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Silence as A Strategy

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Silence as a Strategy

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in *Department Name*.

By
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Under the mentorship of Dr. Novotny

ABSTRACT

Understanding the struggle that is peaceful protest is a task that has two unexplored components. The first is how leaders of political movements and protest groups are able to influence the masses to not waiver in their non-violent, peaceful approach. The second is how political groups learn from the failures and successes of the previous campaigns. We are given these circumstances where governmental violence and abuse would normally lead to a retaliatory response from groups, but in order to maintain the fidelity of the movement leaders of these political protests have to protect the nonviolent approach. These are instances where protesters were met with vehement force from dogs, to water hoses, to physical violence, all in the name of maintaining the separate but equal mentality that plagued the nation at the time. These protesters would be expected to combat this through uproar and display their fervor through violence, however; they consistently choose a different path. There is another important aspect to this, where we are given the idea that these political movements share both leadership and direction and because of this we have to anticipate political groups learning from one another. If we can observe the uniformity between the methods, leadership and ideology between the movements in both Birmingham and Albany then we should be able to see similar if not the same outcomes. With that being said we see two different results in very similar situations, with reasoning why, my study will focus on understanding the disconnect between the two outcomes.

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Introduction

On April 4th, 1968 a champion of civil rights fell. The nation erupted into riots and outrage as James Earl Ray plunged our nation into darkness for an evening by assassinating one of its most active sons and taking a major piece off the board in the chess game that was civil rights at the time. This singular event served as one of the most devastating blows to the movement and ended up being a shot that the world felt. Why was this the case?

People rarely look at the steps that were taken to establish Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as the pivotal standard that civil rights needed. When we look at the civil rights era we see that Dr. King is truly embedded in what some now call the “Long Civil Rights Movement”.¹ Serving the people that needed him most we see Dr. King recognizing the importance of not just civil rights, but the significance of lobbying for human rights. Crafting important documents that would later serve as the instruments to light the path for civil rights. The purpose of this thesis is to tie together some of the most influential thinkers’ thoughts and ideas as they relate to Dr. King's campaign in Albany and the lessons that campaign taught him that he would later apply in Birmingham, Alabama as well as other locations on his southern tour for equality. I argue that the experience that Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference gained in Albany was the most important lesson that they could have been taught moving forward and that those were the tools they would use later on in their protests.

Lack of preparation and direction would ultimately lead to the failure in Albany.² King would regard his time there as nothing more than that, a negative mark on his resume as he

¹Schmidt, Christopher W. “Legal History and the Problem of the Long Civil Rights Movement.” *Law & Social Inquiry* 41, no. 4 (Fall 2016): 1081–1107. doi:10.1111/lsi.12245.

² Burrow Jr., Rufus. “The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.: To Save the Soul of America, January 1961-August 1962.” *Western Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 256–61. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=13913891>.

battled for equality, but an important lesson that would contribute to a winning formula.³ This formula proved so potent that scholars have been able to look at the direct connection between both protests:

“the CRM launched an intense campaign in Albany, Georgia, to challenge its racist order. But it ended without having won any concerted concessions; the nonviolent direct-action tactic of MLK’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was widely seen as a defeat...Unlike the Albany campaign, Birmingham was to be a planned action under SCLC direction”.⁴

We have to look at the idea that there was significantly more at play than just the lack of preparation on SCLC and King’s part.⁵ It would prove to be a lack of desire to get prematurely involved on the political side from the currently gaining steam Kennedy brothers;⁶ as well as, the cunning of Police Chief Laurie Pritchett as it stood in contrast to the malicious tactics employed by police chief Eugene “Bull” Connor. Through intense study and reflection of the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi (someone Dr. King looked to as a mentor) Pritchett anticipated the ability to neutralize the protest through peaceful tactics,⁷ scholars draw comparisons from this particular instance to another two, the Selma and Birmingham protests.⁸ This is not the case and is apparent when you look at the character of Eugene Connor and the character of him, as well as his limited

³ Burrow, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.: To Save the Soul of America, January 1961-August 1962*, p. 257

⁴ Nimitz, August H. “Violence and/or Nonviolence in the Success of the Civil Rights Movement: The Malcolm X–Martin Luther King, Jr. Nexus.” *New Political Science*, no. 1 (2016): 1.
<https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsbl&AN=vdc.100029429197.0x000001>.

