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Department of Foreign Languages

**Television, Movies and the Civil Rights Movement in the
sixties**

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Submitted by

BOUCHEBBAH SIHAM

supervised by

Dr Megharbi Nacer Eddine

Broad of Examiners

Dr Megharbi

Ms Zine

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Dedication

To my parents

To my brothers

To my sisters

To all my friends

Acknowledgement

This dissertation is just a fruit of hard work, lot of patient, and great support.

To begin with, my endless thank to my dear parents who supported me to continue my studies in Constantine, without their trust on their education that they gave me, I would never resumed studies and accomplished this work .They are my source of reassurance and strength. I would express my extreme gratitude to all my teachers of the University of Abdurrahman Mira in Bejaia, who motivated me to follow my Master degree in Mentouri University. I must thank the department of English in Constantine, from Mr Labara Samir and the stuff, for giving me a chance to follow my studies here, at the University of Mentouri.

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My Immense gratitude to my brothers and sisters

My most sincere recognition to my husband rafik Ghoul

I similarly thank the Jury members who accepted to read and appraise this dissertation.

Abstract

This present dissertation aims to enhance the role that technological communication has had on society, with an emphasis on the role played by television and movies on the political and social change in attitudes towards racism in the United States during the sixties. It probes the political, social, and cultural causes which encounter the nation after the Second World War, which encompasses effective means to eradicate the evil of racism. Television in the sixties was in its full development, ready to serve its public because it was just this technology could unite the minds into a sole aim, and the hearts into the same emotion which is "America". This work also attempts to show how television and movies emerged in the sixties as a means to contest, envision and re-vision historic illness which is racism and its impact on present day crises of values and identity. It was time for the blacks to reposition their identity and heritage. Television reporters and film directors made people realise that America is a country of diversity, there would be neither superiority nor inferiority, but just tolerance and solidarity, living in harmony and applying the principles of democracy could make the nation stronger and would be a good image over the world. This is what the government understood from the medium message. As a result they changed its attitude towards the minorities. This self awareness awakened the blacks, then all the minorities in America about their status. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, The NAACP, and other black intellectuals have strived to correct the racist direction taken by the society.

Abstract

This present dissertation aims to enhance the role that technological communication has had on society, with an emphasis on the role played by television and movies on the political and social change in attitudes towards racism in the United States during the sixties. It probes the political, social, and cultural causes which encounter the nation after the Second World War, which encompasses effective means to eradicate the evil of racism. Television in the sixties was in its full development, ready to serve its public because it was just this technology could unite the minds into a sole aim, and the hearts into the same emotion which is "America". This work also attempts to show how television and movies emerged in the sixties as a means to contest, envision and re-vision historic illness which is racism and its impact on present day crises of values and identity. It was time for the blacks to reposition their identity and heritage. Television reporters and film directors made people realise that America is a country of diversity, there would be neither superiority nor inferiority, but just tolerance and solidarity, living in harmony and applying the principles of democracy could make the nation stronger and would be a good image over the world. This is what the government understood from the medium message. As a result they changed its attitude towards the minorities. This self awareness awakened the blacks, then all the minorities in America about their status. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, The NAACP, and other black intellectuals have strived to correct the racist direction taken by the society.

Résumé

Cette présente dissertation aspire à montrer le rôle que la technologie de la communication a eu sur la société, avec un accent sur le rôle joué par la télévision et les films sur le changement politique et social sur l'attitude envers le racisme dans les états uni pendant les années soixante. Il explore les causes politiques, sociales et culturelles qui avaient rencontré la nation après la Seconde guerre mondiale, qui englobe des moyens effectifs afin de supprimer le racisme. La Télévision dans les années soixante était dans son plein développement, prête à servir son public parce que s'était juste cette technologie pourrait unir les esprits en un seul but et les cœurs dans la même émotion qui est "l'Amérique". La Télévision et les films ont apparu dans les années soixante comme un moyen pour contester, prévoir et la réviser la maladie historique qui est le racisme et son impact sur les récentes crises de valeurs et l'identité. C'était le temps pour les Noirs pour replacer leur identité et héritage. Des journalistes de télévision et des réalisateurs ont fait Les gens se rendent compte que l'Amérique est un pays de diversité, il n'y aurait ni supériorité, ni infériorité, mais juste la tolérance et la solidarité, vivant dans l'harmonie en appliquant les principes de la démocratie pourraient faire la nation plus forte et donner une bonne image pour le monde. C'est ce que le gouvernement a compris du message. En conséquence ils ont changé son attitude envers les minorités. La conscience personnelle a éveillé les Noirs, et toutes les minorités en Amérique de leur statut .Martin Luther King, Malcolmx, et d'autres noirs intellectuels se sont efforcées de corriger la direction raciste prise par la société.

