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## **Harmony in Discord: Unravelling the Radical Flank Effect in the US Civil Rights Movement**

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US Civil Rights Movement**

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# 1. Introduction

Since the arrival of the Europeans, racism has persisted throughout the United States of America due to the triangular trade of slaves from Africa and the marginalisation of the indigenous population (Feagin & Ducey, 2019, pp. 2-3). Whilst the Founding Fathers stated “all men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence (US, 1776), this did not include people of colour. Slavery served as an economic and political benefit for the white European settlers (Feagin & Ducey, 2019, p. 3). African enslaved labour allowed the economy to flourish (p. 3). Given that white elites controlled the political system, the concerns of the African Americans and the indigenous population were deemed marginal compared to the power and profits it provided to white individuals (p. 3). Racial progress was established in the 1960s due to the Civil War which led to the abolition of slavery (p. 26). However, no official amendments were made to the Constitution that would include all Americans (pp. 4-5). Racial segregation and oppression were strongly enforced due to the Jim Crow laws until the US Civil Rights Movement (CRM) (p. 32). The CRM marked a pivotal event in the advancement of racial equality, as it challenged previously accepted racist practices (Ware, 2013). Especially notable is the fact that it led to legal advances such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (pp. 1091-1094). Therefore, this thesis will focus on how the success of the CRM came to be.

Research within the field of social movements has examined the impact of peaceful and violent tactics. On the one hand, certain movements, such as the Serbian Otpor movement, opted for a peaceful path to guarantee success (Nikolayenko, 2012). On the other hand, movements such as the Italian Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse), used violence to achieve change (Sundquist, 2010; Tarantelli, 2010). However, due to differing objectives, strategic orientations, and the desire to employ different tactics, movements are rarely completely unified and aligned (Gupta, 2007). Instead, movements often experience fragmentation, which in turn influences the movement’s operation and outcome (Zald & Ash, 1966).

Theories such as the radical flank effect (RFE) tackle the issue of fragmentation within social movements (Haines, 2013). The RFE theory examines the influence that extreme actors have on the ability and the legitimacy of more moderate actors within the same movement to pursue and achieve their goals (Gupta, 2002, p. 5; Haines, 2013, p. 1048). The propensity of the RFE can go two ways: positive or negative (Gupta, 2002; Haines, 2013; McAdam, 1982). A positive RFE signifies that the actions and/or existence of the radical group benefit the moderate activists

(Haines, 2013, p. 1049). Conversely, a negative RFE means that the moderates and the movement as a whole experience backlash due to the actions of more extreme actors (p. 1048). However, there is limited research on the conditions responsible for the propensity of the RFE (Gupta, 2002, p. 8). Due to underdeveloped research, this thesis is academically relevant as it aims to explain the internal mechanism responsible for the existence of an RFE within a social movement. Additionally, this paper yields societal relevance as it aims to enhance understanding of one of the most transformative movements in American history. It will also aid scholars in comprehending current activism and potentially advance policy-making on police brutality, economic inequality, and voting rights. For these reasons, this thesis will examine the causality of the RFE. Thus, the following research question arises: *Under what conditions is the radical flank effect positive?*

The CRM was used as the original case to provide evidence of the RFE (Haines, 1984). Moreover, the movement proved to be successful and many scholars have found evidence that established the presence of a positive RFE (Haines, 1984). By using Gupta's (2002) variables, this thesis expects to identify the conditions that led to a positive RFE in the CRM. Hence, this research paper will be structured as follows: First, Haines' (1984) and Gupta's (2002) theories will be introduced and explained. Second, after having understood the difference between a positive and negative RFE and Gupta's (2002) five factors, the theories will be applied to the case of the CRM. As this thesis will conduct pattern matching, Gupta's (2002) variables will be used to construct an expected pattern. The expected pattern will later be compared to the observed pattern established during the analysis to see if they match. To conduct the analysis, primary and secondary data will be examined to examine the RFE during the US CRM.

## **2. Literature Review**

Freeman (1975) first established the concept of 'radical flank' when analysing the US women's movement. Haines (1984) built on Freeman's (1975) findings and coined the term 'radical flank effect' when analysing the US CRM. Gupta (2002, 2007) has since made advances to explore the causal mechanism behind the RFE. Ellefsen (2018) added to Gupta's (2002) by differentiating between short and long-term progress within social movements. Thus far, most research on RFE theory has been conducted through qualitative research (Chenoweth & Shock, 2015). Attempts have been made to analyse the RFE through quantitative analysis, though that has proven challenging (Chenoweth & Stephen, 2011).

Although many scholars have made advances in social movement research, the effect of factionalism on social movements requires further attention (Haines, 2013, p. 1049). Although the RFE theory has gained popularity over the years, research is still limited (Gupta, 2002, p. 2). Certain aspects, such as the existence of positive and negative RFEs, have largely been explored (p. 2). However, other areas within RFE theory still require further investigation (Ellefsen, 2018, p. 111; Gupta, 2002, pp. 2-3). Research has thus far rewarded little attention to the relationship between moderate and radical groups within a movement (Ellefsen, 2018). In particular, research has often neglected the conditions under which particular RFEs occur (Ellefsen, 2018, pp. 111-113; Gupta, 2002, pp. 2-3). Thus, this concern of the internal causal mechanism will be addressed in this paper. It is for these reasons that this research paper aims to further research on RFEs by identifying under what conditions an RFE is positive.

