

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
Hamma Lakhdar University of El-Oued  
Faculty of Arts and Languages  
Department of Arts and English Language



**Racial Violence against Black People: *The I Can't Breathe Murder* and the Trump's Administration Reaction**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

**Submitted by:**

DJAOUADI Zoulikha  
KHEZZANE Atika  
ZID Malika

**Supervised by:**

Dr. ANADAhmed

**Board of Examiners:**

**Mrs. BERRA Yamina**

**President** University of El-Oued

**Dr. ANAD Ahmed**

**Supervisor** University of El-Oued

**Dr. ZELLOUMA Ahmed**

**Examiner** University of El-Oued

**Academic year: 2020/2021**

## **Dedication**

We dedicate this work to  
our family members, friends, and colleagues for all their encouragement,  
patience, understanding, and support throughout this process.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and Foremost, praise to *ALLAH* for giving us the strength and knowledge to conduct this study.

We would like to thank Dr. ANAD Ahmed for all his support, time, guidance, and useful instructions along the writing of this dissertation. Without his help, this work would not have been brought to light.

Thanks to the head of department Mr.SAHRAOUI Belgacem for providing the required help and assistance. We also want to extend our gratitude to the Department of English and staff for making our time at El-Oued University a great experience.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of the jury for devoting their time to examine and evaluate our research.

## **Abstract**

Throughout history, African Americans have been suffering cruel forms of violence, both outside and inside the lines of the law. Even after the abolishment of slavery ,the racial violence inflicted on Blacks persisted until the present time. The George Floyd murder stands as an episode of the racial violence series against African Americans. Additionally, the reaction of Trump's administration echoes prior events going back to the Post-bellum era when mob violence, vigilantism, and lynching were committed in broad daylight with the approval of the local government. The current study aims at assessing Trump's administration's reaction to the police killing of the African American man, George Floyd. It was carried out in order to better understand the efficacy of Trump's approach to dealing with race-related issues. For this, the qualitative inquiry in hand depends basically on historical and descriptive methods. Major results are revealed ,the murder of Floyd mirrors a reflection of the legacy of racial violence imposed on Blacks in the old days. Besides that, the response of Trump's government to the killing of George Floyd signified the American administration's inability to handle the civil unrest properly.

**Keywords:** African Americans, George Floyd, police brutality, racial violence, Trump administration,

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

|               |                                                            |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ANTIFA</b> | Anti-fascist                                               |
| <b>BLM</b>    | Black Lives Matter                                         |
| <b>EJI</b>    | Equal Justice Initiative                                   |
| <b>KKK</b>    | Ku Klux Klan                                               |
| <b>MLK</b>    | Martin Luther King                                         |
| <b>NAACP</b>  | National Association for the Advancement of Colored People |
| <b>NFL</b>    | National Football League                                   |

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Numerous studies and researches were conducted to address the issue of racial violence against African Americans. Racial violence is a set of aggressive acts with hostile outcomes in which victims are racially fungible (Blee, 2005 as cited in Thompson-Miller, 2006). This interest is triggered by the horrific legacy left behind racially violent experiences. Moreover, the growing crimes committed by police officers unfairly against Blacks urged researchers to carry out studies about racial violence imposed by law enforcement personnel. The killing of George Floyd in police custody seemed to open the wounds of 400 years of racial violence of Black community in a country that tries to reckon with its history and during a pandemic that has disproportionately impacted and killed African Americans. Regarding police brutality, it has its roots in slave patrols, to enabling lynching and attacking peaceful marches. Police violence against African Americans is driven by the imbedded white supremacy belief and systemic racism in policing. In response to George Floyd's protests, Trump administration adopted a forceful approach to deal with Floyd's protests. This reaction ignites controversy. Some parts support Trump's approach as the best strategy to quell the civil unrest following George Floyd killing whereas others oppose this approach. In his Op-ed, Senator Cotton (2020) asserts that he advocates the president's method of using force to restore order. He maintained that other presidents had already used force on dozens of occasions to protect American citizens' lives and property during race riots. Others considered that Trump's violent reply fanned the flames. Jim Mattis, the former defense secretary, denounced the president's handling of George Floyd protests and he accused Trump of trying to divide Americans. Mattis backed the protesters' right to exercise their first amendment right to assemble. Meanwhile, he regarded the president's violent response as a way of setting Americans against each other (Goldberg, 2020). In the light of these opinions, this paper seeks to assess the validity of Trump's response to the ongoing protests.

## **2.Statement of the Problem**

The Black community in the U.S. has been experiencing racial violence since the first Africans were shipped to America. The murder of George Floyd by a white police officer highlights the issue of racial violence and systemic police brutality on a national and international scale. Thus, this study investigates the efficiency of the American administration in handling systemic racial violence against Afro-Americans descent in Trump's era.

## **3.Research Questions**

The current study seeks to provide conclusive answers to the following questions:

- 1-What were the forms of racial violence inflicted on African Americans since slavery?
- 2-What are the driving forces of racial violence against Blacks especially Floyd's killing?
- 3- Has the White House managed to handle the crisis aftermath "I Can't Breathe " crime?

## **4.Research hypotheses**

To answer the questions of this research, we suggest the following hypotheses:

- 1- African Americans have endured various forms of racial violence throughout history .
- 2- White supremacy and racial discrimination have been the main reasons standing behind violence against people of African descent.
- 3-Trump's administration reacted indifferently towards the murder of George Floyd.

## **5.Aims of the Study**

The present piece of research aims at examining the roots of racial violence in the U.S. against African Americans by listing the forms of racial violence inflicted on them and which are illustrated in the case of George Floyd. In addition, the study evaluates Trump's administration's response in managing the national crisis through critically examining Trump's rhetoric and orders.

## **6.Research Methodology**

The qualitative research in hand contains two chapters. In order to better understand the current situation of Blacks, it was necessary to answer questions about their past. Thus, the

historical and descriptive method is used in the first chapter. As for the second chapter, the descriptive method is applied so as to describe the incident and assess the effectiveness of Trump's administration response.

## **7.The Significance of the Research**

The significance of the current investigation relies on the fact that it exhibits a fluent relationship between the past experiences of Blacks with racial violence and the current unjustified violence they undergo, along with the contribution of the U.S. administration to handling it. In addition, this significance is demonstrated by increasing the understanding of systemic racial violence, which is protected by the approval of policymakers and legal institutions. Furthermore, the study's primary contribution is that it provides future research in the field with coherent evidence of the persistence of systemic violence against African Americans, as well as a precise evaluation of Trump's strategies for dealing with such issues.

## **8.Structure of the Study**

In order to discuss the issue of racial violence exercised against blacks in the U.S. and the American administration's response to it, essentially Trump's, this dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first is theoretical, while the second is practical. The first chapter provides an overview of the Afro-Americans' experience with the different forms of discrimination and racial violence from the early beginning of enslavement, the legalized violence Blacks were victims of, their attempts of resistance, until the modern stage of systemic violence which they have been witnessing in the recent years. The second chapter begins with a description of the murder of an unarmed black African male, George Floyd, at the hands of the police and the reverberations which were provoked by his death, followed by a discussion of the reaction of President Trump and his administration to this incident.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Racial Violence against African Americans in the U.S.A. Throughout History**

## Chapter One

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## **Introduction**

To better comprehend the context of racial violence against African Americans, the current chapter attempts to track the history of Blacks since their arrival to the country. First, this chapter opens with an account of early black suffering at the hands of whites. It starts with the deplorable circumstances they faced on the Transatlantic voyage and the horrors they witnessed throughout the slavery and post-slavery era, followed by illustrations of some attempts of resistance. Second, a contemporary ideology, systemic racism, is identified as the root cause of various types of racial segregation in the U.S. institutions. Finally, the chapter narrows the emphasis to elaborate racial segregation and violence in police institutions, identifying unjustified practices committed by officers against Blacks.

### **1.The Transatlantic Voyage: An Overview**

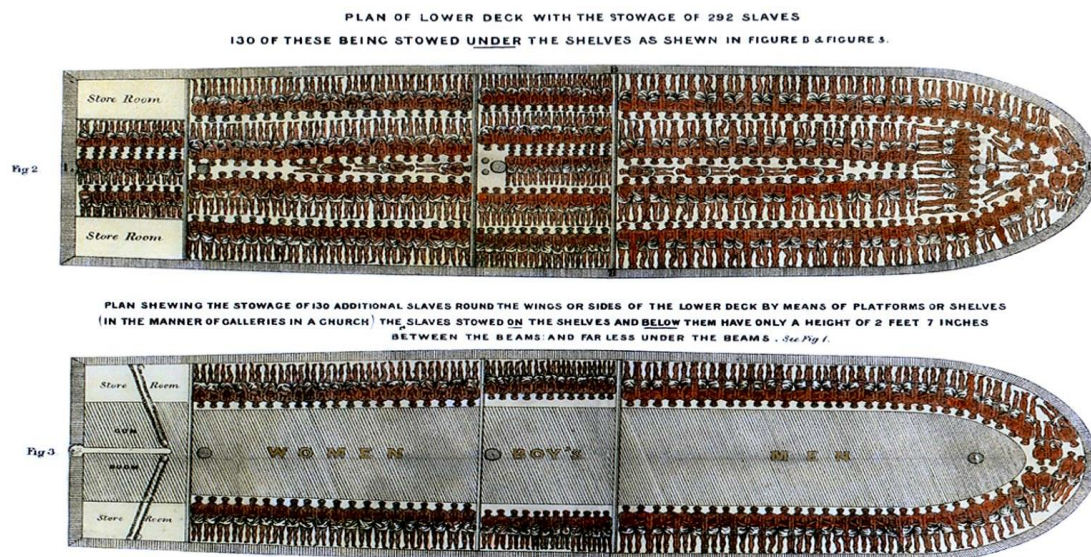
After about a century since the discovery of the Americas, the need for free labor to work on plantations and farms had desperately increased. There was no cheaper resort for Europeans than to kidnap unpaid workers from Africa. Therefore, from the 1500s to the 1800s, millions of them were transported on massive cargo ships designed to carry as many people as possible. This forced journey across the Atlantic Ocean was fraught with peril, with Africans subjected to brutal practices and tragic circumstances on each voyage.

#### **1.1. Suffering of Slaves on the Slave's Ship**

Before arriving in the United States, ships had to navigate the perilous Middle Passage, so named because it was the middle leg of a three-part expedition that began and ended in Europe. On this trip, African slaves were kidnapped from their homelands to be traded for cotton and corn. They went through horrible events and endured ugly practices onboard.

The living conditions of the slaves on the slave ships were horrible. Because the ships were extremely crowded, slaves were naked and chained together and crammed into spaces, sometimes less than five feet high, as shown in (figure1). They were usually fed only once a day, and allowed to spend only a couple of hours a day on the deck. Additionally, they were subjected

to forced exercises that occasionally included dancing and singing to entertain the ship's crew. Moreover, there were no toilets below deck; thus, the slaves were given tiny pots in which they were supposed to discharge themselves. Shackled slaves who were far from the buckets were frequently unable to reach them on time. Therefore, they had to relieve themselves where they were sleeping. As a result, disease spread abominably throughout the ship, sickening many slaves and killing many more (Mancke & Shammas, 2005).



**Figure 1.** A sketch of the hold of a slave ship shows the overloaded cargo of slaves where the slaves had to sit chained tightly next to each other (The Gilder Lehrman institution of American History, n.d.).

In addition to the hard conditions, the slaves were also suffering from brutal and humiliating treatment by the crew members. As for women, they were usually left unchained. However, members of the crew sexually assaulted and raped them. In fact, they occasionally arrive in the new world bearing the infants of their abusers. Furthermore, enslaved men who showed signs of disobedience were tortured, beaten, and whipped, usually with a particularly cruel cat o'nine tails, a tool designed to inflict maximum pain. Also, in some occasions, when slaves refuse to have their meals, the masters enforce them to do so by using a speculum ores, a medieval tool used to force open a person's mouth (Klein, 2010).

In conclusion, the whites' intentions toward Africans, as well as the harsh conditions on the ships and the brutality of their crews, have established a strong indictment against the whites. This has proven that, since the very beginning, Blacks' lives, dignity, and emotions have been of no value when they stand against Whites' profit, supremacy, and privilege.

### **1.1.2.The Zong Massacre**

The case of the Zong massacre makes an adequate illustration of the cruelty African slaves went through on their path to America. In 1781, the Zong, a fully equipped ship, set sail from the west coast of Africa with 442 slaves bound for Jamaica. Later, by reason of some navigational errors made by the captain, this disastrous voyage took four months rather than the usual six to nine weeks. As a consequence, diseases were spreading throughout the ship and fresh water was running dangerously low, resulting the death of sixty Negroes of thirst and forty more pushed themselves into the sea and drowned. In order to cut the loss, captain of the ship ordered to throw some of the cargo overboard, thus the marines threw 150 Negroes alive into the sea (Philip, 2008). The reason for such behavior was the assumption that if Africans on the ship died of natural causes, the owners would have to bear the cost of losses, whereas, if they were thrown alive into the sea for threatening the crew's safety, the insurers would cover the loss. In fact, the massacre of the African slaves proved to be more financially beneficial to the owners of the ship and its cargo than allowing the slaves to die naturally (Thomas, 1997).

## **1.2.The Suffering of Slaves in the U.S.**

After a long horrific journey of the back of the slave ship, African slaves reached the new world. Although Black suffering had such a wide variety of faces either in Antebellum era or Postbelum era, their plights remained the same.

### **1.2.1. The Slaves' Living Conditions in the Antebellum Era**

Slaves in Antebellum plantations lived and worked in brutal conditions. In the south, the slaveholders were in charge of providing food, shelter, and clothes for their labor force.

