

States' rightsversusan indestructible union essay examples

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



The Civil War involved states in the North, collectively referred to as the Union, and several Southern states, also referred to as the Confederacy. Southern states sought to break away from the greater union to structure their own union, the Confederate States of America. The cause of the war revolved around the issue of slavery. While the North was opposed to slavery, the Southern states were utterly against its abolishment. Historians however are divided as to whether slavery was the sole cause. There are sentiments that there were underlying interests that both parties in the divide wanted to protect. These can be classified into political (states' rights vs. a permanent Union), economic (an agricultural based vs. Mechanized), and moral interests. Each of these interests is analyzed in the next part. The war was political to the extent that it involved a clash of political ideology. While the North favored a united nation under a common law, the Southern states preferred a union where states' rights were not subservient to the union. The North pushed for a blanket ban on slavery and insisted that the American nation was opposed to all forms of slavery. Accordingly, it was expected that all states would outlaw slavery. The Southern states on the other hand were not receptive of such blanket ban. At the very least they felt that the choice to ban slavery or not should be left to the state to decide and that a state's choice should be upheld even in other states (Divine 147). The North felt that such a scenario violated the rights of the other states, especially where a state had banned slavery and a Southerner moved to such state.

The economical aspect of the divide is depicted by the nature of the economy of the two fronts. The South's economy was largely agrarian,

farming cotton, tobacco among other things. The Northern economy on the other hand was largely industrial. Since a lot of land in the South was for farming, many industries were set up in the North. During the pre war period, the economy was not growing thus the government -dominated by the North- felt that industrialization or mechanization would boost the economy. The push to ban slavery was thus construed as coercion to the South to abandon slave labor in favor of mechanized labor. Both sides believed that the nature of their economy was the best, or at least had worked for them, thus were unwilling to abandon it (Divine 151).

The moral aspect of the divide is illustrated by the social ideals and beliefs of the two sides. The Southerners believed slavery was in line with the spirit of the founding fathers, who themselves had slaves. It was thus morally correct to have and keep slaves. To the Northerners, slavery was irreconcilable with Republicanism. They even ridiculed it and branded it as a national evil. To them, it was not morally correct to have and keep slaves. The Preston Brooks and Charles Sumner saga best illustrates this moral divide. In as long as both sides felt morally justified, the divide would still subsist.

Accordingly, the divide amid the two sides was in effect political, economic and moral. Though slavery revolved around all these issues, it was not the sole cause. A better approach would be to view it as a catalyst that brought forth the deep-seated political, economic and moral issues that were present at that time. The magnitude of the war is proof that the divide could not have been caused by a single cause. The foregoing issues present a holistic view to the conflict that better explains the cause of the divide between the North and the South.

Works cited

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