



The Segregation of African Americans in the US

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of literature on the US African American Population - racism, discrimination, and segregation. From the very early history of the US, racism has been a major problem of African American, which continually impacts the cultural, economic and social life of African American community in the US. For centuries Black people were enslaved and forced to work in brutal conditions as agricultural, domestic and service workers. African Americans were tortured, mutilated and even killed without legal repercussions. The racism which is structural and systematic at federal, state and local level has produced stark inequalities in economic well-being. It targets the interventions to expand access to opportunity for people of color. My research will focus on the different level of racism and discrimination against the Black population and factors which pushes the Black community in poverty line in the US. The negative impact of racism on the US economy and the struggles of Black people from getting jobs to housing. My research will consist of information from academic articles, published books, various websites, government data's and websites, data from previous studies and resources.

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Education

In the 1954 Brown V, The Board of Education ruling, the Supreme Court outlawed segregation in education for blacks and whites. The ruling did not cause a dramatic change in certain parts of the US as some school districts refused to follow order. In 1960 Ruby Bridges was a 6 year old African American girl that had to be escorted daily by federal agents to school in which she was met by angry white parents who were in favor of school segregation and in protest, withdrew their children and boycotted the school which left Ruby Bridges as the only student in her class [1]. The Supreme Court ruling ending school segregation was a move in the right direction but it also exposed many other inequalities for African American students in the education system that still persist today. For school officials such as teachers and principals, their main objective is to provide a safe and learning environment that is available and equal for all students. However, research shows that while the 1954 ruling by the Supreme Court was intended to end segregation, it resulted in extreme stereotyping of

African Americans students [2]. Research shows that when compared to white students, African American students were more than four times likely to receive multiple out-of-school suspensions in which nearly half of the suspensions were for non-violent student behavior such as refusing to remove a hat. Some of the unnecessary suspensions could be handled well if school funding and the access to resources are distributed equally among all school districts regardless of the race of students or poverty levels [3]. In the Hechinger Report, writes that when it comes to funding the rich and poor districts in the US, there is a 3.4 percent funding gap. The same report shows that states such as Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, Nevada and Virginia have sizable funding gaps while Illinois stood out as it topped the list with an overall 18 percent funding gap between its higher poverty and lowest poverty districts in which higher poverty district received \$2,490 more to spend on per student. The inequality in school funding is directly responsible for the continuance of inequality in all other factors of student lives [4]. In a report for The National School Board Association, 32 percent of African American

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students lived in poverty compared to 10 percent of white students and 64 percent of African American students lived in households in which the parents education level is less than high school. The inequality in school funding reflects on the quality of learning provided as African American students are provided with less qualified teachers with lower salaries and as a result, 61 percent of high school students do not meet the four ACT college ready benchmarks which is twice the national average for all students [5]. This also explains the low numbers of African American undergraduate enrollment which was reported in the National Centers for Education Statistics reported that out of the 16.6 million registered undergraduate students for the 2018 fall semester, only 1.1 million were African American. Interestingly, for African Americans beating the odds and getting their college degrees also increased their odds of experiencing overall discrimination [6].

Workforce

African Americans in all fields of work face obstacles in career advancement as they are less likely to not only be hired but trained and promoted and as a result underrepresented in the many well-known corporations throughout the US [7]. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics released in 2018, reported 6.2 percent of African Americans over the age of 16 were unemployed, almost twice as much as Asians and Whites at 3.2 percent and 3.3 percent. The African Americans that are employed, racism and inequality greatly impacts their earnings. According to the data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics on the Status and Trends in the Education of Racial Ethnic Groups, African Americans earn the least in average salary when compared to all other races. When compared to other races with less than high school completion, African Americans average yearly salary is \$21,400, compared to \$29,100 for whites, \$25,600 for Hispanics. The same data shows that the average salary for African American with a high school diploma is \$27,800, compared to \$35,000 for whites, and \$30,000 for Hispanics. Discrimination and inequality in pay is evident even for the educated African Americans that have a bachelor's degree or higher as their average annual salary is \$49,400, compared to \$54,700 for whites, but do earn slightly more than Hispanics at \$49,300. When it comes to the employment of educated African Americans, workforce data clearly shows that there are very few African Americans which are employed by well-known companies. In the 2016 annual reports on workplace diversity, LinkedIn reported a total of 6,435 employees, in which only 3 percent are African Americans, while Google reported that 2 percent African Americans, and Intel is slightly higher in which 3.67 percent of its employees are African American [8]. Interestingly, a company like LinkedIn which is specifically designed to match employees and employers, fails to realize their own short-comings on workplace diversity, but also in matching

African Americans that are registered in their system to potential employers. Another example of racism, discrimination, and inequality that African Americans endure in the workforce is in the respected STEM field. African Americans account for 16 percent of the workers in the STEM fields in which 62 percent report earning less than a coworker who performed the same job, 45 percent reported that they were treated as not competent, and 40 percent reported that their race has made it harder to succeed in their job [9].