The slaves' workday on the cash crops plantation starts at sunrise and terminates at sunset. The enslaved people resided far away from their master's luxuries furniture and glass windows mansion in a slave quarter called cabins. They are constructed of wood. In filthy, overcrowded, and furniture-less cabins, more than one family would be grouped together. The slaves used to sleep on the floor or on straw mattresses bed. Being without windows, the slave quarters were an uncomfortable place to live in. Insects invaded the room in summers and the residents suffer the cold wind in winters. Due to the poor living conditions in cabins, slaves developed multiple diseases like pneumonia (Wroth,2016).

Salves' feeding was a significant issue for slave owners. They tried to minimize costs meanwhile making sure that labor force is well fed for to assert productivity. Covey and Eissach (2009)demonstrated that despite the white southerners 'claim of the soundness of food offered to the enslaved people, slaves' narratives emphasized the low quality diet. Many factors as slaves' productivity determined the distribution of food for instance, children and the elders were poorly fed. The usual diet was composed of boiled cornmeal, rice, fatback, and salt pork bacon. As a result of slaves malnutrition, numerous diseases broke out among the slave community such as : Pellagra, Rickets, Scurvy, and Anemia. The nutrition of slaves varied according to the area and the position of the slaves. In comparison with plantation slave, house slave enjoyed good meals of kitchen leftovers. Teed and Teed(2020)clarified the weekly ration of corn and fat pork were distributed to slaves on weekends and at Christmas. The monotonous diet of corn, the chronic hunger, and the temptation to taste chickens, pigs, and sheep led slaves to food stealing which were common among slaves in spite of the consequences of whipping.

As far as clothing is concerned, Hazen(2004) emphasized that slaves received outfits yearly from their owners and at Christmastime. They were also offered both summer and winter clothes. Males and female slaves obtained their portion of clothing unlike children who remained unclothed till the age of ten .Similar to men, women used to receive two linen shirts, two pairs of trousers, one jacket, one pair of socks and a wool hat. In his narrative Frederick Douglass

(1845)pointed out , "In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked-no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers"(p.18).

In conclusion, the miserable living conditions of slaves on plantations were not the only hardships the slaves would come across throughout their lives in America.

### **1.2.2.The Brutal Treatments of the Slaves**

Theodore Parker (1830) stated, "The relation of master and slave begins in violence; it must be sustained by violence"(p.31).These words summarized the living conditions of enslaved Africans after arriving to America. Slaves were maltreated from the outset of setting foot on the slave ship. Slaves' narratives of Frederick Douglass, Mary Prince, Robert Wedderburn ,Olaudah Equiano, and others recorded the brutalization of slaves at the hand of white owners on plantations across the Americas. In most cases, slaves were treated inhumanely, and they were often subjected to torture like beating, flogging, whipping, shackling, and raping.

#### **1.2.2.1.Auction**

Hazen(2004) maintained that auction was the first phase of the pain cycle the enslaved people went through after reaching America. Most slaves had already experienced standing on the auction block. The selling process was advertised as commodities advertisement. Heartbreaking separation of families took place on the auction stage. The auction ceremony started with firing a gun declaring the beginning of the process. Buyers approach eagerly to check on the merchandise put for sale. Being herded like a cattle, slaves were put on the auction block of three feet high for sale. Hazen also described the site, "They were treated more like animals than human beings. They were poked, prodded and subjected to all manner of indignities"(p.7).The buyers start to diagnose slaves' muscles by stripping their clothes and to check their bodies. They also looked at their teeth. The price of each slave depended on the age and the physical status of slaves; for instance, those who had no bodily imperfection and were young were purchased on high costs while elders or sick ones were sold as cheap objects. Many families were torn apart after choosing one of its member for sale. Despite the fact that some

owners opted to purchase a whole family together, others heartlessly took children from their families. Many of these individuals would never glance their families again.

#### **1.2.2.2. Whipping**

According to The Infighters (2020), white owners used various punishment tools like cotton screw hanging, thumb kin, masks, neck collars, wooden collar, blade, piercing, and iron muzzle to subjugate slaves to work on the plantations but sometimes they brutalize slaves for fun or to display authority. Physical violence was a typical punishment technique during slavery era since hundreds of stokes and lashes marked the back of slaves as a means of control and oppression. Whipping was the most common and prevalent discipline method on fields. Slaves were frequently whipped and the lashing was held publically so that the news reverberate across the region as intimidation to whom thought of resistance. Masters innovated a wide range of ways to make whipping even more painful like putting salt on the slaves scars. Robert Burns, a former slave, stated 'always limited de lashes to five hundred...[and] ...after whipping dem, he would rub pepper and salt on deir backs, where whipped ,and lay dem before de fire until blistered ,and den take a cat ,and hold de cat, and make hum claw de blisters, to burst dem' ("Whipping, "n.d). Slave holders justified beating slaves as a means to correct those who stole, lied, or run away. In other cases, they meant to apprehend them so as not to think of resistance. Not only were slaves beaten by their masters, but they were also maltreated by drivers, overseers, and other masters. Whipping took place publically on the roads(Dickman, 2015). Many slaves fought back this punishment. An instance of this resistance is Bob who chopped off his whipper's head. This incident implied the discontentment of slaves as a warning sign to masters("Whipping , "n.d).

#### **1.2.2.3. Sexual Abuse**

Berry (2012) defined, "sexual violence is a general term for sexually aggressive behaviors including rape, incest, harassment, coercion, and exploitation"(p.322). All of which Black women and men endured under slavery. Sexual abuse against enslaved females and males was an integral part of slaves' lives dating back to the Middle Passage. On auction, slave female

had been stripped, poked, and examined to measure her productive capacities .Almost every slave's narratives include instances of rape and sexual abuse. For example ,in her narrative of Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl, Jacob Harriet demonstrated how her master harassed her. Enslaved women had been regularly coerced and forced to have sexual relations with their slaveholders. Ironically, the enslaver's sons, friends, and overseers had the right to exploit black women. Regarding the jealous mistresses, they punished enslaved women, who accused them for having consent sexual relation with their husbands, by belittling them, beating them, and selling off their children from their husbands(Barbar&Mabrouki,2015).Another sort of sexual violation is breeding. In order to maintain having a new cadre of slaves, slave owners raped and forced their slaves to conceive as many children as possible estimating around eight to nine pregnancies during her life. In the case of the women who had not given birth, they were whipped or get off as a damaged good. The other type of breeding is forced breeding in which slave holders monitor the process of breeding by choosing to intimate slaves couple so as to breed good production. The unwilling breeders were punished. Furthermore, medical experiments on enslaved women was another form of sexual violence. For instance, cesarean surgeries were experienced firsthand on black women before performing them on white women(Berry,2012).

Not only had enslaved men endured physical abuse but also they suffered sexual abuse. Perkins(2017)identified that" Male slave owners used sexual assault to dominate, dehumanize, and emasculate male slaves in American Antebellum South"(p.1), because enslaved men and women were viewed as a property in the antebellum south without legal right or protection from sexual abuse. It has been constantly believed that only enslaved females were assaulted sexually, yet slaves' narratives and journals indicated that even enslaved men were subject to sexual abuse or compelled homosexual behavior although the term homosexual appeared in the twentieth century in American dictionaries. Sexual assault inflicted on male slaves was considered a form of sodomy which was a common practice by slaveholders. In his book Foster(2019) examined the story of the coercion of Rufus to intimate with Rose an enslaved woman for breeding slave

children. The story of Rufus suggested that black bodies of slaved males similarly to enslaved women were also subjects to sexual violation. The bodies of enslaved men were controlled by enslavers who decide when and with whom slave males breed. Rufus reluctantly obeyed his master's decision, but he knew he had no choice just to adhere to the orders. He had been poked, prodded, stripped, whipped, leered at, and now mated.

In a nutshell, both enslaved males and females had endured sexual abuse from their owners. Sexual assault inflicted on slaves with the purpose to control, dehumanize, and discipline them.

### **1.2.3.Racial Violence against African Americans in Post-Civil War Era**

The newly-emancipated slaves celebrated the social and political rewards of the civil war including the Emancipation Proclamation and the inclusion of thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments in the American constitution. Nevertheless, the lives of the Blacks following the civil war was proved to be challenging.

#### **1.2.3.1. White Supremacy and Terrorist Organizations**

White Supremacy as an ideology has constantly dominated American history since the early settlements till nowadays. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary(n.d), white supremacy is "the belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races". Prior to the civil war, white supremacy was widespread amongst both northerners and southerners . After four years of war and with the Emancipation Proclamation resulting in 4 million free slaves, the urge of maintaining and protecting white supremacy against the threat of former slaves prevailed the defeated south. During Reconstruction, white supremacists formed political and social organizations to uphold whites and terrorize Blacks in order to keep them in the inferior position and to codify laws that promoted racial inequality. Southerners with their inherent belief of racial hierarchy (whites are superior to Blacks) did not accept the equality with their former slaves. The white backlash was manifested in forming terrorist groups to confront the Reconstruction transformations. Being the most famous supremacist group, the Ku Klux Klan, founded in 1866,was not the only racist clan,

the Knights of the White Camellia (1867), White League (1874), and the Red Shirts (1875). Ranging from being secretive to publicly known, all of them shared the same doctrine of white supremacy and the tactics of using violence to intimidate blacks and Republican voters. Consequently, with the collapse of Reconstruction in 1877, these terrorist organizations managed to take over the southern part of the country under the white supremacy belief (PBS, 2017).

#### **1.2.3.2. The Aggression of the Ku Klux Klan against African Americans**

In the wake of civil war, six confederate southern veterans gathered in Tennessee to found a social club called the Ku Klux Klan in 1866 which later developed to be an organization until its repression by federal government in 1871. Nevertheless, the group reborn in 1915 and 1950 respectively. Its name is derived from the Greek word 'Kyklos' meaning the circle. Under the name of 'Invisible Empire of the South', the Klan dedicated itself for opposing Republicanism and Reconstruction aftermath the civil war in the hope of restoring white supremacy after the abolition of slavery and the growing political activities of the former slaves in the Postbelum south ("the first KKK", 2021). Disguising in a white hood and a white robe claiming that they were the ghosts of Confederate soldiers, the KKK used violence and intimidation against Blacks and their white supporters to prevent them from engaging in politics. The Klan embraced violent tactics like burning houses, beating, raping, mob violence in the form of lynching, kidnapping, whipping, mutilating, and murder. According to Hazen (2004), 5000 Blacks were killed at the hand of the Klansmen during the first year of Reconstruction. Many Black Americans were lynched. Lynchings became a frequent sight in the South. Victims were tortured during lynching by shooting, mutilating, or burning the victims alive. Lynchings were photographed and published as postcards souvenirs. Escalating racial violence against Black people, the Klan committed Black massacres in Orleans Louisiana and Memphis Tennessee. Bullard (1996) explained by varying the weapons of terrorization, the Klan discovered the use of bombings during the Civil Rights movement era. From 1965 to 1963, 138 homes were bombed by the KKK. One of this homes was Dr Martin Luther King, Jr house which was brought to the

ground in 1965. The Black churches also were a target of the terrorist attacks such as the bombing of 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. The recently emancipated Blacks found themselves in confrontation with a new life outside of the plantation and meanwhile terrorized by the racial violence.

### **1.2.3.3.Racial Terror: Lynching**

From the civil war and during Reconstruction to the early twentieth century, thousands of African Americans lived in horror due to mob violence including lynching and vigilantism. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People(NAACP)(2021) defines lynching as, "the public killing of an individual who has not received any due process" (para.1). In its 2017 report, Equal Justice Initiative(EJI) concluded that the executions were often carried out by lawless mobs, though police officers did participate, under the pretext of justice. The new social and political transformations held by the emancipation of slaves and the Reconstruction era were confronted by the spillover of collective violence as an extrajudicial act in the south as a reaction to the abolition of slavery institution and to the political endeavors to establish racial equality between the master and the former slave. The southerners officials turned blind eyes and lynchers were never held accountable. Although the white mob justified their gruesome act of lynching by accusing Black men of assaulting white women sexually, the genuine reason was to restore the white supremacy and simultaneously to disenfranchise the Black's right of vote. Besides rape allegations, Blacks were accused of less serious crimes like arson, robbery, non-sexual assault, and vagrancy which later were confirmed baseless and victims were innocent. In sharp contrast to whites' lynchings, the lynchings of African Americans were far more brutal including acts of torture such as whipping, burning, and mutilation. In most cases, a white man who convicted the same crimes was legally tried by a jury and rarely lynched by the mob. Furthermore, lynching day was a special occasion wherein families were invited to enjoy the show. In the public spectacle lynching, the attendees brought with them food and photographs with the lynched corpus were produced to be kept as souvenirs. Julius E. Thompson in his book

Lynching in Mississippi: A History, 1865-1965, described the lynching of Luther Holbert in 1904 :

Both victims were tied to a tree and forced to hold out their hands while member of the mob methodically chopped off their fingers and distributed them as souvenirs. Next, their ears were cut off. Mr. Holbert was then beaten so severely that his skull was fractured and one of his eyes was left hanging from its socket. Members of the mob used a large corkscrew to bore holes into the victims' bodies and pull out large chunks of "quivering flesh," after which both victims were thrown onto a raging fire and burned .The white men, women, and children present watched the horrific murders while enjoying deviled eggs, lemonade, and whiskey in a picnic-like atmosphere.(p.53)

EJI(2017) added in order to maximize the horrors of lynching, the black families were compelled to attend the hanging of one of its member. In addition, lynching as a vicious tool is used to drive African Americans entirely from the south. As a consequence, the great migration of six millions African Americans to the north and the west took place at this era of racial terror and the Blacks fled their homes seeking safety and better living conditions. Amid all these racially-motivated massacres, all of scientific academia by releasing theories claiming that Black men are hypersexual, politicians who relied on mob violence to win elections and the indifferent government and justice system by remaining silent to stop the racial violence were complicit in the persistence lynching over a century. Blacks undertook measures to self-defend the racial terror by using the press like Ida B. Wells, boycotting the business of the white mobs, establishing anti-lynching organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and by non-violent marches under the leadership of Dr. King.

