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# The Price of Change: Historiographical, Fiscal, and Demographic Considerations of the Milwaukee Movement, 1966

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THE PRICE OF CHANGE: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL, FISCAL, AND  
DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS OF THE MILWAUKEE MOVEMENT, 1966

by

Jonathan Bruce

A Thesis Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts  
in History

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ABSTRACT  
THE PRICE OF CHANGE: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL, FISCAL, AND  
DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS OF THE MILWAUKEE MOVEMENT, 1966

by

Jonathan Bruce

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013  
Under the Supervision of Professor Robert Smith

The work presented in this thesis argues for a new schema with which to approach the civil rights literature. Arguments for the necessity of this new approach utilize Milwaukee as a case study, analyzing the texts considered canonical to the city and offering a critique that will begin to break away from a lionized individual in favor of an egalitarian approach to history, specifically through the use of non-traditional methods such as quantitative analysis. Perhaps most important to the literature, this thesis addresses a fundamental, long-ignored aspect of the Civil Rights Movement by analyzing fiscal realities that face a grassroots organization agitating for school desegregation, the Milwaukee United School Integration Committee (MUSIC).

Through quantitative analysis, the simple realities of donors, donations, and monetary outflow will be brought to the forefront of discussion. This data will also work to demasculinize and democratize a narrative largely composed of worshipped individuals by examining the demographic makeup of donors and volunteers in MUSIC. The information presented here will be vital to those wishing to articulate the Milwaukee movement as a unique presence in the field of civil rights literature as well as its place

within the larger historiography. It will also provide the framework for a new way of understanding the rapidly growing volume of literature discussing the black freedom struggle.

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To Ashlie

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

MUSIC	Milwaukee United School Integration Committee
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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Any historian is only as good as their sources, and for this, I must thank the staff of the archives at the University. I would be remiss to not acknowledge the help I received from Cindy Lawler, an archivist at the University of Mississippi Archives when I began looking for material for future projects. It would also be short-sighted of me to ignore the contributions my fellow students have made to my ability to articulate and understand the past. Steven Colagiovanni, Monica Drake, Matthew Hall, Elisabeth Kaune, Emily Rock, and Joe Walzer provided valuable insight and stimulating conversations which assisted in both my pedagogy and education.

Although writing has always been a passion of mine, my work at the UW Milwaukee Writing Center allowed me to not only hone my skills, but use what I know to help others. Having the opportunity to work under Professor Margaret Mika has

contributed much to my educational experience, and, just as the others mentioned here, has earned my undying gratitude.

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## **Introduction**

It started with a phone bill.

It certainly was not the best as far as auspicious beginnings go. Sequestered in the Roosevelt Room in my History 600 class, the school's archivist paid us a visit with boxes from two of the premier figures in Milwaukee's Civil Rights Movement: Father James Groppi and Lloyd Barbee. I was not expecting much with my first archival experience, but holding the bill in my hand triggered something. It never occurred to me that the Civil Rights Movement could survive or die on its ability to successfully maintain finances.

It makes sense, of course. People need to be fed, rooms for meetings need to be rented, and materials for protests secured. Beyond that, court fees for lawsuits and utilities for bases of operation must be paid. The reason why this simple fact escaped me was simply in how the Civil Rights Movement had been traditionally presented. Even beyond the "Rosa Parks sat down, Martin Luther King stood up" narrative, much of the internal struggles of the Movement are lost.

Through my career as a graduate student and developing historian, I have been exposed to books and articles which helped to add detail and humanity to the campaign. Stories of labor unions preserving before ultimately breaking down the color barrier, the alternating violent and peaceful fights for open housing, and the threat of the March on Washington stripped away the simplified tales of bright-eyed student activists changing the world and replaced it with one of continuing struggles and co-opted revolutions.

As I continued pursuing the answer to this subject of finances, other questions started to surface. How did the local Civil Rights Movements across the country, as disparate and loosely connected as they were, finance their campaigns? Further, where

did the money go, and in what proportion? Moreover, who in their communities provided their time and money to generate momentum for demonstrations or lawsuits? What kind of answers can we find if we analyze the demographics of donors and volunteers?

The answers to many of these questions can be found with the measured use of quantitative analysis. Lloyd Barbee left the UW Milwaukee Archives a wealth of information, including financial ledgers and membership rosters. With the application of descriptive statistics reflecting the totality of data, the answers to these questions can be ascertained as far as Milwaukee is concerned. Although blanket application of these numbers to the Civil Rights Movement as a whole will produce skewed and deceptive results, using the Milwaukee movement as the initial stages of a greater effort to apply quantitative research methods will help establish a more thorough understanding of this period and its continuing historical impacts.

Discussion of the demographics of a movement – in both its leadership and donors – reveals important information regarding just who was involved in the struggle for equality. It not only tells us the gendered demographics of the leaders, but also who spent their money in funding demonstrations and lawsuits. It gives a glimpse at the reality of who was knocking on doors, collecting money, mailing books and donation requests, and spear-heading initiatives to keep the movement afloat. In thinking and discussing the civil rights movement, national attention mostly focuses on male leaders, ahead of male processions. The Rosa Parks and Vel Phillips of the struggle can too often be relegated to anecdotes. Analysis of demographics of gender within the movement, however, can allow historians to more fully articulate the makeup and activity of the movement without falling back on traditional masculine-dominated narratives.

But this thesis does more than just recite statistics and numerical data. It also sets forth a new schema from which to construct historians' understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. It also seeks to begin the deconstruction of the heroic narrative that has become a fixture in discussion of the Milwaukee struggle for equality. Milwaukee's Civil Rights Movement is often dominated by the messianic figure of Father James Groppi, a white Catholic priest. While this thesis does not seek to downplay his significance, it is an attempt to restore common agents of change – donators, marchers, and others – to the fore.

Chapter one of this thesis sets the stage by introducing major themes in the historiography. By dividing this subject into three subheadings – temporal, regional, and case studies – this chapter will serve to simultaneously address some of the developing trends in the literature while setting the stage for later, Milwaukee focused chapters. The main contribution of this chapter is to set up an important method of approaching the Civil Rights Movement both in Milwaukee and in the rest of the country. This chapter lays out major connecting themes across the literature, establishing that the historiography communicates across demarcations of time and spatial location.

Chapter two discusses the inherent difficulty in discussing movements and offers solutions to this issue. Focusing on the idea of the sovereign authority (commonly known as the heroic narrative), this chapter offers alternatives to the standard way of documenting history. Revolutionary history is a challenge, and I make an argument that measured and particular use of quantitative data and analysis can give historians a new way of approaching this difficult topic. Further, I suggest alternate approaches to traditional historical materials, providing evidence for the expansion of the historical

literature through cultural-analytical methods. These approaches, particularly the quantitative aspect of this argument, lend theoretical credence to my final chapter.

The final chapter is the crux of my research: the quantitative analysis of the demographic and fiscal data of MUSIC. The thrust of this chapter is self-evident: these numbers provide historians a new way of discussing the school integration campaign in Milwaukee and, used cautiously, elsewhere. These numbers also work toward answering that fundamental, elusive question: how did civil rights campaigns earn and spend their funds? Chapter three also provides evidence that challenges the traditionally gendered notions of leadership and organizers within these civil rights groups, rearticulating these groups as collectives of people with a common goal rather than one charismatic leader at the head of an otherwise faceless multitude. Both of these goals serve to ultimately democratize the Milwaukee movement, returning power and agency to the masses using a non-traditional historical method.

In the discussion of the movement, the time has not been taken to examine the basic financial and demographic information behind the mass struggle for civil rights. By articulating this information, historians can gain a better insight into what makes a grass-roots civil rights campaign work in this time period. Further, the efforts needed to maintain this momentum can be expressed not just in qualitative terms, but hard financial ones as well. While this is an analysis of but one particular spin-off of the NAACP, the data gathered here begins to answer questions that have been unanswered for far too long. This research can also lead to a better understanding of mass movements as a whole in terms of who gave their time and money to push them forward. It can show the



bureaucracy involved – perhaps even necessary – for such a movement to have an effective presence on the local stage.

This thesis will help further position Milwaukee as an important part in understanding the movement as a whole. The time has come to democratize the movement and shine the spotlight on the marchers and donators, giving them the voice that has, for too long, been adopted by the heroic visage. Although the literature on Milwaukee is growing steadily, there is still much work to be done and many more questions to be answered. The story of Milwaukee's ugly racial history must not go unacknowledged. Historians must work to remind others that the Eugene "Bull" Connors of Alabama were not limited to individual actors or the South, just as the bravery of Martin Luther King, Jr. was not isolated in a solitary man.

## **Chapter One**

### **Important Themes in the Civil Rights Historiography**

The frames with which historians discuss the Civil Rights Movement have been largely functional since the conversation began in earnest. This conversation, however, has routinely been defined more by the limitations scholars have impressed on the subject. Largely focused on the South and constrained to a timeline which restricts the historical roots of the Era, the position of the Civil Rights Movement in the overall historiography may not be in any danger of irrelevancy. The growing size, however, asks for a new schema with which to approach a topic which perhaps seems relatively straightforward and constrained, yet moves inexorably out of sight the more that is discovered. As such, this chapter focuses on offering a new way with which to approach the scholarship. Analyzing the historiography offers up three categories – temporal, regional, and local – which serve to generate a useful tool for historians. The temporal category refers to how scholars periodize the Era; regional refers to which part of the country the particular study takes place in, (i.e., North versus South); the local category is typically dominated by case studies of cities.

Through this frame of reference, the connections across each category establish that, indeed, most studies are interwoven across these categories and speak to a much greater degree than the scholarship may have realized. In effect, this is a schema that works at marking distinctions while still encouraging connections across the body of available material. This assertion affects works at all levels: this thesis is at once a case study of Milwaukee and its Milwaukee United School Integration Committee (MUSIC), but is a part of the larger regional and temporal conversations within the historiography.

Perhaps most importantly, it will work to undermine some of the factors which hold back the historical understanding of the Movement.

The traditional narrative of the Civil Rights Movement has several defining characteristics that reveal themselves in varying degrees across the historiography. Although the data this narrative has generated is important, those characteristics have also skewed the way both laypersons and scholars understand the struggle for equal rights. Southern dominance, inherent religiosity, an insistence on non-violence, heroic leaders, trends toward declension, and clear temporal demarcations define the popular understanding of the Civil Rights Movement and undermine efforts to democratize – and therefore understand the nature of – the movement. This thesis, by way of analyzing Milwaukee's struggle for equality, pulls away from at least two major aspects of the traditional understanding – heroic leaders and Southern dominance – and places greater emphasis on the forces behind individuals. Donators and those members of the movement who work at collecting money and gathering volunteers are given greater emphasis and, as a result, will not only reveal previously hidden aspects of the Civil Rights Movement, but begin to chip away at Southern hegemony and the other defining characteristics of the popular understanding of the Movement.

The three important genres within the movement are an especially powerful tool at democratizing the narrative of the Civil Rights Movement. This chapter establishes a working historiography of the Civil Rights Movement by defining the various studies as falling into three important genres – time, regional, and case studies. By highlighting some of the recent scholarship of this period, subthemes and trends can be identified and used to understand the evolution of scholarship. It also serves to set up a framework from

which to theoretically analyze the heroic narrative which holds much of the historical work in its grip, the primary topic of analysis using this framework being Milwaukee and the scholarship's fixation on the heroic (and white) Father Groppi.

Milwaukee's absence from the traditional civil rights narrative should trouble historians. Despite its presence in the Midwest and therefore outside the boundaries of the South, the former industrial city saw its share of civil disobedience and violent counter-demonstrations. Milwaukee also presents a continuing challenge to scholars, as the impact of the Movement has continuing ramifications in countless areas of the city's existence, including education, segregation, and systemic racism. If left restricted to the traditional narrative, Milwaukee's place in the historiography may appear meager at first glance. If one critically approaches the available sources however, it is possible to uncover bits and pieces of a larger and more dynamic civil rights history. If historians understand the Civil Rights Movement in a wider scheme, with emphasis on both the temporal and regional aspects of the historiography, they will reveal startling insights into the city and ramifications beyond geographical limits.

It becomes apparent, then, that a discussion of the historiography is in order. This chapter will first examine the discussion of the temporal aspects of the movement with some of the seminal literature pertaining to the topic. That will be followed by a breakdown of some of the recent scholarship based on region. The local case studies will be discussed last, with Milwaukee dominating the last portion due to its relevance to the subsequent chapters. This fundamentally addresses a major point of this chapter: Milwaukee and its role in the Civil Rights Movement by no means occurred in a vacuum. Articulating the impact of the seminal works in the wider scholarship will reify

connections across time and location, break down artificially erected barriers and allow a deeper conversation about the Civil Rights Movement to take place. The genres that have become emblematic of the historiography define how scholars approach the larger questions inherent to discussions of the movement: the first and farthest-reaching topic of conversation focuses on the question of periodization; following this issue is the question of region – the North versus the South; local case studies provide the final area of discussion in regards to the Civil Rights Movement.

The arguments presented here are but a fraction of the research conducted on this topic – an exhaustive historiography on the subject is outside the scope of this thesis. Even by highlighting the three major divisions of the literature, such meager divisions dissolve before the veritable maelstrom of ideas, concepts, and connections made by historians over the course of almost four decades since earnest historical discussion of the Civil Rights Movement began. Rather, the works presented here are meant to highlight a variety of the subgenres within the civil rights historiography and mark some thematic connections between the entries in the scholarship. Further, this chapter will help to set up the theoretical discussion of bringing the multitude to the forefront of the historical literature in the second chapter by highlighting trends across the historiographical genres.

### **Temporal Distinctions in the Civil Rights Movement**

The two main theories for approaching the topic of understanding the temporal constraints of the Civil Rights Movement are the recent encapsulating approach termed the Long Movement (LCRM) and the traditional/classical approach which attempts to keep the Era of reference contained in a shortened timeframe to little more than a decade. It may appear on the surface to be a superficial or even unnecessary argument, but as

Michael Denning pithily declares, “[t]o name a period... is already to argue about it.”<sup>1</sup> At the core of this issue, however, is the very basis from which historians construct meaning from the Civil Rights Movement. The question of when the Civil Rights Movement starts and ends is a debate that functionally defines what is and is not discussed. Demarcations – clear beginnings and definite endings – help historians keep the arguments and narratives focused and prevent one from creating overreaching connections. Constricting a period can limit the historical connections between actors and regions, preventing important links between events and people that need to be made to provide greater context and understanding. The debates within this particular genre of historical research are presented using the works of some of the leaders of each side of the debate in order to help contextualize the arguments within.

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall is the leading scholarly voice shaping the discussion of the LCRM, specifically articulating its merits in her article “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past.” Hall expresses major benefits to extending the traditional beginning and end points of the Movement. Of chief benefit to historians is the redirection of focus away from the Southern United States. Such dominance overlooks the *de facto* and *de jure* racism of the North and undermines the comprehension of the vastness of entrenched racial discrimination across the region. Further, the LCRM emphasizes the links between labor, race, and class in the United States while also demasculinizing the Movement and the counter-movement.<sup>2</sup> Stepping outside the typical chronological demarcations inherent to this discussion, Hall also

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 2010), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd-Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1239.

distinctly links the rise of conservatism with the growing Civil Rights Movement,<sup>3</sup> providing evidence to the reader of the significant long-term impact of the struggle for equal rights. In essence, the LCRM places the Civil Rights Movement as something other than a mere moment in time stretching from the 1950's to the 60's. The traditional movement becomes a stepping stone along the path of continuing agitation and counter-movements.

As a counter-point to Hall's interpretation of a long history of the Civil Rights Movement is the classical approach, conservatively bookended by the years 1953 and 1965.<sup>4</sup> Although not quite arguing in favor of the traditionalist narrative, Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang argue that being too literal with the LCRM model effectively neuters and weakens the discussion of the Civil Rights Movement by collapsing regional differences, thus making the Black Freedom Struggle last forever. Further, this interpretation deemphasizes the various waves of the Black Freedom Struggle in an effort to homogenize the black experience in the United States during this period.<sup>5</sup> The inherent problem with stretching the movement out so thinly is that it effectively reduces individual agency and events to a mere continuum of inevitable cause and effect. As such, the actual significance of any individual actor or action is then mitigated to a point on a timeline. These arguments emphasize the need for distinct lines to be drawn between major events – for instance, making Black Power an equal subject for discussion rather

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 1235.

<sup>4</sup> Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long-Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (2007): 267.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 265-266.

than forcing it into a moment in the larger scheme of the Civil Rights Movement<sup>6</sup> - and making sure that regions are distinct in their importance and events.<sup>7</sup>

While these two sides do make valid criticisms of each other, perhaps their most important facts concern the way in which history is co-opted and expressed. Hall recognizes that conservative politicians and ideologues hijacked the successes of the Civil Rights Movement as a discreet, short-lived entity. Essentially, by acknowledging racism's integral role in older modes of conservative thought and excising its overt expression in neoconservatism, right-leaning thinkers and politicians effectively "stole" the triumphs of the Civil Rights Movement by appealing to the shorter narrative.<sup>8</sup> In the other direction, Cha-Jua and Lang express the need to erect clearer boundaries in order to revitalize scholarship<sup>9</sup> and move it beyond merely reiterating African American agency.<sup>10</sup> It is through the utilization of discrete time periods that the historiography will not be spread so thin as to lose individual agency's role in events.

The fundamental role of this thesis can be seen in either temporal capacity. For the LCRM, the analysis of MUSIC's financial and demographic makeup functions as a step that conceivably had its origins in the foundational stages of its parent organization, the NAACP. This is not to suggest that it is only useful for proponents of the LCRM. Although the information examined for this thesis was produced in the early months of 1966, it still functions in the traditional narrative, especially when framed by the fact that Milwaukee's African American population skyrocketed in the 1950's with the Late Great Migration as opposed to other Northern cities. The funds that MUSIC generated in 1967

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 271.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 281.

<sup>8</sup> Hall, 1238.

<sup>9</sup> Cha-Jua and Lang, 266

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 284.



certainly helped to push the legal battle to desegregate schools into the 1970's<sup>11</sup> – well after the direct action phase of the movement had been phased out. It should also be mentioned that Lloyd Barbee, the leader of MUSIC, was an advocate of both Black Power and integration, often contributing to the Black Panther newspaper.<sup>12</sup> As such, the connections that can be made certainly transcend regional boundaries, but the temporal reality of the situation *can* reinforce more conservative notions of understanding the Civil Rights Movement as a moment in time. Closer analysis of the actors and events, however, leads to a much stronger tie to the LCRM.