⁵ Burrow, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.: To Save the Soul of America, January 1961-August 1962*, p. 260

⁶ Kenneth O’Reilly. “The FBI and the Civil Rights Movement during the Kennedy Years--from the Freedom Rides to Albany.” *The Journal of Southern History*, no. 2 (1988): 201. doi:10.2307/2209399.

⁷ Reston, James, Jr. “Clark and Pritchett: A Comparison of Two Notorious Southern Lawmen.” *Southern Cultures*, no. 4 (2016): 50.
<https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgea&AN=edsocl.477339615>.

⁸ Reston, *Clark and Pritchett: A Comparison of Two Notorious Southern Lawmen*, p. 57

interaction with Pritchett. “the Klan meet in Bessemer, Alabama, and opening planned the Birmingham bombings. “I told Connor, ‘Look here, the Klan says they’re going to blow this man [King] up,’ ” Pritchett told me. ‘You ought to put a guard on him.’” And Connor replied, according to Pritchett, “I don’t give a damn if they do blow him up. Don’t care what they do. I’m not going to protect him”⁹. This particular instance would prove to be the last straw for Pritchett and the last time that him and Eugene Connor collaborated. The last important factor to make notice of was the activist climate that had already taken hold in Albany. People had current started mobilizing and representing themselves within different organizations that were formed to bring the same justice that the SCLC was attempting to bring.¹⁰ In the end it would be King’s leadership that the people desired not his work and he would eventually get this confused.

The quest that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would embark on would prove a lucrative one in the long run; however, Albany is certainly considered a significant stumble. The highest point and arguably one of his most significant victories is possibly Birmingham, Alabama. There is much to be learned about the process that was employed in both these locations, and I believe there was substantially more time and preparation that went into the planning and execution of Birmingham. The lessons that were learned between the two instances can be articulated in King’s iconic *Letter from Birmingham Jail* manuscript in which he lays out his plan and articulates his purpose.¹¹

⁹ Reston, *Clark and Pritchett: A Comparison of Two Notorious Southern Lawmen*, p. 61

¹⁰ Ricks, J. (1988). Martin Luther King’s mistakes in Albany, Georgia, 1961-62. *Proceedings & Papers Of The Georgia Association Of Historians*, 9 (169-176).

¹¹ Tremaine T. Sails-Dunbar, “A Case Study Analysis of the ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’: Conceptualizing the Conscience of King through the Lens of Paulo Freire.” *Pursuit: The Journal of Undergraduate Research at the University of Tennessee* 8, no. 1 (January 2017): 139–48.
<https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=123884535>.

We see growth between the two cities, and we see a more directed approach as we move toward Birmingham. This growth is what I argue helped shape the civil rights movement into what it ended up being and was directly responsible for some of the success that was enjoyed by King and his affiliates. We see that he takes note of the climate that he is subjected to in this particular era in works like his *Letter From Birmingham Jail*,¹² as well as the ability to articulate the things that he hopes to accomplish. As I analyze both cases notice, how this change establishes a standard of what will be considered success, and notice that the achievements that King enjoyed as a product of nonviolent protest could be examined to a particular structure and formula.

Literature Review

The history of silent protest is one that has maintained its presence throughout time. It is a method that has proven its worth as a mechanism of change and has been applied to a wide variety of situations.^{13 14} The power behind silent demonstration has the ability to captivate crowds and bring about the change that words never could.¹⁵ My research is directed toward obtaining a stronger grasp of the effectiveness and validity of silent protest, while I ask myself the all important question of whether or not the protest worked when applied to case studies and

¹² Sails-Dunbar, Tremaine T. "A Case Study Analysis of the 'Letter from Birmingham Jail': Conceptualizing the Conscience of King through the Lens of Paulo Freire." *Pursuit: The Journal of Undergraduate Research at the University of Tennessee*, vol. 8, no. 1, Jan. 2017, pp. 139–148. *EBSCOhost*, libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=123884535.

¹³ Daniel Kane, and Tiell Bonnie. "Application of Normative Ethics to Explain Colin Kaepernick's Silent Protest in the NFL." *Sport Journal*, July 27, 2017, 1. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=s3h&AN=124402533>.