With the above in mind, the Reconstruction years failed African Americans hopes of living a decent life. On the contrary, it was another cruel chapter in the Blacks Odyssey.

### **1.3.Legalized Violence against African Americans**

The racial violence exercised on African Americans dating back to slavery until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were legitimized through the enactment of numerous laws. Racially-motivated crimes were committed under the seal of laws approval.

#### **1.3.1.The Slave Codes**

Campbell(2015)explained that slave codes as laws codified the slave system to uphold the absolute control of the masters and to ensure the submission of slaves. The provisions of these codes deemed the slave as a pure property or an animal that is allowed to be bought and sold. The slave codes stated that the slave is not allowed to constitute a family or own a property. Under the slave codes, it was illegal for slaves to learn reading or writing. The slave who rebel these provisions or resist was brutally punished. The slave codes were issued in an attempt to protect the institution of slavery and out of fear of slaves rebellion. The codes were not unique in each state or unchangeable ;however, they had certain provisions in common. As time passed, the rules of slave codes became more rigid for asserting that slaves remain subservient. The provisions stipulated that the offspring followed that of the mother. Regarding legal rights, slaves were deprived of testimony in court; they could not own property nor sign contracts ; even if assaulted, they could not attack in return. The slave codes imposed other social restrictions on slaves like they could not hold gatherings unless a white person was present. In order to enforce these orders, corporal punishments as whipping, branding, and imprisonment were regularly used and in some cases rebellious slaves were murdered. The slave codes were the predecessor of another codes of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **1.3.2.The Black Codes**

The abolition of chattel slavery became constitutional under the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment cost the south a huge loss since the labor force of slaves left the plantations. In retaliation ,the southern politicians thought about legitimate ways to control the newly emancipated Blacks and drove them back to the plantations legally through the Black Codes. It followed the traditions of slave

codes. The Black Codes originated in 1865 and 1866 and Mississippi was the first state to issue these laws then other states followed its footsteps. Although the black codes seemed to preserve the recently freed slaves rights, it attempted to tie the former slaves to plantations. It allowed the freed slaves to own lands, to sign contracts, to marry and to testify in courts. Meanwhile, it restricted the African Americans political, economic, and social rights. The majority of laws concerned with labor to keep the former slaves working under the control of their former masters. Unemployed freed Black would face vagrancy charges. Vagrants were arrested and forced to work on plantation as a fine. Apprenticing laws allowed to hire out black children to white employers. It also forbade Black Americans to vote, to learn in schools, to use white public facilities, to testify in courts against whites, to carry firearms. Additionally, most states passed laws forbidding interracial marriages imposing life imprisonment penalty in some states. Ultimately, the Black codes were weakened by passing the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment. However, in 1877, a new discriminatory law took the place of the Black Codes to sustain the legal segregation against African Americans (Stroud&Schomp,2006).

### **1.3.3.Jim Crow Laws**

The racial violence method was replaced by the highest court in the country by the enactment of Jim Crow laws. The term Jim Crow used to refer to a series laws enacted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the end of Reconstruction era(1877). It aimed at legalizing racial segregation between white citizens who had access to political, economic and social resources and black citizens who were disenfranchised their rights under the name of the law. The name Jim Crow itself originated from a minstrel show mocking Blacks. The actor of the show named Thomas Dartmouth darkened his face and performed a dance imitating old black slaves. How the show of Jim Crow later turned to a law name is unknown. Regardless of the name's origin, Jim Crow became an American way of life for over a century. It stipulated that blacks and whites are separate but equal. These laws separated public transportation, schools, work places, restaurants, businesses, recreation facilities and barbers. Even water fountains were colored. Employers had

to allocate bathrooms for whites and others for blacks. 'white only' or 'Colored only' signs were frequent scene during Jim Crow America. In addition, other laws forbade Blacks to date, marry or even touch white women. Notably, many black facilities were underfunded by government; consequently, black facilities were in worse condition in comparison with white's. Southerners were creative in designing multiple Jim Crows even it was difficult to keep track of them. Even though Blacks fought back to end Jim Crow laws, it remained in effect with the approval of the constitution until it is overturned by President Lyndon Johnson signing the Civil Rights Act 1964 (Tischauer,2012).

It is fair to conclude, racial violence inflicted on African Americans either prior or post-civil war thrived with the blessings of legal system in order to maintain and restore white supremacy.

#### **1.4.African-American Resistance**

Due to the horrible treatments Blacks had been witnessing through the period of enslavement and after the emancipation; they, for several times, made organized attempts for freedom, equality and putting an end to racial segregation. Some had chosen to rebel against inequity by means of violence and war; while some, on the other hand, had chosen more peaceful ways to attain justice.

##### **1.4.1.The Nat Turner Rebellion**

On August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1831,Southampton County, Nat Turner and his men started one of the greatest slave insurrections in the American history. The insurgents went from house to house, murdering any white person they came across; soon after, more recruits joined them as they advanced to surrounding towns. Luckily, Turner's plan was not discovered by local patrols, thus the deadly rebellion continued for about thirty-six hours. In effect, around sixty white men, women, and children were murdered. In the end, Turner's rebels were defeated by a troop of almost three thousand state militiamen assigned to deal with them while Turner managed to hide for six weeks before being apprehended. Eventually, on November 11, 1831, he was executed

(Stampp,1956).For their part, white Virginians had different reactions to the revolt. While the majority of non-slaveholders sought revenge on blacks, both innocent and guilty, the county's slaveholders attempted to quell white violence and persuade the public that the insurrection was insignificant, had little solidarity from the black population, and thus it represented no serious danger to them (Harris, 2018). Commenting on this rebellion, Mr. Breen, a writer of a book on Turner's revolt, says that: "Nat Turner and his followers never had a chance. Whites held too much power; blacks were too divided. The obvious imbalance of power made it hard for the rebels to enlist even sympathetic blacks " (Breen, 2005, p. 124).

#### **1.4.2.The Civil Rights Movement**

After years of racial injustice, African Americans stood against legal segregation, inequity and racism by seeking the abolition of white supremacy, which set black people apart from the rest of the American society and labelled them as inferiors. These demands were met as part of the Civil Rights Movement which lasted from the 1940s to the 1960s.

Though the civil war has ended enslavement and granted the emancipated Blacks some basic civil rights, people of African descent continued to fight for their civil rights. After the Civil War, the U.S. Congress initiated the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendments, known as the Civil War amendments, which were intended to abolish the institution of slavery and give Blacks and whites equal rights (The United States Senates, n.d.).However, legalized segregation lasted under what is known as the Jim Crow laws. As a result, and in order to defend their rights, a group of activists founded the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) in 1909(The Library of the Congress, n.d.).

After a while, on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a black woman, was arrested in Montgomery, for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man. In effect, massive protests arose, igniting the Civil Rights Movement. It was MLK, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy, two former members of the NAACP, who launched a year-long peaceful boycott of the bus system, which finally compelled the bus company to desegregate its buses. Later, similar protests led by King

quickly spread to other areas throughout the country (The Martin Luther King Research and Education Institute, n.d.).

Along with the protests of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, activists of the movement have engaged in numerous nonviolent practices as means of resistance, which has greatly strengthened its position. For instance, by 1960, more than 50,000 black students had joined sit-ins, in which they practiced non-violent, civil disobedience by sitting and politely asking to be served in only-white restaurants. Moreover, as one of the greatest marches performed by the black community, the Washington, D.C, march on August, 28, 1963, stands as the climax of the Civil Rights Movement. More than 250.000 person participated in the march. The March had extensive press and broadcast coverage, bringing Blacks' case to the attention of people all around the world ( Constitutional Rights Foundation, n.d.).

On April 4, 1968, MLK was assassinated. The news of King's death provoked unrest in hundreds of cities. Many African Americans interpreted King's assassination as a rejection of their peaceful fight for equality. Thus, riots, involving burning, bombing, and looting spread throughout the country. Fearful of an unruly escalation, on April 11, 1964, President Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act. The act banned housing discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, or gender. This was regarded as a significant follow-up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964(Wallenfeldt, 2018).

As to conclude, for many years later, civil right activists continued to attain more political power. The legislated racial discrimination against the black community was to a large amount decreased and finally diminished. Besides, they have been able to improve the social, political, and economic status of African Americans in the U.S.

### **1.4.3Black Lives Matter**

Long before its inception, Black Lives Matter movement protested systemic racism in American institutions, particularly violence against blacks in the criminal justice system. When Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old Black American, was killed by Officer Zimmerman in 2013,

waves of protests erupted across the country, demanding significant changes in a variety of areas as the stand-your-ground laws to gun control. Three African American women created the slogan "Black Lives Matter" in 2013 in response to George Zimmerman's acquittal. However, the term did not gain wide popularity until the summer of 2019, when Michael Brown was killed by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. Protests arose around the city with banners stating "Black Lives Matter". It was due to the heavy police reaction to the demonstrations that the slogan pervaded the news (CBS Sunday Morning, 2020). While Ferguson began to absorb the heat, the combination of social media and the recurring killings of African Americans at the hands of law enforcement meant that it was only a question of time until Black Lives Matter reappeared. Actually, four months later, BLM protests erupted all across the country, responding to the death of Eric Garner, who had also been killed by the police. Therefore, rallies were held in major cities, with demonstrators claiming to be members of the BLM movement. Lastly, unlike a lot of hashtag activism, the BLM banner has established a long-term rallying cry for change and tangible outcomes in the U.S.A. (NBC News, 2016).

### **1.5.Systemic Racism**

Formerly, African Americans have been through a standing history of racial segregation. They have long suffered from the bitterness of slavery to the cruelty of Jim Crow' laws then the injustice of "separate but equal" alleged rights. Now, according to the U.S. constitution, Blacks enjoy their full civil rights the same as their white counterparts. Nevertheless, the old ideology of white supremacy and privilege still lives within the American system. It is not legalized nor apparent yet it exists in each of the U.S. institutions. In fact, racial segregation has become systemic.

#### **1.5.1.Defenition of Systemic Racism**

Since the early years of the founding of the country, racism has been a very critical issue for the people of the United States. Today, despite the various attempts to eliminate this ideology, racial discrimination still lives within the American society. Nonetheless, the shape it

takes now is less apparent and overt; it can be described as an embedded form of racism of what many researchers agree to name "Institutional or Systemic Racism".

Institutional racism refers to the disparate impact of policies, laws and practices on people of a specific ethnic minority group as well as on all minority groups. It can arise as a result of deliberate racism, motives to provide support to one's own race, or as a by-product of policies with one overt target but with unintentional systemic race-based policies, that are usually closely attributed to ideologies built to defend them (Klinker & Smith, as cited in Scott, 2007). A further definition of systemic racism is given by Macpherson as:

The collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behavior that amount to discrimination through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (as cited in Brennan, 2017, p. 14)

This concept, as described by McPherson, implies that unintentional systems, perceptions, and actions within an institution uphold racial discrimination and prejudice. Those systems are unwitting because they are mere reflections of a construction of factors such as: ideology, the role of whiteness, and the nature of ethnicity (Bhavnani, Mizra & Meeto, 2005). Ultimately, the effects of institutional racism are of major harm to people of color. They are described as "widespread and recurring white discrimination in many institutional settings wastes human beings and their resources and it usually restricts, dehumanizes or marginalizes its targets, to the point of making normal lives difficult" (Feagin & McKinney, 2003, p. 182).

In summary, The term "Institutional Racism" describes how discrimination can underpin a variety of racial organizational attributes and dimensions. This discrimination is manifested in the system's implicit disparity between whites and other ethnic groups as a means to express white privilege and supremacy.

### **1.5.2.Forms of Systemic Racism**

Systemic racism scores a prominent rate in the U.S institutions. However, its occurrence is more detectable in some systems compared to others. The following are the forms of racism in which African Americans clearly suffer from inequality.

#### **1.5.2.1.Education**

Higher education is one of the educational settings in which black students face racism. According to Adrinda Kelly, the executive director of the Black Education Organization, among the difficulties faced by black students in higher education institutions are affordability, difficulties in gaining access to college counselors, an inability to fit, and, most importantly, a lot of inherent conscious bias based on race. Kelly illustrates the unconscious racial bias in higher education through a recent study. The study reveals that higher education students with identifiably black names are 10% less likely to get a response when emailing a college admission office. Furthermore, if their email mentions black identity or activism, the percentage rises to 17%. This fact explains the racial bias of some officers in the process of admission as well as the institutions they work for, which effects the educational performance of blacks compared to whites and other races (WWLTV, 2019).

#### **1.5.2.2.Employment**

The existence of systemic racism has resulted in disparities in the labor market between African Americans and whites. According to the Center of American Progress, African American employees continue to encounter higher barriers to employment in comparison to their white counterparts. In particular, they face increasing unemployment rates, fewer work options, lower income, less benefits, and increasing work instability. Accordingly, these persistent disparities reflect systematic inequities in the job market, such as racial discrimination, occupational segregation, and segmented job markets (Weller, 2019). Moreover, a recent study conducted by the Urban Institute revealed that African American youth are far more likely than whites to not be enrolled in school nor to have a chance of proper work. Therefore, these young

individuals will have low future wages, poor educational level, and great rates of future criminal justice involvement, causing an economic burden manifested in a reduction in economic growth, poorer tax revenues, and more government expenditures (Spievack, 2019). Furthermore, the national unemployment rate in the U.S. has risen to 14.7% as a result of the recession that began in March 2020 as a result of the covid19 pandemic. Certainly, the increase was particularly prominent for Blacks. In January 2020, the unemployment rate was 3.3% for White men, 2.9% for White women, 6.1% for Black men, 5.8% for Black women. Later, by June 2020, the unemployment rate had reached 9.4% for White men, 10.8% for White women, 16.6% for Black men, 14.3% for Black women ( Bureau of Labour Statistics,as cited in Gezici&Ozay, 2020).