Setting up clear reference points in the timeline can help constrain an overzealous historian. In the same instance, refusing to acknowledge connections with earlier and later events can leave the reader with a myopic understanding of history. History, despite the best human efforts, does not fall into easily classified components. Defining the Civil Rights Movement as a decade or so in the middle of the century does not acknowledge the NAACP's continuing efforts for equality, Booker T. Washington's gradualism, or Marcus Garvey's rise and fall. Pushing the boundaries too far, however, can lead to the devaluing of those who struggled after *Brown v. Board* and turn important moments in Black Power into mere checkpoints along the path of loosely-defined "progress." This thesis is a stepping stone in furthering temporal boundaries. MUSIC, despite being a 1960's Milwaukee phenomenon, reaches both into the past and well into the future.

### **Mason-Dixon: Historiography by Region**

The next major classification in civil rights literature is regional, and it should come as no surprise that this thesis is firmly entrenched in the Northern industrial city of

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<sup>11</sup> Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 127.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 128-129.

Milwaukee. Although discussion of the Civil Rights Movement is steadily evolving toward an understanding that the North had an important part to play in the black liberation struggle, the South is still heavily privileged. Even the canonical images of the Civil Rights Movement tend to skew toward the Southern struggle: outside of the initial grisly images of Emmett Till's desecrated body, Steven Kasher's photographic journey through the Movement focuses on Southern marchers and white reactions.<sup>13</sup> Outside of a potential handful of images, it appears that most of the population pictures the streets of Selma as opposed to the streets of Northern cities and towns when imagining the Civil Rights Movement.

This privileging extends beyond how one views the Movement, of course; Southern dominance also applies to how historians talk about and conceptualize the freedom struggle. One textbook, *The Civil Rights Movement* by Bruce Dierenfield, dedicates most of its content to discussions of the traditional South,<sup>14</sup> with token references to Northern cities such as Chicago when Southern figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr. 'inspired' leaders there.<sup>15</sup> This theme is emblematic of how the North is traditionally handled in the Civil Rights narrative: Chicago is mentioned only when it is second fiddle to the South: Emmett Till's Northern city of origin is emphasized only as it is contrasted with Southern brutality;<sup>16</sup> the Freedom Riders come from the North in shows of solidarity with their Southern brethren;<sup>17</sup> etc. Hall looks at such restrictive discourse as disrupting any attempt at comprehending the Civil Rights Movement,

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<sup>13</sup> Steven, Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-1968* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Bruce J. Dierenfield, *The Civil Rights Movement* (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 87.

simultaneously lionizing its heroes and achievements while devaluing the struggle itself.<sup>18</sup> Dierefield is not alone in this portrayal of Civil Rights: the combined volume of *African Americans: A Concise History* dedicates a chapter to the freedom movement, and while Emmitt Till is described as a Chicagoan,<sup>19</sup> much of the discussion is dedicated to Southerners fighting Southern battles. Northerners are dedicated financial supports and social justice busybodies<sup>20</sup> or a part of a separate chapter (“The Struggle Continues”), identifying them as Black Power offshoots of the core struggle.<sup>21</sup> Although textbooks are hardly a fount for groundbreaking historical investigation, they serve as useful benchmarks in academia, translating the tremendous bulk of written work into a digestible format for the average reader. These books reveal how history is translated and sold to those who *are not* historians; therefore, even a cursory glance is necessary to understand the state of affairs of the historical narrative.<sup>22</sup>

Textbooks are incredibly useful tools for getting an overview of the general scholarship, but simple surveys do not allow for an intense study of the material the historiography presents. Further, recent scholarship does much to undermine the classical

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<sup>18</sup> Hall, 1234.

<sup>19</sup> Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold, *African Americans: A Concise History Combined Volume*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2006), 459.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 463.

<sup>21</sup> Although there is no inherent problem with dividing the Civil Rights Movement by phase, and indeed this method falls within the traditional Civil Rights Movement model, it still prioritizes the Southern Movement as a specific type of struggle – religious, rural, long-suffering, and uniquely Southern – from the North’s, with its key features being violence and Black Power. Other books which treat this subject in much the same way include John Hope Franklin and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham’s *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* and Deborah Gray White, Mia Bay, and Waldo E. Martin, Jr.’s *Freedom on my Mind*.

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that even radical historian-authored textbooks which focus on general history end up focusing on the Southern movement over Northern struggles. In Eric Foner’s *Give Me Liberty!*, for instance, the discussion of the Civil Rights Movement in the 50’s lasts ten pages and focuses predominantly on a traditional narrative of Southern-style activism – Rosa Parks, *Brown v. Board*, etc. Emmitt Till is mentioned, but the lynching’s location is more important than where he came from. Further, Rosa Park’s activist past is glossed over in favor of what appears to be lip-service to the standardized narrative of the “palatable” Civil Rights Movement.

narrative, even as it may reinforce some aspects of the traditional Southern-style Civil Rights Movement. Perhaps, then, it is best to begin with a study focusing on one of the more well-known Southern student-led activist groups. Wesley Hogan's *Many Minds, One Heart* traces the development and declension of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) while keeping to a more traditional Civil Rights Era timeline. While highlighting the religiosity and Southern-ness of SNCC, the book also works to eliminate traditional "big man" narratives by focusing on SNCC and its members as a movement rather than a few charismatic leaders taking the helm.<sup>23</sup> Hogan's work also illustrates a certain sense of "Southern legitimacy" to the narrative of the Civil Rights Movement. SNCC is placed in the narrative as a 'real' organization, training other groups and demonstrating how a 'true' civil rights campaign should act.<sup>24</sup> The importance of SNCC's contributions to the movement is certainly not questioned here, but it does bring up an important question about the fixation on the Southern movement: is the lack of a similar, Northern-region focused organization a factor in why the North is relegated to a secondary story, useful only in its relationship with the South? Would a 'NNCC' have helped ameliorate some of the substantial difficulties in discussing the Civil Rights Movement as a national phenomenon, or would it have suffered the same fate as the relatively ignored NAACP chapters of the North? These questions aside, Hogan's work is a powerful example of using qualitative information to tell the story of disparate people working toward a similar goal. Her work is a tremendous example of a

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<sup>23</sup> Wesley Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 133. There are numerous examples of this tone through the book, primarily due to the work's focus and the types of sources that Hogan used.

democratized narrative, placing individuals within the movement on their own feet rather than hidden behind a charismatic leader.

Theoretical questions aside, SNCC also plays a prominent role in Leigh Raiford's *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare*. The second of three chapters concentrates on how the members of SNCC wanted to be represented visually, using the camera as a means to control their image and, as a result, forcing others to see them in a specific (and positive) way. The first chapter is dedicated to discussing the images of lynching in the black presses and how they were utilized to draw attention to white criminal acts against innocent black citizens. The final chapter covers the Black Panthers in California and how they used visual representations of their members to reinforce ideas of strength, unity, and masculinity.<sup>25</sup> Although this book seems to breach the regional boundaries in its three chapters, the first two are focused on the Southern representation of the black freedom struggle. The third, looking at the Black Panthers and therefore outside of the “traditional” Civil Rights Movement due to that organization’s Black Power mentality, is therefore removed from the “Southernized” narrative.

Raiford’s book can be viewed as a part of the traditional Civil Rights timeline. If one expands the temporal boundaries, however, the already ample historiography swells even further. Looking at the Southern region of the United States, works like Nan Woodruff’s *American Congo* covers the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Mississippi Delta. The historical roots of what is understood to be the “traditional” Southern Civil Rights Movement are found in the sharecropping/neo-slavery that dominated much of the Southern post-Civil War economy. Of particular import is the formation of the

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<sup>25</sup> Leigh Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America, a collection of white and black laborers who met in African American churches for social and practical reasons<sup>26</sup> – traits which would reflect the Civil Rights Movement years down the road. It should be mentioned that Woodruff's work could easily fit into the next category – case studies – but was placed here instead. The rationale is twofold: first, *American Congo* works better as an example of collapsed boundaries between areas and highlighting the uniqueness of the terrorism in the South; second, it highlights the versatility of these categories and emphasizes the fact that many of these works *can* and indeed *must* exist within multiple categories to produce the best results.

For example, it is within the formations of bi-racial unions in the decades before the 1960's which serves to highlight the connections between race, labor, and class in the United States – an issue that Hall is quick to remind her readers is imperative to one's understanding the Movement as a whole.<sup>27</sup> Even in their appeal to provide discrete demarcations around the Civil Rights Movement, Cha-Jua and Lang cite Woodruff's work as a means to privilege the Southern narrative as wholly different from the North and, as such, worthy of different considerations.<sup>28</sup> While Woodruff's work appeals to both sides of the temporal argument, it does not adequately settle the issue so much as provides another piece of the puzzle to sort out.

In a more sociological examination, *Growing up Jim Crow* by Jennifer Ritterhouse seeks to establish how Southern children learned the concept of race. Of primary concern in this work is attempting to show how children developed a race-

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<sup>26</sup> Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *American Congo: The African-American Freedom Struggle in the Delta*, Kindle Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), Loc. 1179-80.

<sup>27</sup> Hall, 1234.

<sup>28</sup> Cha-Jua and Lang, 281-282.

consciousness when such notions are hardly inborn. Ritterhouse's work highlights how white children would grow up and further embellish segregationist laws and norms while black youths would assert themselves in sometimes subtle, sometimes overt ways in an effort to show their worth as individuals. The examination also focuses on the differences between the private and public sphere in the South and how both white and black children operated within and between races to maintain or challenge the status quo.<sup>29</sup> The enforcement of this "code of etiquette" is an important aspect of this study, as the rules of the South were maintained through violence, both real and psychic, against all transgressors.

If one shifts the discussion northward, the historiography expands with a wealth of data on the Civil Rights Movement – data which highlight the urban and suburban North's unique role in the Era. On a social and legal level, James Loewen's *Sundown Towns* takes a different approach to Northern-style racism. Loewen's work is more concerned with small-town America's reaction to racial issues than with larger, urban-focused analyses. The titular sundown towns are obviously the main focus – communities of white citizens maintaining racial homogeneity through concrete laws, overt and implicit threats, and violence. The very idea of the North having only *de facto* – and therefore inadvertent – segregation and racism is upset by Loewen's fervent investigation into the laws of neighborhoods, suburbs, and towns. Historians of the Civil Rights Movement can no longer claim that the North's racism was reinforced through cultural norms alone.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Jennifer Ritterhouse, *Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Children Learned Race* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, Kindle Edition (New York: The New Press, 2005).

There are works that serve to actually link the regions together rather than use their differences to control the narrative. Clenora Hudson-Weems's article "Resurrecting Emmett Till" takes the opposite approach to Kasher's photographic history. Although there are some regional suspicions that are brought up in the article,<sup>31</sup> such matters are hardly the central focus. Emmett Till is not highlighted as a divisive figure, but as a uniting force that shook the entire country and forced the conversation of race back into focus. The tale of Rosa Parks being arrested for not giving up her seat may be the public idea of how the Civil Rights Era began, but the reality is far grimmer than that. Galvanizing the Civil Rights Movement took a terrible crime committed on a black body and forcing the country – as a whole, not as disparate regions – to deal with it.

In some ways, the historiography is strongest when it attempts to transcend regional distinctions in favor of a national narrative, speaking to the versatility offered by the schema presented in this chapter. Rather than highlighting regional differences, a national narrative somewhat simplifies matters in an effort to create a baseline from which to work. Harvard Sitkoff's *A New Deal for Blacks* covers numerous subjects around the era of the New Deal, but the most significant for this discussion centers around the how the New Deal legislative scope enabled African Americans to more directly partake in political, social, legal, and cultural life in the United States. Of particular note is Phillip A. Randolph's March on Washington as the culmination of a decade of subtle – but significant – advances in the basic rights of blacks.<sup>32</sup> At its strongest, Sitkoff's contribution to the historiography functions as an effective way to

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<sup>31</sup> Clenora Hudson-Weems, "Resurrecting Emmett Till: The Catalyst of the Modern Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of Black Studies* Vol. 29, no. 2 (Nov 1998): 183.

<sup>32</sup> Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue*, 30th Anniversary Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).



articulate changes across the entire country, rather than focusing on Northern and Southern variances.

Other works also provide important links between regions that have typically gone unnoticed by the scholarship. Mary G. Rolinson's *Grassroots Garveyism* discusses the Universal Negro Improvement Association's adoption in the Southern United States, despite being an organization typically viewed as decidedly "Northern."<sup>33</sup> The situational reversal of a standard Civil Rights trope (i.e., privileging the South over the North) itself is a curious aspect of the movement. Outside of its peculiarity, however, this work provides valuable insight into the disseminations of ideas and causes throughout the United States as a whole, turning the 1920's stage of the Civil Rights Movement into a far more dynamic institution, no longer confined to the cities but spreading to smaller communities. Certainly, such facts at least coincide with the evolution and violent suppression of labor unions/civil rights organizations meticulously described in *American Congo*, providing yet another layer of complexity to our understanding of events.

Another important part of the historiography deals with themes of movement and economy. James Gregory's *The Southern Diaspora* is the history of the Great Migration, charting how millions of Americans resettled throughout the United States. The effects on the country were profound: culture, religion, and politics are but three of the major areas that underwent thorough evolution in this time period. Perhaps the largest contribution to the narrative is the idea that the migration was multi-directional. Migrants left their Southern homes for the economic opportunity of the North for a variety of reasons. What more classical interpretations of the Great Migration tend to leave out is

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<sup>33</sup> Mary G. Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

that the evidence shows that, by and large, these migrants also returned home, bringing Southern customs north and infusing Northern culture into their ancestral homes.<sup>34</sup> In the end, James Gregory's work helps to collapse notions of regional "otherness" while still highlighting that there were still significant differences between Americans based upon the region they were born into. Further, it helps to break down the traditional differences between the regional movements by emphasizing the reciprocal nature of migrants – political, cultural, and economic ideas were in constant, dynamic flow. Instead of a story of a 'legitimate' and religious Southern movement teaching an 'illegitimate' movement of Northern assistants, Gregory's work subtly informs scholars that the cultural exchanges across regional borders had a lasting impact on the modern movement. In many ways, Gregory's emphasis on a dynamic and fluid movement of a multitude of people allows historians to see how those interactions across traditional regional boundaries made issues affecting blacks more pronounced in the United States.

Unfortunately, such pan-regional works do not always fit into a narrative of progress. Khalil Muhammad's *The Condemnation of Blackness*, an urban history text, traces the United States's pathological desire to characterize its black citizens as a dangerous criminal class. If *A New Deal for Blacks* establishes moderate attempts to ameliorate the racial problems in the United States, Muhammad's discourse unveils why much more than the token motions the government enacted were so desperately needed. Muhammad's work is effective by illustrating the effects that scientific racism, judicial malevolence, and legislative terror had on the black population.<sup>35</sup> Although this book is

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<sup>34</sup> James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> Khalil Gilbran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*, Kindle Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

not expressly about civil rights, it describes the atmosphere that the men and women who would march in the 1940's and 1960's inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By further focusing on the 1920's, Muhammad forces historians to recognize the historical roots of the Civil Rights Era. This is made all the more impressive with the fact that attention is focused predominantly in the urban North as opposed to the more traditional position of rural Southern interests.

Focusing on cultural history, Robin D. G. Kelley's *Freedom Dreams* highlights some of the various intellectual traditions that underpin the Civil Rights Movement. Although it is not explicitly restricted to the 1953-65 timeframe, it provides a wealth of information surrounding the philosophical and cultural creativity that was produced in response to and helped drive the movement as a whole. From the surrealist movement to the communist push for the hearts and minds of African Americans, Kelley's work breaks through the traditional regional boundaries by focusing on the aspects of the movement that are not bound by traditional geographic limitations. Black feminists are also given a voice where, traditionally, an effort was made to keep the narrative masculinized. Finally, in a significant move for modern historians, *Freedom Dreams* also works to place the Civil Rights Movement in a global narrative instead of one that is restricted to the United States.<sup>36</sup>

Speaking regionally, there is a certain richness that the historiography gains by expanding the borders of the Civil Rights Movement beyond those that have traditionally defined the era. Sitkoff's and Muhammad's works function as a part of the LCRM – perhaps more obviously in the case of *A New Deal for Blacks*. But the cross-discipline function of the sociological work allows for a greater understanding of the environment

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<sup>36</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

many African Americans found themselves in at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even if the starting marker for the Civil Rights Movement goes no further than the 1930's, *Condemnation of Blackness* is nonetheless a fundamental necessity in understanding the drive of the civil rights agitators.

Even if one is to make the Civil Rights Movement a discrete, decade-long era focused on the inherently 'different' South, it still needs to set the stage for the freedom struggle afterwards and the multiplicity of its intellectual and social precursors. While *American Congo* works within the classical demarcations of the Civil Rights Movement, they still require the context of earlier eras to make sense of the struggles held within their bindings. Without them, the obsessive necessity for legal and extralegal white dominion may not be fully grasped.

The major themes in the regional literature are manifold. To be sure, one important issue that always asserts itself is the agency of African Americans, highlighted by works like *Many Minds, One Heart*. Within this theme, the major topics of education, economy, and class begin to take shape. Tied to the concept of agency is the white reaction to the growing civil rights agitation, exemplified by *Sundown Towns*. The major themes within the idea of white reaction focus on legislative and judicial evolution as white leaders struggle to outmaneuver their African American opponents. But as powerful and varied as these themes are, they still do not address one major recurring question: how did the Civil Rights Movement fund itself? The answer, in some ways, cannot be found on the regional level. It is only at the level of case study – the level that this thesis operates in – where scholars can begin to understand that most fundamental phenomenon in capitalist discourse.

### **Case Studies – Local Historiography**

Local treatments of individual cities and states provide an in-depth analysis of the various ways civil rights agitators and their opponents attempted to outmaneuver each other. It is these close-proximity studies that highlight the differences between cities as well as the inherent similarities that define the Civil Rights Movement as a national front. Historians can find case studies useful in emphasizing both temporal schemes of the Civil Rights Movement, either through maintaining a tight timeline or seeking connections across the traditional demarcations of time. Further, case studies provide insight into the varied struggles across the United States, undermining the trend in understanding the Civil Rights Era of a Southernized, predominantly rural struggle for equality. These scholarly examinations do much to bring the hidden world of counter-agitation, ideology, bureaucracy, and private humanity into focus. The research presented in this thesis, entrenched as it is in Milwaukee, extends beyond regional and temporal boundaries. The question of money and organizations is not answered simply, nor do the answers discovered have no impact on the way the historiography is approached, regardless of the categorical distinctions placed on them.

The overwhelmingly urban nature of the struggle in Milwaukee makes it a particularly interesting example of civil rights agitation. Other unique factors, such as the small, relatively bourgeois African American population in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which gave way to an influx of Southern migrants in the Second Great Migration, establish Milwaukee as both unique among its Northern brethren and useful in its place among the regional examinations. Before we can examine the case studies of Milwaukee, it is necessary to look at some of the advances made by historians studying individual

cities and states closely. By doing so, Milwaukee's place in the historiography will become readily apparent as its own case studies are scrutinized.

