

# Racism and Discrimination in Plato's Modern Cave

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# What is racism and how does it fit into Plato's "Modern Cave"?

- ❖ Plato's allegory of the cave follows the ignorance of the main character and their story striving to expose others' ignorance and liberate those individuals from their blinded ways.
- ❖ The cave fits into this modern world with regard to racism in a number of ways.
- ❖ For instance, racism and discrimination impacts the quality of care that individuals get when in a hospital, the treatment from police officers towards the citizens they are meant to protect and serve, (example: racial profiling) and even the ability to live a successful, fulfilled life due to these circumstances.
- ❖ Another example is institutional discrimination. This happens when one's ability to live in society and the community as a whole is affected due to mistreatment.
- ❖ Institutional discrimination impacts minorities in a number of ways from one's access to education, housing, and even employment.

# Medical Care Discrimination

- ❖ For minorities especially in low income inner cities, not only are these individuals at a higher risk of developing diabetes, heart disease and cancer among many other illnesses, but their life expectancy and level of care done by physicians is significantly less compared to white Americans.
- ❖ For many of the physicians or medical providers, there is a strong implicit racial bias for these minorities which in turn affects quality of care.
- ❖ This could include microaggressions, having a non-factual belief in genetic abnormalities for their non-white patients, less frequent positive body language and even little to no compassion and warmth shown for these patients.
- ❖ Kanter et. al in their study “Addressing microaggressions in racially charged patient-provider interactions: a pilot randomized trial” assessed these issues of medical care discrimination and illustrated as follows, “emotional rapport, variously defined as displaying empathy, respect, validation, and concern for the patient, is central to patient centered care... and may be particularly sensitive to the effects of bias.” (Kanter et. al)

# Medical Care Discrimination Continued:

- ❖ For example, the trust between the patient and the provider may be fragile in this instance because as an African-American patient may bring up past experiences of discrimination or racism, this may even further the divide causing the provider to avoid the discussion of race altogether and develop “automatic, inaccurate, negative stereotypes, heightened physiological threat responses and anxiety...” (Kanter et. al)
- ❖ The University of California-San Francisco wrote an article titled, “one in 5 patients report discrimination in healthcare” which concluded, “In 2008, 27 percent of Blacks with a major health condition reported experiencing discrimination.” (Nguyen et al.)
- ❖ That study went on to find that African Americans reported “the top three reasons for discrimination reported that year were on the basis of race or ancestry (48 percent), age (29 percent), and financial status (20 percent).” (Nguyen et al.)
- ❖ For Hispanics, the top four reasons for discrimination that year were, “...age (27 percent), race or ancestry (23 percent), weight/physical appearance (14 percent), and financial status (14 percent).” (Nguyen et al.)

# Medical Care Discrimination Continued:

- ❖ When it comes to life expectancy in the U.S. there are many factors involved, however there is a significant race gap which may be due to discrimination.
- ❖ For example, these are average life expectancies by race:
  - Native American: 75.06 years
  - African Americans: 75.54 years
  - White Americans: 79.12 years
  - Hispanic Americans: 82.89 years
  - Asian Americans: 86.67 years
    - However, there are many factors involved in this life expectancy, including diet, stress, economic status, medical issues, and environmental issues.
- ➔ In “The Racial Life Expectancy Gap” by Rosemary Carlson, she explains one key factor in life expectancy that sets apart African Americans and white Americans, saying, “a 2012 study showed that 80% of the racial life expectancy gap between black and white men could be attributed to socioeconomic factors. About 70% of the gap between black and white women can be contributed to socioeconomic factors.” (Carlson)
- ➔ These socioeconomic factors include, “education, occupation, unemployment, marital status, and home ownership.” (Carlson) For many African Americans, these factors are stacked up against them due to institutional racism and discrimination.

# Racial Profiling

- ❖ Erin Olsen defines racial profiling in her scholarly article, “Racial Profiling,” saying, “... is a form of racial bias whereby citizens are stopped, questioned, searched, or even arrested on the basis of their minority status per se rather than due to a demonstrated, elevated risk of lawbreaking.” (Olsen)
- ❖ There is a hard line to be crossed when suggesting racial profiling, yet in many instances, the police officer’s actions are seen as justified or even necessary.
- ❖ For example, in New York City, under the Michael Bloomberg administration, a program was created called “Stop and Frisk,” which overwhelmingly singled out African Americans and Hispanic Americans to be stopped, questioned, searched, and many times arrested, even though often times ,they were innocent.
- ❖ Since 2002, the New York Civil Liberties Union or NYCLU reports that “...New Yorkers have been subject to police stops and street interrogations more than 5 million times...”
- ❖ The NYCLU goes on to say that “nearly 9 out of 10 stopped-and-frisked New Yorkers have been completely innocent.”

