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Student and Youth-Led Movements: A Comparative Literature Review of Advocacy Strategies and Policy Outcomes in Federal and Unitary Systems

Harini Krishnan
vjharinik@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In societies across the world, students have been leaders in advocating for civic change. However, the political systems in which these students advocate for policy change often influence the outcome of their success. Yet, existing literature on this topic tends to provide a fragmented understanding of how political systems influence movement strategies and outcomes. This begs the question: How do federal and unitary systems of government influence the advocacy strategies and policy outcomes of student-led civics movements? This paper provides a synthesized comparative literature review of 22 academic and institutional sources examining 10 student-led civic movements across 6 different countries, and leads us to identify how veto players theory and the political systems model can be used to explain how federal and unitary systems affect student-led civics movements. It finds that these political systems shape both the success of student-led civics movements and the strategies they adopt. This study aims to provide student leaders across the world with a deeper understanding of how their government systems shape their advocacy. Through this knowledge, student leaders can adopt their advocacy strategies to lead more successful civics movements.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, students around the world have mounted an unprecedented wave of civic movements, calling on governments to act to address the climate crisis, education inequality, and students' rights. Student and youth-led civics movements can be defined as a collective, youth-driven effort focused on advocating for social, political, or environmental change. For example, in Chile, students marched through the streets against economic inequality in education, and in Germany, students protested to demand climate change reform. Despite similarities in student and youth-led civics movements across the world, their journeys and outcomes varied drastically. Some movements achieved great success by passing legislation; however, others had little impact in effecting change. This variation is largely influenced by the systems of government under which these movements operate. The systems of government and related power structures in countries can differ, and thus specific advocacy strategies may be effective in some countries and less so in others. For an "effective" movement, these advocacy strategies need to be implemented depending on the way power is structured within a country.

Two major systems of government, which will be examined in this review, are federal and unitary. Bose et al. (2025) define, "A Unitary system centralizes authority within a single national government… local governments may exist, but they primarily serve as extensions of the central authority, executing decisions made by the national parliament" (p. 115). In contrast, they also define, "A federal system disperses power across multiple layers of government, typically involving a national and several regional or state governments. This arrangement allows for greater local autonomy and responsiveness to regional needs…" (p. 115). As such, federal systems tend to allow for multi-faceted advocacy strategies, but may also enable fragmentation of movements, which can divide them and weaken their impact. Unitary systems of government, however, tend to allow for movements to concentrate efforts into one centralized body, but narrow the routes that can be taken to create policy change. This research presented in this paper explores how systems of government may impact advocacy strategies and outcomes of student-led movements. Further, it analyzes movements in countries under both unitary and federal systems of government. The federal systems examined include the United States, Australia, and Germany, while the unitary systems include Chile, Japan, and South Africa. These specific countries were chosen to represent the range of political cultures, movement types, and policy domains. This literature review asks: How do federal and unitary systems of government influence the advocacy strategies and policy outcomes of student-led civics movements?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Some student-led movements find success in creating policy change, while others fail to achieve real policy outcomes. Previous research has used the theoretical framework of the political process model of social movement analysis to develop the reasoning behind why student-led advocacy outcomes largely vary in relation to the systems of government. The framework allows for a more comprehensive comparison among the strategies and successes of student-led advocacy movements and how the systems of government under which they exist influence these outcomes.

Political Process Model of Social Movement Analysis (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996)

In their research on social movements, McAdam et al. (1996) developed the political process model of social movement analysis to explain why some movements succeed while others fail. This model identifies three core components that have the potential to impact the movement's outcome: political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and cultural framing. The political opportunity structure, or POS, can be defined as the degree to which a given political system is open or closed to change imposed by outside formal institutions. In this model, the structure of government remains one of the most critical components in determining what political opportunities exist for a movement. For example, federal systems tend to have wider political opportunity because power is diffused among subnational governments, while unitary systems tend to have narrower political opportunity because power is centralized. However, federal systems are not guaranteed to allow movements to succeed, nor do unitary

systems guarantee their failure. Instead, the conditions of these systems influence the political opportunities.

