**The Impact of Social Movements Based on Iceland After 2008**

Student’s Name

Institution Affiliation

Course Name and Number

Instructor

Date of Submission

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**Introduction**

Iceland is one of the most progressive modern societies in the world, and it has for years been ranked top in terms of quality of life. The nation’s economy is impressive as it is among the most productive economies globally. Besides that, Iceland is among the greenest countries in the world, an aspect largely grounded on the vast renewable energy resources available within its borders. These and numerous other elements have made the Scandinavian nation an envy to many, and they have made it possible for the country to forge a strong and peaceful society where both men and women thrive and play a role in building the country. The sincerity of the country’s power was perhaps evident after the 2008 financial crisis, with the country, through strong social movements, beating the impacts of the crisis and emerging safely from the storm.

**True Democracy**

Perhaps Iceland’s true power is held by the citizens, a true democracy established post the 2007-2008 financial crisis. Indeed, the country witnessed a profound social approach to change, and the strategy ultimately proved ideal for navigating the post-financial crisis impacts. At the root of the change were reformists deeply concerned about the economic state of the country. Essentially, thousands of people engaged in protests in January 2009, denoting the biggest protests in Icelandic history (Ridenour, 2021). Here, a good question would be how such protests came to be in such a peaceful country, and the answer would point directly to Hörður Torfason, a musician, as responsible for igniting a reformation wave that would leave the country in a better position and with a better reputation than ever before.

**The Protests**

October 2008 saw Torfason staging a one-man protest following his grave concern for the economic direction the country was taking. Primarily, he was armed with a microphone and he tirelessly attempted to invite people to speak their opinions regarding the economic turmoil the country, and the rest of the world was enduring, and perhaps concerning the decisions the sitting government was making in response to the financial crisis. At this time, Torfason’s efforts would have appeared far-fetched and illogical, but the next weekend saw a more organized protest sprout and advance, with the demonstrators successfully establishing their stand (Ridenour, 2021). An agreement was made that the group would be demonstrating every Saturday in the efforts of forcing the sitting government to stepdown. Indeed, this primary objective was signed boldly, with the protestors claiming that they would only stop protesting after the government had stepped down.

**Eviction of the Government**

The peaceful demonstrations soon escalated into riots in January 2009, and riot police often dispersed the people using paper spray and batons. However, the people were unyielding as they disrupted parliament meetings, surrounded government buildings, and strongly demanded the resignation of the Prime Minister. Urgent plans for a parliamentary election were made in January with the aspiration that the elections would be held in April, but the people wanted a more rapid change involving a complete change in the political scene with immediate elections (Jónsdóttir, 2011). Therefore, the Prime Minister was forced to resign, and the Social Democratic Alliance was sworn in after forming a minority-based government. These events thus pushed the Independence Party out of the political scene even though the party had held power for the last 18 consecutive years.

**A New Government**

Focusing keenly on the events made possible through the social movement labeled by the press Kitchenware, Kitchen Implement, or the Pots and Pans Revolution, one can easily identify the significance of the movement towards propelling Iceland forward and helping the country emerge from the financial crisis successfully (Ridenour, 2021). Essentially, the demonstrations that later turned into riots brought real change in the country, removing a corrupt and ineffective government from power, and placing in its place a better government that would handle the things needed by the citizens effectively.

**Constitutional Reforms**

Apart from that, the social movement underlined the need for constitutional reforms that sought to give the people more power by placing them in a capacity to regulate the power held by political leaders. Essentially, the previous government had immensely failed the people through corruption, lack of transparency, and nepotism, and the people were fed up, and thus protested until they evicted the government and instituted a new government that would serve their needs, the needs of the 99% of the population (Jónsdóttir, 2011). With this power, the citizens successfully devised important and invaluable democratic tools that would save the country from another failed government as the people can now initiate a referendum independently and dissolve the parliament.

**Navigating the Financial Crisis**

Another important impact from the movement is evident through the step taken by the new government in handling the financial crisis and protecting the country’s economy. Primarily, the previous government had pushed the economy to the edge such that the impacts of the financial crisis were devastating, but strategic decisions and approaches placed the economy back on track (Matsangou, 2015). The country’s stock markets had fallen by 90% during the crisis, and the rate of unemployment rose swiftly to adverse levels. However, the government decided to employ a risky crisis-management policy that would provide a way out of the chaos (RT, 2014). While other nations were scrambling to save their banking systems, Iceland took another road by ignoring the falling banks and letting its three biggest banks collapse (Matsangou, 2015). Instead, the country implemented strict capital controls, and it focused on households by pushing banks into writing-off mortgage debts. The model, although perceived as unideal and skeptical, worked well with the rate of unemployment decreasing sharply, interest rates deflating, and output levels increasing strongly.

**Conclusion**

The post-2008 financial crisis sociological Iceland represents a process of reinvention and the creation of a perfect system for the people and the country’s benefit. Before and during the crisis, the country was seemingly heading in the wrong direction but was forced into the correct path through the power of the people. Reformations became necessary following the unscrupulous behaviors presented by the Independence Party government, and by enacting a new government and changing the constitution, Iceland stepped into a new era of progress, overcoming the anguish imposed by the financial crisis with a rather skeptical approach. Today, the Icelandic people hold the power to foster their nation forward, and everything seems to be working efficiently.

References

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