

inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.”<sup>16</sup>

Poverty cannot be separated from the other structural inequalities that shape society, such as discrimination formed along the lines of gender and sexuality, race or ethnicity, nationality, migration status, religion, or disability. The effect of systemic racism on economic mobility among People of Color is an example of how the structures and policies that uphold racism and classism intersect. Systemic racism in the United States has been, and continues to be, a barrier to economic mobility and building generational wealth for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities.

**Systemic racism:** racism that has been embedded in the institutions and laws of a society, and is found in American housing, employment, education, health care, and criminal justice systems.<sup>17</sup> For example, racist housing policies after the Great Depression and during the housing boom of the 1950s and 1960s allowed for the creation of generational wealth for White Americans, while denying African Americans the same opportunities to build and pass on assets. Because of this, the average White family holds almost eight times the wealth of the average Black family.<sup>18</sup>

**Redlining** is a key example of racist housing policies that affect economic stability today. In the 1930s, the government marked neighborhoods with high minority populations in red and refused to provide mortgages to residents in these areas; while at the same time subsidizing suburban homes for White families. Without access to federally-insured mortgages, BIPOC families were unable to purchase homes and build equity or were forced into predatory and abusive loans.<sup>19</sup> In Portland, Oregon, systemic racism in housing and city planning excluded communities of color from homeownership and wealth-building, denied them access to educational resources, jobs, healthcare and more, and displaced many families from their homes.<sup>20</sup> This displacement

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<sup>16</sup> Katy Steinmetz. “She Coined the Term ‘Intersectionality’ Over 30 Years Ago. Here’s What It Means to Her Today.” *TIME*, February 20, 2020. <https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/>

<sup>17</sup> “What is Systemic Racism?” *Race Forward*. <https://www.raceforward.org/videos/systemic-racism>

<sup>18</sup> Michelle Singletary. “Systemic Racism, not \$200 Air Jordans, Suppresses Black Wealth.” *The Washington Post*. November 6, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/11/06/black-net-worth-wealth-gap/>

<sup>19</sup> Terry Gross. “A ‘Forgotten History’ of How the U.S. Government Segregated America.” *NPR*, May 3, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america>

<sup>20</sup> “History of Racist Planning in Portland.” *Portland.gov*, 2022. <https://www.portland.gov/bps/history-racist-planning-portland>