

Struggles over racial relations from past times to now

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



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Throughout history minority backgrounds have endured many struggles which are still in effect today. For example, in the United States racial struggles for African Americans have been ongoing since the civil war. Law enforcement in the past has struggled with racial tension and those struggles are still a common threat to minority cultures today.

Before the Civil war slavery was legal in most states. DeBow saw no reason for slaves not to be used as the main workforce in an industrial revolution (Slaves and Masters). DeBow used several biblical quotes and characters from the Bible to provide the readers with a strong reason to defend the institution of slavery. Using references from the bible, allowed DeBow to create his own interpretation of the Bible to justify slavery and show that God did not condemn slave owners. Although De Bow argued slavery has existed since the beginning of time, the bible tells a different story that slaves were not kidnapped or forced into labor. They would sell themselves into slavery to settle their debts. During this time slavery was based upon social class not based on race during that time.

After the Civil war Slavery was eventually abolished in 1865. The Mississippi Black codes were created to maintain the agricultural economy and labor and prohibited freed slaves from owning their own farm land and from voting. The individuals that monitored and enforced the Mississippi codes were white law enforcement members. However, the ratification of the 14th amendment offered equal opportunity and protection for all individuals no matter their race. Next the 15th amendment allowed African American men the right to vote. Although civil rights were moving forward in a positive

direction it was still going to be a long battle for people to except it. This created an economic transformation that created differences while trying to find regional identity (Kessler-Harris).

The Southern states were resistance to Northerner states telling them how to live, which lead to the civil war and that resistance still exist today (Bond). In 1963, Birmingham Alabama became the focus of the civil rights movement. Civil rights activist wanted to change the perception of Birmingham and thought if they could achieve to desegregate in Birmingham they could accomplish just about anything (Littlefield). Non-violent marches were organized in Birmingham Alabama to protest racism and injustice. Law enforcement did everything they could to disrupt these marches, and on April 12th Martin Luther King was arrested for not complying with the no outsiders' rule. While in jail Mr. Kings wrote a letter called " the Letter from Birmingham jail", that responded to the white clergymen that called him an outsider. In this letter he explained that people have a responsibility to take direct action rather than waiting potentially forever for justice to come through the courts, and why it was necessary to have a non-violent protest (Jr.) Mr. King's describes in his letter the suffering African Americans faced by witnessing mob lynchings, hate filled policemen kicking and killing their brothers and sisters because of racism. However, the letter was not intended to be over critical, but to inform people against hatred and to illustrate the importance of the church. The church could be an instrumental tool to influence people for the greater good of society. Unfortunately, the protest was anything but peaceful, for the people that were protesting. Instead of

law enforcement approaching the situation in a peaceful manner, they behaved violently to the protestors. Law enforcement used brutal force such as aiming fire hoses at the protestors throwing them against walls (Chafe).

Struggles over racial relations have always existed throughout the history of our society and is still a struggle today. Society tends to react negatively in situations especially when it comes to race. Pew Research Center published a study to find out people's perception of racism and they asked the following questions. " How big a problem is racism in our society today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all?". According to the study fifty-eight percent of respondents said that racism is now " a big problem" in the US. This is up from a record-low of twenty percent in 2011. The study reported Americans who think that racism is ' a big problem' outnumber those who say it's ' not a problem' by nearly 20 to 1.

There are minority populations today that are holding onto racism from the past and especially with law enforcement. Racism has been a major part of law enforcement developed by the white slave owners as a means of punishment when someone did not obey. Martin Luther King Jr. said we should not make judgment or opinions based upon the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. A majority of white America has looked down on minorities. It is important for people to understand the bigger picture of hidden racial biases, and to develop your own opinion by interacting with one another.