

Annotated bibliography example

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



According to Dudziak, social justice refers to “.... promoting a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity” (46), and it is said to exist when all people share a mutual humanity thus having a right to equal treatment, fair allocation of community resources as well as support for their human rights. In other words, social justice is equated with equality meaning that all persons in the society are treated equally and fairly. Equality is not guaranteed in every society, and this is the reason why internationally known activists for social justice have been murdered by gangs of unscrupulous individuals who enrich themselves at the cost of the minority the weak and the disadvantaged. This essay will discuss John F Kennedy as one of the widely known international figures who fought for social justice fearlessly.

John F Kennedy is one of the most mythologized figures in contemporary American history who was known for his debonair good looks, oratory skills and charismatic persona. Kennedy is also termed as one of the 20th century’s most memorable presidents who left a legacy that continues to enjoy the spotlight up to date. He was born in a rich, Irish-Catholics family that was connected to politics (Pascale 60). He and his eight siblings enjoyed a privileged childhood of elite private schools, sailboats, servants, and summer homes even though he used to suffer frequent serious illnesses during his childhood and youth (Bryant 28). Despite health challenges, Kennedy strove to make his own way whereby he wrote one of the best-selling books while still at Harvard and volunteered for hazardous combat obligation in the Pacific during World War II. Serving in the World War II made Kennedy a hero after which he quitted and worked as journalist for a

short spell, and later entered into politics where he served in the House of Representatives from 1947 to 1953 and the Senate from 1953 to 1961.

John F Kennedy became the president of the United States of America during some of the most tumultuous years of the 1960's civil rights movement that was led by renowned civil rights activists like Dr Martin Luther King Jr (Dudziak 58). Civil right movement was fighting for equality for persons of African-American origin and Kennedy give the movement an ample support. As a matter of fact, many admirers think of Kennedy in terms of his youthful vibrancy, his popularity amongst the people and his commitment to social justice, especially for African-Americans.

He was elected as the US president in 1960 partly because of his promise to secure equal rights for black Americans because he would make it clear in his speeches that he was a supporter of civil rights (Dudziak 78). Though some historians claim that Kennedy started supporting civil rights so as to get ' Black Votes', it is evident that he had a strong passion for instilling equality in the American society. In his speeches, he would regularly suggest that discrimination stained America as it led the west's stance against the Soviet Union during the Cold War and that a decent president could end unacceptable housing conditions by using federal power. At one point, Kennedy's call of sympathy to Martin Luther King's wife, Coretta, was well publicized by the Democrats when King was in prison (Goduti 35). During his campaigns, he would also promise to act swiftly to end discrimination if he would have been elected.

Kennedy appeared to understand the pain and bitterness blacks were going through in their mother country. According to the report that was released

by Civil Rights Commission in 1960, discrimination in the USA had reached its climax and African American community was suffering in an extreme way. According to this report, 57% of African American housing was judged to be unacceptable, their life expectancy was 7 years less than whites and infant mortality amongst African American was twice as great as whites (Goduti 39). African Americans also found it all but impossible to get mortgages from mortgage lenders simply because property values would drop a great deal if an African American family moved into a neighborhood that was not a ghetto (Goduti 39).

Regardless of his promises, in 1961 Kennedy did nothing to help and push forward the civil rights issue because international factors meant that the president could never focus attention on domestic issues in that year and he also knew that there was no great public support for such legislation.

According to 1960 and 1961 opinion polls, civil rights was less emphasized on when people were asked “ what needs to be done in America to advance society?” Other sources show that Kennedy did not give the issue a swift attention as he had promised because he was concentrating his domestic attention on improving health care and helping the lowest wage earners. Immediate focus on civil rights issues would have only clouded the issue and disrupted evolution in these areas (Bryant 85). Moreover, improving health care and employees’ wages for the poor would have effectively benefited the poor who were mostly from the African American community.