¹⁴ Kwame J.A Agyemang, Brennan K. Berg, and Rhema D. Fuller. "Disrupting the Disruptor: Perceptions as Institutional Maintenance Work at the 1968 Olympic Games." *Journal of Sport Management* 32, no. 6 (November 2018): 567–80. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=s3h&AN=132545868>.

¹⁵ Hatzisavvidou, Sophia. "Disturbing Binaries in Political Thought: Silence as Political Activism." *Social Movement Studies* 14, no. 5 (September 2015): 509–22. doi:10.1080/14742837.2015.1043989.

what was different between the cases. The literature around peaceful protest has painted a vivid image of how scholars approach the tactic, while simultaneously expressing why it is still important to this day. I now expand on the significance of protest as I understand it from the literature that studies it. I also draw similarities shared between present day protest to the structure of the civil rights movement.

Speaking first on the idea of tactics, I illuminate the idea that the decision to use a particular form of protest is extremely significant when dealing with protest as a whole.¹⁶ The way a group approaches a protest can determine how seriously the message will be perceived and what attention is drawn to it. Also the ability to get other people to buy into the ideas of the protest determine on the methods, as well as the legitimacy of the claims that are made by those organizing the protest.¹⁷ Relating this back to the topic these are two things that King was able to do, being very strong willed about the philosophy behind his protest, while the idea of civil rights stayed at the forefront of everyone's mind.

When understanding silent protest as a historically political phenomena, there are different components of it that I have found to be specifically impactful; these components as I understand them are: the ability to bring attention to a particular occurrence of injustice,¹⁸ and the ability to stand peacefully in opposition of specific instances of injustice,¹⁹ both of these culminate into the ability to create political change and advocacy. These components are what drive political change by exposing different aspects of institutions through disrupting the natural

¹⁶Dan J. Wang, and Piazza Alessandro. "The Use of Disruptive Tactics in Protest as a Trade-Off: The Role of Social Movement Claims." *Social Forces* 94, no. 4 (2016): 1677, accessed November 10, 2018.

¹⁷Stefano Passini, and Davide Morselli. "Supporting Protest Movements: The Effect of the Legitimacy of the Claims." *International Journal of Psychological Research, Vol 8, Iss 2, Pp 10-22 (2015)*, no. 2 (2015): 10.

¹⁸Ramadhhar Singh, Paul A. Bell, Ran Bijay Narayan Sinha, Sweta Singh, and Krithiga Sankaran. "Crime against Woman and Punishment Goals: Social Order and Country Moderate Public Protest Effect." *IIMB Management Review* 26 (June 1, 2014): 82–90.

¹⁹Hatzisavvidou, *Social Movement Studies*, 514.

flow of things; in this sense non-violent protest has been found to be significantly more effective than violent protest.²⁰ I would like to note that silence itself has political potential; however, it is not inherently political: “Silence is not political in itself, but it has political potentiality, when as a form of operating enables a subject to be responsive to the current affairs, to *kairos*.”²¹

Conversely to the understanding that silent protest can be an effective means of making change, research has shown that violent or disruptive protest runs the risk of diluting the cause and mudding the message.²² Research also shows that the expectation in cases like the civil rights movement (where there are high levels of repression) is that the individuals participating in the protest would retaliate with violent protest.²³ While both of these ideas have been shown to be true through research, it has also been proven that staying the course of civil disobedience through peaceful protest also has direct benefit.²⁴ Furthermore the training and the way that violent protest is approached is completely different than that of silent protest with violent disobedience being labeled a riot and being understood as significantly more hostile.²⁵ These ideas help me formulate a later hypothesis, that becomes a value assessment, that other forms of protest would have possibly derailed the civil rights movement.

Tactics that are used today are similar to the idea of silent advocacy and manifest in the methodology of movements similar to the Black Lives Matter Group and the #MeToo

²⁰ Dan J. Wang, and Alessandro Piazza. “The Use of Disruptive Tactics in Protest as a Trade-Off: The Role of Social Movement Claims.” *Social Forces* 94, no. 4 (2016): 1678, accessed November 10, 2018.

²¹ Hatzisavvidou, *Social Movement Studies*, 516.

²² Dan J. Wang, and Alessandro Piazza. “The Use of Disruptive Tactics in Protest as a Trade-Off: The Role of Social Movement Claims.” *Social Forces* 94, no. 4 (June 2016): 1675–1710.

