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## **THE ROAD TO REPARATIONS A Comparison Between the United States and South Africa**

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**THE ROAD TO REPARATIONS**  
**A Comparison Between the United States and South Africa**

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**ABSTRACT:**

This thesis paper is designed to be an analysis of potential methods on how to achieve reparations in the United States and South Africa. Both nations' Black demographics have been victims of white supremacy and enslavement, pushing the white masses to excel while the rest are left to parish. The oppression of these groups have been acknowledged and as opposed to a simple verbal apology, I will write on how compensation in the forms of money, education, and land can be used to undo the wrongdoings of the past. The point of this paper is to present my newfound perspective of how to handle such a delicate matter, proving that using reparations as a means to close the white-Black wealth gap in each nation will help make up for the atrocities done as well as guarantee Black demographics a better future.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

From as early as the 1400s, humanity has been indulged in a history of colonization and white supremacy; from the colonization of African countries to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, slavery in the US, apartheid in South Africa, Jim Crow, the list of times when Black demographics have been tortured and oppressed by their white peers in boundless. For the United States and South Africa in particular, the effects of these institutions (US with slavery and South Africa with apartheid, respectively) have been dreadful. Even after several years (or in America's case, centuries) after its ban in use slavery and apartheid have managed to set back the Black demographics in these so much that their white counterparts exceed them in multiple aspects of life. Examples of this include: education status, property ownership, or generally

speaking, wealth. By now in the 21st century, humanity has progressed enough to acknowledge the fault in our ancestor's ways and how such evil acts have led to both racist and oppressive societies. While it is good that the atrocities have been acknowledged there leaves room as to what is to be done to make up for what was done to Black people in the past. Essentially, in this thesis analysis I will be laying a proposal for how to achieve reparations in the United States and South Africa, and how by using such a form of compensation to close the white-Black wealth gap, Black demographics will finally be able to play at an equal playing field with their white peers.

Reparations can be defined as the act of making amends, offering expiation, or giving satisfaction for a wrong or injury (Merriam-Webster). In the US' case, I will be evaluating the institution of slavery, where Africans brought over from the Atlantic slave trade were brought over to America and used to build the very infrastructure of this country and receiving little to no compensation. Meanwhile with South Africa, I will address a similar narrative of how Black South Africans were forced into segregation as well as the uprooting and stealing of their land by white people for their own economic benefit. Both nations come together in the sense that the effects of slavery and apartheid affect their Black demographics even to this day. Statistics show that Black people in each nation tend to have the lowest incomes, are the least educated, have limited amounts of assets, the list can go on and on. The purpose of this thesis is to propose a method on how each nation could go about achieving reparations, and how by closing the white-Black wealth gap, it can in way help undo the damage done to Black people in these nations and promote an equal/just society. My goal is also to explore the most feasible means of reparations as the amount owed in each country is so high most believe it would not be possible to give back

the total amount owed, no matter how many benefactors come forth to contribute. The study will look at institutions that should be held accountable in paying these Black demographics back as well as the different forms of compensation that should be left on the table. Eligibility will also be taken into account as an estimated number of people needs to be known in order to know how much is owed and what the goal amount to pay back should be. In addition, the study will draw its deliberations from experiences of South Africa, given that the country attempted reparations in the past and resulted in utter failure.

Generally speaking, the issue of reparations has been an ongoing debate and is taken seriously here in the US as well as South Africa. For example, in the US the Congress introduced the HR 40 legislation (first introduced nearly 30 years ago) to establish a commission to examine the impact of slavery and discrimination in the United States from 1619 to the present and recommends appropriate remedies (Judiciary House). The country has since recognized a need for reparations as the gap between Black people and their White peers has continued to widen in recent years. South Africa, as previously stated, attempted reparations back in 2003 that failed to accomplish anything long-term productive once completed. Now in 2021 with the talk of land reparations being proposed and shot down by parliament, a wake up call is needed, showing that reparations are indeed possible and necessary.

## **2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF REPARATIONS**

In this section of the thesis paper I will provide a historical background on the enslaved peoples in both the United States and South Africa. By providing further insight on the times of

slavery and apartheid, it provides the reader with context as to why reparations are needed in both nations. This form of compensation is needed for the Black communities in these countries by highlighting the past ill deeds, it may make it easier for one to understand how it affects their present and how truly disadvantaged they are.

## **2.1 Early Colonial Practices**

The origin story begins in the continent of Africa, where slavery and the colonization of people wasn't a newfound concept. From an estimate of two thousand years ago we begin to see what scholar Erna Oliver calls "unofficial colonization" (Oliver), where northwestern and eastern Africans would migrate down to regions in southern Africa for better farmland. The reason why this is deemed "unofficial" is because the indigenous South Africans at the time were nomads, having no claim of land or official territories. Africa as whole to this day has a reputation for fertile land and abundance of resources whether it be South Africa with gold or North/Central Africa with oil (Britannica). Two centuries later following the invention of the compass, European nations began to have a much easier time exploring different parts of the world.

Trading amongst Asian countries was quite common at the time with Europe, particularly India, Malaysia and Indonesia (Oliver). However, European nations began to seek new heights, new places to explore to utilize for its resources and conquer. The Portuguese were actually the first ones to use a compass in 1486, with explorer Bartholomew Diaz having sailed around the southernmost point of Africa (Oliver). It is from the fifteenth century onwards where we begin to see Africa being colonized by European powers such as France, Portugal, Great Britain, Germany, and Belgium. On top of stealing the continents' resources these world powers decided

to take advantage of their people too. At first things were somewhat cordial, where the Europeans would strike deals with African kingdom leaders to use their slaves. However, things would quickly go awry as Europeans wouldn't be able to tell who was a slave and who was an ordinary citizen; soon entire countries would be taken over as the reign of European rule began. One can already begin to see why there is a need for reparations from the nations' governments because on top of stealing resources that didn't belong to them, this was only the beginning of a long, brutal period where millions would suffer and/or have a very short life span.

## **2.2 Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade**

Beginning in 1526 and lasting until 1867, approximately 12.5 million slaves were shipped from Africa (10.7 million of them ended up in the Americas) through what is known as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Mintz). This transition was obviously no walk in the park for those who were captured and enslaved; from malnutrition to sexual exploitation to even that of arbitrary deaths, the enslaved people were in for a rough ride. The period of travel from Africa to wherever they were needed became known as the Middle Passage (Brittanica). The journey alone, however, was quite dangerous; each boat would be jam-packed causing an overcrowding issue with the sexes separated and kept naked. The men would also be kept in chains for long periods of time to avoid rebellion and with everyone so close, there was an easier transmission of disease, usually obtained from Europeans (i.e scurvy). Approximately two million people died on the voyage (Slavery and Remembrance Museum), and those who were deemed "lucky" and survived, still had a much more brutal and torturous life ahead of them. With so many names lost



and forgotten to time, so many lives lost and never accounted for, the option to merely look past it and chalk it up to prior ignorance is not an option.

### **2.3 American Enslavement and Effects**

As previously stated, approximately 10.7 million of the enslaved people were transported to the Americas. Despite such a large number coming to the New World, only four hundred thousand (400,000) would move to the United States (Strochlic). This is indeed significantly smaller compared to other nations, but the effects were still beneficial economically. The cotton, sugar and tobacco industries would begin to flourish because of this newfound free/cheap labor, and we see the American economy sky-rocket. This may sound like a great thing, but if it takes the enslavement of an entire group of people who are unwilling to do so, this proves to be otherwise. Regardless, the US would cease the importation of the enslaved following the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves of 1807 (Strochlic), due to many catching on to how the enslavement of people is an inhumane and immoral practice. Taking effect on January 1, 1808 the act was put into effect following the biggest influx of enslaved people coming in that year (approx. 23,864). However, we begin to see the hypocrisy of the United States government following the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves, as several members began to recant on their decision. Southern politicians and agricultural workers began to advocate for a domestic slave trade after coming to the realization that the utilization of the enslaved as cheap/free labor was a key tool in our economy at the time. With this aspect gone businesses were having a hard time finding alternative methods to produce as many goods and maintain their profit margins. With political leaders such as such as Thomas Jefferson or James Monroe (Deyle) on their side however, the conversation for a domestic slave trade became a more legitimate option.

