggle for equality and justice.

On the other side of America's shores, the Civil Rights Movement had also influenced social movements that occurred in South Africa, Algeria, Yemen, Liberia, among others. One has to mention that civil rights activists in the US wanted to awaken international public opinion against America's treatment of its African American citizens.

After a brief study of the influence of the Civil Rights Movement on these minority groups in the US and abroad, one becomes aware of the deep impact that this revolution had produced on these communities. No one can ignore the transformation of these communities, from oppressed populations to more emancipated people.

Chapter IV

The Effects of the Civil Rights
Movement on the Contemporary
Issue of Racism in the US (2001
– the present time)

Introduction	126
4.1 The Concept of Racism in the US	127
4.2 The Evolution of Racism in American Society	128
4.3 The Persistence of Racial Discrimination in American Society	131
4.4 The Situation of African Americans in the Post Civil Rights Era	133
4.4.1 The impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Race Relations in the US	133
4.4.2 The Impact of Hurricane Katrina on the African American Community	135
4.4.3 The Relationship between Poverty and Human Rights	139
4.4.4 The Rising Police Violence against African Americans in the US	140
4.5 The Impact of Racial Politics during the Election of Barack Obama	141
4.5.1 Barack Obama and the Politics of Racial Representation	142
4.5.2 Barack Obama's Road to the White House	143
4.5.3 The Impact of Black American Voters on Obama's Election	144
4.6 Barack Obama's Place in American Politics	148
4.7 Barack Obama's Presidency and its Impact on the Problem of Racism in the US	151
4.8 The Ambivalence of Racial Identity in Post-Racial America	154
4.9 Contemporary Racism within American Society	156
4.10 Civil Rights in the aftermath of 9/11 Attacks	158
4.11 The Future of Civil Rights in the US	160
Conclusion	163

Introduction

It is well known that racism faced by African Americans has its historical roots in oppression. After more than two centuries of continuous fight for racial equality in the US, racism is still a fact of American life, making African Americans suffer from many forms of discrimination in their daily lives.

Despite many victories achieved by the Civil Rights Movement, after the dismantling of the Jim Crow laws in the South, and the passage of civil rights legislations, the problem of racism has not yet been resolved in the US.

The election of the nation's first African American President, Barack Obama in 2008 was of an outstanding importance to the successful efforts and the new challenges brought by the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century. Moreover, African Americans' struggle for their rights had culminated with this historical election.

One knows that the world had changed since the 1960's. Indeed, a nation whose constitution defended slavery had elected an African American President. One can affirm that the election of Barack Obama was considered a triumph because it had won the support of millions of people of all races.

With this election, Americans hoped to put an end to the problem of racial equality in the US; however, it had been proved that racism remained the most important problem affecting African Americans within the American society. One has to assume that Americans are still optimistic that one day racial equality will be achieved in the US.

In this fourth and final chapter, one will try to answer the following question: has the Civil Rights revolution of the 1960's brought any solutions to the problem of racial equality in the US, especially after the election of the first African American President in the history of the US?

4.1 The Concept of Racism in the US

One can define racism as the superiority of one race over another. Due to America's history of enslavement, the US had a persistent problem in the domain of race relations over the preceding centuries. For more than 300 years, racism was part of American life, especially in the South. During these years, African Americans were moved to positions of inferiority and subordination, being oppressed in their social and political lives.

Discrimination was the direct consequence of racism; it was visible in the form of civil rights infringements against groups of people that are considered as inferior to the dominant group. One can say that racism was the means of opposition to the Civil Rights Movement. It was so deeply rooted within American society that it could never be ended because white people could never accept the idea of social and political equality with black people.

Racial discrimination is practiced within a system of institutional racism.¹ In America, institutional racism is a form of injustice imposed upon blacks and other minorities. Even if it is not as important as it used to be, racism still exists in the US, especially in the domains of medicine, education, politics, employment and housing.²

It can be said that during the 1960's, Black people had legally the same rights as whites, but in reality, they lived in the poorest neighborhoods, went to the worst schools, and had the lowest paying jobs. Black people wanted to put an end to their economic exploitation by having access to better jobs.

¹ Institutional racism: The phrase institutional racism was first coined by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in their 1967 book "Black Power" and then further expounded upon by Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt in their 1969 book "Institutional Racism in America". Institutional racism comes about when the benefits of an institution serve one race of people better than it does another race of people. Institutional racism can only be imposed upon a race of people who have little or no power in the society in which they live. In America, institutional racism is an injustice imposed upon blacks and other minority groups by the dominant group. From: Elreta Dods, Racism, the Bible, and the American Dream, 2011, p 8.

² Ibid., p.9

One knows that discrimination had obliged Black people to live in ghettos, where they suffered from poverty, crime, ignorance, unemployment, alcoholism, and drugs. At that time, America was moving toward two societies, one black and one white. After Martin Luther King's assassination, black people were in admiration of this black leader, who had defended civil rights for the black community in the US. His murder was a proof of racism across the US, increasing blacks' revolts against years of oppression.

4.2 The Evolution of Racism in American Society

It is noticeable that racism is and will remain an unsolved problem in the US. It had developed under the Reconstruction period, because poor Southern whites were defeated in the Civil War.³ During that era, blacks had made rapid progress and unbelievable gains. It had been calculated that blacks had won more than 1400 positions of political authority in the South.⁴ As a result, Northern Unions wanted to prevent blacks from moving to their states and competing with white workers.

One can say that political leaders like Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and W. E. Dubois, wanted to extend political and economic rights to black people. As Negroes started to gain political power during the Reconstruction period, many racist organisations emerged in order to terrorise blacks. The most racist organisation in American history was the Ku Klux Klan.⁵ Founded in 1866 by former Confederate soldiers, this organization was composed of people who appeared like ghosts and terrorized former slaves.

³ Dinesh D'Souza, The End of Racism, 1995, p.170.

⁴ Ibid., p.171.

⁵ Ku Klux Klan: An ultra-racist organization first formed during Reconstruction following the Civil War and later revived in the 1920's. The Ku Klux Klan had its third incarnation in the 1950's and 1960's. Rising up in response to the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which ordered desegregation of all public schools, the new Klan sought to halt the civil rights movement by intimidating its leaders with threats, murders, bombings, and other terrorist acts. Klansmen beat "freedom riders", activists seeking to integrate interstate bus transportation, and burned the bus in which they were riding in Anniston, Alabama in 1961. The first Mississippi Klan of the 20th century sprang up in 1964 to oppose the Mississippi Freedom Summer project and harassed civil rights activists seeking to register black voters in the state. Klan violence, however, helped mobilize public support for the passage of civil rights legislation. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *OP. Cit.*, p. 160.

The Ku Klux Klan practiced lynching as a form of punishment. One has to mention that not only black people were lynched, but also white people were. However, the Klan considered black people as an easy target for lynching. It had been reported that between 1920 and 1925, this terrorist organization was a major force in American politics.⁶

Therefore, one can say that racism had flourished in the early decades of the 20th century, with the aim of destroying black people economically and politically. Violence against black people was commonly practiced through lynching, especially in the last two decades of the 19th century.⁷ It is said that between two and three thousand black people were killed in this way.

The Black community in the US suffered not only from lynching but also from race riots which consisted of assaults of white mobs on black communities. Radical racists refused to co-exist with the black population; therefore, they sought to keep them in the slave condition.

Throughout the South, legal segregation was adopted; Blacks and Whites could not sit in the same sections in schools, restaurants, theatres, churches, post-offices, etc. Even parks and beaches had separate areas for “colored” and whites. Black people were a resilient group, who endured the harshest living conditions; consequently, black leaders emerged in order to challenge the practice of segregation and to demand justice for the black community in the US.

⁶ Dinesh D' Souza, OP. Cit., p.175.

⁷ Ibid., p.177.

One can say that the unique way for blacks to respond to early 20th century segregation and discrimination was the Civil Rights Movement, which was a spontaneous reaction against white prejudice. Moreover, the *Brown v. Board of Education* legislation of 1954,⁸ the Civil Rights Act of 1964⁹, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, had given the opportunity to black people to compete with whites in the domains of education and employment.

One has to point out that important organisations recruited a great number of civil rights activists; among these were the NAACP¹⁰ (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), SCLC¹¹ (Southern Christian Leadership Conference), SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), and CORE¹² (Congress for Racial Equality).

⁸ *Brown v. Board of Education*: a law case in 1954 which was held after a school for white children in Topeka, Kansas, refused to accept a black girl called Louisa Brown. The case led to a decision of the US Supreme court that made segregation in public schools illegal. The decision ended the idea of “separate but equal” schools for whites and African Americans, and encouraged the civil rights movement. From: Oxford Guide to the British and American Culture, 2005, p. 59.

⁹ Civil Rights Act of 1964: It was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, and entitled all persons to equal access to restaurants, bars theatres, hotels, gasoline stations, and similar establishments serving the general public. The legislation also barred discrimination in the hiring practices, and wages of medium size and large firms. From: Thomas E. Patterson, We The People, 2008, p.175.

¹⁰ NAACP: an American organization that supports the rights of African Americans. It was formed in 1909 and played an important part in the civil rights movement. One of its greatest achievements was to bring a legal case which led to the US Supreme Court’s decision in 1954 against segregation in schools. Its main office is in Baltimore, Maryland, and it had more than 500,000 members in 2003. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p. 316.

¹¹ SCLC: The organization grew out of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott of 1955-56, which had forced the city to integrate the local transportation system. Under King’s leadership, the group brought its tactics of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience to cities across the South and later in the 1960’s to northern cities as well. King served as president of the organization until his assassination in 1968 and was succeeded first by Abernathy, then by the Reverend Joseph E. Lowery. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *OP. Cit.*, p. 232.

¹² CORE: It had been founded in 1942, by a group of students at the University of Chicago. In 1955, CORE members went to the South to train volunteers in the techniques of nonviolent protest against segregation and other forms of racism. At first the group used sit-ins, freedom rides, and civil disobedience in its efforts to end segregation. Next, in the early 1960’s, as members became pessimistic about the likelihood of true integration, it focused on achieving political power for blacks and also was active in the antiwar movement. CORE still exists, though it has been only sporadically active in the fight for civil rights in the 1990’s. From: *Ibid.*, p. 75.

4.3 The Persistence of Racial Discrimination in American Society

One can say that racism has dramatically declined in America; yet, one cannot assert that it is no longer a serious problem nowadays. Black people have made considerable progress since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's; however, they are still regarded as inferior citizens or second-class ones.¹³ Black people are convinced that racism persists in American society despite the progress they achieved. For them, racism is deeply rooted in the American society, and in the psyche of American people.¹⁴

African Americans continue to believe that America is a racist society, where racism is in constant rise, and is still apparent in daily life within American society. Indeed, many acts of racial discrimination are observed in American streets; for example, taxi drivers refuse to pick up African Americans by fear of being robbed, assaulted or murdered.¹⁵

It had been reported that the poverty rate among black people reaches 24%, constituting the double of all other Americans. Moreover, it had been calculated that between 1965 and 2014, black families earned 59% of what white households earned.¹⁶ These inequalities prove that the black population continues to suffer from discrimination and injustice.

One has to point out that the African American community in the US makes up about 12% of the national population (about 40 million). Yet, they represent about 42% of people who are arrested for weapons possession, 43% of those arrested for rape, 55% of those jailed for committing a murder, and 61% of those arrested for robbery.¹⁷

¹³ Marie Christine Pauwels, *Civilisation des Etats Unis*, 2013, p. 184.

¹⁴ Dinesh D'Souza, OP. Cit., p. 245.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jean Eric Branaa, *American Civilisation*, 2015, p. 160.

¹⁷ Dinesh D' Souza, OP. Cit., p. 260.

According to surveys made all along the 20th century, black people were more victimized by imprisonment than white people. Indeed, one can assert that young African Americans were more convicted of murders than young white people. This continued to be a fact of American life until the 21st century. As an example, the events that took place in Ferguson in 2014 have proved that racial injustice is still a defining factor of American life.¹⁸

One has to refer to the young and unarmed teenager, Michael Brown, who was shot and killed on August 9th, 2014, by Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in Ferguson, Missouri, a suburb of St Louis. The shooting had caused protests especially after the jury had decided not to indict the police officer.¹⁹

One cannot answer the question of how much racism still exists in the US. However, one can show and prove that racial discrimination is still apparent in areas of job hiring, mortgage lending, and criminal justice.²⁰ For example, in mortgage lending, a survey made in 1993 showed that the Boston Federal Reserve Study had revealed that 38% of blacks and 27% of Hispanics were refused loans, as compared with only 17% of whites.²¹

Therefore, one has to say that the civil rights gained by African Americans are threatened by the numerous forms of inequality and prejudice that persist within American society. Despite the great advances made by the black community in the US, African Americans are still suffering from all kinds of injustice.

¹⁸ Jean Eric Branaa, OP. Cit., p. 161.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 330.

²⁰ Dinesh D'Souza, OP. Cit., p. 276.

²¹ Ibid., p.280.

4.4 The Situation of African Americans in the Post Civil Rights Era

It is clear that neither the Civil Rights Movement nor the Black Power movements of the 20th century had succeeded to achieve racial equality in the US. From the Civil War to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's, Americans have had many opportunities to bring about racial equality; however, the problem of racism remains deeply rooted in American society.

Even after King's claim of Universal Human Rights, declaring that race was no longer an impediment to political, economic or social advances, the US is still facing the crisis of racial poverty. In spite of the huge progress made by African Americans since the 1960's, black people are often regarded as second class citizens. The black population remains the poorest in the nation and very few American cities are desegregated.

4.4.1 The impact of the Civil Rights Movement on Race Relations in the US

Race has been and remains a major problem in American society. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's had transformed the American life; however, race constitutes a dominating issue leaving the gains toward equality unachieved. The Civil Rights Movement was able to overthrow the Southern Jim Crow regime and served as a model for other movements both in America and abroad. One wonders what could be the future of Black people without the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. The latter was considered as one of the major developments of the twentieth century.²²

²² Aldon D Morris, *A Retrospective on the Civil Rights Movement : Political and intellectual Landmarks*, , available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/223515>. Source: Annual Review of Sociology, Vol 25 (1999), p 517.

The Jim Crow regime had characterised American society in the 1950's.²³ This system was designed to control Blacks politically, socially, and to exploit them economically. African Americans had launched protests to attack directly racial inequality. As a result, the passage of the Brown v Board of Education ruling declared racially segregated schools unconstitutional.

African Americans were filled with hope by this ruling, believing that it was the end of legal racial segregation. During the Cold War years, the issue of American racism was an impediment to an American foreign policy, trying to persuade African nations to align with America. Indeed, America's treatment of Black people was an obstacle to become the major superpower because racism and democracy were opposing ideologies.²⁴

One has to understand why a movement led by a relatively powerless group was able to overthrow the Jim Crow system and how it became a model for other protest movements in America and abroad. The example of the Montgomery Bus boycott shows that it had mobilized an entire community to protest against racial segregation. It lasted for over a year and revealed that Black culture was rooted in protest tradition. Consequently, the Montgomery Bus Boycott gave power to Black people, requiring them to engage in collective action.

²³ Ibid., p.518
²⁴ Ibid., p.522.

Other protests occurred throughout the South including sit-ins, freedom rides²⁵, mass marches, and jailings. It was during the mid 1960's that the modern Civil Rights Movement became a powerful weapon against Jim Crow.²⁶ These protests led White people to react violently in order to defeat the movement; however, this brutality was diffused by national and international media, as was the case in Birmingham, Alabama, 1963, when the world was watching images on their screens of Black people being attacked by White policemen with dogs and fire bombs.²⁷

These images had outraged both the national and international communities on the abuses of the black community in the US. Therefore, one can say that the Civil Rights Movement had taught the nation and the world an unforgettable lesson, that a minority group in the US that is sufficiently organised, was capable of producing social change within American society.

4.4.2 The Impact of Hurricane Katrina on the African American Community

One needs to give a clear example of how racism still affects American society by making an allusion to Hurricane Katrina, which had affected the poorest black communities of New Orleans, in 2005. These people had suffered from death and disease, due to the slow reaction of the state and federal authorities in order to bring aid to poor black people.²⁸

²⁵ Freedom rides : The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) dispatched black protestors to ride on interstate buses in the spring of 1961 as a way of publicizing the south's defiance of a year-old Supreme Court ruling desegregating interstate transportation. Members of the Ku Klux Klan beat the freedom riders and burned their bus in Anniston, Alabama, and a white mob attacked the protestors in Birmingham. When the freedom riders suffered even more brutal attacks in Montgomery, President John F. Kennedy ordered federal marshals to defend them. Only in the face of continued protests and attacks on the freedom riders, however, did Kennedy finally order the Interstate Commerce Commission to enforce the Supreme Court's ruling. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *OP. Cit.*, p. 108.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.525.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 526.

²⁸ David Mauk and John Oakland, *American Civilization, an Introduction*, 2009, p. 98.

One can say that Hurricane Katrina had allowed Americans to discover the links between race, poverty, justice and democracy in the US.²⁹ Images through the media had clarified the disastrous effects of poverty in America. This disaster had also proved that poverty and segregation are part of American society where democratic ideals have not yet been achieved. Poor black people constituted the vast majority of victims being traumatized by the storm; this was not due to their blackness, but to their poverty.³⁰

The population of New Orleans had suffered from extreme levels of poverty and racial segregation. It had been reported that the poverty rate was 28% in 2000, whereas the nation counted only 12%.³¹ The black poverty rate had reached 35%, more than three times the white rate which attained 11%.³² Moreover, the city of New Orleans is considered as one of the ten most racially segregated cities of the American nation.

It had been reported that before Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans had suffered from many economic problems, an unskilled population and an obvious lack of opportunity for those poor people. Racism and a lack of concern for victims were characteristics of government neglect to the hurricane's victims. Images of African Americans and their flooded homes were shown on television and the internet. Most of them had to wait days before being evacuated.³³

²⁹ Chester Hartman and Gregory D. Squires, Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina, 2006, p.61.

³⁰ Ibid., p.63.