Moreover, the theory that will be tested in this paper is designed to predict the causality of the RFE (Gupta, 2002). Gupta's (2002) theory on RFE causality has been selected as she has made the largest strides in this field of research (Ellefsen, 2018). Ellefsen's (2018) advances on Gupta's (2002) theory will not be examined in this paper, as the short-term RFEs that he identifies will be taken into account as advances and retrogressions made by the moderate and radical flank. Gupta's (2002) theory is being tested as doubt persists about the generalisability and external validity of the theory (Chenoweth & Shock, 2015). If it proves to be significant it will counter these concerns and criticisms. Conversely, if Gupta's theory fails to explain the original case, further research will need to be conducted. Thus, the following research question arises:

*Under what conditions is the radical flank effect positive?*

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

#### **3.1. Theory**

During a social movement, as activists experience a decline in support, they will follow different paths resulting in the fragmentation of the movement (Gupta, 2002, p. 5). Some will take on a consensus-oriented attitude to retain mass support and achieve more modest goals (Gupta, 2002, p. 5; Hoffmann & Bertels, 2009, p. 17). The radicals contrast moderates, as they will adopt a conflict-oriented mindset and thus turn to more extreme tactics (Tarrow, 1998, pp. 147-148). For example, the moderate flank could opt for nonviolent means including peaceful protests and petitions which carry lower risks and costs and can thus engage a broader audience.

Conversely, radicals may decide on violent tactics, such as guerillas to gather the support of militant activists. It is important to note, that these groups will continue to advocate simultaneously for change, by pursuing different tactics, thus influencing the movement and each other (Gupta, 2002, p. 5; Haines, 2013, p. 1048, Hoffmann & Bertels, 2009, p. 18).

The RFE encompasses the influence that extreme actors have on the ability and legitimacy of more moderate actors within the same movement to pursue and achieve their goals (Gupta, 2002, p. 5; Haines, 2013, p. 1048, Hoffmann & Bertels, 2009, p. 18). The RFE can be either positive or negative (Hoffmann & Bertels, 2009, p. 18, McAdam, 1982). On the one hand, a positive RFE can be identified if the actions or even the mere existence of the radical group benefits the moderate activists (Haines, 2013, p. 1049). On the other hand, a negative RFE can be observed when the actions of more extreme actors harm the ability of more moderate activists and damage the legitimacy of the social movement (Haines, 2013, p. 1048). However, this research paper will focus on the former as a positive RFE has been identified in the case selected for this paper.

Gupta (2002) has highlighted five broad variables that have proven influential in the analysis of RFE theory. By observing all of these five variables, it is possible to analyse the presence and propensity of the RFE in a social movement (p. 8). Gupta's (2002) five variables are the presence of fragmentation (1), external actors' recognition of said fragmentation (2), the moderates' ability to distinguish themselves from the radical group (3), the vulnerability of external actors (4) and the costliness of their actions (5). The first two variables focus on the presence of background conditions necessary to create an environment in which the RFE can thrive (p. 8). To determine the propensity of the RFE, it is crucial to observe the last three variables (p. 8). Therefore, using these variables will allow the specific factors that led to a positive RFE to be highlighted.

### **3.1.1. Necessary conditions for the existence of the RFE**

First, a certain level of fragmentation is required (Gupta, 2002, p. 8). In the absence of rival groups with "varied interests, ideologies, goals and tactics" (p. 8), a single organisation can directly engage in negotiation discussions with external actors (Tarrow, 1998). For this thesis, external actors can be understood as corporations, elites and political institutions. Moreover, without competing groups, external actors are stripped of the choice of providing selective rewards, which in turn eliminates a strategic element of the RFE (Gupta, 2002, pp. 8-9; Tarrow,



1998). Hence, the presence of fragmentation is required to establish an RFE (Gupta, 2002, p. 8).

The second variable is the recognition of fragmentation (p. 9). It is vital that external actors acknowledge the existence of fragmentation within the movement by distinguishing certain activists as moderates and others as radicals (Gupta, 2002, p. 9; Ellefsen, 2018, p. 113). The course of distinguishing between moderates and radicals is both a relational and cognitive process (Gupta, 2002, p. 9). It is relational because each group requires the existence of the other to be able to be contrasted (p. 9). Simultaneously, it is cognitive, as the differentiation between both groups relies on the perception of external actors (Güell, 1994; Gupta, 2002, p. 9; McAdam et al., 1996; Snow, et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988). If groups are perceived to be employing similar tactics and align ideologically, external actors may dismiss the distinction and classify them under the umbrella term of the movement, thus eradicating the RFE (Gupta, 2002, p. 9).