Eventually, with another sudden boom in the cotton industry, southern plantation owners' demands were met between 1810 and 1860 where an “estimated one million slaves were forcibly transferred from the Upper South to the Lower South” (EJI). Even though the non-domestic slave trading had ceased, there was still a massive number of the enslaved in the US due to natural reproduction. By this time the United States census counted for approximately four million enslaved people in the nation; we then begin the Civil War between the abolitionists and the pro-slavery Confederacy, leading up to the Emancipation Proclamation of freed slaves in 1863 (EJI). Finally in 1865 when there is the the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment, the practice of slavery is officially abolished after 246 years.

Though the enslaved may have received somewhat of a “happy ending”, one cannot look past the atrocities that occurred during this time period. What was interesting about the United States is in regards to the treatment of the enslaved, is that depending on where you were based, the way you were treated could be better or worse. Generally speaking those who were forced into slavery in the Deep South were treated far worse compared to those who were in the northernmost southern states. Typically they were given better working conditions and overall more freedom, but at the end of the day the experience of a slave was still terrible. Basically losing any right to personhood or humanity, the enslaved would face countless beatings, whippings, even executions if they showed any sign of rebellion. Rape and sexual abuse wasn't uncommon amongst a slave owner and the enslaved individual, and many could die trying had they refused to submit. Both the beatings and abuse led to several marks and scars on the enslaved bodies, and medical care wasn't deemed a priority from their owners. “Medical care was often provided to slaves by the slaveholder's family or fellow slaves who had gleaned

medical knowledge via ancestral folk remedies and/or experiences during their time in captivity” (Boundless). This led into another problem faced amongst the enslaved, which was a lack of education. The reason behind this was so that the enslaved would never be able to outsmart the slave owner, thereby always keeping them in the position of power. This maintenance of “White Dominance” correlates to that of slaves codes, which were state laws/mandates used to help regulate the relationship between the enslaved and his/her owner as well as to legitimize the institution of slavery (Boundless). In 1852 Louisiana established a set of Slave Codes citing lines such as:

- a.. The slave owes to his master and all his family total respect and absolute obedience. He must instantly obey all orders he receives from them.
- b. No slave can own anything of his own without the consent of his master. No slave can sell anything he has made without his master’s consent.
- c.. No slave can be a witness in any case against a white person.
- d. Slaves shall always be considered real estate, and may be mortgage according to the rules of law.
- e. No slave shall be allowed off of his plantation without written permission from his master.
- f. If a slave willfully strikes a white person to cause shedding of blood, the slave shall be punished with death.
- g. Any person who teaches a slave to read and write shall be imprisoned for no less than one month or more than 12 months.(Digital History) With this form of treatment as the norm for the enslaved in the United States, there’s no doubt that there is a need for reparations for the maltreatment of African-Americans in this country.

Aside from the need for reparations to make up for past treatment, there is still a necessity for it in the US on the grounds of economic compensation. One cannot forget all those years where the white demographics in our nation were profiting off of the enslaved and how the effects of slavery still effect the Black demographic today. Following the abolition of slavery in 1865, there was little to nothing done to help Black Americans assimilate into society and compete at a level playing-field with their white peers. Recent statistics show that the Black community in America is still far behind compared to other demographics whether it be in regards to average income, education level, essentially any factors that impact one's wealth (EPI). An example of this would be the white-Black wage gap; while we progressed from the point of getting zero compensation for our work to actually getting paid. There still lies a difference where white people make more money for the same profession. A recent study showed that for every eighty-seven cents a Black person makes in the United States, and a white person will make a dollar (Miller). The point here is that, yes the Black community in the United States has fought and won a long hard fight to get where we are today, but there is still a long way to go before we catch up to our peers, ergo the need for reparations.

#### **2.4 South African Enslavement and Effects**

It was by 1652 that South Africa had been completely colonized by the Dutch (and eventually down the line Great Britain). The reason why this area became such a hot spot was because many voyageurs would be going for long journeys with no fresh fruit, vegetables, or meat, leading to them developing scurvy (Oliver). In dire need of a halfway point to pick up

fresh supplies, the Dutch (led by Jan van Riebeeck and ran the Dutch East India Company) would develop a supply station for passing ships at what was initially known as Table Bay, followed by the Cape (aka present-day Cape Town). With Cape Town becoming a new hot spot, the Dutch began to implement what is known as the Slavery and Forced Labour Model from 1653 to 1822. This form of colonialism brought by the Dutch in 1652 led to the exportation of the enslaved from the Western Cape to the Afrikaner Republics of the Orange Free State and the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (SAHO). The Dutch were actually pretty civil at first with the indigenous people of South Africa (known as the Khoikhoi), but soon there became issues. With the Khoikhoi having refused to negotiate their herds of cattle as well as the Dutch's settled agriculture having conflicted with the pastoral economy of the Khoikhoi, the European nation had "no choice" but to force them into enslavement. Within fifty years of the establishment of the Dutch settlement, the indigenous communities near Table Bay, despite heroic struggles on their part, had been dispossessed of their lands and their independent means of existence had come to an end. Khoikhoi men and women were forced into becoming low-status servants, consistently being maltreated, abused, and raped, (similarly to that of the enslaved in the United States). With things doing so well in the Cape, the Dutch decided to bring in more Africans; these people would originate from areas that we now know as Madagascar and Mozambique (SAHO).

The British took over the Cape Colony in 1795, before it was returned to the Dutch in 1802. During this first period of British rule, South-East Africa became the main source of slaves. With an influx of slaves it quickly began to draw comparisons to that of America, where its economy was heavily reliant on the use of enslaved people. The British took over again in

1806, however this time they actually wanted to improve upon the conditions and welfare of those enslaved in the Cape. There was even an appointed slave guardian by the British government who was responsible for enforcing these laws. Some of the lives of the enslaved did improve after this, but for the most part slave owners were still able to get away with the maltreatment of those they owned. The reason for this sudden change of heart stems from how in 1807 the British government banned the slave trade in all of its colonies, including the Cape (SAHO), meaning no more exportation or importation of slaves in any of its territories. However, those already in the Cape continued to be enslaved until 1834 when the British Empire abolished the practice altogether. Though this era of mistreatment came to an end, there is still another hurdle to get through: apartheid.

Apartheid originates after the National Party gained power in South Africa in 1948. The nation's all white government at the time began enforcing existing policies of racial segregation between whites, Blacks, and those of mixed descent. Under apartheid, any nonwhite South Africans would be forced to live in separate areas from the white demographic (with the white population having the better option of course) and separate use of public facilities. This time is quite comparable to that of the 60s in the US, as both racist regimes stem from that of their colonizers (slavery ended in South Africa in 1961). During this time we see the implementation of the 1913 Native Lands Act, a policy that pushed non-white South Africans off the land for the benefit of white people (McKenzie). As previously stated South Africa relies on agriculture as its main source of wealth accumulation, so with the white masses dominating on this front, they also progressed to have a majority on the nation's income, despite being in the minority in regards to population.

With Black land ownership only at a mere seven percent (McKenzie), this explains as to why there is still a need for compensation in the present era.

Advocates for the end of apartheid such as Desmond Tutu or Nelson Mandela did an excellent job and achieved their goal of course, but the equality amongst the races in South Africa still remains. Professor Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò writes how in 2003 President Thabo Mbeki attempted to give reparations to twenty thousand victims of apartheid (at least the ones that reported in). Given only a mere \$3500, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission who is the front line for this subject in South Africa, claims that this is nowhere near enough. The time has come to reevaluate the situation and give back what is due not only to victims of apartheid, but also to those affected but slavery.