### **1.5.2.3.Health Care**

Racial discrimination in the United States frequently occurs in the healthcare system. Many studies have reported institutional racism in how minority groups access healthcare. Studies such as that conducted by Feagin andMckinny (2003) have shown that the existing statistics on sickness outcomes indicate that African Americans experience a variety of medical and other health-care issues. Since they not only have greater risks of obtaining some severe illnesses, but they also have far less survival rates for many of these illnesses, which definitely infers that the health treatments they receive are totally inadequate. A case in point, discovered by researchers, is that African-Americans have challenges in receiving organ transplants, and that black patients are much less likely than white patients to obtain transplants. Accordingly, researchers concluded that physicians' "subconscious prejudice" was to blame (Alexander & Seghal, as cited in Feagin & Bennefield, 2013). Moreover, according to Women's eNews, African American women are less likely than white women to be provided with new cancer treatments, therapies, or even to be included in vital cancer research, assuring that women of color are automatically excluded from several clinical studies (Ginty, 2005). Lastly, more recent attention has focused on the disparities in the healthcare system amid the Covid19 pandemic. Accordingly, studies have found that African American communities in various cities were the

most affected by the virus while their death rates were so much higher compared with those among whites (Jean, Cenat, Njoku, Angelo & Sanon, 2020).

#### **1.5.2.4.Criminal Justice**

Despite the increased attention to the issue of racial and ethnic inequity and the recent major changes in the governing heads of many of the US law enforcement institutions, racial discrimination in the criminal justice system still strongly exists. Massive racial disparities and bias evidently exist in each of the criminal justice' institutions: the police, the courts, and the corrections system. Therefore, unfortunately, African-Americans are arrested, convicted and sent to prison at a much higher rate compared to whites.

People of color continue to disproportionately be incarcerated at a much higher rate than whites. Apparently, as shown in recent studies, even though African Americans are not the majority population, they do constitute the majority population within prisons. Actually, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, African American men are imprisoned at an overall rate of nearly seven times that of white men. It was further stated that African American men have the highest incarceration rate of any race, ethnicity, gender, and age (Tucker, 2016).

Moreover, an article submitted by The Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality explains that incarceration inequities are not a reflection of crime or victimization patterns. Changes in police, prosecution, and sentencing that disproportionately affect historically disadvantaged groups are responsible for the increase of incarceration among racial and ethnic minority groups (Moore, as cited in Pettit& Sykes, 2017).

Furthermore, the statistics on black incarceration are striking, but they barely tell half of the story. Logically, since Blacks comprise the majority of the jail population, it makes the assumption that they would also make up a significantly high number of violent crimes. However, the majority of offenses committed by Afro-Americans are nonviolent. As a matter of fact, approximately the majority of blacks in prisons are charged with drug related offenses. In addition, the war on drugs has been conducted mostly in communities of color, where minority

groups are more likely to be charged with more serious felonies. Unfortunately, people of color are no more likely than whites to use or sell narcotics, but they have a greater incidence of arrests (Tucker, 2016).

Many reports agree that systemic racism distinctly appears at some points in the U.S. courts. A 2007 article published by the American Sociological Association claims that racism does systemically exist within all stages of adjudication. The study claims that because the pre-sentencing procedures are most often covered and based on vague criteria, there is a high chance of racial prejudice and discrimination in the stages of bail decision-making, charging and plea bargaining. Consequently, decisions might have serious spillover repercussions on trial and sentencing (Sampson, as cited in Ronish, 2007).

Furthermore, Baldus, Woodworth, and Pulaski (1990) assert that systemic racism is prevalent in the capital sentencing process in many American states. Thus, African Americans are significantly at higher risk of getting the death penalty, especially when considered in cases of persecution and victimization patterns. These claims were supported by the former US President Bill Clinton in his report on Race Initiative. He says that "criminal victimization rates are significantly greater for minorities and people of color than for whites, especially with regard to violent crimes" (Wilson & Franklin, 2009, p. 55).

In conclusion, the uncountable injustices against African Americans within the U.S. criminal Justice system are highly threatening. Blacks are being targeted by the system itself, which has created a wave of rage, lack of trust and hostility towards the institutions of this system.

### **1.6. Police Violence against African Americans**

All along since the creation of the nation, African Americans have been victims of police bias and racial violence. Nowadays, police brutality against Blacks has become one of the most significant human rights violations. Excessive police force, such as unjustified shootings, serious physical abuse, lethal chokeholds, and violent suppression, is on the rise at an alarming rate. As a consequence, the American public is undergoing big concerns and frustration.

### **1.6.1.History of Police Violence against Blacks**

The modern system of policing in the United States emerged from the system of Slave Patrol that was developed in South America in the mid-eighteenth century. Dulaney(1996) believes that the central role of the aforementioned is to maintain control over African slaves; prohibit their insurrections; and prevent any sort of rebellion the slaves may commit. Furthermore, according to Loewen, Plantation Patrols were given immunity to use extremely inhumane and brutal methods as punishment for disciplining African slaves. Such practices include beating, dismembering, and extend even to sterilization and killing. Lynching was an insured means of controlling African Americans. The researcher estimates that between 1880 and 1950, more than 3,500 African American lynchings were committed. Most of the victims were African slaves who defied racial norms (as cited in Miller, 2019). An illustration of police violence in the past century can be taken in the case of Jon Burge. In the 1970s and 1980s, Burge was a serial supremacist and sadist who tortured over 120 Black men in Chicago. He put sandbags over their heads, burnt them, and electro-shocked them. Ultimately, because Burge was a Chicago Police Department commander who tortured these guys in order to elicit confessions to alleged crimes; he was never charged for these offenses (Addison, 2009).

### **1.6.2.Racial Profiling**

African Americans have been victims of racial injustice and violent practices since the time they were brought to America. They have been unfairly assaulted by those who created and enforced the US law. Despite the fact that Black Americans allegedly enjoy greater equality, they continue to face unjust treatment and violations by police officers.

For decades, the issue of police racial profiling against African-Americans has been a major concern. Ramirez, Mcdevitt and Farrell (2000) define racial profiling as:

Any police initiated action that relies on race, ethnicity or national origin rather than the behavior of an individual or information that leads the police to a

particular individual who has been identified as being or having being engaged in criminal activity. (p. 3)

Several experts have supported the claim that racial profiling does undeniably exist within the U.S. system of policing. In America, racial profiling is a systemic strategy that is frequently justified by white police officers' arrogant assumption that people of color are criminals and more likely to obtain illegal drugs than white people. Moreover, many police officers believe that the act of racial profiling is appropriate since it is founded on probabilities. They assume that it is a statistical fact that young men of color are more likely to commit crimes (Harris & Hughes as cited in Barlow and Barlow, 2000).

In addition, arrest statistics in the US show a disparity between white and black citizens as they do not reflect the reality of crime rates as much as they reflect a racial pattern of arrests. A 2016 survey made by the Pew National Research Center found that 71% of black respondents complained of an experience of being unfairly treated by police because of their skin color, while only 30% of whites claimed so (Hetey & Eberhardt, 2018). Accordingly, Amnesty the U.S.A. (2015) has expressed concern over racial profiling, pointing to the federal government's unwillingness to adopt the "End Racial Profiling Act" which would prevent any law enforcement agent or agency from doing such practice.

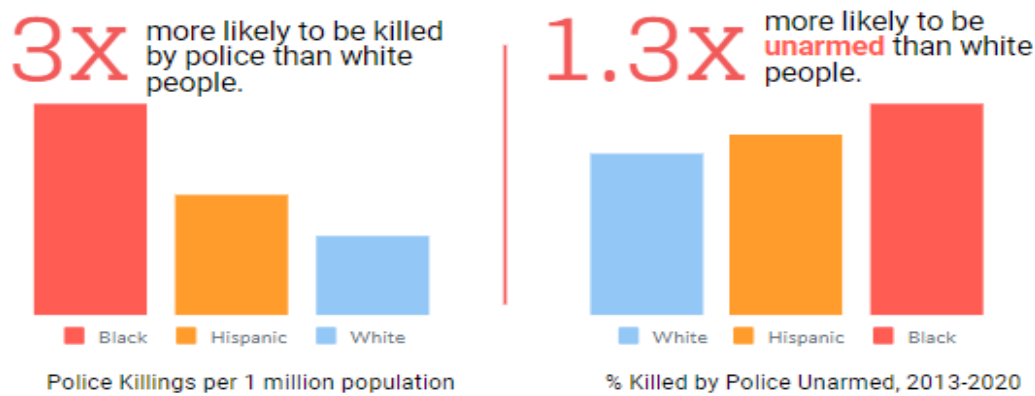
All in all, it is the racial and profiling of the U.S. law enforcement officials that paved the way for the rebirth of racial brutality and violence against ethnic minorities. Especially ones of African descent. This fact justifies the increasing numbers of police crimes against blacks.

### **1.6.3. Police Brutality against Blacks**

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the U.S. has seen notable cases of perceived police violence against racial minorities. Every year, hundreds of men and women are abused, assaulted, and also killed by police in the United States. The number of such cases is unknown because the U.S. does not keep track of them. Significantly, it appears that the police's use of force has a disproportionate impact on African American people.

People of the U.S. are in disturbing unrest due to the recent unjustified brutality of police forces. The absence of laws that restrict police violence is to be blamed. Amnesty International (2015) reports that there is not a single state in the U.S. that conforms with international law and principles on the use of deadly force by police. In fact, the rules that govern the appropriate use of deadly force are totally absent in nine American states and Washington D.C. while in thirteen other states, rules concerning the use of fatal force by police officials do not really meet the lowest conditions established by the U.S. constitutional law. The absence of laws, as well as the absence of any official statistics to track fatalities, provided police officers with immunity. As a result, in many cases, officers shoot victims even if it is not necessary nor appropriate.

Black Americans are significantly more likely to be affected by police brutality than Whites. According to Mapping Police Violence, the number of people killed by police in 2020 was 1,127 people. 58% of this number was of police responding to mental health crises, traffic stops or cases in which the victim presents no threat to others. Furthermore, the website reports that, despite accounting for 13% of the American population, African Americans account for 28% of those killed by police as displayed in (figure 1.2) below (Sinyangwe, 2021).Embrick (2015) explains this disparity by stating that "The blatant disregard for black and brown bodies and racialized acts of social control is evident with the recent murders committed by police officers or vigilantes across the nation" (p. 836). The researcher also claims that the murder of black people and the frequency with which it occurs are not isolated incidents, nor do they represent the reasons that have become normal police reactions to these situations, such as concern for personal safety. Rather, these killings highlight the systemic and discriminatory ways in which killing black people has become an acceptable practice in American culture.



**Figure.1.2.** Police Killed Black People at Higher than White People in 47 of the 50 U.S. Largest Cities(Sinyangwe, 2021).

All in all, unless there have been large constitutional reforms limiting the use of force by police officers, police brutality will remain persistent within the American society. Recently, many activists are standing against police brutality, especially towards people of color.

#### **1.6.4.African Americans Murdered by Police**

##### **1.6.4.1.Eric Garner**

On July 17th 2014, Eric Garner, a middle aged man and the father of six children, was confronted by Staten Island police for selling loose and textured cigarettes. Garner denied the accusations and resisted the arrest and argumentatively exchanged some words with officer Daniel Pantaleo, then reached Garner's neck and put him into a chokehold, although such a maneuver is against the New York Police Department's rules. Garner fell backwards, which allowed Pantaleo to bring him to the ground along with the assistance of three other police officers. While on the ground, Garner repeated the words "I can't breathe" eleven times. An hour later, Eric Garner was pronounced dead (Baker, Goodman & Mueller, as cited in Jones, 2017). According to the New York Times, despite the fact that Garner's autopsy, conducted by the city examiner, determined that his death was a homicide caused by the policeman's chokehold, all police officers were declared innocent (Winston,2019).

##### **1.6.4.2.Breonna Taylor**

Breonna Taylor, a black female medical examiner who was fatally shot by Lewisville police officers in a bungled raid on her residence, was one of the key motives for nationwide

protests against policing and racial inequality in the United states (Reuters, 2020). It began in the early hours of March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, as a part of an investigation into drug distribution activities. Seven white police officers of the Louisville Metro Police Department who were dressed in plain clothes forced entrance into Taylor's apartment to execute a "no-knock" search warrant. The officers say that they announced themselves as policemen before performing the entrance. Whereas, the attorney of Kenneth Walker, Taylor's boyfriend and the one who shot the first bullet, negates this claim and stresses that his client's behavior was out of self-defense since the police never introduced themselves as officers which drove him to assume they were intruders (Costello & Duvall,2020). Walter's warning gun shot hit one of the officers in his thigh, which led him and two other police officers to start firing their guns back. The total number of gunshots fired was thirty-two. Six of them hit Taylor, dropping her dead in her apartment's hallway. A subsequent search of the flat revealed that there were no drugs found (Duvall,2020). On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, Kentucky's Attorney General Daniel Cameron presented the grand jury's decision about this case in which he stated that only one of the police officers was charged with wanton endangerment while no officer had been charged for Taylor's death (Mangan, 2020).

#### **1.6.4.3.Andew Brown**

Only a day after the conviction of a white policeman for murdering an African American man, George Floyd, in an incident that sparked national wide demonstrations; another African American male was shot dead by North Carolina Police. Andrew Brown was a forty-two year old black citizen who was put to death by cops when trying to escape a police attempt to serve an arrest warrant on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. An independent autopsy authorized by the victim's family showed that brown was shot five times, including one in the back of his head (Abdullah, 2021). Merely one month after the incident, on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the district attorney Andrew Womble declared that all three officers who shot Brown will not be charged and will not face any accusations they have committed. The reason for this decision, says the attorney, is that Brown posed an immediate threat to the officers' safety when he tried to escape, which made officers

assume his car was a deadly weapon. Thus, officers in this case had the right to use deadly weapons against him (CBC News, 2021).