McAdam et al. further define mobilizing structures as the formal organizations, informal networks, and available resources that movements use to engage members of the community in collective action. For student-led movements specifically, mobilizing structures may include various social media applications or university campuses. The movements discussed in this paper largely vary in their mobilizing structures. For example, the Sunrise Movement used a formal nonprofit with millions of dollars within their budget, while the FFF Kyoto resisted institutionalization and operated through smaller circles of members. The use of mobilizing structures as a theoretical framework is essential in understanding the advocacy strategies used to help movements gain momentum and how they influenced policy outcomes.

McAdam et al. define cultural framing as the process in which movements create meaning, assign blame, define the cause, and build credibility among others. As will be seen in the case studies, advocacy movements in both federal and unitary systems focus largely on cultural framing, but their targets and specific frames differ. On the one hand, movements in federal systems typically frame demands in a way that appeals to multiple levels of government, while on the other hand, unitary systems typically frame demands toward a targeted central audience.

These three components of the Political Opportunity Structure Model can dissect why some student-led advocacy movements succeed, and others fail. The model will be applied to identify how structures of government affect movements, and what strategies are best suited for federal systems and unitary systems.

Veto Players Theory and the Structural Conditions of Policy Change (Tsebelis, 2002)

Another framework used to assess the successes of social movements in federal and unitary systems is Veto Players Theory. In Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work, Tsebelis (2002) analyzes the conditions needed for a government to alter the status quo. This framework defines a veto player as any actor whose agreement is needed to change the status quo. This means that veto players can not only be individuals but institutions as well. This theory argues that an increase in veto players makes policy change increasingly difficult. Alternatively, systems with fewer veto players find it substantially easier to achieve policy change.

Federal systems, according to their constitutions, distribute power across multiple levels of government. Thus, this can correlate with an increase in the number of constitutional veto players. This can make it difficult to achieve policy change in federal systems, as approval is needed from either national and sub-national units of government, or from the national level to a great extent, in which approval overrides sub-national authority, or from only sub-national governments, in which policy change may not be uniform across jurisdictions. Although federal systems provide multiple access points for civic

movements, it also generates numerous veto players that can hinder the success of policy changes advocated for by students.

In contrast, unitary systems tend to have a concentration of veto players at a national level because subnational governments derive their authority from the central government. If a student-led civics movement successfully pressured the national government to enact policy change, the movement would not face any counterinterference from subnational governments. This allows for civic movements in unitary systems of government to experience more rapid and widespread change, which movements in federal systems struggle to achieve.

However, this advantage is not always present in unitary systems. For example, a unitary system that is controlled by a single-party government with a strong resistance to movement demands can be considered a system with one incredibly cohesive veto player whose position is a strong opposition to movements' goals. An example of this can be seen in Chile's 2011 Student Movement, in which the government strongly opposed the movement's idea of positioning education as a public right. This means that the range of outcomes the veto player could possibly accept does not include the change warranted by the advocating group. This can create a limit on policy change that a movement is able to successfully achieve. It is important to recognize, however, that the actual number of veto players and their ideological alignment with movements is still dependent on the structure of institutions within each country.

Both the Veto Players Theory and Political Process Model will be used to interpret the case studies discussed. The Veto Players Theory will be used to discuss the veto players faced in each movement, the choices made by the movements in response to these players, and the degree of success the student-led civic movements were able to achieve from their response. The Political Process Model will be used to analyze the strategies of movements in response to government structures and the outcomes resulting from these choices. This framework will allow for both federal and unitary systems to be evaluated equally, and identify the configurations in each system that either enabled or obstructed the success of the student-led civic movements.

