

# Impact of muhammad ali on the civil rights movement



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## **1 Identification and Evaluation of Sources**

**This investigation is concentrated on determining the impression that Muhammad Ali had on the civil rights movement from 1954-1968. During the 1954-1968, African Americans were fighting for their civil rights, that they did not own as citizens of America. One of the primary sources used in the investigation is Hana Yasmien Ali and Muhammad Ali's 2013 book *The Soul of a Butterfly* . The purpose of this book is to take the reader on a journey about Ali's life and essential beliefs, who has done him well.**

**Quotes, for instance, saying that the authorities solely made him fight harder, show the expression of Muhammad Ali's reactions towards the negatives placed on him, and the time when he met Islam, where he found the power within himself that no man could stop or carry away or when he first walked into a mosque, where he did not find Islam, but it found him, that show what Islam meant to him. Muhammad Ali's views on certain events were seen, and these comments are for every spirit on the downside of advantage. However, the source is limited as the source only reflects on Muhammad's life but does not analyze it. For instance, Muhammad wrote that he hoped to invigorate others to take authority of their lives and live with dignity and self-determination it shows how he was a role model, but does not account for any examples of his impact on the lives of others. Moreover, after the events happened, Ali wrote the book years ago – a commendation to himself when his actions were not always justifiable, and in the book, he redeems himself. He justifies, for example, referring to white people as a devil, so his judgment is not always trustworthy.**

One source by Hauser Thomas, who specializes in African-American history, is *Muhammed Ali: His life and times*, a biography focusing on Ali's life published in 1992. The purpose of the book is to give a biography of Muhammad Ali's life accomplishments from childhood to his boxing career. Hauser inputs a quote by Muhammad Ali saying that he had respect for Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders, but that he was taking a different path, which was when Muhammad was being converted into Islam; saying that he was not a civil rights leader. Hauser says that Everything ought to do among Muslims and Vietnam and civil rights, and if Ali succumbed, it was further than a fight coming to show how he views the importance of Ali in terms of the Vietnam war, Islam, and the civil rights movement. The origin is valuable because the book is written by a historian who specializes in African American history. Direct quotes coming from Ali give value as they support statements, beliefs, and assertions. However, a limitation comes aside from the bias of the author as he refers to Muhammad as an important figure, showing his side. This book has limitations because it focuses too heavily on his achievements and fails to evaluate his controversies and weaknesses thoroughly, for example, Thomas says that the things that Ali had done right in his life, far overbalance his past.

## 2 Investigation

**Muhammad Ali is a boxer remembered in the ring like a man who stood up for his ideas despite the outcomes. Boxing supplied him the stage to become this carrier, and he used it to encourage innovation and become someone to look up to for the black society. His anti-war stance inaugurated many views in the United States. The investigation will attempt to answer the question, How historically significant was Muhammad Ali's career? Muhammad Ali was an insiprational figure to many, but although he achived a lot throughout his career, he had a limited influence, and was very controversial at times.**

Ali had a boxing career, and instead of prioritizing it, he became a role model for the black community. Following the winning of the 1960 Olympics, Ali went home only to again be neglected because of the color of his skin. As a result, he threw his medal in the Ohio River pointing out that society should recognize the authenticity – at the base of the Ohio River Ali asserts that this was the impetus display that obtained him being viewed as a role model for the black community and that star that taught youngsters that being a black person is gorgeous <sup>[1]</sup>. However, Remnick claimed that Ali lost the medal and that the narrative was made up which was then confirmed by James Silberman, supervisor of the story where it was first announced: “ The story of the Olympic Medal is not valid. <sup>[2]</sup> The evidence hints that Ali was lying to their audience to appeal as a better person. Moreover, he expressed that he stood gratified to be black and incite others to be proud of their origins and changed the perspective white people had on them, rather than taking the African American culture away from them. Arthur Ashe said that Ali did not

just want to change the image that African Americans have of themselves. The eyes of the people were opened by Ali to see the potential of African Americans; who they are and what can be <sup>[3]</sup>. Jill Nelson also says that he also epitomized black people's sentiments at the moment, their anger, and their sense of entitlement. <sup>[4]</sup> Despite what Ashe and Nelson announced, Ali did not alter comprehensions of all white Americans out of nowhere- Jimmy Cannon replied that Ali upset the natural order of things <sup>[5]</sup> and his relationship amidst the Nation was a more of a pernicious symbol of hate than Nazism. <sup>[6]</sup> The comparison made makes Ali appears to be a hateful person rather than an activist.

The position on the Vietnam War Ali had was vital as it brought popularity into the subject matter and the issues concerning it. Ali's opposition was meaningful because it drew media coverage to his protest. Ali said that he " had not prepared any dispute with the Vietcong which placed the total battle into question; the question of why impoverished people in the United States were held captive by rich people in the United States to kill people in Vietnam <sup>[7]</sup>. The source holds a limit as it neglects to recognize that for others, it was a complete disgrace to deny his nation. A woman said to Ali that her son is in Vietnam and that Ali is no better than he is, hoping for Ali to rot in jail <sup>[8]</sup>, but Ali nevertheless, stands with his points. Ali's champion titles were dropped, his right to fight in the US and additional countries was taken away and was condemned to 5 years in prison amidst a 10, 000 dollar fine. <sup>[9]</sup> Ali said that the revelation was that it was difficult to stand up for his religious feelings upon the United States Government and the millions of

souls who turned toward him for his choice than it would have been to go to battle <sup>[10]</sup> ; precisely why people view him as an exemplar to guide them as a role model.

