

# A VISUAL Guide to The History of Racism in the United States

*A Set of Conceptual Frameworks*

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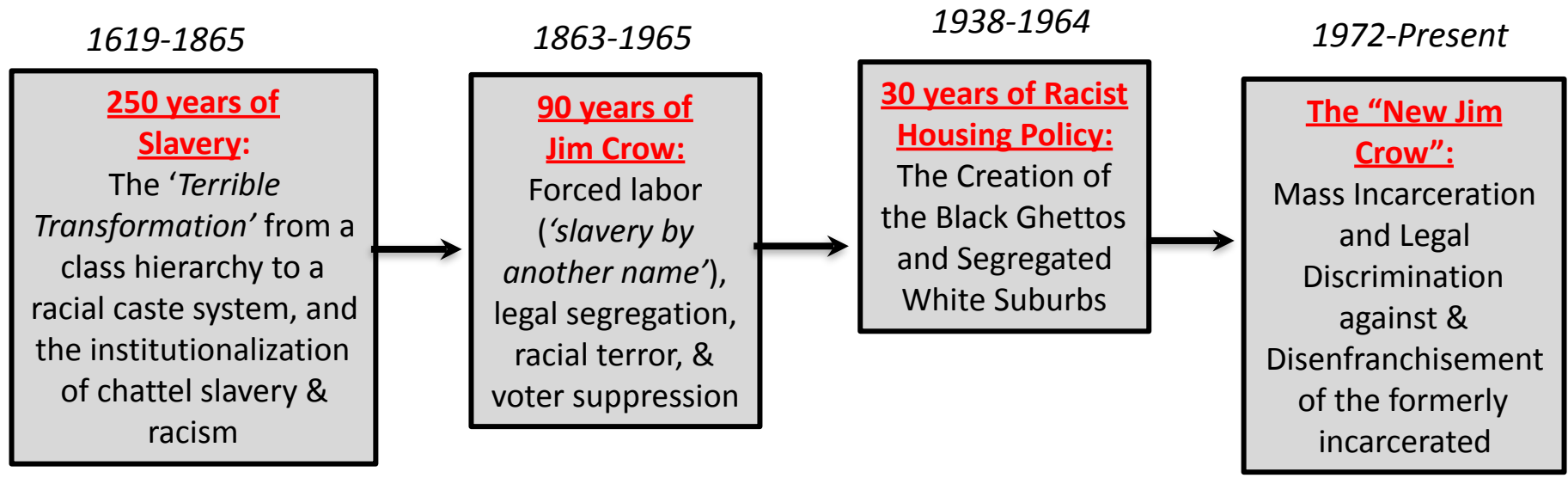
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# History of Racism in U.S.



"Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy. Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole".

"Something more than moral pressure calls America to reparations. We cannot escape our history. All of our solutions to the great problems of health care, education, housing, and economic inequality are troubled by what must go unspoken. "The reason black people are so far behind now is not because of now," Clyde Ross told me. "It's because of then."

-- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*, June 2014.

# Origins of Racism: The 'Terrible Transformation' (1619-1865)

**ECONOMICS**  
Wealthy colonists  
"needed"  
a free labor force

**CULTURE/RELIGION**  
non-pervasive sense of White  
Christian superiority

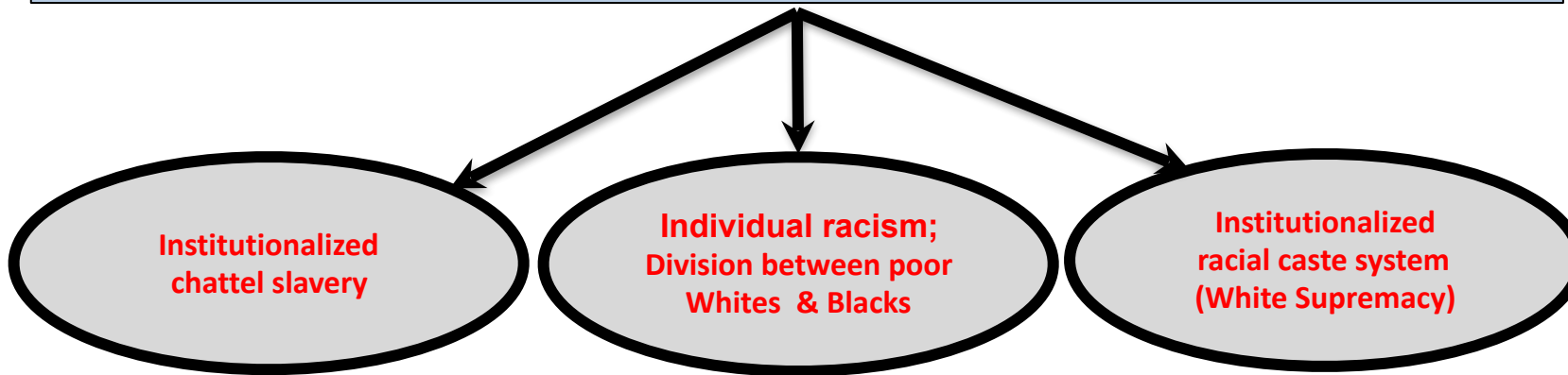
**SOCIAL CONTROL** **Bacon's  
Rebellion** (1676) alerted white  
elites to threat of class-based  
rebellion