³¹ Ibid., p.3.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., p.52.

It can be said that Hurricane Katrina had a great impact on the African American community, because it had raised the discontent of both the American nation, and the international community. In fact, journalists all over the world were outraged by the catastrophic situation of African Americans, who were struggling to survive in an abandoned city, where government had very slow reaction to what had happened. Therefore, American society became more conscious of the problem of racism that threatened the safety of its citizens.³⁴

It is said that African American women were the most affected by poverty.³⁵ They were the lowest earners; consequently, they were the least equipped with the necessary resources to protect themselves from these storms. When President Bush gave his speech in September 2005, he had stated that:

“We have a duty to control this poverty with bold action”³⁶

However, this action had been carried out extremely slowly. It became clear that in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, President Bush’s popularity went down by 42%, and 57% of African Americans were dissatisfied by the government’s response to Hurricane Katrina.³⁷

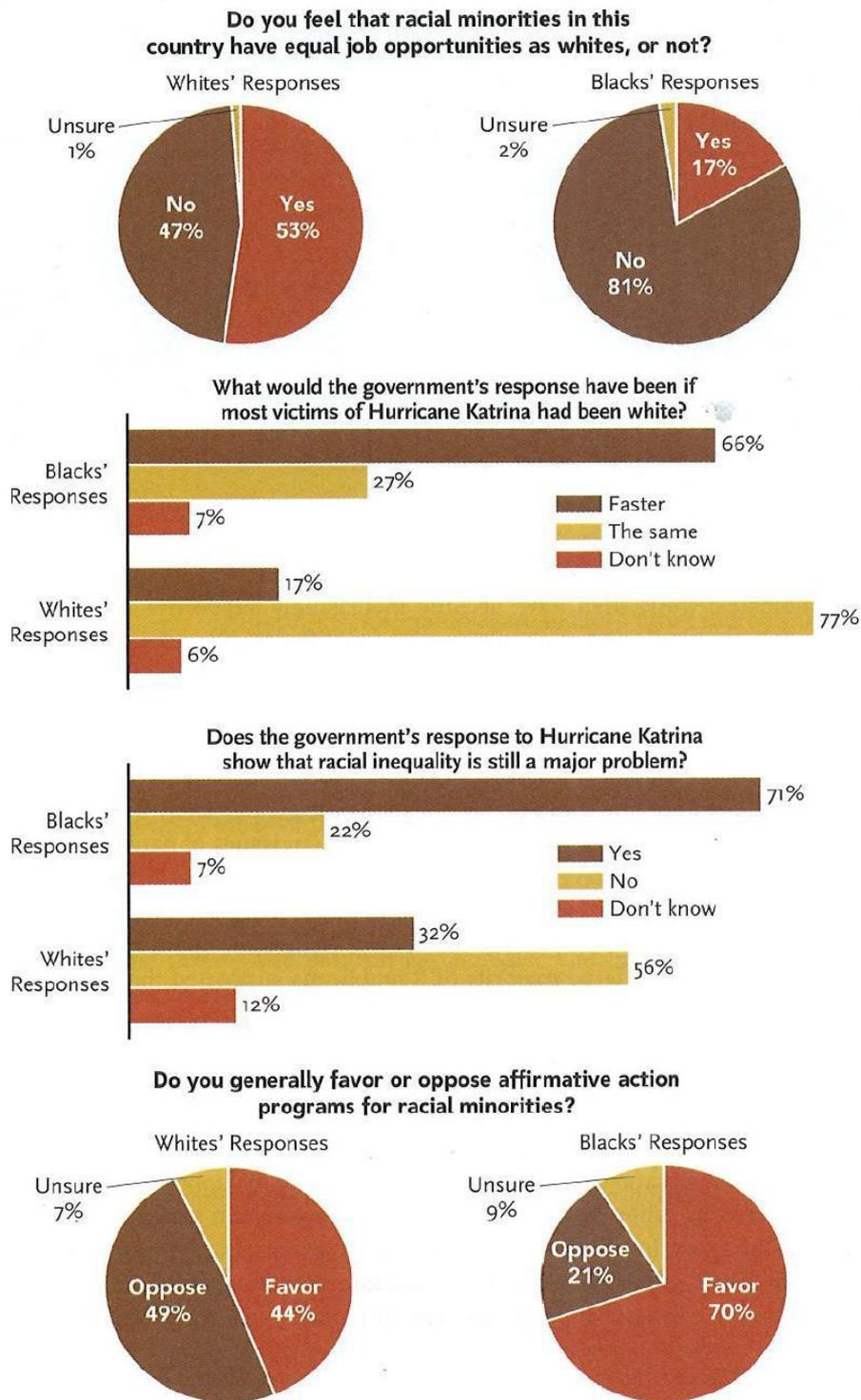
³⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

³⁵ Ibid., p.91.

³⁶ Ibid., p.98.

³⁷ Pauline Maier, Merritt Roe Smith, *Inventing America*, p. 1018.

Figure 4: DISAGREEMENT AMONG BLACKS AND WHITES



Source: Theodore J. Lowi, American Government Power and Purpose, 2011, p. 259.

4.4.3 The Relationship between Poverty and Human Rights

The problem of poverty is a complex and a controversial issue as it is directly related to human rights in the world. This was made clear by the World Bank which stated that:

Of the world's 6 billion people, 2.8 billion live on less than two dollars a day and 1.2 billion live on less than one dollar a day. Out of every 100 infants, 6 do not survive a full year, and 8 do not live to see their fifth birthday. Out of every 100 infants who reach school age, 9 boys and 14 girls do not attend school³⁸

One can say that the problem of poverty is divided between “income poverty” consisting of an insufficient income to satisfy minimum needs, and “human poverty” referring to malnutrition and diseases.³⁹ To make an end to poverty, it is extremely necessary to guarantee human rights to poor people.

The link between human rights and poverty is the fact that people are subjected to discrimination; as a result, one can say that poverty is an abuse of human rights, and discrimination is the consequence that people had their rights violated, so they were thrown into a situation of poverty.

The rights that are denied because of poverty can be either: civil, political, social, economic, or cultural rights. If people are excluded from employment, housing, or education, this can be considered as a violation of the most basic rights as the right to life.⁴⁰ Then, our goal is that human rights should function as a guarantee to avoid poverty that works to violate human dignity by depriving those people of their fundamental rights. As a matter of fact, poverty would be eradicated if people all over the world enjoyed their rights to employment, housing, food, health, education, and an adequate standard of living.

³⁸ Elizabeth Salmon G, The Long Road in the Fight against Poverty and its Promising Encounter with Human Rights, 2007, p. 152.

³⁹ Ibid., p.154.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.157.

4.4.4 The Rising Police Violence against African Americans in the US

The American society has always been characterised by violence. Crime and delinquency have been social problems for a long time; moreover, police violence against innocent Black people at the hands of white policemen had become problematic within the African American community.⁴¹

After the election of a Black President, African Americans wanted to end old racist days, and to build a new society based on tolerance and equality. However, the lives of young Black Americans were threatened by the brutality of white policemen's guns.

One has to mention that white people still believed that Blacks' status was inferior and disadvantaged in comparison to their own, especially in domains concerning income, employment, health, housing, and criminal justice. Black poverty, joblessness, drugs, crime and violence remained permanent within the African American community even after the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's.

It had been reported that Michael Brown, an eighteenth years old Black American had died, shot by a white policeman in Ferguson, Missouri, on 9 August 2014, provoking worldwide anger and revolt.⁴² Simply because he was walking on the street instead of the pavement, this young Black man had been shot eleven times, twice in the head and nine times in the chest, while on his way home.

Four years before Michael Brown's killing, on 5, August, 2014, another young Black man of twenty-two years old, named John Crawford was deadly shot by two white policemen in a department store in Ohio, while he was choosing a toy pellet gun to buy.⁴³

⁴¹ Foreign Affairs, p. 9

⁴² Leslie Gordon Gaffe, Black America VS White People, New African, October 2014, p. 81.

⁴³ Ibid.

One can say that Black people in the US were considered as a danger to American society; therefore, these people were hunted like wild animals. According to a survey made by the FBI, at least one hundred African Americans are killed by white policemen each year. The US bureau of statistics shows that whites commit more crimes than Blacks do. However, Blacks are arrested more often than whites, and remain in prison for longer periods.⁴⁴

According to the US bureau of statistics, much prejudice remains today. It is said that one in 15 African Americans are imprisoned, as opposed to one in every 106 white men.⁴⁵ This problem had its roots in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement, and in the riots that occurred in most American cities in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Despite the victories of the Civil Rights Movement, the growth of the Black middle class, and the decline of poverty rates, Black incarceration remains a controversial issue with regard to their political and economic progress.

The problem of rising white police brutality on innocent black people becomes a problem that needs worldwide reaction. International organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International or the United Nations must put an end to these atrocities committed on innocent Black people.

4.5 The Impact of Racial Politics during the Election of Barack Obama

A nation whose Constitution defended slavery would elect an African American President, whereas two centuries ago, those Black people were denied their fundamental human rights, including the right to vote. In a nation where race has been called "the American Dilemma", Obama's surprising victory was a proof of the transformation of race in American politics.⁴⁶ The question is how, in just half a century after the adoption of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, did an African American become the first Black President of the United States?

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Frederick C. Harris and Robert C. Lieberman, Racial Inequality after Racism, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2015, p. 14.

⁴⁶ Charles P. Henry, Op. Cit., p. 200.

4.5.1 Barack Obama and the Politics of Racial Representation

Barack Obama's success in American politics was the proof that the victories of the Civil Rights Movement introduced a new era of African American leadership; therefore, this had brought political, social, and economic changes in African Americans' lives. Following the protections guaranteed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 had had a great influence on the role of African American racial representatives.⁴⁷ African Americans were able to elect other Black people to higher positions; For example, in the post civil rights era, an increased number of African Americans were elected to the American Congress.

One can deduce that African American politics and the idea of racial representation exemplified by Douglass, Washington and King have witnessed a new revolution. African Americans who were elected to public office were all legitimate, respectable, and supported by both black and white people. These descendants of Black Africa live in an era that is more significant on matters of race.⁴⁸

Barack Obama's victory for the US Senate in 2004 was surprising due to the fact that he was only the fourth African American elected to this position in African American history.⁴⁹ Accordingly, his unforgettable success in his bid for President of the US was an illustration of the changing dynamics of race in American politics.

We cannot forget that Obama had defeated other white candidates for his presidential election, including Hillary Clinton and John Mc Cain. An African American man was able to gain support of American whites. The question which remains to ask is that: what made this man so different from other African Americans who had sought the presidency like Jesse Jackson or Shirley Chisholm?

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 208.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 209.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 200.

4.5.2 Barack Obama's Road to the White House

Obama's campaign for the presidency of the United States illustrated racial progress, and the significant role of African American representatives in a post-racial America. Indeed Barack Obama had continued in the way of Douglass, Washington and King, becoming the most prominent African American representative of the time. He had gained a high level of legitimacy not only among African Americans but also among American Whites.⁵⁰

Unlike Douglass, Washington and King, Obama had been elected to the highest office and became the most influential African American political leader. Barack Obama had to clarify issues of race, racism, and inequality in America. He believed that racism remained a controversial issue among African Americans. We must not forget that Obama had benefited from the support of a multiracial American electorate, and had to assume a conflicted role of the actual African American representative.⁵¹

Black politics had been transformed by the election of an African American President. This election would be the turning point in the struggle for equality because Barack Obama was a Black man who had moved beyond racial politics. His campaign was the biggest and the best financed in the history of American politics because it involved minorities as well as white people.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 210.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 211.

4.5.3 The Impact of Black American Voters on Obama's Election

African American voters had largely contributed to Barack Obama's election as the first African American President of the US. It is said that 96% of African Americans voted for Obama, 18% higher than in 2004.⁵² The 2008 election was the most successful presidential election with more than 130 million voters.⁵³ Obama had won 69 million votes, becoming the largest vote winner in American history. In 2008, 43% of white Americans voted for Obama, whereas John Kerry received only 41% of the white vote in 2004.⁵⁴

In South Carolina, Black voters represented 40%, giving Barack Obama a major victory over Hillary Clinton and John Edwards.⁵⁵ According to the polls, Obama had received 229,352 votes (54%) compared to Hillary Clinton with 114,351 votes (27%), and 79,329 votes (19%) for John Edwards.⁵⁶ It has been estimated that 75% of voters in South Carolina wanted to elect an African American President. Moreover, the votes of African American women (58%) were greatly significant for the election of Barack Obama.⁵⁷

Barack Obama's election to the Presidency was an unprecedented victory in the history of the United States. This great success had its roots in the African American leadership tradition, from Frederick Douglass to W. E. B. Dubois, up to the late 20th century Martin Luther King. Barack Obama was an idol for Black people in a country that had long struggled for equality and justice.⁵⁸

⁵² Ibid., p. 28.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Gwen Ifill, Op. Cit., p. 16.

⁵⁵ Charles P. Henry, Op. Cit., p. 37.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 42.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.52.

One has to affirm that, without the Black vote, Barack Obama would not have won the Presidency of the United States. Indeed, Barack Obama’s successful election must be remembered by future generations of African Americans in particular, and Americans in general, as an unforgettable historical election of the first African American President of the United States.

Table 1: Racial Breakdown of vote in South Carolina Primary January 26, 2008

Voter Category	Barack Obama	Hilary Clinton	John Edwards
Black	78%	19%	2%
White	24%	36%	40%
Men	54%	23%	23%
Women	54%	30%	16%
Black Men	80%	17%	3%
White Men	27%	28%	45%
Black Women	78%	20%	2%
White Women	22%	42%	36%

Source: Washington Post (January 27, 2008) From Charles P. Henry, Robert L. Allen & Robert Chrisman, The Obama Phenomenon, 2011, p.38

Table 2: Black Voter Bloc Support for Obama in Key Primaries

2008 Democratic Primaries	Black Support for Obama
South Carolina (January 26)	85%
Georgia (February 5)	88%
Super Tuesday 22 States (February 5)	80%*
Wisconsin (February 19)	89%
Texas (March 4)	85%
Ohio (March 4)	89%
Pennsylvania (April 22)	90%
North Carolina (May 6)	91%
Indiana (May 6)	92%

* Average percentage for 22 states

Source : Exit Polls. From Ibid., p. 43.

Table 3: Voters' Support Pattern in Selected Primaries

	Hillary Clinton	Barack Obama
Ohio (March 4)		
Black Voters	11%	89%
White Voters	61%	38%
Texas (March 4)		
Black Voters	15%	85%
White Voters	55%	44%
Pennsylvania (April 22)		
Black Voters	10%	90%
White Voters	62%	38%
Indiana (May 6)		
Black Voters	9%	92%
White Voters	60%	40%
North Carolina (May 6)		
Black Voters	9%	91%
White Voters	60%	40%

Source: Exit Polls. From Ibid.

One has to notice that the Black Voter Bloc during the 2008 Democratic primaries gave us a meaningful explanation to Obama's historic campaign. It will also bring out an important basis to understand the overwhelming success made by the Obama- Biden campaign that defeated the Republican Mc Cain- Palin in the 2008 Presidential election.⁵⁹ More than 80% of the Black population had voted for Obama, mobilizing democratic states like Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan. The Black Voter Bloc had enormously helped Senator Barack Obama to win the delegate over Senator Hillary Clinton and therefore, to gain the Democratic Party nomination in August 2008.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.46.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.47.

Table 4: Black Voters' Preference in Selected States in 2008 Election.

Selected States	Black Percent of Voting Age Pop	Obama-Biden	McCain-Palin
Alabama	25,0%	98%	2%
Arkansas	15,0%	94%	4%
California	8,0%	95%	5%
Florida	14,0%	96%	4%
Illinois	15,0%	96%	3%
Louisiana	29,3%	94%	4%
Maryland	29,6%	94%	6%
Michigan	13,8%	97%	3%
Missouri	10,8%	93%	7%
New York	15,9%	100%	0%
North Carolina	21,4%	95%	5%
Ohio	11,3%	97%	2%
Pennsylvania	9,5%	95%	5%
Texas	12,5%	98%	2%
Virginia	19,7%	92%	8%

Source: David Bositis, Blacks and the 2008 Elections: A Preliminary Analysis (Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, December 2008). From: *Ibid.*, p. 55.

Barack Obama became the forty fourth President of the United States, representing over two centuries of struggle for racial equality and civil rights. His election was the best proof for the continued advocacy of the American Dream; however, will Obama address issues of race, and is he going to put African American concerns in his political agenda? On the problem of race in the US he had responded as follows:

Obviously I am honored and gratified to be a part of this journey to change how race is viewed and dealt with in this country. But I think it is important to understand that it's not just me, or African Americans that want to see better race relations...And so I think the burden is going to be on all of us to continue to make progress on these fronts. I think there are some specific things that we should do as a nation, some that are specific to civil rights. I think it is important to make sure that our civil rights laws are enforced...The biggest challenge that we face right now in improving race relations have to do with the universal concerns of Americans across color lines. If we get a healthcare system that covers more people, is more affordable, reduces costs, emphasized prevention, that's going to be good for everybody. And it will be especially good for blacks and Latinos who are more likely to be uninsured and more likely to die of an early age of diseases that are preventable. If we are creating jobs throughout this economy, then, you know, African Americans and Latinos who are disproportionately unemployed, they're going to be swept up in that rising tide. So, I think that more than anything is going to improve race relations, a sense of common progress, where everybody feels like they have a chance at the American Dream⁶¹

4.6 Barack Obama's Place in American Politics

Obama's goal was to transform the nation, seeking to promote social justice, and reduce inequalities within the different categories of people. Since his election to the White House, President Obama had adopted liberal policy changes concerning education, healthcare, immigration, and banking.

One knows that Barack Obama had been more concerned with international concerns. He had focused on counterterrorism and climate change, and succeeded to prevent violent wars in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. Moreover, he dedicated special attention to domestic reforms, such as healthcare, financial regulation, and Gay rights, allowing him to win reelection for a second term in office.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 292.

