



---

# THE TREASURE OF FELLOWSHIP:

FROM FRAGRANCE TO  
FORTRESS

---

MIST QUIZ BOWL TOPIC 2:  
RACIAL DISPARITIES AND  
INJUSTICE



## MIST Quiz Bowl Topic 2: Racial Disparities and Injustice: The Politics of Race

For MIST Quiz Bowl Topic 2: **Racial Disparities and Injustice: The Politics of Race**, the questions will be asked from the compilation of scholarly journals below:

### **Table of Contents**

3	Introduction
6	Justice Enforcement
6	Background and history
9	Statistics and Numbers
11	Corporate promises
14	References

#### **Note:**

The questions for this topic may include specifics regarding dates. These will be dates of significance.

For example:

Question: What date was George Floyd murdered on that sparked worldwide protests for the Black Lives Matter movement?

Answer: May 25, 2020



## Introduction

Racial inequality in the United States today is rooted in long standing behaviors, beliefs, and public and private policies that resulted in the appropriation of the physical, financial, labor, and other resources of non-white people. While a review of the origins of racial inequity requires extensive research, it is important to note the prominent role of inequitable and harmful policies—dating back to before the country’s founding. These include attacks on Native Americans’ political status and expropriation of their land, the reliance on slavery to underpin a significant portion of the colonial and then U.S. economy, and the Jim Crow laws and other formal and informal policies that enforced segregation and severely limited opportunities for non-white Americans. The millions of African Americans who left the southern United States to escape Jim Crow laws faced formal and informal employment, housing, and educational discrimination in destination cities in the North and West.<sup>4</sup> Native Americans who survived the military conquests of the mid-19th century were subject to policies that disenfranchised them, forced their assimilation and relocation, and removed Native children from their households.

Anti-Latino sentiment, which grew in the 19th century as emigration from Mexico to the United States increased in the years following the Mexican-American War, grew further following the Great Depression due to concerns that Mexican Americans were taking jobs from European-Americans.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, anti-Asian sentiment grew following the arrival of Chinese immigrants during the California Gold Rush, which was manifested in the Chinese Exclusion Act prohibiting the immigration of Chinese laborers beginning in 1882, and was ignited again after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, with the establishment of Japanese internment camps by executive order, which resulted in the forced relocation and internment of about 120,000 Japanese Americans.

While the most targeted racist laws and policies have been repealed or otherwise abandoned, subsequent policies, uneven enforcement of equal protections, and a failure to invest in individuals harmed by de jure and de facto discrimination has resulted in vastly limited opportunities and stark inequities between white and non-white



Americans that have continued to this day. For example, maps drawn by the Home Owners Loan Corporation, a now defunct federal agency, to portray the relative riskiness of lending across neighborhoods in the 1930s were used by banks to deny access to credit to residents of the lowest-rated neighborhoods, who were often racial and ethnic minorities, though these policies also hurt poor white individuals. Moreover, this conduct depressed home ownership rates, house values, and rents and increased racial segregation in low-rated neighborhoods in subsequent decades, highlighting the lasting, negative economic consequences of racism on the community and on future residents of these neighborhoods, regardless of race.<sup>8</sup> These and other policies and actions not only led to continued racial disparities in access to resources and opportunities, they also led to differences in the extent to which people of different races benefit from the resources and opportunities they already possess.

These disparities are evident in the persistent over-representation of Black and Hispanic Americans among the population in poverty in the United States and in the widening of the racial wealth gap in recent decades.<sup>10</sup> While the poverty rates for all racial and ethnic groups had been declining prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the gaps between the rates for Black and Hispanic Americans and non-Hispanic white Americans has remained relatively constant since the early 2000s. At the same time, the gap in average net wealth between Black and Hispanic households and non-Hispanic white households has widened significantly.

Race has been a defining issue in American politics since before the country formally came into existence, a dividing line marked by generations of struggle and conflict. Today, the issue is back at the center of a national debate, this time amid shifting attitudes and heightened expectations that are demanding more than sympathetic rhetoric and safe steps from political leaders.

Two unexpected events catalyzed this moment. The coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately killed black Americans and exposed a broader range of inequalities that persist in black communities; the recession that accompanied the pandemic has highlighted similar inequities. And the brutal killing of George Floyd by police in



Minneapolis has prompted many white Americans to acknowledge that their lives are profoundly different from those of black Americans — and that racism is part of that lived experience.