**Early  
Colonial  
Period**  
(1619-1676)

Between 1670s-1850s, a series of **race-based laws/codes** were passed:

1. The "**slave code**" institutionalized chattel slavery (enslaved are property, not humans).
  - *During early colonial period, slavery was more like permanent indentured servitude (enslaved still considered human)*
2. The "**Free Negro code**" stripped rights & privileges away from Free Blacks;
  - *In early Colonial period, small communities of Free Blacks (both freed slaves & those born free to white servant mothers). Social relations were governed by class rather than race, and poor blacks often consorted with poor whites.*
3. "**Freeborn rights**" (privileges) were extended to poor whites on the basis of RACE (vs. land ownership).
  - *These new ideas formed the basis of **The Declaration of Independence** and **The U.S. Constitution**.*

**Mid  
Colonial  
Period**(1676-  
1725)



**Late Colonial  
Period to  
Emanci-  
pation**  
(1725-1863)

Morgan, Edmund. *American Slavery, American Freedom*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1975.

Morgan, Edmund. "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox." *The Journal of American History* 59, no. 1 (June, 1972): 5-29.

Streeter, Sabin, dir. *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (film) "Episode 1: The Terrible Transformation (1607-1750)." PBS, 2013.

# Origins of U.S. Racism: **The 'Terrible Transformation'** (1619-1865) **CLASS-Based to RACE-Based Caste System**

Early Colonial period  
(Before *Bacon's Rebellion*)

**CLASS-Based Hierarchy**

Entitled to Rights/Privileges  
(voting, gun ownership, etc.)

**Elite Planters**  
(White & Black)

**Small Farmers**  
(White & Black)

**Landless Europeans,  
European Indentured Servants  
& Enslaved Africans**

**Rights tied to Class (Land Ownership)**

Late Colonial period to Emancipation  
(After *Bacon's Rebellion*)

**RACE-Based Hierarchy**

Entitled to Rights/Privileges  
(voting, gun ownership, etc.)

**"White" planters,  
yeoman farmers,  
& landless poor**

*Division between poor Whites & Blacks*

**Free & Enslaved "Blacks"**

**Rights tied to Race**

Morgan, Edmund. *American Slavery, American Freedom*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1975.

Morgan, Edmund. "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox." *The Journal of American History* 59, no. 1 (June, 1972): 5-29.

Streeter, Sabin, dir. *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (film) "Episode 1: The Terrible Transformation (1607-1750)." PBS, 2013.

# 250 years of **Slavery** (1619-1865): The Paradox of American **Freedom** & **Oppression**

1. Southerners **enslaved** millions of Blacks (**LABOR**) & **displaced** Native Americans (**LAND**);
2. **Economic growth** (Industrial Rev) & **prosperity**,
3. **Economic & societal stability** (averted class-based rebellion),
4. **Democracy, freedom, & equality for all white men**,
5. In other words, **liberty for some was made possible by the oppression of others.**

Reinforcement of  
White Supremacy  
& Division between  
Poor Whites & Blacks

**Democracy,  
Freedom, & Equality  
for white men**

These new ideas/  
philosophies of  
**rights and equality**  
for **all white men**  
formed the basis of  
**The Declaration of  
Independence** and  
**The U.S.  
Constitution.**