One has to point out that Barack Obama's goals had been to focus on the Israeli Palestinian peace process, by forbidding any further settlements in the West Bank, by combating Al Qaeda and its allies in Afghanistan, by ending the War in Iraq, and by insisting on domestic socioeconomic concerns, rather than military intervention. Moreover, he insisted on the fact that the security of the US was in direct relation with that of the rest of the world.⁶²

When he wrote his memoir "Audacity of Hope" in 2006, Barack Obama believed that the American government had a lot to do in terms of foreign policy. He stated that:

Our tendency to view nations and conflicts through the prism of the Cold War; our tireless promotion of American-style capitalism and multinational corporations; the tolerance and occasional encouragements of tyranny, corruption, and environmental degradation when it served our interests... In other words, our record is mixed⁶³

One has to point out that Obama had spent his childhood in Indonesia, and this had left a great impact on his interest in world affairs and international politics. As a result, he understood the dangerous effects on the world security about problems such as the Cold War, nuclear disarmament, and Apartheid in South Africa.

Nevertheless, many politicians agree that Obama didn't succeed to bring positive solutions to issues concerning national and international security in the US, especially in the Middle East. For example in Iraq, President Obama had allowed the complete withdrawal of US troops; however, Islamic terrorism had left the country more devastated than ever.

⁶² Colin Dueck, The Obama Doctrine, 2015, p. 46.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.43.

It is well-known that when Obama ran for President in 2008, he believed that most US foreign policy problems were due to the American failed policies under George W. Bush, and that the US should focus on more international cooperation. However, conflicts and rivalries existed long before Obama was president, and are expected to continue in the future.

One can say that Obama's administration succeeded in dealing with the financial crisis of 2008, in combating Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, and in initiating the process of nuclear disarmament. Moreover, President Obama avoided the use of military intervention in Syria, calling for the overthrow of Assad, and preventing from growing Islamist extremism.⁶⁴ In Libya as well, Obama had encouraged the overthrow of Gaddafi, hoping to provide a democratic government for the country; consequently, Libya became a land for terrorists and violent jihadists.

One has to assert that President Barack Obama had governed through both domestic and foreign crises. Although he had failed in Libya and Syria, he succeeded to avoid major disasters, especially in the Middle East.⁶⁵ He assumed that US military intervention in the region would only worsen the situation. However, he extended the use of special operation forces with the aim of limiting terrorist menaces on the US.

President Obama had considered the issue of terrorism seriously and refused to use the term "radical Islamic terrorism". However, Libya was considered as Obama's failure as Europe and the Arab League were unable to build Libya after the overthrow of Al Qaddafi from his country. When President Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, on December 10, 2009, he had declared:

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.103.

⁶⁵ Joe Klein, *Judging Obama's Legacy, Yes, He Did*, Foreign Affairs, July/Aug 2017, p.136.

I make this statement mindful of what Martin Luther King JR said in this same ceremony years ago: violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones. As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr King's life work, I am living testimony to the moral force of non-violence. I know there's nothing weak, nothing passive, nothing naïve, in the creed and lives of Gandhi and king. But as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation, I cannot be guided by their examples alone. I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people. For make no mistake: Evil does not exist in the world. A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms. To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism; it is a recognition of history, the imperfection of man and the limits of reason⁶⁶

One can say that President Obama had been an outstanding person whose leadership helped save the country in difficult times. However, America had spent too much in wars than to protect Human Rights. The US should insist on diplomatic rather than military intervention; moreover, it must give more importance to international challenges such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation and climate change.

4.7 Barack Obama's Presidency and its Impact on the Problem of Racism in the US

When President Obama took office, he found himself dealing with the most important problem affecting US society: racism. One has to point out that Obama's election came at a time of apprehension concerning race, immigration, and America's status in a post- 9/11 world.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.140.

Barack Obama's election and his Presidency changed the significance of American democracy; moreover, his victory announced the emergence of a post-racial America. It had been assumed that an African American President would lead a coalition of African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American voters to determine a new vision of American citizenship.⁶⁷

One question comes to our minds: What was Obama's dream for America? Was it the American dream? Or was it Martin Luther King's dream? One can affirm that Obama's presidency had completed the Civil Rights protests that occurred in the 1960's.⁶⁸ Obama's proponents, as well as his opponents spent years believing that he had failed; however, they were convinced that he had brought about a post-racial society. Moreover, he had promised to transform the healthcare system, to do something on climate change, and to avoid another economic crisis.⁶⁹

One of the greatest achievements of the Civil Rights Movement was the struggle for racial justice. The problem of racial discrimination has been diminished, but by no means eradicated from American society. Obama's election had been a wide political breakthrough that contributed to the improvement of race relations in the US. Indeed, during the 2008 Presidential election, a large number of white voters had supported Barack Obama. This is what made this election so particular.⁷⁰

It had been reported that during Obama's Presidency, the number of black immigrants was increasing, and many black officials have been elected in both national and local levels, among them Caribbean, Haitian, and Jamaican candidates who won electoral offices across the nation.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com.national>, Obama's Legacy, by Peniel Joseph, 22/04/2016.

⁶⁸ Jonathan Chait, *Audacity*, How Barack Obama defied his critics and created a legacy that will prevail, 2017, p.237.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.238.

⁷⁰ Randall Kennedy, *The Persistence of the color line*, 2012, p. 250.

⁷¹ Christina M. Greer, *Black Ethnics*, 2013, p. 141.

One knows that Barack Obama entered the White House as a living symbol, breaking the chains of discrimination that existed for two centuries. When he took office, racism represented an unprecedented issue in American history. Moreover, he had the duty to rule the world's most powerful nation, and was considered as the hero of the African American community.

In his early administration, Barack Obama was doing his best to liberate US forces from two long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, whereas the country was suffering from a great recession. African Americans and all ethnic minorities had voted for him with the hope of improving their lives. As a result, one has to ask the following question: did race relations get better or worse under Obama? And did his election create a post-racial American society?

One has to draw the conclusion that Obama's election was a historical moment with a great meaning; however, it did not bring definitive solutions to the problem of racial equality in the US. Indeed, Obama's Presidency didn't provide racial harmony within American society. This was clear with tensions created after the shootings of African Americans causing many protests in several cities.

Therefore, one has to assert that it took America more than two centuries to elect a Black President, and it will take many years to come to end up with the problem of racial equality in the US. Obama's Presidency was the culmination of the Civil Rights Movement initiated in the 1960's. His election was a notable success because it united all Americans over one goal: the promise of racial equality.

4.8 The Ambivalence of Racial Identity in Post-Racial America

The term racial identity gives evidence that race, and racial identity, are deeply rooted in American people's minds. Nowadays, one wonders about the significance of a post-racial country if differences between White and blacks are even greater and have clear racial and historical foundations. What is the significance of a post-racial country when the penal system convicts black people for murders they did not commit, and where these people are illegally imprisoned?⁷²

One knows that President Obama had done a lot concerning criminal justice, reforms that helped minorities, protecting hundreds of thousands of immigrants from deportation, and appointing racially diverse leaders to key jobs. Moreover he brought back America from the worst recession since the Great Depression, and expanded healthcare that secured insurance for millions of minorities. Still, Obama's Presidency didn't provide racial harmony within American society.

Recent surveys have shown huge gaps in how blacks and whites view race. It had been reported that about 88 % said the nation needed to continue making changes for blacks to have equal rights with whites. For whites, that number was lower, about 53%. It had been reported that about 51% of blacks said Obama had made progress on improving race relations, compared with 28% percent of whites. The poll found 32 % percent of whites blaming Obama for making race relations worse, compared with 5% of blacks.⁷³

⁷² Ibid., p.38.

⁷³ Available at : <http://apnews.com>Obama> Racial Legacy: Pride, promise, regret and deep rift, by Sharon Cohen and Deepti Hajela, 04/01/2017.

Table 5: Perceptions of Race Relations

A Pew survey released in 2016 found wide gaps in how Americans of different races view race relations in the US

Race Relations in the US are

	Black	Hispanic	White
Generally bad	61%	58%	48%
Getting better	15%	16%	20%
Getting worse	37%	41%	39%

President Barack Obama has...

Made progress in improving

Race relations	51%	39%	28%
Tried but failed to make progress	34%	36%	24%
Made race relations worse	5%	13%	32%

Data based on survey of US adults Feb 29- May 8, 2016

Source: Pew Research Center.⁷⁴

One has to point out that half a century after the Civil Rights Movement, Black Americans' objective is to achieve full acceptance in every aspect of life. History will decide about the importance, success, or failure of Obama's Presidency. On the whole, his election did not and cannot resolve the problem of racism in the US.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

4.9 Contemporary Racism within American Society

In a country where American people hated slavery, racial segregation and discrimination in all its forms, the stability of its citizens is still menaced by the problem of racism. Racism towards Black people in America has nothing to do with immigration or nationality. Instead, it is a problem of criminalization and alienation of young black people. It had been confirmed that the number of African Americans who consider racism as a big problem in the US had grown especially since 2009, the first year of Obama's Presidency.

It is said that African Americans are more vulnerable to shootings than white people within US society. Moreover, they are often wrongly convicted for crimes they did not commit. Many cases of racial discrimination occur every day in the US; for example, the killing of Trayvon Martin, a black teenager assassinated on February, 26th, 2012, in Florida, by a white police officer, had had a profound impact on the life of Barack Obama. In Washington D.C, on July 19th, 2013, he had declared:

You know, when Trayvon Martin was first shot I said that this could have been my son. Another way of saying that is Trayvon Martin could have been me thirty years ago. And when you think about why, in the African American community at least, there's a lot of pain around what happened here, I think it's important to recognize that the African American community is looking at this issue through a set of experiences and a history that doesn't go away⁷⁵.

Each successive generation seems to be making progress in changing attitudes when it comes to race. It doesn't mean we're in a post-racial society. It doesn't mean that racism is eliminated...And so we have to be vigilant and we have to work on these issues, and that along this long, difficult journey, we're becoming a more perfect union, not a perfect union, but a more perfect union.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ E. J. Dionne, Joy Ann Reid, We Are the Change we Seek, 2017, p.235.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 241

One can say that racism is still threatening American society; the African American community in the US had had a long experience of violence, and oppression. In its fight against racism and poverty, the US has the hard task to protect human rights for all people, to end police brutality in minority communities, and to reform the criminal justice system in order to make the world more peaceful.

One has to assert that the United States had always been a champion of human rights, and should remain the leader in advocating democracy and human rights. One knows that the US had been involved in two wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that the 11th of September attacks were considered as a betrayal of American values, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

The history of racism in the US is also the story of generations of Africans who were determined to gain freedom from the moment they landed on American shores. The stories of these people are illustrated throughout famous Black leaders, who fought in order to gain full American citizenship.

It is well known that racism faced by African Americans had its historical roots in oppression. After more than two centuries of continuous fight for racial equality, racism is still a fact of American life, making African Americans suffer from many forms of discrimination in their daily lives.

Since the 1960's, most forms of racial discrimination have been prohibited by law, and a large number of civil rights laws had promoted political, social, and economic equality between black and white Americans. Despite these efforts, racial equality has remained a dilemma in American society.

4.10 Civil Rights in the Aftermath of 9/11 Attacks

One of the events that changed America and the whole world was the terrorist attack that occurred on the American soil on 9/11/2001. These dramatic events had opened a new chapter in US history, the War on Terrorism. American troops had invaded Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, because they were in possession of weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, a hostile sentiment grew towards Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians.⁷⁷

Following the 11th September attacks, American politics became more concerned with Human rights. One knows that the US government reinforced security measures, considering these attacks as a violation of its civil liberties. Moreover, these attacks were against the moral values defining the American nation. President Bush had declared:

This new enemy seeks to destroy our freedom and impose its views. We value life; the terrorists ruthlessly destroy it. We value education; the terrorists do not believe women should be educated, or should have healthcare, or should leave their homes. We value the right to speak our minds; for the terrorists, free expression can be grounds for execution. We respect people of all faiths and welcome the free practice of religion; our enemy wants to dictate how to think and how to worship, even to their fellow Muslims...We wage a war to save civilization itself⁷⁸

President George W. Bush had focused on the fact that Muslims and Arabs were not the enemy, by making clear that America was a country advocating religious tolerance and mutual respect that were the basis of American identity. He said:

Not all Arabs are terrorists and not all Muslims are enemies⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Betita Martinez, We Have Not Been Moved, 2012, p. 302.

⁷⁸ Joseph Margulies, What changed When Everything Changed, 9/11 and the Making of National Identity, 2013, p. 120.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.123.

One can say that the campaign against terrorism united Americans of all faiths, backgrounds, and nationalities. Moreover, the 11/09 events were considered as a revival of the tumultuous years of the 1960s. Liberty and justice were important to American values, and civil rights for every American were reawakened in the beginning of the 21st century.

One knows that Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and South Asian Americans came to America searching for a better life, to be more respected, and to be an integral part of American society. On 15th September, 2001, at the Islamic Center in Washington, President Bush had said:

The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace. They represent evil and war... When we think of Islam, we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world, billions of people find comfort and peace, and that's made brothers and sisters out of every race, out of every race.⁸⁰

These attacks that targeted the US on 11th September 2001 and the War on Terror that followed had brought a new vision of race; at the same time, these events had marked a new era of religious tolerance, and pluralism in the US. However, most Americans considered Islam as a menace to human rights in general and to American freedom in more specific terms.

One can assert that in the aftermath of 9/11 September attacks, American people embraced the religious diversity of American society, by integrating more people from Pakistan, India, Indonesia, and some African countries.⁸¹ Moreover, the war on terrorism had conducted the US to reexamine the criminal justice system, and the end of torture in American prisons.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.126.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.171.

4.11 The Future of Civil Rights in the US

One knows that the United Nations⁸² was established to preserve peace between states after the Second World War. It had the duty to deal with individual civil and political rights, as well as the right to basic provisions like food, healthcare, and accommodation.

After the Cold War, peace and security were threatened by civil conflicts represented in humanitarian and refugee crises, infringements of human rights, and problems such as poverty, and inequality. By the mid 1990's, the United Nations had been involved in preserving peace and security; for example, it became concerned with issues such as terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11th.

The United States had always been a leader of human rights, and should continue in advocating human rights, democracy, and peace around the world. The American nation should engage in diplomatic rather than military intervention with the rest of the world. Moreover, it needs to defend universal political and human rights.

⁸² United Nations: was formally organized on June 26, 1945, at a conference in San Francisco, where its basic charter was drafted. Like the earlier failed League of Nations, the United Nations sought to promote international peace and security. It voted to defend South Korea in 1950, condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and permitted the use of force against Iraq in 1990. It had also played a peacekeeping role in the Middle East and helped to end civil wars in Guatemala and Mozambique. During the Balkan crisis in 1999, the UN resisted pressure from the United States to send ground troops into Kosovo to force an end to the civil war, but did endorse air raids on the Yugoslavian capital of Belgrade. The UN, which is a huge organization, has a number of smaller organizations that focus on specific goals. Among the best-known of these smaller groups are the UN Children's Fund, better known as UNICEF, which is devoted to promoting the long-term survival, protection, and development of children; UNESCO, the United Nations educational, scientific, and cultural organization, which promotes education for all, cultural development around the world, protection of the world's natural and cultural heritage, international cooperation in science, and freedom of the press and of communication, and WHO, the World Health Organization, which tries to solve health problems around the world. US opponents of the UN, nevertheless, criticize it as being too expensive and inefficient and as an infringement on US sovereignty. From: Harvard Sitkoff, OP. Cit., p. 256.

Broadly speaking, the Obama Administration was slow to provide solutions to the Syrian refugee crisis. It imposed harsh detention rules, holding families in immigration camps that were in violation with US human rights and refugee protection contracts. Moreover, Obama's Administration policies in the Middle East have caused regional insecurity and instability, by supporting authoritarian regimes, like Assad's regime that assaulted its own population.⁸³

In 2008, President Obama had made a statement on Human Rights, in which he clarified his goals:

When the US stands up for human rights, by example at home and by effort abroad, we align ourselves with men and women around the world who struggle for the right to speak their minds, to choose their leaders, and to be treated with dignity and respect. We also strengthen our security and well-being because the abuse of human rights can feed many of the global dangers that we confront from armed conflict and humanitarian crises, to corruption and the spread of ideologies that promote hatred and violence⁸⁴

One has to point out that Obama's Presidency was marked by continuity rather than change. Despite the hope generated by Obama's Presidency in his eight years in office, one can say that human rights had been relegated to a secondary role concerning international peace and security. He had insisted that development, security and peace would be reached only through the principle of democracy. At his final speech at the United Nations general assembly, on 20th September, 2016, he had declared:

⁸³ Retrieved at : www.humanrightsfirst.org/default/files, President's Obama legacy on human rights, 11/01/2017

⁸⁴ Ibid.

I believe the road of true democracy remains the best path... because of our Democratic Constitution, because of our Bill of Rights, because of our ideals, ordinary people were able to organize, and march, and protest, and ultimately, those ideals won out, opened doors to women, minorities and workers in ways that made our economy more productive and turned our diversity into a strength, that gave innovators the chance to transform every area of human endeavor; that made it possible for someone like me to be elected President of the US⁸⁵

We must reject any forms of fundamentalism, or racism, or a belief in ethnic superiority that makes our traditional identities irreconcilable with modernity. Instead we need to embrace the tolerance that results from respect of all human beings⁸⁶

Therefore, one has to conclude that Obama's Presidency was successful in the way that it defended socio-economic segregation and inequality within American society. The US is not the same place as it was a generation ago; after the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's, it became a nation preaching pluralism and tolerance. Today, it is facing another period of uncertainty about the greatest threat to its security. In its fight against Islamist extremism, the US must always defend universal political and human rights in order to maintain the nation's identity.

It is noticeable that during the Civil rights Movement, when Martin Luther King gave his famous speech in August 1963, he wasn't addressing only people in front of him; he was speaking to future generations in order to give them the best solutions to achieve the "American Dream".⁸⁷ Indeed, he had paved the way to millions of Americans of different ethnic groups to the road of democracy.