Incarceration

According to the 2016 US Census Bureau estimates, the population of African Americans was just under 41 million which is around 13 percent of the total US population. When it comes to the African American population in the state and federal prison system, of the 1.46 million prisoners in 2016, the total African American prisoners was 487,300 which is about a third of the prison population [10]. Considering the proportion of the population of African Americans in the US, that number is astonishing. The local and county jails show similar numbers in terms of incarceration rates of African Americans. The US data for city and county jails in midyear of 2018 had a total incarcerated population 785,500 in which African Americans again accounted for 33% of the population. (Zang 2020) To put these numbers in perspective, according to the state and federal prison statistics for 2018, the imprisonment rate of African American population was 1,134 per 100,000 residents, compared to 218 for every 100,000 of the white population, which show an African American imprisonment rate of 5.8 times that of white males. These numbers reflect a broken down system in policing and the unfair treatment of African Americans compared to other races [11]. Law enforcement agencies from police districts to agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Agency have used tactics such as racial profiling to put African Americans behind bars. Regardless of the fact that all individuals are protected by the fourth, fifth, and fourteenth amendment against racial profiling, law enforcement routinely stopped and questioned African Americans in about possible drug sales, or they may simply "look out of place" by walking in a predominantly white neighborhood [12]. The racial profiling has led to arrest for low level offenses which encouraged law enforcement to increase racial profiling. However, racial profiling and the controversial stop and frisk did not lead to more arrests as research shows that 88 percent of those stopped and frisked by the in New York police department were unjustified as it led to no arrest and 85 percent of the stop and frisk were done on African American and Hispanics. The high population of African Americans in the prison systems is due to racial profiling but it is also due to the fact that African Americans are sentenced more harshly than white offenders for the same crime committed [13]. In a study done on racial sentencing for drug offenders, African



Americans had less convictions than whites, but were sentenced at a higher rate that resulted in more incarcerations and longer jail sentences [14].

Housing

With the Fair Housing Act passed in 1968, segregation in housing still exists in the US. This is due to the racist notion that, African American are not wanted as neighbors as they are a risk to the communities due to crime, which will cause a negative effect on property values [15]. That type of mindset is what continues the housing segregation as African Americans and whites prefer to live in their own comfort zones. Studies shows that some metropolitan areas have very few neighborhoods which are integrated with African Americans and whites and are nearly either all African American or all white [16]. This lack of integration is what continues the seemingly endless cycle of inequality for African Americans as it limits their access to good paying jobs, safe neighborhoods for their children that would also give them access to good schools. These were some of the issues that the 1968 Fair Housing Act was supposed to resolve along with purchasing, renting, and providing financing in mortgaging [17]. Racism is not the only deterrence that keeps African Americans from moving into white neighborhoods to rent an apartment. The average estimate in Chicago to rent an apartment in a predominantly white neighborhood is around \$1,500, which is \$900 more than what it would cost in a predominantly black neighborhood [18]. According to the Census Bureau report (2020) on homeownership, data shows that from 2016 through the third quarter of 2020, African Americans rank last in homeownership at 42.6 percent, while white home ownership is 73 percent, and Hispanic was at 47.3 percent. To better understand the importance of the low number of African American homeownership, we must also look at the value of their homes compared to other races. In metropolitan areas in which 10 percent of the neighborhoods are majority African American, those neighborhoods account for 41 percent of the African American residents and on average if the neighborhood population is just 50 percent African American, the home homes are valued at roughly half the price [19]. With the lack of resources available for African Americans which would improve their neighborhoods, we can assume that the value of their homes expected to continue to drop.

Health

African Americans have continually faced racism that has impacted their mental and physical health which are linked to, low-quality schooling, lack of availability of healthy foods, easy access to illicit drugs and alcohol, violent neighborhoods, and environmental exposures [20]. When it comes to their health, about one third of African Americans experience discrimination in health

care treatments, and 22 percent chose not to seek treatment for their condition due to expecting to be discriminated [21]. The issue of having health insurance and qualifying for Medicaid is something that also needs to be addressed as data shows that in 2016, 11.7 percent of non-elderly African Americans were uninsured compared to 7.5 percent white and 6.3 percent Asians [22]. Housing segregation also has an effect on the health of African Americans as their areas lack hospitals and rely instead on community health care centers that offer lower quality care [23]. The combination of the anticipation of being discriminated against for health care along with a lack of access of medical facilities with quality care can be directly linked to the fact that the African American community remains the least healthy of all ethnic groups in the US. which shows that 33 percent of African Americans aged 36-49 have high blood pressure compared to 22 percent of all other races for the same age group [24-27]. That number increases to 61 percent of African Americans compared to 41 percent of all other races that are between the ages of 50-64; 23 percent of African Americans are diabetic compared to 14 percent of all other races aged 50-64; 7 percent of African Americans suffer from a stroke compared to 4 percent of all other races aged 50-64. While these numbers mostly observe older aged individuals, the lack in quality healthcare access shows a darker picture for the young populations as well. The death rate of African American babies before their first birthday is 11.4 per 1,000, compared to white babies at 4.9 per 1,000; African American mothers dying from childbirth related causes is 42.8 per 100,000, compared to white mothers dying from childbirth related causes of 13 per 100,000 [28]. The increase of mental illnesses amongst the African American population is due to racism and inequality as African Americans have higher rates of severe depression, yet lower rates of treatment compared to the white population which leads them in emergency rooms for these mental issues due to being less likely to receive psychological and psychiatric counseling to resolve their mental issues [29].

Conclusion

The research, studies and data provided in this paper will show that African Americans continue to be affected by racism, discrimination and inequality in education, workforce, correctional system, housing, and these issues have had a direct impact on their mental and physical health. The Supreme Court ruling on the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education and the 1948 Fair Housing Act, these laws were to provide equal opportunities for African Americans and it is evident that 66 years later we are still discussing the issue of racism, discrimination, and inequality. The government laws have had limited effect as its resources have not been fully implemented in the school systems, and would provide quality education in which the younger generation of African Americans will be more ready and qualified for college. The government resources must also be provided so the majority of



black neighborhoods have access to hospitals and other medical facilities which would provide quality medical care. With access to better schools and hospitals, more business and employment opportunities would open up and crime rates would drop. The famous and well known African American educator, author, and activist Booker T. Washington said, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed." It is difficult to measure the success of African Americans as they continue to face many obstacles on their way to so called success even after laws were passed which were meant to provide an equal road to success.

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