### **3.1.2. Variables on the propensity of the RFE**

The third variable investigates whether the moderates showcase the ability and willingness to clearly distinguish themselves from the radical groups (Gupta, 2002, p. 9). Moderate activists will weigh the benefits and costs of distancing themselves from the radicals (p. 10). Moderates could separate themselves by publicly condemning the actions of the radicals or by opting to “work within established, institutionalised channels of interest representation” (p. 10). However, moderates can become increasingly hesitant to signal their differences from the radicals due to the risk of losing support for the entire movement (p. 10). If the moderates express the will to be considered as a separate unit from the radical flank, external actors will later judge how clear these signals are, and react accordingly (p. 9). If the moderate flank fails to signal its opposition clearly, external actors may use this to their advantage in order to connotate the moderates to the actions of the radicals, thus resulting in a negative RFE (p. 9). If the moderates condemn the actions of the radicals and promote their consensus-oriented approach, this will allow them to facilitate alliances with external actors, which would point towards a positive RFE (p. 9). Therefore, as the signals will vary in costliness and strength, it could affect RFE outcomes (p. 10).

The fourth variable is the vulnerability of external actors (p. 11). External actors can be understood as the government, elites and corporations (p. 11). As variations in the political environment occur, this will alter the stability of external actors, especially the government (p.

11). The relative strength of the different groups will then change in relation to one another, which will in turn affect their strategies (p. 11). Consequently, external actors will be pushed to reevaluate their position and revise the costs and benefits of offering selective rewards to moderate actors (p. 11). A state prefers not to make any concessions, as they are costly (p. 11). However, if the government feels cornered to do so, it will work with the moderates, rather than the radicals, to strengthen its position (p. 11). If a state feels confident, it can control the situation by exerting repressive force, its bargaining range will decrease (p. 11). If the government lacks the power to counter the movement successfully or finds the cost of doing so too high, it will weigh the costs and benefits of selective rewards to moderates (Tarrow, 1998; Przeworski, 1991). Moreover, if elites or corporations find themselves in a stable position, they may be less encouraged to aid any group as it is costly to them (Gupta, 2002, p. 11). Conversely, if elites or corporations find themselves in a vulnerable state, they may be more willing to establish a relationship with moderates to further their social and political position and thus strengthen their legitimacy (pp. 11-12).

Lastly, one must take the costliness of the proposed concessions to the moderates into account when analysing the RFE (Gupta, 2002, p. 11). It is important to note, that external actors will avoid any kind of concession if they can (p. 11). However, if they are pushed to concede, the costs of their actions will have both direct and indirect consequences on the external actors (p. 11). Direct costs can take the form of financial burdens resulting from provided support or aid (p. 12). Providing rewards to the moderates can entail policy and budgetary alterations, which diverts resources from projects external actors previously aimed to invest in (p. 12). Moreover, indirect costs cannot be overlooked (p. 12). By backing a moderate group, external actors are risking their constituency's support (p. 12). As the costs of providing these benefits to moderate actors change, so will the choices of the external actors (p. 12). On the one hand, if the costs increase, external actors may be less motivated to reward the moderates with selective benefits (p. 12). On the other hand, if the costs decrease, the moderates will feel more encouraged to voice their interest in cooperating with external actors (p. 12).

Thus, the hypothesis is as follows:

*H<sub>1</sub>: The combination of Gupta's five variables lead to a positive radical flank effect.*

In terms of the US CRM, the moderate group selected to be analysed is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), because it is the oldest and largest of the civil rights organisations known for its non-violent and lawful approach (Ware, 2013, p. 1088).

The radical group that will be examined throughout this thesis is the Black Panther Party (BPP) due to its militant tactics (Hall, 2007). Thus, the five variables will be examined in relation to the NAACP, the moderates, and the BPP, the radicals, to illustrate how they lead to a positive RFE for the US CRM.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Method of analysis**

Most scholars researching RFE theory have chosen to conduct a qualitative analysis, specifically by examining a single case study (Chenoweth & Schock, 2015, p. 429). As this thesis seeks to explore the conditions under which an RFE occurs, a single case study is well suited as it allows for an in-depth analysis (Campbell, 1975). Pattern matching has been selected as the method of analysis.

Pattern matching differentiates between the *observed* and *expected* pattern (Hak & Dul, 2010). The expected pattern is established by deducing a set of expectations from the theory which are then classified as *expected* variables (Hak & Dul, 2010). To find the observed pattern, data must be thoroughly analysed to distinguish *observed* variables (Hak & Dul, 2010). Then, the data found is linked to the variables highlighted in the theory, thus allowing a comparison between the observed and expected pattern (Bitektine, 2008; Campbell, 1975; Hyde, 2000; Sinkovics, 2017; Trochim, 1985). This method is well-suited to analyse the causality of the RFE as the expected pattern can be established by using Gupta's (2002) five variables. Thus, when analysing the data on the CRM to create an observed pattern, it will later be determined whether the patterns match. In the case of matching patterns, the results strengthen the theory and contribute to its validity (Yin, 2017). If the empirical data found fails to coincide with the predictions set out by the theory, it is necessary to explore alternative explanations (Yin, 2017).