#### **1.6.4.Lack of Police Accountability**

Safeguarding public safety and preventing criminal behavior is undeniably a challenging and difficult task for law enforcement officials. Nevertheless, some police officers, who swore to serve and protect, do on several occasions use unnecessarily excessive or even deadly force against citizens. The lack of criminal or civil liability for those officers has resulted in a lack of accountability and a loss of public trust in law enforcement.

Though the American Constitution clearly states that nobody is above the law, many officers seem to escape accountability for their misconduct. Egon Bittner, a sociologist and an expert in policing, summarizes the insufficient role of courts in administering police misconduct. He says:

Our criminal courts have no control over police work, never claimed to have such control, and it is exceedingly unlikely that they will claim such power in the future, all things being equal. Indeed, the courts have, today, even less control over the police than they have over attorneys in private practice  
(Bittner, as cited in Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993, p. 194)

Concurrently, police officers may refuse to consider a police killing of a fellow officer as a crime and gather evidence. They would conform to the so-called "blue wall of silence," which is essentially a code among policemen which states that they would not snitch on one another or place a mate in danger. Moreover, cops who witness a police deathly shooting intentionally give untruthful testimony if the truth endangers their mates. Consequently, the police killing would not be considered as a possible crime (Lopez, 2021).

Moreover, Police Unions have been known to successfully prevent the imposition of penalties on officers who have engaged in misconduct. According to Levin (2020), "Police unions have fought to shield their members from public scrutiny and legal accountability. And

police unions have repeatedly rallied behind politicians hostile to criminal justice reform, racial justice, and labor rights "(p. 1400). Indeed, according to lawyers who prosecute police officers charged with killing civilians, there are several factors that obstruct the conviction of the aforementioned, including powerful unions. Lawyers claim that Police Unions regularly represent policemen and dissuade elected district attorneys from bringing charges (Chan, 2019).

Furthermore, Activists insist on the necessity for change in the police departments.. They argue that unions are of great political power, with Republicans and Democrats competing for their support and campaign donations. Subsequently, the legislation they support is more likely to be passed, and their candidates are more likely to be elected. Lastly, Police Unions defy reformers, especially police heads, who face difficulties discharging even officers with unacceptable performance ( Finnegan, 2020).

To summarize, the lack of accountability for police officers promotes a climate of impunity for their actions. As a result, police authority will increase. Along with new authority comes more police violence, which will enrage the American population.

## **Conclusion**

It has become clearer that the issue of race has been a persistent threat to African Americans throughout the historical tapestry of the United States. The American society has successfully proven to be driven by class and societal constructs that grant some supremacy and privilege, while others are granted hate, enslavement, and misery. In the past century, this despicable claim lived as the driving force of the insults, sexual abuse, and the mal treatments against Blacks. Nevertheless, it lives, in modern days, as a logical justification to the systemically racial practices of whites, who hold authority, against their black counterparts. Therefore, any claims of end of discrimination within the American community are refuted. In fact, they are evidently falsified and known to be matter of lies to beautify the American front.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **"I can't Breathe" Murder and Trump Administration Response**

## Chapter Two

### **“I Can't Breath Murder” and Trump's Administration Response**

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## **Introduction**

This chapter seeks to examine the findings of the previous chapter to come up with the research final result. Firstly, the chapter opens with accounting the murder of George Floyd by narrating the how, when and where the crime took place. Further, it states the repercussions of this incident domestically represented in the nationwide protests and internationally with the sympathetic demonstrations sweeping all over the world. It also enumerates the surrounding events coincided with the killing of George Floyd like the outbreak of corona virus, the economic situation due to Covid19 and the presidential race. All these circumstances assist to fully examine the response of the government to the murder. Finally, the reaction of Trump's administration is analyzed by tracing back Trump's views and policies towards the Black community and by dividing this response to positive and negative ones. Additionally, the Americans citizens' evaluation of the president's response is included to see the whole picture of how Trump's administration have handled the "I can't breathe " incident.

### **2.1.The Killing of George Floyd**

On May 25<sup>th</sup>,2020, a store employee registered an apparently forged \$20 bill and reported it in a 911 call. The employee stated that the accused is an African American man who seemed to be terribly drunk and not in control of himself (Document Cloud Organization, 2020). Two police officers responded to the call. At around 8 p.m. they arrived at the place that will, later, become the scene where Mr. George Floyd was killed by police.

After the police officers arrived at the scene, they located Floyd in a nearby car. According to the Washington Post, Floyd informed the police of him being claustrophobic as they were trying to place him in the police car. During the arrest, officer Chauvin, one of the four officers involved, aggressively forced Floyd, who was handcuffed, to the ground and used his knee to pin Floyd's neck to the ground for over nine minutes. Over this period, Floyd constantly expressed inability to breathe and, several times, begged officer Chauvin to release him. Chauvin declined all requests to reposition Floyd even after the deceased had lost consciousness (Baily,

2020). A Fox News article revealed that officer Chauvin was convicted of second and third-degree murder and manslaughter (Griffith & Siemaszko, 2021).

To conclude, the killing of George Floyd was not the only black person to die at the hands of US police officers. However, his murder attracted a wide range of national as well as international demonstrations. Those demonstrations were not the spur of the moment, they have, in fact, arisen as a counter reaction to a long history of police racism, police brutality and lack of police accountability in the United States of America.

### **2.1.1. The Reverberations of the Murder**

The cruelty of Floyd's death footage uploaded on the internet led to a great rage among the public. Huge numbers of people have reacted to the incident. Americans and foreign people from different races, backgrounds, cultures, and nations have expressed their sympathy with the black community and condemned police brutality against it; calling for the correction of the system of policing and ending systemic racism in the U.S. institutions.

#### **2.1.1.1. National Response**

The death of George Floyd in the spring of 2020 provoked massive nationwide demonstrations and riots. Crowds from across the country have taken to the streets and stood on the ground to condemn the tragic crimes and violations committed by police officers across the country against African Americans. Demonstrators of different backgrounds, cultures and races have condemned systemic racism and police brutality and demanded accountability for police brutality and racial justice.

Floyd's murder sparked nationwide demonstrations in both urban and rural areas of the United States. The first wave of demonstrations began shortly after the spread of the murder footage on the internet. Next, large-scale protests occurred for many days in numerous cities. The demonstrations lasted for over a week. Protests centered on George Floyd's death, as well as the police murder of other unarmed Black individuals. Moreover, people expressed larger

concerns about systematic racism in law enforcement and voiced their dissatisfaction with policing (NYC Department of Investigation, 2020).

In a similar fashion, huge numbers of white citizens have protested the death of Floyd. Washington (2020) reports that protests have drawn large numbers of whites. In fact, in multiple cities, white masses represented the majority of protestors. Several forms of solidarity were shown by whites, such as: white women formed human shields in order to protect black demonstrators, white athletes have signed petitions and tweeted their support; and many public figures and organizations made donations to the Racial Justice Fund.

While most protests were peaceful at the beginning, chaos broke out in several major US cities in the aftermath. Riots have robbed shops, destroyed cars, damaged private properties and there have been some clashes with police. As a result, Curfews have been ordered by mayors and governors in many cities across the U.S. to try to stem the unrest caused by riots; however, the orders have been defied in many areas. As riot police have reportedly clashed with protesters, they have used tear gas, batons, rubber bullets and made hundreds of arrests (Betz, 2020).

In brief, such demonstrations were a strong appeal against racial discrimination and police oppression against African Americans and other racial minorities. Significantly, many state legislatures have started passing bills towards restricting the use of deadly force by police.

#### **2.1.1.2.International Response**

The Death of George Floyd has attracted wide attention to the issue of police violence against blacks. A large series of demonstrations has taken place in numerous places over the world and leaders from countries, allies, and foes of the US alike, have empathized with George Floyd and demanded to bring justice.

Activists and leaders from different lands have commented on George Floyd's death in police custody. In Germany, people gathered in the capital, Berlin, in front of the U.S. Embassy. The crowds carried signs stating "black lives matter" and "Justice cannot wait" (Rahim &Picheta, 2020). On her part, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, condemned the death of Floyd,

describing it as "a murder". Merkel added that racism is something terrible and that society in the United States is very polarized (Boyle, 2020). Furthermore, the Chinese foreign Ministry's spokesman, Zhao Lijin, stated that black lives matter and that their human rights must be protected. Additionally, when interviewed about Floyd's murder, the spokesman told the journalists that racial discrimination has been a long-standing issue in the United States. Moreover, Lijin expressed the necessity of the United States to take all possible actions to deal with police brutality in order to defend ethnic minorities' legitimate interests (Jin, 2020). The British prime minister also had something to say about this incident. Boris Johnson, in response to a question about the Corona Virus at the Daily UK briefing, stated that, unlike in the United States, racial violence has no place in British society, and that he was appealed and sickened when he watched the footage of Floyd's murder (Johnson, 2020).

To conclude, America, at long last, has seen modest progress being made on the issue of police brutality and use of lethal force. This sort of progress would not have been attained if not for the broad international support of individuals, groups, organizations, and even world leaders.

### **2.1.2.The Context of the Protests**

The year 2020 has been a crucial period for Blacks in the United States. The year has started with an unknown global pandemic that provoked a national panic crisis in addition to a great economic recession. The killing of Floyd happened in the middle of these events, which led to national discontent and affected Americans' lives. During this time, the President of the United States was busy with his presidential campaign.

#### **2.1.2.1.Covid19 Pandemic**

Over the first half of 2020, the United States has been going through a fierce fight against the Covid19 pandemic. The virus has rapidly spread across the country, causing a tragic loss of human lives and a serious economic crisis. Therefore, the full closure of schools, restaurants, recreation, and many other facilities; stay-at-home orders, curfews, banning all non-essential medical procedures and surgeries, and banning people's gatherings were the steps adopted by the

American authorities as preventive measures to decrease the rising rates of infection (Ferrise, 2020). Nonetheless, the negative effects of these policies on people's economic well-being and welfare sparked discontent among members of American society, resulting in large protests against the economic fallout, financial setbacks, unemployment, and depression caused by the Corona virus's ramifications (Andone, 2020). Later, in the last week of May of the same year, other protests rose to condemn systemic racism and racial injustice following the death of George Floyd. These protests, precisely, received intense criticism for causing an increase in Covid19 cases (MPR news, 2020).

#### **2.1.2.2.The Economic Recession**

The Covid19 pandemic's full closure protocols imposed by different states of the US caused the American economy a great recession crisis. This has resulted in major layoffs, furloughs, and a massive rise in unemployment numbers, with concerning predictions for future reductions in the U.S. gross domestic product (Congressional Research Service, 2020). The White House announced that Blacks' unemployment rates have been around twice that of Whites. Ironically, President Trump praised the fact that the Black unemployment rate had fallen to 6% in January 2020 in his latest State of the Union Address, though it is still almost twice as high as the White unemployment rate of 3.1 percent (as cited in Beyer, 2020). Once the corona virus closure orders were adopted, the Whites' unemployment rates reached 14% whereas the Blacks' unemployment rates rocketed to 16.7% (Rattner& Frank, 2021).

#### **2.1.2.3.The Presidential Elections**

George Floyd's death and the repercussions it caused occurred in the midst of the US Presidential Elections. The Republican party's nominee, Donald Trump and his rival, the former vice president and the Democrat presidential nominee, Joe Biden, were running against time to win as many votes as they can. David Litt (2020), the former senior speechwriter of President Barack Obama, believes that people who protested against Floyd's death, all of African American descent as well as people of other ethnic minorities or immigrants, are the ones whose

voting rights are being ruthlessly targeted. So, he argues, those who possess power and privilege must first of all ensure these rights rather than asking them to vote. Furthermore, 69% of African Americans who responded to a poll made by the Morning Consult were strongly critical of the response of Trump to the incident, saying that he addressed the protest in a poor manner. The poll also found that 45% of the respondents are willing to vote for Biden while 31% of them said that they would vote for Trump (Davis, 2020).

## **2.2.Trump's Stances towards Black People**

Given Trump's history with race, he had his own debatable views and stances towards African-American community earlier before even thinking of the presidency.

### **2.2.1.The Central Park Five Incident**

In the wake of raping white female jogger in Central park in 1990 , five teens were accused of this crime. Four Africans and one Hispanic were charged of the assault. Amid the event, Donald Trump stepped in calling for the reinstatement of death penalty by spending \$85,000 to allocate full page ads in daily New York city newspapers in order to affect the Department of justice to execute the rapists. As a result, what known as the Central Park Five were arrested and convicted ,yet in 2002 the real rapist confessed to the crime and the five teens were released free. Despite the fact that they were declared innocent, so far Trump argues they were guilty and he has never apologized to them (Clayton, Moore, & Jones-Eversley, 2019).

### **2.2.2.The Birtherism Movement**

Klinkner(2014) stated that the Birtherism Movement is a movement established during Barack Obama presidency and it seeks to affirm that Obama has not been born in United States. Being born in USA is a fundamental condition to be eligible to run for the White House presidency as it is required in the US constitution. One of the prominent leaders of this movement is Donald .J Trump. In 2011, Trump started a campaign against President Barack Obama. He questioned whether Obama was born in the country casting doubts that he is illegitimate president. Trump persisted to throw allegations that he has sent people to Hawaii to

investigate Obama's birth place. Trump membership in this movement in which he later became the Birther in chief and his interviews in reality TV shows challenging Obama to release his birth certificate helped him to gain the GOP support. Although the White House released the president long term certificate, Trump claims lingered by questioning the legitimacy of the documents as being forged.

