**Chapter 4: The Development of Dominant-Minority Group Relations in Pre-Industrial America: The Origins of Slavery**

[Harris, L. (2004). Slavery, Emancipation, and Class Formation in Colonial and Early National New York City. *Journal of Urban History,* *30*(3), 339-359.](http://juh.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/30/3/339?ijkey=vLpL6AYzcci96&keytype=ref&siteid=spjuh)

In this article, Leslie Harris gives us insight into conditions of slavery and its aftermath in an area we don't typically associate with slavery – New York City. She presents the connections between the slave system and its dissolution and how classes were formed in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were some of the reasons given for and against abolishing slavery in New York?
2. What eventually led to the eradication of the institution of slavery?
3. What are some examples of the political and economic inequalities faced by blacks even after slavery ended?

[Shah, H., & Nah, S. (2004). Long Ago and Far Away: How US Newspapers Construct Racial Oppression. *Journalism,* *5*(3), 259-278.](http://jou.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/5/3/259?ijkey=3mt1kuMuUebqE&keytype=ref&siteid=spjou)

In this article, the authors look at U. S. newspapers' coverage of racial oppression. They see that often it is presented as "long ago and far away," rather than something real, current, and active in U. S. society.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some limitations of this study, particularly, the way newspaper articles were found and classified for the study?
2. If racial oppression is presented as something that occurred in the past, what impact might that have on people's awareness of prejudice and inequality in today's society?

[Farr, J. (2008). Locke, Natural Law, and New World Slavery. *Political Theory,* *36*(4), 494-522.](http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/36/4/495?ijkey=dmWpWtXobVj4g&keytype=ref&siteid=spptx)

This article first serves as an historical overview of theory making about slavery, and second takes on the theoretical construct of new world slavery as proposed by sociopolitical philosopher John Locke. Long standing controversy over Locke’s work has focused on the questions of whether Locke intended to justify new world slavery and his role in it, or was his theorizing limited to a natural law theory that explained and justified slavery as a consequence of just war.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does an understanding of the theories of slavery, particularly theories that served to justify the institution, add to our sociological understanding of the construction of race and persistent inequality in America?
2. Do you find Farr’s argument compelling in light of the way your author presents the inception and working of slavery in America?

[Moore, J. (2010). Darwin's Progress and the Problem of Slavery. *Progress in Human Geography,* *34*(5), 555-582.](http://phg.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/34/5/555?ijkey=iKlu1d/m4ILiU&keytype=ref&siteid=spphg)

The author addresses Charles Darwin’s possible response “ at three critical moments, in 1838, in 1854 and during the US Civil War in the 1860s, to the greatest moral challenge of his age, the urgent agonizing problem of black chattel slavery” (557). Illustrating Darwin’s abolitionist beliefs through an examination of his theory of evolution, Moore adroitly reveals that Darwin’s theorizing was both a product of that particular social moment, and of his own moral understandings of the world, grounded in a belief in “a Creator-God, in mechanical laws of nature, in real historical time and in the common descent or ‘brotherhood’ of the human races” (558).

Questions to Consider:

1. Moore argues that Darwin’s theory of evolution is a product of the historical moment in which it was created. Do you agree?
2. How did abolitionist thinking inform Darwin’s theory? Why is this important to an understanding of contemporary theories of evolution?

[Pargas, D. (2009). Disposing of Human Property: American Slave Families and Forced Separation in Comparative Perspective. *Journal of Family History,* *34*(3), 251-274.](http://jfh.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/34/3/251?ijkey=SwNbygCp4VpBY&keytype=ref&siteid=spjfh)

This article addresses one of the foundational issues for African American families during the period of American slavery: “the dismemberment of slave families that was often the result of their being forcibly and arbitrarily separated by their owners” (252). The author examines records from two separate communities in the antebellum South, one in northern Virginia and one in southern Louisiana, to support his argument that time and place mattered in the way slave families were treated because the threat of forced separation varied for families living in different communities.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the significant differences in the ways that slave families were treated in Virginia and Louisiana?
2. What role does agricultural subsistence base play in the differences in forced separations of families?
3. What does an understanding of the long-term patterns of family dismemberment give to a contemporary assessment of family among African Americans?

[Hollis, S. (2009). Neither Slave nor Free: The Ideology of Capitalism and the Failure of Radical Reform in the American South. *Critical Sociology,* *35*(1), 9-27.](http://crs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/35/1/9?ijkey=RTPDB2cCK7lsI&keytype=ref&siteid=spcrs)

This article looks at the conditions under which Blacks experienced the “freedoms” of Emancipation in the American South. Despite being promised “40 acres and a mule,” most freedmen were turned out with little or no possessions, and no prospects to secure either income or land other than sharecropping or moving North. Hollis argues that “structures of inequality deeply embedded in Southern colonial and post-colonial relations with Europe continued after the Civil War to block changes that would have given access to resources and development opportunities to large sectors of the population, particularly the freed slaves” (11). She goes on to demonstrate that, rather than being strategies localized to the American South, these forces must best be understood within the ideologies that ground Western capitalism in general. Rather than granting freedom to slaves as a basic human right, the ultimate aim of Emancipation in the American South was “the diversification of Southern capitalism and the construction of a labor force that was a favorable alternative to slavery” (24).

Questions to Consider:

1. What specific social forces does that author point to that effectively served as barriers to radical change, to shape local, state, and federal policy, and to block changes that might have altered the South’s way of life?
2. Why did property ownership for blacks in Southern states increase at a rate far below that of their white counterparts 1880 and 1910? (The author outlines several critical factors)
3. Why does the author describe the free labor in the South as a myth? What were the factors that entrapped freedman into peonage?

[Noel, H. (2013). Which Long Coalition The Creation of the Anti-Slavery Coalition. *Party Politics,* *19*(6), 962-984.](http://ppq.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/19/6/962?ijkey=R31NAo1D/0YX2&keytype=ref&siteid=spppq)

This article explores the question of how party coalitions are shaped and reshaped by elected officials, non-elected political actors, and intellectuals. Taking the question of slavery the author examines the ideological divisions in Congress and among intellectuals to illustrate these processes.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does the author suggest about how party coalitions are shaped by elected officials?
2. How are party coalitions shaped differently by non-elected actors?
3. Why is the slavery question of the mid-1800s a good demonstration of these processes? Are there any contemporary racial/ethnic “problems” being dealt with on the world stage that could be used as effectively?

[Androff, D. (2011). The Problem of Contemporary Slavery: An International Human Rights Challenge for Social Work. *International Social Work,* *54*(2), 209-222.](http://isw.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/54/2/209?ijkey=0HKpZDSSVqSI2&keytype=ref&siteid=spisw)

This article examines the literature on human trafficking to support the argument that this violent exploitation persists. While conventional wisdom has suggested the eradication of slavery for decades, it is clear from this author’s work that that is simply not the case. The article investigates other forms of economic exploitation which are essentially slavery and details the range of public policy options necessary for ameliorating the problem.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the extent of contemporary slavery according to Androff?
2. Why does contemporary slavery represent a human rights challenge for social work in particular?
3. What are the programmatic and policy solutions to the problem of contemporary slavery? How likely is it that governments, including our own, will address these solutions?