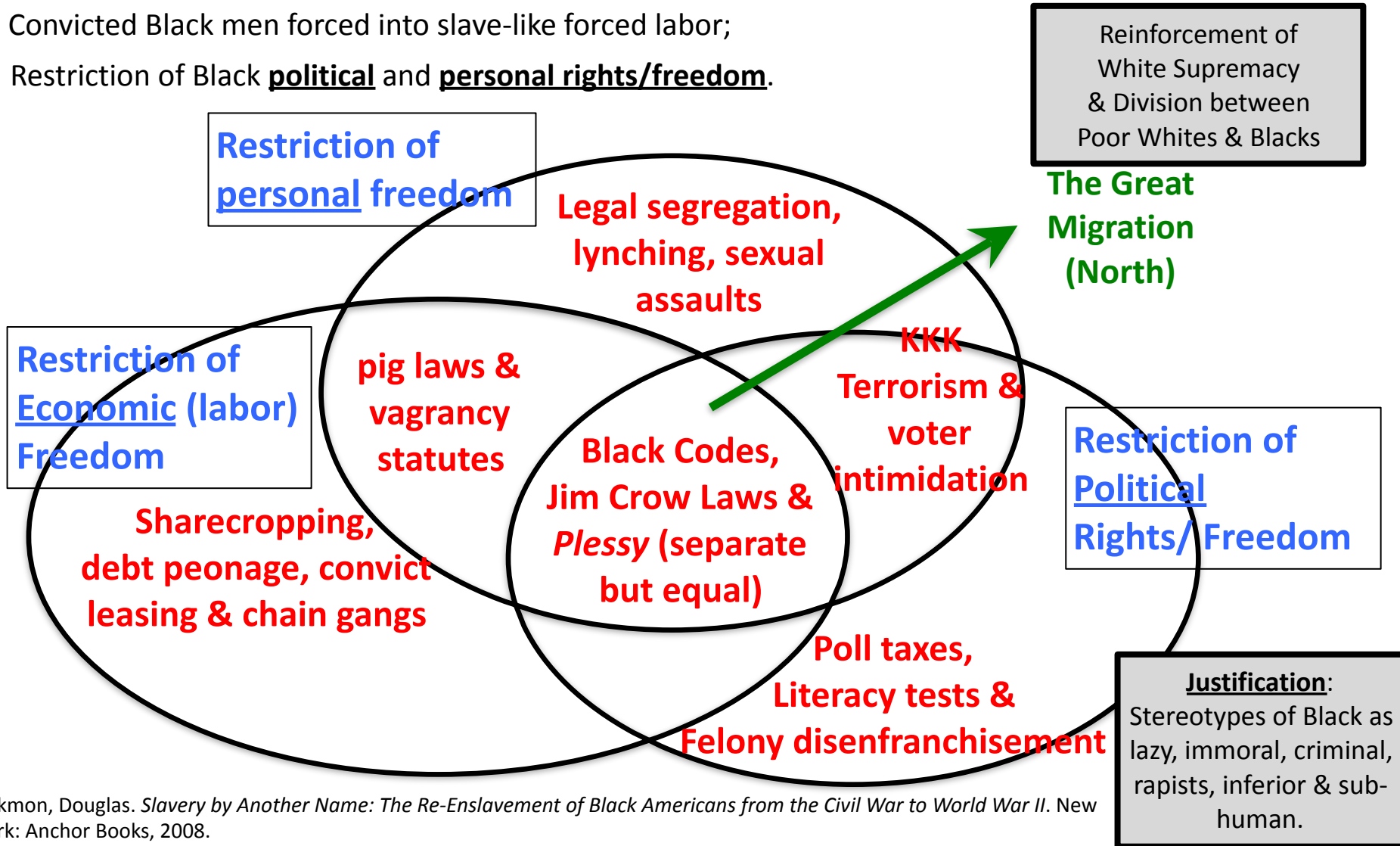
**Economic Prosperity AND  
Economic & Social stability**

**Enslavement of Blacks (*labor*)  
& Dispossession of Native Americans (*land*)**

**Justification:**  
Stereotypes of  
Black as lazy,  
immoral, criminal,  
rapists, inferior &  
sub-human.

# 90 years of **Jim Crow and Forced Labor Systems** (1876-1965): **Re-Construction of Slavery** (*'Slavery by Another Name'*)

1. Southerners reconstructed slavery with **sharecropping** & the **criminal justice system**.  
 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment permitted involuntary servitude of convicts, so new laws criminalized petty crime;
2. Convicted Black men forced into slave-like forced labor;
3. Restriction of Black **political** and **personal rights/freedom**.



Blackmon, Douglas. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. New York: Anchor Books, 2008.

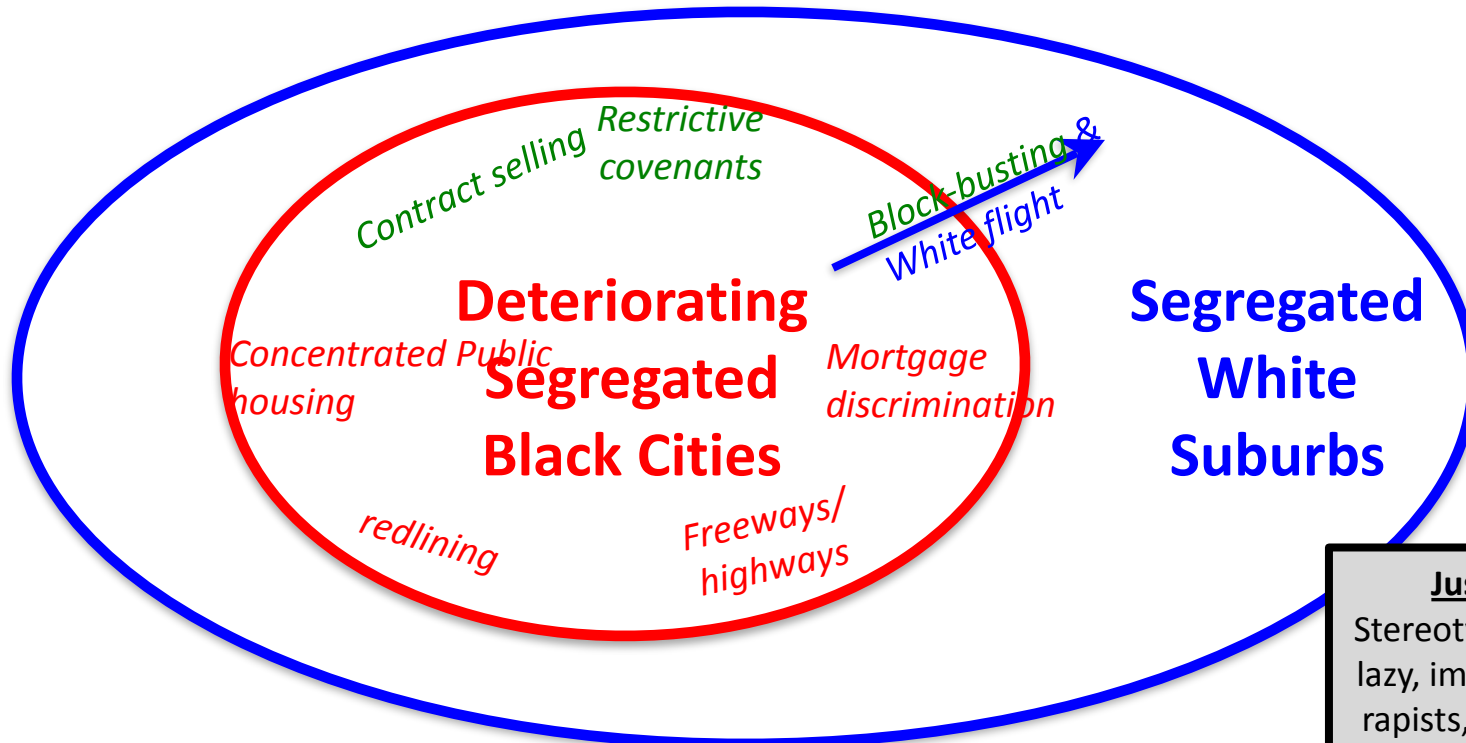
Pollard, JL. Dir. *Slavery by Another Name* (film). PBS, 2012.