⁸⁵ E.J. Dionne JR, and Joy Ann Reid, We Are the Change We Seek, 2017, p. 313.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 314

⁸⁷ Gwen Ifill, The Breakthrough, 2009, p. 242.

Conclusion

One can say that the Obama presidency was the culmination of the Civil Rights Movement initiated in the 1960's. He had tried to transcend race; however, racism is deeply rooted in American society. The Black community in the US will continue to claim social justice, and the struggle for racial equality continues because African Americans have a duty to challenge the highest ideals of American society.

History will decide about the success, or failure of Obama's Presidency. No election would eradicate racism in the US; but it is easier today to see that racism, once a barrier is now like a hurdle. Obama's historical election had had a great impact on the transformation of American society from a racist society to a more tolerant one.

One can conclude that the struggle of the Black community for equality and justice had brought a new meaning to democracy in the US. Barack Obama's election did not imply that complete racial equality has been achieved in the US. However, civil rights will remain a major political issue that will always defend the right to full citizenship for American people.

It is noticeable that human rights were used to protect the lives of marginalized people, and the poor, both in America, and in the rest of the world. The abuse of human rights is a dramatic issue throughout the world, as people still face a long and difficult road in their struggle to enjoy fully their human rights.

General Conclusion

The story of African Americans has not yet ended and the politics of right is and will remain an important part of the American political agenda. It was the struggle of Blacks for equality and justice that transformed the US from a “closed society” to a more open and egalitarian one. Civil rights is a major political issue in the US. Since the 1960’s, most forms of racist discrimination have been prohibited by law, and a large number of government programs have been designed to promote greater political, social and economic equality between Black and White Americans. Despite these efforts, racial equality has remained a dilemma in American society.

The problem of racism persists until nowadays. The Black middle class that rose in the 1970’s had moved to the suburbs and had gained the same opportunities as Whites.⁵²³ However, poor Black neighborhoods have been left behind. Ghettos are plagued with drugs, crime, violence, and high unemployment. This category of Black people represents a large Black underclass that was hit particularly hard by the economic crisis of 2008 as most of them suffered from firings and unemployment.⁵²⁴

In November 2008, Democratic Senator Barack Obama was elected as the nation’s first Black President after a historical campaign.⁵²⁵ His biracial background made him a bridge between races, and his successful bid for the presidency was the culmination of the Blacks’ struggle for equal rights and citizenship.

⁵²³ Fabien Fichaux, *Definitely British, Absolutely American*, 2011, p. 298.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.299

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

General Conclusion

Barack Obama inherited the most painful of all American struggles, the struggle for race; not the one cited in the Civil Rights Movement, but his election symbolized a narrative of moral and political progress. Barack Obama was born on the eve of the Civil Rights Movement. As a young boy, he had read texts of the Black Liberation Movement, slave narratives, the speeches of prominent Black leaders like Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, and Malcolm X, to cite just a few.⁵²⁶

He always sought to identify himself with the history of the African American community. Issued from a Kenyan father, and an Indonesian mother and grandparents, Barack Obama was raised on a multicultural island where he spoke one language at home, another at school, and another with his friends. He had developed strong oratory skills, delivering sermons, shifting accents, depending on the audience.⁵²⁷

During the 1960's, the greatest African American speaker was Martin Luther King Jr. He was a preacher whose role was to lead millions of Black men and women in their way to freedom. Forty years later, Obama followed his steps bringing himself into the narrative of civil rights. Before announcing his candidacy, Obama was talking about race. He was the only African American in the Senate having a strong determination to deal with Black issues such as inequality, poverty, drug laws and Affirmative Action.⁵²⁸

After Hurricane Katrina, that event which devastated New Orleans in 2005, Obama had insisted that injustice was a persistent problem in the US, long after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.⁵²⁹ Since the assassination of King in 1968, Barack Obama came to be considered as a savior figure who had the competence and intelligence needed to save the country from an aggressive former president.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁶ David Remnick, *OP. Cit.*, p.13.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.22.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.24.

General Conclusion

In the story of America, there never was one Civil Rights Movement, not then, not now. It is many stories and many people each attempting to improve and reform their country. After the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, the US became a nation preaching pluralism and tolerance.⁵³¹ Obama's presidency was successful in the way it defended socio-economic segregation, inequality and stagnant wages.

When WWII ended, the US ignored who were its friends, and who its enemies would be.⁵³² Today, it's facing another period of uncertainty about its greatest threat to its security. China? Russia? or Islamist extremism. Therefore, the US should work with all regimes clearing the way for democracy and stability. Moreover, it must always defend universal political and human rights in order to maintain the nation's identity.⁵³³

One big problem that needs to be solved since the election of Barack Obama is racism. In fact, his election doesn't mean that complete racial equality has been achieved in the US. America is a country where all battles have been fought. Yet, Americans continue to fight racism. Indeed, this problem has not completely disappeared from American life. We can say that only discrimination is less visible than it was before the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's.⁵³⁴ Moreover, America is not the same place as it was a generation ago. African Americans now live in a country where a Black man was elected President of the United States.

During the Civil Rights Movement, when Martin Luther King gave his famous speech in August 1963, he wasn't addressing only people in front of him; he was speaking to future generations to give them the best solutions to realize the fulfillment of the American Dream.⁵³⁵

⁵³¹ Foreign Affairs, The Clash of Exceptionalisms, March/April 2018, p.143.

⁵³² Ibid., Future Fights, p.165.

⁵³³ Ibid., p.147.

⁵³⁴ Dinesh D'Souza, OP. Cit., p.286.

⁵³⁵ Gwen Ifill., OP. Cit., p.242.

General Conclusion

The election of Obama to the presidency would improve race relations; in fact he was the embodiment of change, of hope in the lives of millions of people who were sick of eight years under the Bush administration.

Domestic and foreign policies of a country are shaped and transformed by events, like the 11th September 2001, and Middle Eastern Wars that can change its policies.⁵³⁶ Obama's election did not and cannot resolve the problem of racism in the US. His election has made him an alternative to other administrations and a promise to open new opportunities and a new horizon of history. His election had been an outstanding victory in the history of the US.

African Americans are a people; Obama is a man who served the Presidency of the US, and will be succeeded by others. The Black community will endure and continue to claim social justice. Obama has tried to transcend race; however, racism is deeply rooted in American society because America was constituted by a system of racial hierarchy since its foundation.⁵³⁷ The struggle for racial equality continues because African Americans have a duty to challenge US society and live up to its highest ideals and move US society even beyond its highest ideals.⁵³⁸

Therefore, one can say that Obama's election was a historical moment with a great meaning, but was not a proof of automatic or systemic change. No election can eradicate racism, but it is easier today to see that racism, once a barrier is now more like a hurdle. This election was a triumph because it tested America's fundamental promise of equality. Black Americans did not elect Obama. Americans did.

⁵³⁶ Charles P. Henry, Robert L. Allen and Robert Chrisman, *OP. Cit.*, p. 274.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.155.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.158.

General Conclusion

Even if every African American in the country had voted for Obama, it would not have been enough. Obama knew that he was the person upon whom Americans projected their hopes and dreams. Moreover, the 2008 election was historic because either an African American (Obama) or a woman would become the President of the US.⁵³⁹

President Obama had been supported by all ethnic groups; still, one can notice that all along American history, both women and people of color have struggled to be treated equally by the law; both were denied the right to vote. White women Abolitionists were disappointed when the Fifteenth Amendment gave African Americans the right to vote before it was granted to White women.⁵⁴⁰

History will decide the full measure of the importance, success, failure, and shortcomings of the Obama presidency. With regard to race, Obama's historical significance is ensured; only his impact and legacy are up for debate. In other words, the burden of transforming America's tortured racial history in two terms in office proved impossible.

A century and a half after the Civil Rights Movement, Black Americans still struggle to achieve full acceptance in every aspect of life. The definition of democracy has proved to be ambivalent in today's America. By ignoring and defying norms and traditions, President Donald Trump has exposed the flaws of the American Constitution. The poison of racism is spreading further and discussions about race and immigration still resonate in American politics.

Blacks, Jews and Muslims, who are considered as undesirable in the US have been encouraged in their militancy by Donald Trump. They have found a President who, by barring immigrants of color, and Muslims from entering the US, is making the national debate on racism more hateful than ever.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., p.83.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., p.84.

General Conclusion

Racism is no longer a meaningless term. The great majority of Americans and people around the world were outraged to watch that White policeman (Derek Chauvin) killing this Black man (George Floyd), by kneeling on his neck, on 25th May, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

This act was more than just racism against Black people; it is rather an expression of the White society's hatred towards Black people. Moreover, this Black man's killing signifies that even after more than 400 years of Black suffering, racism and White prejudice reveal the everlasting violence endured by the Black community in the US.

Who knows what this hatred may bring if not a race war? I think this undeclared civil war has already taken root; Moreover, the current tensions within American society will diminish any hope that racial equality will one day be achieved in the US.

Chronology of the Civil Rights Era

June 1946: In the case *Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia*, the US Supreme Court bans segregated seating on interstate buses.

July 1948: President Truman issues an executive order banning segregation in the Armed Forces.

May 1954: The US Supreme Court issues its *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, declaring segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional.

December 1955: The Montgomery Bus Boycott begins. It ends one year later with the desegregation of the city's bus system.

March 1956: Ninety-six southern members of Congress sign a "Southern Manifesto", pledging their opposition to school desegregation.

January 1957: Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernathy, Joseph Lowery, and Fred Shuttlesworth organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

September 1957: President Dwight D. Eisenhower sends troops to provide security for black students trying to integrate Little Rock, Arkansas, Central High School.

February 1960: Black college students stage sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in Greensboro, North Carolina. Sit-ins spread to eight other Southern states.

April 1960: Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is organized in Raleigh, North Carolina.

May 1961: Black and white Freedom Riders test the compliance of integration on interstate buses by traveling together.⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴¹Source : James Ciment, *Op.Cit.*, p. 158.

October 1962: James Meredith becomes the first black student to attend the University of Mississippi; his enrollment leads to the most violent campus riot of the decade.

April 1963: Civil Rights protests hit Birmingham, Alabama; from jail, King writes his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail".

June 1963: Civil rights worker Medgar Evers is murdered in Mississippi.

August 1963: The March on Washington brings 250,000 to demonstrate for civil rights; King makes his famous "I have a Dream" speech.

September 1963: Four children die in the firebombing of a black church in Birmingham.

June 1964: The Freedom Summer project to register voters begins in Mississippi; civil rights workers James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner are murdered.

July 1964: President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Democratic Party refuses to seat the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation at the convention.

February 1965: SCLC organizes the Selma- Montgomery (Alabama) voting rights march; civil rights workers Jimmy Lee Jackson, Viola Liuzzo, and the Reverend James Reeb are murdered.

August 1965: President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act, rioting breaks out in the Watts section of Los Angeles.⁵⁴²

April, 4, 1967: Martin Luther King JR announces his opposition to the Vietnam War in a speech at Riverside Church in New York.

11 May: Mississippi National Guardsmen fire on African American college students at Jackson State College, killing Ben Brown.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

12 June: The Supreme Court holds that laws prohibiting interracial marriage are unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia*.

13 June: President Johnson nominated Thurgood Marshall to become the first African American on the Supreme Court.

27 June- 27 July: Race riots occur in Detroit, Newark, and Buffalo.

27 July: President Johnson announces the creation of the Kerner Commission.

7 November: Carl Stokes and Walter Washington become the first African American mayors of major US cities.

1968, 30 January: North Vietnam and the Viet Cong launch the Tet offensive, which turns the American public largely against the Vietnam War.

8 February: Three South Carolina State college students are killed by state police troopers in what is dubbed the "Orangeburg Massacre".

24 February: The Black Panther Party merges with SNCC.

4 April: Martin Luther King JR is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, while supporting a strike by African American workers.

4 Apr- May: In the wake of King's assassination, race riots occur in Baltimore, Chicago, Kansas City, Washington, and over 100 cities across the US.

11 April: President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1968 with its provisions for open housing rights.

12 May: Ralph D. Abernathy, Martin Luther King's successor in SCLC, leads the Poor People's March on Washington.

27 May: The Supreme court rejects "freedom of choice's school attendance plans in *Green v County School Board of New Kent county*.

5-6 June: Presidential candidate and former attorney General Robert Kennedy is assassinated in a Los Angeles hotel after winning the California Democratic primary.

21 June: Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren resigns, marking the end of the Warren Court. He will eventually be succeeded by Warren Burger.

5 November: Shirley Chisholm defeats former CORE director James Farmer to become the first African American woman elected to the United States Congress.

1969, 5 March: President Richard Nixon establishes the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE).

8 August: President Nixon signs Executive Order 11478 requiring equal opportunity and Affirmative Action programs by all federal agencies.

29 October: The Supreme Court orders immediate desegregation of all public schools in *Alexander v. Holmes*.

November: Charles Evers and Howard Lee are elected mayors of Fayette, Mississippi and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, respectively.

4 December: Police kill Black Panther members Mark Clark and Fred Hampton.

1970, 29 April: President Richard Nixon escalates the Vietnam War, by invading neighboring Cambodia. This triggers waves of student protests across the country.

4 May: four students are killed after police in Ohio fire on protesting students at Kent State University.

14 May: Jackson, Mississippi police opens fire on Jackson State college students, killing two and injuring 12.

9 August: Angela Davis goes underground after being added to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Ten Most Wanted List.

1971, 2 February: The Congressional Black Caucus is organized by 13 African American members of Congress.

8 March: The Supreme Court in *Griggs v. Power Company* finds that employment-related tests that discriminate on a racial basis are unconstitutional.

20 April: In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, the Supreme Court finds that school busing to achieve desegregation is constitutional.

25 December: After being suspended from SCLC by Ralph David Abernathy, Jesse Jackson leaves the venerable civil rights organization called People United to Save the Humanity (PUSH).

1972, 25 January: Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm of New York announces her candidacy for the Presidency, becoming the first African American to mount a nationwide presidential campaign.

25 March: President Nixon signs the Equal Employment Opportunities Act, which provides enforcement powers to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

15 May: Segregationist Alabama governor George Wallace is shot and paralyzed while campaigning for president in Maryland.

7 November: Andrew Young, who served under Martin Luther King JR, becomes the first African American to win a Congressional seat in the state of Georgia. In Texas, Barbara Jordan becomes the first African American Congresswoman from the South.

1973, 14 May: The Supreme Court establishes the burden-shifting analysis in employment discrimination cases in *Mc Donnell Douglas Corp v. Green*.

29 May: Tom Bradley becomes the first African American of Los Angeles.

21 June: The Supreme Court holds that a Denver, Colorado school board had acted to reinforce de facto segregation in its schools and was obliged to counteract their decision in *Keyes v. School District N° 1*.

6 November: Maynard Jackson becomes the first African American mayor of Atlanta.

1974, 25 July: A divided Supreme Court retreats from busing in *Milliken v. Bradley*, essentially ruling that court-ordered busing is only allowed in school districts with a history of the Jure segregation and not those with de facto segregation.

9 August: President Richard Nixon resigns as President due to the Watergate Scandal and General Ford succeeds him.

1975, 26 February: Wallace D. Muhammad succeeds his father, Elijah Muhammad, as leader of the Nation of Islam.

25 April: North Vietnam conquers South Vietnam, ending the Vietnam War with more than 58,000 Americans killed.

1976, 16 January: All charges are dropped against North Carolina, civil rights activist Robert F. Williams.

12 July: US House of Representatives member Barbara Jordan delivers a critically acclaimed keynote address at the Democratic National Convention.

17 August: Alex Haley's *Roots: The Saga of an American family* is published and goes on to become a best-seller and win a Pulitzer Prize.

1977, 23-30 January: Alex Haley's *Roots* (TV miniseries) is seen by an audience of between 130 million and 140 million in eight installments.

29 January: President Jimmy Carter appoints Andrew Young as the first African American ambassador to the United Nations.

12 November: Ernest N. Morial becomes the first African American elected mayor of New Orleans.

19 November: Alabama attorney General wins the conviction of former Ku Klux Klansman Robert “Dynamite Bob” Chambliss for first-degree murder for his role in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing in 1963.

1978, 28 June: In *University of California Regents v. Bakke*, the Supreme Court narrowly rejects the use of racial quotas in educational institutions as reverse discrimination.

1979, 27 June: The Supreme Court holds that Affirmative Action training programs by employers are constitutional in *United Steelworkers v Weber*.

1980, 22 April: The Supreme Court holds that a higher level of scrutiny is required to challenge electoral practices by the government in *city of Mobile v. Bolden*.

18 May: Racial riot occurs in Miami, Florida, resulting in 15 deaths.

29 May: Vernon Jordan is shot and nearly killed by a white supremacist in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

2 July: In *Fullilove v. Klutznick*, the Supreme Court rules that the US Congress has authority to pass laws making limited use of racial quotas to overcome past discrimination.

1981, 16 November: The Reagan Administration fires moderate Arthur Fleming as Chairman of the US Civil Rights Commission and replaces him with Conservative African American Clarence Pendleton.

1982, 29 June: President Reagan signs a 25-year extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

9 September: Joseph H. Jackson is deposed as head of the National Baptist Convention after 29 years as leader of the organization.

1983, 12 April: Harold Washington is elected the first African American mayor of Chicago.

21 May: President Reagan attempts to fire Mary Frances Berry and two other commissioners from the US Civil Rights Commission.

24 May: in *Bob Jones University v. United States*, the Supreme Court holds that the Internal Revenue Service may withhold tax-exempt status from a private, sectarian institution that racially discriminates.

2 November: President Reagan signs the law making Martin Luther JR's birthday a federal holiday.

3 November: Jesse Jackson launches his first campaign for the Democratic nomination for president.

1984, 20 July: Jesse Jackson's bid for the Democratic nomination ends, but his transformative campaign garners over 3 million votes or 18 percent of the primary vote, wins five primaries and caucuses, and registers millions of African American voters.

21 November: Mary Frances Berry, Walter Fauntroy, and Randall Robinson are arrested after refusing to leave the South African embassy in Washington D.C, sparking international protests against South Africa's Apartheid policies.