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A review of literature is necessary in this study as it highlights the scholars that were used as a point of reference when coming up with an analysis. The literature review will be centered around: the history of enslavement in the US as well as South Africa's history of apartheid (enforcing the need for reparations), calculations and past attempts of such compensation, as well as an account for the atrocities done upon the Black communities in both nations. The findings surrounding this topic come from a vast array of sources, posing a more objective point of view. This will also help to present my newfound perspective of how to handle such a delicate matter, proving that using reparations as a means to close the white-Black wealth gap in each

nation will help make up for the atrocities done in the past as well as guarantee Black demographics a better future. Though each scholar presented may have differentiating opinions on how to go about reparations, they all agree that it is indubitably needed. The point of the paper is not to merely berate one another's theories and come up with the best method, but to instead prove that more effort is needed by different institutions if society truly wishes to see Black communities at an equal playing field with their peers.

As previously stated, each scholar presented has a different perspective and concentration when focusing on the goal of reparations. Some may focus more on the governmental/economic side of the issue at hand regarding how much is to be reimbursed and what a feasible plan looks like where others shift their attention more towards what is happening in the present and of who may be eligible for such compensation and how it will affect them. Some scholars even set their focus on where the reparation money/other forms of compensation is coming from, an example being religious communities who played a much bigger role in the enslavement process than one thinks. This presentation of different findings can lead to a more critical perspective on how to obtain reparations and analyze the different theories of why it is needed as well as what the overarching goal is.

### **3.1 Historical Scholars**

The history of the Atlantic Slave Trade and the colonization process in both the United States and South Africa is a huge component when writing on a topic such as this one. In regards to the US, Steven Mintz writes an article on the origins of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and how the slavery process began in America. From approximately 1526 to 1867, roughly 12.5 million slaves were shipped from Africa leading to 10.7 million arriving in the Americas (Mintz).



The scholar goes into such detail describing the attributes looked for when choosing those to ship over with factors such as gender or age. While the key point to his article isn't centered around the need for reparations, his findings can still act as a central argument for its' necessity; he brings up points of how the journey alone killed off hundreds of thousands of people and how the actual slavery process took a toll on African Americans mortality and health. With poor work and living conditions common diseases/injuries amongst this demographic included diarrhea, abdominal swelling, blindness, the list can go on and on. By explaining only a mere fraction of what the brutality Africans faced in the Slave Trade one already begin to see why compensation is need for this group of people; further explanations on the history and conditions for the enslaved at the time will be found in the history section of this paper.

Nina Storchlic is another scholar that needs to be commended as she provides the average numbers of those in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and how the disbursement of these people. The number of those involved is necessary to know as going further in the thesis analysis, it helps give estimates as to how much total needs to be given to each African American deemed eligible. Her work from National Geographic goes in depth to provide the spread of enslavement, and how even though such a small amount out of the total was shipped to the US, the effects were still grand. Storchlic is able to connect to Mintz as Mintz cites his own findings on the Domestic Slave Trade, stating how the distribution of the African American population throughout the South was able to significantly surpass in volume the Atlantic Slave Trade to North America (Mintz). While Storchlic focuses on statistics of of the slave trade and Mintz on pure history, both writers still manage to come together to give an authentic account on what the period of enslavement was like.

In regards to South Africa, Erna Oliver provides a detailed account on the history of colonization in South Africa and how it led to apartheid. What stands out in her work is how she explains the hierarchical systems in South Africa and how the indigenous South Africans were “unofficially” colonized by northern African tribes who migrated there roughly two thousand years ago. Oliver continues on to say how these newfound kingdoms in South Africa actually did bargaining with the Dutch, Portuguese, and the British upon their arrival in the fifteenth century, but things quickly went array once the Europeans demanded complete power. The scholar analyzes the history from a very objective point of view and is very articulate with her writing, differentiating the tribes and how positions of power were determined in the nation, whether it be through the social construct of race or tribal classifications. Oliver also delves into the period of apartheid lasting from 1961 to 1994 (Oliver), where we see white Afrikaners rise to power upon the end of colonization by European nations. Because of this constant change in position of power on stolen land that led to significant racial tension, the work of Oliver indubitably proves the necessity for reparations for the indigenous people of South Africa.

### **3.2 Economic Scholars**

Trevor Smith and Thomas Craemer act as the main economic scholars in my thesis analysis. In their work they provide a thorough calculation on how much is owed to the Black community in the US as well as potential interest rates. The reason why I chose to follow their model however, is that they have a similar idea of using reparations to help close the white-Black wealth gap. By doing this, it takes into account the atrocities/effects of slavery, as well as helping to guarantee a more financially stable future for African Americans. The way we

differentiate however, is how their work alludes to such a reimbursement not being possible; this is because they rely on one benefactor (the US government); in my reparations theory I advocate for more than one, including other institutions that may be held accountable such as the Church or universities. I also wish to provide ulterior forms of reparations such as land or education, while Smith/Craemer seem to only focus on money. Overall their model is solid for total cost calculations, but I wish to expand on their theory even more.

Another referential source comes from Professor Olúfẹmi Táíwò who proposes that the United States follows South Africa's approach on achieving racial equality: a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Following the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa began their Truth and Reconciliation Commission, an organization who had state agent who desired any form of amends from the commission to give a full account of the crimes they committed as state agents in detail and identify their victims' names, thereby educating the masses on what occurred during this time period and not overlooking the atrocities done.

Táíwò's work sparks an interesting debate against that of scholar Christopher J. Colvin, an author who breaks down the reparations program in South Africa. In 2003, the South African government enacted a distribution of reparations to those who were deemed eligible, and in Colvin's work, he reveals how this effort was actually a limited version of what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's original request was. Although the effort is plausible (as some countries like the US have done little to no effort in regards to giving back money), Colvin argues that the government did a lot of stalling to execute this process. He even mentions how that, yes, money was distributed to these families but it is nowhere near the correct amount to see Black South Africans thrive at the same rate as their peers. By posing two opposing views it

leaves for one to evaluate both the good and bad that the South African government has done in regards to reparations, which can be used to develop a better method on how the US should go about the situation.

### **3.3 Ulterior Methods to Reparations: Land & Religion-Based Scholars**

An often forgotten notion is how Christianity was used to condone slavery; one particular method was through the usage of slave bibles. AmsterdamNews provides a background on the role of Christianity with colonialization and slavery, an institution that was forced upon the colonized in Africa and found its way to the United States when the enslaved were starting to be shipped over to the Americas. The platform explains how religion in this sense was almost like a brainwashing technique, coercing the oppressed into thinking that this is their destined way of life according to God. The reason I wish to insert the role of religion in this thesis is because it provides another benefactor to contribute in paying back what owed in both Black communities. AmsterdamNews also should be commended for making distinctions from the institution of Christianity versus the belief system itself as the two are not one and the same.

However, Christianity has also been used for good in this regard; Scholar Saneta Maiko discusses this theory in her work revolving Methodist John Wesley, the founder of the Wesleyan movements in her articles she talks of Wesleyan theory and how for the reverend, religion was merely a social phenomenon rather than a individualized experience (Maiko). Her work brings up a common argument found amongst those who were Christians and were against slavery in the sense that they believed the religion was being misused, refraining from what was actually

rooted in the faith and twisted so that it fit into society's corrupt agenda at the time. The people who believed that Christianity was being misused were referred to as Wesleyans and devoted their time to debunk this corruption and advocate for the abolition of slavery. Maiko's work will prove to be useful as she makes clear that when one wants to hold religious institutions accountable they need to make sure to differentiate from the different branches of Christianity/ belief systems and that it is not the religion itself that is corrupt but rather the institutions behind it are to be held responsible for the atrocities done "in the name of God".

Moving on to land reparations, Mike Cohen provides an excellent observation regarding land reparations in South Africa. He talks of how land reparations is recently being readdressed in the nation as many are becoming more aware of the effects the stealing of Black-owned land has done onto this population. Since agriculture is one of the top methods of how people make money in the nation, his talk of reparations on this front would be quite useful. I want to highlight how his work will show how the United States and South Africa can use all these different forms of reparations to pay back their Black demographics, but each nation may need to evaluate which means would be easier for themselves to focus on. In South Africa's case, I believe land reparations should be one of the main focuses.