# Racial Profiling Continued:

## Stop and Frisk Data at its Peak:

### ❖ 2011:

- 685,724 NYPD stops
- 605,328 were innocent (88%)
- 350,743 were Black (53%)
- 223,740 were Latinx (34%)
- 61,805 were white (9%)
- 341,581 were aged 14-24 (51%)

### ❖ 2010:

- 601,285 NYPD stops
- 518,849 were innocent (86%)
- 315,083 were Black (54%)
- 189,326 were Latinx (33%)
- 54,810 were white (9%)
- 295,902 were aged q14-24 (49%)

### ❖ 2012:

- 532,911 NYPD Stops
- 473,644 were innocent (89%)
- 284,229 were Black (55%)
- 165,140 were Latinx (32%)
- 50,366 were white (10%)

### ❖ 2009:

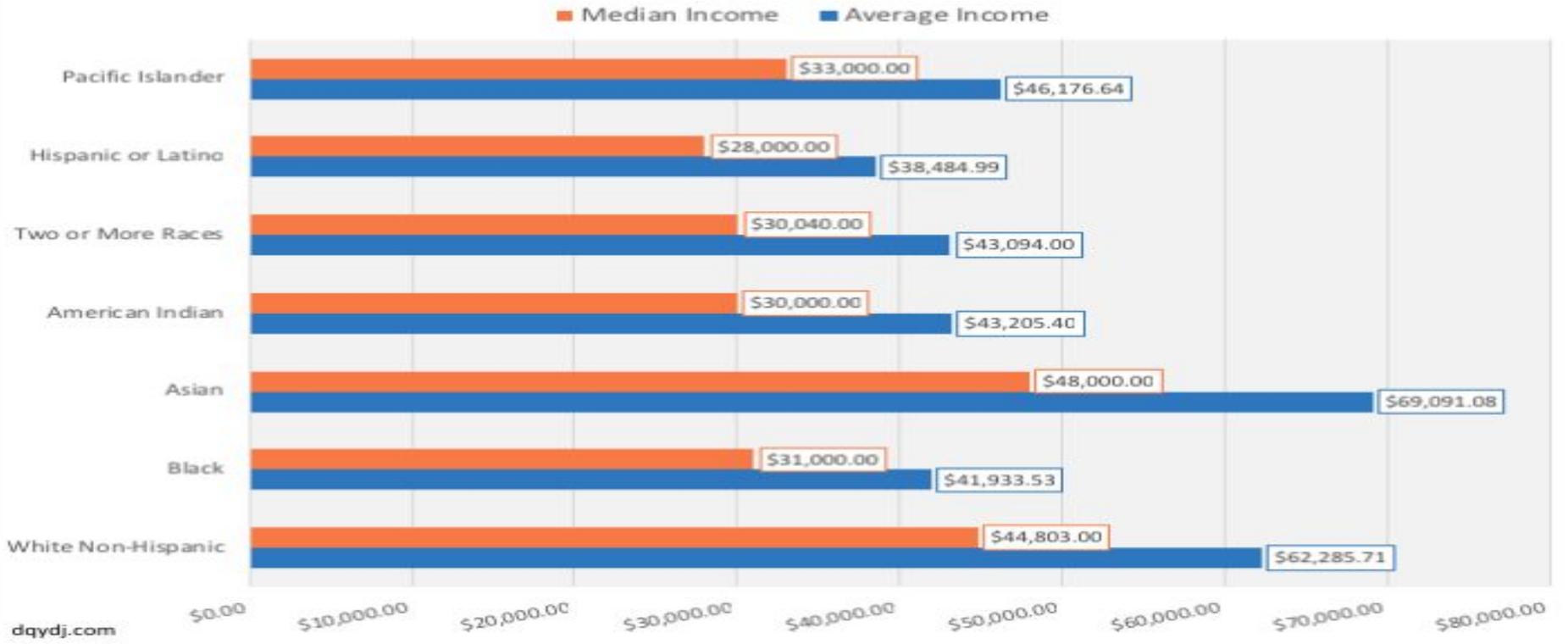
- 581,168 NYPD stops
- 510,742 were innocent (88%)
- 310,611 were Black (55%)
- 180,055 were Latinx (32%)
- 53,601 were white (10%)
- 289,602 were aged 14-24 (50%)

# Institutional Discrimination (Education)

- ❖ For much of the U.S., there is a staggering difference when it comes to socioeconomic status across racial boundaries.
- ❖ These socioeconomic factors include varying degrees of access and levels of success with regards to education, occupation, and even home ownership.
- ❖ When it comes to education, the National Center for Education Statistics took notice on public high school graduation rates with regard to race.
  - Asian/Pacific Islander: (91%)
  - White: (89%)
  - Hispanic: (80%)
  - Black: (78%)
  - American Indian/Alaska Native (72%)
- ❖ Many of these minority populations are facing, often times, de facto segregation in which they are living in separate communities within cities and are going to school within their own districts while the majority of Caucasian families live outside of cities in suburbs with their own school districts.
- ❖ This, in turn, is reinforced and exacerbated by the fact that many school districts' funding relies heavily on the tax bracket that that community is in. This gives the most funding to the community that makes the most money. Then, in turn, leaves those communities that have a majority of minorities, left with failing, underfunded school systems.