ملخص

يهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى إضهار الدور الذي لعبته تكنولوجيا الاتصال على المجتمع، وبالأخص الدور الذي لعبته التلفزيون وأفلام على السياسيّة علي التغيرات السياسيّة الاجتماعيّة الثقافيّة التي واجهت الأمة بعد الحرب العالميّة الثانية. التي تتوجب وسائل فعالة لاستئصال شبح العنصرية. . كان التلفزيون في الستينات في عز تطوره ، جاهزة لخدمة جمهوره. فقد كانت الوسيلة الوحيدة التي مكنت من لم العقول لهدف واحد و توحيد القلوب لإحساس واحد وهي أمريكا . التلفزيون والأفلام ظهوروا في الستينات كوسيلة اعتراض ،نزاع و نقاش لمراجعة مرض تاريخي و هو العنصرية. و أثرها علي الأزمة الحالية للقيم و الهوية . لقد كان الوقت الحاسم للسود في اعادة النضر في هويته. مراسلون في التلفزيون و مخرجي الأفلام جعلوا الشعب يدرك أن أمريكا بلد التنوع لا تفوق و لا نقص فيه إلا التضامن و الرحمة تجمعهم ليعيشوا في انسجام و تطبيق مبادئ الديمقراطية لجعل الأمة قوية لإعطاء صورة جيدة لكل العالم. هذا ما فهمته الحكومة من هذه الرسالة، و بالتالي غيرت موقفها نحو الأقلية الأمريكي ،كما إن هذا أفاق ضمير السود الأمريكيان في النضر في حللتهم مارتن لوثر كينغ مالكو لم اكس و مثقفين سود قاموا بتصحيح وجهتهم العنصرية في المجتمع .

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General introduction

Racism took roots in America and shaped its life. In the sixties, there were attempts to bring a new breath to American life, there was a hope that the American illness would be cured. In fact, racial discrimination was an urgent problem that the nation had to face, in order to change the image that would alter and prevent America to be a model for democracy over world. Racism at that time was confronted by all front, used all the means possible. The black leaders activism in one hand, and the media on the other, with especial interest on the role of television, since the civil rights movement paralleled the growing use of television in the United States. Noise fit to waken the dead, as Black leaders and organizations have used television to waken the hearts and minds of the blacks as well as the whites. In 1950 television was still in its infancy, but by 1960, television was present in every living room. During that period, the civil right movement proved successful thanks to the use of television and movies.

This present research makes an attempt to assess the role of television and movies on the civil rights movement. Black demonstrations, protests and white violence, were carried into the American conscience by television. In this respect, the African American movies tackled racist life reached mainstream audience, and Media coverage of the movement's events helped swell the membership ranks of civil rights organizations nationwide. Indeed, the civil rights movement sought the support of broad spectrum white "conscience group". The voice that shouted the loudest received the most attention. Thus the message on television and movies have produced

action by contagion and this contagion spread out to reach mass audience. Consequently, this placed great strain on government to change its attitude towards racism.

This research delves into the subsequent probing questions: what makes the civil rights movement an urgent matter in the sixties? What were the means that black leaders used in the movement? How did television and movie production handle the challenge of covering the movement? Did the movement was successful during the sixties?

The aim of the research is, by opting for a descriptive as well as analytical approach, to assess the role of television and movies which changed the white's vision on the blacks, and led them to integration. To achieve that purpose, this study encompasses three divisions. The first chapter probes into examining the political, social and cultural factors that pushed the minorities to a great civil rights movement. The accumulation of these three factors aimed not only at fighting segregation and discrimination between the whites and blacks but eradicating racism as a national illness.

The second chapter investigates two powerful means used in this revolution – television and movie production. In fact, the rise of television inspired young black journalists to experience the job on the benefit of the civil rights movement. Names as Ed Bradley, Lenore Jenkins-Allen and others remained on the memory of the 60s. Through this technology, reporters attempted to appeal to a biggest audience possible. Hollywood directors and producers returned to the civil rights movement. Black cinema has slowly changed its meaning over the years obviously, the opinions

expressed in movies depicting African Americans has changed to the better. The important thing for a cause or movement was to get on television.

The third chapter illustrates the major events to which television used its power to support the black leaders; Martin Luther King Jr who used protests, demonstrations, organized sit-ins in many regions of the United States. The NAACP organization used its power as a political power, Malcolm x and the panthers to achieve some gains.

The third chapter is to assess the Black achievements, to reassert the impact of television and movies on the civil rights movement .In fact, the impact of the two later means on the movement regenerated positive consequences either psychological as well as political. Under orders from the chairman of the federal communication commission to increase news programming, the scandal-stained networks competed in their newly expanded coverage. During the 1950 and 1960, movie industry turned toward social criticism.

All throughout my research, the work was inspired by a number of books such as *And the crooked places made straight: The struggle for social change* by David chalmers. This book illustrates the social changes that witnessed The United States of the sixties. *Black city cinema: African American urban experience in Film* by Paula j .Massood. This book illustrates the experience of African Americans in urban cities and explained how this experience has changed the minds about the US in the south. To a lesser extent, in order to enrich my research; I resorted to the internet from which I used serious sites.

Chapter one: The Reasons of Change in Attitudes Towards Racism in The Sixties

This opening chapter is devoted to explain the political, social, and cultural events that led the Americans to change their attitudes towards racism during the fifties and sixties. First, the international events that followed the Second World War; that is, the cold war, and the emergence of new independent nations in Africa and Asia represented a turning point in the existence of racism in the United States. Thus, the new position of America as a world leader and a model for democracy counteracted the American social life of violence and racial segregation. In fact, these events have increased questions at home about the legacy of this position .Then, during the sixties people of all ages and backgrounds; the people, minorities, journalists and even the government became convinced that America should built a new society, in which no one used to be poor or exploited, everyone could be educated, and the sins of America's past should be redressed. After the Second World War, the greater concentration of blacks in urban centers increased their political consciousness that their freedom can be achieved only when they possess power. In fact, Black leaders and organizations strove to reach that aim. For instance, Martin Luther King J.R advocated non –violent protest, whose aim was to end racial discrimination through civil disobedience. Whereas MalcolmX, and after his assassination Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panther party preferred violence to fight racism in America. One has to add that the civil rights movement of the sixties did not just concerned blacks or other minorities in America, but was a problem of the whole nation. Then, when television was established in every living room, we can say that the Civil Rights

movement became not only a cause for black advancement but also to become a national issue. Television helped turned public opinion against the government for instance in its intervention in the Vietnam War.