The works presented stand as key sources as well as points of reference to be used to formulate arguments defending the central claim of this paper on how the reparations needed amongst Black communities in both the US and South Africa are attainable if we see the institutions responsible take more initiative. By providing solid arguments and the proper works to support it, one will be able to see the origins of how reparations came to be needed, how much we are looking at to be reimbursed, and the several institutions that can be held accountable for

producing such atrocities. Comparing and contrasting the different theories presented by such a wide array of scholars proves to form a stronger analysis on how the United States and South Africa can continue their journey on successfully achieving reparations.

#### **4. MECHANISMS OF REPARATIONS**

##### **4.1 Who Should Be Eligible in the US and South Africa?**

As previously mentioned, the Black community within the United States is quite diverse. The people of this demographic stem from numerous origins whether it be nations in Africa, islands in the Caribbean, or those who don't know their origins (an effect of slavery) and simply identify as Black American. When it comes to filling out the census the government will force us into one demographic, deeming Black as an umbrella term to group us all together. Though this usually isn't seen as a problem as no matter what our ethnicities are we all share a collective narrative, facing the struggles of systemic racism as this face of evil doesn't care if your family has been here for generations or have immigrated to America in recent years. While there is a shared experience amongst these groups, in the quest for reparations it is imperative that we not generalize all Black people in the US to be one and the same.

The point for reparations in the US is to give back to those whose ancestors have been tortured during times of slavery and were unable to generate wealth for their future generations to live off of. That being said, this would mean that Black people in the US who are new immigrants, first generation, second generation, or essentially have no ancestors that suffered this tragedy should be deemed ineligible for this type of compensation. The Historical Overview of

this thesis paper already discusses how during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, only four hundred thousand (400,000) were forced to move to the United States (Strochlic). This number only accounts for less than one percent of the US population when in fact the Black population is up to 13.4% (43,984,096.1 people). Of course one has to take into consideration that this portion repopulated and brought the percentage up, but this still isn't enough to account for the whole thirteen. Pew Research Center has conducted a study that concludes estimately eighteen percent of the Black population in the US is foreign born and second generation (defined as those born in the U.S. but have at least one foreign-born parent) (Anderson), meaning of the bordering forty-four million Black people in the United States, only 38,706,004.6 (11.792% of the US population) should be considered eligible for reparations.

Immigrants and their children do share this collective experience with Black Americans in which we are all subjected to racist ideology stemmed from that of slavery and how we were treated as less then, but fighting systemic racism and making up for what happened in the past are not one and the same. This prejudice that every Black person in the US goes through is indeed a serious issue that must be resolved, but providing reparation for this issue fails to solve anything. If anything there is the argument of immigrants having been victims of colonization, meaning that the countries involved such as France, Portugal, Great Britain, Germany, and Belgium can and should be held responsible for their actions, but the experience of the Trans-Atlantic Slave and the New World is what differentiates the two groups. From the day they were captured to the brutal boat rides to the torturous experience that is being enslaved, Black Americans from the jump have been set up for failure. By providing them with reparations it can provide them with the resources needed to catch up with their white peers.

Meanwhile in South Africa, their method of eligibility for reparations is that of an interesting one; as previously mentioned South Africa attempted giving back to those affected by apartheid back in 2003, having even formed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to help solve the problem. Their approach towards who should be eligible for reparations should be commended as they had each person who thought they were eligible apply and go through a background check to see if they really were. The criteria is pretty standard, being defined as those who “suffered physical, mental, or emotional injury,” during the times of apartheid (ICTJ). To correlate to the idea of race being a social construct, this nation has a different way of dividing race compared to that of the US. In 1950 the South African government released what is known as the Population Registration Act No. 30 which essentially divided their people into four categories: white, Black African, and coloured (defined as those who are of mixed descent or South/East Asian, and “others” (typically those of Indian or other Asian decent) (Evans). White people were obviously at the top of the pyramid followed by coloured and those in the “other” category, leaving Black Africans at the bottom. The distinction of who is eligible for reparations is somewhat easier to classify here as the majority fell in the Black category (although some people who were defined as coloured were granted compensation). In theory the idea seemed to be solid and clear-cut, but when the results came out it can give one second thoughts. In total the TRC received around twenty thousand people who testified against reparations when in fact historians claim that up to 3.5 million Black South Africans were victims (History.com Scholars). This number seems to be more accurate as the Black population in South Africa makes up the majority. The 3.5 million also implies limitations as it doesn’t account for every Black person in South Africa; immigrants are obviously omitted from the equations and the number only counts



those who actually lived and suffered through apartheid. While the situation of slavery goes back hundreds of years and therefore can branch off to the enslaved's next of kin to receive compensation, apartheid wasn't all that long ago. Apartheid in South Africa started in 1948 and ended in 1994, a mere twenty-seven years ago; to trace back those who lived during this era shouldn't be that difficult, and to rely on the people to send applications in is clearly a very messy method. From potential corruption coming from those who approve/reject the reports to lack of education on the steps needed to complete one, a more ideal approach would be for the South African government to reach out to the victims rather than vice versa. They are the ones with all the records from this time period and to make the oppressed reach out for help pushes the responsibility of the oppressor onto them. Overall if the South African government truly wishes to grant reparations and make up for their ill deeds, they need to acknowledge the 3.5 million affected from apartheid rather than a mere twenty thousand.

#### **4.2 How Much is Owed in the US and South Africa?**

Initially promised in Union General William T. Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15 was "forty acres and a mule" (the mule portion was a joke) for all freed slaves following the Civil War in 1865 (Gates Jr.). The effects of this unfulfilled promise is evident even to this day, as without any land or money given back to allow Black Americans to generate money, this demographic still remains the lowest ranked in regards to wealth. Forty acres of land and mule clearly isn't a feasible form of compensation in the present era, but the question that remains is how much should be given back to Black Americans in order to truly level the playing field. Several factors need to be taken into consideration for this matter, such as how much slave

owners actually profited off of the enslaved, the cost of lost opportunities, pain and suffering fees, etc. leading to much debate on how much is to be owed. Scholars Trevor Smith and Thomas Craemer estimate that this “forty acres and a mule promise” adds up to a range of a whopping US\$18.6 trillion at 3% interest to US\$6.2 quadrillion at 6% interest (Smith, Craemer). What should be admired about Smith and Craemer’s calculation is how they based their calculations off of closing the white-Black wealth gap. By doing this, it not only takes into account the atrocities/effects of slavery, but also the other periods of time where African Americans were disadvantaged and were unable to accumulate wealth as rapidly as their peers. Periods of this nature would include that of Jim Crow, post-Civil War era, discrimination from the New Deal, even that of discrimination following the Civil Rights movement. During 2016 when the study was conducted, the average net worth figure for White households was \$933,700 (with approx. 2.37 people per household) and for Black households it was \$138,200 (2.48 people per household); therefore, the average racial wealth gap between the two demographics stands at \$795,500 per home (Craemer, Thomas, 221). The White per capita net worth is  $\$933,700 / 2.37 = \$393,966$  and Black per capita net worth  $\$138,200 / 2.48 = \$55,726$  leading to a per capita average wealth gap of \$338,240. Inflation needs to be taken into consideration here as what was \$338,240 in 2016 is now up to \$388,788.77 in 2021 (bls.gov). Using my estimate of what percentage should be deemed eligible, the 11.792% of Black Americans that make the cut would be able to receive a portion of this amount, bringing the total to \$15,048,459,920,048.34.

This number doesn’t even include that of interest, which has been another area for debate. According to Thomas/Craemer as well the general consensus from other scholars, three percent seems to be the usual standard based on the historical annual return on an investment without

consideration of inflation (Thomas, Craemer, 219). This number appears to be the most feasible as it has simply been the historical standard and the factors that play into interest are so arbitrary (i.e pain and suffering fees, the amount of time taken to consider reparations and how long it will take to pay back, etc.). However other scholars have been known to have proposed higher alternatives, an examples being when Georgetown University and the Louisiana Purchase of 272 enslaved people in 1838 have used a six percent interest rate or even up to nine percent by John Talbott as it is the average rate of return made by those who have invested in the stock market from 1870 to present (Thomas, Craemer, 219). For the purposes of this paper I will use the most common/historical form of interest which is set at three percent; this brings the total amount owed in the US to be \$15,499,913,717,649.79 with each individual eligible to receive \$400,452.43. To conclude it should be noted that the interest rate could be subject to change if the case for reparations were to ever be taken seriously into consideration, as the number would have to be agreed upon by the African American community and the organizations/institutions who have agreed to contribute.