Kennedy advanced the cause of civil rights in various ways such as enacting a legislature as well as through putting pressure on federal government organizations to employ more African Americans in America’s equivalent of

Britain's Civil Service. Before he was elected as the president, African Americans who were employed in federal government organizations were given the lowest paid posts and in jobs that had little prospect of professional progress. Moreover, government organizations were recruiting a very small number of blacks with statistics showing that FBI for instance, only employed 48 African Americans out of a total of 13, 649 and these 48 were nearly all chauffeurs. Kennedy is believed to have done more than any other president before him in attempt to have Afro-Americans appointed to federal government posts (Bryant 38). As the prudent, he appointed 40 blacks to senior federal positions including five as federal judges (Niven 100). Moreover, he appointed his own brother (Robert) as the Attorney General, technique that enabled him to use the law courts as a way of enforcing already passed civil rights legislation.

In his fight for fair and equal treatment for the African Americans, Kennedy also forced various organizations sign African Americans, organizations such as Washington Redskins, a team that had much hatred for the blacks. He ordered that this team would not use all federally funded stadiums not unless it would sign African Americans. He also created the Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity (CEEEO), a commission whose job was to make sure that all persons employed by the federal government had equivalent employment opportunities and that all firms that had contracts with the federal government to do the same if they were to win further federal contracts (Pascale 25).

All these moves can be used to predict on what Kennedy might have done for civil rights had he not been killed. For many older African Americans,

Kennedy was a president who sympathized with black struggle like no other before him and many remember him speaking eloquently against segregation despite resistance from Southern racists in his own Democratic party. Some even feel that his support for civil rights was one of the many reasons that could have led to his assassination, even though racial motives are not prominent among the many theories about Kennedy's death.

Providing equal rights for persons with disabilities

Kennedy was also deeply committed to providing equal rights for persons with disabilities among other health and physical challenges (Bryant 98). The signed law required that students with disabilities be educated and that proper foundations be laid for future reforms in education so that disabled children can be accommodated. Immediately after the enactment of this law, the Architectural Barriers Act was introduced, an act that ordered that all federally funded and constructed buildings must be accessible to people with disabilities. Kennedy's fight for social justice for the disabled had started much earlier since he had previously enacted amendments that had been made to the Social Security Act in 1961 primarily to include disabled persons. At the signing, Kennedy called the changes " an additional step toward eliminating many of the hardships resulting from old age, disability or the death of the family wage-earner" (Niven 50)

After the enactment of the act, compensation for disabled persons particularly veterans increased in the following years as Kennedy urged Congress to provide programs for rehabilitation and vocational training. At the same time, Kennedy expressed a great deal of interest in mental health, particularly research into the prevention and treatment of mental retardation

(Pascale 48). He ordered for the establishment of a panel of experts that encompassed leaders in the medical and health fields as well as other special consultants like his older sister, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who later founded the Special Olympics.

Improving health care and helping the lowest wage earners

John Kennedy had prepared adequately to fix an economy that was struggling with rising unemployment, slumping profits and depressed stock prices because he knew that the deep recession could prevent him from advancing his broader domestic and diplomatic agenda. Moreover, this was the right thing to do as the president according to Kennedy (Niven 63). His policies and strategies contributed in a significant way to that golden era of the mid-1960s when the United States was enjoying one of the most robust economic expansions in history, a season that was characterized by dramatically low rates of unemployment. He passed the “ liberal’ agenda that involved increasing the minimum wage, expanding unemployment benefits, boosting Social Security benefits to encourage workers to retire earlier as well as spending more for highway construction. Moreover, Kennedy also pushed for much lower tax rates for the ordinary citizens who needed tax breaks.