1.1 Political Factors:

To begin with, some political factors have influenced the change in attitude towards racism. The controversy between the American principles and reality, has led the Americans to mistrust their governments. This contradiction of the American authorities was pointed out by John H. Franklin who spoke of the inconsistencies of an American position that spoke against racism abroad and countenanced it at home.()

The International event which was behind America's social unrest which was a cause of the civil rights movement of the sixties was the Universal Declaration Of Human Rights ,which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10December 1948 at the palais de Chaillot in Paris. This declaration consisted of articles that all the nations had to respect, which protected the human rights for liberty, freedom, and equality. The two first article in this declaration asserted that" all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights ".This single sentence boldly insisted that human rights are *natural* (not granted by the government, but inalienable and inherited to people simply by being human), are *equal* (not just for a segment of society but the same for all), and are *universal* (not restricted to a few places or a few actors, but everywhere in the world). (Lauren12). Whereas the second article asserted that in applying these rights, there is to be no distinction or discrimination of any kind: not by race, color or sex,not on account of language ,religion, property ,birth, or status

of the country or territory to which a person belongs. America was one of the members of the United Nation, and Eleonore Roosevelt

Up to the mid twentieth century, the American government had betrayed the founding principles of the nation: liberty and equality .Since 1890, the American south lived a pesible life under Jim Crow system, under a brutal racism. But the situation in this region changed after the coming of a wave of politicians, known as “the New Leftists”¹; who stressed on social reform, participatory democracy, community organization rather than violence, which stifled people’s life and of course prevented them to progress. For instance, after the Second World War, the president Harry Truman gave in July 26, 1948 an Order, to desegregate the military forces. Then, other democratic presidents followed him, the president Eisenhower called in the federal troops to protect black students and allow them to go to the white schools .He explained to Americans why he took his actions:

Our enemies are gloating over this incident and using it everywhere to misrepresent our whole nation. We are portrayed as a violator of those standards of conduct which the people of the world united to proclaim in the charter of the United nations...Thus will be restored the image of America and of all its parts as one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. ()

Then, the following presidents; John F.kennedy and Lyndon Johnson focused on the social problems to change the image given to America at home and to prevent the infiltration of communism in its borders .An investigative committee have found many communist cells who dominated the American business. Some were jailed and others could not be detected .It was mainly for that reason that presidents hoped to

solve the hatred between the American people before it became a hatred for the whole nation. John F. Kennedy urged Americans to explore a 'new frontier'². The frontier that open more tolerance between the races. Lyndon Johnson (1964) pledged to build a 'Great Society'³, based on social policies.

Furthermore, the US emerged from the two world wars as a new superpower. In fact, the questioning of racism was in part due to this new position of world leadership because, at the same time made it a target of criticism from the rest of the world. In fact, racism became the most urgent problem to be solved as it damages the image of the USA abroad. As the "presumptive leader of the free world" Dudziak claimed: "how could American democracy be a beacon during the cold war, and a model for those struggling against soviet oppression ,if the united states itself practiced brutal discrimination against minorities within its own borders?"(Brogan 627) In this way, American racism stood as an "international handicap", because no nation would accept the lead of a nation which tolerated racism within its borders. Hence a strong determination emerged on n the part of the Americans to eradicate racism in American life. During the sixties, a nationalist sentiment awakened among black leaders, who called for the black's integration .Some saw the peaceful means would solve their problems. Others, after the failure of the non-violent means, they turned to violence. They found violence was the only that worked in America. Whereas others lost all hope, they preferred to return to their country, to work in there with dignity .Because they found no hope in America Among those leaders, I can site ,Martin Luther King,Malcolmx and Marcus Garvey.Throughout their struggle, they succeeded to

influence Blacks as well as the whites. They used divert programs, strategies and tactics. Each one through their personal charisma, their eloquent speeches

Then, in Africa ,the sixties was a period of radical political changes, as 32 countries get their independence from their European rulers .In fact, in the United states the liberation struggles of black people abroad were both inspiring and galling, in light of continued oppression at home. John Lewis, a student in the nonviolent coordinating committee explained:”they were getting their freedom, and we still didn’t have ours in what we believed in a free country, we couldn’t even get a hamburger and a coke at the soda fountain”. Indeed, the USA strove to have these independent nations endorse democracy and liberalism .In fact, the United States made all the possible efforts to convince these nations to choose democracy and not communism. This will on the part of the USA to make a democratic world further strengthened the questioning of racial inequality at home. For this reason, the USA had to correct the flaws of its system and more particularly to remove segregation.