### **4.2. Case selection**

As the thesis aims to discover under what conditions an RFE is positive for the entire movement, the CRM has been selected as scholars have identified this case to display a positive RFE (Haines, 2013, p. 40). Moreover, although Gupta (2002) included three cases, she omitted the original case, the CRM. As RFE theory has been accused of selection bias, Gupta's (2002) choice of cases left room for doubt in the minds of sceptics, as it begged the question as to whether her theory would fit the original case (Chenoweth & Schock, 2015, p. 429). Thus, to counter these selection bias claims, this thesis aims to see whether Gupta's (2002) variables can

explain the positive RFE identified in the CRM. The period of analysis will range from 1954 to 1970 as it has previously been selected by Haines (1984) during the first systemic analysis of the RFE identified in the CRM.

The parties that have been chosen are the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Black Panther Party (BPP). For the analysis, the NAACP will serve as the moderate flank, whereas the BPP will be considered the radical flank. Both parties were active during the CRM, however, they differed in their tactics and their specific objectives (Harris, 2001; Watson, 1993). On the one hand, the NAACP was founded in 1909 by W.E.B. Du Bois, Mary White Ovington, Moorfield Storey, Ida B. Wells. The NAACP has been selected as the moderate flank, due to its pacifist approach. In particular, the NAACP advocated for nonviolent resistance to achieve racial integration and equality for African American citizens (Watson, 1993, p. 454). Moreover, across the nonviolent organisations they were the oldest and largest American civil rights group with numerous grassroots branches, which marked their influence on a national level (Fischbach, 2016, p. 54; Watson, 1993). On the other hand, the BPP was founded in 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton and fought for change through more violent means (Harris, 2001). Their tactics included guerillas and armed self-defence (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1969). Their objectives included ending police brutality and fighting for social and economic justice (Harris, 2001). They have been selected as the radical flank because they were known for militancy and their willingness to bear arms (Harris, 2001).

### **4.3. Operationalisation**

Following Gupta's (2002) theory, this thesis will focus on establishing the presence of an RFE by analysing the first two variables. The first variable is fragmentation which will be exposed by identifying the presence of differing ideologies and tactics between the NAACP and the BPP (Ellefsen, 2018, pp. 124-125). This variable will be observed by analysing journal articles and academic books.

Next, the second variable requires external actors to acknowledge the existence of multiple organisations that they deem more or less radical when comparing the groups (p. 125). Thus, the presence of this variable will be identified by analysing external actors' recognition of the different organisations' tactics and ideologies, and their ability to use different terms to describe them. The framing will be observed by analysing police reports, FBI documents and media publications.

After having established the existence of an RFE, the last three variables will be used to explain how specifically a positive RFE can be identified. The third variable is the moderate's signal that clearly expresses their will to distinguish themselves from the radicals (Gupta, 2002, p. 9). Possible ways the NAACP could distance themselves is by condemning the actions of the BPP publicly and by working with political institutions. This will be examined by analysing historical documents on the NAACP and speeches made by the leaders of the organisation.

Furthermore, the penultimate variable to determine is the vulnerability of external actors (p. 11). The groups that will be analysed for this variable include the government, elites and corporations. This will allow the groups' perceptions of the other actors to be highlighted. This thesis will focus on external actors' perceived threat of the moderates and the radicals as this paper wants to highlight the effectiveness of the RFE. The relative strengths or weaknesses of the different groups will be analysed by looking at journal articles, academic books, and historical documents.

Lastly, the costliness of the actions taken by the actors involved needs to be observed (p. 11). External actors will conduct a cost-benefit analysis to decide on their response to the movement (p. 12). They prefer to avoid making concessions as they are costly (p. 12). However, in certain circumstances, external actors may be pushed or incentivised to make concessions to avoid worse consequences. If external actors perceive the fact of providing selective benefits to moderates to be a small cost compared to the possible consequences provoked through their resistance, they might consider this path to render the actions of the radicals less legitimate (p. 12). To analyse external actors' thought process and actions, academic books, journal articles and historical documents will be taken into account.

## **5. Analysis**

The decades of struggle and resistance that ultimately paved the way for racial progress, marked a crucial period in American history (Ware, 2013). Emerging from the marginalisation and oppression of Black/African Americans, this movement gained traction by encouraging individuals to oppose the widespread discrimination and fight for fundamental human rights (Ware, 2013). This thesis will delve into the complex nature of the CRM, by first providing a historical background to highlight the presence of an RFE. Later, an observed pattern will be established and compared to Gupta's (2002) variables to understand the internal mechanism of a positive REF.

## 5.1. Historical Background

In 1986, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case resulted in the Supreme Court ruling stating that the “separate but equal” facilities were constitutional as long as they were of similar quality (Berg, 2007; Ware, 2013, pp. 1087-1088). Whilst it endorsed equality on the face of it, it also served as a justification for the segregation and the degradation of African Americans (Ware, 2013, pp. 1087-1088). Racial segregation was further enforced due to the Jim Crow laws that allowed discrimination to persist in all aspects of daily life, education, health care, work and public transportation. In a nutshell, in terms of the “separate but equal” doctrine, separation was enforced, however “but equal” seemed to be mere words on paper (pp. 1087-1088).