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# 30 years of **Discriminatory Public Policy** (1938-1968):

## Construction of **Black Ghettos** and **White Suburbs**

1. **Federal gov't** subsidized the growth of **segregated white suburbs** & large **white middle class**
2. Encouraged **economic deterioration of black urban centers** (*self-fulfilling prophecy*) by:
  - a. **Mortgage discrimination** and **redlining**;
  - b. **Predatory housing practices** by private real estate agents;
  - c. **White-flight** from cities; and
  - d. Concentrating low-income **public housing** in cities.



### Justification:

Stereotypes of Black as lazy, immoral, criminal, rapists, inferior & sub-human. And how this would destroy property values.

Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law*. New York: Liveright/W.W. Norton, 2017.

Lopez M, Rothstein R. *Segregated by Design* [18 min video]. Austin, TX: Silkworm Studio; 2019.

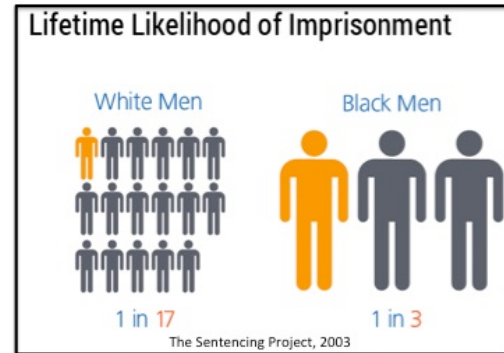
Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*, June 2014.

Adelman, Larry, Exec prod. *Race-The Power of an Illusion*. (film) "Episode 3 The House We Live In." California Newsreel, 2003.

Boule, Jamelle. "How We Built the Ghettos." *The Daily Beast*, March 13, 2014

# 50 years of the New Jim Crow (1972-present): The Re-Construction of Jim Crow's Racial Caste System

1. Nixon, Reagan, Clinton & Trump campaigned on "law & order"/"tough on crime" racial rhetoric;
2. **War on Drugs** increased **policing, enforcement, sentencing, and time served of drug laws** (new *pig laws*) in a racially biased manner (**racial profiling, crack-vs.-powder cocaine sentences, etc.**), resulting in the **mass incarceration** of Black men.
3. Mass incarceration both a **means of racial control** AND a **band-aid "solution"** to racial inequity, poverty, addiction, mental illness, illiteracy, and mass unemployment after deindustrialization
4. Ex-felons "branded" and **legally denied constitutional rights & public benefits.**