1.2 Social Factors

Furthermore, a subsequent determination awakened among the minorities to no longer tolerate racism, and no longer willing to accept white’s subjugation. Since the 1890, state governments in the south adopted segregationist laws mandating separation of the races in nearly every aspect of everyday life .They required separate public schools, railroad cars ,and public libraries; separate water fountain,restaurants,and hotels. The system became known in formally as “Jim Crow “. But after the Second World War, America saw an economic progress. For this reason, the blacks migrated

to the north, seeking a better life there. This sentiment of disgust of the Jim Crow System is well illustrated by Martin Luther King; the black militant leader who stated:

There comes a time when people get tired .we are here this evening to say to those who misrepresent us so long that we are tired- tired of being segregated and humiliated. Tired of being kicked about feet of oppression. We have no alternative to protest. (Hoffman 615)

In the sixties, through the civil rights movement, the African Americans, Black leaders, organizations stood determined to fight to be treated as equals; changing the conscience of the whites and consciousness of the minorities was two major factors that led to the social change in the sixties and gave birth to numerous movements. Since the end of the First World War, the black community found many economic and political opportunities to participate in the business and national economy of the nation, but the atmosphere of racial intolerance remained stifling, as whites in north and south feared black competition for economic and political opportunities despite the opposition and resistance displayed by the majority of whites. A. Philip Randolph claimed that:

...the task of realizing full citizenship for the Negro people is largely in the hands of the hands of Negro themselves...freedom is never given; it is won. And the Negro people must win their freedom .They must achieve justice. This involves struggle, continuous struggle. True liberation can be acquired and maintained only when the Negro people possess power...(45)

Since the 1896, the Americans lived under Plessy vs. Ferguson decision that separated the white's school from the blacks. The purpose was to create a sense of inferiority among the blacks. In this respect, there was a violation of America's

institution, which is the equality of opportunities. All this deprived rights, is a neglect of the black's citizenry. By this respect, Soviet communist's leaders used Jim Crow, plessy's system and white violence to try to undermine the American position as the leader of the free world. Thus America has to correct its image in the world.

During the fifties and sixties, African Americans challenged their second class citizenry in America, while their brothers enjoyed their freedom abroad. For them it was time to act. It was really the high time for the African Americans to take advantage from these international events, to revendicate for all their rights. Indeed, prejudice and discrimination for Mary F.Berry and John Blassingames"blunted the free Negro's ambition, crushed his hopes, embittered his heart and threatened his psychic security". Blacks were always seen as eternal, unchanging, unchangeable rather than as a part of the nation's progress.

1.3 Cultural Factors

The African American reflections of virtue and democracy, amalgamated with the feeling of mistrust and despair, were determined to break the color barrier and resort their talents .First of all ,they started to challenge in education , by which the blacks learned who to respect their cultural heritage, inspired young artists and actors through the films of the sixties .and used their talents to express their feelings, in order to reveal what many oppressed minorities didn't dare to say. The line "say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud" conveyed a new self-confidence and assertiveness among the black community in 1968 America.

The young students involved in a popular social movement through protests, demonstrations, sit-ins. The NAACP youth council organized sit-ins in Oklahoma, Kansas, Greensboro, Nashville, which opened a national awareness of the depth of segregation in the nation. Sit-ins dated at least to Mahatma Gandhi's campaigns for Indian Independence from Britain. In the United States, the Congress For Racial Equality employed sit-ins as well. Terms such as "struggle", "protest", "resistance", and "do your own thing" dominated the consciousness and rhetoric of the people. These demonstrations had positive impact and received significant attention by the media and the government. On March, 16, 1960, President Eisenhower supported the students expressed his sympathy towards those who struggle for their human and civil rights. He said that he was "deeply sympathetic with efforts of many groups to enjoy the rights...of equality that they are guaranteed by the constitution." (Wilkinson)

Woman, without doubt left a profound impact on the events of the sixties. Eleanor Roosevelt was the first woman who supported the civil rights movement. She has been a close relationship with the African Americans during the New Deal. She was the first who believed in the civil rights as the litmus test for the American Democracy. For her, there would be no democracy in America did not include Democracy for blacks. She told those listening to radio of 1945 National Democratic Forum that Democracy might grow or fade as America face this problem of racism at home (Park). In the throes of cold war politics, she declared that the best defense for communism was making Democracy work. In the sixties, when she learned of the violence greeting James Meredith when he tried to enroll at the University of Mississippi and attacks on Birmingham churches, she phoned Martin Luther to ask him

to appear on her television show to discuss racial violence .But two days later, She entered the hospital .She died on 7 December 1962 and racial injustice remained .Another woman activist,Rosa Parks, also called “the mother of the civil rights movement”, the courageous woman who fought behind the black man in the non-violent protests. The woman’s voice of reaction, protest, and permeation can be found in journalism, the black films, through which she portrayed the woman’s hard life. If we talk about journalism in the United States, we can say that from 1930 to 1960, journalists felt socially inferior, their pay was low and most of them had little or no college education. For this reason, most media managers did not encourage in-depth reporting of the events. But during the sixties, journalists became of great importance .The political, social and cultural changes influenced young journalists to improve the job. Journalism of the sixties has evolved as a social practice; it means that it was reserved for social, behavioral and moral requirement.

Finally, without free speech no political action is possible and no resistance to injustice and oppression is possible, and without it, it is futile to expect any political freedom .When the evil of racism was widely voiced in the streets, through television, where millions watched the effect of this illness in society. The whites as well as the blacks were accustomed to this reality, but what can shake the hearts and minds of the white Americans to realize their guilt? What can make the Blacks revive their self - esteem and pride? During the sixties. black the black reporters have played both critical and advocacy role and offered a sort of front row view on the civil Rights struggle that led them to get great stories that the white journalists didn’t get .They were free to discuss all the events in detail .The reported The Emmet Till murder trial;

the Montgomery Alabama; bus boycott; the court ordered integration in little Rock ;Arkansas; sit –ins at lunch counters in North Carolina; Freedom Riders who sought to desegregate bus seating and facilities at bus terminals.