LITERATURE REVIEW METHODOLOGY

This is a comparative literature review that examines student-led movements in 6 countries through the examination of 22 scholarly sources. These sources were found by searching academic databases using a combination of terms related to student-led movements, civics movements, political opportunity structures, and federal and unitary governments. The databases used were Google Scholar and JSTOR. Terms used for search include the following: "civics movements", "student-led movements", "political movements", "unitary government", "federal government", "youth-led movements", "international student movements", "international youth movements", "unsuccessful youth movements", "successful youth movements", "political change frameworks", "2000s political movements", "modern political movements", and "political movement frameworks". To successfully identify the literature used, I ensured sources included were peer-reviewed, cited sources used for reference, and were either published or

written by a credible organization, institute, or scholar. I also ensured that sources included quantitative data and data from other credible sources to support claims. I tended to exclude sources that were not written papers or journals, were not peer-reviewed, and failed to include quantitative evidence or evidence from other credible sources.

The countries and movements chosen to be examined for federal systems of government are: The Sunrise Movement and March For Our Lives (United States), Australia Youth Climate Coalition and School Strike 4 Climate (Australia), and Fridays for Future (Germany). For the unitary systems of government, the countries and movements chosen are: The 2011 Student Movement (Chile), the Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy and Fridays for Future Kyoto (Japan), and #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall (South Africa). These specific countries and movements were chosen because they demonstrated relevance to student-led political mobilization, advocacy strategy, and/or policy outcomes. The countries were chosen to ensure there were diverse perspectives considered from various regions and cultures. The movements were chosen to ensure variety in the causes being advocated for.

The majority of sources used for review are peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books, supplemented by institutional reports and other scholarly materials providing movement policy documentation. The sources and movements were analyzed through the Political Process Model and Veto Players Theory. Furthermore, success in this paper shall be defined as the observable change in government policy or agenda that can be traced back to the student-led movement discussed.

FEDERAL VERSUS UNITARY SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT

[The variable being observed throughout this research is the structure of governance. Schiavon (2006) argues that how power is divided between the national and subnational governments plays a key role in determining how political systems operate. In federal systems, subnational governments tend to derive their power from a constitution. Thus, subnational governments in federal systems have a degree of autonomy in which they can enact policy change without needing approval or power from the central government, as their power is constitutionally protected. This can create further institutional opportunities for policies to either be advanced or blocked. However, in unitary systems, local authorities derive their power from the central government. Thus, in unitary systems, local authorities have less autonomy and require the central body of government to provide power. As such, less change can be enacted at the local level in unitary systems of government, as the majority of power is held within the central body.

For advocacy movements, governance structure often shapes the methods used by organizing groups. In federal systems, the overall institutional structure is much more complex compared to unitary systems, as it has access to more points of contact with the government. Even if a movement is not successful at the national level, it can still achieve policy outcomes at the local level. Additionally, local governments in federal systems derive power from a constitution and, as a result, success at the local level cannot be easily overturned by the central government. The Sunrise Movement, discussed later in this research, provides an example of this strategy, which supported divestment in fossil fuels at the state level, while

simultaneously advocating for the Green New Deal at the national level.

As unitary systems tend to have a less complex structure, it can be difficult to achieve sustained change. In unitary systems, the power of the central government can achieve quick and widespread change. For example, in South Africa's #FeesMustFall campaign, university-level students engaged in widespread protest to achieve a 0% fee increase, directly announced by President Zuma. However, when the central government is less responsive, there are fewer options for movements to pursue policy change. For example, Japan's central government enforced the notion that protesting is stigmatized within society through its education system and political culture. This has suppressed movements led by the youth, and the government structure tends to create a system without any other level to appeal to.

It is crucial to understand that the terms federal and unitary systems are somewhat broad. In reality, governments do not fit directly into one or the other, but rather on a spectrum between the two systems. An example of this can be seen through Australia's bicameral federal structure, which differs from other more centralized federal systems. Additionally, it is important to understand that structures of government are a condition rather than a cause of movement success and failure. Economic, political, and social factors all play a role in how advocacy movements succeed in their endeavors.