The protests that followed the killing of George Floyd have been described as an inflection point for the country. That conclusion may be premature, given how deeply embedded structural racism is in America's history and culture and how fractured and polarized its political system is.

But when 2 in 3 Americans now say they support the Black Lives Matter movement; when thousands upon thousands of Americans march in the streets of big cities and small towns; when the National Football League reverses its position on players' kneeling during the national anthem; when Mississippi eliminates the Confederate symbol from its flag; there seems little question that for now, this is a materially different moment.

The killings of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown and Eric Garner gave rise to the Black Lives Matter movement but did not stop the use of deadly force by police against unarmed black people. Nor did the election of the nation's first black president result in any healing. Quite the opposite.

Across the country, prominent institutions, corporations and other organizations are moving to implement new policies on diversity and inclusion and to eliminate as much as possible the scourge of discrimination. Forced by public opinion and the marketplace, they are removing symbols that have caused pain to black Americans for generations. Meanwhile, the political power structure in Washington has been caught up in predictable partisanship and paralysis.



## Justice Enforcement

The capacity of the prison and jailing system has grown dramatically over the past several decades, and today the per capita prison population in the United States sits at 505 per 100 000. It is the sixth largest in the world. But, the expansion of the carceral state has not affected all groups equally. Black people are disproportionately hurt by the justice system's growth. Between 1980 and 2014 the black incarceration rate increased from 5.19 to 13.92 per 1,000 black citizens. The white incarceration rate during that period increased from only 0.79 to 2.37 per 1,000 white citizens (Bureau of Statistics 2014). Such striking disparities in criminal justice enforcement hold true even for crimes that both races are equally likely to commit (Tonry 2014). Racial inequalities also can be seen in everyday police encounters such as routine traffic stops. Although both black and white individuals are equally likely to be stopped while driving, black drivers are three times more likely to be searched during a stop and twice as likely to experience violent force by police officers compared to white drivers (Eith and Durose 2011)

## Background and History

American politics has arrived at this moment of racial reckoning deeply polarized and with a party structure shaped profoundly by the politics of race. Ideology, religion and culture are a part of the polarization, but over the past half-century, race has been at the core of the sorting-out.

The story of how the Republican Party, once the party of Abraham Lincoln, became almost entirely dependent on white voters, and how the Democratic Party, once the party of Southern segregationists, became the political home to black Americans and other minorities has been years in the making.

Historian Jill Lepore has observed that at an earlier point in the country's history, there were in essence three political parties — Republicans, Democrats and millions of black



Americans denied the right to vote. Those who could vote began to move from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party during the New Deal of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

But even as the allegiance of some black voters was shifting, the two major parties were perceived more or less equally in their capacity to address issues of race, and many black voters continued to side with the Republicans. In his reelection campaign in 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower received about 40 percent of the black vote. In the spring of that year, two years after the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ordered an end to school segregation, the Gallup Poll asked Americans which of the two major parties they saw as best able to handle the issue of segregation. Twenty-eight percent said the Republican Party, 26 percent said the Democratic Party, 22 percent said both parties and 24 percent had no opinion. By the summer of 1964, a seismic shift in perceptions of the parties was underway. That was the summer when Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. Not long after, Gallup asked Americans which party would do the best job of handling relations between races. Rather than a near-even split, 50 percent said the Democrats while 18 percent said Republicans.

“It starts in 1932 but ends in 1964,” said Andra Gillespie, a political science professor at Emory University. “That’s where the perceptual advantage becomes clear. It was [President] Lyndon B. Johnson’s embrace of civil rights [that] signaled that the Democratic Party was going to be more aggressive in pursuing issues of civil rights.” The election of Barack Obama in 2008 shattered a barrier many people thought they might not see in their lifetimes. His victory appeared to herald a new chapter in relations among the races.

That was a widespread interpretation in the days and weeks after his election, but it was wrong. Instead, polarization moved to another level during Obama’s presidency. As the



most visible face of the Democratic Party, he brought even more clarity to the question of which party stood with and for black Americans — and with that clarity came more division.

