

Case study: Impact of Systemic Inequality on African-American race

Student name

Institutional

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Course

Due date

Case study: Impact of systemic inequality on African-American race:introduction

This paper examines the contemporary social issues affecting the African American community, specifically focusing on the racial wealth gap, healthcare disparities, and systemic bias within the criminal justice system. By analysing data from the Federal Reserve, the CDC, and various sociological studies, it becomes evident that these issues are rooted in historical disenfranchisement rather than individual choices. The paper proposes specific policy interventions, including the implementation of "Baby Bonds," the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act, and comprehensive sentencing reform. The conclusion emphasizes that targeted, race-conscious policy is the only path toward achieving true equity in the United States.

The Persistence of Inequality: Social Challenges and Policy Solutions for African Americans

The African American experience in the United States is marked by a dual reality: significant cultural and political achievement contrasted against deep-seated systemic inequality. While the legal barriers of the Jim Crow era have been dismantled, the structural "ghosts" of those policies remain embedded in American institutions. Today, the African American community faces a unique set of social challenges that hinder upward mobility and physical well-being. To address these issues, it is not enough to rely on general economic growth; instead, specific, data-driven policies must be enacted to dismantle the remnants of systemic racism. This paper explores three critical areas: economic wealth, healthcare outcomes, and the legal system.

The Racial Wealth Gap and Economic Policy

The most significant barrier to African American progress is the persistent racial wealth gap. According to the Federal Reserve's Survey of Consumer Finances (2023), the median Black household holds roughly 15-20% of the wealth of the median White household. This gap is not merely a result of income differences but is the cumulative effect of generations of excluded access to homeownership and the GI Bill.

Without "intergenerational wealth," Black families are less likely to have the liquid capital necessary to survive medical emergencies or to invest in higher education without taking on predatory debt. To solve this, economists suggest Baby Bonds. This policy would provide a federally funded trust account for every child born in the U.S., with larger amounts given to those born into lower-wealth families. By the time the child reaches age 18, they would have a capital stake to buy a home or start a business, effectively "seeding" wealth where it was previously denied.

Healthcare Inequity and Maternal Health

Another pressing social issue is the disparity in healthcare outcomes. Research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2024) indicates that Black Americans have higher rates of diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease compared to other groups. However, the most startling statistic is found in maternal health: Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than White women, regardless of their income or education level.

This suggests that the issue is not just "poverty," but "weathering"—the physical toll of chronic stress caused by discrimination—and implicit bias within the medical field. The proposed policy solution is the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act. This legislation would provide funding for community-based organizations, improve maternal nutrition, and mandate bias training for medical professionals. By focusing specifically on the Black maternal experience, the policy seeks to close the mortality gap that general healthcare reform has failed to touch.

Criminal Justice and Systemic Bias

The criminal justice system continues to be a focal point of social unrest and inequality. African Americans are incarcerated at nearly five times the rate of White Americans. According to The Sentencing Project (2024), this disparity is fuelled by "broken windows" policing in minority neighbourhoods and harsher sentencing for the same crimes committed by other races.

Beyond the immediate loss of freedom, incarceration leads to a "civil death," where individuals lose the right to vote, access to public housing, and employment opportunities. To remedy this, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act and Sentencing Reform are vital. These policies aim to end qualified immunity for officers and eliminate the sentencing disparity between different types of drug offenses. Shifting funds from punitive measures to community mental health resources would also lower the frequency of negative interactions between police and the Black community.

Conclusion

The social issues facing African Americans are complex and interconnected. The wealth gap limits healthcare access; healthcare disparities limit economic productivity; and the criminal justice system often disrupts the family units necessary for both. Moving forward requires a shift from "color-blind" policies to "equity-based" policies. By implementing Baby Bonds, the Momnibus Act, and police reform, the United States can begin to fulfill its promise of equal opportunity for all its citizens.

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