Although the US criminal justice system prided itself on being fair, impartial, and just, the facts told a different story (p. 1088). In reality, in the criminal justice system, whites benefitted from systemic privilege whereas African Americans were subjected to systemic oppression (p. 1088). The white offenders enjoyed protection of the law, whilst black individuals suffered violence and discrimination often at the hands of law enforcement officers and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), a white supremacist and terrorist group (p. 1088). Racially charged violence, lynching, and police brutality preserved racial discrimination and spread fear among African Americans (p. 1088).

The events of the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1955 set the stage for the CRM, when Rosa Parks, an activist and seamstress, refused to yield her seat to a white person on a Montgomery bus (p. 1089). Park’s act of defiance fuelled the Montgomery Bus Boycott which encompassed a year-long campaign of African Americans organising carpools and prayer meetings to challenge the legitimacy and legality of public transport segregation (p. 1089). The Montgomery Bus Boycott succeeded when the Supreme Court ruled the segregation of public transportation to be unconstitutional in 1956 (Gray, 1995; Ware, 2013, p. 1089). This victory paved the way for future broader struggles within the CRM (Gray, 1995; Ware, 2013).

Only in 1954 did the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case get overturned with the victory of the *Brown v. Board Education* decision, where the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in schools did indeed constitute a violation of the Constitution. Whilst these Supreme Court rulings marked a significant success in the CRM, African Americans still had to face a multitude of challenges before achieving racial inequality (Ware, 2013). The desegregation of schools hit a wall when nine African American students attempted to integrate the Central High School in Little Rock,

Arkansas, in 1957, Governor Orval Faubus mobilised the Arkansas National Guard to stop them from entering (p. 1089).

The CRM underwent a severe rift in the 1960s with the emergence of Black Power. Whilst the NAACP sought the integration of African Americans into society through legal means and establishing alliances with sympathetic whites, the Black Power movement opposed this to be the solution to racial inequality (Hill, 2022). Enraged by police brutality and the violent and racist acts of the KKK, many African Americans turned their backs on the non-violent movement and became radicalised. They joined the Black Power Movement, as they had lost faith in the traditional civil rights organisations and believed this new movement could prove more successful in their struggle to advance racial progress (Hall, 2007). The BPP was at the centre of this movement (Street, 2009, p. 352). This group fought for black self-determination and economic independence from the whites by advocating for armed self-defence and community programs (Hall, 2007, p. 56; Ware, 2013, p. 1093). In contrast to the NAACP's nonviolent approach, the BPP's tactics included armed resistance and guerilla tactics (Ware, 2013, pp. 1093-1094; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1969).

Haines (1984) found evidence of a positive RFE in the US CRM, by analysing the funding of the different civil rights groups. From an economic perspective, he was able to prove that the NAACP, the moderate flank, benefitted financially from the actions of the Black Power activists, the radicals, due to the backlash it provoked (Haines, 1984, p. 42). As the government recognised the threat that the Black Power movement posed, it saw the advantage in working with the NAACP and thus extended funds to them to marginalise the radicals (p. 42). However, the causal mechanism behind the establishment of the positive RFE in the CRM remains unknown. Therefore, the following analysis aims to address this research gap.

In the following section, in the first step, the observed pattern will be established, and later it will be compared to the expected pattern drawn up with the help of Gupta's (2002) variables. Hence, the analysis will identify whether Gupta's (2002) five variables, the presence of fragmentation (1), external actors' recognition of said fragmentation (2), the moderate flank's ability to distinguish themselves from the radicals (3), the vulnerability of the external actors and the costliness of their actions (5), are present in the CRM.

## **5.2. Analysis of observed pattern variables**

### **5.2.1. The presence of fragmentation**

As theory predicts the presence of fragmentation, this thesis will identify whether the moderates, the NAACP, and the radicals, the BPP, differed in their ideologies and tactics.

#### **5.2.1.1. Ideologies**

The NAACP fought to change racial progress by operating within the existing political and legal frame (Hall, 2007; Ware, 2013). They focused their efforts on “civil rights, ending segregation, achieving a ban on lynching, and securing the right of African Americans to vote freely” (Hill, 2022, p. 9). They believed African American integration to be the solution to racial equality (Hall, 2007, p. 65). Rivalling the strategies of traditional civil rights groups, Black Power rose as a radical group to challenge previously accepted notions that integration and changing practices within the system were the solutions to the black man’s suffering (Hall, 2007, p. 56). Coined by Stokely Carmichael, who later went by Kwame Ture, Black Power advocated for black self-determination, political empowerment, and economic autonomy (Hall, 2007, p. 56; Ware, 2013, p. 1093).

Rejecting the solution of assimilation into white society, Black Power sought community self-defence, economic self-sufficiency, and the reclamation of their African roots (Hall, 2007, p. 56; Ware, 2013, p. 1093). The BPP was one of the most prominent advocates for Black Power and fought for armed self-defence and community-based social programs (Hall, 2007, pp. 53-54). The ideological rift grew larger over time due to external factors, namely police brutality and socioeconomic marginalisation (Hall, 2007; Street, 2009). The NAACP wanted to continue to fight these matters through peaceful means (Hall, 2007; Ware, 2013). However, beatings and deaths resulting from brutality and poverty provoked by economic marginalisation fuelled the radicalisation of many African Americans who began to lose faith in the strategy of the traditional rights groups (Hall, 2007, p. 69).