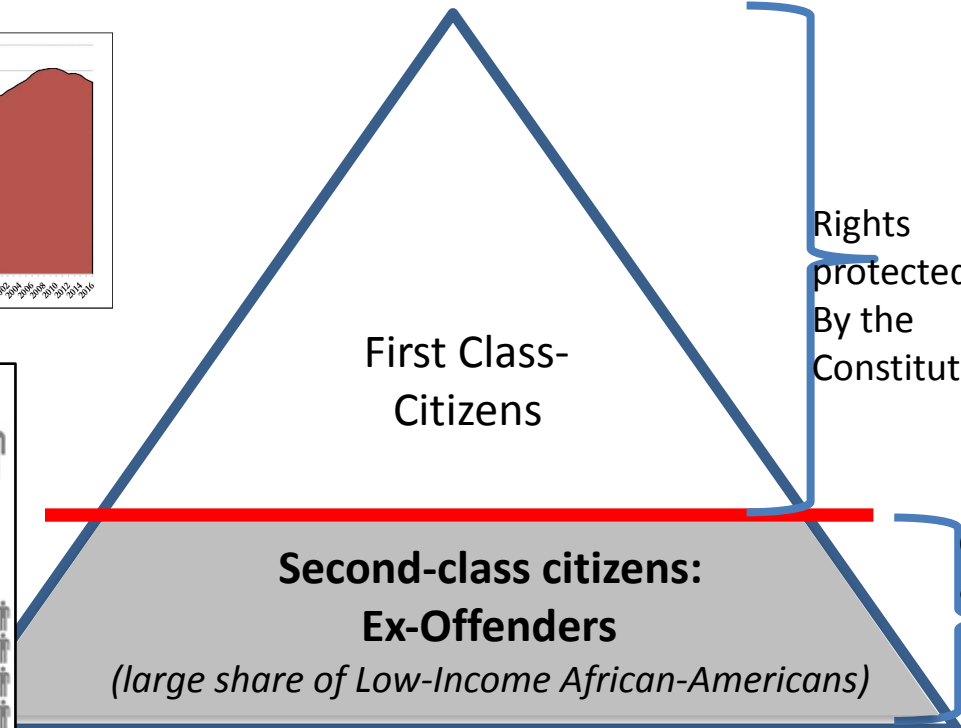


**Justification:**  
Stereotypes of Black as lazy, immoral, criminal, rapists, inferior & 'super-predators'.

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Rights protected By the Constitution

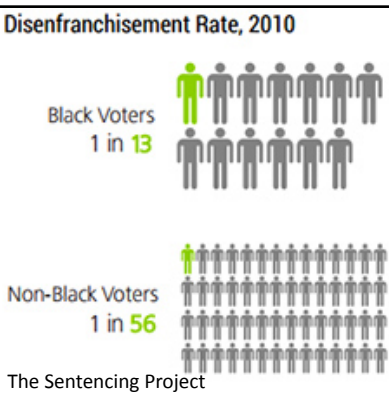
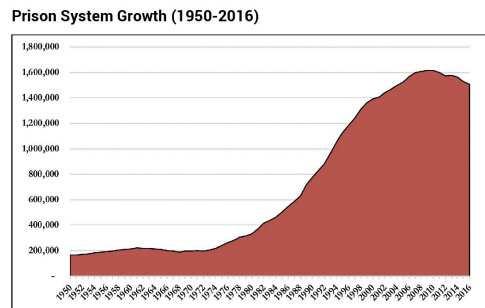
Legally denied rights & public benefits



First Class-Citizens

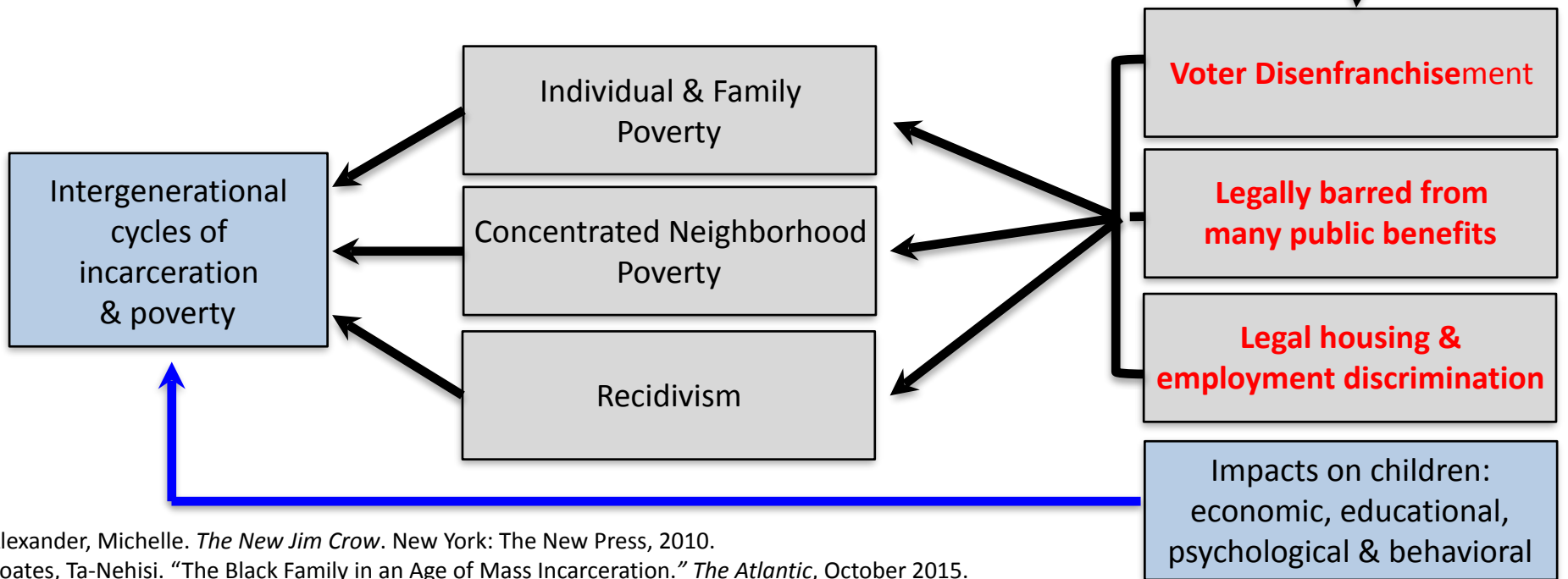
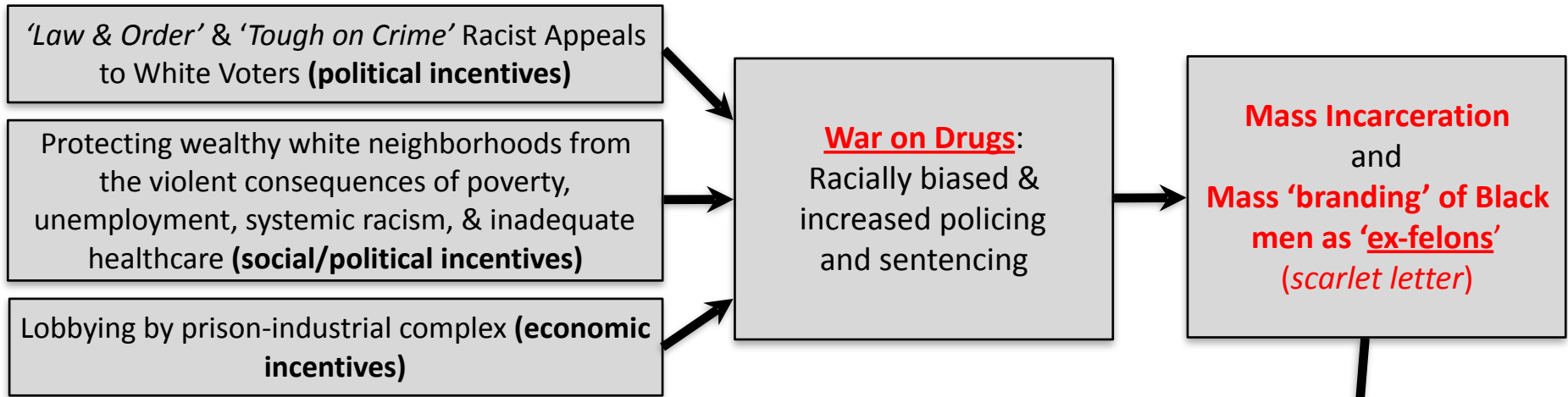
Second-class citizens:  
Ex-Offenders

