

Interconnections of socialization: the african americans



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Abstract

Throughout American history, there were many significant events that took place which helped shape the world today. One major issue which is still popular today in uprising major controversy was slavery. Slavery is defined as a system under which people are treated as property to be bought and sold, and are forced to work. This issue predates written records and has existed in many cultures. Innumerable situations and events occurred during the early 1600's abiding through the late 1900's that contributed to this matter. The African Slave Trade, or " Middle Passage," was instrumental in both the rise of the British Empire and in the development of the future United States. African Americans were trafficked as slaves during the mid-seventeenth century when race was not solidified as a concept. The slave trafficking contributed to ideas, laws, and economic forces which drove the development and implementation of race in the American colonies. The Africans were desperate in finding a way to resist captivity, and had no emotional sustenance amidst the dehumanizing horrors of plantation slavery. The retaliation of former slaves eventually led to the abolitionist movement, an attempt to abolish slavery. The experiences of African American society demonstrated in the video, *Many Rivers to Cross* , will be analyzed and correlated with the significant issues concerning community attachment, social movements, immigration, social stratification, race/ethnicity, exclusion/excluded communities, and social networks.

Interconnections of Socialization: The African Americans

The sociological lens is the aspect of sociology which highlights social marginality/inequality, sees diversity in America and elsewhere, draws attention to social problems and change, and makes a connection between self and society. This social perspective relates to the concept of sociological imagination. American sociologist, C. Wright Mills, defines sociological imagination as the sociological processes from the past that have shaped our opportunities and constraints that we are experiencing in the future. In regards to African American society, one would say the idea of slavery is unlawful and inhumane, however, it was necessary for building culture and helping American society to succeed.

After the American Revolution in the late seventeen hundreds, the Age of Slavery took place. As slavery intensified, so did resistance. Frederick Douglass was an African American from Maryland who was born into slavery in the year of 1818. His mother was a former slave and he was separated from her right after birth. As a child slave, he was unhappy and confused. Slave owners kept important information from slaves in order to take advantage of them. For example, African American children were not allowed to know their own age, while it was okay for white children to know theirs. Songs of joy and sadness were sung by the slaves and Douglass did not understand the songs as a child. However, when he got older, he realized the songs were complaints about slavery. During this specific time period, it was common for slaves to be competitive and prejudice about their masters, not that the masters truly deserved to be praised by them. Children slaves were not allowed to work in the fields because they were considered weak. The

food which was given to the slaves was not the best and only the strong children were fed well.

While living with the family who enslaved him for about seven years, Frederick Douglass learned how to read and write. Douglass made plans to escape which he attempted three times. He was caught and beaten the first and second time he tried escaping, but the third time was a success.

Douglass was at the age of twenty when he finally escaped slavery and fled to the state of New York where he was united with his fiancée. Frederick Douglass later became an activist for anti-slavery. He was a well-known social reformer, public speaker, writer, and political leader. He became a leader of the abolitionist movement and he was recognized for his oratory and his outstanding antislavery writings.

In the textbook, *The Sociology of Community Connections*, Bruhn discusses the earliest social connections: The tendency to form interpersonal attachments is a fundamental characteristic of human biology. Social bonds form easily when there is frequent face-to-face interaction. The process of attachment seems to be involved in significant human relationships at all life stages, although the reasons for attachment and the ways in which it is expressed vary with different ages and social contexts (Bruhn, 2011, p. 2). As mentioned previously, Frederick Douglass was separated from his mother right after birth. Due to unfortunate circumstances, Douglass was disconnected in this aspect of socialization and did not reap the benefits of early connections with his mother.

Sojourner Truth was an African American born into slavery with both of her parents as slaves at the time. Their family was owned by a wealthy Dutch patron in the state of New York. After the passing of former slave owners, Truth was separated from her family and auctioned off. She was nine years old at the time. After encountering harsh and violent treatment from her new slave owner, Truth was auctioned off again. Later the same year when Sojourner fell in love with another slave and they had a child together, she also learned to speak English for the first time. It was very common during this time period for slave owners to take and keep their slaves' offspring. Truth was forced by her current slave owner at the time to get married to an older slave, which she eventually did and they had three children together. Slaves had no rights of their own. Their lives were governed by their owners and they had no other choice but to listen and obey their masters.

In the year of 1799, the state of New York started to negotiate the abolition of slavery, discussing the freedom of the slaves. However, when Truth was promised her freedom from the malicious lifestyle of her owner, she did not wait. Sojourner Truth sought her own freedom and took the opportunity she had to escape. She eventually fled with her baby girl, the only child she had left after the others were sold away as slaves. Truth knew at the time that her five year old son was illegally sold to a man and she took her case to the courts. This particular court case was crucial throughout society. It was the very first time in history that an African American woman, who was once a slave, challenged a white male in the courts of the United States and was successful in getting her son back from the south. Sojourner Truth became

heavily involved in religion and became a well-known abolitionist, evangelist, and women's right activist.