CASE STUDIES OF FEDERAL SYSTEMS

Movements taking place in a federal system often allow for movements to pursue advocacy and policy change at multiple levels of government. However, this structure is not all beneficial. Multilevel systems increase complexity. Movements may need to coordinate across various regions and levels of government. They may find success in some areas and at some levels, such as the state level, but not in others, such as the national level. Thus, it can be more difficult to achieve widespread uniform change. The pathways of movements observed in three federal systems - The United States, Australia, and Germany- exemplify how federal structures shape strategies of student-led movements for policy change. It will also reveal the limitations that occur in federal systems of government regarding movement success.

The United States

The two movements that best exemplify student-led movements within the United States are the Sunrise Movement and March for Our Lives. These movements highlight how movements use the multilevel opportunity structure, and how the federal system shapes policy outcomes.

The Sunrise Movement

The Sunrise Movement was launched in 2017 by a student-led climate organization in Washington, D.C. Run by students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Wesleyan College, the movement's

political strategy was to align itself with the Democratic Party of the United States. The choice to align with a political party was a calculated plan developed in consideration of the structure of the American federal system. De Moor and Wahlström (2019) emphasize that climate movements typically alter their strategies depending on the political opportunities available to them. This supports the argument that the Sunrise Movement's use of both national and subnational routes reflects its adaptation to the Political Opportunity Structure of the U.S.

At the federal level, the Sunrise Movement advocated for the passage of the Green New Deal. This bill was introduced in Congress in 2019 and sought to link climate action with economic justice. Although the bill itself did not become a law, the Sunrise Movement was able to amass the pressure needed to contribute elements of the bill to the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. This demonstrates the lengthy process to achieve policy change as seen in the federal veto player theory. It exemplifies how large-scale reform is difficult, but federal systems allow for smaller-scale reform wins to be achieved by organizations capable of long-term advocacy. Stuart et al. (2020) highlight how the Sunrise Movement specifically targets a major political party at the federal level, while simultaneously advocating for change at the state level through fossil fuel divestment. This strategy of targeting both the national and subnational governments is a strategy that can be implemented in a movement in federal systems to achieve success in policy reform.

Australia

The federal system of Australia differs from that of the United States through features such as compulsory voting, strong party discipline, a Senate purely representing state interests, and a history of centralized industrial relations that coexisted with genuine state policy autonomy in areas like education and environment regulation. Both the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) and the School Strike 4 Climate (SS4C) movements emphasize how these specific features of the federal system have shaped strategies used by movements and their policy outcomes.

Australia Youth Climate Coalition

The Australian Youth Climate Coalition was founded by 65 young people, including college and university students, across Australia in 2006. Hilder et al. (2022) provide a longitudinal case study of the AYCC over the course of fifteen years, exemplifying the outcomes of multi-channel engagement with a federal system. The authors categorize the AYCC's approach as educational movement-building. This is a combination of direct lobbying in both the state and federal governments, digital advocacy, formal school education programs, and public demonstrations. This strategy was used in response to the federal distribution of authority across education in Australia, environmental regulations, and energy policy. The longevity of the AYCC is significant in that it demonstrated the somewhat slow pace of policy change in federal systems and the resilience organizations must maintain through multilevel engagement.

Through this movement, federal advocacy can be associated with a lengthy process. The AYCC demonstrated this by pursuing state-level renewable energy policy changes that cannot be easily reversed by the federal players. However, rapid and uniform change cannot be achieved by advocating at the state level. It takes much longer to see widespread policy change, and such changes may not be uniform across regions. The authority of Australian states over energy policy highlighted the resistance of state powers against federal political shifts. This demonstrates the advantage of movements in federal systems: if national change is unlikely, smaller policy changes at subnational levels can accumulate over time to achieve great policy change success.