²³ Sam R. Bell, and Amanda Murdie. “The Apparatus for Violence: Repression, Violent Protest, and Civil War in a Cross-National Framework.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 4 (July 2018): 346.

²⁴ Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare. New York: Columbia University Press. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search-ebscohost-com.libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=399884>.

²⁵ Wagner, Jim. 2018. “Riot Defense.” *Black Belt* 56 (3): 42–47. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search-ebscohost-com.libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=s3h&AN=128175718>.

Movement, that uses social media as a framing tool to base their demonstrations.²⁶ You can see that these are instances where platforms like Twitter facilitate offline cooperation and work as a medium to empower protests while drawing attention to issues.²⁷ I believe that the tactics that manifest here are centered in the same ideology that silent protest invokes when attempting to create democratic change.²⁸ We can see this with different groups like the American Civil Liberties Union doing training protestors in the appropriate art of civil disobedience and what their rights are as protestors.²⁹

As this relates to my research and my case study this literature demonstrates the importance of protest as a means of facilitating change,³⁰ but more importantly the ability of peaceful [silent] protest to bring about this change.³¹ There should be no denying that silent protest and protest in general is something that is worth understanding and studying as it evolves. Silent protest maintains some of the key elements that protest in general provides, and the idea of nonviolent protest (the act of protesting without riots, without violence, without revolution) is something that has been maintained and mimicked with the social movements that we see today.

²⁶ Luigi Esposito and Romano Victor. "Benevolent Racism and the Co-Optation of the Black Lives Matter Movement." *Western Journal of Black Studies* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 161–73. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=125104211>.

²⁷ Saura, Geo, José-Luis Muñoz-Moreno, Julián Luengo-Navas, and José-Manuel Martos. "Protesting on Twitter: Citizenship and Empowerment from Public Education." *Comunicar* 25, no. 53 (October 2017): 39–48. doi:10.3916/C53-2017-04.

²⁸ Thomas Davies, Holly Eva Ryan, and Alejandro Milciades Peña. *Protest, Social Movements, and Global Democracy Since 2011 : New Perspectives*. Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change. Bradford, (West Yorkshire: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2016), 14.

²⁹ Gretel Kauffman Staff. 2017. "How the ACLU Is Training Protesters in the 'Resistance' Movement." *Christian Science Monitor*, March 12. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost-com.libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=121736481>.

³⁰ Thomas Davies, Holly Eva Ryan, and Alejandro Milciades Peña. *Protest, Social Movements, and Global Democracy Since 2011 : New Perspectives*. Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change. Bradford, (West Yorkshire: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2016), 12-13

³¹ August H. Nimtz. "Violence and/or Nonviolence in the Success of the Civil Rights Movement: The Malcolm X–Martin Luther King, Jr. Nexus." *New Political Science* 38, no. 1 (March 2016): 6.

This is something that affects our local community,^{32 33} our political landscape,³⁴ it affects our international community³⁵ and much more.

Theory

Referring back to the question that this is centered on I am looking at the differences between both the cases. The things that distinguish both Albany Georgia as well as the things that distinguish Birmingham Alabama. Without question the first the outcome. One was presented the desired outcome while the other was presented the exact opposite. This brings me to the first thing that my study demonstrates: that is that the lessons learned at the earlier location, and during the early campaign of Albany, directly influenced some of the decisions that were made in Birmingham. This can be seen with the similarity between the rural locations and the type of protest that was taken. If you look at both locations ,the tactics that were employed in Albany were similar to the ones that were employed in Birmingham and the type of southern rural town that characterized Albany was the same thing that characterized Birmingham. These realities exist on the same plan with completely different outcomes as my studies show. The differences start with the way the media presents the relationship between both the police as well as the individual protestors and how the police actually go about handling King and his affiliates.

