Race, Power, Privilege, A Critical Analysis of Systematic Racism

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Abstract: This paper critically analyzes complex interactions between power, privilege, and race in the context of institutionalized racism, highlighting the structural and historical dimensions of racial disparities that continue to perpetuate racial inequality. Based on a comprehensive review of the literature and an online search, the study examines how power relations benefit majority racial groups, privilege is exercised as an unseen benefit, and institutionalized racism extends to a range of societal institutions, such as schools, hospitals, workplaces, and the criminal justice system. One of the most important findings of this study is that systemic racism is historically entrenched. It was colonialism, slavery, and institutional discrimination that created foundations for racial hierarchies that continue to influence contemporary power dynamics. These historical injustices have become ingrained in legal systems, policy, and societal norms, therefore resulting in long-lasting inequalities. The research also uncovers the role of privilege in sustaining these disparities. Privilege allows certain racial groups to live life with unearned advantages, at times even without their owners' knowledge, while marginalized groups face perpetual obstacles. This privilege encompasses access to education, economic opportunities, and equal treatment under the law, sustaining cycles of disadvantage.

Keywords: Critical analysis; Power; Privilege; Race

Introduction

Power, privilege, race, and systemic racism are interconnected concepts that organize societies around the world, influencing social arrangements, institutions, and individual lives. Race is the categorization of people based on physical features such as skin color, typically linked to assumptions regarding identity and worth (Suyemoto et al., 2020). Power is the ability to control or influence outcomes, decisions, and resources — often possessed by dominant racial groups. Privilege is the benefit or advantage that is not acquired by specific groups due to their racial identity, leading to the sustenance of inequalities. Systemic racism is the institutionalization of racial discrimination in laws (Fotaki & Pullen, 2024), policies, and practices that continue to offer unequal access to opportunities and resources, imparting racial prejudices to the social fabric.

Systemic racism originates from the processes of colonialism, slavery, and segregation. These systemic forms of oppression created racial hierarchies that still influence institutions today. Education, employment, healthcare, and the justice system have had discriminatory policies operating within them that have perpetuated racial inequalities over time, leading to lasting disparities (Elias & Paradies, 2021). From redlining policies excluding minorities from home ownership to racially biased policing and mass incarceration, the legacy of these historical discriminations continues to have an impact, shaping socio-economic conditions and access to rights (Tayefi Nasrabadi et al., 2024; Vogel et al., 2021; McAuliffe, 2023). The dynamic of power, privilege, and systemic racism in perpetuating racial differences is here examined critically through race analysis (Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021; Plaisime et al., 2023). It

discusses how systems of power nourish privilege, institutions create inequality, and how such influence shapes individual and group experience. Through exploring such complexity, this study aims to bring into the limelight the extensive impact of systemic racism and illustrate ways towards equity and justice across race (Banaji et al., 2021).

The roots of systemic racism are deeply embedded in historical phenomena that structured societies over centuries (Fibbi et al., 2021). Colonialism, slavery, and segregation created racial hierarchies that continue to influence modern institutions (Maussen, 2023). Through colonialism, racial superiority was evoked to justify the exploitation of indigenous people and the transatlantic slave trade, where millions of Africans were forcibly removed, enslaved, and inhumanely abused. These practices set the stage for racial discrimination, sowing the seed that some races were inherently superior to others. As societies evolved, these racial hierarchies became formalized through policy and practice that excluded minority groups (Gururaj et al., 2021; Rocha & Yeoh, 2022). In the United States, for example, Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation, denying Black communities access to education, employment, housing, and voting rights (Hswen et al., 2020).