Chapter Two: Television, Movies, and The Civil Rights movement: The Struggle For Integration

Furthermore, television and movies was two powerful means which has tremendous impact on solving the social turmoil of the sixties. Because of the international events , the American People and the press started to loose trust on its government and its social institutions. During the sixties, the remaining trust collapsed .Journalists influenced by rebellious social and cultural changes, left their responsibility of serving the government, and turned toward social criticism, and becoming a watchdog on government. They viewed now the press as an institution for social change. According to research by John Johnston and his colleagues, “reporters saw the press’s responsibilities to include being an investigator, a watchdog on government, an interpreter of the news, and an educator.” George p. Hunt, managing editor of *life magazine*, argued in 1965 that “the success of civil rights reform depended largely on the media’s willingness to engage in in-depth coverage of the race issue”.(Aucoin52)Like the early -twentieth-century muckrakers who had come before them, journalists in the 1960s saw in-depth reporting as a responsibility to society in the face of great injustice and social upheaval .It was a defining moment for the news industry in the postwar era. Harrison Salisbury pointed out:

Coverage of the civil rights movement in the south resulted in the formation of a *New York Times* team of reporters, “skilled, physically courageous, battle-trained, “that went on to cover the racial charged riots in Northern cities, the student movement, the Vietnam war and its opposition, and “the widening and bitter action which marked the new politics of the sixties (52)

By the mid - to late 1950s there was a general understanding in the press-

Government relationship and journalistic conventions needed adjustment. Journalists began to move toward more in-depth coverage to better explore and explain the meaning of events. The first test for the new journalists was the civil rights movement. While the 1950s perception of social harmony was criticized throughout the decade by leftist intellectuals and the counter culture Beats, it was the civil rights movement more than any other single factor that forcefully challenged the notion that America was trouble-free. The movement not only raised questions about the integrity of American institutions and the ability of government to maintain social order but also changed definition of news by turning social justice issues into daily stories for both the print and the broadcast media. John Herbert recounted his experiences with the United Press International in its Mississippi bureau and wrote that "racial strife during the late 1950s and early 1960s consumed the energy of the news staff and on some days news of racial events accounted for half of the state wire's contents"

2.1 The Rise of Television in The Sixties

Many sociologists have argued that technology has always influenced the society, and its implication has positive or negative effects. In America, after World War II, broadcasting technology had profoundly affected how American looked, thought, and behaved. Social change of the sixties was enhanced than any other time in American history when television cables were set up in every American home. A media scholar, the professor Neil Postman, has argued:

A new technology does not add or subtract something. It changes everything...After television, the United states was not America plus television; television gave a new coloration to every political campaign, to every home, to every church, to every industry.

It is worthy to note that television in America was not a new discovery, but its development was slowed, because the continuing success of radio and the fact that the producers of radio shows were also involved in the development of television .Television was promoted at the 1939 New York World's Fair .This technology enabled to bring the non-violent civil disobedience campaign of the civil rights movement and the violent reprisals of southern law enforcement agents to a new mass audience. The ascendancy of television as the new arbiter of public opinion became increasingly apparent at this time to civil rights leaders, and television during the 50's and 60's helped bring the reality of Jim crow ,white racism and brutal violence to the homes of Americans throughout the country.

In the 1960, network news more than network programming contributed to social and political criticism. For the first time ,a majority of Americans could watch events as they occurred .Many historic moments ,such as John Kennedy's inauguration, First lady Jackie Kennedy's televised tour of the white house ,and astronaut Neil Armstrong 's walk on the moon had a positive impact that tended to coalesce the nation .But the same audience also witnessed film replays of Kennedy's assassination, the arrests of 668 persons during the bloody confrontation between protesters and Chicago police outside the democratic convention

Birmingham police dogs attacking civil rights protesters and nightly footage of the “living room war” in Vietnam.

2.2 African Americans Growing up on The Films of the 1960s

The image of African American in movies changed over time .Many of old films showed black characters in negative image which the blacks would not identify as being truly themselves. But when their image changed a lot after the events of the sixties. The 1915 saw for the first time the formation of independent African American filmmakers, who attacked the first film *The Birth Of A Nation*, who gave a bad image of the African American. They produced films with their own money, with a more positive image of blacks. In fact, *The Birth of a Race* was the first Independent black film produced by Emmet J.Scott, personal secretary of Booker T.Washington of the Tuskegee institute. The film was released in 1919.Then in 1916, two brothers George P. and Noble Johnson opened a Lincoln Motion Picture Compagny.They wanted to produce films which presented the black in his everyday life ,a human being with human inclination and one of talent and intellect .They produced two films *The Realization Of The Negro Ambition* and *A Trooper Of Troop K*.In 1921, another film, produced by the same company, *By Right Of Birth* ,it covered the portrayal of black life featuring successful middle –class African Americans.

From 1927 to 1939 America experienced two major events: The Great Depression 1930's when America's stock market crashed causing great damages and the Second World War in 1939 which lasted until 1945. The rise of African Americans actors seeking work but only receiving roles dealing with light comedy, music or dance.