As previously mentioned the TRC has acknowledged that estimately 20,000 South Africans as victims of apartheid and should be eligible for reparations when in fact 3.5 million people were affected. When conducting what should be owed, I believe that the same model should be followed as what was done with America by basing calculations off of closing the white-Black wealth gap. Currently the South African population stands at 56.5 million with Black South Africans making up the majority at 45.6 million (80.8%). The average net worth figure for Black households was 92,893 rand (\$5914.68) with the average number of people per household set at 3.3. For white homes the average net worth figure is set at 444,446 rand (\$28,298.75); this means

that the average racial wealth gap between white and Black people in South Africa is 351,553.01 rand (\$22,384.07). The Black per capita net worth is 92,893 rand / 3.3 = 28,149.39 rand (\$1792.33) and white per capita net worth 444,446 rand/ 3.3 = 134,680.6 rand (\$8575.38) leading to a per capita average wealth gap of 106,530 rand (\$6783.05). These findings date back to 2017, so if one includes inflation that would mean the number rises to 128,422.85 rand (\$8176.93). So, if South Africa were to pay back the 3.5 million victims of apartheid (6.1% of the population) and close the wealth gap the total needed would be 449,479,975,000 rand (\$28,619,271,887.96).

To go back to the topic of interest, the number for the purposes of this paper will remain at three percent. However it should be reiterated that this number could be subject to change as it should be agreed upon by the Black South Africans affected by apartheid and those responsible for paying them back. Moving forward, if we were to go by the three percent model the total goes up to 462,964,374,250 rand (\$29,477,850,044.60) meaning each person would receive 132,275.53 rand (\$8422.24). In comparison to what was given in 2003, one can see why this wasn't a significant enough amount to truly level the playing field between white and Black South Africans as well as the fact that the South African government failed to consider the total number of people eligible. It is because of these factors that we learn that the quest for reparations in this nation is far from over.

#### **4.3 Who Should We Hold Accountable in the US and South Africa?**

The common answer to this question will more often than not be the government.

Technically this isn't incorrect, as the governments in both South Africa and the United States played the biggest role in the victimization of its Black demographics. By passing racist legislations which thereby supports societal discrimination by proxy, governments should be considered for the main contributors for reparations. However they are only a mere fraction to the whole pie; other institutions played a role in the enslavement of African Americans and apartheid in South Africa. Examples of this notion include religious institutions such as the Christian Church or education institutions, both public and private. Considering that the debt owed is so high in both nations that neither governments would be able to afford reimbursement on their own, the help of other institutions is both desired and necessary. This section of the thesis paper will highlight what I believe should be the three main contributors for reparations in Black communities in the US and South Africa.

Arguably the most obvious culprit, the US government should be considered the most guilty in regards to the enslavement of African Americans. Despite the fact that the nation was technically still a colony when the slave trade initially started, the US government made no effort to stop this process even after it was granted independence in 1776. Some of our nation's most prominent leaders of the time such as George Washington or Thomas Jefferson were proud slave owners, and with our very Constitution vaguely acknowledging the institution, guaranteeing the right to repossess any "person held to service or labor" (History), it's a necessity to hold the government accountable. The abusive relationship between the enslaved and their masters was no secret either, from lynchings to beatings to rape, there was no shame in the maltreatment of Black Americans and the US government sat by and practically endorsed this behavior.

Numerous forms of legislation has been passed throughout our history that have been used to further oppress the African American community such as the Three-Fifths Compromise (which established that slaves were only three-fifths of a person), or the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 which guaranteed the right of a slaveholder to recover an escaped slave (Alto Arizona). Even after slavery's abolition in 1865, there is still a series of racist mandates passed to limit the power of Black Americans like literacy tests to prevent the Black community from voting, the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* that promoted the "separate but equal" ideology, Jim Crow laws, the list can go on and on. With little to no efforts made by African Americans after causing them such grief and suffering, the US government needs to be the main contributor/resource when handling the issue of reparations.

#### **4.4 The Role of the Church in Both Countries**

The role of the Catholic Church and slavery is a very complicated connection, as it was used to both oppress the Black community as well as motivate them to stand up and fight for justice. The belief system itself didn't call for the abuse and torture of different peoples, colonizers just chose to interpret it that way in order to justify their ill deeds. During the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Europeans would use the Bible as their main source of inspiration, citing themselves as "good Christians" by coming to these "barbarian nations" and teach them the word of God so that they will be salvaged. Christianity was forced upon the colonized in Africa and found its way to the United States when the enslaved were starting to be shipped over to the Americas. There, the ideology was that: "Slavery enjoyed the sanction of Scripture and natural law...They believed that their version of Christianity would help them to be 'good slaves' and not challenge the slave system" (Chism, AmsterdamNews). Slave masters would force this false

Christian narrative onto the enslaved in order to maintain obedience and promote that God supports this mentality of white superiority. African Americans at the time would even receive slave bibles, highly altered versions of the true text that would be used to justify the institution of slavery. There is also the fact that the Catholic Church did not oppose the institution of slavery until the practice had already become infamous in most parts of the world (AmsterdamNews). Since it renounced the practice, The Catholic Church has yet to do anything to help renourish the numerous cultures and groups it has done damage to and for that reason alone, the time has come to hold them accountable.

However, it needs to be made clear that it is the institution of the Church that is responsible, the very beliefs of Christianity are not to blame. When colonizers were initially forcing the beliefs of the Church onto Black demographics, they were corrupting them with incorrect notions of what the belief system stood for. From slave bibles to Manifest Destiny, these lies that were passed down to the oppressed were a control technique at best, used to prevent these groups from any form of uprising and rebellion. It would be unfair to attack Christianity for what it really is though, as the actual teachings of the Church promote equality amongst all people; there have even been instances where faith/religion has been cited as the source of hope for the Black community. During this time, there were people in the Black community who knew better than to trust the words of slave owners, so they instead created different denominations of Christianity that was pro-Black and spoke the truth. The first Black Protestant (a branch of Christianity) denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, was founded in the early 1800s by Richard Allen, (Pewforum). Famous abolitionist Frederick Douglas was also a member of this branch, and often encouraged the Black

community to use their religion as the source of their strength in this struggle for equality. This created a movement where religion is seen as a form of motivation for African Americans, not as a tool for their oppression. Overall this behavior should be commended as it has inspired the Black masses to persevere through their hardships, but at the end of the day the institution of the Christianity will need to take responsibility for the past.

#### **4.5 The Role of Education in the US and South Africa**

Aside from public institutions, there are several private ones that are equally responsible for the torture and abuse of Black Americans, particularly that of our colleges and universities. Several academic institutions have taken advantage of African Americans, whether it was depriving them from an advanced education to the fact that they built the very infrastructure of the campus with little to no compensation. Powerhouse schools like Georgetown, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc. have recently done research to learn their previous ties with slavery and the results have been quite shocking. Examples would be how at the University of Virginia (founded and designed by former president Thomas Jefferson) slaves cooked and cleaned for the sons of the Southern gentry, Georgetown having the ability to offer free tuition to its earliest students because of the unpaid labor of Jesuit-owned slaves on plantations in Maryland, or how Yale inherited a small slave plantation in Rhode Island that was used to fund their first graduate programs and scholarships (Smith, Ellis). What these institutions were inherently doing was seeking out opportunities to benefit from the slave economies of New England and the broader Atlantic world, thereby stimulating their own institutes economically, promoting the continuation of slavery, and helping to create the white-Black wealth gap. Statistically speaking the higher



one's education level is, the more likely they are to have a higher income. With that being said, while the white masses have generations of people who have attended university and used their knowledge to accumulate wealth for future generations, Black Americans were deprived of this luxury, thereby setting us back in both education and income status to the present day. These education institutions are definitely guilty for playing a role in the oppression of the enslaved, and have a multitude of ways to provide reparations for them.