Similarly, apartheid in South Africa legally enforced racial discrimination with profound socio-economic cleavages (Kakwata, 2024). Even after these oppressive systems were officially disbanded, the legacies of these institutions persisted, shaping inequalities in wealth, health, and access to opportunities (Rad, 2025; Simson, 2024; Barnes et al., 2023). Furthermore, systemic racism changed over the years, becoming less overt but equally effective. Discriminatory practices such as redlining — where minority communities were denied housing loans — and racial profiling in law enforcement entrenched social and economic disparities. These practices concretized racial differences, ensuring power and privilege remained invested in dominant racial groups. The legacy of these past injustices is still evident today, as racial minorities continue to be disadvantaged in their pursuit of equality in most spheres of society. This history is important to understand in order to appreciate the long-standing nature of systemic racism and to address the mechanisms that reproduce inequality (Wang, 2022).

The objective of the paper is to critically examine the complex intersection of power, privilege, race, and systemic racism, with emphasis on the institutions that sustain racial inequalities. By examining these interrelated concepts, the research aims to deconstruct how historical injustices have evolved into contemporary modes of discrimination, which are deep-seated in social institutions and everyday practices. It seeks to shed light on the mechanisms through which power is maintained by ruling racial groups and privilege, often unseen or unnoticed, reinforces these imbalances, securing systemic disadvantage. One of the main issues addressed in this research is how institutions reinforce racial disparities. From education and health care to labor and the justice system, the paper discusses how policies and practices subtly enforce discrimination, limiting the access of marginalized groups to opportunities and resources. It also discusses how power operates, illustrating how the powerful influence society's standards and decision-making processes, to the detriment of minority groups (Mosley et al., 2025).

Moreover, the study seeks to expose the impact of such long-existing inequalities on individual and communal experience. From an exploration of lived experience, the paper highlights the ongoing reality of racial discrimination, socio-economic impacts of exclusion from institutions, and affective consequences of having to bear discrimination. By this critique, the study seeks to understand better these complex social constructs and contribute to the body of work aimed at dismantling institutionalized racism, fostering equity, and the creation of more just societies.

Method

This research employs a mixed-methods method in which qualitative and quantitative methods are combined in an integrated manner to critically explore the intersection of race, power, privilege, and systemic racism. The method is designed with a view to acquiring a broad grasp of such complex social phenomenon through gathering different perspectives and examining different forms of data. A key part of the study is a thorough literature review. Books, policy reports, scholarly journals, and historical documents are thoroughly examined to trace the history of systemic racism and its relationship with power and privilege. The literature review attempts to determine influential theories, background history, and contemporary debates on racial inequality. This process aims to construct a theoretical framework to guide the analysis and interpretation of findings.

Additionally, online research plays a critical role in gathering up-to-date information and researching global stories of racial injustice. Online materials such as news articles, human rights publications, government reports, and social media discussions provide insightful information on the latest forms of systemic racism. Using online databases and search engines ensures access to a vast range of perspectives, providing richness and applicability to the research. The research also has a

mixed-methods design with both qualitative information and quantitative data that are put together to paint an inclusive picture. Qualitative techniques focus on the analysis of narratives, policy, and case studies, painting an in-depth description of individuals' and group's experiences with racial discrimination. Quantitative data, obtained through demographic studies, statistical reports, and surveys, help quantify the differences along race lines and examine the impact of institutionalized racism in various domains.

By integrating these diverse methodologies, the research is able to get to the richness of racial disparities and equate patterns of the past with current realities. This robust methodological framework offers a balanced analysis of the intricate interaction between race, power, privilege, and institutional racism and culminates in a greater understanding of the mechanisms for perpetuating inequality

Result and Discussion

Understanding Systemic Racism

Systemic racism is a pervasive form of discrimination embedded in the structures and institutions of society, perpetuating inequalities over generations. It has its roots in colonialism, when the exploitation of native lands and resources was justified by racial hierarchies. Colonial powers established their dominance by constructing racial narratives that defined non-European groups as inferior, justifying oppression, land dispossession, and cultural erasure. These colonial traditions laid the ground for enduring racial divisions, deepening prejudice into political, economic, and social institutions (Smith & Matthews, 2025; Lesutis, 2023). Slavery is a second pillar of systemic racism that institutionalized racial disparity globally. Africans enslaved lost their humanity and were treated as property, legal institutions upholding their subordination. Most states' economic prosperity was built on the back of slave labor, strengthening racial hierarchies and institutionalizing dehumanization of Black communities.