22 December: Bernard Goetz shoots four African American young men in a New York subway, that he alleges were going to rob him.

1985, 13 May: the City of Philadelphia bombs the house of an African American activist organization, "MOVE", killing 11 occupants, triggering a fire that destroys the neighborhood, and leaving 300 homeless.

1986, 20 January: The first official Martin Luther King JR Day is observed as a public holiday on the third Monday of January.

2 September: John Lewis defeats Julian Bond in the Democratic primary for a US House of Representatives seat from Georgia.

30 October: US Senate overrides President Reagan's veto of the Comprehensive Anti- Apartheid Act, which imposes sanctions on South Africa.

27 December: Reverend Al Sharpton leads 1,200 protestors through Howard Beach, a white section of Queens, New York, after three African Americans were assaulted by a mob of whites a week earlier.

1987, 17 January: Hosea Williams and 75 supporters are attacked by a white mob of 500 Ku Klux Klan members and sympathizers in an Atlanta suburb. The following week, Jesse Jackson, Coretta Scott King, and Andrew Young march in the same suburb with 20,000 marchers and 2,000 National Guardsmen protecting them.

22 April: The Supreme Court strengthens the death penalty by holding that statistical studies demonstrating racial disparity in the application of the death penalty cannot be a mitigating circumstance.

October: The US Senate rejects Ronald Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court after it is revealed that Bork supported poll taxes and opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1988, 20 July: Jesse Jackson's second Presidential bid ends with a strong second-place showing in the Democratic Party and includes Jackson winning 609 million votes (29 percent of the primary vote), 11 contests, and registering over 2 million new voters.

1989, 1 May-12 June: The US Supreme Court, in a series of three controversial decisions, *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins*, *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio*, and *Martin v. Wilks*, weakens employee rights and strengthens employer defenses in employment discrimination lawsuits.

23 August: Four African American teenagers are beaten by 30 white youths in Bensonhurst, a section of Brooklyn, New York, leading to weeks of marches and countermarches by whites and African Americans in the area.

8 November: David Dinkins is elected the first African American mayor of New York City, while L. Douglas Wilder becomes the first African American governor elected by popular vote.

1990, 11 February: Nelson Mandela, the leader of the black South Africa anti-Apartheid movement, is released after 27 years in prison.

22 October: President George H. W. Bush vetoes the Civil Rights Act of 1990 because he fears it will lead to racial quotas.

6 November: Former Charlotte mayor Harvey Gantt loses a close and racially divisive US Senate race to Jesse Helms in North Carolina.

1992, 29 April-4 May: Los Angeles erupts in a race riot after a jury acquits police officers charged in the beating of Rodney King.

3 November: Carol Mosley Braun of Illinois becomes the first African American woman elected to the US Senate.

1993, 20 January: During President Clinton's inauguration, Maya Angelou becomes the first poet to speak at a Presidential inauguration since Robert Frost at John F Kennedy's inauguration in 1961.

28 June: The Supreme Court holds that race may not be used as exclusive criteria in drawing legislative district lines for Congressional seats in *Shaw v. Reno*.

7 October: Toni Morrison becomes the first African American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize in literature.

1994, 5 February: After two largely unsuccessful trials, Byron De La Beck, was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life in prison for the killing of civil rights activist Medgar Evers in 1963.

25 May: Denny's Restaurant agrees to a \$54.4 million settlement with African American customers after years of allegations of racial discrimination.

20 August: The NAACP's Board of Directors fires Benjamin Chavis as executive director after allegations that he used NAACP funds to pay for an out-of-court settlement of a sexual harassment suit.

1995, 3 October: Famed football star O. J Simpson is acquitted in a murder trial that polarizes America along racial lines.

16 October: The Million Man March, organized by Louis Farrakhan, occurs in Washington D.C.

1996, 22 August: President Bill Clinton signs welfare reform legislation, which becomes controversial due to accusations of racial stereotypes being used to garner support for the reform.

5 November: California voters approve Proposition 209 forbidding the use of racial quotas by government agencies including schools and universities.

1997, 23 June: The widow of Malcolm X, Betty Shaba, 22, dies in a fire set by her 12-year old grandson, Malcolm.

25 October: African American women host the Million Woman March in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, focusing on education and healthcare.

1999, 4 February: An unarmed 23-year- old Guinean immigrant named Amadou Diallo is shot 19 times and killed by four New York police officers in the Bronx Section of New York City, sparking a year of protest within the city.

2000, 7 November-12 December: Following a close election, the Supreme Court ends the voting recount of the state of Florida in Bush v. Gore thereby securing Texas governor George W. Bush's victory and angering African American voters who felt their votes were disproportionately undercounted.

2001, 20 January: General Colin Powell is appointed the first African American US Secretary of State.

7 April: After several years of tensions over young African Americans, Timothy Thomas sparks a four day race riot in Cincinnati, Ohio.

1 May: Thomas Blanton JR. is convicted to four life terms in prison for his role in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church Bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963.

2002, 9 March: Hubert Gerold (H.Rap) Brown is convicted and sentenced to life in prison for the murder of a state of Georgia police officer during a shootout.

2003, 23 June: In *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*, the Supreme Court rules that while universities may use race as a factor in the admissions process (*Grutter*), universities cannot use a system of awarding points based on race (*Gratz*).

2004, 10 May: The US Justice Department reopens the investigation into the murder of Emmett Till.

27 July: US Senate candidate Barack Obama gives the keynote address at Democratic National Convention in Boston, Massachusetts, which propels him to national and international fame.

2005, 26 January: Condoleezza Rice replaces Colin Powell to become the first African American female US Secretary of State.

21 June: Edgar Ray Killen is sentenced to 60 years in prison for his role in the murder of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner in 1964.

29 August: Hurricane Katrina makes landfall in New Orleans, Louisiana, causing the death of 1,836 individuals while also sparking debate over stratification of American society on racial and economic lines.

24-31 October: Rosa Parks dies at the age of 92 and is honored by being selected to be the first woman and second African American to lie in state at the US Capitol building.

2006, 30 January-7 February: Coretta Scott King dies at the age of 78 and over 14,000 attend her funeral, including the President of the United States, and three former Presidents.

2007, 28 June: The Supreme Court in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle District N° 1*, rules that assigning students to public schools solely for the purpose of achieving racial integration is unconstitutional.

20 September: Between 15,000 and 20,000 protestors march in Jena, Louisiana, and after several other cities to protest the arrest of six African American youths dubbed the 'Jena Six'.

2008, 18 March: Responding to controversy over his Pastor, Jeremiah Wright, Presidential candidate Barack Obama addresses issues of race in a speech he calls "A More Perfect Union".

4 November: Barack Obama becomes the first African American President of the US.

2009, 29 June: The Supreme Court rules in *Ricci v. Destefano* that white fire fighters in the city of New Haven, Connecticut, suffered discrimination because of their race when the city cancelled the results of a merit exam.

9 October: President Obama wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

2010, 19 July: The wife of civil rights veteran Charles Sherrod is forced to resign from the US Department of Agriculture after being falsely accused of racism when a website releases a selectively edited video.

15 November: James Fowler, the state trooper that shot and killed Jimmie Lee Jackson, is convicted of manslaughter.

2012, 6 November: Barack Obama is reelected President against former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney.

2013, 25 June: US Supreme Court strikes down major provisions of the Voting Rights Act.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴³ Christopher M. Richardson & Ralph E. Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement*, 2014, Library of Congress, Maryland, USA.

Appendices

Appendix One

The Declaration of Independence

July 4th, 1776

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the Earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organize its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that government long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpation, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constraints them to alter their former systems of government.

The history of the present King of Great Britain is history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over those states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained, and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless these people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining, in the meantime, exposed to all the dangers of invasions from without and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states, for that purpose obstructing the laws of naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

For imposing taxes on us without our consent;

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury;

For transporting us beyond seas, to be tried for pretended offences;

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies;

For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments;

For suspending our legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seats, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun with the circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrection among us; and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress, in the most humble terms; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in our attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them, from time to time, of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity; and we have conjured them, by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.

John Hancock and fifty-five others.

Source: Thomas E. Patterson, We the People, A Concise Introduction to American Politics, Seventh Edition, New York, McGraw Hill Companies Inc, 2008, pp. 642-643.

Appendix Two

The Bill of Rights (The first ten Amendments)

The ten original Amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, were passed by Congress on September 25, 1789, and ratified on December 15, 1791.

AMENDMENT I (1791): Basic freedoms; separation of church and state Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

AMENDMENT II (1791): The right to bear arms

A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

AMENDMENT III (1791): Quartering of soldiers

No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

AMENDMENT IV (1791): Search and seizure

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly described, the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

AMENDMENT V (1791): Rights in court cases

No Person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

AMENDMENT VI (1791): Rights of the accused

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favour, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

AMENDMENT VII (1791): The right to a trial by jury

In suits of common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

AMENDMENT VIII (1791): Bail; cruel and unusual punishment

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.

AMENDMENT IX (1791): Rights retained by the people

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

AMENDMENT X (1791): Reserved powers

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the state respectively, or to the people.

LATER AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENT XI (1798): Law suits against states

The judicial power of the United States shall not be constructed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by a citizen or another state, or by citizens or subjects of any foreign state.

AMENDMENT XII (1804): Electoral votes

The electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate; - the President of the senate shall, in the presence of the senate and house of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted; - the person having the greatest number of votes for President shall be the President if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then

from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each State having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the States, and a majority of all the States shall be necessary to a choice. And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall develop upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice-President shall act as President, as in the case of death or other constitutional disability of the President.

The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list the senate shall choose the vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States.

AMENDMENT XIII (1865): Abolition of slavery

Section 1 Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2 Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT XIV (1868): Citizenship for former slaves; due process and equal protection clauses

Section 1 All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2 Representatives shall be appointed among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of Electors for President and vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a state, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age and citizens of the United states, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3 No person shall be a Senator or Representative in congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of congress, or as an officer of the United states, as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United states, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each house, remove such disability.

Section 4 The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss of emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations, and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5 The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislature, the provision of this article.

AMENDMENT XV (1870): Voting rights for freed male slaves

Section 1 The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, colour, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2 The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislature.

AMENDMENT XVI (1913): Federal income tax

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

AMENDMENT XVII (1913): The direct election of Senators

Section 1 The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of (voters for) the most numerous branch of the State legislatures.

Section 2 When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, that the legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

Section 3 This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any Senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

AMENDMENT XVIII (1919, repealed 1933): Prohibition

Section 1 After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States, and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof, for beverage purposes, is hereby prohibited.

Section 2 The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3 This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided by the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission thereof to the States by the Congress.

AMENDMENT XIX (1920): Voting rights for women

Section 1 The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2 The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT XX (1933): The President's term of office

Section 1 The terms of the President and the Vice-President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and representatives at noon on the 3rd day of January, of the year in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

(The start of sessions of Congress)

Section 2 The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3rd day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

(Presidential succession)

Section 3 If, at time fixed for the beginning of the term of the president, the President-elect shall have died, the Vice-President-elect shall become president. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President-elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice-President-elect shall act as President until a president shall have qualified; and the congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President-elect nor a Vice-President-elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such persons shall act accordingly until a President or vice-President shall have qualified.

Section 4 The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have developed upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice-President whenever the right of choice shall have developed upon them.

Section 5 Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.

Section 6 This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the constitution by the legislatures of three-quarters of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission.

AMENDMENT XXI (1933): Repeal of prohibition

Section 1 The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

Section 2 The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or Possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

Section 3 This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of submission thereof to the States by the Congress.

AMENDMENT XXII (1951): Term limits for the President, 2 terms or 10 years

Section 1 No person shall be elected to the office of President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of President more than once. But this article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

Section 2 This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-quarters of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission to the States by the Congress.

AMENDMENT XXIII (1961): Electoral College votes for the District of Columbia

Section 1 The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President and Vice-President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the States, but they shall be considered for the purposes of the election of President and Vice-President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

Section 2 The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT XXIV (1964): Prohibition of poll taxes

Section 1 The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice-President, for electors for President or Vice-President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Section 2 The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT XXV (1967): Presidential succession

Section 1 In the case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice-President shall become President.

Section 2 Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice-President, the President shall nominate a Vice-President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.

Section 3 Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of this office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice-President as Acting President.

Section 4 Whenever the Vice-President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the vice-President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the House of representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the vice-President and the majority of either the principal officers of the executive department(s) or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President pro tempore of the senate and the Speaker of the house of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Thereupon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds votes of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice-President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

AMENDMENT XXVI (1971): Voting rights for young people

Section 1 The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2 The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT XXVII (1992): Timing of congressional pay raises

No law varying the compensation for the service of Senators and Representatives shall take effect until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

Source: David Mauk and John Oakland, American Civilization An Introduction, Fifth Edition, New York, USA, Routledge, 2009, pp. 384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392.

Appendix THREE

WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

Article 1, Section 9 of the US Constitution states: “The privilege of the Writ of Habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or invasion the public Safety may require it. The Latin term Habeas Corpus means “You shall have the body.” A writ is a written order from a court of law that requires the performance of a specific act. A writ of Habeas Corpus requires officials to bring a person whom they have arrested and held in custody before a judge in a court of law, where they must convince the judge that there are lawful reasons for holding the prisoner. If the judge finds their reasons unlawful, then the court frees the suspect. The writ of Habeas Corpus is a strong protection for individuals from government officials who might want to jail them merely because they belong to unpopular groups or express criticisms of the government.

The privilege of the writ of Habeas Corpus is rooted in English common law and was specified in Section 39 of the Magna Carta (1215), through which aristocrats imposed limits on the power of the king. Parliament enacted a Habeas Corpus statute in 1641, but because it was not entirely effectual, an amendment act was passed in 1679. The Crown was thus prevented from unjustly holding individuals in prison for personal or political reasons. By the end of the 17th century this individual right was solidly established as the appropriate process for curbing illegal imprisonment.

The English Habeas Corpus acts were not extended to the Anglo-American colonies. However, the writ was one of the widely recognized common law rights of individuals in the American colonies and was frequently invoked before the Revolution. After the Declaration of Independence, the privilege of the writ of Habeas Corpus was included in several state constitutions enacted prior to the US Constitution of 1781. The Second Article of Compact of the northwest Ordinance of 1787 also protected this right. The Federal Judiciary Act of 1786 provided power to all Federal courts “to grant writs of Habeas Corpus for the purpose of an enquiry into the cause of commitment”. Every state of the United States of America has a similar law providing for writs of Habeas Corpus.

The US Supreme Court has consistently upheld the individual’s Habeas Corpus right, even when this right has been suspended by the federal government to guard public safety and security. In 1861, after the outbreak of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln suspended Habeas Corpus in parts of Maryland. This action was challenged in *Ex parte Milligan* (1861). Chief Justice Roger Taney, sitting as a circuit judge, ruled that only Congress had the right to suspend the writ, but Lincoln ignored the ruling. In *Ex parte Milligan* (1866) the Supreme Court decided that the writ could not be suspended in states (Indiana, in this case) where public order and safety were not endangered by the Civil War. In 1869 Chief Justice Salmon Chase wrote in *Ex parte Yerger* that the privilege of the writ of Habeas corpus is “the best and only sufficient defense of personal freedom”. Ever since the founding of the United States, Americans have believed the writ of Habeas Corpus to be a primary protection of their personal liberties.

Source: John J. Patrick, Richard M. Pious, Donald A. Ritchie, 2001, The Oxford Guide to the United States government, New York, USA, Oxford University Press, pp 276-277.

Appendix Four

Seneca Falls Convention, Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions (1848)

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the Earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such

government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men, both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of her first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns. He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming to all intents and purposes, her master, the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to the wholly regardless of the happiness of women, the laws, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in Church, as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry and with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disenfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation, in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and National legislatures, and endeavour to enlist the pulpit and the press on our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions embracing every part of the country.

Source: Anders Breidlid & Frederik CHR. Brogger, 1996, American Culture An Anthology of Civilization Texts, London, Routledge, pp: 103-104-105.

APPENDIX FIVE

Emancipation Proclamation (1863)

During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued two Presidential proclamations that freed slaves from states in secession.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Lincoln wanted the border states to remain in the Union, and so he resisted pressure from abolitionists to issue an order ending slavery everywhere in the nation. In September 1861, he ordered General John C. Fermont to revoke a military proclamation that had freed the slaves of Missourians who supported the Confederacy. In 1862, Congress passed several acts confiscating the slaves of rebels, measures that Lincoln did not support or enforce. He preferred to compensate slaveholders for the slaves who were freed. After the Union victory at Antietam, however, Lincoln decided on a bolder course. “The moment came”, Lincoln said, “when I felt that slavery must die that the Union might live”. On September, 23, 1862, Lincoln issued a proclamation stating that as of the new year, all slaves within rebelling states “shall be, then, thenceforward and forever free.

On January, 1, 1863, using his authority as commander-in-chief, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that the slaves in areas “in rebellion against the United States” were free as of that date. It specifically exempted border states such as Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, the western part of Virginia, and parts of Louisiana in order to retain the support of Unionists in those areas. (Tennessee, although exempted, ended slavery of its own volition).

There was no mention of compensation in the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln described it as a war measure: it enabled Union armies to obtain the services of former slaves. The Proclamation was a political triumph for Lincoln. It was opposed by the Democrats, who argued that it violated Lincoln's 1860 pledge never to interfere with slavery in states where it existed. It also seemed to violate the 5th Amendment: the Supreme Court had ruled in the 1857 Dred Scott case that slaves were property, and Lincoln had emancipated slave owners' property without due process of law or compensation. Emancipation was, of course, popular with abolitionists in the North. And because of Lincoln's policy, African Americans remained strong supporters of the Republican Party into the 1930's.

The emancipation of all slaves was attained with the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865. Lincoln's refusal to compensate slave owners for their property was embodied as constitutional policy in the 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868.

Source: John. J. Patrick, OP. Cit., p. 210.

APPENDIX SIX

Brown V. Board of Education (1954)

The 14th Amendment declares, "No state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws". In 1896, the Supreme Court handed down a landmark decision on the meaning of this equal protection clause.