In regards to the role of education in South Africa, the main thing that higher education institutions should be held accountable for is their lack of admittance for POC demographics. Full disclosure universities in South Africa weren't as developed nor had as many attendees compared to other nations, but this does not act as leeway for these institutions to get away with racism. The chart below shows the number of those enrolled at South African universities by race in the year 1958, around the time when apartheid regime was at its highest. (PoliticsWeb).

	<b>White</b>	<b>Coloured</b>	<b>India n</b>	<b>Blac k</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Orange Free State</i>	1,709				1,709
<i>Potchefstroom</i>	1,474				1,474
<i>Pretoria</i>	6,324				6,324
<i>Stellenbosch</i>	3,694				3,694
<i>Cape Town</i>	4,408	388	127	37	4,960
<i>Natal</i>	2,530	31	373	188	3,122
<i>Witwatersrand</i>	4,756	22	158	73	5,009
<i>Rhodes</i>	1,098				1,098

<i>South Africa</i>	6,144	204	601	1,179	8,128
<i>Fort Hare</i>		59	59	320	438
<b>Total</b>	32,137	704	1,318	1,797	35,956
<b>Percentage of total</b>	89.4%	2.0%	3.7%	5.0%	100.0%

As one can see, the ratio between white people and their POC peers is significantly disproportionate, with some universities not even granting them access. As has been previously concluded, education is the passport to success. Therefore, by depriving these already marginalized groups of a higher education, it enforces the white demographic to remain in the position of power and ensure that no other groups catch up to/ surpass them. Even today's findings show that South African universities have remained PWIs, showing no effort to balance out the different groups or the recruitment of more Black people/people of color. Essentially what is needed in this case is not necessarily repayment in regards to money, but perhaps methods need to be inserted that will promote equal representation amongst the races.

#### **4.6 The Role of the South African Government:**

While the government is the most responsible for the oppression of the enslaved in the United States, the same goes for the victims of apartheid in South Africa. The concept of white supremacy and segregation wasn't a new concept for the nation of course, as that was the regime during its time of colonization. However, even after South Africa became a union in 1913 (meaning they were self-governing but technically still a colony of the British), the racist ideology and stipulations remained. An example would be the 1913 Land Act which began territorial segregation by forcing black Africans to live in reserves while also making it illegal for

them to work as sharecroppers (History.com Editors). There was also a huge emphasis on the segregation of the races, with the government doing everything in their power to ensure white and Black Africans had little to no contact with one another. Segregated areas weren't uncommon, as non-whites were forced to carry documents authorizing their presence in areas deemed "white-only", interracial marriage was eventually banned, and there was a limit on nonwhite labor unions as well as participation in national government. The overall most destructive act from the South African government however, would have to be how they forced the removal of black South Africans from rural areas and would then sell the land to the white masses at a low price; this would lead to 3.5 million people forcibly removed from their homes and into a life of poverty until 1994 (History.com Editors). As previously stated the South African government has attempted to give reparations, but giving \$3500 to a mere twenty-thousand of those affected is not enough. The time has come to reevaluate the situation at hand and retry compensating those affected by apartheid.

#### **4.7 The Role of Religions in South Africa**

Like the United States, Christianity is also South Africa's primary belief system. The key difference here is, however, is how South Africa doesn't go out of their way to differentiate Church and state as much as America does. Going back to South Africa during the colonial period, when the Dutch settled in South Africa in the 16th century, they brought over and forced their Dutch Reformed theology to the African continent onto their people. It was Jan van Riebeeck who would formally establish the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of South Africa in 1652, in which this denomination of Christianity was in full support of colonial/apartheid regime

(SAHO). As previously mentioned, Church and state aren't really separated in this African nation, meaning the separation and stratification of the people by race was in full effect in this institution. Since this Church followed similar patterns to the South African government, even after South Africa gained complete independence in 1961, the racist ideology remained. Things only started to change in the 1980s when the church was banned from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches; it took until 1986 for the DRC to recant on its previous beliefs and accept Black people (SAHO), but one can argue this was more so to keep up with appearances rather than actual reform. While the institution has since tried to be more welcoming towards all people, there is still a predominantly white population in the DRC and little to no effort has been made to help those they cast away prior. For these reasons the Church of the DRC is to be held accountable in South Africa.

#### **4.8 The Reparation Plan**

Now that it has been established who should be held responsible for providing reparations as well as how much is actually owed between Black communities in the United States and South Africa, the ultimate question remains: how do we pay them back? As previously stated, the amount that is owed amongst these two groups is aggressively high; even if it were to be divided evenly amongst those mentioned to hold accountable, it would not be possible to pay back these communities without bankrupting the benefactors. However, who's to say that money is the only form of reparations? With the ultimate goal of reparations being to see Black communities at a more or less equal range in regards to wealth with their white peers, there are other means of achieving this aside from instant cash. From education, land reparations,

healthcare, etc. there are other ways for these marginalized to catch up with their peers and receive accommodations for past ill deeds. However, another question that arises is if people would be open to these alternatives, and if it should even be their choice or if the decision should be in the hands of those providing. This section of the thesis paper will lay out the entire Reparation Plan in what I believe should be distributed and other potential methods to see Black communities succeed not necessarily from an individualist standpoint, but to the communities as a whole.

#### **A. Money in the US and South Africa**

As previously stated, the total amount that is owed amongst Black Americans with ties to slavery is \$15,499,913,717,649.79, with each individual eligible to receive \$400,452.43 (note that this is with three percent interest). Even if this number were to be divided evenly amongst the institutions held accountable for such an atrocity, none of them would even come close to having enough to pay the debt. Money should indefinitely be the key factor in paying back African Americans, but if one were to take reparations seriously, other forms of compensation would have to be placed on the table as an option. The problem with this, however, is that some people may not be open to this idea. \$400,000 dollars is a lot of money, and while some would be fine if a portion went towards tuition for school or to help develop their communities, others might want to keep the entire amount for themselves, using it to invest, start businesses, or even their personal care. In and of itself there is nothing wrong with any of these scenarios, as both benefit the oppressed individuals; however, I will say that money can lead to corruption, and with such a large amount being offered, people may not know how to use it. The point of

reparations is to ultimately close the white-Black wealth gap and promote this equality for future generations; if one were to be given this amount of money, there is a chance of the individual misusing it. Examples can be how instead of using it on their family or to help accumulate their wealth, they may instead use it for leisure purposes or for things that only benefit them in the present rather than what can be passed down.

Despite this potential issue, Black Americans need the ability to make this decision for themselves. Everyone's lives are different and everyone has different needs, so there can't be one clear cut method of how to distribute reparations as what may be the best for one individual might set the other one back. To use an example, one person may not desire to receive a college level education and may decide to invest instead; others may need an education because they may not desire having their own business or know nothing about stocks. Even the individuals who want to use the money purely on themselves, this isn't necessarily a bad thing as not everyone wants to have kids and continue their family lineage. Ultimately I believe that the choice of how reparations should be distributed should be by the will of the people. If it were to be in the hands of the benefactors, it is essentially depriving Black people of yet another freedom of choice, which is no better than in slave times.

As previously stated, South Africa has a lot of work to do in regards to money reparations. The nation already made the mistake of only accounting for 20,000 people as eligible for reparations when in fact 3.5 million people were found to be victims of apartheid. The total amount I calculated for each person to receive is \$132,275.53 rand (\$8422.24). Running into the same problem as the US, the South African government simply does not have enough money to pay back each citizen. On top of this, the other options such as education and

land are still feasible and should be considered, yes, but compared to the US, they cannot cover as much. In my opinion, South Africa will have to take a much slower approach in this regard and must not follow what America does verbatim. Instead, another model to use as a reference would be that of Germany. The nation back in 1951 agreed to give reparations to those who were victims of the Holocaust. It didn't matter whether you were Jewish or not, or if you even resided in Germany: West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer said they wanted to commit to "paying 'moral and material indemnity' for the 'unspeakable crimes...committed in the name of the German people' during World War II" (Timsit). Over the next twenty years Germany would give victims a monthly payment of €1, 751 (Wiedergutmachung) until the total debt would be paid off.

