

The jim crow laws review

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



Deep faith in white supremacy not only justified an economic and political system in which plantation owners acquired land and great wealth through the brutality, torture, and ownership of other human beings, it also endured long after the institution of slavery was gone. Even when slavery was abolished, the economic and political system was so deeply entrenched that the passing of the black codes, and eventually the Jim Crow laws, did not hinder the white South's morality. Racism was a consequence, not a precursor, to slavery. Once it was instituted it became separate from slavery and acquired a social policy of its own.

During the Reconstruction Era, "no black man held political office in the South, yet three years later, at least 15 percent of all Southern elected officials were black". However, fifteen years later, after the Voting Rights Act of 1965, "fewer than 8 percent of all Southern elected officials were black." This highlights how precarious the institution of race is; as soon as the economy looked to be unstable or politics were shifting to favor conservatives, African American representation was yanked away.

The motivation of free labor for southern states was the beginning of mass incarceration. The Jim Crow laws were created to unfairly target African Americans, who were too poor to pay fines and instead were sent to jail. With no way to pay their way out of jail, prisoners were sold as forced laborers to railroads, plantations, and dozens of larger businesses throughout the south. Through most of the 20th century, prisoners became "younger and blacker", and the lengths of sentences increased dramatically. The nation's first prison boom occurred just as racial polarization was introduced as a political tactic to gain conservative Republican votes.

Some years later, Nixon called for a “ war on drugs”, something that seemed targeted at “ violent” black communities. The absence of explicitly racist rhetoric in his claims about crime and welfare, however, meant that the racial nature of his arguments could claim plausible deniability (Alexander, 2012). The conservative Republicans could safely vote Nixon into power, and effectively hunt down large portions of the African American population. Due to the impact of globalization and deindustrialization, black inner-city communities found themselves without legitimate employment opportunities. This increased incentives to sell drugs in order to survive, as joblessness and crack swept inner cities right as backlash against the Civil Rights Movement manifested itself through the war on drugs.

The media played, and still plays, a huge role in creating a frenzy around the “ war on drugs” and connecting it closely with the black community. It silenced arguments that improvement to education, welfare programs, and abandoned inner-city communities to instead favor blaming drugs for all problem with crime (Alexander, 2012). There were not many people who criticized this shift in focus, as it was broadcasted as the best interests of the nation. This focus still stands today; police brutality in modern society stems from being “ tough on crime”, a phrase used to stir racial resentment by providing rigid punishment for criminals. Black criminals are disproportionately brutalized when arrested which indicates underlying resentment on the part of white police forces.