After the Second World War, movie industry shifted from entertainment films toward social criticism. A political turmoil gripped the industry. There was a suspicion, that communist cells have been found in the industry, though, communists have already gained control on the screen writers Guild in Hollywood. Then, to preserve the industry, a group of political conservative workers in Hollywood formed the motion picture industry. As a result of this political unrest and the fear of communist's infiltration. The industry suffered through a lengthy period of suspicion that continued for years .After that, from 1947 to 1963, the film industry's revenues fell every year. With the rise of television, people stayed at home to watch entertainment on television .Despite the studios have tried to lure people back into theater .But their efforts fail in vain. However, the industry turned to sell their films to television, which at the same time provided them money. With the social changes that witnessed America during the sixties, black directors returned to social criticism. The films therefore depicted social and civil conditions of the African Americans in an integrated context. The ideologies of black activism and integrationism persisted .resulting in the "message movie" era *Pinky; Home of the Brave; No Way Out* a form of racial politics that anticipated the goals of the Civil Rights Movement .African American activists The issue of race and color was

the subject of the 1960's motion picture industry. The major Hollywood studios Warner Brothers; RKO. 20th Century Fox as well as records of the office war of information in the national archives; the NAACP and the interviews of black filmmakers such as Carlton Moss and major figures such as Sidney Poitier. *No Way Out*, *Who's coming to dinner?* *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Inherit The Wind*, all are movies through which people get a panoramic view of the black experience, made the whites rethink their shaming social life. Sidney Poitier was one of the best black actors coming out of Hollywood of the sixties .He was the one who won the Oscar, in his role *lilies of the field*. Through acting, Poitier succeeded to send black's message. Influenced by these films, Professor Robert E.Yahnke from the University of Minnesota commented:

The 1960's was my decade for growing up on the film. Films from this decade helped shape my values and challenged me to think and rethink my positions on human relations, world affairs, sex, family values, and all matters pertaining to character and identity...Old conflicts resurfaced-the power for integrity vs. the evil of racism, the value of social justice vs. the bankrupt legacy of segregation.

(317)

2.2.1 Sidney Poitier: African American Pioneer in Hollywood

Born in Miami, Florida, USA, on February 20, 1927. His first performance as actor was in the film *No Way Out* (1950), a film directed by Darryl F.Zanuck .His performance in this film as a doctor treating a white bigot led to more roles. Poitier was the first male black actor to be nominated for a competitive Academy Award .He also won the Academy Award for best actor in the film *Lilies Of The Field* in 1963. Robert E.Yahnke also commented about Sidney Poitier:

Poitier was the first actor to have his work accepted in the mainstream of Hollywood films ...I never gave it second thought that my hero was black man. What mattered to me was his qualities of character, his empathy for the suffering of other people, his sense of humor, his ability to listen, his capacity for tolerance, His determination and fortitude, his capacity for love. (315)

In fact, Poitier was just one among many cultural activists who tried to attract many blacks as well as whites that the black deserves to participate in the economy and culture of the nation as an American citizen. Poitier was given a positive image for the African American which gave them their self-esteem and pride. It was a period of integration .Society's outlook on race was better in the sixties, and this was reflected in the Actor's ability to express their talents freely. Throughout the majority of his career, the actor was being used primarily as a symbol, the physical embodiment of white liberal guilt .Instead of poor, uneducated, the characters Poitier played tended to be far smarter, politer and more eloquent than his white co-stars which represented the American progress. Poitier represented the first who opened the way to other black actors, to give them the opportunity to show their talents and to give a good image for the African Americans.

2.2.2 Guess who's coming to dinner: First Motion Picture About Interracial Relations

The film, *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner* reflected social life of the 1960's time period. The film explored the subject of interracial marriages. It was filmed in 1967.Sidney Poitier played the central character in the movie. Katharine Hepburn's

performance as the mother of a white girl whose fiancé (played by Sidney Poitier) is a black man. Their engagement aggravates racial tensions in both of their families. The social integration between the whites and blacks was the subject of that period. The interracial marriage is a way of integration. The marriage is a symbol of unity, respect of both races. Integration started by the family. If both families accepted this marriage, this would be the first step of integration and the coming generation would follow the same path. The film would influence many to rethink about the possibility to accept the unity between the races in the United States, the possibility that no longer judge the person for the color of his skin but for his character. A character like Sidney Poitier would honor the American society to have such talents, Poitier not only represented the African American but the whole society. Then other films that followed this film wanted to send the same message.

To conclude, television played an important role during the civil rights movement. Whether it changed minds may never be known, but there is evidence that this technology inspired some to act forcefully in the streets and others to try desperately to control the media. The civil rights movements of the sixties made the blacks believe that they could really change the world into a better place through political activism, spiritual experimenting, and artistic expression. In fact, through Sidney Poitier, he has brought some hope for the possibility for integration that the African American success in movies and the activism of black directors and filmmakers in developing the independent black films would succeed to change the hearts and mind of the whites. And their union would be perfected over time.

Chapter Four: Assessment of Black's Achievements

The different movements as well as the media generated positive consequences on the decline of racism. Undoubtedly, racism has declined, not only because television or the black movements, but because it was attacked on all fronts. Then one has to understand, that the movement of the sixties, was not only a struggle for black power, or black's integration, but it concerned the whole nation, if the USA, of course wanted to win the cold war. Indeed, the USA had always succeeded to undermine the black efforts. Since the civil war (1861-1865). But what was new during the sixties? It was the international events that pushed the government to ease its hatred, and the African Americans; without doubt were the first who blazed the fire, and they were also the beacon that lighted the way to other minorities to struggle. And what really triggered one's intention was the rapidity by which television had appeared during that period. The FCC's licensing process, the visual and dramatic effect of film, the sharp demand for television news, and the national programming affiliations of the local stations combined to make television a potentially powerful instrument for change. At that time, nearly all the participants: politicians, news reporters, the black's organizations and others, all used the news medium to their advantage. For instance, on March 22, 1967 director of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins, delivered a speech at fund raiser in Los Angeles. He was invited by Jack Valenti, president of the motion picture Association of America to address some of the most powerful executives in the film and television industry. In recent book of essays on the media and the civil rights movement, Julian Bond speculated that "until historians unravel the complex links between the southern freedom struggle and mass media, their understanding of how

the movement functioned, why it succeeded, and when and where it failed, will be incomplete.”(Franklin 65)

One cannot deny that thanks to the civil rights movement and government action, with especial interest on the role of television and movies, several blows were given to racism on different grounds. Television stimulated public discussion that culminated into favorable legislation. It would be useful to state the positive effect of that attitude towards racism.