South Africa needs to consider this model in order to pay reparations; in this case, it isn't a matter of how fast the money is given but more so the fact that it is done at all. The US can choose much quicker options as the nation has the resources and economy to do so, but in South Africa's case, slow and steady wins the race. This method can be seen as the most feasible as the calculations of what their monthly payment would be based on what their economy is able to afford. For some the little by little approach may be even better than for it to be given all at once, as it is less likely to be spent foolishly and can be more thought out on what to do with it. Every case for reparations is different, and if South Africa were to ever attempt reparations again, this model would be the most ideal.

## **B. Education in the US and South Africa**

Going back to the idea of the government being the main institution responsible, I believe that they should be the ones who configure how this process is done. It can start with a benefactor that is held accountable by sending any form of money that they owe to them; next, the methods of how to distribute it should be put to a vote. Some may only want to be compensated in the form of money, but another form of reparations that should be considered is through education. Malcolm X once said “Education is the passport to success, for the future belongs to those who prepare for it today. No truer words can be said, as statistically speaking the more educated an individual is, the wealthier they will be (Wolla & Sullivan). As previously mentioned the white demographic in the US makes significantly more than their Black peers; what should also be noted is that in regards to education, the white demographic triumphs again. The NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) claims that as of 2016, only twenty-one percent of Black people in the US have a bachelor’s degree or higher (with majority falling in the high school diploma only category) while white people are up to thirty-five percent (NCES). Keep in mind that where the people are receiving their degrees is a factor too, as when one looks the racial make-up of fiercely competitive schools in the US such as the Ivy Leagues or those in the top 50, they will be PWIs (predominantly white institutions) with the Black population making up less than ten percent.

With that being said, in order to put African-Americans on the track of accumulating more wealth, we need to see an increase in Black degrees on the collegiate level. What I propose is that because many of these PWIs have played a role in the abuse of Black Americans in the past, they can contribute to reparations in the form of degrees. What I mean by this is to offer more scholarships or free tuition; while the universities may not be able to provide enough



money to pay back what is owed to African Americans they can offer them an education with the same value. The research is clear that if we see an increase in Black degrees, chances are we'll see an increase in Black wealth. What should also be addressed is how we need to see an increase of the Black population in these fiercely competitive, predominantly white institutions. Where one receives their degree definitely plays a role in how easy or hard it may be for them to get a job post-graduation. With that being said, affirmative action has been an on-going debate in the US, with different forms of it in place in many universities. However, after many battles in court (with the topic being addressed several times by the Supreme Court) this legislation has become so watered down that it does very little to help African American with university entry.

Another debate for another day, but in order to see an increase in Black populations in universities we also need to see improvement in predominantly Black schools in the K-12 level. Contrary to popular belief, many school systems are still highly segregated post *Brown v. Board of Education*, a Supreme Court case that called for desegregation in this regard. Black children are suffering the consequences from this; similar to the Jim Crow era, a 2017 study from EPI (Economic Policy Institute) found that 72.1% of Black students are attending high-poverty schools as opposed to only 31.3% of white students (Garcia). Clearly this will affect test scores and one's performance in schools which is why the white demographic typically does better than the Black one. So, to go back to the idea of putting the distribution of reparations to a vote, what I want to propose is that those eligible for reparations should vote on putting a portion of their money to help develop their schools at the K-12 level. If the majority says yes, then the money can go towards developing them which thereby will improve the academic results in the African American community, which will lead to an increase of the Black population in college. To

summarize, on the education front I want the ability for African-Americans to opt for academic scholarships and/or reduced/free tuition in institutions that played a part in slavery as well the consideration of taking a portion of what is collectively owed and putting in towards developing predominantly Black schools o the pre-college level.

Education should also be considered as another option on giving back to those affected by apartheid. No matter which nation you look at, the more educated one is the more wealthy they tend to be. South Africa's universities are nowhere near the prestige as the ones in the US, but the sentiment of education leading to a better life is still the same. However, the one similarity the two nations do have in regards to higher level education is the racial make-up. According to Statista, a 2019 study revealed that of the share of student participation rates for individuals aged 18-29 in South Africa, 20% was white and only 4.3% was Black African. To make matters worse, I have already established the fact that the nation is predominantly Black, so it is significantly disproportionate. What I propose here is potentially a form of affirmative action that increases the number of Black Africans in their universities. The University of Cape Town is the number #1 university in the entire continent of Africa (USNews) and the fact that it is a PWI is absolutely galling. There is also the idea of those affected by apartheid putting a vote to push the money of what is owed to them and reallocate it to further developing their education systems. The University of Cape Town may be number one in Africa but it is only #109 in the whole world (USNews). This isn't to say that African education is mediocre or insufficient, but it is because they lack the funds to further develop what they have. Most people in South Africa as well as several other African nations opt to leave their home country and study abroad, whether it be for the other school's better reputation, more access for further education, more opportunities

awaiting them post-graduation, etc. What many fail to realize is that what must be done is to develop what these nations have; if South Africa puts more money towards its education system, they will have the ability to be on the level of other first world nations. Overall education isn't the strongest route for reparations in South Africa, but this can be used to improve the education system there and potentially influence other African nations to follow suit.

### **C. Land in the US and South Africa**

Forty acres and a mule” was initially promised to Black Americans following the Civil War, and the African-American community has not forgotten this promise. While most may not think of land when it comes to reparations in the present day, the idea isn't as far-fetched as one may think. Rashawn Ray of Business Insider writes how estimately two billion acres of land in the US is federal land making up about twenty-five percent of all land in the nation (Ray). Land is often an under-appreciated form of wealth as the possibilities are endless with what one can do with it whether it is for farming, building property, starting a business, etc. Land wealth can be passed on from generation to generation, with one's offspring having the opportunity to develop it and guarantee stability for years on end. Black Americans missed the chance to obtain land during slave times and only citizens had this ability to. Even after the forty acres and a mule was promised by General William Sherman ( known officially as Field Order 15), the promise was then broken by President Andrew Johnson as he overturned the legislation and gave it back to slave owners (Ray). The time has come to fulfill this promise however, and this abundance of land just sitting there can be greatly appreciated by the Black community. What I admire about this form of reparations is that it is not something that is finite, as the land will always be there

and can be passed on from one generation to the next. As a point of reference, in 2018 Donald Trump authorized the availability of over two million acres of public land in Utah. At a modest \$25,000 an acre, this equates to \$50 billion” (Ray). Land reparations needs to stop being neglected as this would be a brilliant method to help compensate Black Americans as it acts as a form of immediate wealth and fulfills the initial promise of what was to be given. Again, this should be considered as an option for African Americans, not what is to be forced upon them as not every person may want this form of compensation.

In regards to South Africa, the returning of stolen land actually stands as one of the rising methods of compensation in the present-day. Going back to the historical context, in 1913 the majority of the Black population were not permitted to own property under the Natives Land Act (Cohen). With the lack of this ability, Black Africans were unable to accumulate wealth or develop a name for themselves in the field of agriculture, one of South Africa's leading industries. If we fast forward to the modern world, a 2017 state-commissioned audit revealed that only a third of rural land was owned by individuals, with 72% belonging to the white demographic (Cohen). Considering that white people only make up eight percent of the South African population, the disproportionality of the situation is obvious. The Black population is in the majority and yet, even when combined with the Indian and mixed demographics, these citizens only owned twenty-seven percent of farmland (Cohen). A call for change is clear and the South African government has acknowledged this. In the same year the state-commissioned audit was conducted, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa proposed a constitutional amendment involving the idea of expropriation. To give a definition to the term, expropriation would allow the “government to seize “unused” private land without compensation, a process known as

expropriation, and redistribute it to disadvantaged black farmers” (Clark). A solid idea, but to simply take land that is owned by someone and to take it away would definitely lead to some backlash. This isn’t an unreasonable response as the government would essentially be doing the same thing they did back in 1913, just with a different group of people. The idea of giving back the land to its original owners is a step in the right direction, yes, but its execution needs to be handled delicately. Though some of the people in the 72% of white landowners need to be held accountable, the idea of reparations is that it needs to be given willingly not by force; this compensation is supposed to equate to an apology, not that it's holding people against their will otherwise it's not genuine.