Lastly, he can be judged historically significant, when Ali turned his back on his previous provocative comments and instead advanced to motivate and invigorate people. As of 1984, Ali was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Initially, he focused heavily on the effect the disease had on him, despite the weakness felt; he later wanted to be an illustration of how the ailment did not represent him, hoping to bestow people who are grieving from an illness of any sort that they do not have to deceive or be embarrassed. <sup>[11]</sup> In 1998 he had been delegated as a United Nations Messenger of Peace, as a consequence going to Afghanistan, where he raised the consciousness of the unavoidable circumstances of the people had due to the Taliban. <sup>[12]</sup> Ali had visited multiple Olympic events, prominently the Olympics of 1996 and the Special Olympics in 2003 where he encountered Nelson Mandela <sup>[13]</sup> . In 2001 after the terrorist raid on the twin towers, he articulated out to support Muslims over the world by saying that the terrorist attack withheld in New York is in no way a representation of Muslim people. <sup>[14]</sup> People will remember that he always had a lot to say, but most importantly, he nevertheless persisted in his views.

Notwithstanding, Ali being this civil rights and anti-Vietnam war exemplar and remaining an advocate for Parkinson's disease and other circumstances, Ali was nonetheless a character who was controversial, and had limited

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influence. It started when he converted and associated with Islam by saying that he became a member and was supporting equality and black vanity. <sup>[15]</sup> Ali missed acknowledging that people questioned his judgments because the National of Islam was wholly connected with violent prototypes. Jimmy Cannon said they injured the bodies of multiple men and ruined their minds, but now, as one of Ali's missionaries, Clay was using it as a plea of blasphemy and push on the spirit. <sup>[16]</sup> Throughout the period he was linked with the Nation of Islam, the name from Cassius Clay to Muhammad Ali was modified, and this was a process of extracting for him, it showed his refusal towards the slave name he had and the outrage that was performed to his family by slave masters. <sup>[17]</sup> Moderately ironically, the primary Cassius Clay was an abolitionist, essentially the one who frees him from slavery.

Moreover, the influence Ali had was restricted, and he took deeply contradictory positions, instead of supporting his people. In terms of civil rights, other characters of that time managed more, for instance, Martin Luther King. Although Ali dared to speak for what he believed he never supported to change legislation and in some cases, his reputation did more harm than good. Ali hurt Joe Frazier, by saying that Joe Frazier is an Uncle Tom and that he works for the opposition, which was exceptionally offensive and divisive. <sup>[18]</sup> Besides, looking at Louisville today, Ali's hometown, it is seen that he did not have a permanent influence, the city continues to be unofficially segregated; of all the manslaughter victims two-thirds are of color. <sup>[19]</sup> He pushed the black is beautiful ideal although ideas spread by Elijah Muhammad, Ali even said that integration is wrong. <sup>[20]</sup> However, he

also called white people devils <sup>[21]</sup>, which was profoundly contentious because he wanted equality for black people but was disrespectful to white people. The position Ali had on women was just as uniformly questionable. When Ali was asked what would happen if a Muslim woman went out with a non-Muslim man, he said that she would die. <sup>[22]</sup> But then again, his religious beliefs may be the root cause of why he had controversial standpoints.

As seen above, Ali was one of the few greatest boxers to ever live. He had become an exemplar for the black community. At times he could be considered limited, but those limitations are far outweighed by his accomplishments. It is easy to see the important role that Ali had towards the influence for people during the civil rights movement and more. Muhammad Ali reaches a great extent as to his significance in history.

### 3 Reflection

Through the research paper, I faced many challenges of selecting and preventing sources. A lot of the evidence viewed Ali as bringing meaning, but in others, limitations were seen. As a way to overcome the potential bias, I presented both sides of Ali; the good and the bad. The validity of the sources can be valued by the amount of bias shown. It comes to show that if researchers are not careful about their bias, it lowers the validity of the paper overall. Moreover, it was vital to include a historian in the case because it brings up new perspectives, rather than Ali's own. However, some challenges that were faced due to the historian, which was his bias being presented evidently towards Ali. For example, the historian would mention Ali to be important, and significant. From this, the significance at the time

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was questioned, due to Ali having so much impact in the ring as well as in the outside. Many had heavy criticism on Ali back then when he was opposed to joining the military during the Vietnam war, but now he is perceived differently. It was quite the challenge to find sources against Ali nowadays since it is said by the majority of American that Ali was vital during the civil rights movement. I now know that for someone to be constituted as a historical figure, there is the need to evaluate how remembered, revealed, remarked, resonated, and resultant that character is. In the paper, it is seen that Ali, is very much remembered to present day, and revealed himself publicly very much, but the results that were brought to the civil rights movement was rather minimal. Lastly, through my journey, I came to the realization that proof cannot be established on many topics Many confounds, rest aside, and at times problems can be brought if not acted upon accordingly. Despite, the many confounds in sources, it is very much possible, to avoid bias, by providing two sides of the argument, with well-supporting evidence towards those claims.

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