Post-abolition, too, the inheritance ran through institutions that discriminated such as segregation, disfranchisement, and economic exclusion, reinforcing racial differentials further. Institutional discrimination also sustained such injustices by embedding racial biases in policies, practices, and laws. Systems of government, education, health care, and the criminal justice system embedded structures that denied racial minorities access to resources and opportunities. Redlining in housing policy, racially discriminatory policing, and inequitable funding for schools are just a few examples of how discrimination was made systemic. These practices not only sustained racial hierarchies but also ensured the

reproduction of privilege for dominant racial groups (Brablec et al., 2025; Ali & Salam-Salmaoui, 2024). To comprehend the origins of systemic racism is to understand how colonialism, slavery, and institutionalized discrimination worked together to fashion power structures that currently disadvantage the marginalized. The long-term legacy of these historic injustices manifests itself in today's racial disparities, and so it is necessary to confront these entrenched structures as a means to clear the path towards true equity and justice.

Systemic racism is perpetuated by legislation, policies, and societal norms that reinforce racial inequalities and privilege structures. These mechanisms create barriers that exclude opportunities for marginalized groups while maintaining power and privilege for dominant racial groups. Over time, discriminatory laws and institutional practices have habituated societies to inject racial prejudices into everyday life and perpetuate unequal outcomes across generations (Müller et al., 2022). Policies and laws have long been in the forefront of institutionalizing racial discrimination. Legal frameworks in most nations were designed to prevent racial minorities from accessing fundamental rights. For example, segregation laws made racial segregation official, restricting where people of color could reside, work, and receive an education. Policies such as redlining in the real estate market excluded minority groups from receiving home mortgages, systematically denying them access to wealth-building opportunities. In the criminal justice system, increased punishment for minorities and racial profiling contributed to the reinforcement of disparities, with a cycle of marginalization and punishment.

Social norms also contributed to the perpetuation of racial inequalities. Cultural mythologies and stereotypes have been used for centuries to justify discriminatory treatment and maintain racial hierarchies. Media portrayal, education materials, and working environments typically reflect and reinforce these prejudices indirectly, shaping public opinion and guiding policy decisions. Social norms that require unequal treatment legitimize discrimination, and it becomes harder to turn around and reverse such entrenched injustices. Combined, these social norms, laws, and policies form a system whereby racial disparities become sustainable on their own. People's access to education, employment, healthcare, and justice is disproportionate, and privilege is reserved for the majority racial groups. Understanding such structural mechanisms is crucial since it reveals that in order to end systemic racism, there have to be comprehensive reforms that dismantle discriminatory processes and promote equity and inclusion (Jackson et al., 2023).

Power Dynamics and Privilege

Power relations are at the core of systemic racism, organizing society to favor dominant racial categories over others. Power relations operate through political, economic, and social institutions to create a system in which power is held by those who are race-privileged. This disproportionate concentration of power ensures decisions over society — from policy to resource allocation — are held by dominant racial categories, entrenching racial hierarchies and perpetuating inequality. In political systems, power structures have generally excluded racial minorities from exerting influence. Electoral systems and policies have typically been designed to suppress minority votes, excluding them from shaping policies that directly affect their lives. Racial minorities in democratic countries are even frequently subjected to structural obstacles such as gerrymandering and voter ID laws that undermine their political power and perpetuate the dominance of major groups. As a result, legislation tends to serve the interests of the powerful and neglect the needs and interests of vulnerable groups (Kuran et al., 2020; Eriksen et al., 2021).