# Institutional Discrimination (Occupation)

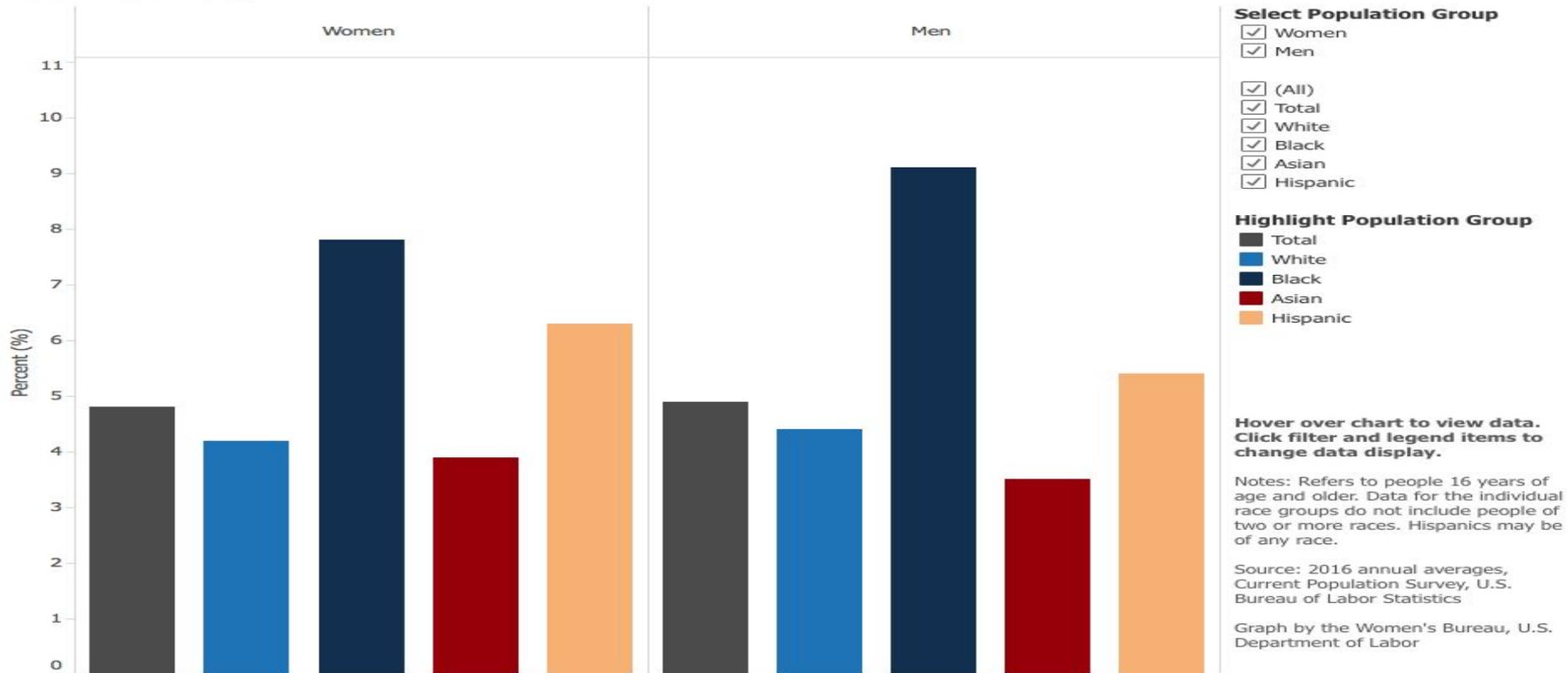
Average and Median Income by Race and Hispanic Origin  
2018 US Data from IPUMS-CPS



Average and Median Income by Race in the United States (2018).

# Institutional Discrimination (Occupation)

**Unemployment rate by sex, race and Hispanic ethnicity**  
2016 annual averages



**Select Population Group**

- Women
- Men

- (All)
- Total
- White
- Black
- Asian
- Hispanic

**Highlight Population Group**

- Total
- White
- Black
- Asian
- Hispanic

Hover over chart to view data.  
Click filter and legend items to  
change data display.

Notes: Refers to people 16 years of  
age and older. Data for the individual  
race groups do not include people of  
two or more races. Hispanics may be  
of any race.