The Southern historiography has produced provocative work on the counter-movement in a case-study context. In the traditional narrative, those providing much of the pushback against civil rights activists are white and tend to be either supported or members of law enforcement. They are a relatively classless mass, devoid of signifiers of their wealth. This also make discussing these agitators problematic, as they can fade into the community in which they live, secure in their anonymity. That is why works that serve to shine a light into this area of history are so important for historians. Focusing on the political evolution of the South in the years immediately after *Brown vs. Board*, Anders Walker's *The Ghosts of Jim Crow* illustrates how the Supreme Court's decision was successfully turned into a symbolic gesture not by slaving fascists, but by moderate racists in the state government. Concerned particularly with this "Second Redemption," Walker highlights the role of Mississippi's J.P. Coleman, North Carolina's Luther Hodges, and Florida's LeRoy Collins in their quest to keep schools segregated.<sup>37</sup> While this narrative does sit comfortably in the traditional understanding as the South-as-villain, it subverts the image of Eugene "Bull" Connor standing alone as the dictatorial head of Alabama's police force. Instead, the "reasonable racists" of Walker's research are shown to be the more effective force behind continuing racial animus.

Karen Anderson's *Little Rock* moves the critical lens closer with her analysis of one city's resistance to integration. Instead of focusing on the governors of three Southern states as Walker did, Anderson focuses on three classes that, through resistance,

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<sup>37</sup> Anders Walker, *The Ghosts of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used Brown v. Board of Education to Stall Civil Right*, Kindle Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

helped to shape legislation that would ultimately reflect their interests while playing appropriate lip service to *Brown v. Board*. *Little Rock* does much to show how the token integration in Central High School would influence the rest of the nation as well as the tremendous impact of women in maintaining segregation. Anderson gives scholars a vivid example of what integration meant to Southern communities and how said communities worked to stymie any efforts made by African Americans.<sup>38</sup>

Case-studies also allow for a greater focus on the uniqueness of a particular event in the civil rights historiography. For instance, Robin Kelley's *Hammer and Hoe* follows the battle for the hearts and minds of African Americans in the Depression ravaged south. Essentially doing what Woodruff did for the Southern region in one chapter in *American Congo*, Kelley works to do for the state of Alabama. Covering the rise and fall of the radical labor movement and its attempts to organize in the face of violent reprisals from Ku Klux Klan terrorists, politicians, and anti-Communist forces, Kelley's contribution to the historiography emphasizes the major ideological drives behind one of the progenitors of the modern Civil Rights Movement. It also serves to emphasize how black Communists did not necessarily subscribe fully to the utopian ideals of the Communist Party, instead using the movement to achieve their more pragmatic goals.<sup>39</sup> Concentrating his study in the rural South effectively makes this particular case study a valuable asset at every level of discourse – local, regional, and temporal.

Case studies seem to dominate the Northern discussion, with the historiography predominantly focusing on reminding scholars that the Civil Rights Movement was not

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<sup>38</sup>Karen Anderson, *Little Rock: Race and Resistance at Central High School* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

contained in the South. Even the subtitle of Thomas Sugrue's *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggles of Civil Rights in the North* emphasizes a distinct sense of frustration at being left out of the traditional, Southern-focused narrative. Focusing on a few of the major urban centers of the North (including Chicago and Philadelphia), Sugrue emphasizes the struggles above the Mason-Dixon Line.<sup>40</sup> Other works, such as *Freedom North*, echo that sentiment by filling their chapters with a series of disparate case studies rather than a cohesive narrative.<sup>41</sup> While this is not inherently a bad way to discuss history, the long-term reliance on this approach will fail to make the connections that the Southern narrative has spent decades developing. A book-sized treatment of a single topic in a single city or state is much more effective at articulating difference and significance than a series of chapters that are connected only by merit of regional location.

Legal histories also provide an important analysis of how courts approached the problems of Civil Rights in the United States. Especially relevant for historians of the Civil Rights Movement are precisely what Supreme Court Justices said about different cases, if for nothing else than to chart how the states circumvented having to honor those decisions. John R. Howard's *The Shifting Wind* charts important legal decisions from the Reconstruction Era to beyond *Brown v. Board of Education*. Specifically, Howard marks the points that the Supreme Court worked to undermine African American rights, specifically interpreting legal doctrine to develop legal precedence for discriminatory

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle of Civil Rights in the North*, Kindle Edition (New York: Random House, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940 – 1980* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).



behavior.<sup>42</sup> Works like this, while being case studies, have tremendous ramifications across time and regional boundaries – after all, MUSIC would be mobilized after municipal recalcitrance in the face of *Brown v. Board*, itself poised to assault the underpinnings of *Plessy v. Ferguson*.<sup>43</sup>

Milwaukee, despite its absence in most traditional Civil Rights histories, has nonetheless generated a fairly sizeable library of case studies. Initially, it also appears that Milwaukee could play a role in affirming the classical narrative of the era; if the Civil Rights Movement lasts from roughly 1953 to 1965 before transitioning into the less middle-America-palatable Black Power phase, Milwaukee's experience fits comfortably within that timeline. The first part of civil rights agitation focused on Lloyd Barbee's school integration campaign before the NAACP Youth Council shifted focus to open housing legislation. With that change in emphasis, the civil rights campaign took on a slightly more militant view of African Americans in the city. To view the events of the Milwaukee Civil Rights Movement so succinctly, however, is to do a fair injustice to the struggles that the African American community had to endure.

In terms of resistance, the city's version of Eugene Connor, Police Chief Harold Breier, is less bombastic and far more adept at controlling his image, cementing the South's violent systemic racism as inherently "different" from the North's more calculated and paternalistic approach. That is not to say that this Northern strain of thought is even viewed as racism – instead, there is a lack of emphasis on the racist tendencies of Northern cities. By and large, the Polish-Americans of Milwaukee's South

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<sup>42</sup> John R. Howard, *The Shifting Wind: The Supreme Court and Civil Rights from Reconstruction to Brown* (State University of New York Press: New York, 1999).

<sup>43</sup> Other important cases for the civil rights historian include: *The Civil Rights Cases of 1883*, *Bailey v. Drexel*, *Korematsu v. U.S.*, *The United States v. Thind*, *U.S. v. Cruikshank*, and *Duke v. Griggs Power*. This is by no means a complete list of relevant cases.

Side are the unnamed white resisters in this particular civil rights story. The vast majority of white Wisconsinites (whether sympathetic or not, from the city of Milwaukee or its outliers) are ignored in favor of focusing on the figure of Father Groppi as the narrative's "hero" and the Polish as its "villains". Or, depending on to whom you speak, the roles are reversed.

As of this writing, there are four "canonical" books in Milwaukee's civil rights historiography. The first book produced was Frank Aukofer's *City with a Chance*. A civil rights reporter for *The Milwaukee Journal*, Aukofer's work is short and contains no citations, but serves as a valuable tool for making sense of the tumultuous 1960's. The sociological text starts with Lloyd Barbee's school integration campaign and ends after Father James Groppi led marchers across the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct in protest of restrictive housing legislation. It covers the marchers being met with violent white resistance and the eventual adoption of open housing legislation (after, of course, a federal bill was passed). Of the two phases in the Milwaukee movement, Aukofer is more concerned with the open housing campaign and its oft-perceived leader Groppi, a white Catholic priest. Between these two benchmarks is the Milwaukee "riot," a civil disturbance which was quickly quelled using a strict curfew and rapidly responding police power.<sup>44</sup>

Probably the most interesting aspect of this particular study is the lack of declension – the title of the book alone displays the optimism still prevalent in the movement at the time of its writing. Indeed, in 1968, it appeared that the forces of racism were retreating from the city. The "sequel" of sorts is Patrick Jones's *The Selma of the North*. Jones reiterates many of Aukofer's points while providing more bulk to the

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<sup>44</sup> Frank A. Aukofer, *City with a Chance: A Case History of Civil Rights Revolution* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1968).

narrative. In particular, due to the historical distance Aukofer did not have, Jones is able to follow Groppi into the 70's.<sup>45</sup> The book, at times, is far more focused on Groppi than the earlier school integration campaign or even the NAACP Youth Council he advised. As such, *The Selma of the North* works more as a “heroic” rendition of the historical narrative. As Jones is also a supporter of the LCRM,<sup>46</sup> he spends more time than Aukofer attempting to establish some of the historical roots of the Movement.

Jack Dougherty's *More than One Struggle* also follows a LCRM narrative, beginning with black Milwaukeeans' efforts to achieve jobs for black teachers in the 1930's. Continuing through Lloyd Barbee's Milwaukee United School Integration Committee (MUSIC) and the 1970's, *More than One Struggle* illuminates efforts to conform with and resist *Brown v. Board*. It also clearly illustrates how a movement loses momentum and can turn against itself, generating a conservative backlash within its own ranks. Further, Dougherty pushes the impact of the Milwaukee Civil Rights Movement beyond the classical narrative, highlighting the recalcitrant problems of a city yet to come to terms with its racial animosity.<sup>47</sup>

If *More than One Struggle* extends the end point of civil rights struggles beyond the 1970's, Bill Dahlk's *Against the Wind* continues the civil rights struggle well into the next millennium. Beginning in 1958 and ending in 2002, Dahlk adds much girth to the historiography of Milwaukee. By discussing educational developments and not just the revolutionary and reactionary leaders who pioneered the evolution of scholastic reform

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<sup>45</sup> Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>47</sup> Dougherty.

through the decades, Dahlk effectively maps the birth, life, and death of movements and their physical and psychological results.<sup>48</sup>

It is clear that the two major recurring divisions of the Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee, at least in the classical time period, are education reform and open housing. Outside of these canonical books, a good number of articles revolve around these two major areas. Most articles, however, seem to focus more on the open housing marches than the education aspect of the movement. Margaret Rozga's "March on Milwaukee", written on the fortieth anniversary of the march on the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct and the subsequent routing of the marchers from the South Side, provides a personal account of white resistance to housing integration from the perspectives of the marchers.<sup>49</sup>

A particularly unique article is Stephen Leahy's "Polish American Reaction to Civil Rights in Milwaukee, 1963 to 1965." Using geo-plotting and letters to the mayor of Milwaukee on the subject of broadly defined "Civil Rights", Leahy's article attempts to rehabilitate the image of Milwaukee's predominantly Polish South Siders as the main agitators against civil rights demonstrators.<sup>50</sup> Although his final argument may not effectively persuade the reader away from the perception of the Polish South Siders as racist extremists, he brings up enough counter-arguments to warrant further examination into the topic.

Moving beyond the literature directly related to civil rights, Joe Trotter's essential *Black Milwaukee* is the story of how the predominantly bourgeois African American

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<sup>48</sup> Bill Dahlk, *Against the Wind: African Americans & the Schools in Milwaukee, 1963-2002* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010).

<sup>49</sup> Margaret Rozga, "March on Milwaukee," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 90, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 28-39.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen M. Leahy, "Polish American Reaction to Civil Rights in Milwaukee, 1963 to 1965," *Polish American Studies* 63, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 35-56.

community of Milwaukee lost social and economic mobility in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Using population data and a variety of social and cultural sources, Trotter illustrates black life in the city while documenting trends in race relations and economic matters.<sup>51</sup> Even if a scholar wishes to severely demarcate the Civil Rights Movement's temporal boundaries, it would be remiss of them to ignore Trotter's contribution to the historiography.

Milwaukee's troubled journey with civil rights is not relegated to more traditional histories, but much of the valuable information needs to be critically inferred from other works. The urban history text *Making Milwaukee Mightier* charts the aggressive expansion campaign that the city undertook in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rezoning and demolition programs worked to effectively segregate the African American population from their European American brethren. Such practices were especially brazen around the city's central business district, further 'whitening' the established commercial area.<sup>52</sup> The biggest example of the municipality's behavior, though, is the overall lack of material on the black denizens of Milwaukee. The 16 pages dedicated to the topic of African Americans is not out of oversight on author John McCarthy's part, but results from a pattern of neglect and antagonism from the city government.

Stephen Meyer's *Stalin Over Wisconsin* predominantly covers the development of a union in West Allis, a suburb of Milwaukee. As such, his contribution to the civil rights literature focuses on the fight to get African American representation in the workplace. Taking place during Trotter's period of black proletarianization, Meyer's labor history is

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<sup>51</sup> Joe William Trotter Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat 1915-1945*, 2nd. (Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> John M. McCarthy, *Making Milwaukee Mightier: Planning and the Politics of Growth 1910-1960* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009, 193-195).

primarily concerned with questions of workers and the management and not black activism per se. As is often the case in labor histories, many strides were made by white union leaders to keep black workers out of their unions, especially in the AFL craft union vying for control of the Allis-Chalmers workers.<sup>53</sup> In small strides, still very much so representative of the sham of separate-but-equal institutions, black workers began to make inroads with the union.<sup>54</sup> Once the historically white union began to fully welcome black and female workers into their midst,<sup>55</sup> however, the stage is set for a biracial experience in the fight for better wages and, later on, civil rights.

Other histories may not directly discuss blacks in Milwaukee, but are nonetheless an important part of the civil rights literature. Earlier or parallel instances of city officials' behavior toward ethnic minorities are possibly fringe, but nonetheless illustrative, parts of the civil rights historiography. In her study of Milwaukee's water supply, Kate Foss-Mollan argues that the city aggressively discriminated against their Polish residents through denial of municipal services. If access to goods and services is included under the civil rights banner, the Poles were discriminated against by the widely German-American ruling class of the city and ignored by the Polish-supported Democratic Party. Foss-Mollan examines important numerical evidence that effectively establishes, in responding to petitions for water services, politicians discriminated against the Poles while favoring others around the city. Only about 18% of the claims filed by the Poles between 1890 and 1910 were approved by the Board of Public Works, compared to

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<sup>53</sup> Stephen Meyer, *Stalin Over Wisconsin* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 124.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 124-126.

other constituents who enjoyed a 98.8% success rate.<sup>56</sup> This discriminatory use of water as a weapon is something at least partially unique to Milwaukee,<sup>57</sup> and a decided black eye in the discussion of the government's civil rights activities.

By and large, Milwaukee's contribution to the history of the Civil Rights Movement is varied and is constantly growing. Major themes of education, open housing, black power, white resistance, and movement exhaustion are well represented and explored. The archives at UW Milwaukee are a rich source of information, and the *March On Milwaukee Civil Rights History Project* provides another way to access and analyze the wealth of primary documents. Future works have ample room to continue to flesh out what is known about Milwaukee's tumultuous 60's. Aukofer, Jones, Dahlk, and Dougherty have created an impressive framework for future historians; it is up to them to beginning critically answering some of the questions created by the gaps in the literature.

The topic of gender is curiously absent in the discussion of the Milwaukee movement. Outside of a few mentions of female agents, the discussion seems to end with Jones providing a brief discussion of whether or not the movement in the city was a gendered affair. Even then, the discussion mostly centers on masculine roles and their perception of the female members.<sup>58</sup> Other topics that do not seem to be as available in the literature include how the predominantly African American movement in the city affected other minority groups, such as Hispanics and Asians. Did these groups organize with the NAACP Youth Council and march along with them? After violently expelling African Americans from the South Side, how did Ward 14 end up with a population

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<sup>56</sup> Kate Foss-Mollan, *Hard Water: Politics And Water Supply in Milwaukee, 1870-1995* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001), 60-63.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 72-73.

<sup>58</sup> Jones, 224-227.

comprising of almost 25% Hispanics in 1990 with no comparable increase in the black population?<sup>59</sup> Marc Simon Rodriguez does provide us with at least one narrative of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement in Wisconsin with his article “A Movement Made of “Young Mexican Americans Seeking Change,””<sup>60</sup> but the canonical literature has not yet integrated these important facets into their histories. Although white resisters and their allies in government seldom leave behind the wealth of data as their more progressive-minded opponents, questions still remain about the resistance to integration and open housing reform. In particular, Police Chief Breier remains an enigma, an almost impenetrable figure in the story of Milwaukee’s struggle with civil rights.

And, of course, most relevant to this thesis, is a largely ignored question on almost every level: how did these movements make and spend their money? Although some have come close to approaching this seemingly fundamental issue, most notably the Southern-oriented *Many Minds, One Heart*, the question of economics has not been analyzed on any significant level.

### Conclusion

At every level of discussion, the historiography of the Civil Rights Movement is vast and varied. But, importantly, each layer interacts with others, drawing parallels and distinctions in the ever-evolving literature. Temporal boundaries frame the ways we perceive and interpret the case studies of individual cities. The regional studies are vital to steep city-level analyses in a wider context. The local studies are the pieces we use to construct the wider meanings of regional studies and allow us to rethink the civil rights

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<sup>59</sup> Roger D. Simon, *The City-Building Process: Housing and Services in New Milwaukee Neighborhoods, 1880-1910* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1996), 140.

<sup>60</sup> Marc Simon Rodriguez, “A Movement Made of Young Mexican Americans Seeking Change”: Critical Citizenship, Migration, and the Chicano Movement in Texas and Wisconsin, 1960-1975,” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 34, No. 3 (Autumn, 2003), 274-299.



timeline. Of the examples given in this thesis, perhaps the most effective at uniting all three of these categories is *Many Minds, One Heart* through its cogent use of every element. Hogan deftly weaves together a case study of a movement to explore regional histories while also extending temporal boundaries into what could be described as the movement's aftermath. While works like this help to overcome some of the limitations historians have encountered in the quest to make meaning of the past, obstacles still remain.

One of the recurring challenges to this discussion is how historians talk about the *movement* as an entity. It is not enough to simply follow one man or woman's journey through the time period and declare that as 'the true history.' Jones's *The Selma of the North* is a particularly apt example. In many ways, Jones's Father Groppi is metonymic with the Milwaukee movement. Just as Martin Luther King, Jr. became the *de facto* icon of the Civil Rights Movement writ large, Milwaukee's open housing battle is often remembered by way of Groppi's seeming omnipresence in the matter. It is this problem, the heroic narrative, which will be addressed in the next chapter. Although Father Groppi is an integral part of Milwaukee's campaign for civil rights, the single-minded focus on his story undermines historians' ability to conceptualize the Civil Rights Movement. New approaches, both cultural and quantitative, are necessary to make sure that the literature continues to evolve. Without acknowledging this reality, the story of Milwaukee will be dominated by the singular force of Father Groppi.

