
The Role of Systemic Oppression in Shaping Civil Wars

The focus of this investigation will be “To what extent has systemic oppression shape what happened civil wars? And will analyze the degree to which the aspects of systemic oppression were expressed through the government”.

The first source would be analyzed would be a Newsone article written on 16, September 2016. This article was brought to life due to the Congressional Black Caucus panel discussion. The discussion was addressing the reshaping of criminal justice system and the role activists play in the movement to address issues affecting African-Americans. During the discussion Congressman Hakeem Jeffries spoke about the oppression Blacks have faced throughout the history of this nation. Since the first Africans set foot on American soil in 1619, Blacks have faced an insurmountable level of oppression despite the Emancipation Proclamation, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, reconstruction after the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. African-Americans have “not been able to breathe.” “Chattel slavery lasted until the Civil War and then there was a brief moment of enlightenment around the 13th Amendment, which ended slavery, and the 14th Amendment, the equal protection clause, and of course, the 15th Amendment, which dealt with the right to vote. “He said the period of reconstruction was “quickly abandoned” and replaced with Jim Crow and the Black codes. These oppressive institutions allowed for the “systematic lynching of African-Americans all designed to suppress our capacity.”

The second source being analyzed by the Revolution newspaper. This article is directed towards why there should be a revolution in the future for African Americans. This article focuses in on the comparable idea of systemic oppression used in our every day lives. Or take imprisonment: The Black population in prison is 900,000—a tenfold increase since 1954!—and the proportion of Black prisoners incarcerated relative to whites has more than doubled in that same period. A recent study pointed out that “a young Black male without a high school degree has a 59 percent chance of being imprisoned before his thirty-fifth birthday.” On top of all that, and reinforcing it, is an endlessly spouting sewer of racism in the media, culture and politics of this society—racism that takes deadly aim at the dreams and spirit of every African-American child. And who can forget the wave of nooses that sprung up around the country, south and north, in the wake of the 2007 struggle in Jena, Louisiana against the prosecution (and persecution) of six Black youth who had fought back against a noose being hung to intimidate them from sitting under a “whites only” tree at school?

This country was founded on the twin crimes of the genocidal dispossession of its Native

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American (Indian) inhabitants, and the kidnapping and enslavement of millions of Africans. But this essential and undeniable truth is constantly suppressed, blurred over, distorted and excused—all too often treated as “ancient history,” if admitted at all. But let’s look at its implications. The early capitalists, like their descendants, would take possession of and sell the goods thus produced, paying the proletarians only enough to live on, and thereby accumulating profit. They did this in competition with other capitalists, and those who could not sell cheaper were driven under; this generated a drive to gain any possible advantage, either through lowering wages and more thoroughly exploiting the proletariat, or through investing in more productive machinery, or both. This twin dynamic of exploitation and competition drove forward the accumulation of capital in a relentless and ever-widening cycle. The fact that these supposedly “inherently inferior” people had played a crucial part in building up highly developed societies and cultures in both Africa and the Americas, long before Europeans came to dominate these places, was an “inconvenient truth” written out of the official histories and textbooks. And the fact that all human beings are all one species, with only relatively superficial differences in some characteristics, was also written out, with spurious racist pseudo-science substituted instead—lies that also come up in new forms today.

The third source to be analyzed would be from Setareh Janda in the article Ranker. This article is focused towards ways oppression and racism was kept alive after the civil war. The Jim Crow era perpetuated racism in America, and life for black Americans after the Civil War was dangerous. For many black Americans, true freedom didn't become reality, and new challenges arose. In both law and custom, white Americans attempted to exclude, oppress, and limit the rights of black Americans. This post-Civil War racism was as heinous as it was unbelievable, especially since some of the ways racism was kept alive mimicked or drew from the very slave system the Civil War had officially ended.

But this story is not just one of oppressors and the oppressed. Though the Jim Crow era is certainly a heartbreaking, violent chapter in African American history, it is also a story of resistance and activism for many men and women who suffered under it. Like Harriet Tubman in the antebellum and war years, or slaves who assisted the Union Army as Civil War spies, black Americans during the Jim Crow era also challenged racism in subtle, important ways.

True, most of the Jim Crow laws were in the South. But racism existed across the country, and wasn't confined to states that rebelled in the 1860s. Racism was not just a Southern problem - it was an American one.

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