I believe that the structure of the movement, the active groups, and the location to large support systems had something to do with the success and failures of the individual

³² Matthew Enfinger. "Student walkout to conclude with open letter to Interim President Nickel," last modified November 1, 2018. http://www.thegeorgeanne.com/news/article_527552de-dde4-11e8-810f-c306cd50ddf4.html

³³ Rachel Adams. "Student-led march and class walkout to take place on Thursday," *The George-Anne* (2018) http://www.thegeorgeanne.com/news/article_d78db28e-aec9-5df8-afd5-6fce174fb202.html

³⁴ Emily Shugerman. "The #MeToo Movement Takes Office After Winning elections Across the U.S." last modified November 7, 2018. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-metoo-movement-takes-office-after-winning-elections-across-the-us>

³⁵ Anna North, "How the Women's March made itself indispensable" last modified January 19, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/1/19/16905884/2018-womens-march-anniversary>

movements.³⁶ To understand this I will take a look at the active groups in the area during this time the philosophies that they adopted and the agenda that they each supported. That was I can get a better understanding for the purpose of some of these activist groups. I argue that the ones available did not have the organization or support needed to bring wide scale change and would have been extremely appreciative of larger figures coming to support their movement.

We can see some of the tactics today in some of the social campaigns that have popped up all around the country I am sure.³⁷ The civil rights movement is cited as the inspiration and the motivation behind many protests and shows of civil disobedience. I have faith that the students of this particular incident have not simply let the idea die, but continue to promote and use some of the tools that have proven to gain success. This hints at the heart of my question: was silence as a tactic successful? This also presents the most important question of relevance and reaffirms it. Things that matter the most to us are ideas that we can apply to daily life and use as we move forward. We see silent and peaceful protest and demonstration still deployed today as a means of facilitating change.³⁸

My first hypothesis looks at the cases for what they are and I ask are the lessons that were learned from the experience King and the NAACP gained in Albany significant for shaping how he approached the work that was to be done in the later case of Birmingham. Next, looking at the philosophy of silent protest I want to understand how important silent protest was to the movement, it is my hypothesis that a different philosophy could have derailed the movement

³⁶ Tijds Broek, David Langley, and Tobias Hornig. "The Effect of Online Protests and Firm Responses on Shareholder and Consumer Evaluation." *Journal of Business Ethics* 146, no. 2 (December 2017): 279–94.

³⁷ Gretel Kauffman Staff. 2017. "How the ACLU Is Training Protesters in the 'Resistance' Movement." *Christian Science Monitor*, March 12. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search-ebSCOhost-com.libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=121736481>.

³⁸ The Associated Press. 2017. "The Latest: Protesters Return to Ferguson for Latest March." *US News Online*. Associated Press DBA Press Association. <https://libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login?url=https://search-ebSCOhost-com.libez.lib.georgiasouthern.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nsm&AN=APee8aeee64cb84dac9074d9f738793a90>.

completely. Lastly, I hypothesize that some of the concepts that were applied in this earlier movement can possibly be applied to current day movements and have possibly even become standards that are applied to social movements of today.

Research Design

I approach my thesis by looking at two similar case studies to better understand the similarities and differences between the two cases for instance the things that make the studies different from police interaction to the planning process and the way that the protestors and activist approach each individual location. This is a comparative case study approach and it will help establish the individual cases and look at what changes occur between them. There are substantial differences between the two cases and my ability to pull these differences out will be important for me testing the questions that I have raised and helping reinforce my hypothesis and work through my thesis. Within my case studies, the most important part of the study was using my theory to isolate changes between the two individual cases, and then looking at how the two cases stack up against each other. Next isolating the variables in each particular instance is a must to determine for sure what causes the change between the two. I would like to refer back to the question itself of whether or not the lessons learned by civil rights leaders in Albany, Georgia were not beneficial in successful protests later on in the civil rights movement, specifically the case of Birmingham, Alabama. I am studying the idea that civil rights leaders are employing tactics that are congruent with, in climates that are not. I have analyzed the change between the two situations and understand the different outcomes. I would also like to look at how some of these lessons are deployed in a singular current day case to show that this research is still relevant.

My case study has been a strong proponent for answering the main question that I have of whether or not silent protest was an effective method of demonstration. I want the contrast and

comparison between the cases to be what discloses the answer. For instance from the research that I have already done the relationship that the media and the protestors had was significantly better in Birmingham and that makes it easy for me to imply that that has a serious impact in the outcome of the situation. I am basically finding what factors lead to a change in the situation and a positive outcome. I affirm that the outcome of the cases are what I am focusing in on to provide my evidence. While I am aware that certain early aspects of the cases may mimic each other I am only really concerned about the difference in outcome, this is my dependent variable. My independent variables are each independent case, this is because everything that makes up each individual case can exist within its own ecosystem while the tactics used are the same.