### **2.2.3.Backlash against the National Football League's Players**

The National Football League's black players launched taking a knee movement in the season of 2016 till 2017. The players protested police brutality against black people during the anthem by kneeling, raising fists, linking arms, holding shoulders, staying in tunnels or locker room, and others. This movement was inspired by Colin Kaepernick, knelt during the anthem. Trump as a newly elected president in 2017 made backlash against NFL black players not standing for the national anthem although they did not commit any crime for exercising their right of free speech and protest which is guaranteed by the first amendment in the Constitution. He went further to blacklist any players who refuses to stand for the national anthem and he laid blames on players protests for the NFL game decline of viewership and ratings(Osmond,2018).

### **2.2.4.Martin Luther King Commemoration Brief Visit**

President Trump along with vice president Mike Pence paid a 90-second visit to Martin Luther King memorial. This unscheduled brief visit was heavily criticized in particular by the civil rights activist Al Sharpton, who said it was “an insult to the American people that the president and vice president had no official recognition of Dr King 's birthday” .He pointed out that Trump and Pence after facing harsh criticism, they drove by the memorial of MLK and they only put the wreath on the memorial. The president did not even mention king' s name or give words of remembrance (Colvin,2019).

### **2.2.5.Mocking Black Lives Matter**

According to Danner(2015),a Black Lives Matter activist was beaten by Trump supporters in Alabama. Mercurio Southall Jr. attended Trump's speech shouting 'Black Lives

Matter' and 'dump Trump' in an effort to disturb the rally. In response, Trump ordered his supporters to get him out. The crowd punched, kicked, beaten and even choked him. From 2015 to 2020, Trump's strategy toward BLM does not change. George Floyd protests erupted in May 2020 led by BLM activists demanding justice for Floyd and holding the officers accountable. Trump on his part criticized the movement labeling it with multiple names like 'Anarchist, extremist, thugs...'. Dale (2020) reported Trump considered BLM mural painted in front of Trump Tower with assistance of New York mayor a symbol of hate referring to words chanted in a BLM 2015 protest "Pigs in a Blanket, Fry 'Em Like Bacon". Drawing attention that BLM hates police by calling to defund police and he is the defender of police. Additionally, in the wake of Floyd's demonstrations and in one-on-one interview on Fox News with Laura Ingraham (2020), Trump attacked BLM as being 'Marxist group' that harm black people.

Having the above in mind, Trump's record on race issue is complicated. Therefore, Black community were not in favor to vote for him in 2016 election. Having Assumed office, Trump strived to court black community who constantly suspected his policies.

### **2.3.Trump'sAdministration Policies for African Americans**

In multiple occasions, President Trump has regularly repeated that he has served African Americans more than any other president with the except of Lincoln. However, Black community do not share similar views with him.

#### **2.3.1.Housing Policy**

Richard Rothstein in an interview with Shapiro claimed that African Americans have been constantly regarded as a threatening neighbor due to the perpetual stereotype of being slum dwellers. He argued that the frequent views of wastes resulted from industries which widespread in African communities contributed to giving African Americans the image of slum dwellers in the eyes of whites and contributed to white flight when African Americans attempted to move to suburbs. This discriminatory policy of housing changed overtime through issuing a bunch of acts like the Fair Housing Act in 1968 in the wake of MLK 's assassination. Blacks who rezoned

to reside in urban zones were unable to move to suburban areas that they have been excluded from either by segregationist laws or due to their low income. Some critics like Rothstein believes that Trump rhetoric as far housing policy perpetually stoke racial inequities and worsened Black community housing conditions (Shapiro,2017).

Despite the fact that housing reforms attempt to integrate neighborhoods and to combat housing segregation which kept African Americans away from certain areas, this segregationist policy continues till the administration of Trump who worked to push low income housing out of suburbs two months away of the 2020 presidential election. He cancelled Obama policy who attempted to promote more integration in the suburbia. In accusation to low income residents of being criminals and destroying the suburbs Trump said" we will save our suburbs from the future of chaos, corruption and economic collapse". This claim is considered a direct address to immigrants and Blacks whom the suburbs become a shelter for them(AljazeeraEnglish,2020).

### **2.3.2.Black Unemployment Achievement**

According to Scott(2019), the president has followed through his promises to the Black community. Trump gave African Americans thriving economy since he provide 1,017,000 new jobs for African Americans. Consequently, the Black unemployment reached its lowest level of 5.5%. Black women as well are priority to the president lowering to 4.4%. Notably, black-white unemployment gap is getting smaller than any time before. In addition, the opportunity zone is pumping money to underdeveloped communities especially the Black community. The project is producing approximately \$100 billion of investments.

Woodward, Yen and Lajka (2020)explained each time Trump touts about the economic prosperity African Americans enjoy, other side highlights that the credit of this success should be indebted to Obama's economic policy .Simply put, Trump has set out what Obama already starts .He just follows the roadmap of his predecessor since Black community experienced the economic welfare earlier in the last two years of Obama second term. Couch, Fairlie and Xu (2020) argued that this affluence does not last long because of the pandemic. Having been hit

hard by the pandemic, the American economy has dropped drastically. In spite affecting all racial groups ,Covid19 stroke massively ethnic minorities including the Black community. Its disproportionate impact on Blacks resulted in 16.6% unemployment rate on contrary of white unemployment of 14.8%.

### **2.3.3.Health Care**

Costa and Goldstein(2017) explained that Trump, in his healthcare plan, promised to provide insurance for everybody by replacing Obama care with another plan. As far as the Black community is concerned, the repeal of Affordable Care Act has a negative effects on this category of American citizens. Trump touted about what he has done for African-Americans at a debate of reforming police. As for Black's health care policies , Trump claims "We expanded affordable options for better health care"; however, this policy is not appealing for Black people who had benefited from ACA. The president's claim of expanding more options meant the change of the implementation of the affordable care act and because Obama care targeted helping underserved communities for more insurance coverage, the overturn of ACA would hurt the Black community the most besides other minorities and low-incomes families. Bump (2020) stated that after the execution of this act, the number of uninsured Black Americans had decreased by third due to the widening of Medicaid.

Wright and Robert (2020)noted that the cancellation of Obama care has devastating implications on Black people particularly due to the disproportionate impact of corona virus pandemic on this community. Obama care contributed to narrow the health disparity gap by covering more disadvantaged communities. Senator Harris said "the horrifying truth is ...they are fighting to take health care away from people in pandemic". She also mentioned that termination of Obama care would give insurance companies to "discriminate" Blacks and Latino patients affirming that statistics demonstrates how corona virus has disproportionately affected people of color.

### **2.3.4.Funding Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) have a significant role in the course of struggle for justice and equality. Also, they are an incubator to students participation for civil rights as HBCUs students who obliged their institutions to acknowledge Black Lives Matter Movement. From the outset of his presidency, Donald Trump has prioritized the HBCUs. Dennard (2020) said that "when president Trump said he saved Historically Black Colleges and Universities(HBCU) he is 100% correct because he did"(para.1).He argued that the president signed an executive order on February 28, 2017 in his 100 days of presidency is in itself a sign that indicates how much the president prioritizes the HBCU. This order promised to support the HBCU, to move them from the Education Department back to the White House and he also issued bills to increase the institutions funding. In stark contrast with his predecessor president Obama who cut HBCU funding, president Trump was there to follow through his promise to HBCUs presidents that he would never defund them although he implied that he would upset other parts. Furthermore, the former president had never invited the 80 HBCU leaders to the Oval Office in the white House to meet him yet president Trump did. Not to forget that Trump is the first sitting president to speak at the BHUC Week Conference. The survival of HBUC till now is indebted to Mr. Trump who saved the establishments from a prolonged plights they grappled with like enrollment , economic crises , layoffs, and the risk of closure. Under no circumstances has the president forgotten HBUC since he dedicated \$960 million for HBUC as an emergency relief during COVID 19.

On the other hand, Trump's accomplishments for HBCUs have been seen from different angle. In his Op-Doc, Nelson(2018)reported Trump administration handling of HBCUs was a matter of sometime for the sake of show and other times for political benefits. As a person who places more importance on appearances ,Trump invited an HBCUs marching bands to his inauguration. This invitation is considered as a form of polarization to a president Whom 92% of Blacks did not vote for him. The meeting of Trump with the 80 leaders of HBCUs in the Oval

Office put them between a rock and a hard place on how to deal with a president who is clear ant-black yet their optimism that this meeting would benefit the institutions of federal financial support made them a part of this show. Unfortunately, the meeting crowned by only photo-op by the president counselor and they walked away empty-handed. As for HBCUs permanent funding provided by Trump executive order, in an interview with Roland Martin the 16-year HBCU college leader Walter Kimbrough said that this funding is launched as a pilot program by president George W. Bush. This 85 million programmed lasted for two years then ended in Obama's presidency. The latter encountered harsh criticism for not extending this program, consequently, Obama made the two years ten years. When officials asked Trump for funding, he only renewed the program by signing it and his signature was merely a performative act (Martin,2020).

### **2.3.5.Criminal Justice Reform**

The First Step Act as a bill signed into law in December 2018 is one of the top achievements that crowned Trump's presidency and it served mainly the Black community. Lartey(2018) discussed that the First Step Act is also one of the rare laws gaining bipartisan support. The Law's provisions include improving conditions in federal prisons and giving more rehabilitative opportunities to the inmates so as to facilitate re-entry into society. It also bans some of the practices like the shackling of pregnant women and the reduction of mandatory minimum sentences for a great deal of drug-related crimes. During the signing of the Act, Trump said "The First Step Act will make communities SAFER and SAVE tremendous tax payers dollars". According to USSC, black incarcerated are considered one of the big beneficiaries of the First Step Act since "over 91 percent of the individuals whose sentences were shortened were African American and 98 percent were male"(para.5). Another reform in the criminal justice system that Trump achieved is the signing of full pardon to the black woman Alice Johnson in December 2020. Alice Johnson as a black woman was condemned for non-violent drug dealing and spent almost twenty years in prison. Her case was backed by Kim Kardashian. Under the

FSA, she was released due to good conduct and she was granted a full pardon by President Trump.

Nonetheless, some critics believed that Trump has drastically changed his stance toward the issue of crimes. Clayton, Eversley and Moore(2019) cast doubt on Trump's criminal justice reform because during his presidential campaign, Trump considered himself tough on crime and law and order president who advocates police department calling police not to be nice to criminals and he dismissed some of Obama's policies to reform the justice department like the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice. As for the First Step Act, he exaggerated his contribution in the First Act overhaul as well as the impact of this law is not that big deal since it was put in motion solely for Federal prison; that is to say, only 13% of the inmates would benefit from this overhaul. The issue of the First Step Act is credited to his political adviser Kushner whose father spent 14 months in prison(Gest,2020). With regard to Johnson's release, Colbert(2020) reflected that Trump commutes Johnson's sentence merely due to the involvement of the celebrity reality TV show Kim Kardashian. To put it simply, Trump granted Johnson the pardon for showing himself off .

To summarize, while Trump had frequently touted his achievements to Black community, experts and African Americans met his claim with skepticism.

#### **2.4. Trump's Administration Response to George Floyd Murder**

The brutal murder of George Floyd under the knee of officer Derek Chauvin sparked a nationwide and worldwide backlash. The Americans on their part were waiting for their president to address the incident by delivering a speech denouncing the crime and showing sympathy. In national crisis, president's words, rhetoric and even body language matter. Within the scope of 18 days, President Trump and his administration reacted to George Floyd death by insulting and ended by signing an executive order.

## **2.4.1.Negative Responses**

### **2.4.1.1.Disappointing Rhetoric**

Alaghbary (2020) maintained that the viral footage of the police officer Derek Chauvin pinning and kneeling on the neck of the unarmed Black man George Floyd for about nine minutes was a terrible scene to watch as it is expressed by President Trump. While touring Kennedy Space Center, Trump in his first reaction when asked by a reporter about the brutal murder of Mr. Floyd shows no sign of empathy or solidarity. He chose to describe an awful manslaughter that touched the hearts of millions all over the world as "a very, very bad thing" which "he didn't like to see". Alaghbary also considered Trump's rhetoric disappointing to the feelings of demonstrators who took the street demanding justice to George Floyd and called for holding the complicit officers accountable. This reply built outrage and triggered protests to spread around the country. Taking Twitter to interact with Americans, Trump on May 28 at 1 a.m posted his reaction in two tweets which add fuel to fire. While the president considered the murder as very sad and tragic in his first tweet and he asked the FBI to carry out the investigation, he fanned the flames in his second tweet only after four minutes from the first one. Trump's appreciation of the work of law enforcement despite the street's outrage of police use of force let the demonstrators down who were expecting condemnation to police brutality. This response brought about more people to join the protests which sparked nationwide. Here protesters clashed with law enforcement personnel who dispatched in huge numbers and they used tear gases and rubber bullets to disperse the angry crowd. At this level, the peaceful protests turn to riots and some demonstrators started looting and vandalizing shops. Neither has Trump visited Minneapolis nor met Floyd's family to express his condolences. He only spoke to Floyd's brother Philonise Floyd who said that unlike former vice president Joe Biden , President Trump's call was brief and he constantly interrupted him. Trump during a roundtable event at the White House declared that he called the Floyd family. His call came along with his controversial tweets which were widely condemned by the Americans(Watts &Duster,2020).

To sum up, Trump's first response either his tweets or the call with the Floyd's were failed attempt to contain the furry of the street, on the contrary, it stoked racial discrimination and frustrated protesters to take to the streets across the country.

#### **2.4.1.2. Insulting Minneapolis Mayor and Protesters**

Aratani(2020) affirmed that after having thanked law enforcement for doing a great job to disperse protesters over the death of George Floyd, Trump outrages demonstrators who flood the streets all over the country demanding to convict the officer who knelt on Floyd's neck. In Minneapolis, riots erupted torching Police Department's 3rd precinct of the three officers. Alongside the peaceful crowds, some looters started vandalizing and stealing property amid the march. Trump before 01am responded to these riots with his most controversial tweets. In his first tweet, he insulted Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey as being weak and lacking leadership for not cracking down the protests and offered him either to dominate the street or he will send the National Guard to do the job on his behalf. The president (2020)wrote:

I can't stand back and watch this happen to a great American City, Minneapolis.