It is this singular force that this thesis will directly challenge. The next chapter discusses the theoretical rationale for and deconstruction of the heroic narrative in order to place the historical emphasis on the multitude of marchers and supports as well as the

NAACP Youth Council. The final chapter, then, reinforces this assertion by taking that most basic of needs – money – and returning agency to those who donated to the cause of school desegregation.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Methodology and Theory**

This chapter focuses on how the Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee, and indeed elsewhere, has been constructed. By analyzing the various ways the topic has been approached, the necessity of a more democratized approach to history will become apparent. In Milwaukee, the discussion of the struggle for equality will almost inevitably turn to Father Groppi, effectively denying agency to those who also risked their lives and livelihood to march, collect donations, and serve their community. This chapter lays out the need for a new approach to Milwaukee's canonical civil rights history, further eroding the barriers which limit the city's scholarship in the wider historiography. It will also establish the groundwork for the final chapter, the fiscal analysis of MUSIC, which will draw Milwaukee one step closer to an egalitarian history. The agency of those involved is highlighted against the domineering force of the heroic narrative, providing further depth to the scholarship and un-skewing historians' understanding of the past.

As previously established, the Civil Rights Movement has, at least in popular/generalized textbook history, been spoken of as being led by Martin Luther King, Jr. with a distinct privileging of the Southern United States. While not to downplay the man's significance to the cause of civil rights, this limited approach stymies our ability to conceive of the movement itself. That is to say, putting a singular individual on display as the "face" of a movement limits perception of the individuals acting as one entity. Such a strict restraint on how we teach and understand the movement severely curtails how we comprehend the scope and impact of people demonstrating and dying for a cause. This goes beyond the realm of historiography and into the act of remembrance itself. As

historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall reminds her readers, “remembrance is always a form of forgetting,”<sup>1</sup> and choosing what to keep in the public consciousness involves a process which ends up eliminating or minimizing other events and people. Particularly, this process usually ends up forgetting the roles of women and those outside the heteronormative field.

How do historians address this discussion of individuals and movements?

Traditionally, the emphasis is on a solitary and usually male actor rather than an organization or group of people attempting to assert authority. While brick-and-mortar bookstores do indeed carry copies of general histories, the more popular literature focus on an individual’s contribution to a cause or, more directly, discrete biographies.<sup>2</sup> It is easier, apparently, to write a historical narrative which mirrors the fictional hero, potentially catching the “national imagination” by walking a “solitary hero through a sociological landscape of a fixity that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside.”<sup>3</sup> Perhaps by doing so, by giving something the authority of a leader, the reader responds in a way wholly different from the movements of the masses. This is further reflected in the way the nation constructs its national narrative and, as a direct result, how its citizens construct meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd-Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233.

<sup>2</sup> A quick comparative example may be in order here. A search of ‘NAACP’ through Amazon.com’s book search engine on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, for instance, leads to 1,038 paperback editions of books, and seven out of the first thirty entries appear to focus more on individuals than the organization itself. Searching ‘Martin Luther King Jr.’, however, turns up 48,310 entries, a mere 45 of which are classified as being written by the man himself. This is a ratio of 46.5:1, illustrating historians’ preferred subject and the consumers’ preferred consumption. It also warrants reporting that, in the approximate year since I first conducted the study, the ratio rose from 42.49:1.

<sup>3</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Kindle Edition (New York: Verso, 2006), 30.

The United States has Martin Luther King Jr. Day on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, yet they do not have a day of remembrance for the racial violence of Selma on March 7<sup>th</sup>. While we do indeed commemorate days of national victory, especially for independence or the end of World War One, one of our darkest moments in racial history goes popularly unremembered. After all, to officially commemorate it would be to render the approved racial violence committed against the civilian population real. Further, the reality of acknowledging a racial crisis will almost point a finger at the South and allow the North to lay claim to a softer Civil Rights record.

Indeed, commemorating the violence of racial oppression is an unpopular notion. Even if it was possible to create a day of remembrance for Selma or victims of racial violence, to do so would ask members of the citizenry to acknowledge their own culpability – a prospect that is perhaps easy to request, but difficult to achieve. While we are told to ‘never forget’ those who attack us, we suppress any mention of when we attack ourselves – perhaps because the idea of what constitutes a heterogeneous rendition of “us” is fairly difficult for the average person to grasp. If this is indeed the case, then the national myths need to be popular amongst a nation’s citizenry, and little is less popular than asking a country to ruminate on their guilt. It could also be reasoned that this entire phenomenon speaks to an issue undergirding the inherent difficulties in discussing race in the United States: that, despite the Civil Rights Movement, victory has never truly been achieved despite the occasional grandstanding politician and undereducated student proclaiming that the America they live in is “post-racial.”

These flaws in the historical narrative lead back to the fundamental question that this chapter is asking: why is there such an emphasis on the movement’s leaders instead

of the army of individuals who support them? This method of constructing history limits our ability to comprehend these situations, boiling down the search for social justice into a homogenous whole, devoid of internal strife and drama. Such discussion makes the formation of splinter groups seem less like historical norms than aberrations, historical oddities to disregard or use as the exception that proves the rule. Or, in the case of the Black Power Movement, a distinct, frightening, and radical entity separated from the more palatable expression of racial struggle. If this is the case, and too often the effort is made to turn a dynamic history into an easily digestible series of events, how shall historians proceed in order to break out of it? The methods of the past clearly are not working in a way which effectively tells the story of the multitude.<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that there are works that do not subvert this historical mismanagement. Wesley Hogan's *Many Minds, One Heart*, Leigh Raiford's *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare*, and Robin Kelley's *Freedom Dreams* are all excellent examples of democratizing narratives, spreading focus on numerous actors while not diminishing their overall roles. It should be noted that those examples also are creative in their use of sources, providing unique qualitative and cultural analyses where others do not.

It is important to remember that individuals need biographies, movements do not; rather, they need historians to catalogue their journey, finances and practices. Historians also must do their due diligence and conduct vigorous analyses of counter-movements, whether they are found in a hostile local government's meeting minutes, newspapers parroting the party line, or other forms of cultural minutiae. Simply put, it is imperative to

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<sup>4</sup> The multitude here refers to a heterogeneous collection of individuals with differing personalities, goals, and experiences. Although the word can function in making the multitude appear as a faceless mass, I find this emphasizes an alliance of disparate forces rather than the unwashed masses feared by the elite. Naturally, I owe this to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's theoretical works, especially *Multitude* and *Empire*.

find a way to represent a heterogeneous whole and not a sanitized mass. The voices of the leaders can still be heard, but they must not drown out the sound of the multitude.

Historians should view leaders rising *from* the multitude rather than the traditional method of having said leaders appear as if from nowhere in order to corral the masses for a singular purpose. There is a wealth of data available, and it is up to historians to unpack it. Yet the duty of historians goes beyond the act of simply providing the material to the public.

As maintained in chapter one, attempting to examine the entirety of the civil rights literature is well beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, this chapter will focus on Milwaukee, particularly using Patrick D. Jones's *The Selma of the North* as the major case study to be dissected. The figure most frequently presented is Father James Groppi, a man placed into the mantle of leader despite declarations of his role as advisor and nothing more.<sup>5</sup> This is not to suggest that Jones is alone in placing Groppi on a pedestal: even Frank Aukofer's more sociological approach dedicates a full chapter to the man, and that does not include the numerous other times he appears in the book.<sup>6</sup> Although part of the reason for his emphasis has to do with his white skin, gender, and the local newspaper *The Milwaukee Journal's* aggressive coverage of the priest, those facts alone do not explain the continuing emphasis on his role in the Milwaukee rights campaigns. It is through this analysis that the foundation for the third chapter will be set. This thesis, as a whole, functions by providing an alternate, egalitarian way of approaching the Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee – and this chapter discusses precisely why it is needed.

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<sup>5</sup> Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 210.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Aukofer, *City With a Chance: A Case History of Civil Rights Revolution* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1968), Chapter 7.

### Defining the Heroic Narrative

The difficulty in discussing a body of people versus an individual actor stretches back into the beginning of modernity. When theorizing the head of government, Sir Thomas Hobbes encounters a similar problem in discussing sovereignty. How can the idea of being sovereign, that notion of representing the people, be spread among different institutions? He writes: "... if the king bear the person of the people, and the general assembly bear also the person of the people, and another assembly bear the person of a part of the people, they are not one person, nor one sovereign, but three persons, and three sovereigns."<sup>7</sup> Although it may seem out of place in the discussion on the Civil Rights Movement, there is worth in briefly examining Hobbesian philosophy. After all, the political theorist points out a fundamental problem in articulating authority – the more bodies that claim authority, the more difficult it is to pinpoint who grants that authority and in what ways and against whom it can be exercised. In the same way, the civil rights historiography suffers from the inability to focus on the truly massive amount of data available and, as such, becomes reliant on traditional ways of approaching and discussing the topic at hand. Much like Hobbes being resistant to the idea of multiple sovereigns, historians are perhaps resistant to resisting the majority of data. In the Milwaukee struggle for equality, it is arguably the most prevalent in the case of Father Groppi and the NAACP Youth Council and the democratic nature of the organization. Historians tracing the Milwaukee movement will find an obsession with the priest that bears a striking resemblance to the Hobbesian conundrum of multiple sovereigns.

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Kindle Edition, Edited by J. C. A. Gaskin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 219.



The simple fact is that, despite Groppi's prominence in both media and historical works, his does appear to be a fairly limited role in the critical function of the Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee. Although not much has been said about the conduct of council meetings of the Milwaukee branch of the NAACP (at least in Jones's work), there is at least evidence of some manner of democratic voting system in place. When Alberta Harris brought Father Groppi's name to the board as a potential advisor to the council, they "authorized him to take over as temporary advisor."<sup>8</sup> Such behavior certainly parallels the democratic aspirations of the American system. Unfortunately, the UW Milwaukee digital archives do not have a membership roster, nor do they have any minutes from the Youth Council itself. However, an example of the minutes from the Milwaukee United School Integration Committee, which Groppi was *also* a part of, shows a clear, semi-democratic republican model indicative of most council meetings.<sup>9</sup> His official role as 'advisor' to the Youth Council, coupled with the fierce defensiveness of the Council against others impugning their legitimacy over their own actions,<sup>10</sup> suggests that it is not too great a cognitive leap to believe that this model of governance held fast. There is also the tendency to ignore or at the very least gloss over the historical nature of the Youth Council, as Milwaukee's chapter was established – if altogether less militantly – in 1947.<sup>11</sup> If nothing else, the role of advisor places him outside of any strict decision-making capabilities and subordinate to at least one other person – this places his position in history as just that: subordinate.

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<sup>8</sup> Jones, 113.

<sup>9</sup> MUSIC Research Meeting Minutes, *March On Milwaukee Civil Rights History Project*, Accessed January 12, 2013, <http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/u/?/march,1332>.

<sup>10</sup> Jones, 210.

<sup>11</sup> Aukofer, 96.

Yet, one would be hard pressed to come to this realization with just a casual reading of the available literature on the subject of the open housing campaign in Milwaukee. It is clear that there are significant and dangerous implications of historians continuing to use this approach in regards to the Civil Rights Movement. At 259 pages,<sup>12</sup> almost half of the pages of *The Selma of the North* speak to Groppi's actions and reactions. Vel Phillips is mentioned in just over one-eighth of the book, while Lloyd Barbee receives just over one-seventh. Institutional nemesis, Police Chief Harold Breier, gets referenced for only approximately 13 pages, leaving him at one-twentieth of the book, while Mayor Maier receives about a fifth of the book's pages. The Commandos, while the primary example of the multitude and major actors in the dissemination of knowledge and organization of marches, are still only actively discussed in less than one-third of the book.<sup>13</sup> Other works which treat the movement similarly tend to focus more on Groppi than the popular movement behind him, whether due to the affective bonds tying them to the situation (as is the case with Margaret Rozga<sup>14</sup>) or the historiographical inability to effectively articulate democratic mass movements.

That is not to say that the historiography is wholly without alternate visions of the Civil Rights Movement. There are a number of produced theses which attempt to take the heroic narrative and reconstitute it into something far more egalitarian. Louis Mercer's "In Order to Form a More Complete Society" charts student movements in Chicago and Milwaukee.<sup>15</sup> On a cultural level, Benjamin Barbera's "Improvised World" examines the

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<sup>12</sup> Excluding non-numerated pages and back matter.

<sup>13</sup> These rough estimates were achieved by going through the index pages for references.

<sup>14</sup> Margaret Rozga, "March on Milwaukee." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 90, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 28-39.

<sup>15</sup> Louis R. Mercer, "'In Order to Form a More Complete Society': Black Students' Efforts Towards Educational Decolonization in Chicago and Milwaukee, 1968" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012).

influence of jazz on black Milwaukee in this era of Civil Rights agitation.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps most relevant to this particular chapter is Erica Metcalfe's "Coming Into Our Own," which tracks the NAACP Youth Council from 1948 to 1968.<sup>17</sup> One major theme that presents itself in her work is that it *is* the Youth Council, and *not* Father Groppi, that provides the leadership and backbone to the movement. While these are incredibly important studies which do much to further the historiography and democratize the movement, the fact remains that these projects have yet to enter into the canonical literature. Therefore, Milwaukee's historical canon remains constrained to the yolk of the hero.

The myopic view of the Milwaukee Civil Rights Movement in Jones's work leaves critical questions unanswered while relying on a heroic narrative which renders the multitude dependent on a charismatic leader. Because of this, the things missing from the canonical published literature are manifold. In just one egregious example, where is the cultural history of the movement and its opponents? Even the analysis of how newspapers viewed and disseminated information about the Civil Rights Movement – an important component of any civil rights discussion – is not broached by either Jones or Aukofer.<sup>18</sup> If, as Jacques Derrida tells us, a state needs an enemy to exist or face dissolution,<sup>19</sup> then looking at the newspapers and how they created mediated narratives is critical to understanding how Milwaukee's movement was understood as either enemy or friend.

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<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Barbera, "An Improvised World: Jazz and Community in Milwaukee, 1950-1970" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Erica L. Metcalfe, "'Coming into Our Own': A History of the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council, 1948-1968" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Aukofer has at least one defense – he could not be too critical of the newspaper employed him.

<sup>19</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, Translated by George Collins (New York: Verso, 2006), 77.

Yet Jones and others have yet to do a thorough analysis of how newspapers functioned in the way that the public responded to the campaign for open housing. Even casual observations reveal that *The Milwaukee Journal* acted as an extension of the state, often portraying the Police Chief as calm and collected in the face of a passionate and explosive enemy<sup>20</sup> or as the paternalistic protector of the “worthy” citizens of Milwaukee.<sup>21</sup> (see figures 2.1 and 2.2) The first photo does not even accompany the story it pertains to, which is located on the front page.<sup>22</sup> Instead, it is featured by an article warning of potential riots despite the photo’s story not even broaching the subject in such a capacity.<sup>23</sup> (see figure 2.3) The disingenuous placing of the image in relation to the headline clearly illustrates where *The Journal’s* sympathies lie in regards to the threat against the sovereign authority of Breier. Further, as suggested by Michael Fried,<sup>24</sup> the over the shoulder framing of the photo can be interpreted as effectively imprinting Breier’s interpretations onto the reader, quite literally forcing them to share Breier’s world view. The second image is taken during the Milwaukee “riot” and features the slightly-harried Breier as a force for order against the chaotic elements of the city. The photo is indicative of a worried father-figure for Milwaukee, one of the sovereign forces protecting the citizens from domestic malcontents. In regards to the Civil Rights

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<sup>20</sup> Clipping from the *Milwaukee Journal* Containing a Photo of Groppi in Breier’s Office (May 11, 1967), Clippings – Scrapbooks Circa 1967, Box 17, Folder 2, James Groppi Papers, Milwaukee Mss EX, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

<sup>21</sup> Photo of Police Chief Breier, *The Milwaukee Journal*, August 1, 1967, Page 4.

<sup>22</sup> “Groppi, Police Chief Clash Over Who Causes Tension,” *The Milwaukee Journal*, May 11, 1967, Latest Edition. Available at: <http://www.jsonline.com/historicarchive/search/>

<sup>23</sup> “Riot Warnings Heard Again,” *The Milwaukee Journal*, May 11, 1967, Latest Edition (Sports and Local News).

<sup>24</sup> Michael Fried, *Courbet’s Realism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 98.

Movement, Breier simply *is* the state, a fact acknowledged in an interview with civil rights activist Prentice McKinney.<sup>25</sup>

By and large, there does indeed appear to be some form of collusion – perhaps even outright alliance – between *The Milwaukee Journal* and Police Chief Breier. The suggestion of a partnership between the newspaper and the municipality is hardly out of the question – the state using media to undermine the Civil Rights Movement is not aberrant. In her discussion of the Black Panthers, Leigh Raiford points out how the FBI leaked derogatory information to local news outlets to undermine the validity of the Black Power group.<sup>26</sup> While Raiford maintains that the FBI’s “stepped up” this disinformation campaign in August of 1967 (months after these pictures were taken), the language of the images and their relationship to headlines indicate that, while perhaps not the “cooperating journalists” the FBI specifically tapped for the purpose of discrediting civil rights leaders, *The Milwaukee Journal* was nonetheless willing to help cast the members of the movement as a distinct enemy to the stability of the United States – in this photograph, usefully symbolized as the chief of police.

Described as “old fashioned” by Frank Aukofer<sup>27</sup> in the way that clearly means “racist,” Breier personified the racial tensions in the city until the white counter-protestors violently rebuffed the peaceful marchers on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1967. Like the image of a sheriff in an Old Western being the physical manifestation of the United States, Breier was synonymous with the Milwaukee government. Not afraid to use state power to intimidate his detractors, Police Chief Breier used his position to have Father Groppi, and

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<sup>25</sup> Jones, 218.

<sup>26</sup> Leigh Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 168.

<sup>27</sup> Aukofer, 145.

probably many others, followed and intimidated.<sup>28</sup> Naturally, this behavior would most likely be ignored by a compliant press. Placing a frenzied Groppi next to a relatively composed Breier certainly connotes the impression of “belittlement” and an “aggrandized threat” that Raiford suggests the government fed a willing media.<sup>29</sup>

This certainly ties back into the idea of the LCRM, as Breier was no doubt familiar with the Southern Movement. As such, he was able to sidestep the publicity debacles of Selma through effective use of the media. The media, for its part, was genuinely open to assisting in this venture. By casting the Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee as a gang of criminal upstarts rallying behind a frenetic white priest and Chief Breier as the ennobled protector of the peace, a narrative of heroes and villains is constructed. This particular way of discussing events – even if the hero and villain roles are reversed in most historical renditions of 1960’s era Milwaukee – still wreaks havoc with how the Civil Rights Movement is interpreted. The journalistic obsession with Father Groppi is represented in works like *The Selma of the North*, simply due to the fact that there is an equal obsession in the sources used to create the narrative. And even the fact that the roles change – Groppi becomes the hero – goes largely unexplained. Although Jones does mention the death of Clifford McKissick (in relation to Father Groppi leading a procession, of course)<sup>30</sup>, he leaves out the long-term community reaction to the boy’s death, such as the creation of a black-culture focused school in Milwaukee.<sup>31</sup> Also missing is an indexical entry for the deceased.<sup>32</sup> Choices like this

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<sup>28</sup> Jones, 155-156.