The research that I have done has shown that the outcomes in both Albany and Birmingham are different. Scholars consider Birmingham to be one of the greatest successes of the civil rights movements while they consider Albany as one of the greatest failures of the movement. This understanding of outcome is written not just in the way that the laws ended up changing, but also in the public perspective of the outcomes.

I have used a secondary sources to provide context, specifically scholarly articles that talk about the Albany and Birmingham experience, but this context is reaffirmed through the primary sources used which talk about the period of time specifically and what happened in each location. Newspapers that talk about the incidents specifically and news film that shows the conversation that surrounded Albany city. These are going to be relied on based on their relation to the situation and the viewpoint that they provide for both of the independent variables.

The key elements of contention for my independent variables were: lack of preparation or planning, the amount of different social advocacy groups in the area, and the relationship with

the police and media in both areas. I will take some time to give an overview of both locations in respect to these three key elements.

Data Sources:

While I do not know if these two cases have been compared specifically by scholars I am sure that each case has been looked at individually. I will take the time to look at how scholars understand each case and if the cases have actually been looked at together I will look at that as well to gain contextual understanding. Another thing to look for is general articles that address protest and peaceful demonstration as a whole. These all will show that this is something that is relevant and on the radar of the academic community.

I need to have a better understanding of how the newspapers and the the media were perceiving these tactics. This has a lot to do with defining what success and failure look like with these movements. At the end of the day we understand that legislation change is the motive, but there is something to be gained from public perception and that kind of success as well. Newspapers and magazines will provide insight to this kind of success. In future research, it would be useful to look at individuals perspectives in newspapers because it may have an effect of the outcome of the movement.

With there being curated exhibits based around commemorating this period of time as we speak I think that it is important to use some of the work already done. Both locations now have their own civil rights museums, one of which has already agreed to let me look at their archives for my research. To travel to these places and take the general admission tour could realistically be valuable. I want to use them to find out what other people think was a useful take away from the movements at the time and how the story was told. This is political history that invoked political change, it is an existing story, I am just looking for a different way to tell it. These are

people that make a living telling this story to the best of their ability it only makes sense to consult them.

Analysis

Birmingham, Alabama and Albany, Georgia provide the perfect comparative case study and understanding the results I can attribute the difference in the two cases to several major factors. These are included but not limited to: police relations, media attention and the control of the situation expressed by King and the Albany Movement. I will then look at how these elements differed by comparing the studies.

Police Relations

Civil rights lore does not hide the fact that Albany Georgia can be regarded as one of the most decided defeats that Martin Luther King Jr. faced during the civil rights movement; we can argue that this was the result of King facing one of his most intelligent opponents. Police chief Laurie Pritchett was made into one of the most incredible villains of the civil rights movement because of his appearance within the media. From a retrospective approach the usual tactics were employed (filling the jails, baiting brutality, out of control officers), but none of it worked because of the culture that police chief Laurie Pritchett employed. His constant direction to interact positively with the protestors prevented the media outrage that you saw when the abuse and the assaults were documented in Birmingham. This was a critical part of why the movement failed here. With a major emphasis on recognition through the media and public acknowledgement after police abuse, the abuse being covered up better prevented that and thus did not provide the media attention that the movement needed.

Birmingham was a completely different story in the idea of police relations. Eugene “Bull” Connor did not meet silence and peace with silence in peace, he meet these things with

fire hoses and police dogs. The need to out maneuver Bull Connor was not there because the way he approached the entire situation made it easy to bring attention to the situation, “ ‘There were times,” one of King’s associates, Bayard Rustin, remembered, ‘when we didn’t have to be supreme strategists. Bull Connor helped us.’”

The relationships and philosophy of the police departments can be seen in the response that both officers provided. The ideas that Bull Connor would equip his men with would be the exact ideas that would inspire media attention and get the broader United States audience involved, while there was no recognizable danger in the struggle for Albany. These would be the antics that would eventually cause the Kennedy administration to get involved with the happenings in Birmingham, which is a big difference from the administration's lack of concern in Albany. This is valuable because it shows what actually got the protestors closer to their goals and shows that even through their tactics were the same (silent non violent civil disobedience) the reaction that was shown by the police departments had a strong

While government involvement could be seen as another variable, it is more of an indicator of whether or not the tactics have worked. This is because the actual goal of the civil rights movement was not only government involvement and recognition, but legislation to be written as a means of facilitating change.