A total lack of leadership. Either the very weak Radical Left Mayor, Jacob Frey, get his act together and bring the City under control, or I will send in the National Guard & get the job done right.

Frey responded to the president's attack by saying that the president detached from his responsibility and holding others accountable instead of taking full charge "Weakness is pointing your finger at someone else in a time of crisis" Fery said. In the second tweet released over the third night of protests in Minnesota, Trump lashes the protesters out and his language becomes increasingly aggressive after the precinct have been set on fire by rioters, Trump refers to demonstrators as 'thugs' which is a loaded word and he also threatened to shoot looters. His use of "When the looting starts, the shooting starts" phrase is echoing the Miami chief police officer of 1967 Walter Headley known for his brutal treatment for black neighborhoods. He used to combat crimes using guns, siccing dogs, and a 'get tough policy'. Trump (2020) posted:

These THUGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you!.

Chang (2020) reported Twitter in an unprecedented move flagged Trump's tweet of violating the platform's rules about glorifying violence shortly after posting this tweet. For the first time, the company hides the president's tweet based on the historical context of the phrase looter will be shooter which may escalate further tensions. Worth mentioning in this context that Twitter placed fact-checking on two tweets Trump posted about mail-in ballots considered as not factual. One day after the policy applied on the president, and in retaliation Trump signed an executive order to restrict social media platforms accusing them of controlling the Americans' private and public lives. Alaghbary(2020) pointed out this tweet incited growing outrage and defiance among protesters but late in the night, the president sought to walk back his tweet claiming that he did not know the historical background of the phrase and he downplayed the use of "Looting leads to shooting"; as a matter of fact, statement arguing seven people shot in Louisville due to chaos. Ironically, while Trump was insulting protesters as thugs and looters in Minneapolis, he denounced China's violent response to protest in Hong Kong and he warned to impose sanctions on Chinese officials for quelling freedom of speech. CNN's Brian Stelter (2020) the chief media correspondent explains that the president's use of looters will be shooters is a veiled threat yet he hoped that the president's advisors intervene to contribute to calm the situation. Stelter comments that this tweet conveys the usual leadership technique of the president who frequently sought to stoke division and spread mayhem in the American society. He added not to forget that the president responded late to the events starting from his silence to comment on the video of George Floyd's murder till to the growing unrest in Minneapolis. What made the dire situation even worst his attack on protesters by calling them out 'thugs' and his threat to

shoot them. Presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden in an interview with CNN described Trump's comment as "thoroughly irresponsible".

#### **2.4.1.3. Threatening of Vicious Dogs**

Haberman(2020) asserted that on the fifth night what started as peaceful gatherings devolved into mayhem in various states across the country. Despite the fact that governors issued a state of emergency and early curfews due to Covid19, protesters defied the curfews calling for justice and violence spill over along with riots. In Minnesota, the epicenter of the event, the National Guard is mobilized for the first time in the state's history. By night and in Washington Dc, rage reached the white house doorstep wherein clashes broke out. According to the New York Times, Trump was taken to an underground bunker as tension ramp up outside the White House. Secret Service agents put the white House in lockdown closing entrances and exits. They also formed a defensive line to protect the White House. The majority of protesters were chanting peacefully "Black lives matter " and "No justice, no peace" whereas others keep pushing the metal barriers and throwing bottles and bricks on the officials who fired pepper spray on protesters. The gathering persisted for almost five hours till it was broken in at 3:30 am. Shortly after, Trump in a tweet at 3:41 am said he was watching the confrontation expressing his pride to the Secret Service who made him feel safe by quelling the crowds. His praise is accompanied by a threat to use vicious dogs and weapons to face demonstrators. Also, Trump criticized sharply the Washington Mayor for not sending backups to surround the White House. The Mayor denied this later. In Twitter threads, the U.S. President (2020)said:

The front line was replaced with fresh agents, like magic. Big crowd, professionally organized, but nobody came close to breaching the fence. If they had they would have been greeted with the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons, I have ever seen. That's when people would have been really badly hurt, at least. Many Secret Service agents just waiting for action. 'We put the young ones on the front line, sir, they love it, and ... good practice.

The president's response to the White House clash in a nation already grappling with a huge death toll due to the pandemic, the economic repression and the issue of racism again shows the president's lack of leadership. Washington DC mayor found that the remark of vicious dogs is offensive and reminds African-Americans of the past segregationist policies. Instead of addressing the protesters in order to calm down the turmoil, the president resorted to violence and he belittled the demonstrators by painting them as agitators who seek to spread mayhem. After a night of civil unrest near the White House, another controversial tweet came out in the president's feedback. Trump wrote:".... Tonight, I understand, is MAGA NIGHT AT THE WHITE HOUSE???"(Trump,2020).This tweet seems as if an upfront invitation to Trump's supporters to rally Saturday night outside the White House. When Trump was asked by a reporter that he is toying with racial tensions, he denied it saying he just asks whether people are coming to the gathering insisting that MAGA loves African Americans. The president appears to send a mixed message. Twitter brought up the question of whether the president is stoking racial violence by inviting counter protest, Trump replied no and he was merely wondering if MAGA were coming to the protest.

#### **2.4.1.4.Accusing Demonstrators of Domestic Terror**

According to Vice News (2020),in a span of six days, Trump posted fifteen tweets pointing fingers at other parts for the escalated unrests across the country. He also gave similar speeches in: Opening America Again event, in Kennedy space center, in the White House Rose Garden and in an interview with Newsmax TV, Trump claimed that most protesters are outsiders, and they came from other states to loot and destruct Minneapolis businesses notably African-Americans small businesses. In a tweet, Trump (2020)posted"80% of the RIOTERS in Minneapolis last night were from OUT OF STATE. They are harming businesses (especially African American small businesses), homes, and the community of good, hardworking Minneapolis residents who want peace, equality, and to provide for their families."

Not only did Trump make this allegation, but his federal and state officials endorse him like Attorney General William Barr, Minnesota's governor Tim Walz, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey. Trump goes further to question the protesters' character. According to Vice News (2020), the president in various events has described George Floyd protesters : “radical left bad people,” “rioters, looters, and anarchists,” “criminals and vandals,” “angry mobs,” and “dangerous thugs.” On Twitter, he called them hoodlums and also he accused them of “lawless anarchy and chaos,” “violence, mayhem, and disorder,” and “domestic terror.”

Trump regularly assigned blames to ANTIFA for the growing protests and arson around the country. Mr. Trump(2020) tweeted on Saturday, "It's ANTIFA and the Radical Left. Don't lay the blame on others!". ANTIFA stands for anti-fascist action and it is a movement of activists with left-leaning ideologies who work under no leader with no headquarter. It is known for its resistance to all forms of racism and sexism like neo-Nazis, white supremacists, the nationalists, anti-immigration, anti-Muslims. Simply put, ANTIFA opposes all Trump's policies. It is frequently associated to anarchists due to its anti-government and anti-capitalists stances using aggressive tactics like vandalism and physical confrontation. In Charlottesville 2017 rally, ANTIFA confronted white supremacists members. In the rocket launch in Florida, Trump declares ANTIFA along with the radical-left wing are responsible for inciting violence and vandalism in US streets. On his part Attorney General William Barr validated Trump's claim calling the act "domestic terrorism"("The President Accused Antifa",2020).Then, on Twitter Trump (2020)announced "The United States of America will be designating ANTIFA as a Terrorist Organization". Cumming and Philips(2020) argued that the American Civil Liberties Union declared that Trump has no constitutional authority to label a domestic organization as a terrorist group because doing so would be a violation of the First Amendment of freedom of speech right. on NBC News' "Meet the Press.", Attorney General Ellison stated that both Trump

and Barr deviate to address the major issue; namely, systemic police brutality and lay blames on ANTIFA and similar groups for the violence breaking out nationwide.

#### **2.4.1.5.Declaring Law and Order Strategy**

Having blamed ANTIFA and Democrats for unleashing mayhem across American cities as protests of racial injustice has continued for a week, Trump shifted to embrace a new policy, that is to say, law and order. Trump in a series of tweets and speeches not only casts himself as law and order president who confronts lawless and chaotic protesters but he also delegitimizes the protests demands. Adopting this policy aims at persuading Americans with the forthcoming election that George Floyd's demonstrations are a threat and people who demand justice are terrorists simultaneously Trump would be the only person who can stand up for them. Dating back to history, law and order strategy has been followed by Richard Nixon and George Wallace in 1968 presidential race. As far as Trump is concerned, he used this strategy in his 2016 campaign holding Barrack Obama the responsibility of making America an unsafe environment and in an attempt to appeal for his base, he rode the wave as mass turmoil unfolded in the United States in the wake of George Floyd murder through inciting Americans' sense of fear. He kept talking about "vandalism, anarchism, looting, arson, thugs, mayhem, chaos and so on"; nonetheless, polls show that the majority of Americans are standing by civil rights movements and crime rates issue is no longer a priority to electors. Julia Azari, a professor of political science at Marquette University, in an interview last month with the Guardian said, "To shift to law and order and distract people, and say the real problem is these protesters, and say, 'Look, we're strong'"(McCarthy,2020).

By declaring himself Law and order president echoing the sixtieth era marked with racism and police excessive use of force, Trump set unveiled aggressive tone for handling the ongoing protests against police brutality. By doing so, he also delegitimizes the demonstrators' demands. On contrary to other presidents stepping up to ease tensions in a time of crisis, Trump

read autocrats playbooks which play on race and crime card to appeal to his base but he contributes to stoke racial division by adopting "law and order"(Washington Post,2020).

#### **2.4.1.6.Deploying the National Guard Threat**

Law and order strategy goes with the deployment of the military to restore order. In a televised address after a week of the civil unrest, Trump expresses his solidarity to peaceful protests but in striking terms, he recommended governors either squash riots or the National Guard would intervene activating the Insurrection Act of 1807 to quell the ongoing civil unrest. The president stated:

I am mobilizing all federal and local resources, civilian and military, to protect the rights of law abiding Americans.....If a city or state refuses to take the actions necessary to defend the life and property of their residents, then I will deploy the United States military and quickly solve the problem for them.(ABC news,2020)

Earlier on Monday morning on a teleconference, Trump reproached the states' governors for their failure to contain the riots erupting during the week urging them to 'dominate the streets' and arrest violent protesters for long-term jail sentences. He also ridiculed the governors for being 'weak'. Declaring himself an ally of peaceful protests in the Rose Garden, the riot police and the law enforcement units were outside the White House moving protesters forcibly from Lafayette Square firing tear gas and rubber bullets into the crowds to clear the area for Trump to pay respect to St. John's Church. Shortly after having finished his speech, Trump escorted with several members of his Cabinet as well as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff U.S. Army Gen. Mark Milley walked through the square. The president stopped at St. John's Church, which had been set on fire by protesters the night before, holding a bible without explanation or addressing the protesters and he invited Attorney General William Barr and other members of his Cabinet for a photo-op outside the church then left without going inside the church or talking with religious leaders(Wilkie & Macias,2020).The latter criticized Trump's visit ,for instance, the Rev. Mariann Budde, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington expressed to NBC news

her outrage on the president's visit saying he did not come to the church neither to pray nor to offer his condolences. NBC News( 2020) reported that the photo-up was the president's suggestion to show his strength after the local press disdained him for sheltering in an underground basement over Friday's protests. Joe Biden responded to the church photo-op saying that America is longing for leadership not for photo-ups.

Macias (2020) remarked that Trump's invoke of insurrection act faced fierce backlash by former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis who broke his silence for the first time. Mattis in an article published in The Atlantic denounced Trump for dividing America saying: “Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people — does not even pretend to try”. He continues to criticize Trump's three years of presidency blaming him for the militarization of the US response which breaks a misunderstanding between military force and American citizens. Mattis' words drive Trump to react on Twitter “I didn’t like his ‘leadership’ style or much else about him, and many others agree. Glad he is gone!” .Other top retired military officers as well weighed in on Trump's call for force like Navy Admiral Mike Mullen and retired Army general Martin Dempsey and others. The former Defense Secretary rebuked the current military leadership including Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Chairman Mark Milley for taking part in St. John church photo-up( Stewart,2020). Later, the Pentagon clarified that Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Chairman Mark Milley thought that they escort the president to check on law enforcement outside the White House (Macias,2020). Two days after Trump declared the dispatching of the National Guard in US states, Defense Secretary Mark Esper publically discouraged the invoke of the 1807 Insurrection Act considering the involvement of the military would be the last resort in domestic emergencies situation which is not the case now(Welna,2020).

#### **2.4.1.7.Laying Blame on the Media and Democrats**

In response to racial injustice protests, Trump chose other targets to lay blame on local media and Democrats. Alaghbary(2020) claimed that Trump as usual attacks his familiar opponent-the media in order to cover his mishandling of the protests. In a series of tweets, Trump accused the local press coverage of the protests as agitators who seed chaos and he constantly questions the credibility of the "CNN, MSDNC, Washingtonpost, Newyorktimes" by calling them fake news and enemy of people. On Sunday, Trump(2020) tweeted:“Much more “disinformation” coming out of CNN, MSDNC, @nytimes and @washingtonpost, by far, than coming out of any foreign country, even combined. Fake News is the Enemy of the People!”.However many press headquarters and journalists were assaulted during the protests, Trump further lashed out at the local press accusing them of establishing 'hatred and anarchy' and glorifying looters making them look like partners in the crime but these allegations were not backed by any robust evidence.

