

American civil revised

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



American civil war of 1861-1865 was the bloodiest war. The fight was between United States (the Union) and the Southern eleven slave states that proclaimed that they had their own rights to secession, thus, forming Confederate states of America which was headed by Jefferson Davis as the President. The United States termed as the Union was made up of Free States together with Border States that were under President Abraham Lincoln lead by the Republican Party. The republicans were against the spreading of slavery into regions governed by the United States (the Union); this increased the desires of secession by the Southern states.

Nevertheless, the republicans refused to accept any secession rights from the Southern states. This then led to the civil war which broke up on April of 1861, when Southern States forces attacked a military installation of United States (union) located at Fort Sumter, in the South of Carolina, which was the very first state to secede. (Holt, 1978) Causes of the civil war Many historians argue that the civil war was caused by slavery issues. However, there is no one simple cause of the civil war.

The war was caused by complex issues including slavery, party politics, and sectionalism, misunderstandings of federalism, expansionism, economical differences and modernization during that period. All this issues contributed to the war. (Holt, 1978) Slavery Slavery is considered by many historians as the main issue that caused the war; other reasons were directly or indirectly related to slavery. Historian Holt (1978), said, as the 1850s went on, an exacerbating, exhaustive and basically pointless conflict about slavery continued to be the main topic excluding all other issues.

As Abraham Lincoln a Northern politician by then pointed out, the issue of slavery was the most important issue than other issues, he further states that “ indeed, so much more important has it become that no other national question can even get a hearing just at present. ” (Holt, 1978) The issue of slavery was in relation to competition by sections or states for the control of territories. The demand of the Southern states for a code of slave in the territories was an issue being used by the Southern politicians to divide the Democratic Party in to two. The division of Democratic Party ensured the election of Lincoln and also the secession.

Though, Abraham Lincoln did not have immediate plans of abolishing slavery in the South, the Southerners all over the South conveyed fears about the slavery future in the South the moment Lincoln took over, leading to tensions that lead to war. (Holt, 1978) The Southerners were also concerned about economic loss and racialequalitythat they may loss. In accordance to the Texas Declaration of Causes for Secession, declared that those states that were not holding slaves were proclaiming the degrading doctrine that all men were equal irrespective of color or race.

According to this declaration, African people were an inferior race. This issue of slavery contributed a lot to the civil war, the Southern states feared losing control of slavery to the federal government. On the hand the Union feared that the power of slavery was already controlling the government. This led to the civil crisis of 1850s. States disagreements about the moral issue of slavery; extent of democracy and the debate about economics of slave plantations labor over free labor caused political unrest in the states.

This contributed to the Southern secession which triggered the civil war. (Levine, 1992) Political instability Political instability during that time was so fractured; this contributed a lot to the civil war. Cultural and economic disparities contributed to widen the political differences. Wars between the north and the south grew a lot more heated, particularly after 1850. Politicians and the judiciary of the two regions sent contradictory signals in trying to appease each other. However, all the two parties were not satisfied.

The Georgians (Southerners) felt that the Federal government which was mainly controlled by the Northern industrialists was not responding to their problems in their states. Thus, the Southern states started seceding, this could not be allowed by the Northern states led by President Lincoln. As a result the Southern states opted to use force by attacking the military installation of the United States (the union) the United States (Union) responded and the war began. Therefore, political instability was another cause for the American civil war. (Holt, 1978) Modernization fears by Southern

Another cause of war was fear of modernization by the south, According to historian's Foner (1970), when the North abolished slavery and started industrial revolution which resulted to urbanization, improved education and reform activities like abolitionism, the truth that out of eight immigrants seven settled in the North, added to the truth that the number of whites leaving South for North were twice as those leaving North to South, this contributed to aggressive- defensive political activities of the South. These political animosities enhanced the prevailing tensions between the two parts culminating in the civil war.

(Foner, 1970) Other historians argue that, people who owned slaves were the highly modernized people in the South. Traditional people were the ones and this group included the middle class whites who had no slave or owned a few number of slaves. The South common people struggled for secession as they believed in a slogan of “ freedom is not possible without slavery” they also believed that slavery led to social equality between whites. On the other hand the Northerners particularly the republicans did have a varied interpretation of the principle of 1776.