(large share of Low-Income African-Americans)





# 50 years of the New Jim Crow (1972-present): Re-Construction of the Jim Crow's Racial Caste System



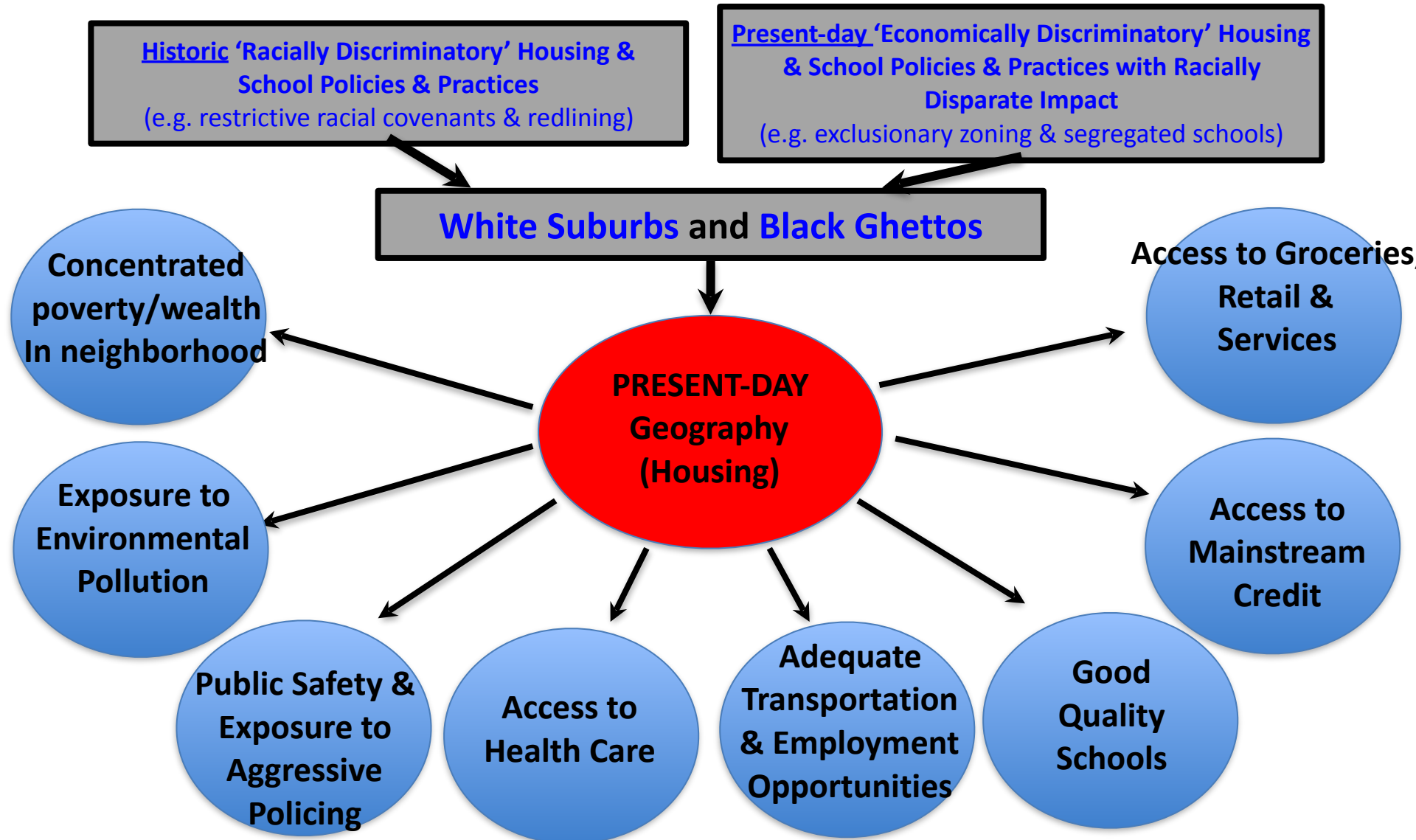
Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. New York: The New Press, 2010.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Black Family in an Age of Mass Incarceration." *The Atlantic*, October 2015.