<sup>29</sup> Raiford, 21.

<sup>30</sup> Jones, 147.

<sup>31</sup> Jack Dougherty, *More than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 123-125.

<sup>32</sup> To be entirely fair, Dougherty’s book erroneously lists the last name as McCissick. That’s problematic as well.

make it very clear that the focus of the book is not actually on the titular Selma of the North, but the white Catholic priest instead.

Quibbling over focus aside, the major point is that the analysis of newspapers would mark that McKissick's death served as a transitional point in how Milwaukee understood the Civil Rights activists in general. The paper on Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup> carried the image of marchers protesting the death of Clifford McKissick on the Local and Sports News Page.<sup>33</sup> At first glance, the image is not in any way significantly unique. It is a long shot, taken at a great enough distance to capture a long line of people making their way across a street. The cameraperson is too far from the group to really pick up the details of the marchers. Underneath the image is the accompanying article, "March and Prayer Protest Death." Father Groppi was in attendance and gave a speech, decrying the needlessness of the fatality.<sup>34</sup> The article is devoid of the casual evaluation of Groppi's personality that tainted the article on his confrontation with Breier. The fiery personality is recorded by the newspaper without mention of his "voice cracking with passion." What makes this photograph especially interesting is that the editor chose to use a photograph *without* Father Groppi, despite the fact that he is quoted. Unlike other instances of the discussion of civil rights matters, there are no guilt-by-association headlines to accompany the photo. (see **figure 2.4**) And when the image of the actual funeral focuses on grieving parents instead of the traditional "villain" of the narrative (who was indeed in attendance)<sup>35</sup> (see **figure 2.5**), a transition in how the events will be interpreted has

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<sup>33</sup> "Image of Marchers Protesting the Death of Clifford McKissick," *The Milwaukee Journal*, August 7, 1967 (Sports and Local News), 1. Available at: <http://www.jsonline.com/historicarchive/search/> (Accessed February 15, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> "March and Prayer Protest Death," *The Milwaukee Journal*, August 7, 1967 (Sports and Local News), 1. Available at: <http://www.jsonline.com/historicarchive/search/> (Accessed February 15, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> "500 Mourn McKissick at Funeral," *The Milwaukee Journal*, August 8, 1967.

transpired. In fact, the next time that *The Milwaukee Journal* publishes a picture of Groppi, he is smiling and nonthreatening with his compatriots (**see figure 2.6**) – his message has not changed, but his portrayal in the media certainly has. This change is fundamentally important in understanding how the municipal apparatus responded to its citizens, yet Jones does not acknowledge the change.

The issue of most concern here is how Jones used material without necessarily questioning how that material is organized and disseminated. Through the uncritical interpretation of sources, especially *The Milwaukee Journal*, he effectively reconstructed a heroic narrative, devoid of the nuance necessary to construct a thorough history. In many ways, he took a narrative already being told and catalogued it rather than use the material available in a varied and critical fashion. Most of the stories that captured *The Milwaukee Journal's* headlines were inflammatory and focused on Groppi. As such, the history being constructed reflects this perception.

It is no question that both heroic and villainous historical actors are savored by the population. When discussing legends, the focus is on Robin Hood, not his Merry Men. We celebrate the 'Army of One' and take delight in 'The Few, The Proud, The Marines,' even if such notions are realistically flawed. Everyone remembers 'Washington Crossing the Delaware,' but no one remembers the faceless subordinates depicted as accompanying him across. We collectively boo Richard Nixon's seedy character while only tangentially acknowledging the role of the Committee to Re-elect the President,<sup>36</sup> his own take on the Merry Men. Why is it that we cannot seem to escape this historical anomaly? In truth, historians are limited to the information available, and in many cases,

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<sup>36</sup> This is often, incorrectly, acronymed as CREEP or CREP, most likely to capitalize on the popular odium directed at Richard Nixon. The proper version is CRP.



as *The Milwaukee Journal's* negative obsession of Groppi shows, that information is single-mindedly obsessed with a unique individual among the crowd – even if that individual is a mere advisor. It stands to say that, while the audience acknowledges the existence of the Merry Men, the focus is drawn to Robin Hood.

In the case of Father Groppi and the Youth Council, part of the blame potentially lay within the racial dynamics of the situation. James Groppi, as a white priest, generated a lot of anger from white racist conservatives in his position as advisor to the Youth Council. The fact of the matter was that, for the white power structure, it was considered taboo for anyone – especially a white man – to be ‘leading’ a group of African American youths in civil disobedience – after all, a state’s hegemony necessitates maintaining the status quo, even if the status quo involves a racial hierarchy. But even within the Civil Rights Movement, the white Catholic Father Groppi’s presence was seen by some as unusual and problematic. Other black power groups told reporters that the NAACP Commandos were not ‘real’ black power leaders as they followed the advice of a white man.<sup>37</sup> Conservative Catholics, too, were not pleased with Father Groppi’s support of supposed communists and beatniks,<sup>38</sup> to make no mention of the overt racists obsessed with his movements. According to Aukofer, some viewed Groppi as a sort of “safety valve” for black Milwaukeeans, a way to focus their anger in a non-destructive way.<sup>39</sup>

The fact that Groppi’s whiteness was a focus of the counter-movement is obvious. Aukofer discusses the various ways assailants would describe him, from “white nigger” to “black god,”<sup>40</sup> the ire directed toward him was far more focused than any other

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<sup>37</sup> Jones, 211.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>39</sup> Aukofer, 81.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

individual or organization. Clearly, the members of the racist populace saw Groppi as the key threat – whether due to his “betrayal” of whiteness or inherent temerity at suggesting that racist Milwaukeeans were to blame for the racial problems in the city. Even his status as priest did not protect Groppi, as he was hung in a swastika-covered effigy and subject to assault in the South Side riot.<sup>41</sup> The expected hesitancy toward violence against a man of the cloth is clearly forgotten when racial expectations are threatened. As if this was not indicative of the hostility felt toward Groppi, the media attention on the rise of Father Witon, a sort of antithesis to Father Groppi, attests to a variant of this theory – it is only after he stops using race-neutral language and starts with racial slurs that the media loses interest.<sup>42</sup> By channeling their hatred into white face, perhaps angry counter-demonstrators could rationalize their racism into something else. This is not to suggest that these men and women were not also hostile to black marchers. However, if the NAACP Youth Council or any other individual was targeted specifically by protest signs or chants, the historical record is silent.

Clearly, Groppi’s whiteness made him a target of bigots when looking at the open housing campaign. Rather than make his contribution to history obscured or outright ignored, as is often the case with other subaltern groups, his whiteness made him into someone to fixate on. Other black power advocates could not support his role, no matter how advisory it was, as they rightly believed that the older white priest would always be assumed to be a leader to the Council. Racist Milwaukeeans, on the other hand, saw him as a Benedict Arnold-style race traitor, an anti-American figurehead unjustly rallying

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 114-115.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, 229 and Aukofer, 126-127. Witon’s role is usually very brief but explosive, apparently brought in by angry whites to articulate their opposition to open housing. The lack of media focus after the initial bursts of coverage indicate that the media either lost interest in the group or had no desire to follow such an openly racist white man leading other openly racist white men.

black youth against a paternalistic system intent on protecting only the rights of those deemed white enough to deserve it. Their hatred of minorities was to be assumed, but to see a white, recognizable face at the forefront was an assault on perceptions of whiteness. It certainly didn't help matters, then, that the media focus was almost always on Groppi.

While not the only figure upon which attention was focused, the Father was seldom far from camera or microphone. There are 30 news clips from Milwaukee's WTMJ in the UW Milwaukee digital archives, almost half of them featuring Father Groppi.<sup>43</sup> In one where he isn't even physically present, a city council member consistently identifies Groppi as the main problem, frequently saying that it is the Father's fault that demonstrations devolve into a so-called 'media circus.'<sup>44</sup> Such attention gave casual viewers a name and a face to blame. And blame they did: numerous Milwaukeeans wrote to Father Groppi, describing their outrage, and further expanding the historical evidence toward a heavily James Groppi narrative.<sup>45</sup> The association of Groppi as the sovereign leader of the Milwaukee movement, no matter how inaccurate it was, is the final result of this coverage. Just as a racist, anti-integration attacker bombed the NAACP offices<sup>46</sup> rather than every individual member of the movement, others took to focusing on Groppi rather than the multitude behind him.

This analysis must then ask the question: were there no other black heroes that the press could have focused on? The prior period of the Civil Rights Movement in the city –

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<sup>43</sup> *March On Milwaukee Civil Rights History Project*, <http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/> (accessed December 9, 2011). The actual number is 12.

<sup>44</sup> News film clip of press conference with Milwaukee County Supervisor Richard Nowakowski, August 30, 1967, *March On Milwaukee Civil Rights History Project*, Accessed January 7 2013, <http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/u?/march,937>.

<sup>45</sup> Groppi Papers, Box 8, Folders 3-6, Correspondence, Hate Mail, 1967, *March On Milwaukee Civil Rights History Project*, Accessed December 9 2011, <http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/u?/march,709>. In continuing a proud tradition of ignorance, most of these letters are full of typos and grammatical errors.

<sup>46</sup> Jones, 132.

the school desegregation phase – has largely been the domain of Lloyd Barbee. However, Lloyd Barbee had left active protesting by this time in order to more fully engage with organizing and winning a lawsuit.<sup>47</sup> The next choice would be Vel Phillips, an alderwoman and active supporter in the campaign for black Milwaukeeans' civil rights. She appears to be the most reasonable choice for the press to fixate on. First, as an elected official, she had to deal with and respond to the public. Second, as a minority, she could serve as an adequate scapegoat for the white press. And third, as a woman, she was challenging gender norms, especially in the backlash period of the 1950's when she was elected.<sup>48</sup> As if these points were not enough to have her viewed as a critical leader of the movement, she pushed through four separate open housing ordinances between 1962 and '67, only to be voted down by her peers.<sup>49</sup> In many ways, she should have been a popular target for the conservative *Milwaukee Journal* and, as such, ended up with the lion's share of media attention. And, thanks to her long-standing campaign against discrimination, she should be similarly lauded in the historical record.

It could be suggested that this is simply an issue of what audiences will find compelling to read. A politician being routinely defeated, no matter their determination, lacks the exciting draw that protestors and a group called "The Commandos" have. Another way to understand this dearth of attention, though, is suggested by Vel Phillip's own 1956 campaign. She legally changed her name to Vel and attempted to hide aspects that revealed her to be a woman from the voting public and the press.<sup>50</sup> Further, there is a gendered stigma associated with Black Power Movements that is typically ignored in

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<sup>47</sup> Dougherty, 105.

<sup>48</sup> Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), 68.

<sup>49</sup> Jones, 176-177.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 176.

popular renditions of history. Robin D. G. Kelley suggests that this is a problem of conception, that it is hard for many of the non-marginalized to not imagine black communities as a homogenous entity with similar agendas.<sup>51</sup> Further, however, there is the reality that female leaders of the freedom struggle were viewed as stripping black men of their masculinity through their oppressive natures.<sup>52</sup> These types of struggles are hinted at in the Milwaukee movement with a brief section exploring gender in Jones's book. After four pages, the sentiment was that the marchers were a proving ground for de-masculinized black youth, protecting the women and the Priest.<sup>53</sup> Historians continuing to bypass Vel Phillips in their examination of the movement are missing a critical component to understanding gender and racial dynamics within and outside the various organizations involved. Making place for women in the narrative of the movement is not a matter of a "me-too" mentality – the frustrations and experiences of female members of the Era's multiple movements are integral to understanding the rise of Women's Rights Movement as not only its own entity, but its position and evolution within the wider activism narrative.

It is apparent that James Groppi, while not officially the leader of the NAACP Youth Council, was deemed the *de facto* head of the civil rights struggle in Milwaukee. Such an obsession by the media and opponents of the movement leads to an inordinate amount of data focusing on an individual versus a mass movement. Sifting through this data is still a challenge, but the temptation to focus on that alone should be ignored. Too intense a focus on the popular media can potentially end up distilling the historical

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<sup>51</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 137

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>53</sup> Jones, 223-227.

narrative to the point of unintentional heroic rhetoric. Making this a further challenge is in how we construct our knowledge of a movement in relation to those in positions of authority.

This goes back, once again, to how newspapers and other historical material interpret the world around them and, subsequently, how historians use that material. Political theorist Benedict de Spinoza, the early modern champion of democracy, discusses the emotionality behind this fundamental error in thinking in his *Ethics*:

“If a man has been affected pleasurable or painfully by anyone, of a class or nation different from his own, and if the pleasure or pain has been accompanied by the idea of the said stranger as cause, under the general category of the class or nation: the man will feel love or hatred, not only to the individual stranger, *but also to the whole class or nation whereto he belongs.*”<sup>54</sup> (emphasis mine)

This brings up a twin problem: first and foremost, it makes reasonably discussing the Civil Rights Movement without a figurehead difficult. The affection felt toward the leaders, or rather perceived leaders, deflects narrative focus towards the individual while sharing in the overall affectation.

The corollary to this concept is that it is similarly difficult to effectively discuss the counter-insurgents of the era. While the leaders of the civil rights movement are lauded, any leaders of the opposition hid from sight. Although Breier makes an effective human opponent, his secrecy makes him a continuing problem for historians to explore. As discussed earlier, the evolution of *The Milwaukee Journal* from inflammatory agitprop to semi-neutral documenter of events is hardly touched by the canonical Civil Rights texts of Milwaukee. Those who took part of the counter-demonstration at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct, too, vanished into their homes, their role in the violence

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<sup>54</sup> Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, Edited by Edwin Curley (New York, New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 160.

unrecorded save for participation as a mass of individuals. The national narrative focuses on the idea that we do not like white supremacists, but the inability to discuss movements in any meaningful way allows them to remain hidden in plain sight, devoid of the critical analysis necessary to draw them into the light of analytical historical discourse.

Although *The Selma of the North* does make an earnest attempt to tackle the Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee, it nevertheless succumbs to telling a heroic narrative. Rather than an actual, in-depth discussion of the mass movement for open housing or school desegregation, the preponderance of data on the media-appointed leader Father Groppi proved too difficult to resist. This is hardly to downplay the Father's role in a pivotal movement. It is to point out, however, that precautions need to be taken in discussing the multitude so history does not devolve into a series of biographies.

Perhaps this problem is similar to Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. Just as Western eyes telling the story of the Middle East produces inaccurate results,<sup>55</sup> maybe historians outside the Civil Rights Movement can never quite grasp the revolutionary history it entails. Or perhaps it is more fundamental than that. Perhaps the ability to picture something without an individual agent behind it is too much to comprehend. In analyzing history, even Walter Benjamin describes time as subordinate to a figure, "[f]or every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter."<sup>56</sup> In the case of the Civil Rights Movement, it may be extremely difficult to tell the story without that Messianic figure to focus on when the force behind them is a mass of disparate actors, each with aspirations that may not coherently connect with the preferred rendition of events. In short, without an individual identifiable actor, the history of the multitude

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<sup>55</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Random House, 1994).

<sup>56</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, Edited by Hannah Arendt (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), 264.

may be forever beyond the historian's grasp. If this is indeed the case, the ability to effectively understand the past is seriously handicapped.

### **Continuing Evolution of the Civil Rights Historiography**

These grievances are not to imply that there is anything inherently wrong with the historiography as it stands. It does serve to point out, however, that there is something important missing in our fundamental understanding of the Milwaukee movement. Revolutionary history, as the name implies, is already resistant to traditional methods of approach. Unless that revolution is successful, at which point tradition teaches us it begins to write its own history,<sup>57</sup> it is subject to the mercy of state which conquered it. This, naturally, means it is subject to vilification or co-option. On the one hand, it can become a Foucaultian cautionary tale, used for the enforcement of social norms and practices. Just as a true crime narrative weaves elements of grisly perversion within the context of a morality play, so, too, would a government's vilification of an insurgency. More insidious, however, is the co-option of the revolution – the very co-option that neo-conservatives have used in reshaping their past racial animus.<sup>58</sup> That is, the absorption of aspects of the rebellion, packaging it and marketing it as something decidedly un-radical, homogenized and sterile – colorblind, if you will – trumpeting the improved qualities of the state while making few, if any, concessions.

Even outside of the expressly political sphere, the standardized civil rights narrative in the United States suffers from this sanitized co-option. The public is given legendary, celebrated figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Father James Groppi, all for the sake of an easily digestible heroic narrative. This allows for the casual

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<sup>57</sup> Anderson, 104.

<sup>58</sup> Hall, 1238.



disregard of further evaluations of the state of civil rights in the U.S. while allowing the continuation of racist and demeaning practices hidden beneath the “color blind” language of neoliberals and conservatives. If, as so many of us are told, the movement was a success, why do ‘Sundown Towns’ exist in the United States? How have these communities, created and maintained as whites-only enclaves, remained historically invisible for so long, even after mob violence erupts?<sup>59</sup> How can towns in the ‘post-racial’ United States still “maintain their all-white status, although less openly than in the past”?<sup>60</sup> If the open housing movement garnered a new federal housing law, why is Milwaukee still considered hyper-segregated?<sup>61</sup>

Since insurgent history is, or at least, is potentially resistant to traditional means of historiography, other approaches should be taken. This is not to say that there is no merit to more direct approaches of history: Wesley Hogan’s *Many Minds, One Heart* is a powerful example of qualitative research producing an effective examination of a movement versus a biography of an exalted leader. Hogan’s work has the potential to fall into the central problem of the historiography and the sources used to construct the past. Nowhere is this subtle problem more evident than, when in a discussion on organization, she states “[t]he movement was developing two distinct models for a “good organizer”: the *heroic individual* and the relationship builder”<sup>62</sup> (emphasis mine). In one sentence, she casts a spotlight on the limiting yet powerful effect of the heroic narrative. Despite the possibility that her sources skewed to a lionized rendition of an individual actor, her

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<sup>59</sup> James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, Kindle Edition (New York: The New Press, 2005).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>61</sup> Tom Tolan and Bill Glauber, “Milwaukee area tops Brookings segregation study of census data”, *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 14, 2010, <http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/111898689.html> (accessed January 15, 2013).

<sup>62</sup> Wesley Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC’s Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 112.

analysis of SNCC weaves a powerful series of stories, from the philosophical underpinnings of non-violence,<sup>63</sup> the ties to (relatively) leftist political and labor traditions,<sup>64</sup> to the personal spiritual struggles within holding cells.<sup>65</sup> These personal stories appeal to an individual *and* revolutionary narrative, fixing the readers' gaze on members of something far greater than the sum of its parts.

