**What is Racism?**

A structural relationship based on the subordination of one racial group by another. The determining feature of race relations is not prejudice toward people of color, but rather the superior position of Whites and the institutions-ideological as well as structural-which maintain it. Racism involves ideas (legitimations) and practices (discrimination) that create and maintain a system of White racial privilege, responsible for both past and present forms of racial inequality.[[1]](#endnote-1) A social system that has 2 main effects: 1. to constrain people's lives by sorting them into positions in a hierarchy of power, prestige, status, wealth, opportunity, and life chances; 2. to maintain, extend, and reproduce this hierarchy by using political, economic, patriarchal, and cultural power.[[2]](#endnote-2)

**What are the Consequences of Racism?**

**Wealth income & Employment**: 2016 House Hold Income: Black: $36,544; Native American & Alaska Native: $38,530; Latinos (2010); $40,785; White: $59,698.

Unemployment in the US as of December 2017: Black 6.8%; Latinx: 4.9 %; White: 3.7%.[[3]](#endnote-3)

The 2013 Federal Reserve’s Survey of Consumer Finances shows that Black households have *1/13th* of the wealth of White households at the median. Blacks working full time have less wealth than Whites who are unemployed. Black households whose heads have college degrees have $10,000 less in net worth than White households whose heads never finished high school.[[4]](#endnote-4) Since Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968, the income gap between Blacks and Whites has narrowed by just 3¢ on the dollar. At this rate, income equality will not be achieved for 537 years.[[5]](#endnote-5)

**Criminal Justice & School Discipline**: Black people comprise 13 percent of the U.S. population, and are consistently shown to use drugs at similar rates to people of other races. But Black people comprise 31 percent of those arrested for drug law violations, and nearly 40 percent of those incarcerated in state or federal prison for drug law violations.[[6]](#endnote-6) One in every three Black males born today can expect to go to prison at some point in their life, compared with one in every six Latino males, and one in every 17 White males, if current incarceration trends continue.[[7]](#endnote-7) Black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than White students. On average, 5% of White students are suspended, compared to 16% of Black students. American Indian and Native-Alaskan students are also disproportionately suspended and expelled, representing less than 1% of the student population but 2% of out-of-school suspensions and 3% of expulsions.[[8]](#endnote-8)

**Housing:** From 1934-68, the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) rated neighborhoods to determine which were most suitable for mortgages. FHA’s redlining became a means of denying or limiting financial services to certain neighborhoods based on racial or ethnic composition without regard to the residents’ qualifications or creditworthiness.. Celebrated for making homeownership accessible to Whites by guaranteeing their loans, the FHA explicitly refused to back loans to Blacks or even people who lived near Black people. Redlining destroyed the possibility of investment wherever Black people lived. The consequences of this policy are evident in Durham’s neighborhoods today.

**Impact on Latinos & Native People:** There were 55.3 million Hispanics/Latinos in the United States in 2014, comprising 17.3% of the total U.S. population. From 2008 to 2012, the emigration rate from Mexico dropped from 6.4 migrants per 1,000 residents to 3.3 migrants. It ticked up slightly in 2015 to 3.6 migrants per 1,000 residents. Immigrant crime rates are lower than citizen crime rates, and the undocumented have no access to most social welfare programs.[[9]](#endnote-9) The average Hispanic household has about $109,000 to its name, nearly $400,000 less than the average American; more than $500,000 less than the [average white American household](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412802-Less-Than-Equal-Racial-Disparities-in-Wealth-Accumulation.pdf" \t "_blank). Hispanics make up more than 16% of the U.S. population, but hold about 2.2% of its wealth.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Native America occupies 4% of US land and receives the majority of its nuclear waste. 31% of Native families live below the poverty line. $1,300 per capita is spent on health care in Native communities, half the overall average of $2,600. On the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, 60% of women have diabetes as a result of malnourishment. Average income is $4,500/year. Twenty percent of its homes lack a functioning toilet and telephone. The average household head receives $32 bimonthly from welfare. Unemployment consistently hovers well above 50 percent.' (Steven Nasr Salaita, '…Invisible, with Liberty and Justice for All', Z Magazine)

**Causes of Racial Disparity:**

Racial wealth differences cannot be mainly explained by education, employment, or even income. The history of Black wealth deprivation, from the failure to provide ex-slaves with 40 acres and a mule to the violent destruction of Black property in White riots, to the seizure and expropriation of black-owned land, to the impact of racially restrictive covenants on homeownership, to the discriminatory application of policies like the GI Bill and the FHA, created the foundation for a perpetual racial wealth gap. The seizure of Indian land, the impoverishment of reservations, the Jim Crow privileging of ‘whiteness’, the exploitation of undocumented labor, limitations on voting rights and ongoing racial hostility have also contributed to the perpetual wealth gap.

Economists estimate that, by far, the largest factors explaining these differences are gifts and inheritances from older generations: a down payment on a first home, a debt-free college education, or a bequest from a parent… Given the roles of intergenerational wealth transfer, and past and present barriers that have kept Black families from building wealth, private action and market forces alone cannot be expected to address wide-scale racial wealth inequality.[[11]](#endnote-11)

**Effect on Whites:**

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva explains how White socialization or a “White habitus” conditions intra-group identity and cohesion. White habitus is “a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates Whites’ tastes, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters.” White habitus occurs within a separate residential and cultural life that fosters a White culture of solidarity and negative views about non-Whites.[[12]](#endnote-12)

"Racial threat is a general term that describes when somebody is threatened by the close proximity of an out-group." Obama took only 43% of the White vote in 2008 and 39% in 2012. Mitt Romney ran up a higher score among White voters than Ronald Reagan when Reagan had a landslide in 1984." Across the country, White people withdrew from the 'public' sphere and migrated to 'Whites only' suburbs to evade racial integration. The word 'public' preceding words like 'housing,' 'hospital,' 'health care,' 'transportation,' 'defender,' 'schools,' and even 'swimming pool' in some parts of the country became code words that meant poor and most often Black and Latino. The word 'private' began to mean 'better.'[[13]](#endnote-13) Whites often view racism as a zero-sum game, such that decreases in perceived bias against Blacks over the past six decades are associated with increases in perceived bias against Whites. Research suggests that White Americans perceive increases in racial equality as threatening their dominant position in American society, with Whites likely to perceive that actions taken to improve the welfare of minority groups must come at their expense.[[14]](#endnote-14)

Racism distorts the sense of danger and safety; many Whites live in fear of people of color, while exploited economically and unable to even see this exploitation as people of color are scapegoated.

1. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.458.4107&rep=rep1&type=pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://zcomm.org/wp-content/uploads/zinstructionals/www/znet_race_instructional2.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. http://money.cnn.com/2018/01/23/news/economy/black-unemployment/index.html [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/how-barack-obama-failed-black-americans/511358/> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.loyno.edu/jsri/race-racism-and-whiteness>  [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DPA%20Fact%20Sheet_Drug%20War%20Mass%20Incarceration%20and%20Race_(Feb.%202016).pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/04/racial-disparities-criminal-justice_n_4045144.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/176271/tomgram%3A\_aviva\_chomsky%2C\_the\_criminalization\_of\_immigrants\_from\_clinton\_to\_trump/ [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/07/01/hispanics-make-up-more-than-16-of-the-u-s-population-but-own-less-than-2-3-of-its-wealth/?utm_term=.920e45e7a7af> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.insightcced.org/uploads/CRWG/Umbrellas-Dont-Make-It-Rain8.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1163/156916306777835268> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/28/us/lost-cause-trump/> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1745691611406922?journalCode=ppsa> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)