School Strike 4 Climate

Another student-led movement in the federal system of Australia is the SS4C strike of September 2019, which is associated with a significant moment in Australian youth climate activism. The SS4C was an informal network of student activists, coordinating across different states without a central headquarters, as described in Hilder et al. (2022). During this time, the government of Australia shifted to being conservative and resistant to climate policy. As a result, the movement prioritized mobilization of public opinion over direct engagement with institutions to shift the political opportunity structure. This made climate inaction electorally costly, providing a more achievable route than winning in legislation.

White et al. (2022) argue that the September 2019 SS4C strike was an example of students enacting political agency through mass civic participation rather than traditional lobbying. This highlights the cultural framing aspect of the Political Process Model, used by the movement, which focused more on persuading the public rather than the elite. In mobilizing countless students and families, the movement shifted views on climate action, making opposition stigmatized rather than contested. Hohenhaus et al. (2023), on the other hand, highlight a complication of the movement in the context of a federal system. It details how anti-protest laws operating at the state level created variation in the movement's success across jurisdictions. This created a situation in which the entirety of the movement experienced varying legal environments, exemplifying veto players theory at the subnational level. In states with more aggressive protest legislation, state governments act as additional veto players, which limits the movement's reach. This can cause variations in policy outcomes between states, limiting the success of movements as a result.

Germany

The analysis of Germany's Fridays for Future movement will provide a nuanced perspective in understanding how the complexities of federal government systems affect strategic choices and policy successes of student-led civics movements.

Fridays for Future

Following Greta Thunberg's 2018 school strike, FFF became associated with one of the most impactful youth movements in modern European political history. Germany's federal system has a unique POS. There are many shared responsibilities between the federal government and sixteen Länder. The country also has additional municipal governments that have authority over land use, building standards, and local energy infrastructure.

Einsiedel (2020), an unpublished manuscript, highlights FFF Germany's extra-parliamentary stance in which the movement avoided formal ties to political parties. Veto players theory can help explain why FFF Germany adopted this approach. Due to Germany's POS, affiliation with a single political party in the multi-party proportional system tends to alienate potential supporters and cause the movement to be unable to speak for a wider range of constituents. FFF Germany understands its POS as needing non-partisanship to maximize mobilizing potential. In Eckersley et al.'s (2025) analysis of FFF's impact on German municipalities, many declared climate emergencies and adopted participatory governance in response to the 2016 demonstrations. Fewer veto players at the local level were associated with less opposition. Thus, the FFF was able to create change and action at the local level while federal action was blocked.

CASE STUDIES OF UNITARY SYSTEMS

Student-led civics movements in unitary systems faced an environment in which power tended to be heavily concentrated. When central governments of unitary systems are receptive to demands made by movements, the unitary structure can help to create rapid policy change across a country. However, when central governments are resistant to change, there may be fewer outlets to pursue change. The countries that will be analyzed in this context will be Chile, Japan, and South Africa.

Chile

The movement that will be analyzed in the context of Chile's unitary system will be the 2011 Student Movement. The analysis of this movement will provide a comprehensive understanding of what strategies are used to leverage the success of student-led civic movements in unitary systems of government.

The 2011 Student Movement (Movimiento Estudiantil)

The moment that sparked the 2011 Movimiento Estudiantil was when Chile's unitary presidential system joined with a higher education landscape structured around market principles. The movement's POS was primarily controlled by the central government. This can be attributed to Chile's unitary system, in which there are no subnational governments with true authority over higher education advocacy. This tends to

create a situation in which civic movements cannot redirect their advocacy towards other institutions or government authorities to achieve meaningful policy change.

Bellei et al. (2014) outline the 2011 movement as a response to Chilean education being turned into a market. This caused Chilean families to endure the highest educational costs relative to income of any OECD country. The movement utilized various mobilizing strategies such as mass street demonstrations, university occupations, and direct lobbying toward the Ministry of Education. These strategies reflect the POS of Chile, as efforts were targeted toward one single central body of government because of the POS's narrow opportunities. This movement focused on a public right to education rather than a private good. This mission was used to unite the public across various classes.