Bruhn identifies three root causes at the societal level that generate violence in the United States. One of those root causes examines the concept of oppression, which is defined as prolonged cruel, or unjust treatment, or control. Oppression results from feelings of inequality and powerlessness including sexism, racism, and various kinds of discrimination ("The Sociology of Community Connections," 2011, p. 282). Manza pinpoints the term racism and defines it as prejudice and/or discrimination against individuals who are members or particular racial or ethnic groups, often drawing on negative stereotypes about the group ("The Sociology Project 2.0," p. 11. 3. 1).

Another influential African American during the Age of Slavery was Dred Scott. Both, his mom and dad were slaves. When his first owner passed away, he was sold and purchased by an army doctor. A few years went by and Scott met a girl, who was also a slave. They fell in love and got married. The army doctor now owned Scott and the girl he married. About ten years later, the army doctor passed away. Dred Scott was determined to be free from slavery. He tried buying his freedom from the widow of the army doctor but she refused to take his offer. Around the same time, slaves could not get any protection from the Federal Government or the courts because the U. S. Supreme Court stated that slaves were not citizens of the United States. According to Manza, discrimination refers to any behavior, practice, or policy that harms, excludes, or disadvantages individuals on the basis of their group membership ("The Sociology Project 2.0," p. 11. 3. 1). In the year of <https://assignbuster.com/interconnections-of-socialization-the-african-americans/>

1846, Scott and his wife sued for their freedom. They won the second trial but did not get too far with the victory because the “ final” decision was overruled by the Missouri State Supreme Court. Scott later filed a third lawsuit in federal court against John Sanford during the year of 1854. Scott finally decided to turn to the Supreme Court when this last case was not in his favor.

Abraham Lincoln made a speech two years later after Scotts’ third lawsuit. This took place during the year of 1856 and while it examined the constitutional conclusion of the Dread Scott Case, Lincoln’s speech foreshadowed the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. The lawsuit became a struggle for eleven years, but eventually the Supreme Court issued their decision in the Dred Scott V. Sanford. In addition, the Missouri Compromise decision was said to be unconstitutional and the Congress had no right to prohibit slavery. There was a lot of controversy after the trial was over. One year later, Dred Scott and his family were granted freedom by the slave owners. Later that same month, Frederick Douglass made a speech where he addressed the matter of the Dred Scott decision, which is also the anniversary of the American Abolition Society. Slavery was eventually abolished and everyone born in the United States was declared as citizens because the decision of Scott v. Sanford was overturned by the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the Constitution.

There are three types of social movements: alternative, reform, and revolutionary. Alternative is the least threatening and includes limited change sought for a limited number of people. Reform, or progressive, or reactionary is limited social change that targets everyone. An example of <https://assignbuster.com/interconnections-of-socialization-the-african-americans/>

reform would be environmental movements. Revolutionary is the most severe and far reaching consequences and basic transformation of society and institutions. An example of reform would be political movements and militia organizations. Bruhn mentions two key factors in social movements – who is to be changed and how much? (“ The Sociology of Community Connections,” 2011, p. 42).

The concept by which individuals move from one place to another is known as immigration. Immigration is moving into a new place and settling. The act of leaving one place is defined as emigration. People migrate both internationally and internally. The reason for why people move include pull and push factors. Pull factors are factors that attract people to go to the receiving country, for example: expected wages, secure job, and education. Push factors are factors that drive people to leave their home countries, for example: economic hardship, political strife and war (refugees), and overall environmental factors. Referring to the African American community from the early nineteen hundreds to late nineteen hundreds, more than six million African Americans moved from the rural South and relocated to the North, Midwest, and West cities. This impactful event on the United States was known as The Great Migration. The African Americans were driven to leave their country of origin because of their unsatisfactory economic opportunities and cruel segregationist laws.

Ethnicity is about how individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds interact, or do not interact, with each other, and how racial and ethnic groups fit into a larger society (Bruhn, 2011, p. 47). It is about the personal choices people make about connections and networks with others, <https://assignbuster.com/interconnections-of-socialization-the-african-americans/>

and how choices about associations affect the ability to experience American ideals (Bruhn, 2011, p. 47).

Social exclusion is defined as the alienation or disenfranchisement of certain people in a society. It is often connected to a person's social class, educational status, relationships in childhood and living standards and how they might affect access to various opportunities ("The Sociology of Community Connections," 2011, p. 144). In addition, social exclusion arises from a combination of low income, unemployment, poor health, lack of skills, inadequate housing, stigmata associated with lifestyle, stereotyping and prejudice, and self-imposed geographic isolation ("The Sociology of Community Connections," 2011, p. 150).

The integral, or necessary members of society are considered to occupy a great deal of opportunity, for example: housing, educational resources, good social networks, etc. However, there are certain individuals who may be forced out of the core part of society due to four main factors: poverty; ill health (mental and physical); discrimination (race, gender, sexual orientation); and lack of education, jobs, and housing. These individuals who are relegated to the fringes of society are usually at a disadvantage compared to everyone else. They have reduced rights, reduced access to legal protection, reduced access to resources, and overall reduced opportunity. During the age of slavery, the African Americans were forced out of the core part of society. According to Manza, discrimination is often used by dominant groups to control opportunities and reduce the challenges of the subordinate groups.

Moreover, the African Americans have experienced hardships throughout the entirety of life. Although these events have somewhat been disconnected, they have helped shaped society today whether they included positive or negative effects on community.

Resources

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