#### **5.2.1.2. Tactics**

Events that showcase the nonviolent nature of the NAACP include the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the March on Washington and their twelve legal victories against the Supreme Court (Meier & Bracey JR., 1993). Particularly noteworthy is the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, won by NAACP lawyers, in which segregation in public education was deemed unconstitutional (p. 1088). While the NAACP sought change through nonviolent and



legal campaigns, the BPP considered armed resistance a more measured response to systemic oppression (Hall, 2007). The BPP openly carried weaponry and monitored police activity in black neighbourhoods to combat police violence (Ware, 2013, pp. 1093-1094). Moreover, the BPP stormed Sacramento Legislature with weapons to advocate for the right to bear arms to defend one's self (Austin, 2008).

When it came to constructing white alliances, the NAACP and BPP took divergent approaches (Hall, 2007; Street, 2009; Ware, 2013). The NAACP was open to establishing coalitions with sympathetic whites and promoting interracial harmony, whereas Black Power activists denounced integration as reinforcing white supremacy (Street, 2009). This can be identified on a domestic and international level (Fischbach, 2018). On a national level, the NAACP believed in building alliances with the whites, whereas the BPP denounced this approach and encouraged a community-based approach, as explained in its Ten Point Program (Hall, 2007, pp. 53-65). The BPP launched over thirty survival programs and provided community aid, in the form of education, health care, legal aid and transportation assistance (Duncan, 2024). This integrationist-separatist division underscored the disagreements between the civil rights groups on the nature of racial progress and the role of whites in that struggle (Hall, 2007). Internationally, the groups held contrasting stances when it came to involvement in the Israeli-Arab War and the Vietnam War (Fischbach, 2018, p. 52-54). The NAACP opted to support US foreign policy and thus supported Israel and the US (p. 54). Conversely, the BPP condemned the US' actions and sided with the Palestinians and the Vietnamese (p. 52). This rift will be further explored during the fourth variable on the vulnerability of external actors.

### **5.2.2. External actors' recognition of fragmentation**

Gupta's (2002) theory requires external actors, such as the state and elites to acknowledge the existence of fragmentation in the social movement. In this paragraph, external actors' perception of the CRM will be underscored. First and foremost, the NAACP and BPP facilitated recognition of their different objectives and tactics by publishing their own newspapers (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1969, p. 7). By reading the Black Panther newspaper and the NAACP's Crisis Magazine, Americans were able to distinguish between the two organisations. Moreover, mainstream newspapers published articles on them as well (Russonello, 2016).

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the NAACP attracted national media coverage following the events of Bloody Sunday (Lucks, 2014). In 1965, civil rights activists, including members of the NAACP, were protesting for voting rights by marching peacefully from Selma to Montgomery (Lucks, 2014). They were met with violent repression, as the police beat and

teargassed the protesters. This also further highlighted the differences between the NAACP's peaceful approach and the BPP's militant tactics (Lucks, 2014).

Although newspapers reported on the actions of the BPP, their narrative changed when tensions between law enforcement officers and the BPP intensified (Russonello, 2016). It is thus important to note that the narrative portrayed in the mainstream newspapers was influenced by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and police reports and consequently depended on their framing. The FBI is the national intelligence and security service tasked with federal law enforcement.

When investigating the NAACP, the FBI emphasised concerns that the organisation had been infiltrated by the Communist Party (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.). However, in their reports, it is clear through the detailed description of the NAACP's actions that they focussed on the NAACP's pursuit of change through peaceful and nonviolent means. The FBI reports even go through all 13 Supreme Court cases and recognise that the NAACP won 12 of the 13 cases against the highest court in the country.

The FBI's perception of the BPP paints an entirely different picture. In its reports, the FBI explains that the BPP had made preparations to plant a bomb, advocated for the killing of police officers with flyers and openly carried "rifles, shotguns and machetes" (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1969, p. 8). Moreover, the director of the FBI, Hoover, stated that the BPP represented the "greatest threat to national security" (Duncan, 2024, para. 4). The FBI's stance was reflected in the newspapers on the BPP as they were described as a provocative and dangerous group (Russonello, 2016). Hence, it can be concluded that external actors recognised fragmentation within the CRM.

### **5.2.3. The moderates' ability to distinguish themselves from the radical flank**

The theory states that a requirement to ensure an RFE is the moderate's ability to differentiate themselves from the radical flank (Gupta, 2002). This thesis will now analyse whether the NAACP managed to dissociate itself from the BPP. Traditional civil rights groups, such as the NAACP, denounced the actions and tactics of the Black Power groups (p. 53). The NAACP made its sentiments of distinguishment clear, especially under Roy Wilkins' leadership in the 1960s (p. 58). Wilkins openly opposed Black Power by labelling it as "the father of hatred and the mother of violence" (Hall, 2007, p. 58). With these words, he expressed that the Black Power movement would result in increased racial violence and conflict (Hall, 2007, p. 58).

