

Was the civil war inevitable? essay

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



The Civil War in the United States continues to attract the interest of many historians who want to discuss the underlying causes of this conflict and its effects. In particular, they often discuss the extent to which this confrontation was inevitable. Overall, it is possible to say that the notion of inevitability is not fully applicable to this situation. More attention should be paid to the individual decisions of policy-makers, their attitudes, and values. It is often assumed that the conflict related to the legal status of slavery in the country was irreconcilable. However, by looking at the events which preceded the Civil War, one can argue that the confrontation did not have to evolve in the civil war; more likely, it can be explained by the failure to reach a compromise. This is the main thesis that should be elaborated more closely.

This issue can be discussed by looking at the primary sources. Historians, who support the idea that the American Civil War was inevitable, lay stress on the dramatic differences in the opinions of northern and southern political leaders (Heyrman, Lytle.& Stoff, 2010). For instance, one can mention the arguments expressed by John Calhoun (1850), who believed that there had been various encroachments on the rights of Southern states. For instance, one can speak about attempts to limit slavery in the country. In his view, the government had to put an end to such attempts; otherwise, the political role of the South could be reduced to the minimum. He speaks about the domination of Northern politicians in the state apparatus due to the growing population of these (Heyrman, Lytle.& Stoff, 2010). Therefore, one of the options available to the Southern states could be to secede from the Union, if their needs were not taken into account by the government. This is one of

the details that can be identified. To some degree, the events known as Bleeding Kansas suggest that pro-slavery and anti-slavery interest groups could enter into a violent conflict.

In turn, Abraham Lincoln (1858) also focuses on the problem of slavery. In his opinion, the Union could not remain sustainable if the problem of slavery was not resolved. He refers to the notorious Dred Scott decision, which highlighted the potential conflict between two regions of the country. Moreover, in his view, the spread of slavery had to be stopped. This is why he focuses on the Kansas-Nebraska Act according to the status of slavery could be determined with the help of popular vote (Lincoln, 1858). In his opinion, this decision was completely unacceptable. Overall, one can say that both politicians recognize the importance of slavery, and they have the opposite opinions on this issue. Moreover, they are unwilling to consider the interests of one another. Therefore, these dramatic differences in opinions indicate that the civil conflict in the United States could eventually break out. This is one of the arguments that can be made.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember several details indicating that the conflict was not inevitable. In particular, one should mention that Southern state did not secede from the Union simultaneously. This process was led by South Carolina, but it was not immediately supported by the legislators in other states. For instance, one can mention Tennessee, which was the last to join the Confederacy. Moreover, West Virginia emerged as a state because local policy-makers did not want to secede from the Union. Furthermore, they abolished slavery before the end of the Civil War.

Moreover, there were some slave states that did not secede; for instance, one can mention Missouri and Delaware. Thus, one cannot say that the problem of slavery was irreconcilable. This is one of the exceptions that should be taken into account. Overall, the pattern of secession does not fully support Calhoun's idea that all Southern states did want to be a part of the Union because the government wanted to restrict or abolish slavery. These are some of the issues that should be taken into account.

Much attention should be paid to the willingness or unwillingness of the local elite to accept the policies of the federal government. In some cases, they did not want to secede from the United States only because of the conflict which emerged as a result of the slavery debate. Moreover, the support of secession was particularly strong in the states in which the economy was very dependent on slave labor (Heyrman, Lytle & Stoff, 2010). In this case, the idea of inevitability is not fully acceptable. More likely, one can speak about the failure to reach a compromise.

This discussion is important because it indicates that the American Civil War continues to be a subject of heated debate among historians. One cannot say that this conflict was pre-determined by some forces that could not be controlled. The examples, which have been described, suggest that this war takes its origins in the attitudes and interests of separate politicians who could not change the strategies. In particular, one should speak about the unwillingness of Southern political leaders to accept the dangers of depending on slavery. These are the main details that can be distinguished.

Calhoun, J. (1850). The Clay Compromise Measures. Web.

Heyrman, C., Lytle, M., & Stoff, M. (2010). *U. S.: A Narrative History*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Lincoln, A. (1858). *House Divided*. Web.