DuVernay, Ava. 13<sup>th</sup> (film). Forward Movement/Kandoo Films, 2016.

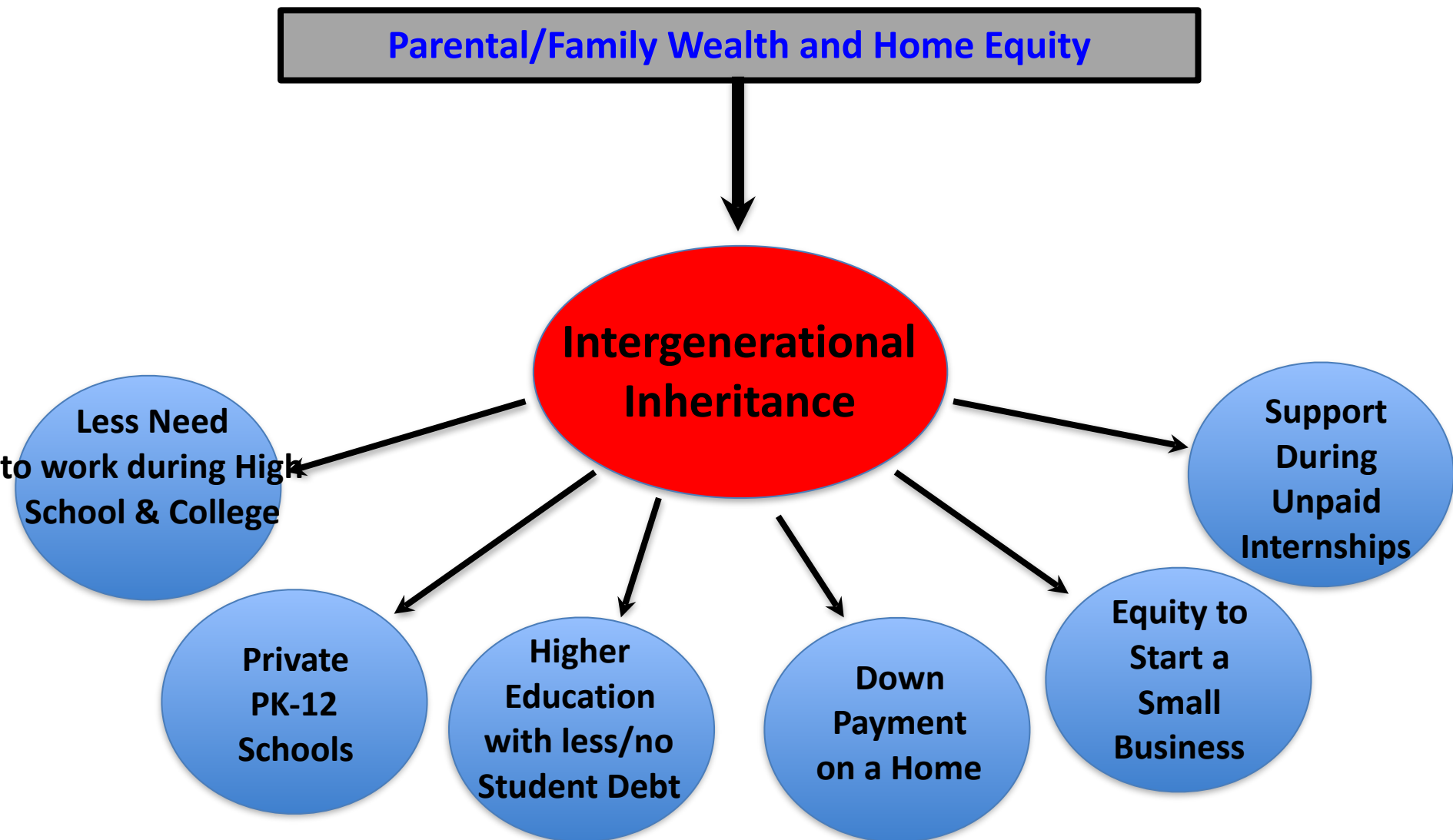
# How the Legacy of Historical Racism Impacts the U.S. Today, Part 1:

