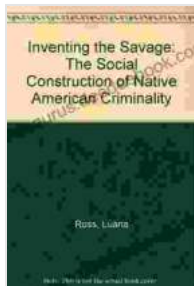


The Social Construction of Native American Criminality



Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality by Luana Ross

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 2381 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 327 pages
Lending	: Enabled
Paperback	: 120 pages
Item Weight	: 1.55 pounds
Dimensions	: 6.14 x 0.94 x 9.21 inches
Hardcover	: 402 pages



Native Americans are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, both as victims and offenders. This overrepresentation is not due to any inherent criminality of Native Americans, but rather to the social construction of Native American criminality.

The social construction of Native American criminality is a process that has been going on for centuries. It began with the colonization of the Americas by Europeans, who brought with them their own ideas about crime and punishment. These ideas were based on the belief that Native Americans

were inferior and uncivilized, and that they needed to be controlled through the use of force.

The social construction of Native American criminality has continued in the years since colonization. In the 19th century, the United States government implemented a series of policies that were designed to assimilate Native Americans into white society. These policies included the forced removal of Native Americans from their traditional lands, the suppression of their languages and cultures, and the establishment of Indian boarding schools. These policies had a devastating impact on Native American communities, and they contributed to the overrepresentation of Native Americans in the criminal justice system.

In the 20th century, the social construction of Native American criminality continued through the media. Native Americans were often portrayed as criminals in movies, television shows, and newspapers. This portrayal reinforced the stereotype of Native Americans as being violent and dangerous, and it contributed to the public's perception of Native Americans as a threat.

The social construction of Native American criminality has had a number of negative consequences. It has led to the overrepresentation of Native Americans in the criminal justice system, and it has contributed to the discrimination and violence that Native Americans face in society. It has also made it difficult for Native Americans to get jobs, housing, and education.

The social construction of Native American criminality is a complex issue, but it is one that needs to be addressed. By understanding the historical

and contemporary factors that have contributed to this overrepresentation, we can begin to work towards creating a more just and equitable society for Native Americans.

Historical Factors

The social construction of Native American criminality began with the colonization of the Americas by Europeans. Europeans brought with them their own ideas about crime and punishment, which were based on the belief that Native Americans were inferior and uncivilized. This belief was reinforced by the fact that Native Americans often resisted European colonization, and they were often portrayed as being violent and dangerous.

In the 19th century, the United States government implemented a series of policies that were designed to assimilate Native Americans into white society. These policies included the forced removal of Native Americans from their traditional lands, the suppression of their languages and cultures, and the establishment of Indian boarding schools. These policies had a devastating impact on Native American communities, and they contributed to the overrepresentation of Native Americans in the criminal justice system.

The forced removal of Native Americans from their traditional lands was particularly disruptive. It led to the loss of land, resources, and cultural identity. It also led to increased poverty and unemployment, which are both risk factors for crime.

The suppression of Native American languages and cultures also had a negative impact. It made it difficult for Native Americans to communicate

with each other and to pass on their traditions to their children. It also contributed to the loss of cultural identity, which can lead to feelings of alienation and anomie.

Indian boarding schools were another factor that contributed to the overrepresentation of Native Americans in the criminal justice system. These schools were designed to assimilate Native American children into white society. However, they often used harsh methods, such as corporal punishment and cultural suppression. This led to resentment and anger among Native American students, and it increased the likelihood that they would turn to crime as a way of expressing their frustration.

Contemporary Factors

The social construction of Native American criminality continues in the present day. Native Americans are still overrepresented in the criminal justice system, and they continue to face discrimination and violence in society. There are a number of contemporary factors that contribute to this problem.

One of the most significant contemporary factors is poverty. Native Americans are more likely to live in poverty than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States. Poverty is a major risk factor for crime, and it can lead to a number of problems that can contribute to criminal behavior, such as lack of education, unemployment, and poor housing.

Another contemporary factor that contributes to the social construction of Native American criminality is discrimination. Native Americans face discrimination in many areas of life, including employment, housing, and education. This discrimination can lead to feelings of anger and

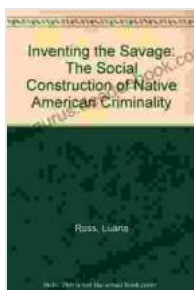
resentment, which can increase the likelihood that Native Americans will turn to crime as a way of expressing their frustration.

Violence is another major problem that Native Americans face. Native Americans are more likely to be victims of violence than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States. This violence can come from a variety of sources, including police brutality, hate crimes, and domestic violence.

Violence can lead to physical and psychological trauma, which can increase the likelihood that Native Americans will turn to crime as a way of coping.

The social construction of Native American criminality is a complex issue that has been going on for centuries. It is the result of a number of historical and contemporary factors, including poverty, discrimination, and violence. These factors have led to the overrepresentation of Native Americans in the criminal justice system, and they continue to contribute to the problems that Native Americans face in society.

It is important to understand the social construction of Native American criminality in order to begin to address it. By working to reduce poverty, discrimination, and violence, we can help to create a more just and equitable society for Native Americans.



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