Alaghbary(2020) concluded instead of acting as a leader to unify Americans, Trump politicized Floyd's protests. He casts suspicion on the ability of Democrats governors and mayors to contain the crisis. From a clear attack on Minneapolis mayor Jacob Frey characterizing him as 'weak' to rebuking Washington DC mayor for not providing the backups needed during the White House protest. In a 'Get Tough' tweet, Trump urged Democrats-run cities to defend their states against protesters. Trump also considers Democrats complicit in the civil unrest and he ordered to call the National Guard in various events to act on behalf of the Democrats governors. In one tweet, Democrats mayors, protesters, and the candidate for the presidential election Joe Biden came under attack by Trump(2020)who wrote," Get tough Democrats Mayors and Governors. These people are ANARCHISTS. Call in our National Guard NOW. The World is watching and laughing at you and Sleepy Joe. Is this what America wants? NO". Trump turned to his democratic foe Joe Biden to take the blame for the civil unrest in an attempt to seize on the turmoil in the 2020 presidential election race. He is alleging that Biden

and his staff bailed prisoners out of jail to spread more mayhem in Seattle by doing so, Trump seeks to undermine Biden framing him as a predator. Trump(2020) tweeted:

These were the people that trashed Seattle years ago. Who's paying for these people. I was appalled that 13 of Joe Biden's staff were donating money to bail people out in Minneapolis. They should have stayed in jail until this is over (and beyond).

As the protests persist to demand for more structural police reform, Trump intensified his rhetoric against 'Radical Left Democrats' draws an opposition to his Law and order theme to Democrats' lawless and anarchy. Taking advantage of the ongoing call to defund police, Trump(2020) posted: "Sleepy Joe Biden and the Radical Left Democrats want to “DEFUND THE POLICE”. I want great and well paid LAW ENFORCEMENT. I want LAW & ORDER!". He made an accusation against 'Sleepy Joe' for provoking the protesters to defund the police and later for abolishing the police. On his part, Biden denied this accusation.

#### **2.4.2. Positive Response**

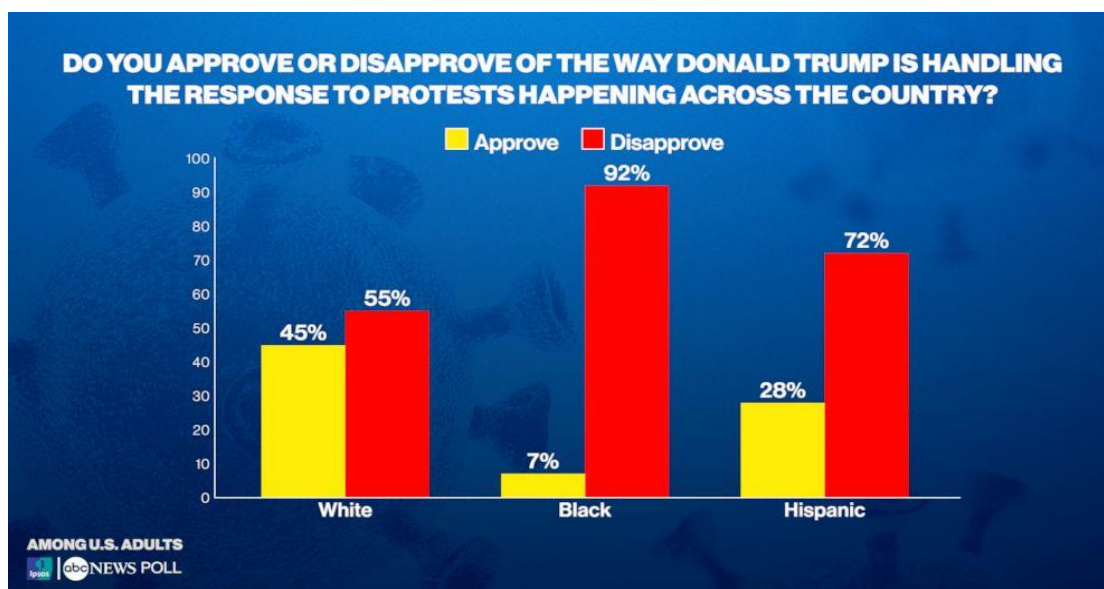
##### **2.4.2.1. Banning Police Chokeholds**

The persisting protests all over the USA for almost three weeks and under the pressure of widespread police reform calls which escalated to police defunding cries, President Trump signed an executive order on Tuesday, June 12th under the title of “Safe Policing for Safe Communities” to overhaul the police department in the USA. Trump in his statement in the Rose Garden announced the order emphasizing that most officers are honest and selfless individuals who seek to serve their communities and he mentioned his meeting with handful families whose loved ones were victims of deadly maneuvers with police officers. He also stressed his Law and order meanwhile lashing Democrats out for inciting the call for police defunding describing it as "Radical and dangerous" ("Under pressure from", 2020). Observers consider the executive order a shift in Trump's and Republican's stances toward police reform since McManus, Cullen, Jonson and Burton (2020) said "President Trump spent his time on the campaign trail as the ultimate

“law-and-order” candidate and champion of the police" (p.8). Additionally, he advocated the Blue Lives Matter movement as a counter to Black Lives Matter. Blue Lives Matter was set up to defend law enforcement from the accusation of racism, brutality, and abuse and it called for the protection of police officers from the "War on Cop" campaign. Becoming president, Trump issued multiple legislations to support the police department such as deeming the attack on officers a federal crime, lifting the Obama-era ban on the transfer of surplus military equipment to police departments - a ban that first came into effect following the “battlefield-style” responses to rioting in Ferguson. He has also publicly pardoned a high-ranking police official, the former Sheriff of Maricopa County (AZ), Joe Arpaio, who was found to repeatedly engage in racial profiling (McManus et al., 2017). The executive order is suggesting to ban the use of chokehold tactic unless the officer's life is in jeopardy and it is creating a misconduct database to track officers with beforehand complaints preventing them from moving from one department to another without accountability. Also social workers and mental health issues police officers are assigned to accompany frontline officers while handling nonviolent crimes. This law came as a response to "defund the police" call which Trump considered as radical and dangerous refusing the idea to dismantle and dissolve the police. Trump(2020) said “Americans know the truth: Without police there is chaos. Without law there is anarchy and without safety, there is a catastrophe”(ABC,2020). The president did not address racism in policing insisting that misconduct is limited to a tiny number of bad apples. The president opened his talk with a plea for unity but swiftly turned to law and order" call which is the Americans demand. While signing the order, Trump was surrounded by nine police officers. Some of them in officer suits.

RT(2020)suggested that the legislation which has been put in motion aimed at appeasing protesters and Black Lives Matter; however, some local activists regard it as toothless and meaningless. On top of them, the Civil Rights, and Social Justice Activist Reverend Al Sharpton (2020) tweeted, "We don't need studies, we need police that commit crimes to be punished. All police that use chokeholds claim their lives were threatened, what's new?". Activists like

Mychal Denzel Smith to AJ+ ( 2020) believed that the chokehold ban is "useless" since police officers will constantly excuse their use of force of by "I feared for my life". Activists asserted that unless sweeping changes to the system would be carried out like full-abolition, heartbreaking videos like that of George Floyd would likely be exposed over and over again. The response of Donald Trump to the ongoing demonstrations across the USA bring about contradictory public opinions. Ipsos in partnership with ABC News using Ipsos' Knowledge Panel conducted a poll about whether the Americans approve or disapprove Trump's reaction to the nationwide protests in the wake of killing George Floyd. According to ABC News poll, the results found only 45% of whites, 7% of Black Americans and 28% of Hispanics approve of Trump's managing of this issue. 42% of Trump's white supporters praised the deployment of federal agents to crack down the violence yet 37% of the same category see this decision as adding fuel to fire stoking the violence even further. The landslide majority of Black Americans(92%) and Hispanics (72%) disapprove Trump's responses. Not farther from Hispanic, (55%) of whites respondents as well are dissatisfied with Trump response in managing the protests. The bar graph below interprets the results:



**Figure2.1.**Americans' opinions about the response of Trump to Floyd's protests(ABC News,2020).

Having the above in mind, Trump's administration handled the civil turmoil erupted nationwide in the wake of George Floyd murder by a series of tweets and an executive order.

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation of Trump administration reaction to Floyd's incident showed a lack of leadership. All the measures followed by Trump to face the massive demonstrations added fuel to fire triggering demonstrators to take more to the streets. Needless to say that both Trump's racial views and policies for Black Americans indicated his strategy to deal with race-related crisis. Additionally, the circumstances accompanied the protests escalated the events since Floyd's murder was committed in a critical time. The pressure of Covid19 health crisis with its economic consequences, the presidential race and "I can't breathe" killing reverberation all over the world in support of Blacks impacted Trump administration approach to confront the unfolding turmoil across the country. All these factors directed Trump to adopt law and order doctrine to save his face as the strong president particularly in front of his base and the world's leaders. Therefore, the research found out that Trump administration resorting to violent approach then eventually passing an executive order in attempt to appease the boiling street was failed policy to contain race protests in a country in the midst of reckoning with racial violence.

## **General Conclusion**

Racial violence against African Americans in the U.S. from the slave trade passing through the Civil War and the Reconstruction era until the killing of George Floyd affirms that racial violence inflicted on African Americans is not a new practice. Therefore, the theoretical part of this study introduces a historical background of racial violence. Additionally, it details how Blacks have been vulnerable to multiple types of racially violent acts such as the blatant brutal treatment represented in physical, psychological and sexual abuse. In addition, the study highlighted that despite the fact that African Americans were granted their freedom under the Emancipation Proclamation, their sufferings have persisted.

Following the Civil war and during the Reconstruction, white supremacy groups terrorized the Blacks by using mob violence, vigilantism, and lynching to restore prior civil war privileges. Worth mentioning in this context that racially-motivated violence has been enshrined by legal institutions to legitimize it. Furthermore, the study shed light on the notion of systemic racism as a new form of implicit racial violence specifically exhibited in police brutality disproportionately against Afro-Americans. Nevertheless, amidst all these terrors, Blacks have developed resistance strategies in forms of slave rebellions and civil rights movements.

In the practical part of the study, the hypotheses were proved to be valid through rhetoric and measures description and evaluation. After exposing details about the death of George Floyd as a result of police brutality and racial stereotyping, the study found out that the case of George Floyd is considered a modern-day lynching and it is a reminder of the brutality Blacks went through historically. This confirms the suggested hypothesis about white supremacy and systemic racism as direct reasons are fueling racial violence against Afro-Americans. Additionally, the outcomes of George Floyd killing either locally or internationally have indicated the growing consciousness of the issue of systemic police violence.

Moreover, the examination of Trump's attitudes towards the Black community before and after presidency interpret the reaction of Trump to George Floyd death. The evaluation of

Trump administration response to Floyd killing revealed the abject failure of the administration to manage the civil unrest due to racial injustice. Trump administration condoned the real issue which is white supremacy and systemic racism in policing as driving forces to racial violence committed by police officers. It also resorted to derogating protesters and their demands, to unveiling then veiling the threat to use force, pointing fingers to other parts as a policy of distraction and lastly to passing toothless police reform. Also, the signing of chokehold banning order confirms the weakness of the criminal justice system in confronting the institutionalized racial violence. What made this incident remarkable is the local and international circumstances corresponded with the crime. All these elements effected the way Trump's administration handled the incident.

Furthermore, the assessment of Trump administration reaction to George Floyd murder demonstrated a mismanagement to a national crisis. On their parts, Americans expressed their strong disapproval of Trump's approach to deal with Floyd's protests. This proves the suggested hypothesis about the indifference policy pursued by Trump administration. Even worst, the president's rhetoric stoke racial division in a country has already been grappling with racial violence and systemic racism issues. The study concluded that Trump's administration failed to handle and contain a race-related crisis.

As with the majority of studies, the design of the current study is subject to some limitations. Firstly, we faced the challenge of lacking prior researches on the topic due to its novelty. Secondly, we were unfortunately unable to access some paid resources and books. Thirdly, the restricted study length deprived us from invoking useful materials in the study.

Ultimately, the study in hand recommends further studies to address the issue of systemic racial violence in policing and consider how Floyd killing changed the world's view towards race issues . Based on the study conclusions, practitioners should carry out a profound analysis to Trump administration response to George Floyd incident. .

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## ملخص

عانى الأمريكيون الأفارقة، على مر التاريخ، من أشكال العنف الوحشية، داخل أو خارج الإطار القانوني. وامتد هذا العنف العنصري ضد السود حتى بعد إلغاء العبودية . تُعد جريمة قتل جورج فلويد كحلقة من سلسلة العنف العنصري الذي كابدها الأمريكيون الأفارقة. بينما يحاكي رد ترامب عل مقتل فلويد أحداثا سابقة تعود إلى حقبة ما بعد الحرب الأهلية، حيث تم ارتكاب أعمال عنف غوغائية، وكذا لاقتصاص، والإعدام خارج نطاق القانون في وضح النهار وبموافقة الحكومة المحلية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم رد فعل إدارة ترامب على قتل الشرطة للرجل الأمريكي، من أصل أفريقي ، جورج فلويد؛ وذلك من أجل تقديم فهم أشمل لفعالية نهج ترامب في التعامل مع القضايا المتعلقة بالعرق. ولهذا ، فإن البحث الذي بين ايدينا يعتمد بشكل أساسي على المنهجين التاريخي والوصفي. وقد كشفت الدراسة أن مقتل فلويد يعكس تراث العنف العنصري الذي فُرض على السود سابقا. بالإضافة إلى أن رد فعل حكومة ترامب على مقتل جورج فلويد يدل على عجز الإدارة الأمريكية في التعامل مع الاضطرابات المدنية بشكل صحيح .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** العنف العنصري ، الأمريكيون الأفارقة ، إدارة ترامب ، جورج فلويد ، وحشية الشرطة