

American Studies

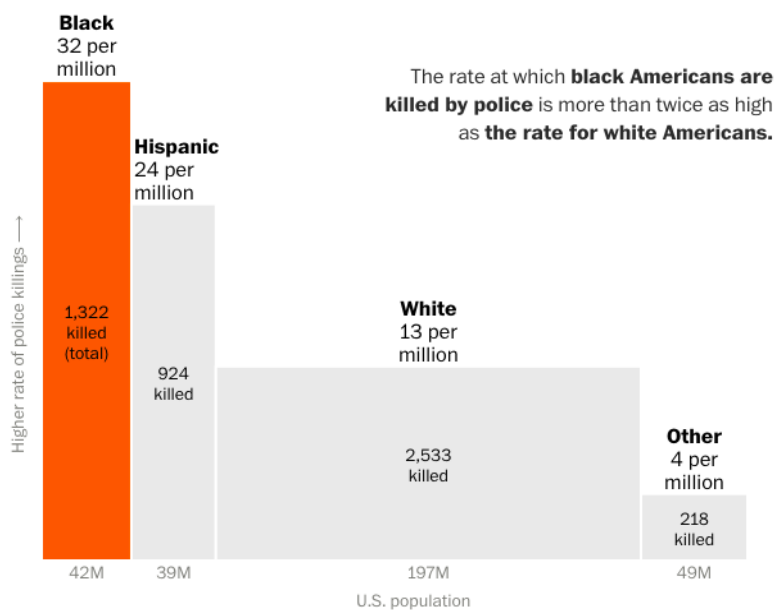
U.S. History

1 September 2020

Failure at Equality in America Leads to the Value of Dissent

Though most Americans today do not think much about what they value, many of America's values come from the history of the nation. Two core American values are equality and dissent. Our founding fathers established the value of equality when they wrote in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal". They also established the value of dissent when they wrote in the First Amendment of the Constitution that Congress would give "the right of the people to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances". These two values, equality and the right to dissent and protest are still very important in America's society today. Currently, America is not living up to the value of equality, which leads to Americans living up to the value of dissent.

Right now, America is not living up to the value of equality. Currently, systemic racism continues to promote inequalities in America. The impact of systematic racism is seen in the

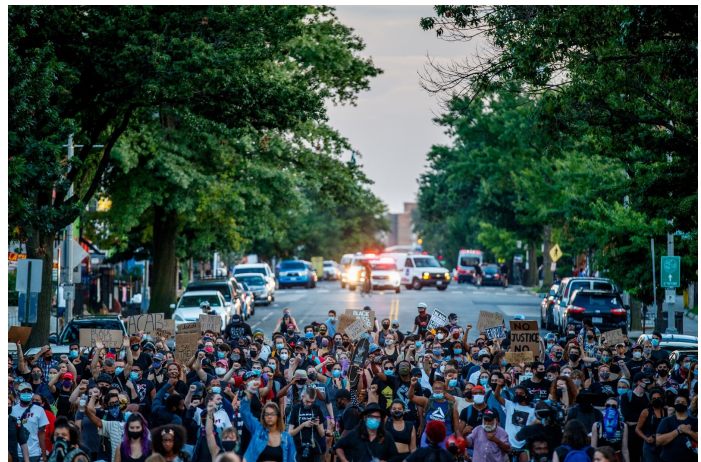


tragic reality of black people getting shot by police officers. According to the Washington Post, black Americans make up less than 13% of the U.S. but are killed by the police at double the rate as white Americans (Fatal

Force, Washington Post). Many unarmed black Americans have been shot and/or killed by the police this year and the past few years. George Floyd was killed this year; a police officer kneeled on his neck until he died, for allegedly trying to use a counterfeit bill (Chughtai). Breonna Taylor was also killed this year. She was sleeping in her house and was unarmed as she was shot eight times by the police (Chughtai). This past month, Jacob Blake was unarmed and was shot in the back seven times by a police officer (Asmelash). Black people suffering from police brutality has been happening for years in the U.S. It is a product of systemic racism, a major inequality.

Gender inequality is another way that America is not living up to its core value of equality. This includes the gender wage gap and career fields that exclude women. The American Association of the University of Women states that women make 82 cents to every dollar a man makes (AAUW). According to Forbes, women make up only 28% of workers in the science and engineering fields (Francis). These facts prove that women in society are not treated equally. They are rewarded less and receive fewer opportunities to pursue jobs in fields for “men”. These two issues in the U.S., police brutality against black people and the gender pay gap, are two reasons why America is not a country that demonstrates equality.

Because America is not living up to the value of equality, many Americans are using their right to dissent and protest. Due to America’s systemic racism, many Americans are protesting and marching to fight for racial equality. Black Lives Matter protests and marches swarmed



the U.S. after the murder of George Floyd during the quarantine. But even earlier in 2016, Colin Kaepernick knelt during the national anthem to protest against police brutality and many other athletes have done the same since (Eligon). The protests, marches, and kneeling show how Americans are using their right to dissent to fight against systemic racism and police brutality. People are speaking up against what they know is wrong. As for gender inequality, there have been marches, protests, and lawsuits to fight against it. After Donald Trump was inaugurated as president, over a million people marched in rallies across the U.S. They marched because of statements that Trump made that were anti-women and the marches continued for the last 3 years (Keneally). Another form of protesting has happened through lawsuits. Many companies have



been sued for gender pay discrimination. In 2018, four women filed a lawsuit against Nike for violating the Equal Pay Act by paying women less than men who were doing the same job (Campbell). And women have filed complaints against many other big companies for gender pay

discrimination, such as Twitter, Microsoft, Google, and Disney (Campbell). People have been marching and filing lawsuits to fight against gender pay discrimination. By doing this they are living up to the value of dissent and protest. With all the inequalities that happen in the U.S., many Americans have spoken out to fight against them, using their right of dissent.

America has many core values, and it's not living up to a lot of them. It's definitely not a country that currently represents equality, but because of that, it's a country that values dissent

and protest. In 2020, inequality is running rampant through the streets of the U.S. It's in the form of police brutality against black people and gender pay discrimination. But in the midst of these inequalities, many Americans are using their right to protest and dissent to fight for what is right. America has lost its value of equality, and in 2020 it is most evident. Americans need to protest against injustices and inequalities to get equality back. By using the value of dissent, Americans can fight for America to value equality again.

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(add declaration of independence and constitution to this)

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