Wilkins (1966) also stated that “Black Power can only be another form of segregation - the very segregation that we have fought so long to eradicate”. Moreover, the NAACP also distanced themselves from the Black Power Movement, by withdrawing their participation from joint protests (p. 5). An instance that showcases the NAACP distinction is when they withdrew from the March Against Fear, due to friction with Black Power activists, such as Stokely Carmichael (p. 5). Thus, it can be stated the NAACP indeed expressed their will to be considered separate from the BPP by clearly stating it in speeches and through no longer partaking in different events. External actors later judged their signals of distinction to be sincere as the government and white elites preferred collaborating with the moderates rather than the radicals, as explained during the fifth variable (Haines, 1984).

#### **5.2.4. Vulnerability of external actors**

The fourth variable of the expected pattern is the vulnerability of external actors (Gupta, 2002, p. 11). It is meant to indicate whether the RFE is positive or negative. If external actors, such as the government and white elites, feel stable in their stance, they will be less likely to help (p. 11). However, if they feel vulnerable, especially because of the actions of the radicals, they may be more willing to collaborate with the moderate flank to weaken the voice of the radicals (p. 11). This thesis will analyse whether the variation in the political environment and the actions of the radicals influenced external actors. In this section two political shifts will be analysed, the first is a CRM protest, and the second is the outbreak of international conflicts.

##### **5.2.4.1. Shifts in the political environment**

Bloody Sunday significantly weakened the position of the US government and American elites, because of the amount of national and international media coverage due to the violent police response to a peaceful protest (Lucks, 2014). Public outrage stressed the government to introduce the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Ware, 2013, p. 1092).

The outbreak of international conflicts, such as the Six-Day War (Arab - Israeli War) in 1967 and the Vietnam War (1955 - 1975), marked a shift in the political environment that acted in the NAACP’s favour (Fischbach, 2018, pp. 52-54). Due to their differing ideologies, the NAACP and the BPP had opposing opinions when it came to showing support for American policy (Inghram, 2006, p. 55). The American policy consisted of aiding the Israelis and continuing to send soldiers to fight against the Vietnamese (Fischbach, 2018, Inghram, 2006, p. 54). The NAACP uttered support for American foreign policy, as it aligned with the

organisation's ideology and presented strategic benefits. As the NAACP's establishment was helped along by the Jewish community, they supported the Israelis in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Fischbach, 2018, p. 53). Moreover, the NAACP believed in making alterations within the existing legal and political American framework to achieve racial progress and believed that they could gain domestic support by aligning with US foreign policy (Hall, 2007, p. 63). It was also a way for the NAACP to display its loyalty and patriotism, which it hoped would make it appear more legitimate in the eyes of Americans and appeal to a broader audience (p. 63). Lastly, by endorsing the state's actions, the NAACP could further distance itself from the Black Power movement and hopefully secure backing from the government and white elites (p. 63).

Conversely, as part of the Black Power Movement, the BPP believed in racial pride and Pan-Africanism, thus they condemned the US actions (Carmichael, 1967, p. 7). In particular, they opposed the idea of African American soldiers being sent to fight other people of colour in Vietnam and Israel, as it propagated oppression and white supremacy (p. 7). Due to the rising death toll of African American soldiers, many young blacks started questioning the promises of integration encouraged by the NAACP and realigned themselves with the ideology of Black Power (Ingram, 2006, p. 54).

#### **5.2.4.2. Vulnerability of government**

Due to the rising death toll of American soldiers, the US was obliged to send reinforcements to continue the war. The US state needed African Americans to fight overseas due to the number of white Americans, who were able to avoid enrolling for military service as they were granted education deferments (Ingram, 2006, p. 60). Hence, the US state found itself in a precarious situation as the people it relied on to fight were simultaneously making demands which it would have preferred to ignore given the costliness of adhering. Specifically, when analysing the influence of international conflicts, it becomes clear that the actions of the radicals worked to the benefit of the moderates, as it weakened the US government's position. In turn, this allowed the moderates to gather support from external actors, as they were seen to be aligned with their interests, thus pointing towards a positive RFE (Hall, 2007).

#### **5.2.5. Costliness of concessions of external actors**

Theory has predicted that concessions made by external actors entail direct and indirect costs (Gupta, 2002, p. 12). This thesis will analyse external actors' accumulated costs in the CRM. As explained in the fourth variable of this analysis, the state found itself in a precarious situation

as it was involved in two international conflicts and dealing with the turmoil from the CRM (Fischbach, 2018; Haines, 1984; Inghram, 2006).

Following the backlash from Bloody Sunday, the US state was forced to make concessions (Lucks, 2014). Direct costs included the introduction of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, which entailed financial costs, due to budgetary changes and political costs, as the government was forced to concede. Indirect costs encompassed opposition from Southern leaders (Lucks, 2014; Ware, 2013, p. 1092). However, the state chose to endure those costs rather than risk further radicalisation of the movement (Haines, 1984).

Moreover, in terms of the international conflicts, the US government needed African Americans to fight abroad and thus decided to provide selective benefits and accommodate “certain manageable black demands” (Haines, 1984, p. 42). The state considered these concessions to be in its “own interest given the more radical alternatives” (Haines, 1984, p. 42). Moreover, US corporate elites also came to the conclusion that it benefitted them to collaborate with the NAACP to pacify the black population (p. 42). Direct costs from this concession included the increase in funding for the NAACP by over 1.5 million dollars (Crisis, 1966 as cited by Inghram, 2006, p. 56). Therefore, the last variable is fulfilled as external actors had to make concessions to the benefit of the moderate flank.