The question now remains on where does South Africa go from here, now that the idea has been proposed; as of December 2021 the proposal for expropriation has since been denied as parliament was not in approval. An understandable ruling, but the South African government has not given up; currently “...the government set a goal to redistribute 24.5 million hectares to those who had been disadvantaged by the racially discriminatory system by 2014, but it has only acquired 8.9 million hectares so far (Cohen). The key here is that though it might take a while for the government to obtain the end and redistribute it, it is better than the alternative of snatching it away. Land reparations can be quite beneficial to those effected from apartheid in South Africa because of the potential it has for accumulating wealth. As previously stated, the agriculture industry in the nation is one of the factors that is used to stimulate the economy, so with that ability in the hands of the disadvantaged, the possibilities are endless. The fight for land reparations may have hit a curve, but the South African government shouldn’t give up on the fight to return what rightfully belongs to the Black Africans of the country.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In the final section of this thesis analysis, I will summarize and analyze the quest for reparations in the United States and South Africa. Though the people who were victimized have a similar past of colonialism, abuse, torture, etc., their means of getting compensation will have to vary based on which nation they are based in. A lot of factors play a role in how a nation is to go about reparations, such as the country's financial situation, what exactly was done to the victims in that country, the amount of people affected, the list can go on and on. This section will also provide concluding remarks on my theory that closing the white-Black wealth gap in each nation will help make up for the atrocities done in the best as well as guarantee Black demographics a better future going forward.

As previously stated, the victims of apartheid and slavery share a similar past of oppression. Although the narrative of being controlled by European nations such as Great Britain, the Netherlands, or France is usually affiliated with African and Latin American countries, one needs to remember that it was through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the colonialist periods that forced Black populations into the New World. South Africans may have been predominantly controlled by the Dutch and Black Americans by the British (and eventually the American colonies), but the two groups come together in the sense that they have this shared narrative of abuse by the white masses. In the United States the British colonies turned nation would utilize the 400,000 Africans that came through the Middle Passage (Strochlic) to build the country's infrastructure and have it rise to the first-world nation it is today. The institution of slavery is what stimulated the economy back then, as this cheap, borderline free labor would

produce millions in the agricultural field, guaranteeing generations of wealth for white slaveowners while Black people were left to rot. The mistreatment of the enslaved isn't an unfamiliar subject either as I have discussed the sexual assault, physical abuse, malnutrition, and metal torture that was done upon African Americans. South Africans went through a similar past only this time with the Dutch (and very briefly the British). European nations have a history of taking land that isn't theirs and South Africa is no exception, again forcing a regime of white supremacy. Using their land as a stop during their explorations around the world, the Dutch took advantage of the natives and used them for their economic benefit. Even after the end of their colonial regime, when the period of apartheid began in 1948 we still see a continuation of the oppression of Black Africans. With all forms of power placed in the hands of the white man there leaves little room for the Black masses to grow and make a name for themselves.

The United States and South Africa also have this shared narrative of their past traumas having an influence on their present. To go more in depth, an example would be how the institution of slavery in the US is what led the racist society that is embedded in the United States. Post Civil War we see legislation being placed in motion that will do anything to limit Black success and have white people remain in positions of power. From the Jim Crow era with literacy tests, poll tax, the "separate but equal" regime, etc. to even the present day with our de facto segregated school systems, this country still oppresses Black demographics in any way they possibly can. The same goes for South Africa where their apartheid regime is similar to that of the Jim Crow era, filled with the segregation of land (as well as it being stolen), limitation of Black-owned businesses, segregated school systems, along with numerous other factors that can be used to limit Black success and wealth. Since apartheid hasn't ended that long ago, the effects

of such an institution are still very much present, with the majority of the land belonging to white demographics despite South Africa being a nation with a predominantly Black population. With the effects of slavery and apartheid still clear and present in today's day and age, limiting any opportunity for Black success, it should be quite obvious why there is a need of reparations.

In the United States I have already established how not every Black person should be eligible for such compensation. The idea of race being a social construct comes to mind where the nation has a habit of generalizing all Black people into the one demographic no matter what your ethnicity is. In certain cases this is okay because there is a lot of shared history amongst the different groups, but in this case a distinction needs to be made clear. With the Black population in America currently standing at 13.4% (43,984,096.1 people), the amount of people that would be eligible is only 38,706,004.6 (11.792% of the US population) once one takes out those who are foreign born, second generation (defined as those born in the U.S. but have at least one foreign-born parent), or basically have had no ancestral ties to slavery in the United States (Anderson). South Africa is similar in the sense where those who are foreign-born or second generation should be cut from the running as they have no ties to apartheid, but even so the nation still has a lot of people to pay back. Though the TRC received around twenty thousand people who testified against reparations, the actual number of those affected is marked at around 3.5 million according to historians (History). As I previously stated apartheid was not so long ago, and with there being a good percentage of people still alive from when it was still place, it should prove to be quite easier to find those eligible for reparations compared to finding those linked to slavery in the US.



The total amount owed is a rough procedure to conceptualize with different scholars producing different numbers (more or less in the same range however) as each takes into consideration different factors such as pain and suffering costs, interest fees, or even the main purpose of the reparation money is. Personally I believe the point of reparations is to close the white-Black wealth gap, ultimately placing us at an equal playing field. I also set the interest rate at three percent as it has been the usual standard based on the historical annual return on an investment without consideration of inflation (Thomas, Craemer, 219). This brings the amount owed to African Americans up to \$15,499,913,717,649.79 with each individual eligible to receive \$400,452.43. I used the same formula for conducting the amount owed to Black South Africans and also used three percent interest and based on my findings this group is eligible for up to 462,964,374,250 rand (\$29,477,850,044.60), meaning each person would receive 132,275.53 rand (\$8422.24).

Clearly neither government has the ability to pay off such high debt, and even if we pull in other institutions that should be held accountable (i.e universities for their use of slaves for research as well as lack of admittance into schools, or the church for coercing slaves into the false narrative of God condoning such a practice and deeming Black people inferior). With that being said, my plan for Black reparations offers ulterior methods for payment aside from money, such as free education, scholarships, land, etc. Money is of course a factor as reparations in the US are essentially paying back for the borderline free labor from the past. In my opinion, I think this should be the main source of compensation here while in South Africa there should be a heavy focus on land reparations. This nation has a vast history of land being taken away from Black South Africans and as of recently the government has acknowledged that since the

agriculture industry is one of the biggest sources of income in the country, this form of compensation should be taken more seriously. Education I also believe should be equally valued in both nations as no matter where you go, the higher the education the more likely one is to have a higher income. Whether we do this by taking some of the repatriation money to build up our K-12 grade level institutions or more opportunities on the university end of things, more/better education options can lead to a better life. The key point I want to emphasize however, is that this decision of how to go about reparations and how to split it up should be made by the people, not the benefactors. Some may want only money while others may want land and education or to divide all three together. No method is right or wrong per say, as every person has a different situation; that being said, it needs to be every person's choice for how they want to go about their own reparation plan otherwise the people trying to apologize are no better than the slave masters, colonizers, and overall oppressors that have condemned them in the past. The overarching goal needs to be seen as a means of closing the white-Black wealth gap, which essentially my point was to say can be done in a multitude of different ways. To conclude, the road to reparations is a hard and difficult matter that needs to be handled delicately. However, just because something is hard does not mean it is impossible. Once broken down and accessed reparations is in fact an achievable goal, it just takes the will and motivation to do so.

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