Obama's election produced a backlash, one that gave rise to a tea party movement fueled by anti-government sentiment but also by racial resentment. In that same time, what also took root was a birther lie that claimed Obama had not been born in America, a conspiracy theory that came to be shared by a sizable minority of Republicans.

As a candidate in 2016, Trump attacked Mexican immigrants and Muslims and used illegal immigration as a wedge to stoke resentment. In office, he had a shocking reaction to the white-supremacist march in Charlottesville in 2017 that resulted in violent clashes and the death of a young female counterprotester: He said there were “very fine people” on both sides.

Trump argued that his policies have helped black Americans, from the lowering of black unemployment (until the coronavirus pandemic drove the economy into a recession) to the passage of a criminal justice reform bill. But his presidency was marked by more racial antagonism and more public expressions of white supremacy. His party has been stamped indelibly in the eyes of black Americans — and others — by his actions.

Current president, Joe Biden, says he resolved to run after a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017. Pledging to recover "the soul of America" from the polarizing Trump era, the 77-year-old white man won the Democratic nomination with the endorsements of many Black lawmakers and strong backing from Black voters. He has a unique place in American politics, both for serving as the running mate of the first Black president, and for choosing as his own running mate the first woman of color on a national ticket.





President Joe Biden took aim at the "ugly poisons" of "systemic racism and white supremacy" that he said had long plagued the United States, and vowed to change the laws that enabled continued discrimination.

In blunt language, the Democratic president said the country faced problems with racism, xenophobia and nativism.

## Statistics and Numbers

A recent Washington Post/Ipsos survey showed that 95 percent of black Democrats and those who lean Democratic, along with 89 percent of white Democrats and leaners, said the country needs to continue to make changes to give black people equal rights with white people. A majority of Republicans disagreed.

Additionally, Black and Hispanic adults continue to have considerably lower earnings than White or Asian adults. Median household income in 2020 was roughly \$46,000 and \$55,500 for Black and Hispanic workers, respectively, compared to \$75,000 and \$95,000 for white and Asian households, as shown in Figure 4. These earnings differences have changed little since 1970 and are one of the primary contributors to the persistence of the racial wealth gap. In 2019, the median white family had \$184,000 in family wealth compared to just \$23,000 and \$38,000 for the median Black and Hispanic families, respectively.

Racial disparities in educational and economic outcomes not only impact the economic well-being of racial and ethnic minorities, they have also been shown to inhibit economic growth for the U.S. economy as a whole, which affects the economic security of every American, regardless of race. For example, recent research by economists Chang-Tai Hsieh, Erik Hurst, Charles I. Jones, and Peter J. Klenow shows that up to 40 percent of



growth in U.S. GDP per capita between 1960 and 2010 can be attributed to increases in the shares of women and Black men working in highly skilled occupations, likely due to changes in social norms that previously hindered talented women and Black men from pursuing their comparative advantage. This research suggests that sexist and racist social norms prevented the U.S. economy from reaching its full potential and that working to ensure that every American has an equal opportunity to pursue the career he or she chooses should improve economic outcomes for all.

When it comes to the justice system, in a poll carried out in 2020, pollsters found that the percentage of Americans with an unfavorable impression of police rose from 18 percent in their May 21-27 survey to 31 percent in its May 28-June 3 poll. The polling for both weeks had a 2.2 percentage point margin of error, meaning either number could be 2.2 percentage points higher or lower than was officially recorded.

Most Americans have high confidence in police, the study found — except for black Americans. With a 1.5 percentage point margin of error, 56 percent of black Americans said they had a great deal or fair amount of confidence in police, compared to the 78 percent of white Americans who said the same. And confidence was even lower among young black Americans — 49 percent said they had a great or fair amount of confidence in police.

Many other polls have also captured this lack of trust — for instance, a [Washington Post/Ipsos poll](#) taken from January 2 to 8 of 1,088 black Americans (with a 3.5 percentage point margin of error) found that 83 percent said they didn't trust police "to treat people of all races equally." Only 14 percent said they did trust police to do so.



## Corporate promises

After the murder of George Floyd ignited nationwide protests, corporate America acknowledged it could no longer stay silent and promised to take an active role in confronting systemic racism. From Silicon Valley to Wall Street, companies proclaimed “Black lives matter.” JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon adopted the posture of former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick’s protests against police brutality and took a knee with bank employees. McDonald’s declared Floyd and other slain Black Americans “one of us.”