In Plessy V. Ferguson, the Court ruled that the 14th Amendment allowed a state to segregate whites and blacks by providing "separate but equal" facilities for blacks.

For nearly 60 years, this doctrine of "separate but equal" served as a constitutional justification for racial segregation in the United States. This doctrine sanctioned separating blacks and whites in schools, housing, transportation, and recreation.

Not all Americans accepted the view that the Constitution allowed racial discrimination. Those opposed to segregation agreed with Justice John Harlan, who dissented in Plessy, declaring, "Our Constitution is color-blind". In 1909, a group of black and white Americans formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to fight segregation and racial injustice. In the 1930's and 1940's, NAACP legal counsel successfully argued a number of Supreme Court cases in which the Court prohibited segregation in public universities, political primaries, and railroads. By 1950, many blacks and whites were ready to challenge the constitutionality of segregated elementary and high schools.

In the early 1950's, five separate cases, from South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, Kansas, and Washington D.C, made their way through the court system. In each case, the parents of black schoolchildren asked lower courts to strike down laws requiring segregated schools. The NAACP provided these parents with legal help. Eventually, the Supreme Court heard these cases together as Brown v. Board of Education. The case received its name when Mr and Mrs Oliver Brown sued the Topeka, Kansas, school board for denying their eight year old daughter, Linda, admission to a school only five blocks from their house. She had to leave her home at 7.40 every morning and travel 21 blocks in order to reach her assigned school by 9.00. The school board refused to let Linda attend the school in her own neighborhood solely because she was black and the school nearest to her home was for whites only.

The Issue: Thurgood Marshall, later a Supreme Court Justice, was director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. He provided legal counsel for the Browns and the other plaintiffs. Marshall presented evidence showing that separating black and white students discriminated against blacks, placing them at a severe disadvantage. He argued that segregated schools were not and could never be equal. Such schools, he said, violated the equal protection guarantee of the 14th Amendment.

John W. Davis, a distinguished attorney and a 1924 Presidential candidate, represented the defense. He argued that the authors of the 14th Amendment never intended that article to prevent segregation in the nation's schools. Further, he claimed, the courts did not possess the authority to order the states to desegregate their schools.

Those states with segregated schools claimed that the dual system provided "separate but equal" facilities for whites and blacks. In fact, virtually no black schools were equal to white schools. The South Carolina case, for example, began when the local school board, run by whites, refused to provide school buses for black children. The board also refused to pay for heating the black schools or to provide them with indoor plumbing, services and facilities provided to white students.

In spite of these glaring inequities, the black plaintiffs did not argue that the school systems were separate but unequal. Rather, they focused on challenging the "separate but equal doctrine" itself. Did state-supported segregation in public schools, even when black and white schools had equal facilities, violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment?

Opinion of the Court: The Supreme Court unanimously struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine as an unconstitutional violation of the 14th Amendment. Chief Justice Earl Warren said that segregation clearly gave black children "a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to ever be undone". Even if segregated schools gave blacks access to equal physical facilities, Warren argued, they deprived students of equal educational opportunities. Warren declared, "We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal".

Significance: The Brown decision overturned Plessy V. Ferguson (1896). The ruling in this case destroyed the constitutional foundations of all forms of state-supported segregation in the United States. It also prompted massive resistance to school integration in many states. That resistance, in turn, helped spur the growth of the civil rights movement. This movement encouraged the passage of the federal civil rights acts of 1957, 1960, 1964, 1965, and 1968, which increased black political and civil rights.

Resistance also slowed implementation of the brown decision in schools, and led to many additional court cases. For example, Prince Edward County, Virginia, closed all of its public schools, for whites as well as blacks, rather than integrate. The first additional case, Brown V. Board of Education, known as Brown II, came in 1955.

Brown II came before the Court because, as Chief justice Warren wrote, “We requested further argument on the question of relief”. The Court wanted to consider the issue of how to implement the ruling of Brown I to end segregation in public schools. In Brown II, the Court set forth guidelines that placed the primary responsibility for doing so on local schools officials. Federal district courts were to continue their jurisdiction and oversight of school desegregation cases. They could allow school districts to proceed carefully and gradually to complete school desegregation.

Although the Supreme Court ordered school districts to begin desegregation “with all deliberate speed”, in reality just the opposite occurred. Fourteen years after Brown, less than 20 % of black students in the South attended integrated schools. Faced with continued resistance, the Supreme Court ruled in 1968, in Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia that segregation must end “at once”. Eventually, lower federal Court rulings and the work of the federal executive branch agencies began to change this pattern. In the 1980’s, most Americans fully accepted the Court’s ruling in the Brown case as the correct decision. Today, it is hailed as one of the greatest and most important decisions in the history of the Supreme Court.

Source: John J. Patrick, OP. Cit., p. 63.

APPENDIX SEVEN

Martin Luther King, JR I HAVE A DREAM (1963)

Five scores years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of negro slaves, who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a cheque. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens are concerned. Instead of honouring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad cheque, a cheque which has come back marked "insufficient funds".

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we have come to cash this cheque, a cheque that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquillizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end but a beginning. Those who hope that the negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must ever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as a negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storm of persecutions and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends. And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

I have a dream that one day the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I will go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. And this will be the day, this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!". And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

Source: Anders Breidlid, OP. Cit., PP: 84-85-86-87-88.

Appendix Eight

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title I-Voting Rights

Section 101 (2): No person acting under color of law shall

In determining whether any individual is qualified under State law or laws to vote in any Federal election, apply any standard, practice, or procedure different from the standards, practices, or procedures applied, under, such law or laws to other individuals within the same county, parish, or similar political subdivision who have been found by State officials to be qualified to vote

Employ any literacy test as a qualification for voting in any Federal election unless such test is administered to each individual wholly in writing; certified copy of the test and of the answers given by the individual is furnished to him within twenty five days of the submission of his request made within the period of time during which records and papers are required to be retained and preserved pursuant to title III of the Civil Rights Act of 1960...

Title II: Injunctive Relief against Discrimination in Places of Public Accommodation

Sec. 201, (a) All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin.

(b) Each of the following establishments which serves the public is a place of public accommodation within the meaning of this title if its operations affect commerce, or if discrimination or segregation by it is supported by State action:

(1) Any inn, motel, or other establishment which provides lodging to transient guests, other than an establishment located within a building which contains not more than five rooms for rent or hire and which is actually occupied by the proprietor of such establishment as his residence;

(2) Any restaurant, cafeteria, lunch room, lunch counter, soda fountain, or other facility principally engaged in selling food for consumption on the premises...

(3) Any motion picture house, theater, concert hall, sports arena, stadium or other place of exhibition or entertainment...

(d) Discrimination or segregation by an establishment is supported by State action within the meaning of this title if such discrimination or segregation (1) is carried on under color of any law, statute, ordinance, or regulation; or (2) is carried on under color of any custom or usage required or enforced by officials of the State or political subdivision thereof...

Sec. 202..All persons shall be entitled to be free, at any establishment or place, from discrimination or segregation of any kind on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin, if such discrimination or segregation is or purports to be required by any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, rule, or order of a State or any agency or political subdivision thereof.....

Sec. 206. (a) Whenever the Attorney General has reasonable cause to believe that any person or groups of persons is engaged in a pattern or practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of any of the rights secured by this title, the Attorney General may bring a civil action in the appropriate district court of the United States by filing with a complaint... requesting such preventive relief, including an application for a permanent or temporary injunction, restraining order or other order against the person or persons responsible for such pattern or practice, as he deems necessary to insure the full enjoyment of the rights herein described.

Title VI- Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs

Sec. 601 No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Source: Anders Breidlid, OP. Cit., pp. 91-92-93

Appendix Nine

A Chronology of the Career of Martin Luther King

1951-55: Attends Boston University doctoral program; earns Ph.D in theology.

1953: Marries Coretta Scott, a student at the New England Conservatory of Music.

1954: Is appointed minister of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

1955-56: Leads a successful one-year boycott of Montgomery's bus system

1957: In early January, helps organize Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); a bomb is thrown at the King house, but it does not explode.

1958: Meets with President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the White House; he is arrested in Montgomery (first charged with loitering, a charge that is dropped and replaced with “failure to obey an officer”). King publishes “Strive toward Freedom”, an account of the Montgomery bus boycott. While on tour to promote the book, he is stabbed in the chest. His condition is serious but not critical.

1960: Is arrested in February on charges that he failed to pay his Alabama state taxes in 1956 and 1958. He is later acquitted by an all-white jury. In June, he meets with President John F. Kennedy. In December he is arrested at an Atlanta sit-in.

1961: Arrives in Albany, Georgia, to participate in an unsuccessful desegregation campaign. In December, he is arrested in Albany for obstructing the sidewalk and leading a parade without a permit.

1962: Is arrested again, at a July prayer vigil in Albany, and charged with failure to obey a police officer, obstructing the sidewalk, and disorderly conduct. In October, he meets once more with President Kennedy.

1963: In March and April, leads sit-in demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama. In jail, he writes his “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” That summer he leads the historic March on Washington and delivers his famous “I have a Dream” speech.

1964: Joins demonstrations in St. Augustine, Florida, in May and June and is arrested. His book *We Can't Wait* is released in June, and in July, he attends the ceremony at which President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In September, he meets with Pope Paul VI at the Vatican, and, in December, he receives the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway.

1965: The Southern Christian Leadership conference organizes a civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. On March 7, the marchers are beaten by Alabama state troopers when they attempt to cross Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge. Two weeks later, joined by 3,000 supporters from around the nation, and protected by federal troops, they begin their march again. En route, they are joined by another 25,000 supporters. When he and the other marchers reach Selma, King addresses the marchers from the Montgomery capitol building.

1966: In Chicago, meets with Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam, and leads an unsuccessful protest against job discrimination, poor schools, and slum housing.

1967: King's book *Where Do We Go From Here* is published. At a speech in Chicago, he denounces the War in Vietnam. In November, he announces that the SCLC will launch a Poor People's Campaign to address the problems of poor blacks and whites.

1968: Is assassinated after leading a sanitation workers strike in Memphis.

Source: James Ciment, 2007, Atlas of African American history, New York, USA, Library of Congress.

Appendix Ten

A More Perfect Union

**Speech at the National Constitution Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 18, 2008.**

Obama the historian shines through in many of his speeches, as he walks the listener through the hills and valleys of American history. But it is Obama the sociologist, the man of two worlds, who stepped forward to defend his ties to his and Michelle's longtime Chicago pastor, Jeremiah Wright, in March of 2008. The media firestorm over a selection of Wright's sermons threatened to derail Obama's insurgent campaign. In response, he delivered a dissertation on race that touched not just on black pain, but also on white fear of economic and cultural displacement. And he did so with a compassion and nuanced understanding that few Americans, black or white, have publicly put into words, before or since. The speech was the first instance of what became an Obama habit; using a lengthy, detailed address to solve a political problem and quell a crisis.

Let me begin by thanking Harris Wofford for his contributions to this country in so many different ways. He exemplifies what we mean by the word “citizen”. And so we are very grateful to him for all the work he has done, and I’m thankful for the gracious and thoughtful introduction.

“We the People, in order to form a more Perfect Union”

Two hundred and twenty one years ago, in a hall that still stands across the street, a group of men gathered, and, with these simple words, launched America’s improbable experiment in democracy.

Farmers and scholars, statesmen and patriots who had traveled across the ocean to escape tyranny and persecution finally made real their declaration of independence at a Philadelphia convention that lasted through the spring of 1787.

The document they produced was eventually signed but ultimately unfinished. It was stained by this nation’s original sin of slavery, a question that divided the colonies and brought the convention to a stalemate until the founders chose to allow the slave trade to continue for at least twenty more years, and to leave any final resolution to future generations.

Of course, the answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution, a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a constitution that promised its people liberty and justice, and a union that could be and should be perfected over time.

And yet words on a parchment would not be enough to deliver slaves from bondage, or provide men and women of every color and creed their full rights and obligations as citizens of the United States.

What would be needed were Americans in successive generations who were willing to do their part, through protests and struggle, on the streets and in the courts, through a civil disobedience, and always at great risk, to narrow that gap between the promise of our ideals and the reality of their time.

This was one of the tasks we set forth at the beginning of this presidential campaign, to continue the long march of those who came before us, a march for a more just, more equal, more free, more caring and more prosperous America.

I chose to run for president at this moment in history because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together, unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction: toward a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

And this belief comes from my unyielding faith in the decency and generosity of the American people. But it also comes from my own story. I am the son from of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. I was raised with the help of a white grandfather who survived a Depression to serve in Patton's army during World War II and a white grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line at Fort Leavenworth while he was overseas.

I've gone to some of the best schools in America and I've lived in one of the world's poorest nations. I am married to a black American who carries within her the blood of slaves and slave owners, an inheritance we pass on to our two precious daughters.

I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles, and cousins of every race and every hue scattered across three continents.

And for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on earth is my story even possible.

It's a story that hasn't made me the most conventional of candidates. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts, that out of many, we are truly one.

Throughout the first year of this campaign, against all predictions to the contrary, we saw how hungry the American people were for this message of unity. Despite the temptation to view my candidacy through a purely racial lens, we won commanding victories in states with some of the whitest population in the country. In South Carolina, where the Confederate flag still flies, we built a powerful coalition of African Americans and white Americans.

This is not to say that race has not been an issue in this campaign. At various stages in the campaign, some commentators have deemed me either “too black” or “not black enough”. We saw racial tensions bubble to the surface during the week before the South Carolina primary. The press has scoured every single exit poll for the least evidence of racial polarization, not just in terms of white and black, but black and brown as well.

And yet, it’s only been in the last couple of weeks that the discussion of race in this campaign has taken a particularly divisive turn.

On one end of the spectrum, we’ve heard the implication that my candidacy is somehow an exercise in Affirmative Action; that it is based solely on the desire of wild-and wide-eyed liberals to purchase racial reconciliation on the cheap.

On the other end, we’ve heard my former pastor, Jeremiah Wright , use incendiary language to express views that have the potential not only to widen the racial divide, but views that denigrate both the greatness and the goodness of our nation and that rightly offend white and black alike.

I have already condemned, in unequivocal terms, the statement of Reverend Wright that have caused such controversy, and in some cases pain.

For some, nagging questions remain: Did I know him to be an occasionally fierce critic of American domestic and foreign policy? Of course. Did I ever hear him make remarks that could be considered controversial while I sat in the church? Yes. Did I strongly disagree with many of his political views? Absolutely, just as I’m sure many of you have heard remarks from your pastors, priests, or rabbis with which you strongly disagree.

But the remarks that have caused this recent firestorm weren’t simply controversial. They weren’t simply a religious leader’s effort to speak out against perceived injustice. Instead, they expressed a profoundly distorted view of this country, a view that sees white racism as endemic and that elevates what is wrong with America above all that we know is right with America; a view that sees the conflicts in the Middle East as rooted primarily in the actions of stalwart allies like Israel instead of emanating from the perverse and hateful ideologies of radical Islam.

As such, Reverend Wright's comments were not only wrong but divisive, divisive at a time when we need unity; racially charged at a time when we need to come together to solve a set of monumental problems two wars, a terrorist threat, a falling economy, a chronic health care crisis, and potentially devastating climate change, problems that are neither black or white or Latino or Asian, but rather problems that confront us all.

Given my background, my politics, and my professed values and ideals, there will no doubt be those for whom my statements of condemnation are not enough.

Why associate myself with Reverend Wright in the first place, they may ask? Why not join another church? And I confess that if all that I knew of Reverend Wright were the snippets of those sermons that have run in an endless loop on the television sets and You Tube, if Trinity United Church of Christ conformed to the caricatures being peddled by some commentators, there is no doubt that I would react in much the same way.

But the truth is, that isn't all that I know of the man. The man I met more than twenty years ago is a man who helped introduce me to my Christian faith, a man who spoke to me about our obligations to love one another; to care for the sick and lift up the poor.

He is a man who served his country as a US Marine, and who has studied and lectured at some of the finest universities and seminaries in the country, and who over thirty years has led a church that serves the community by doing God's work here on Earth, by housing the homeless, ministering to the needy, providing day care services and scholarships and prison ministries, and reaching out to those suffering from HIV/AIDS.

In my first book, *Dreams from My Father*, I described the experience of my first service at Trinity, and it goes as follows: "People began to shout, to rise from their seats and clap and cry out, a forceful wind carrying the reverend's voice up into the rafters.

"And in that single note-hope- I heard something else; at the foot of that cross, inside the thousands of churches across the city, I imagined the stories of ordinary black people merging with the stories of David and Goliath, Moses and Pharaoh, the Christmas in the lion's den, Ezekiel's field of dry bones.

“Those stories of survival and freedom and hope became our story, my story. The blood that spilled was our blood; the tears our tears; until this black church, on this bright day, seemed once more a vessel carrying the story of a people into future generations and a larger world.

“Our trials and triumphs became at once unique and universal, black and more than black. In chronicling our journey, the stories and songs gave us a meaning to reclaim memories that we didn’t need to feel shame about, memories that all people might study and cherish and with which we would start to rebuild.”

That has been my experience at Trinity. Like other predominantly black churches across the country, Trinity embodies the black community in its entirety—the doctor and the welfare moon, the model student and the former gangbanger.

Like other black churches, Trinity’s services are full of raucous laughter and sometimes bawdy humor. They are full of dancing and clapping and screaming and shouting that may seem jarring to the untrained ear.

The church contains in full the kindness and cruelty, the fierce intelligence and the shocking ignorance, the struggles and successes, the love, and yes, the bitterness and biases that make up the black experience in America.

And this helps explain, perhaps, my relationship with Reverend Wright. As imperfect as he may be, he has been like family to me. He strengthened my faith, officiated my wedding, and baptized my children.

Not once in my conversations with him have I heard him talk about any ethnic group in derogatory terms or treat whites with whom he interacted with anything but courtesy and respect.

He contains within him the contradictions—the good and the bad—of the community that he has served diligently for so many years.