This varied ideology is among the main causes of tensions between the Southern states and the Northern states and is among the many reason why the two regions had to fight the civil war. (Foner, 1970) States’ rights The rights of states was another issue that contributed to the war, Debate on if the Union was the one older than states or the other way opposite fueled the on going debate on rights of states. The debate was on if the federal government was should have a lot of power over states or if the federation was just made up of sovereign states that had more powers than the federal, this argument added to the on going controversy.

According to Stamp (1956), each part used rights of states arguments to their convenient position and changed positions when not convenient. Stamp (1956) points out that, Vice President Alexander Stephens of the South confederate as one example of the Southern states leader who termed slavery as “ cornerstone of the confederacy” at the beginning of the war. The Vice President further said that, civil war was not in regard to slavery; it was about states rights when the Southern states were defeated.

Thus, the issue of states rights created a lot of controversies that were among the many causes of the civil war. (Stamp, 1956) Who or what was to “blame” for the Civil War? What to blame; Slavery. The question remains: was the war about slavery? The answer is yes. So slavery was to blame for the war. Supposing that there was no slavery then the war could not have happened. Or supposing that there was no disagreement about slavery issue, the South probably would not have felt that their culture was being threatened, and the Southern politician would not have sought to protect their “rights to secede.”

” (Stamp, 1956) However, the war was not only about slavery it was also about the constitutional rights of the states, if it had powers to leave the Union. Though, the North never went to the war to stop slavery, nor did president Abraham Lincoln have an agenda of stopping the war once he became president, it is clear the differences in understanding of the slavery issue was a major contribution to the civil war. Being a moral issue, slavery caused division in political leaders of the South and the North and created the tensions that existed by then leading to the war.

(Stamp, 1956) Who to blame; Politicians. The main blame of the war goes to the politicians who were political leaders on both sides of the North and the South. The South depended on an economic system that relied heavily on slavery, their leaders such as William Lowndes Yancey of Alabama and Robert Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina who was known as “fire eaters” knew that supposing the South lost its slaves, then, it would undergo hard social and economic effects that will ultimately break the economy of the South.

(Stamp, 1956) Hence, any political activities that threatened the end of slavery in the South received the whole attention of political leaders of the South many of whom owned slaves and who were ready to go for war to ensure that their “rights” were protected. These political leaders were able to influence many Southerners that it was important to fight, in convincing the people they mainly justified the war by arguments which indirectly referred to slavery issue. The politicians of the North states were divided concerning the slavery issue and did not intend to go on war over that issue.

However, they took a political stand of fighting when war came, similarly they can also be blamed for the war. (Stamp, 1956) Could the war be avoided? Ever since the end of the American war, there have been arguments on whether the war was inevitable or could be avoided. The question illicit different answers according to the perspective one is looking the issue from. The war was inevitable and was bound to happen. This is because the ideologies being held by the South and the North were different.

In a situation where political differences are so pronounced it becomes hard for the two opposing sides to solve their differences amicably. Basing in mind that, what was at stake was a lot; economic consideration, freedom, democracy and the issue of slavery it could have been hard to avoid the war. In addition the politicians especially from the south felt threatened and had to assert the power. Basically unless there was change of ideology on either side war was inevitable. Conclusion The civil war of America basically occurred because of differences in political ideology brought about by slavery.

Slavery was a moral and economical issue that created a big rift between the Southern states and the United States (union). Before the war, fractured political system resulted in widening of the rift. Another reason that caused the war was the need of states to have more freedom by seceding from the federation this coupled with other complex issues especially economic ones were the major reason why the war occurred. In addition politicians particularly from the South who felt that their culture was being threaten also contributed a lot to the war.

As mention before slavery was the main cause of this who as one historian puts it “ without slavery there would not have been a civil war. ” (Stamp, 1956) Though, the war resulted in a lot of loss of life, damages and injuries, it greatly helped to correct the historical mistake of slavery and to emancipate the slaves, and bring equality and freedom to many slaves. References Foner, E (1970); Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men; Oxford press Holt, M. F. (1978): Political Crisis of the 1850s; Wiley, Levine, B (1992). Half Slave and Half Free; Hill and Wang, Stamp, K (1956): Peculiar Institution. Knopf