In terms of the veto players theory, the President of Chile was the primary veto player, but ideologically opposed the movement's demand to restructure education into a public right. Thus, the movement struggled with significant institutional restraints. As explained by Bellei et al. (2014), the government's response was to offer incremental funding concessions to diffuse the pressure raised by the movement without agreeing to their demands. This response demonstrates how a single ideologically opposed veto player can significantly limit the success of student-led civics movements.

Japan

The two movements that will be analyzed from the unitary system of Japan are the Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy (SEALDs) and Fridays for Future Kyoto. These student-led civics movements provide insight into the influence unitary system structures have on the choices and policy successes of such movements.

Student Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy

In the specific context of Japan's unitary system, there is a complex challenge that is presented. In the political culture of Japan, activism has historically been treated as socially deviant. Its formal concentration of authority and degradation of dissent tends to create an incredibly close POS. The movement itself was launched in 2015 in opposition to Prime Minister Abe's interpretation of the constitution to permit collective self-defense. This movement had to cater to both institutional veto players as well as cultural veto norms.

Slater et al. (2015) describe SEALDs as the first college-based social movement in Japan that has drawn national attention in around 50 years. This fact, however, highlights the narrowness of Japan's POS. This can be attributed to Japan's institutional barriers and cultural setting. As activism is socially stigmatized, the non-institutional veto on mobilization and the cost of participation increase. In response to this, SEALDs avoided radical imagery and used social media to mobilize political participation among the youth. The movement focused on constitutional democracy rather than confrontational demands, according to Falch et al. (2020).

Falch et al. (2020) explain how SEALDs created informal civic environments in which the youth could get involved in political dialogue without social consequences typically tied to activism in Japan. This provides an example of cultural framing used by student-led civic movements to alter the cultural conditions of political participation. The strategies used by the movement lowered the social cost of activism so that more people could be recruited for the cause. This also highlights how the strategies used by the movement depended on the POS of Japan. However, SEALDs did not succeed in enacting policy change to block Abe's constitutional reinterpretation, thus demonstrating the limits to cultural framing strategies used against an institutional veto player in a unitary system.

Fridays for Future Kyoto

The Fridays for Future Kyoto movement differed from that of both SEALDs and Fridays for Future Germany. This movement confronted a political climate that gave way for a narrow opening in Japan's POS.

Nishiyama (2021) provides an ethnographic study of FFF Kyoto in which it is found that Japan's school system, which oppresses political discussion among the youth, influences young activists from an early age. However, FFF Kyoto functions as a civic education space in place of the school system. The movement's internal democratic structure serves as a cultural framing device that represents the democratic participation that is discouraged by Japan's political culture.

Prendergast et al. (2021) find that Japan has framed protests as anti-social. This has been further reinforced through the education system, thus further constraining the constraints on advocacy in unitary systems. For the veto player model, this marks a limitation of advocacy in such a system. Japan can use cultural socialization to veto mobilization itself to ensure that movements do not amass enough power to truly create political pressure. FFF Kyoto was unable to achieve its goals in policy changes and thus suffered from a government system with limited opportunities to influence policies.

South Africa

In regard to South Africa's unitary system, two movements will be analyzed: #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall. These movements are suitable examples for understanding how student-led civics movements are affected by the unitary systems they are set in.

#FeesMustFall

In post-apartheid South Africa, its unitary system differs from that of Japan and Chile. Its central government champions a constitutional democracy without interference from subnational governments. The #FeesMustFall movement was launched in 2015 across universities in South Africa and serves as a prime example of how student-led civics movements are affected by the structure of government systems.