## Housing Segregation and Geography



# How The Legacy of historical Racism Impacts the U.S. Today, Part 2:

## Intergenerational Wealth Transmission



# Regression on Civil Rights Progress (2013-Present): Rollback of Racially Disparate Impact Regulations

*Brown v. Board of Ed. (1954)  
& the Civil Rights Act (1964)*

**Voter Registration Act (1965)**

**Fair Housing Act (1968) &  
Equal Credit Opportunity Act (1974)**

- Growing school segregation;
- Unequal funding of schools by local property taxes in segregated neighborhoods; and
- Rollback of School Discipline Guidance.

- Shelby County v. Holder (2013) “gutted” Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which required jurisdictions with a history of discrimination to pre-clear changes in voting procedures;
- Photo Voter ID Laws; and
- Voter Registration Purges.

- Exclusionary zoning: (replaces racial zoning);
- Predatory lending: subprime mortgages (“reverse redlining”);
- Rollback of Federal Government Housing Guidelines; and
- Racial Gerrymandering.

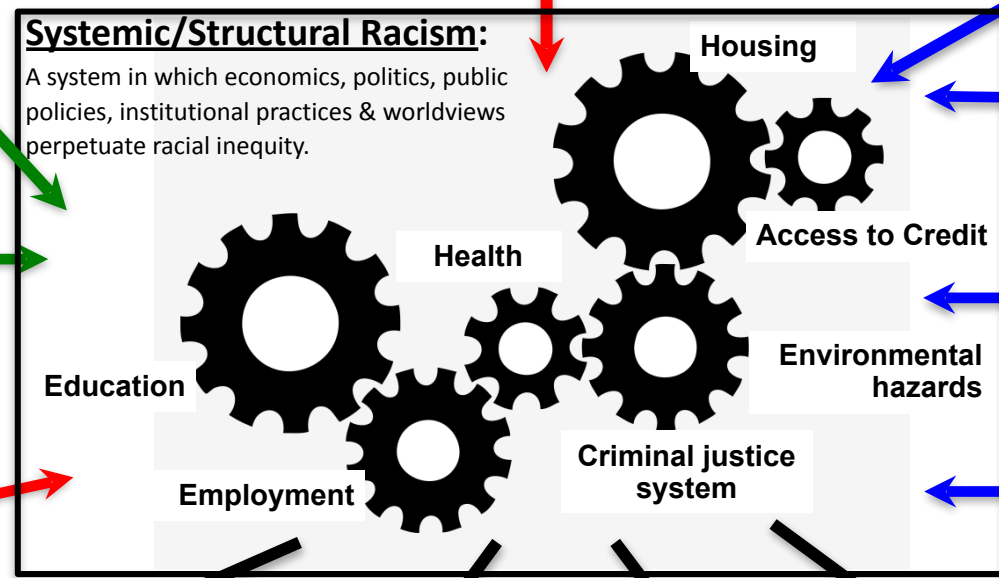
# How Institutional and Systemic/Structural Racism are Reproduced

**Corporate ECONOMIC Interests:**  
Free or below value land, natural resources, labor, or increased business profits.

**Individual Bias & Societal Stereotypes**  
Biases absorbed from family, society, culture, religion, media, literature, and film.

**POLITICAL Interests:**  
Maintaining white supremacy, protecting wealthy whites from violence, dividing low-income Blacks & Whites, & winning votes.

**Indiv. Econ. interests**  
Tendency & ability of whites to reproduce inequity & hoard opportunities ('dream hoarding'), regardless of stated values ('the conundrum of privilege')  
Ex: segregated schools & communities, legacy admissions, exclusionary zoning, hiring discrimination.



Gerrymandering & voter suppression

Racially disparate policies

Political racial rhetoric

Exacerbated Individual Bias & Societal Stereotypes

Racial Disparities & Racial Wealth Gap

Increasing Urban Poverty

Division of Low-Income Blacks & Whites

**Media, Popular Culture & Cognitive Bias:**  
Narratives that normalize & rationalize systemic racism ('system justification') through stereotyping & victim blaming.

Gears metaphor for systemic racism by Tricia Rose.

Jones CP. "Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale". *Am J Public Health* 2000;90(8):1212-1215.

Hayes-Greene, D. and B. P. Love. *The Groundwater Approach: Building a Practical Understanding of Structural Racism*. Report. The Racial Equity Institute. 2018.

Reeves, Richard. *Dream Hoarders. How the American Middle Class is Leaving Everyone Else in The Dust*. Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2017.

Hagerman, Margaret. *White Kids: Growing Up With Privilege in a Racially Divided America*. New York: NYU Press. 2020.