Despite Hogan's ability to circumnavigate the minefield of hero-obsessed sources, traditional sources used in traditional ways will lead to skewed understandings of the past. By using a variety of approaches with more straight-forward history, a wealth of information can be articulated. Cultural analyses, such as visual representations of self and others, provide new insight into movements. This is demonstrated in the example of *The Milwaukee Journal* as well as in Leigh Raiford's *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare*. Alternately, using a quantitative approach can help break down the masses of people into numbers and sets of data which can be used alongside first-person testimonial to give a different treatment of a movement. In particular, the examination of finances can give historians a new way to interpret and evaluate the Civil Rights Movement as a whole. Allowing scholars to see who was donating, how much, and where the money was used provides a new perspective of the movement which could not have been achieved with a more traditional historiographical approach.

Caution must be taken when using a quantitative approach, however, so that one does not overreach with their conclusions. Statistics and interpretation can make dangerous bedfellows when inappropriately utilized; it is inadvisable to approach data with a conclusion already in mind. Khalil Gibran Muhammad, in his work *The*

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 53.

*Condemnation of Blackness*, reminds his readers that the statistics that served to mark African Americans as criminal deviants derived from analysis of census data and, despite the systemic discrimination and blatant racism of American society, were credited as being inarguably fact-based and devoid of prejudice.<sup>66</sup> Such over-reaching can be seen at multiple levels of the historiography, including the local level.

Outside of Chief Breier, Polish-Americans tend to be seen as the central ‘villains’ in the Milwaukee Civil Rights Movement. After all, the civil rights demonstrators marched into the predominantly Polish South Milwaukee in order to protest discriminatory housing practices only to be met by over 10,000 screaming and violent counter-demonstrators.<sup>67</sup> When looking at this situation, historian Stephen Leahy sets out to alleviate the stereotype that the Poles residing in Milwaukee’s South Side during the 1960’s were violent racists. His primary goal is to speak for the ‘silent majority’ of the Polish community in Milwaukee.<sup>68</sup> Using statistical analysis of letters to the mayor on the subject of broadly defined ‘civil rights,’ he concludes that the Polish Americans of South Milwaukee did not generate enough anti-civil rights mail to justify their unanimous resistance to the civil rights of African Americans.

As much as it could potentially do to rehabilitate the image of the South Siders, this type of history is too narrow and problematic to be of substantial use. The time frame is limited to between 1963 and 1965, cleanly ignoring the heaviest instances of racialized violence in Milwaukee. Leahy also does not take into account the *likelihood* of anti-integrationists to write letters or even use real names. While letters are an effective tool to

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<sup>66</sup> Khalil Gilbran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*, Kindle Edition, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010, Loc. 126-30.

<sup>67</sup> Jones, 1-3.

<sup>68</sup> Stephen M. Leahy, “Polish American Reaction to Civil Rights in Milwaukee, 1963 to 1965,” *Polish American Studies* 63, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 35-36.

collect information from *one* person, applying it to the ‘silent majority’ is difficult to do – silent majorities, by their very definition, only provide a voice through the results of their collective desire. Leahy also does not offer any differentials within the racist community as a whole. Since the multitude is not a homogenous mass, defining the Polish community as either die-hard racists or vocal supporters of civil rights is fallacious. One can be virulently or casually racist, and militantly pro-civil rights or casually so. Further, one can be entirely impartial to the subject if it does not pertain directly to oneself.

Even with these pitfalls, Leahy’s work opens many doors for the historiography and provides a platform to begin re-evaluating what historians really know of the movement. While its final thesis may not be entirely sound in this analysis, the approach and results are still worthy of acknowledgment in pushing against the tradition of the heroic narrative. The most important contribution to the historiography is how Leahy addresses the movement of those outside of the Civil Rights Movement engaged with it. While perhaps not the tactical masterminds of *The Ghosts of Jim Crow*, South Siders and their resistance to open housing play an integral part in how Milwaukee understands itself.

On a local level, Leahy’s does call into question the trend in simply casting the South Siders as rioting hate-mongers in favor of a more critical look. Quantitative analysis, while not being the cure-all that some may wish, is still a vitally important to approach revolutionary history with multitude of methods. Sticking to individuals in telling the story of the Civil Rights Movement ends up repeating the same material in subtly different ways. While the biographies of important men and women in history have their place on the bookshelf, the lives, actions, and movement of the multitude

deserves their own space on that shelf. How historians achieve that task is up to them, but it is imperative to continue using new methods of approaching this evolving field of research.

### **Conclusion**

Histories of politically insurgent movements should focus on the movements themselves as well as the multitudes behind them. In other words, the narrative should focus on the real power of the group rather than the individual at the front. After all, Father Groppi is but one person – he cannot feasibly provide the funding, organizing, and marching on his own. It is clear that the traditional heroic narrative cannot continue to substitute for the revolutionary history of the Civil Rights Era, especially in the city of Milwaukee. Continuing to do so will only successfully produce individual stories while leaving important historical data to gather dust in archives. The story of James Groppi and “his” Commandos has been established – it is time to start filling in the gaps left behind.

In particular, there are questions that cannot be addressed with a biographical narrative. Indeed, one of the more pervasive questions of the Civil Rights Movement – how did these individuals make and spend their money – resists this traditional historical effort. As such, other methods are needed to answer this question. In so doing, a democratized history will be established, providing agency to those left out of the narrative. In the final chapter, quantitative analysis will be used on the financial records of MUSIC – the Milwaukee United School Integration Committee. From these records, important information can be parsed about how movements collected and spent their funds. Combining this quantitative analysis with qualitative research will provide a new

tool with which to interpret the Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee. Further, it will also provide historians a new way to explore the present historiography while asserting Milwaukee's role across the broader temporal, regional, and local scholarship.

## Chapter Three

### The Price of Change

The final chapter of this thesis will focus on Lloyd Barbee's school integration organization, MUSIC, and how it generated income to support a lawsuit challenging segregated schooling in Milwaukee. Through the analysis of fiscal data in the early months of 1966, the breakdown of who donated and in what quantity will help to democratize the Civil Rights narrative by showing that such a movement depended on the multitude to survive and achieve its aims. Breaking down membership rosters will achieve a similar goal in discussing MUSIC as an organization, giving historians a means to give voices to the disparate individuals in the collective rather than putting them under the guise of their heroic leader. The biggest contribution to the historiography, though, lies in beginning to answer the question that has resided on the periphery of the scholarship since earnest discussion began: how did various Civil Rights Movements make their money?

The answer, of course, has been hinted at in other works. Wesley Hogan's *Many Minds, One Heart* centers on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and their attempts to organize peaceful protests in the Jim Crow South. It is also the story of how a movement is born, grows, and ultimately fractures. Despite the ambitious nature of this study, just how SNCC made its money is only tangentially discussed as an important part of this non-profit campaign. More importantly, the most important details – the actual numbers – are lacking. There is a discussion of a well-known community member conducting door-to-door solicitation, but the hard data is not revealed.<sup>69</sup> The presentation

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<sup>69</sup> Wesley Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 59.

of a nationwide fundraising system emphasizes how important donations were to the cause, but the scope of the monetary impact is never discussed with discrete financial data.<sup>70</sup> Leigh Raiford provides a clearer picture of the financial aspects of SNCC by highlighting how the photographs of the movement members could be translated to income: posters of four different photos could be sold for a dollar each while a donation of four dollars translated into a set of five. Further, SNCC produced music records which earned more money for the cause.<sup>71</sup> Of course, such financial analysis is outside the scope of Hogan and Raiford's research, and it is unreasonable to expect anyone to provide a wealth of fiscal data in every historical work. Their contributions to this question of economy are important and do indeed begin fill in gaps in the historiography, the dearth of information overall is disheartening.

One of the biggest issues with this limited engagement with economic matters is that the costs of a grassroots civil rights campaign become nebulous and comfortably distant from the historiography. It also serves to delegitimize the role of donors and volunteers. By dismissing money matters to casual mentions rather than analysis, historians run the risk of turning real people with sympathy to the movement to mere cashboxes. When Wesley Hogan says "Northern students from prominent families had one major benefit: many were idealistic and could bring money, human resources, and national media to the South,"<sup>72</sup> she takes the efforts of volunteers and donors and subordinates it to other subjects of discussion. The implication is obvious: that there is a clear hierarchy of importance, with Northern donors and volunteers below the Southern

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>71</sup> Leigh Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 93.

<sup>72</sup> Hogan, 96.



activists. The answers to the question “Who donated and how much?” can be answered with a simple “People and enough.”

This chapter answers these questions more thoroughly with the intent to begin a new level of engagement in the discussion of revolutionary movements. Lloyd Barbee, originally from the South, rose through the ranks of the NAACP as a skilled protest organizer and lawyer and eventually came to Milwaukee to organize a school integration campaign in 1962.<sup>73</sup> By examining the monetary and demographic aspects of his Milwaukee United School Integration Committee (MUSIC), this thesis will reveal the income and expenses of an organization focused on school integration. Analyzing the information available on this grassroots civil rights campaign will also shed light on just who was donating their time and money to the cause. It will also serve to illuminate the ways that these organizations earned their money, whether through person-to-person solicitation or other means. Such discussion of economy and demographics will also serve to mitigate the effects that the heroic narrative has had on discussing the revolutionary history of Milwaukee and lead to a more democratic understanding of the city’s civil rights campaign. By shining a light on the multitude that supports mass movements through financial commitment, the scope of the conversation widens to accommodate more than just a few heroic figures. Instead of being simple monetary contributors, they become a historical force, providing thrust for those very heroic figures. Although Milwaukee is as different a city as any other, the information discussed in this chapter can be used to place the financial activities of other civil rights campaigns – especially those of similar aims and methods.

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<sup>73</sup> Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 74-77.

## Methodology

For demographic and financial analysis, this report examines excerpts from the Lloyd Barbee papers, located in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives.<sup>74</sup> The data compiled is drawn from various financial records from the first half of 1966, including expense reports as well as income statements. The time period is limited precisely because this is the time period that MUSIC has shifted from direct action to focusing on their lawsuit against Milwaukee. As such, the day-to-day bookwork stops completely by June of 1966. Analyzing this data will provide additional understanding of MUSIC, Lloyd Barbee's grassroots movement to end segregation in Milwaukee schools,<sup>75</sup> especially pertaining to the monetary inflow and its subsequent expenditure. Information pertaining to the mix of gender in MUSIC's volunteers is drawn from the membership rolls of MUSIC from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1966.<sup>76</sup> Analysis of the gender makeup will provide new insight into the internal dynamics of the Civil Rights Movement. The data presented here can also serve to demasculinize the narrative of the Movement, returning women to the discussion as important historical actors.

For donor demographics, donors are counted individually; that is to say that a serial donor will be counted the precise number of instances he or she donated. This is not a regular occurrence, and the overall impact on demographics is mitigated by a large population size of 241 individual donations. The rationale behind this mode of counting lay with the understanding that finances for a long-term movement cannot survive with infusions from an individual only once. Further, that particular someone may not be

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<sup>74</sup> Financial and Membership Papers, 1966, Box 13, Folders 1-5, Lloyd Barbee Papers, Milwaukee Mss16, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department. (*Hereafter cited as Barbee Papers*)

<sup>75</sup> Donation Notebook, 1966 Jan-Jun, Box 13, Folder 2, Barbee Papers.

<sup>76</sup> Leadership and Membership Rosters, 1966 Jan 1, Box 13, Folder 5, Barbee Papers.

financially able to donate all they wish at one point. Out of the 241 donations examined, the influence of the smattering of individuals donating twice is of minimal importance.

Donors are categorized into six main groups: couples, male, female, churches, organizations, and unknown/unspecified. Justification for couples not counting as an individual for both male and female should be logical; in what way can a researcher split up the donation amount and be fair to the couple involved? Is it more justified to lean the bulk to the presumed breadwinner or assume the wife is the greater supporter of equality of the couple? Rather than attempt to ascertain such motives or earning power, couples were given their own heading. Male and female categories rely on their gender, just as the unspecified rely on their more difficult to ascertain sex. Although churches and organizations could thematically be lumped together, organizations are spearheaded by ideology or business rather than an overarching theology, a distinction that should be made clear in any responsible researching. Any party identified as a church leader is included in the statistics for churches, as they are the *de facto* heads of their church and their respective flocks, and are (or rather, ideally are) representative of the majority of their constituents.

### **Donor Inflow<sup>77</sup>**

Over the course of the first months of 1966, MUSIC pulled in enough money from 241 donors to help defray the costs to their movement. The donations received in this time period reach \$4,327.48 from a variety of sources. As MUSIC was specifically designed to end school segregation in the urban environment of Milwaukee, it could be assumed that the transfer of descriptive statistics may clarify the economic makeup of

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<sup>77</sup> Donation Notebook, 1966 Jan-Jun, Box 13, Folder 2, Barbee Papers. Data for the rest of this section is taken from the same source. Mathematical statistics are all derived by the author in accordance to standard functions using Quattro Pro X5 and Microsoft Excel.

donations those groups in similar landscapes with similar goals. The problem with this assumption is that the data is a convenience sample rather than random. As such, major extrapolations of this data onto other groups would be misleading, statistically speaking. That is not to say that there is no benefit to providing descriptive statistics, especially since their cautious use can be illuminating to the financial inner workings of the Civil Rights Movement. Using data from Lloyd Barbee's financial records, the following information is produced:

Table 3.1

Donors	<i>N</i>	Donations USD	Percentage	Mean USD	SEM	SD	Range
Couples	18	296.50	0.0685	16.47	2.83	12.02	45
Male	117	2305.15	0.5327	19.70	1.75	18.92	161
Female	69	643.95	0.1488	9.33	0.69	5.74	28
Organizations	23	668.42	0.1545	29.06	4.71	22.58	96.98
Churches	10	391.46	0.0905	39.15	15.51	49.04	140
Unspecified	4	22.00	0.0051	5.50	2.60	5.20	9
Total	241	4327.48	1.00	17.96	1.27	19.27	164
Adj. Total	237	4305.48	N/A	18.17	1.28	19.74	163

Source: Data adapted from Donation Notebook, 1966 Jan-Jun, Box 13, Folder 2. Lloyd Barbee Papers. Milwaukee, MSS 16: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department. The adjusted total at the bottom is from the removal of the "Unspecified" category from the total.

Proportionally speaking, men were responsible for donating just over half of the total. Women and organizations each contributed approximately 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the \$4,327.48 and churches less than a tenth. In this case, men clearly were the dominant *donating* group at play in MUSIC, with over half of the donations coming from their pockets. The fact that churches provide just under a tenth of the total is, to say the least, a little shocking, until the political and social pressures of the time are taken into consideration. The "couples" category serves history as a possibility: as a single unit, they provide a reminder that had the two been listed as an individual, the weight of the female and male

proportions would have been affected accordingly, such as pushing the female statistic above organizations.

The presence of eighteen distinct outliers skews this data distribution to the right, and their presence reduces the population mean fairly substantially – approximately four dollars. The significance of the outliers lay in the fact that they add a certain degree of randomness to certain groups, as the nine \$50.00, one \$50.40, one \$59.95, three \$60.00, one \$100.00, one \$115.46, one \$145.00, and one \$165.00 donations are within groups where the outliers do not act as such. The lone exceptions are the male donor who gave \$165.00 and the church groups who donated \$115.46 and \$145.00. This means that in the entire data set, without taking the dynamics of the demographics into consideration, only 7.5% could be considered suspicious. Taking the group definitions into consideration, that figure falls to a percentage of 1.2% of the data being outliers. The money contributed by these outliers is 29% of the total; significant enough to understand they are outliers, but still integral to the rest of this analysis.

Using this data cautiously and with the understanding that every part of the Civil Rights Movement encountered different problems, needs, expectations, and benefits, a picture of the fiscal realities begin to take emerge. With a similar campaign of donation solicitation, it is not wholly unreasonable to assume that another school integration campaign could very well expect similar results, with variance depending on the demographics of the region and other factors. Caution must be made in using these results, of course. These statistics are wholly descriptive of the donating group within Milwaukee. Applying these numbers in a blanket fashion to other organizations in other regions as anything other than moderated attempts to understand the fiscal workings is

dangerous: overzealous application of these results will result in conclusions which do not accurately reflect reality.

Further tests will be conducted using this data with one alteration – the monetary contributions from unspecified donations as well as the donors themselves have been dropped for this portion of the analysis, as those measures are statistically insignificant. The first test conducted after running these basic analyses is a difference of means test. Such a test will help to determine whether or not abnormal data is having an effect on the results between two sets of data. If we are to assume that the variances between the male and female donations are unequal due to the fact that it is specifically gender which differentiates the two groups, we derive a p-score<sup>78</sup> of far less than 0.001. On the other hand, comparing organizations to churches – as they theoretically represent larger amounts of people with a secular/religious difference – and assuming that the variances are unequal will yield a p-score of 0.273.

The vast difference between the p-scores is not unusual between data sets of this nature. In particular, due to the small sample size of churches donating (10) and the large standard deviation within that set (49.04), there are too few pieces of data with too great of a difference to accurately derive any significant difference between the means. Males and females, however, have a significantly small enough p-value to show that, essentially, there are enough pieces of data to be statistically significant.

The final test to be conducted is an analysis of variance. Analysis of variance between these groups reveals an r-square of approximately 0.1397, which translates to approximately 13.97% of the data is attributable to donor type. This can be explained in a

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<sup>78</sup> The p-value in this test refers to the probability of getting a more extreme statistic than what was observed. Expressed as a percentage, there is less than a 0.1% chance that any results would be greater than that. As further explained below, this translates to having enough data to be statistically significant.

few ways: for every dollar that is attributable to donor type (male, female, etc.), more than six dollars cannot be explained as being tied directly to their donor category;<sup>79</sup> only 14 cents out of every dollar (or \$13.97 out of every \$100.00) donated is linked to donor type. What this data shows historians is that only 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the money collected is linked to the specific types of donor contributing money and the remaining 6/7<sup>ths</sup> are unexplained by the donor type – in effect, only the first 14 cents come from a specific donor, whereas the rest comes in independent of who is doing the donating.

Essentially, the analysis of variance shows that the link between donor type and the amount of money contributed is not strong enough to imply that the particular type of donor has significant influence over how much money is donated to MUSIC. In other words, something other than the donor type is more of a determining factor in how much money is donated. While the data does not reveal what that particular something is, it does provide some groundwork for future research exploring what it could be. Despite this, however, the data does show precisely where MUSIC's money came from and in what proportion.

What this breaks down to is that the quantitative analysis of this data is important to understanding, at least conceptually, the fiscal aspects of one aspect of the campaign to desegregate Milwaukee schools. Each city will have its own means of acquiring money, probably not all that dissimilar to how MUSIC ran their donation collection. Although the data can not accurately reflect any larger trends in the city and, as such, in other cities across the country, it can provide a basic framework from which to approach that very basic question in history: how did a multitude of people gather funds in an effort to challenge the powers that be?

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<sup>79</sup> 1/7 ~ 14.3%. Rounding our initial calculation up gives us this fraction for ease of explanation.

