

The fight for civil
justice: the social,
economic, and
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The fight for freedom originated over three hundred years ago when the institution known as slavery captured thousands of Africans and transported them to America. They were forced to forget their culture and adapt new beliefs. Though liberated as an outcome of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, the struggle for freedom was far from over. “ Although American slaves were emancipated as a result of the Civil War and were granted basic civil rights through the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the U.

S. Constitution, struggles to secure federal protection of these rights continued during the next century” (“ Civil Rights,” 2011). An official title, however, was not allotted to this struggle for freedom until December 1, 1955. On this day, Rosa Parks, an African American seamstress, refused to abide by the Montgomery segregation laws. The bus driver called the police, and Rosa Parks was apprehended and sent to jail for violating the law.

This triggered the eleven month “ Montgomery Bus Boycott” to desegregate Montgomery’s buses, involving approximately forty-two thousand African American citizens; this accounted for about seventy-five percent of the bus users in Montgomery. Park’s refusal to offer a seat to a Caucasian man on the bus initiated one of the most powerful fights for equality in the twentieth century: the civil rights movement. From the years of 1955-1965, this movement was a true struggle in physical and philosophical meaning because it was the retaliation of the dehumanization of a culture for hundreds of years.

Therefore, the social, economic, political trends, and main ideas within the civil rights movement will be meticulously scrutinized. Social and Political Trends The sixties could easily be referred to as the age of youth. Around this time, all the children from the baby boom were developing into radical teenagers and proactive young adults. The fifties were etched with conservative thoughts and methods, but revolutionary thoughts almost immediately changed America. These young people demanded change by any means necessary. The demands had an effect on education, values, lifestyles, laws, and entertainment.

This could be one of the reasons that the civil rights movement had such a strong impact. Free-thinking and revolutionary beliefs led to a fight for freedom. Sit-ins and boycotts were engrained in the movement. The NAACP became stronger than ever while organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) coordinated nonviolent methods to express their demands. Initiating the civil rights movement, Rosa Parks was a social reformer. Perhaps the most influential reformer of the movement was the Baptist minister known as Martin Luther King, Jr.

He was, and still is, a major social reformer whose work remains prevalent worldwide. His methods advocated beliefs based on Mohandas Gandhi's nonviolent resistance concepts. He was the founder of the SCLC and the leader of the civil rights movement. At the other end of the spectrum there was Malcolm X. Malcolm X advocated for the same rights as MLK. He believed that violence was essential and our rights were to be obtained by any means necessary, making him a major social reformer as well. Economic <https://assignbuster.com/the-fight-for-civil-justice-the-social-economic-and-political-trends-of-the-civil-rights-movement-assignment/>

Trends Poverty in the 1950s and 1960s During the civil rights movement, the economy was poverty-stricken, especially within minority communities.

According to the National Poverty Center (2011), “ in the late 1950s, the overall poverty rate for Americans was 22. 4%, or approximately 39. 5 million individuals. These numbers declined steadily throughout the 1960s, reaching a low of 11. 1 percent, or 22. 9 million individuals, in 1973” (“ Poverty in the U. S. “, para. 3). 57% of African American housing was deemed to be unacceptable due to the fact that the majority resided in ghettos. African American families found it extremely hard to get a mortgage through a mortgage lender because if a black family moved into an area that was not a ghetto the property values would decrease intensely. Also, shocking, but not surprising, the average life of an African American was 7 years shorter than that of Caucasians, and infant mortalities in the black community were twice that in the white community” (“ Poverty in the U. S. , 2011, para. 5). The Baby Boom: 1946-1964 During the years of 1946-1964, a host of young men returned from service in World War II. According to Rosenberg (2011), “ In the United States, approximately 79 million babies were born. Much of this cohort of nineteen years (1946-1964) grew up with Woodstock, the Vietnam War, and John F.

Kennedy as president” (“ Baby Boom,” 2011, p. 1). This baby epidemic was known as the “ Baby Boom. ” During the lecture seminar, the instructor noted that besides the return from war, “ decreasing marriage age, desirability of large families, confidence in continued economic prosperity, and advances in prosperity were all contributing factors of the baby boom” (class lecture, September 20, 2011). The dramatic birthrate increase during <https://assignbuster.com/the-fight-for-civil-justice-the-social-economic-and-political-trends-of-the-civil-rights-movement-assignment/>

the Baby Boom led to a rise in demand by consumers for products, homes, cars, roads, and services. The metropolitan areas in the U. S. skyrocketed during these years.

The Vietnam War: 1954-1975 During this time in history, several events were taking place. The Vietnam War (1954-1975) had several major impacts on the U. S. economy. The war efforts put a financial strain on the nation's ability to produce goods, causing a strain in the industrial sector. " Factories that would have been producing consumer goods were being used to make items from the military, causing controversy over the government's handling of economic policy. In addition, the government's military spending caused several problems for the American economy" (" Vietnam War," 2008).

Multitudes of economic funds were allotted for overseas spending producing a disproportionate balance and a feeble dollar due to the fact that no funds were returning back to the U. S. Also, military disbursements, in conjunction with social spending, initiated inflation. Anti-war dissatisfied attitudes with the government triggered doubt and a lack of confidence by consumers because of the rise of interest rates limited the amount of capital. Regardless of Johnson and Kennedy's successful economic policies in the 1960s, the Vietnam War seriously damaged the economy and halted growth and affluence leading into the 1970s.

The Results: Major Policies and Programs The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1968 John F. Kennedy, also a social reformer of the time, came up with a plan that guaranteed equality among all Americans no matter their race. He proposed the Civil Rights Act; yet, before he could put the plan to action, JFK

was assassinated. In efforts to meet the needs of the critical demands of the civil rights movements, President Lyndon B. Johnson requested and granted the most widespread civil rights act to date. The act prohibited discrimination in voting, education, and the use of public facilities.

It was the first time since the Supreme Court ruling in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954 that the federal government enforced desegregation. " By 1967, 22% of the black students in the 17 southern and Border States were in integrated schools" ("*Integration*," 2007, para. 3). However, the continuing separation of blacks and whites in most areas was still omnipotent. Segregated housing was tackled in the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included a clause excluding discrimination against blacks in the sale or rental of most housing. These acts did not relinquish the fact that African Americans were still viewed as subordinates.

Conclusion In conclusion, the civil rights movement was a very powerful and successful movement for then and now. Though it did not put an end to all of the racism during the time, or presently, it was a step for equality and equality of human rights. These rights are still present in today's society. These concepts can be applied to affirmative action and gentrification. Affirmative action enforces equality within the workforce for people of all races. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 could be applied to gentrification or the restoring of dilapidated urban areas by the middle class that result in the displacement of impoverished residents.

If correctly implemented, the act could ensure that the impoverished obtains fair housing. It is obvious that a multitude of African Americans have

achieved real prominence in business, education, government, and other fields, myself being an example. Sadly, race continues to be one of the most obstinate difficulties in the United States because personal biases and racial stereotyping cannot be changed by lawmaking or lawsuits. We must overcome this to be successful in social work. References Anesi, C. (2008, October). Fascism: the ultimate definition.

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