Now, more than a year after America’s leading businesses assured employees and consumers they would rise to the moment, a Washington Post analysis of unprecedented corporate commitments toward racial justice causes reveals the limits of their power to remedy structural problems. Apple and AbbVie, Facebook and Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and Procter & Gamble, and other top corporations made broad claims about what they would do, pledging to be a force for societal change and to fight racism and injustice, including violence against Black Americans. Where and how they dedicated their money became the most visible signs of their priorities.

To date, America’s 50 biggest public companies and their foundations collectively committed at least \$49.5 billion since Floyd’s murder last May to addressing racial inequality — an amount that appears unequaled in sheer scale.

Looking deeper, more than 90 percent of that amount — \$45.2 billion — is allocated as loans or investments they could stand to profit from, more than half in the form of mortgages. Two banks — JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America — accounted for nearly all of those commitments.

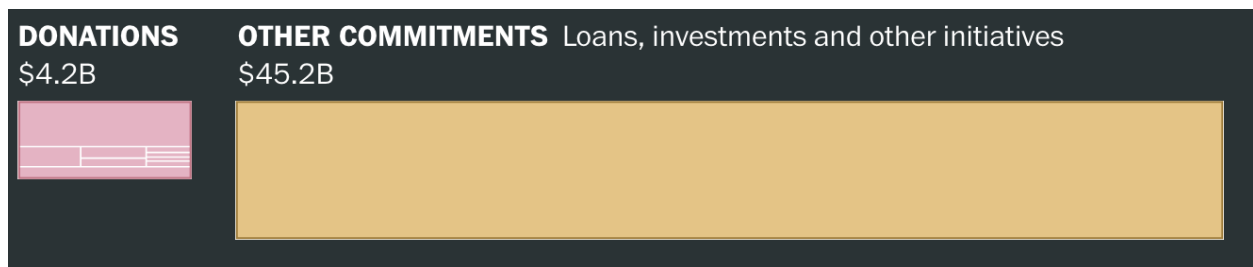
Meanwhile, \$4.2 billion of the total pledged is in the form of outright grants. Of that, companies reported just a tiny fraction — about \$70 million — went to organizations focused specifically on criminal justice reform, the cause that sent millions into the



streets protesting Floyd’s murder by a Minneapolis police officer. Most of the donations went to groups focused on economic equality, education and health.

<b>\$2.1B</b> Economic equality		
<b>\$499M</b> Education	<b>\$304M</b> Health	<b>\$102M</b> Community invest.
		<b>\$84M</b> Civil rights
	<b>\$233M</b> Culture	<b>\$70M</b> Criminal justice
		<b>\$105M</b> Other
<b>\$679M</b> Not enough detail to categorize		

However, the total value of donations was dwarfed by other commitments, all of which focus on economic equality



The \$4.2 billion in grants, to be disbursed over as long as a decade in some cases, represents less than 1 percent of the \$525.6 billion in net income earned by the 50 companies in the most recent year, according to data from S&P Global Market Intelligence.



It will be difficult to assess whether corporations deliver measurable results. There is no single entity tracking the corporate promises. Nor are corporations required to report on where all of their money is going or its impact.

“Because these are pledges, there isn’t any one entity that will be holding these organizations accountable,” said Una Osili, an associate dean at Indiana University who leads the research and publication of Giving USA, the annual report of American philanthropy. While Osili is hopeful about the corporate efforts, she added: “I wonder about the follow-through — whether the will will be there in three to four years to continue to lift up these issues.”

## References

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2021/george-floyd-corporate-america-racial-justice/>



<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/politics/race-reckoning/>

<https://www.npr.org/2020/10/14/920385802/biden-vows-to-ease-racial-divisions-heres-his-record>

<https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/racial-inequality-in-the-united-states>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biden-racism-idUSKBN2BE019/>

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/08/08/racial-discrimination-united-states/human-rights-watch/aclu-joint-submission>

<https://www.vox.com/2020/6/17/21284527/systemic-racism-black-americans-9-charts-explained>

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/262962/countries-with-the-most-prisoners-per-100-00-inhabitants/>