Power also exists economically in the form of disparities in wealth and opportunity. Wealth accumulated by dominant racial groups over generations, typically from privileged positions like land ownership and access to education, has ensured socio-economic cleavages. Corporate-interest policies and capital accumulation also compress wealth further, pitting racial minorities at a structural disadvantage. Discrimination in the workplace, disparate pay, and limited leadership opportunities cement economic inequities, allowing privilege to keep serving those already privileged (Hanasono et al., 2022). Socially, dominant racial groups produce cultural narratives, controlling media representation, school curricula, and social norms. These narratives have a tendency to reinforce stereotype and prejudice, stealthily allowing the status quo to be maintained. The advantage of membership in the privileged race manifests as undeserved advantages — from not having to worry about being protected in public spaces by default to receiving more preferential treatment in medicine, schools, and the workplace. This hidden system of privilege not only perpetuates racial inequality but even normalizes it, making it challenging to counter.

Understanding these power dynamics is the first step towards eradicating systemic racism. By seeing how systems favor dominant racial groups and perpetuate privilege, society can begin to deconstruct such inequalities, creating paths for inclusivity, justice, and long-lasting change (Cappiali, 2023; Adamson et al., 2021; Bermúdez Figueroa et al., 2023). Privilege is an unobserved advantage, quietly entrenched in society, that benefits majority racial groups without them even noticing it. This unearned advantage is deeply embedded in social, political, and economic environments, manifesting itself in critical areas of education, healthcare, work, and justice. The presence of privilege guarantees racial inequity perpetuates, creating a world where opportunities and outcomes are race-determined (Kraus et al., 2019). Privilege is experienced in education in terms of access to quality resources, well-funded schools, and experienced teachers. The dominant race has an advantage from living in areas with quality school buildings and after-school activities according to historical tradition in the accumulation of wealth and housing policy. Curricula also have Eurocentric narratives that erase minority histories and contributions. As a result, the marginalized students face systemic barriers to education, while the privileged ones are provided with a smoother path towards higher education and professional life.

In medicine, privilege is articulated as disparities in access and treatment. Privileged racial groups are insured, receive timely medical care, and are treated more compassionately and respectfully. Racial minorities are likely to face biases in medical diagnosis and treatment, with their symptoms and pain being downplayed or misinterpreted. Socioeconomic characteristics linked to privilege also guarantee better health outcomes, such as access to healthy food, clean living conditions, and preventive services (Jiao, 2024; Collins et al., 2024). The job market also highlights these inequalities, in which privilege translates into enhanced career prospects, higher incomes, and faster professional progress. Privileged racial groups are more likely to experience networks of patronage, in-formal mentoring, and subconscious prejudices that work in favor of those who "fit" privilege-informed organizational environments. Racial minorities, however, face systemic hurdles such as discrimination at the hiring stage, wage inequality, and representation deficits in managerial roles, which limit their professional advancement and economic mobility.

Privilege in the justice system is a cushion against racial minority communities' exposure to brutality. The dominant racial group is given better treatment by the police, the courts, and sentencing. Minority communities are over-policed, given harsh punishments, and racially profiled, all of which reinforce cycles of disadvantage and incarceration. The presumed innocence and equal treatment under the law is closer to dominant racial classifications, which makes inequality easier and erodes trust in the justice system. Determining privilege as an intangible advantage is crucial in understanding the larger power dynamics that characterize systemic racism. Privilege is not so much about one's personal wealth or accomplishment but

about structural benefits accorded to part of the population at the expense of another. Correcting these inequalities requires dealing with these intangible advantages, challenging institutions that exacerbate the unequal situations, and creating open systems wherein equal opportunities and outcomes are given to all (Ashik et al., 2025; Grzelec, 2024; El-Saadani et al., 2024).

Impact on Society

Systemic racism has profound and pervasive impacts on society, generating long-standing racial disparities in wealth, education, and health status. These disparities are not isolated but are interconnected, entrenching cycles of disadvantage and shaping the mundane realities of marginalized groups. Analysis of these disparities reveals the structure of racial inequality and underlines the imperative of genuine change. Racial disparities have an economic base in past injustice such as colonialism, slavery, and discriminatory practices such as redlining and unequal access to finance. The intergenerational accumulation of wealth has chiefly favored majority races, giving them access to better housing, education, and jobs. Marginalized populations are often subjected to economic exclusion, which results in lower incomes for households, less savings, and restriction to capital and credit. The racial wealth disparity not only constrains economic opportunity for minority populations but also ensures that inequality continues to the next generation (Green & Healy, 2022).