I can no more disown him than I can disown the black community. I can no more disown him than I can disown my white grandmother, a woman who helped raise me, a woman who sacrificed again and again for me, a woman who loves me as much as she loves anything in this world, but a woman who once confessed her fear of black men who passed her by on the street, and who on more than one occasion has uttered racial or ethnic stereotypes that made me cringe.

These people are part of me. And they are part of America, this country I love.

Now, some will see this as an attempt to justify or excuse comments that are simply inexcusable. I can assure you it is not.

And I suppose the politically safe thing to do would be to move on from this episode and just hope that it fades into the woodwork. We can dismiss Reverend Wright as a crank or a demagogue, just as some have dismissed Geraldine Ferraro in the aftermath of her recent statements as harboring some deep-seated bias.

But race is an issue that I believe this nation cannot afford to ignore right now. We would be making the same mistake that Reverend Wright made in his offending sermons about America: to simplify and stereotype and amplify the negative to the point that distorts reality.

The fact is that the comments that have been made and the issues that have surfaced over the last few weeks reflect the complexities of race in this country that we've never really worked through, a part of our union that we have not yet made perfect.

And if we walk away now, if we simply retreat into our respective corners we will never be able to come together and solve challenges like health care and education or the need to find good jobs for every American.

Understanding this reality requires a reminder of how we arrived at this point. As William Faulkner once wrote, "The past isn't dead and buried. In fact, it isn't even past".

We do not need to recite here the history of racial injustice in this country. But we do need to remind ourselves that so many of the disparities that exist between the African American community and the larger American community today can be traced directly to inequalities passed on from an earlier generation that suffered under the brutal legacy of slavery and Jim Crow.

Segregated schools were, and are, inferior schools. We still haven't fixed them, fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*.

And the inferior education they provided, then and now, helps explain the pervasive achievement gap between today's black and white students.

Legalized discrimination, where blacks were prevented, often through violence, from owning property, or loans were not granted to African American business owners, or black homeowners could not access FHA mortgages, or blacks were excluded from unions, or the police force, or fire department meant that black families could not amass any meaningful wealth to bequeath to future generations.

That history helps explain the wealth and income gap between blacks and whites and the concentrated pockets of poverty that persist in so many of today's urban and rural communities.

A lack of economic opportunity among black men and the shame and frustration that came from not being able to provide for one's family contributed to the erosion of black families, a problem that welfare policies for many years may have worsened.

And the lack of basic services in so many urban black neighborhoods, parks for kids to play in, police walking the beat, regular garbage pick-up, building code enforcement, all help create a cycle of violence, blight, and neglect that continues to haunt us.

This is the reality in which Reverend Wright and other African Americans of this generation grew up. They came of age in the late fifties and early sixties, a time when segregation was still the law of the land and opportunity was systematically constricted.

What's remarkable is not how many failed in the face of discrimination, but how many men and women overcame the odds; how many were able to make a way out of no way for those like me who would come after them.

But for all those who scratched and clawed their way to get a piece of the American Dream, there were many who didn't make it, those who were ultimately defeated, in one way or another, by discrimination. That legacy of defeat was passed on to future generations, those young men and increasingly young women who we see standing on street corners or languishing in our prisons, without hope or prospects for the future.

Even for those blacks who did make it, questions of race and racism continue to define their world view in fundamental ways. For the men and women of Reverend Wright's generation, the memories of humiliation and doubt and fear have not gone away; nor has the anger and the bitterness of these years.

That anger may not get expressed in public, in front of white co-workers or white friends. But it does find voice in the barbershop or the beauty shop or around the kitchen table. At times, that anger is exploited by politicians to gin up votes along racial lines or to make up for a politician's own failings.

And occasionally it finds voice in the church on Sunday morning, in the pulpit and in the pews.

That anger is not always productive. Indeed, all too often it distracts attention from solving real problems. It keeps us from squarely facing our own complicity within the African American community from forging the alliances it needs to bring about social change.

But the anger is real, it is powerful, and to simply wish it away, to condemn it without understanding its roots only serves to widen the chasm of misunderstanding that exists between the races.

In fact, a similar anger exists within segments of the white community. Most working and middle-class white Americans don't feel that they have been particularly privileged by their race.

Their experience is the immigrant experience. As far as they're concerned, no one handed them anything, they built it from scratch. They've worked hard all their lives, many times only to see their jobs shipped overseas or their pensions dumped after a lifetime of labor. They are anxious about their futures, and they feel their dreams slipping away. And in an era of stagnant wages and global competition, opportunity comes to be seen as a zero sum game, in which your dreams come at my expense.

So when they are told to bus their children to a school across town, when they hear that an African American is getting an advantage in landing a good job or a spot in a good college because of an injustice that they themselves never committed, when they're told that their fears about crime in urban neighborhoods are somehow prejudice, resentment builds over time.

Like the anger within the black community, these resentments aren't always expressed in polite company. But they have helped shape the political landscape for at least a generation.

Anger over welfare and affirmative action helped forge the Reagan Coalition. Politicians routinely exploited fears of crime for their own electoral ends.

Talk show hosts and conservative commentators built entire careers unmasking bogus claims of racism while dismissing legitimate discussions of racial injustice and inequality as mere political correctness or reverse racism.

And just as black anger often proved counterproductive, so have these white resentments distracted attention from the real culprits of the middle class squeeze: a corporate culture rife with inside dealing and questionable accounting practices and short-term greed; a Washington dominated by lobbyists and special interests; economic policies that favor the few over the many.

And yet, to wish away the resentments of white Americans, to label them as misguided or even racist without recognizing they are grounded in legitimate concerns, this, too, widens the racial divide and blocks the path to understanding.

This is where we are right now. It's a racial stalemate we've been stuck in for years. And contrary to the claims of some of my critics, black and white, I have never been so naïve as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle or with a single candidate, particularly a candidacy as imperfect as my own.

But I have asserted a firm conviction, a conviction rooted in my faith in God and my faith in the American people, that working together, we can move beyond some of our old racial wounds and that, in fact, we have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union.

For the African American community, that path means embracing the burdens of our past without becoming victims of our past. It means continuing to insist on a full measure of justice in every aspect of American life.

But it also means binding our particular grievances, for better health care and better schools and better jobs, to the larger aspirations of all Americans, the white woman struggling to break the glass ceiling, the white man who's been laid off, the immigrant trying to feed his family.

And it means also taking full responsibility for our own lives, by demanding more from our fathers, and spending more time with our children, and reading to them, and teaching them that while they may face challenges and discrimination in their own lives, they must never succumb to despair or cynicism; they must always believe that they can write their own destiny.

Ironically, this quintessentially American, and, yes, conservative notion of self-help found frequent expression in Reverend Wright's sermons. But what my former pastor too often failed to understand is that embarking on a program of self-help also requires a belief that society can change.

The profound mistake of Reverend Wright's sermons is not that they spoke about racism in our society. It's that he spoke as if our society was static; as if no progress had been made; as if this country, a country that has made it possible for one of his own members to run for the highest office in the land and build a coalition of white and black, Latino, Asian, rich, poor, young and old, is still irrevocably bound to a tragic past.

What we know, what we have seen, is that America can change; that is the true genius of this nation. What we have already achieved gives us hope, the audacity to hope, for what we can and must achieve tomorrow.

Now, in the white community, the path to a more perfect union means acknowledging that what ails the African American community does not just exist in the minds of black people; that the legacy of discrimination, and current incidents of discrimination, while less overt in the past, that these things are real and must be addressed.

Not just with words, but with deeds, by investing in our schools and our communities; by enforcing our civil rights laws, and ensuring fairness in our criminal justice system; by providing this generation with ladders of opportunity that were unavailable for previous generations.

It requires all Americans to realize that your dreams do not have to come at the expense of my dreams, that investing in the health, welfare, and education of black and brown and white children will ultimately help all of America prosper.

This time we want to talk about the crumbling schools that are stealing the future of black children and white children and Asian children and Hispanic children and Native American children.

This time we want to talk about the men and women of every color and creed who serve together, and fight together, and bleed together under the same proud flag. We want to talk about how to bring them home from a war that should've never been authorized and should've never been waged.

I would not be running for president if I didn't believe with all my heart that this is what the vast majority of Americans want for this country. This union may never be perfect, but generation after generation has shown that it can always be perfected.

And today, whenever I find myself feeling doubtful or cynical about this possibility, what gives me the most hope is the next generation, the young people whose attitudes and beliefs and openness to change have already made history in this election.

Source: E.J. Dionne & Joy Ann Reid, We Are the Change we Seek, The Speeches of Barack Obama, 2017, p. 51-...67.

Appendix Eleven

Remarks on Trayvon Martin

Washington D.C July 19, 2013

The death of Trayvon Martin had a profound personal impact on Barack Obama, inspiring him to create his My Brother's Keeper initiative to lift up and inspire black boys and teens (and eventually girls). It also led him to one of the most controversial but powerful statements of his presidency, in March of 2012, when Obama said in the Rose Garden that if he had a son, He'd have looked like the slain Florida youth. A year later, following the acquittal of Martin's killer, Obama offered these more extended remarks about the case, his own struggles growing up, and the stark realities facing young men of color in America.

Trayvon Martin ...Could Have Been My Son

I wanted to come out here, first of all, to tell you that Jay is prepared for all your questions and is very much looking forward to this session. The second thing is I want to let you know that over the next couple of weeks, there's going to obviously be a whole range of issues, immigration, economics, etc, we'll try to arrange a fuller press conference to address your questions.

The reason I actually wanted to come out today is not to take questions, but to speak to an issue that obviously has gotten a lot of attention over the course of the last week, the issue of the Trayvon Martin ruling. I gave a preliminary statement right after the ruling on Sunday. But watching the debate over the course of the last week, I thought it might be useful for me to expand on my thoughts a little bit.

First of all, I want to make sure that, once again, I send my thoughts and prayers, as well as Michelle's, to the family of Trayvon Martin, and to remark on the incredible grace and dignity with which they've dealt with the entire situation. I can only imagine what they're going through, and it's remarkable how they've handled it.

The second thing I want to say is to reiterate what I said on Sunday, which is there's going to be a lot of arguments about the legal issues in the case, I'll let all the legal analysts and talking heads address those issues. The judge conducted the trial in a professional manner. The prosecution and the defense made their arguments. The juries were properly instructed that in a case such as this reasonable doubt was relevant, and they rendered the verdict. And once the jury has spoken, that's how our system works. But I did want to just talk a little bit about context and how people have responded to it and how people are feeling.

You know, when Trayvon Martin was first shot I said that this could have been my son. Another way of saying that is Trayvon Martin could have been me thirty-five years ago. And when you think about why, in the African American community at least, there's a lot of pain around what happened here, I think it's important to recognize that the African American community is looking at this issue through a set of experiences and a history that doesn't go away.

There are very few American men in this country who haven't had the experience of being followed when they were shopping in a department store. That includes me. There are very few African American men who haven't had the experience of walking across the street and hearing the locks click on the doors of cars. That happens to me, at least before I was a Senator. There are very few African Americans who haven't had the experience of getting on an elevator and a woman clutching her purse nervously and holding her breath until she had a chance to get off. That happens often.

And I don't want to exaggerate this, but those sets of experiences inform how the African American community interprets what happened one night in Florida. And it's inescapable for people to bring those experiences to bear. The African American community is also knowledgeable that there is a history of racial disparities in the application of our criminal laws, everything from the death penalty to enforcement of our drug laws. And that ends up having an impact in terms of how people interpret the case.

Now, this isn't to say that the African American community is naïve about the fact that African American young men are disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system; that they're disproportionately both victims and perpetrators of violence. It's not to make excuses for that fact, although black folks do interpret the reason for that in a historical context. They understand that some of the violence that takes place in poor black neighborhoods around the country is born out of a very violent past in this country, and that the poverty and dysfunction that we see in those communities can be traced to a very difficult history.

And so the fact that sometimes that's unacknowledged adds to the frustration. And the fact that a lot of African American boys are painted with a broad brush and the excuse is given, well, there are these statistics out there that show that African American boys are more violent, using that as an excuse to then see sons treated differently causes pain.

I think the African American community is also not naïve in understanding that, statistically, somebody like Trayvon Martin was statistically more likely to be shot by a peer than he was by somebody else. So folks understand the challenges that exist for African American boys. But they get frustrated, I think, if they feel that there's no context for it and that context is being denied. And that all contributes I think to a sense that if a white male teen was involved in the same kind of scenario, that, from top to bottom, both the outcome and the aftermath might have been different.

Now, the question for me at least, and I think for a lot of folks, is where do we take this? How do we learn some lessons from this and move in a positive direction? I think it's understandable that there have been demonstrations and vigils and protests, and some of that stuff is just going to have to work its way through, and so long as it remains nonviolent. If I see any violence, then I will remind folks that that dishonors what happened to Trayvon Martin and his family. But beyond protests or vigils, the question is, are there some concrete things that we might be able to do.

I know that Eric Holder is reviewing what happened down there, but I think it's important for people to have some clear expectations here. Traditionally, these are issues of state and local government, the criminal code. And law enforcement is traditionally done at the state and local levels, not at the federal levels.

That doesn't mean, though, that as a nation we can't do some things that I think would be productive. So let me just give a couple of specifics that I'm still bouncing around with my staff, so we're not rolling out some five-point plan, but some areas where I think all of us could potentially focus.

Number one, precisely because law enforcement is often determined at the state and local level, I think it would be productive for the Justice Department, governors, mayors to work with law enforcement about training at the state and local levels in order to reduce the kind of mistrust in the system that sometimes currently exists.

When I was in Illinois, I passed racial profiling legislation, and it actually did just two simple things. One, it collected data on traffic stops and the race of the person who was stopped. But the other thing was it resourced us training police departments across the state on how to think about potential racial bias and ways to further professionalize what they were doing.

And initially, the police departments across the state were resistant, but actually they came to recognize that if it was done in a fair, straightforward way that it would allow them to do their job better and communities would have more confidence in them and, in turn, be more helpful in applying the law. And obviously, law enforcement has got a very tough job.

So that's one area where I think there are a lot of resources and best practices that could be brought to bear if state and local governments are receptive. And I think a lot of them would be. And let's figure out are there ways for us to push out that kind of training.

Along the same lines, I think it would be useful for us to examine some state and local laws to see if they are designed in such a way that they may encourage the kinds of altercations and confrontations and tragedies that we saw in the Florida case, rather than defuse potential altercations.

I know that there's been commentary about the fact that the "stand your ground" laws in Florida were not used as a defense in the case. On the other hand, if we're sending a message as a society in our communities that someone who is armed potentially has the right to use those firearms even if there's a way for them to exit from a situation, is that really going to be contributing to the kind of peace and security and order that we'd like to see?

And for those who resist that idea that we should think about something like these "stand your ground" laws, I'd just ask people to consider, if Trayvon Martin was of age and armed, could he have stood his ground on that sidewalk? And do we actually think that he would have been justified in shooting Mr. Zimmerman who had followed him in a car because he felt threatened? And if the answer to that question is at least ambiguous, then it seems to me that we might want to examine those kinds of laws.

Number three, and this is a long-term project, we need to spend some time in thinking about how do we bolster and reinforce our African American boys. And this is something that Michelle and I talk a lot about. There are a lot of kids out there who need help, who are getting a lot of negative reinforcement. And is there more that we can do to give them the sense that their country cares about them and values them and is willing to invest in them?

I'm not naïve about the prospects of some grand, new federal program. I'm not sure that that's what we're talking about here. But I do recognize that as President, I've got some convening power, and there are a lot of good programs that are being done across the country on this front. And for us to be able to gather together business leaders and local elected officials and clergy and celebrities and athletes, and figure out how are we doing a better job helping young African American men feel that they're a full part of this society and that they've got pathways and avenues to succeed, I think that would be a pretty good outcome from what was obviously a tragic situation. And we're going to spend some time working on that and thinking about that.

And then, finally, I think it's going to be important for all of us to do some soul-searching. There has been talk about should we convene a conversation on race. I haven't seen that be particularly productive when politicians try to organize conversations. They end up being stilted and politicized, and folks are locked into the positions they already have. On the other hand, in families and churches and workplaces, there's the possibility that people are a little bit more honest, and at least you ask yourself your own questions about, am I wringing as much bias out of myself as I can? Am I judging people as much as I can, not based on the color of their skin, but the content of their character? That would I think, be an appropriate exercise in the wake of this tragedy.

And let me just leave you with a final thought, as difficult and challenging as this whole episode has been for a lot of people, I don't want us to lose sight that things are getting better. Each successive generation seems to be making progress in changing attitudes when it comes to race. It doesn't mean that we're in a post-racial society. It doesn't mean that racism is eliminated. But when I talk to Malia and Sasha, and I listen to their friends and I see them interact, they're better than we are on these issues. And that's true in every community that I've visited all across the country.

And so we have to be vigilant and we have to work on these issues. And those of us in authority should be doing everything we can to encourage the better angels of our nature, as opposed to using these episodes to heighten divisions. But we should also have confidence that kids these days, I think, have more sense than we did or our grandparents did; and that along this long, difficult journey, we're becoming a more perfect union, not a perfect union, but a more perfect union.

Source: Ibid., pp: 234-...241.

Glossary

Abolitionism : The campaign, strengthened by religious passion, for the immediate end of slavery. Among the most famous abolitionists were William Lloyd Garrison and Theodore Dwight Weld. Themselves always in the minority, abolitionists combined with more compromising opponents of slavery to form a wide antislavery movement in the North by the eve of the Civil War. From: Virginia Bernhard, Firsthand America, 1994, p. 508.

Activist: a person who takes direct action to support or oppose an issue or belief. From: Sheila Hardy, Extraordinary People of the Civil Rights Movement, 2007, p. 268.