The CSVR's policy analysis of #FeesMustFall highlights how the movement succeeded in influencing President Zuma to declare a 0% fee increase across all public universities while also increasing the National Student Financial Aid Scheme funding, as found in Langa (2017). This was achieved through the movement's nationwide campus protests. In terms of the PPM, the POS benefited the movement as the ANC coalition expressed ideological alignment with the student demands. Campus occupations, national coordinating networks, and organizing through social media were all mobilizing structures used to spread awareness of the movement to universities across the country to achieve a level of disruption that would successfully influence the government to agree to the movement's demands. The movement also used cultural framing to position free education as a post-apartheid right rather than a fiscal demand, helping to frame demands in a way that was more politically acceptable to the coalition.

The main veto player in South Africa is the central government. Because the central government accepted the demands of the movement, nationwide policy change was enacted without any other veto players from subnational governments to dispute. This highlights an advantage within unitary systems, in that the absence of subnational veto players can lead to nationwide policies being enacted.

However, a limitation of this can be seen in a study done by Ntombana et al. (2023) in which it was found that the higher education landscape changed minimally as the 0% fee increment was reversed in the following years and NSFAF remained underfunded. This shows how fiscal constraints can operate as veto players without being institutional. It is a structural condition that limits the extent to which the government can enact policy changes.

#Rhodes Must Fall

The #RhodesMustFall movement began at the University of Cape Town in 2015 in a campaign to remove a statue of Cecil John Rhodes as a form of decolonization. This movement demanded changes to the culture of institutions and racial equity in academic staffing across South African higher education.

Daniel (2026) analyzes RMF to determine how the movement's demands for decolonization regarding institutional symbols created policy pressure on the central government of South Africa for free education and curriculum reform. In terms of the PPM, RMF used cultural dreaming by starting with a solid,

achievable, and symbolic demand. This helped the movement use initial success to generate momentum against more difficult demands regarding curriculum content and institutional culture. Thus, demonstrating the efforts of the movement to change the political opportunity structure itself.

Daniel (2026) further analyzes how the intersectionality of the movement shaped its demands and internal dynamics to create a coalition spread out enough to exert sufficient pressure across multiple universities. Opeyemi et al. (2022) also assessed the long-term legacy and found that although the movement succeeded in placing decolonization onto the national government's policy agenda, structural transformations were limited. In terms of veto players, this movement's inability to succeed may be attributed to the institutional culture rather than the institutional actors, such as the governments. Universities played a role in acting as secondary veto players whose resistance to decolonization lasted longer than the movement's ability to continue to exert pressure.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The ten movements analyzed across six different countries reveal patterns of how movements responded to government structures. Simultaneously, the analyses discover that neither a federal nor a unitary system is entirely advantageous for a movement's success. The theoretical frameworks will be used to compare the case studies.

Political Opportunity Structure

Federal systems tend to have a wider but shallower POS. They typically have many access points (because of subnational governments having their own autonomous power separate from that of the national government), but often lack the ability to generate nationwide policy change. This can be seen in The Sunrise Movement's state-level divestment campaigns, the AYCC's state-to-state engagement, FFF Germany's municipal climate declarations, and SS4C's subnational variation in protest rights. Schiavon (2006) argues that the way power is split between the national and local governments in federal systems depends on both how many opportunities there are to block or advance a policy, and which actors are occupying such positions. This helps to explain how federal systems can provide numerous routes for movements to pursue policy change, even if one specific level of government does not support the demands.

Unitary Systems tend to offer a narrower but deeper POS with their ability to produce nationwide policy change with a single decision. This can be seen in South Africa's 0% fee increment and Chile's commitment to free education. However, this depth depends on the central government's response to a movement's demands. When the unitary POS is closed, the effects can be exemplified through Japan's SEALDs and FFF Kyoto. Although they mobilized many and used cultural framing successfully, the veto of the national government caused no policies to be implemented.