Education is also an area where racial inequalities are evident. Majority-minority communities' schools tend to have inadequate funding, inadequate resources, veteran teachers, and after-school activities. Historical conditions, such as residential segregation, have perpetuated unequal access to educational opportunities, thus maintaining socio-economic disparities. Students from marginalized communities are often subjected to systemic discrimination, lowered expectations, and a curriculum that erases their histories and contributions, creating an environment that suppresses academic success and future achievement.

Systemic racism's effects also manifest in the realm of health. The disadvantageous groups, ranging from economic to geographical unavailability, confront barriers in securing quality care. Additionally, healthcare providers' unconscious biases may lead to variation in diagnosis, treatment, and in general care. Minority groups tend to have higher rates of chronic disease, maternal mortality, and mental illness, conditions that are often worsened by socio-economic factors like poor accommodation, food poverty, and exposure to environmental hazards. These health inequalities unveil the structural nature of racism in public health systems (Beard et al., 2024).

Collectively, these inequalities create a society divided along racial lines by well-being and opportunity. The cumulative effect of institutional racism not only confines the potential of the oppressed but also erodes social cohesion, economic prosperity, and justice. These inequalities need to be remedied by dismantling the systems that cultivate racial prejudice and building equitable systems which promote equity and fairness for all. Systemic racism has insidiously deep-rooted impacts that shape the frameworks of society, bringing about perpetual racial disparities in riches, training, and health results. These inconsistencies are not hypothetical but rather reflected in measurable information and empirical illustrations, indicating how racial discrimination continues to affect oppressed gatherings. In terms of wealth, racial minorities suffer significant financial disadvantages. For instance, within the United States, the median wealth of white families is about eight times the median for Black families and five times the median for Hispanic families, according to a 2021 Federal Reserve study. This disparity of wealth is not accidental but the result of historical injustices, such as redlining — a policy that withheld mortgage loans from people in predominantly Black neighborhoods, restricting their ability to build generational wealth. To this day, discriminatory hiring practices and wage gaps persist, with studies showing that job applicants with "ethnic-sounding" names are 50% less likely to be interviewed than white-sounding named applicants with the same qualifications (Intungane et al., 2024).

Racial inequities in education begin early and compound over time. Schools in minority-dense areas are more likely to be under-resourced due to reliance on local property taxes, which perpetuates inequities. For example, a U.S. Department of Education found that schools serving mostly students of color receive approximately $23 billion less in funding every year compared to schools that are mostly white. These funding gaps mean that students have fewer academic resources, outdated textbooks, more students per class, and less access to advanced courses, all of which impact student success and opportunities later in life. Furthermore, disciplinary policies disproportionately affect students of color, with Black students being three times more likely than their white peers to be suspended or expelled for the same infractions, fueling the "school-to-prison pipeline."

Health outcomes are perhaps the most stark consequences of systemic racism. Racial minorities consistently experience poorer health due to restricted access to quality healthcare and the compounding effects of socio-economic disadvantages. For example, Black women in the US are nearly three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women, a disparity that persists even after

controlling for income and education. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare stark disparities, with Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous communities experiencing significantly higher rates of infection and death. Underlying structural problems like overcrowded housing, front-line employment, and limited access to healthcare intensified the impact of the virus on these communities (Parolin & Lee, 2022; Marou et al., 2024). Such concrete examples identify that systemic racism doesn't constitute isolated incidents alone but is ingrained in the fabric of society itself, determining outcomes in wealth, education, and health. In reversing these disparities, it's about dismantling oppressive structures, implementing inclusive policies, and generating spaces where equity and justice aren't merely aspirational notions but lived realities. Only by means of such concerted efforts may society move closer towards greater equality and justice for its members.