### **Inflow Breakdown**

The financial ledger sheets do not contain much information regarding the donations listed above, and cross-referencing the data is a time-consuming and potentially impossible task: without names attached to donations and mere numbers in their place, how can one be sure that everything is accounted for or, more importantly, not counted twice? For the purposes of this examination, the assumption is that everything in the notebook detailed above has already been counted and the ledgers contain the same information. Although the final tallies do not match up completely, it is assumed the income sheets contain more information and not just the individual donations. This financial anomaly can be attributed to any number of sources: human error, substantial difficulties in the collection of pledged money, undocumented expenses absorbing small amounts of petty cash, or even white resistance making detailed reports unwise.

The income ledgers themselves are divided into several sections. Individual donations are self-explanatory: those monies collected immediately by check or cash donation. Collections refer to monetary gains received from either past-due or promised contributions. Letters of solicitation are the donations acquired through postal requests – most likely through addresses acquired through earlier donations, sharing between other grassroots organizations, or even a phonebook. Sales, specifically of books, refer to the direct selling of merchandise at a profit. It could be suggested that this category contains books purchased from other sources, such as the NAACP, and resold to interested supporters. It may also contain self-published materials, such as pictures and framed posters, similar to the images that SNCC used to both garner financial support and



become emblematic of the movement itself.<sup>80</sup> Finally, special events for MUSIC are tickets sold for dinners and capital received from fund raisers.<sup>81</sup>

Table 3.2

	January	February	March	April	May	Total
Individuals <sup>82</sup>	191.50	227.78	25.50	199.25	22.00	666.03
Events	2,504.86	1,279.00	40.00	0.00	20.00	3,843.86
Collections	0.00	18.06	37.86	30.05	0.00	85.97
Books	0.00	16.00	100.10	10.95	191.00	318.05
Pledges	0.00	95.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	105.00
Letters	0.00	0.00	0.00	51.00	206.72	257.72
Total	2,696.36	1,635.84	203.46	301.25	439.72	5,276.63
L. Total <sup>83</sup>	2,701.36	1,600.84	N/A	473.36	500.80	5,276.36
Difference	-5.00	35.00	N/A	-172.11	-61.08	0.27

Source: Data adapted from Income Reports, 1966 Jan-May, Box 13, Folder 1. Lloyd Barbee Papers. Milwaukee, MSS 16. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

According to the first set of ledger sheets for each individual month, the grand total earned by MUSIC in this five month time period is \$5,276.63, while the cash receipts received has a total that ends up twenty-seven cents lower than it should. The individual months' listings have an extremely wide range, and the missing ledger information for March is troubling, if not for historical reasons than for inattentive bookkeeping. Be that as it may, by and large the totals seem to correspond fairly accurately by the time financial information stops being recorded. Of further note, while the Income Reports do not bear the same total as the individual donations listing (\$4,327.28), the missing \$949.04 is more than likely accounted for within the month-by-month income listing. It must also be taken into consideration that the donors providing

<sup>80</sup> Raiford, 67-68. Leigh Raiford's work is extremely important in understanding how a group of young activists took control of their image in the face of a hostile media.

<sup>81</sup> Income Reports, 1966 Jan-May, Box 13, Folder 1, Barbee Papers.

<sup>82</sup> Although listed separately in the Income Reports, I have placed donations from a nebulously defined "youth" and churches into the "individual" category in the same month (February). I did the same for a contribution made by a Dave Owens and the Wisconsin Chapter of the ESCRU in April.

<sup>83</sup> Ledger Sheets, 1966 Jan-May., Box 13, Folder 1, Barbee Papers.

money for MUSIC may be classified under different headings than the ones assigned in this analysis.

What kind of insight can be gained from this data? Outside of highlighting events as the most profitable source of income for MUSIC, this data also suggests that momentum was being lost in the first half of 1966. Although donations were starting to trickle upward in April and May, it is entirely apparent that fatigue had an impact on the ability to pull in potential donors. It is surprising to note that April – the month taxes are due – marks the first uptick in the amount of donations MUSIC received after two months of decline.

The fact that events generated so much money, combined with the fact that individual contributions were comparatively small (a ratio of 1.00:0.17) brings up some new ways of interpreting the numbers presented in the donor inflow. A large portion of the individuals listed in the Donation Notebook *must* have done so at the events organized for MUSIC, rather than door-to-door solicitations. In short, most of the money donated was most likely done so in a premeditated fashion. Although this does not eliminate spontaneity in donation behaviors, the disproportionate amount of funds generated outside of these events does suggest that a greater emphasis was placed on attempting to consolidate likely donors rather casting a wide net in the community through the use of feet-on-the-pavement methods.

### **Outflow**

The expense reports of MUSIC offer a similar breakdown as the inflow did by tracking how much money was expended and where it went. The expenses are split up into the following categories: printing, publication, transportation, telephone, stationary,

office supplies, court costs, fund raisers, postage, and books. Of these categories, publication, transportation, and postage carry no entries either through redundancy or lack of need. As with the income sheets, they only stretch through the first half of the year, with the expense reports making it all the way until June of 1966.<sup>84</sup>

The breakdown of these categories is an essential part of understanding just what the pressing financial issues that MUSIC and the campaigns that it spearheaded had to contend with were. First, court costs are the fees that are incurred for having a case heard. Lloyd Barbee had launched a formal lawsuit against the City of Milwaukee on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1965 in an effort to desegregate the schools.<sup>85</sup> The timing of this case is important, as the Warren Court is receptive to desegregation cases, as evidenced by *Brown v. Board* in 1954. By 1966, most demonstrations were being led by the NAACP Youth Council,<sup>86</sup> taking over MUSIC's direct action campaigns so the latter organization could focus on the cost of fighting in the courts. At this point, it is unlikely that court costs are being run up for police responses to direct action protests – the Milwaukee “riot” is still a year away and, as mentioned, the emphasis on protest for MUSIC has taken a back seat to the legal struggle. Printing is a simple matter to explain, as the creation and copying of court documents, record keeping, and solicitations for donations and meetings would be covered under this heading. Tied to this are the headings of stationary – paper products for notes, printing, letters, etc. – and office supplies – mundane equipment for an efficient office. The telephone bills are most likely generated through solicitation over the phone or for organizing meetings.

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<sup>84</sup> Expense Reports, 1966 Jan-Jun, Box 13, Folder 1, Barbee Papers. All data in this section from these expense reports, with mathematic statistics derived from previously acquired data.

<sup>85</sup> Bill Dahlk, *Against the Wind: African Americans and the Schools in Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 98.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 97-98.

Fund raisers are a particularly interesting heading for MUSIC. As mentioned above, fund raisers were a substantial source of income, so it would logically follow that a substantial amount of effort went into making these events a success. As such, while there was very clearly an emphasis on collecting donations through organization members getting money from the community, there is also the financial reality that staging fund raisers would entail. Such activities would entail renting a space, the creation or purchasing of materials to distribute, the creation or purchase of displays, staffing the location, possibly providing support for the volunteers (via a monetary pittance or access to food for instance), and any other costs that may be incurred by the location and staff. Books most likely refer to the purchase of materials to be sold or given in exchange for a set level of income. These books would most likely be acquired through the NAACP. The remaining items – transportation and publication – do not have any listed entries.

Table 3.3

	January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
Printing	125.00	0.00	0.00	65.00	0.00	8.00	198.00
Telephone	16.57	26.60	15.89	60.79	15.08	0.00	134.93
Stationary	20.27	0.00	0.00	3.48	0.00	3.00	26.75
Of. Supplies	0.00	1.25	26.42	3.30	0.00	0.00	30.97
Court Costs	68.75	1,579.21	811.80	6.80	0.00	0.00	2,466.56
Fund Raisers	1,338.96	3.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,342.62
Books	179.23	4.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	184.08
Other	0.00	0.00	257.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	257.80
Postage	0.00	0.00	0.00	73.62	0.00	0.00	73.62
Total	1,748.78	1,615.57	1,111.91	212.99	15.08	11.00	4,715.33
“Profit” <sup>87</sup>	947.58	20.27	-908.45	88.26	424.64	-11.00	561.30

Source: Data adapted from Expense Reports, 1966 Jan-Jun., Box 13, Folder 1. Lloyd Barbee Papers. Milwaukee, MSS 16. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

<sup>87</sup> This number is derived from the subtracting the expenses from the income as they were listed in the income reports.

Simply looking at the table, an interesting picture of fundraising for the Civil Rights Movement begins to take shape. For instance, the largest continual costs are in court costs, taking up over half of the total expenditures. In a campaign focused more on direct action, such as the earlier days of MUSIC or the NAACP Youth Council's future endeavors against housing discrimination, these costs would probably be substantially lower and different in nature – they would more than likely go toward paying bail on arrested agitators. Looking at the January fundraisers, it becomes apparent that they are extremely costly affairs – especially considering that the event and most of its charges were racked up at a Holiday Inn.<sup>88</sup>

It is when these various pieces of data are put into the overall context of the day-to-day functioning of MUSIC that some intriguing information begins to take shape. For instance, when compared to the income sheet, it is apparent that MUSIC eked out a little over one thousand dollars of profit (\$1,165.90). This is almost completely eradicated by the comparatively huge court costs in February. The fundraising event in February is much more successful, probably due to any leftover materials from the January event. It may be suggested that, if the event were held in Father Groppi's church, the fees owed to the hosting location would no longer be an issue.

Unfortunately, there is not enough data to really ascertain the effective cost/benefit ratios of different methods of soliciting donations. The hefty phone bill in April, for instance, could potentially indicate that numerous calls were made to collect money. If this is indeed the case, then perhaps the nearly \$200.00 collected from individuals that month stem from the strained land lines. If that is true, then garnering money from phone contacts is actually more profitable than the fundraising events at a

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<sup>88</sup> Holiday Inn Bill, 1966 Jan, Box 13, Folder 3, Barbee Papers.

ratio of \$3.27 earned for every dollar spent. Fundraisers, on the other hand, produce \$2.86 for every dollar spent. But this speculation is just that: speculation.

In short, the total income through May of 1966, using the available data, comes to a total of \$5,276.63 while total expenditures up to June of 1966 add up to \$4,715.33. This leads to a solid ‘profit’ of \$561.40, and a ratio of income-to-expense of 1:0.89, or a full dollar earned for every eighty-nine cents spent. Most expenses were consumed with court costs, eating up 46.74% of the total income and 52.31% of all the expenses. The court, just as it was monopolizing Lloyd Barbee and Marilyn Morheuser’s time, had the lion’s share of the money pulled into MUSIC. Fund raising events were second, encompassing a solid 25.44% of income and comprising 28.47% of the expenses. Every other expense group takes less than 5% of either income or outflow.

The reality of the financial beating MUSIC took needs to be addressed. Although most months did end in the black, the fiscal reality of the situation is that most money was generated in the initial months of 1966. Further, that money was completely gone by March, with the little money earned that month pushing them above a negative balance by a mere \$59.40. Although the remaining months do not hobble the operation, the amount of money pulled into the organization peters out substantially. This highlights two major facts about the state of Milwaukee’s Civil Rights Movement. The first is linked to the fairly massive amount of money spent on fund raising in January – that there is a high financial barrier placed on larger demonstrations of support. In short, a civil rights campaign – even one as established as MUSIC – had a fairly high “start-up” cost which could potentially be prohibitive to a grassroots campaign. The second fact that

becomes apparent is that momentum is imperative to the Movement. Even as a deluge of money becomes a trickle, the bills do not stop coming in.

So what does this data mean? MUSIC had been operating in earnest since 1964, with 1966 marking the end of a majority of its activity.<sup>89</sup> If these financial records are indicative of a “mature” (or perhaps “dying”) movement, the tactics of collecting money reveal a certain kind of urgency. Rather than relying on a trickle of donations from door-to-door solicitation or the purchase of mail-order materials – as would be the more “traditional” grassroots solution to financial issues, as put forth by Raiford and Hogan – fund raisers are rather garish events that strive to acquire money from supporters in one motion. As the emphasis shifted from direct action to supporting a law suit, it quickly becomes apparent that crowd-sourced funding becomes an all-or-nothing affair. Indeed, the fiscal realities of a law suit may have prompted the events. This would explain the gradual drop off of donations over the course of 1966, as well as the very narrow margin of “profit.” To be sure, as the goals and aims of organized protest become more sophisticated (for example, a human barricade turning into a direct legal challenge of educational segregation), the monetary necessities become more pressing. Taking this a step further, MUSIC’s donation evolution serves as a model for the next stage of protest – a year and a half later, a fundraiser for Father Groppi was held in the weeks leading up to the march across the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct in protest of restrictive housing legislation.<sup>90</sup>

Stepping back from the close analysis of the results, there are several oddities found in these documents that require some extra consideration. One such item from the March expenditure sheet comes from the \$200.00 salary given to an “MM” – this is most

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<sup>89</sup> Dougherty, 104-105.

<sup>90</sup> “\$5000 Raised For Father Groppi,” *The Milwaukee Journal*, August 14, 1967 (Sports and Local News), 1. Available at: <http://www.jsonline.com/historicarchive/search/> (Accessed February 18 2013).

likely referring to the Marilyn Morheuser on the MUSIC Executive Board.<sup>91</sup> In 1966, no other member of MUSIC's board of executives pulled any kind of salary – at least, so expressly. Morheuser was also not just handling aspects of MUSIC's bureaucracy – she also had worked at *The Milwaukee Star*, the city's "leading black weekly newspaper"<sup>92</sup> and was the lead researcher of Barbee's legal team.<sup>93</sup> Clearly, Morheuser's role in MUSIC was important enough to warrant setting aside funds specifically for her, no matter how small the amount. And the classification as "salary" implies that this money is intended as recompense for services she is rendering to MUSIC and not, say, being compensated through purchases made in the name of the organization as June stationary expense for \$3.00 with her initials by it would imply. Coupled with the fact that Lloyd Barbee himself had to focus more on litigation and representation in the State Assembly (to which he had been elected in 1964),<sup>94</sup> it should not come as too much of a surprise that Morheuser drew a salary and oversaw much of MUSIC's day-to-day operations. The dynamic at play is interesting, to say the least, and reveals that there are intriguing gender dynamics in the Milwaukee Civil Rights Movement that need to be discussed. It certainly adds detail to the lamentation of Arlene Johnson, who observed that the Milwaukee movement typically oversaw women going to jail for protesting while men made the decisions.<sup>95</sup>

Another anomaly of note is the phrase "LAB Boycott" listed under March and without significant context. When it is initially listed, it is found in the office supplies

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<sup>91</sup> MUSIC Executive Board Roster, 1966 Jan. 1, Box 13, Folder 5.

<sup>92</sup> Dougherty, 95.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>94</sup> Dahlk, 101.

<sup>95</sup> Dougherty, 109.



heading of expenses and in the same column as MM's salary.<sup>96</sup> Did a local business refuse to serve him when he needed supplies, thus necessitating extra expenditure? By the end of 1966, MUSIC's activity almost ceased entirely;<sup>97</sup> it could be this mysterious boycott had a part to play in the handicapping of MUSIC's ability to protest. Or perhaps it is simpler than that. Maybe Barbee needed extra supplies to organize and mobilize a boycott. Unfortunately, the lack of information does nothing to help provide a clear picture of how much it actually costs to instigate a boycott. After all, one needs printed material for a variety of purposes, a secondary source of product in case the target of the boycott is providing a necessary good, and a marketing campaign (in this era, the telephone/letter mailing) to reach others who may support the cause. Without clarification, it is difficult to ascertain just what is happening.

Another important note relates to a key document which turns up from January to April of 1966. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, a Siekert and Baum Stationary past-due bill is received by MUSIC, containing an unpaid balance of \$393.37.<sup>98</sup> This bill is never mentioned in the expenditure section of the financial data sheet, and the persistence of it through at least four months of the year is interesting.<sup>99</sup> After all, there was enough money at the end of January to pay the bill and yet month after month it appears, demanding the payment in full. Yet, outside of these mailings, there does not seem to be a persistent effort to collect on the rather substantial sum.

Was this a legitimate bill? One that Lloyd Barbee had neglected, either accidentally or purposefully, because felt that other financial obligations were more

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<sup>96</sup> Expense Reports, 1966 Mar, Box 13, Folder 1, Barbee Papers.

<sup>97</sup> Dougherty, 105.

<sup>98</sup> Siekert and Baum Stationary Past-Due Citation, 1966 Jan, Box 13, Folder 3, Barbee Papers.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 1966 Feb-Apr.

important? This seems unlikely, as financial data proves that there was little excuse for the willful avoidance of this bill. It is possible that Siekert and Baum had simply misplaced the payment, and Lloyd Barbee refused to double up; certainly a strong possibility, and clearly one which gives the benefit of the doubt to both sides. Another, admittedly rather dark possibility, is that someone at the firm meant to resist MUSIC's goals through financial harassment. Another take on this is that, to avoid direct association with (and thus, tacit support of) MUSIC and Lloyd Barbee, Siekert and Baum "sold" supplies, made token attempts to collect, and then dropped the matter. The same confrontational attitude that may have made disenfranchised black men flock to MUSIC's support<sup>100</sup> may have made outright or implicit advocacy of Lloyd Barbee's activities difficult for some of the more entrenched businesses in Milwaukee. This is not to imply that these are the only possibilities, but considering the era, they should be taken into consideration.

### **Donor Demographics<sup>101</sup>**

In terms of demographic makeup, it becomes necessary to initially turn to the original data set of 241 donors. Although hardly *the* definitive source of information on the Civil Rights Era, it nonetheless contains important information regarding who donated and in what volume. As Milwaukee is as much a unique city as any other in the United States, rush judgments using this information are not recommended in favor of only extrapolating this information onto cities of similar size, demographic distribution,

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<sup>100</sup> Dougherty, 127.

<sup>101</sup> Donation Notebook, 1966 Jan-Jun, Box 13, Folder 2, Barbee Papers. All donor demographic information is drawn through the information compiled from this notebook. Further statistical information is drawn from previously compiled data.

population density, and economic status. The following table is a statistical breakdown of donor demographics:

Table 3.4

Donors	Number	Percentage
Couples	18	0.0747
Male	117	0.4855
Female	69	0.2863
Organizations	23	0.0954
Churches	10	0.0415
Unknown	4	0.0166
Total	241	1.00

Source: Data adapted from Financial Notebook, 1966 Jan-Jun, Box 13, Folder 2. Lloyd Barbee Papers. Milwaukee, MSS 16. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

Men dominate the field of donation demographics and monetary contributions.