## **6. Discussion**

This thesis will circle back to the research question: *Under what conditions is the radical flank effect positive?* To find an answer to this question, pattern matching was conducted, which means an expected pattern is established through theory, and an observed pattern is created by analysing data (Hak & Dul, 2010). According to theory, five variables need to be analysed in order to establish the presence and propensity of the RFE (Gupta, 2002). The first two variables, the presence (1) and recognition (2) by external actors of fragmentation must be identified to determine the presence of an RFE (Gupta, 2002). Fragmentation persists if there is a rift between different organisations in a social movement, where one group is seen to be more moderate whilst the other is considered more radical in comparison. The last three variables were examined to gain insight on the direction of the RFE, whether it be positive or negative (Gupta, 2002). These variables focused on the moderate flank’s ability to distinguish itself from the radicals (3), the vulnerability of the external actors (4) and the costliness of the concessions they made (5) (Gupta, 2002).

During the analysis of the CRM, fragmentation persisted due to the rift between the moderate flank, the NAACP, and the radicals, the BPP (1) (Hall, 2007; Ware, 2013). External actors picked up on the fragmentation within the movement by recognising the differences in the groups' stances and tactics (2) (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1969; Hall, 2007). The third variable was also identified as the moderates denounced the violence employed by the BPP and they openly displayed opposing views when it came to US involvement in international conflicts (3) (Fischbach, 2018).

Moreover, due to the Americanisation of the Vietnam War and the US' support for Israel during the 1960s the international as well as the domestic political landscape underwent a massive shift, leaving the US government in a more vulnerable position (4) (Inghram, 2006). Finally, the last variable was fulfilled as the US state found itself in a precarious situation and thus chose to collaborate with the NAACP in order to avoid radical alternatives (5) (Haines, 1984). Therefore, it can be concluded that all five variables are present, signifying a match between the expected and observed pattern. Thus, the hypothesis of the requirement of a combination of all five variables to be present to establish a positive radical effect seems to be backed up in the case of the CRM.

Gupta's (2002) theory dictates that the moderate and radical flank were in competition. However, Ellefsen (2018) opposes this specific assumption made by Gupta offering an alternative explanation. She argues that both flanks could be collaborating in order to be successful. According to this thesis analysis, official channels of communication between the groups seem to indicate that the NAACP and the BPP were not working together. If underground communication were to be analysed it could provide evidence for Ellefsen's (2018) line of thought. Due to limited access to underground communication data, one would first have to overcome this obstacle in order to conduct this research.

## **7. Conclusion**

To conclude, this thesis addressed the research question: *Under what conditions is the radical flank effect positive?* This research paper conducted its analysis through pattern matching by establishing an expected pattern from Gupta's (2002) five variables and then comparing it to the observed pattern created by analysing the CRM.

Gupta's (2002) variables included: the presence of fragmentation (1), external recognition of said fragmentation (2), the moderate's flank denunciation of the actions of the radicals (3), the

vulnerability of external actors (4), and the costliness of the concessions made by external actors (5). The analysis confirmed the presence of the first and second variable and used the last three variables to establish the existence of a positive RFE. Hence, this thesis found support for the hypothesis and concluded that a combination of all five variables was necessary to determine the causality of a positive RFE as shown in the case of the CRM. However, this thesis challenges Gupta's (2002) assumption of competition between the moderates and the radicals, by suggesting that a potential collaboration between the flanks could have existed, as argued by Ellefsen (2018).

In the analysis, fragmentation within the CRM was highlighted due to the existence of the moderates, the NAACP, and the radicals, the BPP (1) (Hall, 2007; Ware, 2013). By observing newspapers and FBI reports, it was established that external actors recognised the fragmentation (2) (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1969; Hall, 2007). Moreover, the NAACP was able to differentiate itself from the BPP as it denounced the actions of the radicals and opposed their opinion on American foreign policy (3) (Fischbach, 2018). Due to US involvement in international conflict, the state became more vulnerable to the domestic turbulence created by the CRM (Inghram, 2006). Lastly, the US government decided to collaborate with the NAACP to marginalise the BPP (Haines, 1984).

This thesis is academically relevant as research on RFE theory is limited and the causal mechanism behind the previously identified RFE in the CRM had not yet been explored. Moreover, in terms of societal relevance, this research has helped gain an understanding of one of the most pivotal social movements in the US and increased understanding of current activism. Additionally, it sheds light on information that could improve future policies on racial and economic inequality, police brutality, and voting rights.

It is important to note that a certain limitation persists when it comes to Gupta's (2002) theory. The measurement of the variables needs to be clarified, in order to include the strengths or weaknesses of variables, as it currently only focusses on the presence of the variables. Thus, doubts remain on how substantial the evidence has to be, to identify a variable to present. Therefore, this thesis recommends future researchers focus on developing methods to measure these variables by establishing a threshold or providing possible indicators of their strength.

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