Affirmative Action: During the 1950's and 1960's, the Supreme Court struck down laws that unfairly discriminated against individuals on the basis of race. Through its decisions in cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States* (1964), the Court ruled that African Americans must have "equal protection of the laws", which the 14th Amendment says is a right available to all people in the United States. While lauding this major advance in the civil rights for African Americans, many civil rights leaders said it was not sufficient to overcome the negative effects of more than two centuries of racial discrimination in the United States. So during the 1970's and 1980's, leaders of civil rights organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the National Organization of Women (NOW), proposed programs designed to go beyond mere equality of opportunity to provide limited kinds of preferential treatment for victims of long term racial or gender-based discrimination. These programs are called Affirmative Action because they involve plans designed through specific actions, to bring about desired outcomes, such as increased jobs opportunities, job promotions, and admissions to colleges and universities. From John J. Patrick, The Oxford guide to the United States Government, 2001, p.12.

Baby boom: The prosperity and optimism that characterized the post-World War II sparked an intense interest in family and "normalcy", which in turn created a most unusual generation of Americans, the "baby boomers." The baby boom consisted of the generation of children fathered by veterans returning to civilian life at the end of World War II. The US population rose by an incredible 20 million people from 1940 to 1950. From: Harvard Sitkoff, Postwar America, 2000, p. 28.

Black Nationalism: A philosophy that exalted Black cultural expression, pride in blackness, and often separation from white society. It has been an important current within African-American intellectual history since the 19th century, when some free Blacks advocated emigration to Africa. Frustrated by violence, discrimination and the slow progress in gaining rights at the start of the 20th century, some African Americans had lost hope of ever achieving equality in the United States. Led by Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey, Black nationalists advocated the creation of a new African-American nation, a Black homeland in Africa. In 1914, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to encourage African American economic independence and to organize his “Back to Africa” cause. His movement declined after he was jailed for mail fraud in 1925 in connection with his fund-raising activities. His beliefs have influenced other African American leaders throughout the century. Since 1945 few African Americans have supported a return to Africa, but many have espoused other aspects of Black nationalism inspired by Garvey, including group solidarity, racial separatism, and ethnic pride. The most visible agent of Black nationalism has been the Nation of Islam and its adherents, including the outspoken and controversial Malcolm X, who converted to Islam in prison and was assassinated in 1965. Malcolm called on Blacks to separate themselves from “white devils” and defend themselves “by any means necessary”. Malcolm’s ideas spread beyond the Black Muslims and influenced the “Black Power” movement. From: *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Black Power: In the mid-1960s, “Black Power” became the slogan of militant Blacks who rejected the nonviolence of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the moderate goals of the early civil rights movement. Stokely Carmichael, the fire-brand elected to head the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1966, popularized the Black power slogan that summer during the civil rights protest march to Jackson, Mississippi. Black Power grew out of frustrations caused by the limited progress of the civil rights movement, desperation at the poverty most Blacks suffered, urban race riots beginning in 1964, and the powerful ideas of Malcolm X, a Black Muslim who rejected integration and advocated self-defense. Those who adopted the Black Power slogan ranged from the Black Panthers, who sought to gain Black power “through the barrel of a gun,” to those who took pride in their African roots and racial heritage. The Black Power movement heightened the self-esteem of many African Americans and spurred mainstream civil rights leaders to focus attention on the economic plight of the Black urban underclass. From: *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

Capitalism: An economic system in which the means of production and exchange are privately owned and market exchanges establish prices. It is also referred to as “Free enterprise system.” From: Virginia Bernhard, *op. cit.*, p.509.

Civil liberties: Those rights of the individual citizen, as enumerated in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, that limit the powers of the government. The First amendment to the Constitution, for example, prohibits congress from making any law that would restrict the free exercise of religious liberty. From: *Ibid*.

Civil rights: Civil rights and civil liberties often mean the same thing. The words are frequently used interchangeably to signify the protection of rights to liberty and equality under the constitution, such as freedom of speech, protection against “unreasonable searches and seizures”, and the right to due process of law. The term civil rights, however, is also used to refer to positive actions by the government to protect or extend the rights of people, to provide for individuals or groups opportunities that were previously denied to them. These kinds of civil rights guarantees usually are provided through statutes, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which gives the federal government the power to prevent an employer from denying a job to someone because of the person’s race, gender, religion, or ethnic origin. Civil rights movements are organized efforts to obtain long-denied constitutional rights for individuals and groups such as African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and women. These segments of the American population have not always enjoyed their full rights of citizenship under the US Constitution. From: John J. Patrick, *OP. Cit.*, p.112.

Civil Rights Act: The Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, was a major turning point in the quest of African Americans for equal treatment under the law. Its numerous titles, or sections, struck down a network of laws that had historically kept Black people, especially in the South, from voting, using public accommodations, and receiving equal treatment under the law. Title I of the Act restricted the use of literacy tests and poll taxes (a tax on adults of voting age that had prevented most Blacks from voting). Titles II and III outlawed certain types of segregation and discrimination in hotels, restaurants, and other public accommodations. Title IV furthered the cause of school desegregation. Titles VII and VIII outlawed discrimination by employers with more than 100 workers and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate violations and enforce the law. Other titles established procedures for the federal government to enforce civil rights laws and updated court procedures. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

Civil Rights Legislation: For a century after the Civil War, Congress debated, filibustered against, and finally enacted significant civil rights legislation to guarantee the equal rights of African Americans and other minorities. In 1866, Congress passed the first Civil Rights Act over President Andrew Johnson’s veto. This Act granted African Americans full citizenship, thereby reversing the Supreme Court’s Dred Scott’s decision of 1857, which had stated that Blacks, whether slave or free, were not citizens. When Southern states passed laws requiring segregation by race, Senator Charles Sumner (Republican Massachusetts)

sponsored the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which provided for equal accommodations in hotels, restaurants, trains and other public facilities. In 1896, the Supreme Court, ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, declared this act unconstitutional and upheld racial segregation. The Court ruled that “laws permitting, and even requiring their separation in places where they are liable to be brought into contact do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other. Although segregationists never had the vote in Congress to write segregation into national law, they were able to protect it by filibustering. During most of the 20th century, the Civil Rights Movement of African Americans had had a strong impact on the advancement of constitutional rights for all Americans, especially those who had been long-suffering victims of unjust discrimination, and unfair treatment under the law. From: John J. Patrick, op. cit., p. 113.

Civil Rights Movement: A movement in the 1950’s and 1960’s that, through the use of civil disobedience, obtained civil rights; the right of equal access to lunch counters, hotels, education, and legislation by the federal government. Among many leaders, Martin Luther King, Jr., was the most prominent. From: William. O. Kellogg, *The Easy Way*, 2003, p.156.

The early leader of the civil rights movement was the NAACP(National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), founded in 1909. After the formation in 1939 of its Legal Defense Fund (LDF), directed by Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP began to have a steady and significant effect on federal court rulings to obtain and expand the civil rights of African Americans with regard to voting and education. The biggest breakthrough came with the legal victory, led by Thurgood Marshall and other NAACP attorneys, in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which established that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. After the *Brown Decision*, various African American organizations, including the NAACP, launched political protest movements to influence enforcement of the *Brown decision* and to demand that the federal government pass laws to protect and promote civil rights for African Americans. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which he led, moved to the forefront. From: John J. Patrick, op. cit., p. 113.

Commission on Civil Rights: For almost a century after the Civil War, a system of racial segregation became entrenched in the South and social discrimination prevailed throughout the nation. During and after World War II, a new movement of equal rights developed. President Harry Truman desegregated the Armed Forces in 1949, and the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that the racial segregation of schools was unconstitutional. Civil rights organizations demonstrated across the South. The Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott of 1955 was one of the most dramatic civil rights confrontations. In 1957, Congress passed the first Civil Rights Act since Reconstruction. Although generally a weak bill, the Civil Rights Act created the Commission on Civil Rights. The commission serves as a fact-finding agency to examine legislation and the government’s policy initiatives to assess the

nature and extent of denials of equal protection of the laws, a guarantee under the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution. From: Ibid, p.133.

Consciousness-raising groups: In the late 1960's and early 1970's, small groups of women held regularly scheduled meetings where they would share intimate details of their lives with each other. These women, who were mainly fairly young, middle to upper middle class, well educated, and white, found that when they discussed their lives and their feelings common patterns emerged. Most of them shared experiences of oppression that they realized came from being female in a male-dominated society, and from that realization came the idea that "the personal is political"; in other words, that experiences that seem to be deeply personal often have roots in the surrounding culture and thus do not have to be repeated if the relationships and assumptions from which they develop could be changed. Consciousness-raising groups grew out of the civil rights and antiwar movements, and had an important effect on the newly re-emerging feminist movement. From the groups came many new insights into how relationships between men and women and between women and other women could be improved. From: Harvard Sitkoff, op. cit., p 75.

CORE: The Congress of Racial Equality, founded in 1942 by Bernice fisher, James Farmer, and others to organize and lead boycotts, sit-ins, marches, and other forms of nonviolent protest. In the early 1960s, it concentrated on voter registration in the South. Later, by the mid-1960s, it focused on achieving political power for Blacks and also was active in the anti-war movement. From: Sheila Hardy, op. cit., p. 269.

De facto segregation: Racial segregation that is not a direct result of law or government policy, but is, instead, a reflection of residential patterns, income distributions, or other social factors. From: Theodore. J. Lowi, American Government, Power and Purpose, 2010, p. 40.

De Jure Segregation: Racial segregation that is a direct result of law or official policy. From: Ibid.

Discrimination: refers to any kind of unfair treatment based on race, gender, or ethnicity.

Disenfranchise: To remove the right of one to vote. Franchise is used in political science and history to refer to the right to vote. From: William. O. Kellogg, op. cit., p. 156.

Equal Protection Clause: A clause in the Fourteenth Amendment that requires that states provide citizens "equal protection of the laws". This clause has served as the basis for the civil rights for African Americans, women, and other groups. From: Theodore. J. Lowi, OP. Cit., p. 41.

Emancipation: Act or process of setting or making one free; freeing, especially applied to slaves. From: Ibid., p. 148.

Filibuster: A tactic used by members of the Senate to prevent action on legislation they oppose by continuously holding the floor and speaking until the majority backs down. Once given the floor, senators have unlimited time to speak, and it requires a vote of three-fifths of the Senate to end a filibuster.

Freedom Rides: A series of protests against segregation on interstate travel, staged by black and white activists traveling by bus through the southern United States. From: Sheila Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

Freedom Schools: schools established in the south during the civil rights movement to teach African American children confidence, political organization skills, and voter literacy. From: *Ibid.*

Great Society: The label given to Lyndon B. Johnson's domestic program. Johnson, having grown up politically during Franklin D. Roosevelt's years in office, sought during his own presidency a program to fulfill the promise of the New Deal and complete the work left undone by John F. Kennedy's New Frontier. From: Virginia Bernhard, *op. cit.*, p. 510.

Imperialism: The policy of one nation's conquering other portions of the world and exercising political dominion over them. The term can also be applied to economic or cultural domination of one society by another. From: *Ibid.*, p. 511.

Jim Crow Laws: Discriminatory practices developed in the 1880's in the Southern United States to restrict the personal liberties and rights of African Americans. From: Sheila Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

Ku Klux Klan: An ultra-racist organization first formed during Reconstruction following the civil War and later revived in the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan had its third incarnation in the 1950s and 1960s. Rising up in response to the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which ordered desegregation of all public schools, the new Klan sought to halt the civil rights movement by intimidating its leaders with threats, murders, bombings, and other terrorist acts. Klan violence, however, helped mobilize public support for the passage of the civil rights legislation. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson promised to use the law to control this "hooded society of bigots," a reference to the white sheets with hoods that Klan members wore. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.

MIA: The Montgomery Improvement Association, founded in 1955 to organize the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, which led to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that outlawed segregated seating on public buses. From: Sheila Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

Middle class status: The social class between the working class and the upper class. It consists of people who are generally regarded as having an average status, education, income, in a society. From: Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, 2005, p. 300.

NAACP: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; it is the oldest civil rights organization in the United States, that played a central role in the civil rights revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. The NAACP was founded in 1919 by a group of Black civil rights leaders, including the scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, and prominent white progressives. The organization promoted civil rights by investigating lynchings and other violence against Blacks, lobbying lawmakers, publicizing efforts to improve civil rights, and, most important, by challenging racist laws in the courts. After decades of a few hard-won legal and political battles, the NAACP's legal strategy paid off in 1954 when the Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of public schools in the *brown v. board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, decision. Under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall and Roy Wilkins, the organization continued to fight legal battles and successfully lobbied for the Civil rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. From: Harvard Sitkoff, op. cit., p. 195.

Plessy V. Ferguson: The Ratification of the 13th Amendment in 1865, shortly after the end of the Civil War, abolished slavery in the United States. However, prejudices against blacks remained strong. Southern states began to pass laws to keep blacks separated from whites. A group of black leaders in Louisiana formed a Citizen's Committee to deliberately test the constitutionality of one such law, the Separate Car Law. Acting for the Citizen's Committee, Homer Plessy, a Louisiana resident who was one-eighth Black, bought a first-class ticket for a train in Louisiana. Plessy took a seat in the railroad car reserved for whites only. When Plessy refused to move to the couch reserved for "coloured", he was arrested. He had violated the Louisiana law requiring separate railroad accommodations for blacks and whites. The Citizen's Committee and Plessy claimed the Louisiana law denied him the "equal protection of the laws" guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. Plessy's lawyers also claimed the law violated the 13th Amendment ban on slavery by destroying the legal equality of the races, and, in effect, reintroducing slavery. From: John J. Patrick, op. cit., p. 483.

Reconstruction: The period following the Civil War during which the Confederate states of the South were under the control of the federal government and the system of slavery was abolished. From: *Ibid.*, p.271.

Registration: The practice of placing citizen's names on an official list of voters before they are eligible to exercise their right to vote. From: Thomas E. Patterson, *We the People*, 2008, p. 659.

SCLC: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization of ministers and other church leaders committed to working for civil rights, which was founded in 1957 and led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The organization grew out of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott of 1955-56, which had forced the city to integrate the local transportation system. Under King's leadership, the group brought its tactics of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience to cities across the

South and later in the 1960's to northern cities as well. King served as president of this organization until his assassination in 1968 and was succeeded first by Abernathy, then by the Reverend Joseph E. Lowery. From: Harvard Sitkoff, op. cit., p. 232.

Secession: As a specific term in American history, the act of the eleven states of the Confederacy in removing themselves from the Union; also the doctrine justifying that decision. The theory of secession held that the Union was made up of sovereign states each of which retained the right to go its separate way. From: Virginia Bernhard, op. cit., p. 513.

Segregation: the legal separation of the races in public institutions and in society. In 1896 the Supreme Court, rendering its decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, ruled that segregated "separate but equal" public facilities did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment. In 1954 the court reversed itself through its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, holding that separate facilities were "inherently unequal". From: Ibid.

Selma march: In March 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr., and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) sought to publicize the need for a federal Voting Rights Act by launching a voter registration drive in Selma, Alabama. Although half of the population in the county was black, only 1 percent of the potential Black voters were registered to vote. When protesters lined up for a peaceful march on the city, the county sheriff, Jim Clark, sent policemen on horseback to attack them with tear gas, clubs, and whips. Film footage of the attack appeared on the evening news and won support for the federal Voting Rights Act, which was signed into law in August 1965. From: Harvard Sitkoff, op. cit., p. 229.

Seneca Falls Convention: Seneca Falls, a small town in western New York State, and often looked as the birthplace of the American feminist movement. In July of 1848, several hundred early feminists met there to discuss their problems in what is known as the Seneca Falls Convention. The meeting was organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. From: Melinda Tims, *Perspectives on the Making of America*, 2002, pp. 187-188.

Separate But Equal Doctrine: In 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court ruled that a state law requiring racial segregation in public accommodations was constitutional as long as the separate facilities were equal. This "separate but equal doctrine" was used to justify racial segregation in public schools and a wide variety of other public facilities. In 1954, the court overturned in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Sit-ins (1960-61): On February 1, 1960, four freshmen from a local black college sat down at the lunch counter of Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina. Denied service, they sat at the counter for the rest of the day and promised to return and occupy the seats until they were served. By the end of the week, enough Black students had joined the demonstration to fill the lunchroom

completely. Six months later, city officials agreed to integrate public restaurants. The Greensboro sit-in inspired similar protests elsewhere in North Carolina and neighboring states. Eventually, about 70,000 students participated in sit-ins across the South. The movement not only won access to public accommodations for Blacks but also revitalized the civil rights movement; it was students who took part in the sit-in who also formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in April 1960. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

SNCC: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, established in 1960 under the direction of Ella Baker, to organize students in nonviolent direct protest against segregation and racism. From: Sheila Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

Third World: A term used to designate non-Western countries that have yet to industrialize. The United States and its industrialized trading partners, and the Soviet Union and its satellites, make up the first two worlds. From: *Ibid.*

Voting Rights Act: Introduced by President Lyndon B. Johnson in March 1965, passed by Congress, and signed into law by the President in early August, the Voting rights Act guaranteed the voting rights of all U.S. citizens “without distinctions of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” The law was aimed at striking down a web of statutes and practices in southern states that had prevented the vast majority of African Americans from voting there, especially laws requiring prospective voters to read and interpret sections of the state constitution and to provide written answers to a test that could be as long as 20 pages. The act restricted literacy testing, forbade intimidation of voters, authorized the attorney general to dispatch federal registrars and observers to countries that tried to resist the act, and empowered the Justice Department to clear in advance changes in state electoral rules that might unfairly burden African American voters. Along with the 24th Amendment to the Constitution, which had been ratified the previous year and prohibited the poll tax in federal elections, and a Supreme Court decision that prohibited poll taxes in all elections; this landmark legislation gave the vote back to Southern Blacks. By 1969, approximately three-fifths of adult African Americans in the South had registered to vote. The most sweeping gains came in Mississippi, where Black registration leaped from 7 percent in 1964 to 60 percent in 1968, and in Alabama, where African American voter enrollment jumped from 23 percent to 53 percent. From: Harvard Sitkoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-264.

Welfare state: The set of governmental programs that provides minimal care for the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and the unemployed. All industrialized societies have adopted welfare measures. In the United States the origins of the welfare state lie in Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. From: Virginia Bernhard, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

White supremacist: a person who believes that the white race is superior to all others and who treats people of other races with hostility. From: Sheila Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

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