As a senator, Kennedy pressurized for strengthening of unemployment insurance to ensure that laid-off workers received extended unemployment benefits while they searched for new jobs. Senator Kennedy was also a constant champion for workers whose pensions were at risk because he understood the way workers suffer when companies dump their pensions in bankruptcy and executives walked away with millions in bonuses. He also

played a major role in helping Americans meet the need of work and family. Kennedy tirelessly pursued policies that would help working men and women manage these competing responsibilities on top of consistently fighting for legislation that not only helped workers earn a decent living, but also assured them time to meet obligations to their families and communities. Other achievements of John F Kennedy with regard to social justice included his consistent pressurization for equal pay for equal work. Kennedy fought for the rights of women, including the right to equal pay for doing the same jobs as their male counterparts of all races (Pascale 45). He also fought for implementation of safe working conditions.

In conclusion, John F Kennedy is a prominent international figure who focused on social justice issues when he was serving as a senator and as a president. He keenly focused on how he could improve the lives of the poor, minority and the disadvantaged persons in the society. He relentlessly fought for civil rights and enacted a law that completely changed the way Afro-Americans were initially treated by the whites. He spearheaded for eradication of racial segregation, improvement of Americans' health and wages on top of championing for equal pay for equal work. Most importantly, John F Kennedy changed people's perception towards the disabled and the mentally challenged persons. He passed laws that ensured that disabled kids were entitled to fundamental rights like right to education and equal treatment among others that they were initially denied. Therefore, John F Kennedy can only be termed as a legend who made a difference in the human race and as an icon whose image will never fade away. Many people owe him gratification and the American society in general must feel indebted

to continue with what he started.

Annotated Bibliography

Bryant, Nick. *The Bystander: John F. Kennedy and the Struggle for Black Equality*. New York: Basic Books, 2006.

The book by Bryant Nick provides the reader with rather critical view on the Kennedy's campaign. The author depicts Kennedy as " a manipulator" of blacks during the campaign in which he targeted them specially. Bryant considers Kennedy to be not very sincere in this campaign while addressing blacks. This book is very valuable for my work as I want to consider different opinions in order to form my own view on the Kennedy's accomplishment.

Dudziak, Mary. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press, 2011.

" Negro problem" had been relevant for every President from Truman to Johnson. It became especially relevant after several death sentences, which seemed unreasonable as people could be sentenced to death for stealing a penny. Mary Dudziak provides very interesting and useful facts on how this issue was addressed during the rule of different presidents. This book helped disclose interesting information about the presidency of Kennedy and his approach to the " Negro problem" resolution.

Goduti, Philip, Robert. *Kennedy and the Shaping of Civil Rights, 1960-1964*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2012.

The writing tells us about the very important events, which happened during Kennedy's presidency. These events are March on Washington, Ole Miss crisis, Freedom Rides and Birmingham campaign. The book provides valuable information about the activity of James Meredith, Martin Luther King

and John Lewis during the civil rights movement. All of them were leaders of movement and the supporters of the politics of Kennedy. The book is very useful for my work, because it provides interesting and valuable facts about the activity of Kennedy during these main events.

Niven, David. *The Politics of Injustice: The Kennedys, the Freedom Rides, and the Electoral Consequences of a Moral Compromise*. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2003.

In his book David Niven criticizes the position of administration during the rule of Kennedy. He emphasizes the important role of blacks and their attitude towards administrator not only during the campaign, but in the long run. Niven also admits that the administration did not realize how important the role of blacks was. This material is very useful as it helps understand the role of blacks and the positions of administration as the author also explains the connections between the President and the voters. Niven argues that these connections were very tight during the Presidency of Kennedy and states that the administration failed to realize that.

Pascale, Meredith. *Determining a Legacy: John F. Kennedys Civil Rights Record. 1960-1964*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2009.

The book provides the thorough analysis of John F. Kennedy's activity during 1960-1963. Such analysis is done in order to determine the real character of Kennedy's behavior during the campaign and the real reasons of his attitude towards blacks. The author wonders if he really treated blacks so nicely or there were some political reasons for such behavior. Pascal analyzed not only the reforms, but also the rhetoric of John F. Kennedy and came to the

conclusion that Kennedy had only political interests. This book is very valuable for my essay as it provides detailed analysis of not only Kennedy's activity, but also of rhetoric.