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**SYSTEMIC RACIAL INJUSTICES AGAINST AFRICAN  
AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES: A HISTORICAL  
AND CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS**

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**Introduction:**

The history of African Americans in the United States is marked  
by profound systemic injustices, from the era of chattel slavery to  
contemporary disparities in criminal justice, healthcare,  
education, and socioeconomic outcomes. These injustices are not  
merely historical artifacts but persist through institutional biases,  
as evidenced by empirical data from demographic studies, health  
reports, and criminal justice statistics. This analysis examines the  
evolution of these issues, drawing on verifiable sources such as  
census data, peer-reviewed research, and governmental reports to  
provide a logical, evidence-based overview. By highlighting  
quantifiable disparities and key historical events, it underscores  
the need for structural reforms to address ongoing racial  
inequities.

**The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Chattel Slavery in  
America:**

The transatlantic slave trade represents one of the most  
egregious chapters in human history, involving the forced  
deportation of approximately 12.5 million Africans

between the 16th and 19th centuries. Of these, an estimated 10-15 million survived the Middle Passage, during which mortality rates ranged from 10-20% due to disease, overcrowding, and brutality, resulting in 1.8-2 million deaths en route. Enslaved Africans were primarily sourced from West and Central Africa, including regions like Senegal, Sierra Leone, Benin, and Angola, and transported to the Americas under inhumane conditions, often chained in ship holds with minimal provisions.

In the United States, slavery was institutionalized as an economic system, particularly in Southern states where agricultural demands for cotton, tobacco, and sugar necessitated cheap labor. By 1860, the U.S. Census recorded 3,953,760 enslaved individuals, comprising about 13% of the total population and concentrated in the South. Enslaved people were treated as chattel property, bought and sold at auctions, with families frequently separated—wives exploited as concubines and children sold without regard for parental bonds. Legal frameworks, such as the Fugitive Slave Acts, provided cover for severe punishments, including whippings and mutilations for perceived disobedience.

Civil rights leader Malcolm X vividly described the horrors, noting that "millions of Africans were brought to America as slaves" and lamenting the "blood scattered in the oceans, chunks of human flesh, broken bones, and crushed skulls," with sharks trailing slave ships to feed on discarded bodies. Over the trade's duration, estimates suggest 110 million Africans were either enslaved or killed, highlighting the scale of this genocide-like enterprise.

### **Abolitionism, the Civil War, and Black History Month:**

Recognition of enslaved Africans' humanity fueled the abolitionist movement, culminating in the American Civil War (1861-1865), which resulted in the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the 13th Amendment's abolition of slavery in 1865. This conflict, driven by economic and moral divides between North and South, led to over 620,000 deaths and marked a pivotal shift toward racial equality.

To commemorate African American contributions and struggles, Black History Month is observed in February in the U.S. and several European countries. Its origins trace to 1915, when historian Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, evolving Negro History Week (1926) into Black History Month by the 1970s.

#### **The Civil Rights Movement and Key Figures**

The mid-20th century saw intensified struggles for equality. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a 42-year-old seamstress and NAACP activist in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to relinquish her bus seat to a white passenger, violating segregation laws mandating Black passengers yield seats when white sections filled. Arrested and fined \$14, her defiance sparked the 381-day Montgomery Bus Boycott, led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., resulting in the U.S. Supreme Court's desegregation ruling in 1956. Parks later received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and over 40 honorary doctorates, embodying her statement: "Oppression remains oppression until challenged."

Protests have been recurrent, leading to incremental gains, such as police accountability measures post-2020 unrest.

### **Contemporary Disparities Faced by African Americans:**

Racial inequities persist across sectors. In criminal justice, African Americans, comprising 13% of the U.S. population, represent 37% of the incarcerated population as of 2023. Incarceration rates for Black males are 5-7 times higher than for White males.

Homelessness affects African Americans disproportionately: In 2023, they accounted for 37% of the homeless population, with over 240,000 individuals impacted, despite being 13% of the general populace. Among homeless families, over 50% are Black.

Family structures show disparities: In 2023, 47% of Black mothers were single, compared to 21% overall, contributing to economic vulnerabilities.

Healthcare and education reveal gaps: Black Americans face higher maternal mortality (3-4 times White rates) and lower access to quality care, with 2023 data showing disparities in emergency department outcomes. In education, Black children experience higher dropout rates and resource shortages.

### **Exploitation of Black Women in Medicine and Politics:**

Historical medical exploitation is exemplified by Dr. James Marion Sims, who conducted experimental surgeries on enslaved Black women like Anarcha, Betsey, and Lucy without anesthesia between 1845-1849, under the racist belief they felt less pain.

In politics, Black Muslim women like Rep. Ilhan Omar face intersectional discrimination. Since her 2019 election, Omar has received numerous death threats, including voicemails threatening to "blow your skull off" and spikes following Islamophobic attacks, as documented in 2021-2023 reports.

### **The George Floyd Incident and Ongoing Protests:**

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, was murdered by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, who knelt on Floyd's neck for 9 minutes and 29 seconds despite pleas of "I can't breathe." The incident, captured on video, sparked global protests, leading to over \$2 billion in damages and reforms like the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.

### **Conclusion**

Racial prejudices continue to perpetuate inequities, as evidenced by persistent disparities in incarceration, homelessness, family stability, healthcare, and education. Eradicating these requires not only legal reforms but also cultural shifts to dismantle systemic biases. Empirical data from sources like the U.S. Census Bureau, Pew Research, and CDC underscore the urgency, calling for evidence-based policies to foster true equity.

### **Editorial Statement:**

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