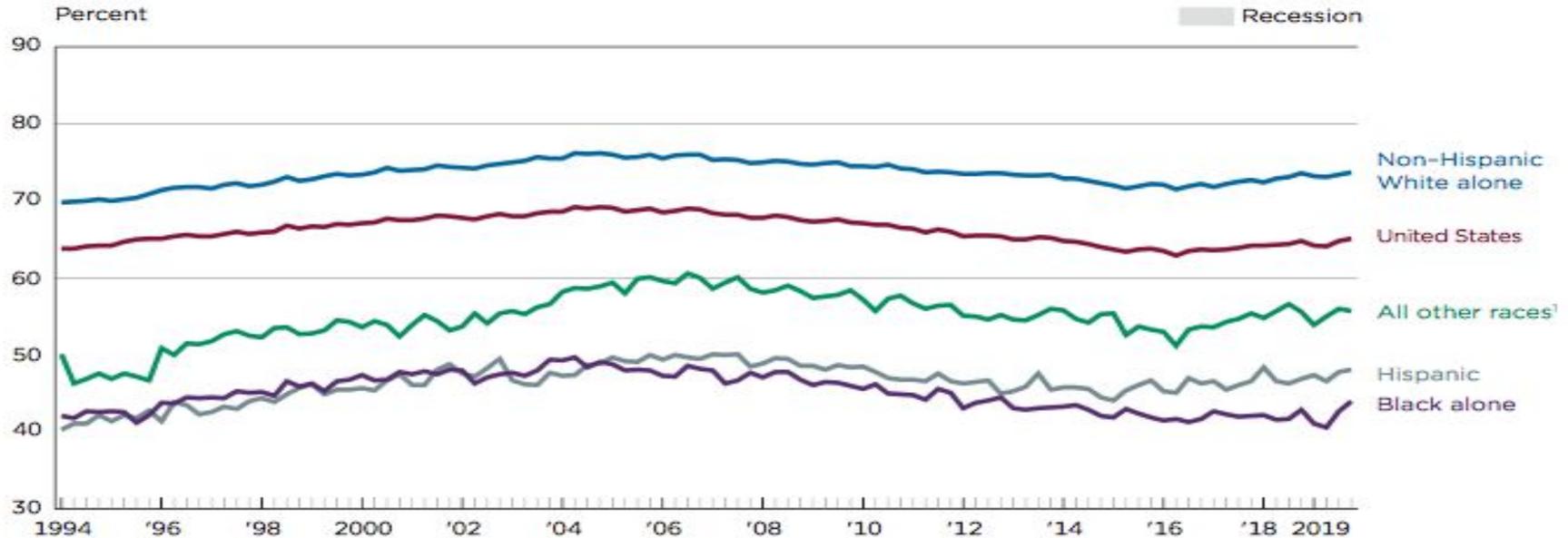
Source: 2016 annual averages,  
Current Population Survey, U.S.  
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Graph by the Women's Bureau, U.S.  
Department of Labor

# Institutional Discrimination (Housing):

Figure 8.

## Quarterly Homeownership Rates by Race and Ethnicity of Householder for the United States: 1994–2019



¹Includes Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Two or More Races.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey, March 10, 2020; recession data from the National Bureau of Economic Research, <[www.nber.org](http://www.nber.org)>.

# Institutional Discrimination (Conclusion)

- ❖ To conclude, when the statistics are broken down to consider all factors and compare by race, African Americans and Hispanics are more vulnerable to the cycle of institutional racism, and in turn, the odds are stacked against them.
- ❖ For instance, when it comes to opportunity, graduating high school most certainly is a very significant factor in financial success. However, when compared to Caucasians, Hispanics and African Americans graduate high school around ten percent less often on average.
- ❖ For both men and women, African Americans and Hispanics not only are more likely to be unemployed, but they make, on average, \$20,000 less with regards to average income compared to Caucasians.
- ❖ Additionally, when it comes to house ownership, Caucasians are upwards of 30% more likely to own a house compared to African Americans and Hispanics.
- ❖ Ipso facto, since African Americans and Hispanics graduate high school less often, make less money, and are less likely to own a house than Caucasians, it seems to be much greater a challenge for these minorities to rise up to their fullest potential and become successful.

# How to Rise Above the Ignorance

- ❖ Grow your compassion: Try to see from other people's perspectives, give back and be kind.
- ❖ Do your research before making assumptions.
- ❖ Get to know the people around you and listen openly.
- ❖ Accept and respect others as you would want to be treated.
- ❖ Be honest, yet gracious.
- ❖ If an issue is important to you, send an email to your local congressmen or congresswomen.
- ❖ Be the change that you wish to see in this world and do it boldly.
- ❖ Believe and do your part to make this world more just and equal.

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*Figure 8. Quarterly Homeownership Rates by Race ... - Census.* [www.census.gov/housing/hvs/data/charts/fig08.pdf](http://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/data/charts/fig08.pdf).

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