

# Free report about civil rights

[Politics](#), [Civil Rights](#)



The killing of a black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri by a white police officer has thrown American into a huge debate about civil rights. There has been increased tension in the nation particularly after a grand jury decided not to indict the white police officer accused of killing the unarmed black teenager Michael Brown. Many blacks have received the news about the lack of indictment with utter disbelief and shock and the last few weeks have seen protests and demonstrations throughout the country calling for a complete review, reshuffle and overhaul of the justice system. The issue of civil rights has been sprung not the limelight and at the current pace of events, it is likely to continue for some time.

The Washington Post published an article describing the issue of civil rights in regard to this matter. The article describes the launching of civil rights investigation into the police department of Ferguson in Missouri. The investigation is supposed to follow a similar pattern to the one that is normally used when investigating cases of police profiling as well as the use of excessive force in other departments (Horwitz, Leonnig, and Kindy n. p). This investigation was launched following the killing of Michael Brown, a black teenager. Brown was gunned down after a confrontation in the street with the officer. The officer claimed that he killed Brown in self-defense although various witnesses have given different accounts about what actually transpired on that fateful day.

This Justice Department was bound to investigate not only the department at Ferguson but also other departments within the St. Louis County. Many of the departments in the county are predominantly white in spite of the fact that the majority of the population is black.

One element that the investigation was supposed to focus on was whether there was any violation of the killed teenager's civil rights. In addition, the investigation by the Justice Department was supposed to look at whether the police departments in St. Louis employed “ practices and patterns that resulted in a pattern of civil rights violations” (Horwitz, Leonnig, and Kindy n. p).

The article states that the number of police detriment reviews initiated by the Justice Department under the leadership of Attorney general Holder are twice as much as those initiated by his predecessor. The article states that there are, in fact, other 34 departments that have been placed under investigation of civil rights violations. The article quotes an incident in the Albuquerque Police Department where the Justice Department was forced to conduct an investigation into its conduct and conclude that it had repeatedly used “ deadly and excessive force in violation of the citizen's constitutional rights when there was no imminent threat to them or the community” (Horwitz, Leonnig, and Kindy n. p).

### **Other civil rights investigations had also been conducted in Seattle and New Orleans Police Departments.**

The article states the civil rights division of the justice department was granted the authority by a 1994 federal law to probe police departments to investigate whether they were engaging in a practice or pattern of violating civil rights of citizens. This particularly came after a video came up of white police officers physically assaulting Rodney King, a black motorist in Los Angeles.

The investigations can usually occur in various formats and may involve

collaborative arrangement, reform ideas proposals and training recommendations by the civil rights division of the Justice Department. The article states that one the earliest investigations of this kind happened in Washington D. C after the local police Chief called the Justice Department to investigate after a report by the Washington Post established that police officers in this particular precinct shot and killed more people than in any other part of the nation throughout the 1990's.

The article further states that investigations of this kind usually assess various aspects that include “ patterns of excessive force, complaints against officers and department training to help officers avoid racial profiling and unnecessary use if force” (Horwitz, Leonnig, and Kindy n. p). A successful investigation usually culminates into an official lawsuit.

The investigation into the Ferguson department is likely to result into charges if officers are found to have progressively abused the civil rights of residents. The senator of the state is fully supportive of the probe into the department where she claims that she has been forced to pull her staff from other areas and take them to Ferguson due to the large number of people who are coming up and claiming that they have had previous issues with the local police. She is then quoted saying “ The expansion of an investigation is by all means a great thing. I absolutely welcome this” (Horwitz, Leonnig, and Kindy n. p).

This article clearly brings into the limelight the issue of civil rights that has been also touched on in the textbook. As they are defined in the book, civil rights are those rights that protect and individual's sense of freedom from being abused and infringed upon the government, other individuals and

social organizations (Greenberg and Page, ch. 16). Civil rights are meant to ensure that every single American has the freedom to participate in the civil life without fear of discrimination (Greenberg and Page, ch. 16). More importantly, civil rights are meant to ensure that people in the society are not discriminated upon based on their orientation to various social groups defined by race, ethnicity, religion, disability and other social factors. Civil rights protect not only people's mental and physical integrity but also their property.

Civil rights have always been a contentious issue on the United States. This has particularly emerged from the fact that the nation has one of the largest multicultural societies in the world. There have historically been tensions between the nations' two major races; that is the whites and the African Americans and tension between the two races have been the primary sources of civil rights conflict. In fact, it was only in the 1960's after the famous civil rights movement that resulted in the signing of the civil rights Act in 1964 that tensions cooled down (Greenberg and Page, ch. 16). This civil rights movement was led by Dr. Martin Luther King, who advocated a free and just society where every citizen could exercise their freedom of life without being discriminated against.

However, civil rights go beyond the issue of race. Civil rights are supposed to ensure that every member or citizen of the nation enjoys their life without being discriminated against or without their personal freedom being infringed upon (Greenberg and Page, ch. 16). Civil rights characterize every democratic society, and they are supposed to be observed and enacted by each and every man (Carson 56). It is, therefore, quite sad that police

officers who have been charged with the role of protecting all citizens are the ones who are violating the civil rights of citizens

The article in the Washington Post exhibits the real situation in the nation. In spite of the fact that massive progress has been made in regards to the enactment of civil rights in very part of the nation, problems associated with civil rights still persist. The article challenges the notion that civil rights are now fully part and parcel of the entire American community. It shows that there are some sections of the nation where abuse of citizens' civil rights is still going on. Once again, the sad thing is that abuse of civil rights in this case is perpetuated by police officers who have been sworn to guard and protect all citizens regardless of their race. The fact that over 34 police departments have been subjected to investigations related to civil rights abuse depict a really sad situation about the nation's stature of civil rights. It is shown that in spite of many authors who have written about the enactment of civil rights throughout the nation, some are still abusing these rights. The case of Michael Brown discussed in the article also exhibits the society's attitude towards the issue of civil rights where for example people may in rush to argue that civil rights were abused without knowing the real details of the incident and on other hand had, others may be quick to defend the accused without once again knowing the real details of what transpired. In simple terms, the book helps to give a clear understanding of what civil rights entail, but the article shows the real situation on the ground and perhaps challenges what has been expressed in the book. The book makes a passionate claim that civil rights are supposed to garner individual's freedom

from infringement by bodies such as the police but the article, shows that infringement of civil rights is still a reality in the society.

## **Works Cited**

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