Mobilizing Structure

It can be seen in movements such as Sunrise, MFOL, and AYCC that federal movements typically develop formal structures of organizing with budgets, staff, and lobbying operations. This reflects the resources required in multilevel federal advocacy, as maintaining campaigns at both the national and subnational levels requires a substantial amount of time, money, and resources.

Veto Players Theory

In federal systems of government, the constitutionally-protected and autonomous subnational governments can present further political actors and institutional opportunities for policies to be vetoed or advanced. Because of the wider political opportunity structure, if a veto player rejects a movement's demands, the movement may turn to other veto players for support in obtaining policy change. However, the influence and the quantity of these veto players are dependent on the structure and composition of the system (Schiavon, 2006). In contrast, unitary systems tend to have fewer veto players (typically a single one, being the national government) as the subnational governments tend to derive their power directly from the national government. Because of the narrow political opportunity structure, rejection from one veto player is associated with significant harm to a movement's success in achieving policy change.

Short-Term Versus Long-Term Success

In both federal and unitary systems, the short-term and long-term successes of policy changes substantially differed. In unitary systems, it can be seen that even when movements achieve policy change, there may be little to no structural changes. For example, in South Africa's #FeesMustFall movement, a nationwide policy was instituted in weeks, but according to Ntombana et al. (2023), there was minimal structural change found. In federal systems, movements may only accumulate small gains across multiple levels, but over years create structural change.

LIMITATIONS

Various limitations must be considered in this literature review. While the majority of the sources used were peer-reviewed journals or published books, the source of Nishiyama 2021 was an article from an institution. This source was used because there was limited information available in English regarding FFF Kyoto. This source, although not a peer-reviewed work, still provides value by presenting a detailed account directly engaging with members of FFF Kyoto, discussing the organization's work, progress, and success. Another limitation is the limited number of cases used in this review. Because only 22 sources were reviewed, there may be additional perspectives that were not considered in the research. Additionally, because movements from only 6 countries were analyzed, the review may not entirely be applicable to all student-led movements globally. Furthermore, there was difficulty in comparing the

"success" of movements because of the diverse goals of the movements discussed. They were not all aligned in the outcomes they aimed to achieve, which limited a uniform comparison. Some confounding factors in the outcomes discussed in the review may have been the social culture of these countries, as well as the specific topic of the movement. In considering these limitations, the conclusion drawn is limited in its direct causality between government structure and movement success.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined how advocacy strategies and policy outcomes of student-led civics movements differ between federal versus unitary systems of government. This was done through the analysis of case studies encapsulating 6 different countries and 10 student-led civic movements. The Political Process Model and Veto Players Theory were the frameworks used to evaluate the relationships between advocacy outcomes and systems of government. To conclude, the findings suggest that government systems may not only shape the outcomes of student-led civic movements, but may also affect the strategies of advocacy they adopt. Federal systems provide a larger range of fragmented opportunities for policy change, while unitary systems provide a smaller, more streamlined range of opportunities. Thus, movement strategies need to adapt to both the political opportunities available in a government and the way veto players are distributed throughout. The frameworks used helped to evaluate both the institutional opportunities and barriers created by political systems.

In federal systems of government, success can be achieved more efficiently in subnational governments than in national governments, as there are fewer veto players in subnational governments. In the event that movements cannot achieve success at the national level, they can appeal to subnational governments to achieve some success. However, this success may not be uniform throughout regions and limits rapid, widespread success of movements. In unitary systems of government, movements can achieve more immediate and widespread change as they target the national government. However, the institutional veto players at the national level can make it challenging to achieve support for a movement's demands. In the event of there being ideological opposition at the national level, it can be incredibly difficult for movements to find any success in policy reform, as there are limited other institutions movements can target.

Rather than viewing movements as successes or failures, this research evaluates how systems of government influence advocacy strategies and policy outcomes. As student civic participation increases globally, understanding government systems has become ever more important. Understanding how political institutions shape movements can help students pursue more effective and achievable policy change by adopting strategies suitable for their environment.

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