4.1 Political Achievements

Through this civil rights movement, television and movies, this made oppression on the government to make an end to segregation. In fact, the blacks achieved strides in their struggle for equality through favorable legislation and court decisions. The desegregation represented a crucial victory.

Segregation in schools was declared unconstitutional. The Supreme Court enacted the Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka Act in 1954. It is a great achievement to allow the minorities to enter schools as the whites. This will be the light that shed their life and would bring change to the dark decades.

Though , the sixties was not a decade for full integration in schools ,as the reverent Jess Jackson ,founder of rainbow/push coalition stated:”Every year there are more black men in prison than there are in college” ,and this because of the protests that students organized in the streets, but this just meant that students became aware ,they belonged to civil rights organizations ,whose leaders promoted ideas for social equality .James Forman was an activist among

youth .He had the best rapport among black students. John Lewis, the leader of the Student Nonviolent coordinating committee (SNCC) recalled:”He was the glue that held the young people together. He did a tremendous job in convincing them that they had a stake in the outcome”.

Besides, all the different minorities, led by the African American, managed to obtain legislation banning discrimination and secure political equality. With the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the government put an end to legal discrimination in the public spaces. In this respect the 1964 Act states:

All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services facilities privileges, advantages, and accommodation of any place of public accommodations [...]without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion or national origin. (Hoffman, 350)

Furthermore, political decisions were secured through the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This act gave all the minorities to participate in political campaign, as the right of any citizen to choose the president who would lead them to more progress, to more economic opportunities. Then, the achievement by the blacks was the beacon to other minorities, mainly the Indians who suffered a lot in their lands, that guaranteed them the right to vote. In 1970, the Indian Self determination Act was a major progress for the Indians who could theoretically at last perpetuate their ancestral way of life. And the congress passed the American Indian Religious Act in 1978.

4.2. Social Achievements

4.2.a Improvement of Inter and Intra Racial Relation

In addition, the civil rights movement of the sixties was different from the previous revolutions about racism, that it was a period of black's and white's integration, and the relationship between and within the races and among the blacks themselves, giving way to more tolerance, and solidarity .They derived from the struggle a racial pride. The distorted image given to blacks in the media had been changed after the sixties .Finally, the two races realized that they are two races ,but united in one nation ,which is “America” , which needed to be unified than any other time in order to win the cold war, and to give a good image abroad. Than the role of television must not be overlooked, because it was television which regained the minorities their self-esteem, and self –awareness, which is a great achievement in America's racial revolution. To make psychological efforts by the blacks to valorize themselves is the first way to gain white's respect and the respect of others.

The Civil Rights Movement generated positive effects on woman .By 1960, over 40 percent of woman were in labor force, compared to 25 percent in1940.Betty Friedan's best -selling book The Feminine Mystique in 1963, was a powerful force the urged woman to enter business and professions. Through television, the intellectuals, the court woman became famous in movies, and shows.

4.3Obstacles to The Full Elimination of Racism

It was apparent that the superior could not accept its defeat, so did America. It fact, the white Americans would not accept easily its decisions, mainly when concerned the blacks, and this could take time, long time. The whites Americans were inherited the British supremacy, ``the white's burden``. But America is a nation build up with diversity, they should accept that diversity, and it should be equality, to be

more tolerant, for the nation's interest. In fact, the blacks, as well as other minorities had really suffered in the hands of the whites. They struggled, resisted, but they always succeeded. If not great thing, but they were patient. During the sixties, the resistance was on edge, not only by the blacks but even the white peoples. The government was on pressure, its people on one hand and the international pressure, on the other hand.

But in all this turmoil, the interest of the country is before all. In this respect, the image of America should be corrected.

Besides, the end of segregation and the opening of opportunities on the political and legal levels frightened the whites who were most attached to their superiority. Indeed, to say that the whites would abdicate their authority would be difficult, but it is a reality which should be admitted. And the blacks deserved it, at the same time; this paved the way for more power and equality. These changes created two waves of whites: these who were still against integration and those who accepted equality.

Moreover, after these political and social achievements, the minorities thought this would result in improved economic and social conditions as a Berry said:

They believed political participation would free white Americans from bondage to the practices of racism and inequality and would liberate blacks from their oppression.

