

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Ava DuVernay's documentary *13th* provides a profound analysis of racial inequality and social injustice, uncovering the fundamental systems that maintain these issues in the United States. The story structure is divided into multiple segments that show the development of racial inequality and social injustice over a period. It can be concluded that the film employs a powerful combination of narrative and documentary elements to expose the enduring nature of racial oppression in America. The narrative structure follows a historical progression, from slavery to modern mass incarceration reflecting a continuity of systemic control rather than a break from it. Through exposition, climax, and resolution, the film highlights how racial injustice evolves in form but not in function. This is further supported using documentary techniques such as segmentation, archival footage, direct storytelling, and impactful music and graphics that amplify the film's persuasive power. These elements are not merely stylistic—they are central to how the film constructs its argument and immerses the viewer in the historical and present-day realities faced by African-Americans.

The Analysis also reveals that the roots of social injustice and racial inequality are deeply embedded in American legal and institutional structures. From the post-Civil War Black Codes and 13th Amendment exception clause, to the Jim Crow era and its mechanism of legal segregation and racial terror, these systems

were designed to suppress Black autonomy while maintaining white dominance. In the modern era, racial control was repackaged through policies such as the War on Drugs and mass incarceration. These mechanisms, while no longer overtly racial in language, function to perpetuate exclusion, labor extraction, and social hierarchy. The film argues that racial injustice has never truly disappeared, but it adapted to new forms of legality, political rhetoric, and institutional practice.

The impact of these structural injustices on African – American communities is vast and multidimensional. The film presents incarceration not just as the loss of freedom for individuals, but as a mechanism that disrupts families, weakens political power, and creates generational cycles of poverty. Through cases like the Central Park Five, the film demonstrates how criminalization is often driven by fear, media manipulation, and political expediency, disproportionately targeting African – Americans youth. The psychological trauma, social instability, and economic dispossession caused by these systems are not side effects, they are part of a broader strategy to define who belongs and who is excluded within the nation’s structures of power.

In conclusion, *13th* is not just a historical documentary, it is a critical reflection on the present. It challenges viewers to confront the reality that racial injustice is not accidental but institutional. The film calls for a deeper understanding of how policies, systems, and ideologies work together to maintain inequality. By unpacking these realities, this research emphasizes the urgent need to dismantle the structures that normalize oppression, and to reimagine a justice system that serves all equally, not just in principle, but in practice. *13th* does not only function as

historical documentary, but also as a social criticism and to raise awareness about the issues by showing how the related policies have reinforced racial inequality, conflict, discrimination, and social injustice. The fight for justice and equality continues, fueled by social movements and policy reform efforts.