Social Groups and Too much Activism

Anchored in the Baptist Churches of Birmingham by activist Fred Shuttlesworth the civil rights movement in Alabama was a unified effort. The NAACP as well as the Baptist churches and the members of the churches rallied behind the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he continued to work toward facilitating change in the form of media attention and legislation.

Albany did not enjoy the luxury of monotony, rather you see community groups emerge, student groups emerge, churches mobilize and Martin Luther King Jr. in the middle of it bringing in his NAACP groups. Dubbed The Albany Movement the collection of people that joined the cause here joined for a variety of reasons and had no unified force to put up. King himself admitted that the simultaneous campaigns that the black community attempted to launch were directly responsible for the loss of enthusiasm there and that a unified goal should have been identified and pursued.

Planning

One major difference between the two locations is that Birmingham was a planned campaign where the forces that Martin Luther King Jr. had previously relied on would team up with the local groups there already. Albany had no such consideration, and King and his forces would enter the fray without the opportunity to study the situation or understand it much at all. This led to miscalculations in how they approached the situation and got them further away from their goal. The significance here is the coordination that it takes to actually have a successful Civil Rights Campaign.

Connection

Referring back to my hypothesis I believe that the silent protest approach is a valuable one that yields results when it comes to the civil rights movement, however, the variables that surround the approach have a significant impact that cannot be ignored. This impact can greatly change the outcome; in Albany the situations around the silent protest approach yielded a much different outcome than in Birmingham, based on the reaction of the people around them.

The main weakness of my study is that these are only two cases and there are cases where this approach was used literally all over the United States during this period of time. There are various factors in each of these situations that could have also changed the outcome.

Conclusion

As we look at the institutions of time, we will be hard pressed to recognize any that are as intense, as oppressive, as suffocating as the institutional racism that defined our country in the early 1900's. It fell on the shoulders of social warriors to create the change that we so desperately needed to take steps toward making our country great. How these social warriors went about ushering in the change was brave, powerful and impactful. Through demonstrations of strength and sheer willpower we saw men and women beat, bloodied and ultimately unbowed. The concept of nonviolent protest is a tactic that takes time to cultivate and when harrassed correctly can be the key to social change. Peaceful demonstration and civil disobedience brings attention to situations that may not always be completely right, it creates a media presence that can side with the protest as they do nothing more than exercise their right to come together.

My case studies show that while it can be an effective tool silent protest can be done wrong. It showed that peaceful demonstration, packing the jails and creating a strong media presence can be nullified if approached correctly, but intensified if entertained the way expected. In Albany, Georgia police chief Laurie Pritchett used his cunning and temperament to hand a loss to Martin Luther King Jr. as he rallied the troops against the racism in Albany. Through relationships with the press, training for officers and meeting silence, with silence Pritchett was able to stomp out silent protest. In Birmingham the lack of tact expressed by Eugene 'Bull' Connor was able to create the media attention and the presence that the civil rights members needed to better publicize their cause.

Something that I found was interesting in my research is the involvement of Minister Fred Shuttlesworth. This is certainly someone who I feel added a significant amount of context to the movement and provided substance and assistance. An opportunity for further research would be how a larger group like the SCLC or the NAACP reinvigorates a movement that is significantly smaller, and helps someone like Fred Shuttlesworth save his home town.

While we can see literature about the importance of nonviolent protest contrasted to violent protest, there is not much research on the importance of understanding the way that those you are protesting respond. The difference that I found was most significant between these cases was the fact that Bull Connor would respond with violence to nonviolence while Laurie Pritchett would respond with patience and peace. The structure of the movement in Birmingham was more fleshed out than the movement in Albany. From what I can understand from the cases what caused the change in the policy, and what caused the passing of the famous Civil Rights Acts after the death of Martin Luther King Jr. was the attention that got brought to the demonstrations. The idea that silent protest and maintaining the philosophy of no retaliation was pivotal to the movement. The images that people would see on television would be black men and women being abused for doing nothing.

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