(Berry143)

Although the democrats presidents, from Roosevelt, with its "New Deal" programs, and Johnson's economic programs. when he passed The Economic Opportunity Act, but the economic disparity widened sharply, because it was the

whites who benefited from them ,whereas the blacks remained on the margin. In this respect, this wide difference in wealth would be the obstacle that faced the blacks to full elimination of racism. And without doubt, who has money, has the power .The white could manipulate the television stations as they want. And this is the first thing that the president Richard Nixon has done after the Watergate scandal; He started to control the media. Because journalists became aware about the government's corruption, and tricks. As Nixon said:" I don't mind a microscope, but when they use a proctoscope..." (Genovese99)Television was a great success during the civil rights movement, but many journalists were jailed or killed, and even they have neither the power nor the materials to influence their opinions. But at least they led to a more informed society to enact social change. Television have made the average man a spectator of the nation's and world's events whatever they occurred .Television ended by covering funerals of president John Kennedy, black leaders; Martin Luther King and Malcolmx.In the seventies David Habersham wrote in McCall's(January1970):

Well, good bye to all that, to the sixties, to all that hope and expectation. It started so well, of American social and cultural progress, victory over the darker side of our nature, victory over injustice. It ended in pain, disillusionment, bitterness, our eyes expert in watching televised funerals.(235)

During the world wars, films lifted the spirits of Americans at home and abroad. Many Hollywood directors worked for the war effort. So, the influence of movies on people was not new .In the sixties, films were seen in color, film production was not a mean for entertainment, but it has more influence on society than television during the civil rights movement.

Another obstacle to the full elimination of racism was the federalist system of government. The autonomy of the states was an obstacle for integration and racial equality. Even if the Supreme Court enacted the decision of *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka* 1954 ending school segregation, the southern states still resisted to any advance by the minorities. They resisted to all government decisions, which concerned the black's integration. The admission of nine black students to central High school in Little Rock in 1956 was followed by rioting and mob violence. In fact, marches, rallies, demonstrations, and classroom disruptions were part of daily life, after this decision. This is why television had a great influence on the civil rights movement of the sixties, because, reporters revealed what is hidden in the American south, the life in the ghetto, in Harlem, about white's violence.

Finally, and the most important obstacle for the success of Civil Rights movement was the depth of the racial prejudice. Enacting a law cannot mean that the blacks were fully free. As it was pointed out by the historian Charles Silberman: "if the whites were to stop discriminatory practices tomorrow, this alone would not solve the problem." Eradicating racism, which is innate in the American people, is very hard. Racism became a principle that the powerful remain powerful and the inferior stands in his status until his death. It was an illness, which is contaminated gradually and deeply over history.

To conclude, this chapter was intended to study the achievements after the civil rights movement to eliminate racism. As seen, under incessant attacks, the whole edifice of racism began to tremble but did not disappear.

NOTES

¹ The sociologist Wright Mills called “the New left”. Mills may have popularized the term “New Left” but did not originate it. The term gained greater publicity in 1960 when it sponsored the “Declaration of The Right of Refusing to serve in the Algerian war” .

¹ New Frontier are terms used by John F. Kennedy in his acceptance speech in 1960 US presidential election in the Democratic election to the Democratic convention at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum as the Democratic slogan to inspire America to support him.

¹ Great society is a set of domestic programs proposed or enacted in US on the initiative of president Lyndon Johnson. Two main goals of great society social reforms and racial injustice.

General conclusion

Despite the black's activism and television racism has represented an obstacle to the full triumph of American democracy .It was deeply rooted in the American culture that it was difficult to eradicate it, but there was a hope that racism would be overcame .Racism in the sixties was faced in all fronts. Although it was seriously declined in the American society but it was far from being eliminated. But the problem of racism is like a stain in the idyllic image the USA wants to display to the world. Television helped brought solidarity among the African Americans, and Black leaders voice sounded louder and louder and the world was watching closely the events, and their message found an echo at home and abroad. This made pressure on government to take a firm stand against racial discrimination and to be more tolerant toward the African Americans. They feared that this would diminish their opportunity to win the cold war.

At the first step, we have strived to present the political, social, and cultural factors that pushed the African Americans to resist the white's injustice and discrimination. They were determined than any other time to no longer accept the white's subjugation. The political awareness, self- consciousness, and the cultural activism dominated the life of the sixties .of the African Americans strived to influence the national conscious about the danger of racism in the American society.

After having exposed the factors of change, then came the possible means, it should be effective means because racism is an illness difficult to eradicate. In fact, some black leaders advocated non-violent strategy. Martin Luther King used this

strategy but resulted little change, mainly when he moved to the Northern cities, where race problems were serious and harder to redress. Poverty dominated the region and Martin failed to achieve congressional commitment for addressing black poverty. Moreover, there was another wave that advocated violence and wanted to create a black power, who emphasized black separatism and self sufficiency, as more realistic for dealing with racism in the United States. But separatism means to create two societies in one society and this is not a democracy .And racism is far from being eliminated in such nation.

After having exposed this factors, we have opted to display the role of television and movies, who was behind any movement, any protest .Television helped swell the movement nationwide. Movies were behind black's nationalist heart. Television and movies pushed to action, because if there was not action there wouldn't be any chance to change the attitudes of the government because happiness is owned and not given. Martin Luther used pacific means .He thought that he could shake the hearts of the whites just by using some demonstrations, some protests in the streets .Discrimination and injustice towards the blacks is found in any place of the nation. A protest in one region or two or even five, being in the north or south cannot alone change a nation where racism was so ingrained in the American social life. Malcolmx have realized that Martin's means are impossible and that only violence could work in such society. But violence also has negative effects rather than positive ones .Violence would strengthen hatred between the races more and more .then, the African American would fail because they are poor and would not resist in front the white's power.

Finally, after exposing all the possible means used in the struggle, from black resistance and the contribution of television and movies in the struggle, we have tried to assess the black's political and social achievements in the struggle .Of course black's revolution have made pressure on government, and feared that this revolution would lead to a total anarchy and reduced their chance to win the cold war. And this self –awareness which is suddenly wake up the blacks would not be manipulated easily. And they could never withdraw for any reason.

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