Resistance and Advocacy

Advocacy and activism have been essential historically in fighting systemic racism and bringing about a more equal and just world. Campaigns and movements globally have sought to dismantle oppressive systems, provide voice for marginalized individuals, and hold institutions accountable. Examples include the Black Lives Matter movement and Truth and Reconciliation initiatives, which have highlighted racial injustices and called for meaningful change. Black Lives Matter (BLM) started in 2013 following the acquittal of George Zimmerman, the man who murdered Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager. BLM is now an international movement that protests police brutality, racial profiling, and systemic racism more broadly. The 2020 killing of George Floyd reignited protests around the world, and millions joined demands for justice and change. BLM's impact has extended beyond demonstrations — it has galvanized legislative calls for police reform, shaped corporate diversity plans, and brought conversations of racial disparity into mainstream discourse. The movement is a testament to the power of grassroots mobilization to confront injustice and demand accountability from institutions.

Similarly, Truth and Reconciliation movements have attempted to address the centuries-long legacy of colonization, racial discrimination, and violence against Indigenous peoples. A key example is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, established in 2008 to investigate the legacy of residential schools, where Indigenous children were taken from their families, prohibited from their culture, and subjected to abuse. The TRC documented survivors' testimonies, raised awareness about these abuses, and issued 94 Calls to Action to promote healing and reconciliation. Other nations, such as South Africa, have undertaken similar efforts to come to terms with the legacy of apartheid and legalized racism, admitting historical fault while demanding reparations and institutional reform (Kaziboni, 2022). Both BLM and Truth and Reconciliation movements underscore the power of mobilization in combating systemic racism. The movements serve as reminders that ending racial disparities requires not only acknowledgment of past injustices but also the fulfillment of actual reforms towards building an equal society. The fight against systemic racism has not yet ended, but these campaigns show resilience and the pursuit of justice amid overwhelming, entrenched oppression. Resistence and activism are central forces driving change in fighting systemic racism, effecting changes in society by collective action, awareness, and reform. In the center of these movements is allyship and policy reform, both of which are central in dismantling embedded inequalities and crafting more inclusive societies (Dwivedi et al., 2025).

Allyship is where dominant group members actively engage in supporting marginalized populations by recognizing privilege in themselves, amplifying voice for minorities, and confronting systems of oppression. True allyship goes beyond performative acts; it requires consistent self-education, listening to those most affected by racism, and using privilege to advocate for equity. When, in the global protests following George Floyd's death in 2020, allies joined Black communities, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement gained more prominence, and there were calls for justice and reform. Allyship is vital as it expands the possibilities of anti-racist work, creating solidarity across racial groups and standing together against injustice (Aouragh, 2019). Policy reform is also fundamental, for it addresses the root causes of racism by confronting racist laws, institutions, and practices. Unwavering advocacy pushes governments and institutions to enact policies that promote equity and accountability. For example, police reforms like prohibiting chokeholds, expanding body-camera usage, and realigning police budgets have been instituted and proposed across regions as a result of persistent activism. There have also been educational reforms that seek to decolonize education by introducing varied viewpoints and historical justice corrections to the curriculum, making learning more inclusive (Galkienė & Monkevičienė, 2021; Babu et al., 2025).

Healthcare, employment, and residential policy changes also play an integral part in addressing racial differences. In countries such as Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have provided suggested policies that apply changes to make reparations to the Indigenous peoples, such as encouraging access to

education, preserving traditions, and enhancing the rights to land. Affirmative action policies in various countries also served to ensure more equitable access to education and the workforce by undoing historically disadvantaged roles that were held by marginalized groups (Naim, 2025). The complementarity of policy reform and allyship highlights that the fight against systemic racism has to be fought on various fronts. Allyship mobilizes popular support and ensures that marginalized voices are heard, while policy reform translates this energy into concrete changes that reshape institutions and power dynamics. Together, they provide the foundation for long-term social transformation, rendering justice and equality more than ideals but lived realities (Patterson et al., 2018).