The reason is astoundingly simple: these donations were made in 1966. Traditionally, men simply had more earning power than women at this stage in history, in no small part thanks to the backlash against World War II- and post-war era female gains in the workplace.<sup>102</sup> In a given “traditionally minded” household, men were typically the primary income earners, and any money the wife brought home would be supplementary or completely under his control. In these types of households, any money donated would also most likely be done under the husband’s name. This is not to downplay any significance of female supports of MUSIC by any stretch of the imagination; if anything, it is simply suggesting the power of the national anti-feminist backlash and, as such, they did not have the financial means to support donating to such a movement. This would not serve to undermine a woman’s ability to make use of other means of support – collecting donations, running the bureaucracy of the movement, organizing meetings, etc. Despite

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<sup>102</sup> Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), 68.

any potential fiscal insecurity, the fact that women make up nearly a third of donors shows a social consciousness that would inform the Women's Liberation Movement.

If one desires, the statistics on couples can also be viewed as a primarily female endeavor. In most cases (94%), the donation information for couples also includes their addresses. This can lead to arguments for their inclusion under the 'female' category. It seems unlikely that in cases where the address is included that the money would be in cash, as checks would make more sense for donations. Since married couples could potentially have joint bank accounts, both names and addresses would be present on the checks – again, this is just a possibility. When it comes to the organization of volunteer groups for MUSIC, it shall become apparent that there is a much closer ratio of women to men; therefore, an argument can be made that women were the driving force behind such 'coupled' donations. Rather than assume such information, as without access to the checks themselves there is no real way to affirm or deny such implications, this study merely offers one interpretation of the data. Another way to read this data is essentially the opposite, wherein males were the actual driving force behind the couple donations, as it can be realistically assumed that it was "their" money which ended up in the hands of MUSIC. But such things are beyond the scope of such statistical analysis.

What could be considered alarming is the disparity between secular institutions and religiously affiliated organizations. Donating secular organizations were double that of churches, and were in a position to contribute more money. However, churches appear to be statistically more likely to have donated more money than secular institutions. This logic can be somewhat difficult to digest in a contemporary setting. After all, Father James Groppi of MUSIC/the NAACP Youth Council and Reverend Martin Luther King,

Jr. were both religiously representative men and highly visible during the Civil Rights Movement. From Patrick Jones's insistence that the Milwaukee movement was church-based<sup>103</sup> to the standard religious narrative of the Southern struggle as emphasized by Hogan's *Many Minds, One Heart*,<sup>104</sup> the data may not radically alter perceptions of religion's role in the Civil Rights Movement, but it does call such assumptions into question. At the very least, it is somewhat disheartening to know that in terms of raw data, churches do not live up to the financial contributions of other groups. It is safe to say that some churches, such as Father Groppi's St. Boniface, made up for any lack of monetary commitment through the use of their basements as places to organize.

The same logic that applied to the methodology of counting the data leads back to a rationale as to why churches did not donate more. Churches are organizations which represent a diverse array of the community, sometimes crossing socioeconomic bounds and encompassing a variety of political and societal viewpoints. A particularly vivid example of this phenomenon is Father Russell Whiton, a Catholic Priest who actively counter-protested the NAACP Youth Council's open housing demonstrations.<sup>105</sup> Outside of the leadership, people wishing to donate had to consider their parish before contributing to MUSIC, taking into account whether or not a call for a school boycott was a benefit to the community, if donations would spark white retaliation, or even if agitation for civil rights was something the whole parish would support.

Organizations, such as the ACLU and local bars, have the benefit of having either a stated civil rights agenda or, more importantly, certain protections granted by nature of

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<sup>103</sup>Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 7.

<sup>104</sup> Hogan, 35-36.

<sup>105</sup> Jones, 229.

being privately owned institutions. Although a place of business could possibly become the target of boycotts or people quitting out of protest, there is the very real fact that many people *need* jobs. As such, employers have certain freedoms regarding their spending habits that may go ignored or grudgingly accepted by their workforce. “As long as the checks don’t bounce” applies aptly here. People can always leave a church to find one better suited for their lifestyle choices or beliefs, the same reason which may prevent a church leader from openly supporting an incendiary topic. Organizations which employ members of the community have the protection of knowing that jobs are not always plentiful, and it is usually better to keep employment than to quit for political reasons.

### **Donating Organizations**

There are a few key organizations that stand out as worthy for discussion. Naturally, the ACLU and NAACP of West Allis contributed \$50.00 and \$10.00 for books, respectively. A group identified as the ADA purchased five tickets for a fundraiser, contributing a total of \$50.00. The Steelworkers Legal Fund donated \$60.00, providing insight into the relationship between race and labor that, as Stephen Meyer points out, was certainly not positive a few decades earlier (at least in nearby community of West Allis).<sup>106</sup> A few housing organizations, such as Longwood Garden Apartments and Percy and Shward Realty, contributed to MUSIC. What is particularly interesting about this is MUSIC’s stated goal of integrating school has little to do with housing – perhaps this is what would compel these organizations to donate to Lloyd Barbee. The Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom donated \$20.00 to the cause, a number matched by The Harry W. Schwartz Bookstore (now Boswell Books on North Downer Avenue).

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<sup>106</sup> Stephen Meyer, *Stalin Over Wisconsin* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 124.

Social organizations also represent a fair number of donors. Delta Sigma Theta, a sorority founded at Howard University, donated \$50.40. Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first Greek sorority for African Americans, donated \$16.00. Omega Psi Phi, founded at Howard University in 1911 with biologist Ernest Everett Just as their faculty advisor,<sup>107</sup> donated \$20.00. As MUSIC's aim was to desegregate the Milwaukee school system, it should come as no surprise that black fraternities and sororities such as these would be willing to donate to the cause. The Badger State Lodge, a part of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and a global fraternal organization, donated \$100.00 to MUSIC. Their contribution operates as a bridge between organizations and churches – although technically a religious organization, the lack of emphasis on a specific denomination marks them as more of a beneficent social club than church.

### **Leadership and Membership Demographics**

The leadership of MUSIC consists of 15 members. Eight of the 15 are male and seven are female, making for an almost even-split amongst them (although the exact statistic is 0.53:0.47).<sup>108</sup> Given the demographic data of the donors, this information comes as surprising. However, the very reason why female donors were unable to contribute larger sums of money and in larger numbers is the perhaps the rationale behind why they make up a more significant portion of the leadership. That is to say women, free from the role of “primary breadwinner,” are able to contribute something more insubstantial than money: time.

The official membership roster for January of 1966 consists of seven pages, totaling 157 individuals. Of those listed, 77 are women and 80 are men, keeping a very

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<sup>107</sup> Kenneth R. Manning, *Black Apollo of Science: The Life of Ernest Everett Just* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 40-41.

<sup>108</sup> MUSIC Executive Board Roster, 1966 Jan 1, Box 13, Folder 5. Barbee Papers.

similar proportion of male-to-female as first discovered in the leadership of MUSIC.<sup>109</sup>

The actual proportion is 0.51:0.49, much closer to an absolutely even distribution.

In both cases of demographics, there are a significant number of church officials. For the leadership, two members are religiously affiliated, including Father Groppi. This is representative of 13% of the total leadership of MUSIC. In terms of the overall membership, 10 are the heads of various churches. This makes up for a total percentage of 15.7%. The inclusion of this information is of importance to understanding how much of a role women played in leadership and membership. Church leaders are typically active members of the community, as their occupations already entail a fairly dedicated effort to maintain community relationships. As such, one could view their role in this movement as unique compared to the typical “breadwinner” male. Although they have obligations, they are more flexible in their abilities to respond to MUSIC’s needs within the community, whatever they may be. The same can be said about women in this time period: although they have significant obligations, they do not (or are not perceived to) have the same ‘responsibilities’ as a head-of-household male.

This is not to imply that religious affiliation renders these leaders gender-less. It is to merely allow into the discussion that responsibilities can differ among the same gender, creating an understanding that women played a greater role in the various civil rights movements because of stereotypical gender roles being assigned to them.

### **Demographics Conclusions**

In terms of donations, males clearly lead in raw numbers. Due to the time frame in question, it isn’t difficult to understand why. Men have the greater amount of financial freedom despite the growing pushback from growing feminist movements. Leadership

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<sup>109</sup> MUSIC Membership Roster, 1966 Jan 1, Box 13, Folder 5. Barbee Papers.



and membership rosters show that females and males share an almost equal burden of running and assisting with MUSIC, a pattern which is no doubt similar in other movements around the country at this time.

While these statistics are relatively clear-cut and not subject to a great degree of varying interpretations, they do offer some compelling information. An interesting question that arises is that if leadership and membership are so close in gender proportion, why are the major moments of the movement dominated by male images? As suggested by the previous chapter, there was at least one female figure in the Milwaukee movement who could have made for a compelling figurehead. Despite this fact (and the information above), typical pictures from the movement focus on young males leading marches and seem to be less interested in representing females. One suggestion offered is that the movement's detractors may use the image of black men, already stigmatized in this time period, to galvanize white resistance against various civil rights activists. If that is the case, then the reverse is also possible: that those sympathetic to the movements will be driven to support, with donations or otherwise, upon seeing the images of the oppressed marching and fighting for their rights.

### **Conclusion**

The Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee, typically characterized by the towering public figure of Father Groppi of the day, was made up of more than just men marching and the rhetorical skills of their leaders. Men *and* women were key components of this and, indeed, every movement, donating capital and time in an effort to bridge the gap between the promises of the United States Constitution and reality. And while men were fundamentally more able to donate their wealth to the cause, both genders rallied

almost equally when it came to organizing and leading movements like MUSIC, and a woman was the only member of MUSIC's executive board to obtain a salary. The importance of women cannot be understated here: victory was just as much contingent on their presence as men.

Churches and organizations played a large role in the funding of such movements. There is no question that a movement organized by a group such as MUSIC, one which is dedicated to social change on a grand scale, makes itself and those who visibly support the campaign targets of suspicion, ridicule, and attack. Although more individual organizations donated, churches donated in larger amounts, contributing almost a third of the operating funds to the cause. Churches and secular organizations put their livelihood and security on the line when it came time to backing up what they felt was right. Father Groppi, a key figure in both the Catholic Church and MUSIC, received hate mail<sup>110</sup> on top of orders from the church to remove himself from what he believed was right.<sup>111</sup> Although there are no specific archival folders dedicated to hate mail aimed at Barbee, the idea that he was somehow immune to receiving such written castigations is, at best, naïve. The Civil Rights Movement was highly visible, controversial, and called upon its supporters to provide what they could to the cause.

The information presented here is not the final word on the matter. Disparate movements call for different resources and expenditure of said resources. Surely SNCC's monetary issues ran into different problems than MUSIC's. And then, of course, there is the question of counter-movements. Although certainly some anti-civil rights agendas

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<sup>110</sup> Anonymous Letter to James Groppi, 1965 Oct 19, Box 5, Folder 6, Groppi Papers, Boxes 5-7, Correspondence, Criticism Mail, 1965-1967 (selections). Naturally, the more odious an opinion, the more likely someone opts to hide behind anonymity.

<sup>111</sup> Austin C. Wehrwein, "Second Milwaukee Priest Told to Quit Public School Boycott," *The New York Times*, Oct 21, 1965, 30.

can be gleaned through the financial stresses encountered by MUSIC and others, it will take fully transparent access to the documents of white supremacist organizations to fully understand the fiscal efforts to destroy the Civil Rights Movement and retain the status quo.

This chapter affords at least one strong, undeniable conclusion through the use of monetary and demographic analysis: that the Civil Rights Movement cannot be pictured as the faceless being led by a singular charismatic individual. The heroic narrative no longer satisfies the needs of understanding the past, as the agency of individuals is ranked secondary to those that historians and the media deem as leaders. Milwaukee's schools could not be desegregated through the actions of a lone individual – rather, the multitude needed to rally support for justice, providing support through volunteer work or monetary donations. This understanding can be applied to future endeavors in the Civil Rights Movement, continuing trends of democratizing literature that has too long been co-opted by biographies instead of the critical analyses that turn the era into a series of disconnected, unchallengeable sound bites.

## Conclusion

In the introduction of the second edition of *City with a Chance*, Father Matthew Gottschalk reminisces about the tumultuous 1960's in Milwaukee and rightly praises Aukofer for the work he had contributed to history. He spends a few paragraphs establishing Aukofer's pivotal role in how Milwaukeeans interpreted these events; surely the sarcastic quotes Gottschalk places around the word "riot" is indicative the results of such an interpretation that Aukofer inspired.<sup>1</sup> One of the most important aspects of reissuing of the civil rights reporter's book, Gottschalk says, is that it is a "check on memory. We tend to romanticize the past: exaggerate its problems and idealize its accomplishments. We canonize its saints and demonize its villains."<sup>2</sup>

And yet, in his lauding of Aukofer, he has simply replaced one heroic narrative for another: in this case, Aukofer for James Groppi. Gottschalk focuses on the vicarious thrill of the marches and demonstrations, but does not discuss the members of the movement. The men and women are consolidated into the Congress of Racial Equality, MUSIC, and the NAACP, but the makeup of these groups and the struggles those individuals faced are lost because of the difficulty in discussing the multitude.

History and historians are becoming more adept and capable of surmounting the hurdles of movement literature. The struggle to place the movement into a distinct temporal framework is the sign of the historiography's maturation. The regional narratives, articulating the themes of politics, economics, labor, and movement, all struggle to make sense of our past while finding the unique strands that make their Civil Rights Movement unique. And the local narratives, in particular Milwaukee, have set the

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<sup>1</sup> Frank A. Aukofer, *City with a Chance*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2007), 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 10.

stage for future endeavors with its four canonical books, covering the two major city-wide movements: education reform and open housing.

But too often, the historian ends up relying on the heroic narrative to tell the story of millions of people. Partially due to the fact that the visible leaders leave behind so much information and typical media fixation, it is often incredibly difficult to discuss movements, revolutions, and organizations in a way that does not rely on fixating on a single actor. As such, alternative means of approaching history can allow scholars to peel back the layers of a movement. Quantitative analysis, as long as it is used cautiously, can be one of the ways historians provide a voice for those who did not leave a written record. Analyzing traditional sources through a cultural lens also helps to democratize history, restoring agency to the multitude long since given over to charismatic individuals.

In Milwaukee's case, quantitative analysis of Lloyd Barbee's financial and membership records allow for an unprecedented view of a grassroots civil rights campaign. Outside of the familiar faces of Father Groppi and Barbee, we now have a glimpse into the organizations inner workings. The demographics of the movement place women in almost roughly the same proportion of men, providing an altogether different answer to Patrick Jones's question of how the movement was gendered.<sup>3</sup> Analysis of the contributions, too, provide new light on how a movement made its money and, once obtained, what ended up absorbing most of those assets. Some facts reinforce ideas we already had – men had more purchasing power – but some upset some of our other notions – such as churches being a primary source of support for civil rights campaigns.

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<sup>3</sup> Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 244-247.

This thesis is not the final word on the Milwaukee movement. To claim otherwise would be hubris. Rather, it is another contribution to the growing literature on Milwaukee's terrible relationship with race. Though there is a good chance this work will only be seen by other scholars, it is my hope that the data provided here gives some inspiration to continue the discussion on a wider scale – with friends, family, students, and others. History needs a vocal community to support it and make meaning out of what can often be construed as meaningless.

But further, Milwaukee needs a vocal community to remind others that the violence of the past has not quite gone away. Racism and segregation are still very much a part of the everyday existence of the city. The deaths of Daniel Bell in 1958 and Clifford McKissick in 1967 at the hands of Milwaukee police seem to play out with alarming frequency in modern Milwaukee. Yet, journalists fail to do what they should and admit what is plainly evident to anyone with eyes: that Milwaukee has a problem.

In the new afterword of *City with a Chance*, Aukofer closes with an anecdote about the title. His publisher originally wanted a “more provocative” title, yet the reporter refused to budge as he remained optimistic. “I remain [an optimist],” he writes in the final line. “But there is cause for pessimism as well.”<sup>4</sup>

If we cannot reconcile our racial past with our present, optimism will be a luxury for those who refuse to open their eyes.

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<sup>4</sup> Aukofer, 198.

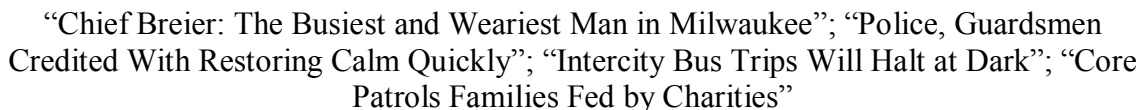
## ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 2.1



Clipping from *The Milwaukee Journal* Containing a Photo of Groppi in Breier's Office  
(May 11, 1967)

Clippings – Scrapbooks Circa 1967, Box 17, Folder 2, James Groppi Papers, Milwaukee  
Mss EX, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.



*The Milwaukee Journal*, August 1, 1967, Page 4.



Figure 2.3



## “Riot Warnings Heard Again”

*The Milwaukee Journal*, May 11, 1967, Latest Edition (Sports and Local News).

Available at: <http://www.jsonline.com/historicarchive/search/> (accessed January 14, 2013).

Figure 2.4



“Maier Lists 39 Point Foundation for Bias Fight”; “March and Prayer Protest Death”; “VISTA to Recruit at Racine, Waukesha”; “Worker Killed in 28 Foot Fall”; “Storms Batter Illinois, Iowa”

*The Milwaukee Journal*, August 7, 1967 (Sports and Local News), 1.

Available at: <http://www.jsonline.com/historicarchive/search/> (Accessed January 14, 2012)

Figure 2.5



Clipping from *The Milwaukee Journal* of Clifford McKissick's Funeral (August 8, 1967)

Clippings – Scrapbooks Circa 1967, Box 17, Folder 3, James Groppi Papers, Milwaukee  
Mss EX, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

Figure 2.6



Clipping from *The Milwaukee Journal* of Groppi, Phillips and Egon at Fundraiser  
(August 14, 1967)

Clippings – Scrapbooks Circa 1967, Box 17, Folder 1, James Groppi Papers, Milwaukee  
Mss EX, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

## GLOSSARY

**Analysis of Variance.** A test used to determine how much of a data set is determined by known versus unknown factors.

**Mean.** The statistical measurement commonly referred to as the average. Found by adding all data in the set and dividing by the number of individual units.

**Median.** Used to determine outliers, the median is the instance of data that is found in the middle of a set. In a set of nine units, the fifth piece of data is the median.

**Outlier.** Any datum which is excessively large or small in comparison to other data in the set, potentially skewing statistical analysis of the set away from a more accurate reading, is an outlier. Outliers are found by dividing the data into quartiles, subtracting the third from the first quartile, then multiplying the result by three. Any data lying in excess of the number added to the median or less than that number subtracted from it are considered outliers, and, at the discretion of the mathematician, may be discarded.

**P-value.** The results of a difference of means test which indicate whether there are enough pieces of data within two sets to be statistically significant.

**Range.** The range is found by finding the difference between the largest and smallest unit in a set of data.

**Standard Deviation.** The statistical unit which gives a typical difference between two data points in the set.

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