Critical Analysis

A remarkable intertwinement of these phenomena with systemic racism in shaping social, economic, and political institutions over generations is revealed through a close examination of race, power, and privilege. Critical analysis illuminates the mechanisms through which racial inequalities are replicated and presents a compelling argument for structural change.

A key finding is the interconnection between race and power. In the past, ruling racial groups held disproportionate power that allowed them to make and enforce policies that maintained their privileged positions. Colonialism, slavery, and segregation are ideal instances of how power was established along racial lines, cementing inequality into institutions. Power relationships continue to be imbalanced today in favor of ruling groups, as seen in disparities in political representation, economic opportunities, and access to justice. These imbalances guarantee that it is challenging to raise the marginalized communities' representation levels to decision-making roles, thus entrapping them in perpetual cycles of disadvantage.

Privilege is also marked by invisibility. Privilege is an unearned benefit; it benefits the racial group members but is almost invisible to them. For example, white individuals walk undetected without racial profiling and discrimination and are accorded access to equal opportunities —privileges they unknowingly assume as a norm of life. Conversely, for marginalized groups, the terrain of racial prejudice pervades their education, professional growth, and physical security. Privilege must be known in order to discern the insidious manner in which systemic racism operates, since privilege tends to make the beneficiaries of the status quo complacent. The discussion further refers to the ubiquitous impact of systemic racism on institutions in society. In education, under-funded minority schools limit access to quality learning resources and entrench achievement gaps. In health, racial minorities face

higher rates of illness and mortality due to barriers in access, discriminatory care, and socio-economic disparities. Similarly, in the justice system, racial profiling and harsher sentencing for minority groups indicate biases that undermine fairness and equality before the law. All of these institutional inequalities are not isolate incidents but rather interconnected results of a system that advantages some over others.

Lastly, the paper brings focus to the role of resistance and advocacy in dismantling systemic racism. Black Lives Matter and Truth and Reconciliation movements exemplify how grassroots organizing, public protest, and policy advocacy can confront injustice and push for concrete change. These movements are a call to awareness, summoning allies and policymakers to uncomfortable truths and towards more equitable systems. In total, the critical analysis illustrates that systemic racism is entrenched in societal institutions, perpetuated through power imbalances and upheld through privilege. In order to rectify these injustices, not only do historical legacies need to be recognized, but also comprehensive reforms need to be implemented that dismantle oppressive systems and promote equity. The fight against systemic racism persists, taking continued reflection, advocacy, and policy change to forge a more just society.

Conclusion

The examination of race, power, and privilege in the context of systemic racism is an extremely deep-rooted and complicated issue that continues to characterize societies around the world. The study recognizes how racial inequalities are perpetuated through inheritance from the past, institutions, and social norms, generating persistent disparities in wealth, education, health, and justice. It is necessary to comprehend these dynamics in order to be capable of toppling the systems that uphold discrimination and injustice. One of the primary findings of the analysis is the interconnection between race and power. Historically, racially dominant groups have employed power to establish and enact structures that reaffirm their dominance, others being excluded in the process. Colonialism, slavery, and segregation not only legalized racial discrimination but also created long-standing hierarchies that advantage particular groups at the expense of others. These asymmetrical power relations can still be seen today in disproportionate political representation, discriminatory criminal justice systems, and unequal socio-economic opportunities. The other important observation is the invisibility of privilege. Privilege allows members of dominant racial groups to navigate society with unearned advantages — unknown to them — while marginalized groups face constant

barriers. This privilege is felt in everyday life, from good education and healthcare to equal treatment in the job market and justice system. Observing privilege is essential to addressing systemic racism because it shines a light on the invisible advantages that perpetuate inequality.

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Conceptualization; methodology; validation; formal analysis; investigation; resources; data curation; writing—original draft preparation; writing—review and editing: visualization, A. R: All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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