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*Black Lives Matter*

A Case for Reparations - How do middle class African Americans experience systemic racism in their lives and to what extent do they believe that reparations can address such inequalities and overcome racism in the United States?

A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership, & Management at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

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May 10, 2021

Advisor: Dr. Bruce W. Dayton

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## Introduction and Statement of Research Question

### Introduction

This study is important to conduct as it brings into sharp focus the race relations that exist in the United States. The study will help to gain a better understanding regarding the ways African-Americans are treated and the racism that they face throughout their lives. The main focus is on those of middle-class background as this particular group is considered to be the main target of systematic racism.

The debate continues as to whether African-American should be provided with compensation for systemic racism and for the legacy of discrimination that they continue to experience even today. A key question that arises is **how do middle-class African Americans today experience systemic racism in their lives and to what extent do they believe that reparations can address such inequalities and be the means to overcome racism in the United States?**

### Structure of the Study

The capstone paper will comprise of five sections which are an introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and discussion, and conclusion and recommendations. The introduction chapter is followed by the literature review chapter. The literature review chapter will focus on analyzing the research objectives through the use of theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The third chapter will be a methodology that will analyze methods used in the research study by stating research philosophy, design, approach, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter will focus on conducting the study by using methods that were stated in the previous chapter, in the form of analysis. The discussion will be conducted by comparing the analysis with the literature review information. The fifth chapter will be concluded with recommendations which will summarize the entire study and provide recommendations for further research.

## Literature Review

### Racism and Inequality in the United States

King (2016) asserted that in the years 1857 to 1938, slavery saw an end in the United States. Yet, at the same time, there were campaigns waged to establish racism and white privi-

lege through wars, economic expansion and immigration policies. In 1865, African Americans officially attained freedom from slavery; however, systematic barriers related to their economic and sustainable advancement did not end (Wells, 2017). In that same year, African-Americans started to gain citizenship rights and mobilized to gain access to public education and elected offices. White supremacists at the same time were focused on a retaliatory campaign of terror. Critical systematic barriers have persisted from then until the present day. These issues are challenges that range from getting their desired job to their children being unable to gain admission into schools that white Americans can. Pedulla and Pager (2019) stated that there are issues in getting the desired job for black people because of various reasons. One reason is that there are segmented labor markets in which black workers are less likely to get hired into stable, well-paying jobs. The second reason is the ever-present reality of racial discrimination. White Americans tend to discriminate against blacks because of their color as well as their past history which creates a major obstacle to employment opportunities in many sectors. Van Hook (2019) demonstrated that black children are not able to get admitted into the same schools as white Americans because of school segregation which has existed for a long time. These challenges can be observed in forms both social and economic.

In the social aspect, there remain barriers to mutually positive interactions between black Americans and white Americans. Black Americans are treated as a group that is inferior and one that should not be treated equally (Ferrara, 2018). Booth (2020) asserted that in the economic aspect, black Americans are not given the same wages that are given to white Americans, and neither receive the rewards, promotions, and benefits as their counterparts. According to Jones (2018), the aforementioned social and economic aspects started from the failure to provide the formerly enslaved with a 40-acre land grant that they were promised in 1865, and at the moment when black communities started to develop some degree of prosperity and independence which then resulted in their communities being destroyed.

In 1866, the Ku Klux Klan was founded with a focus on white supremacy through intimidation and violence. Hohle (2017) explained that during that time, there were five cases regarding civil rights for blacks which resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court declaring the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional, opening the path for Jim Crow laws and lynching. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court created the separate but equal rule, which upheld segregation. In 1910, the Great Migration took place in which one million African-Americans migrated from the South to

the North. In 1924, the Ku Klux Klan was extremely influential in making racism part of the official U.S. immigration policy which lasted until 1965. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated a series of public works and economic programs called the New Deal. Black Americans in many respects were excluded from the benefits, as domestic workers, railway porters and agricultural workers.

Feagin (2017) outlined that from 1940 to 1962, the Cold War and decolonization championed new ideas and realities in the United States. In 1948, President Harry S. Truman ended segregation in the U.S. military. In 1952, the McCarran Walter Act eliminated racial barriers to citizenship, tightened the quotas for immigrants and allowed the deportation of immigrants for “subversive activities” which was seen as an element of Cold War McCarthyism (Tourse, Hamilton-Mason and Wewiorski, 2018). In the early 1960s, there was a massive effort from civil rights leaders to end segregation in schools, employment, and public spaces and to register African-Americans to vote. However, any such effort did not succeed as African-Americans were discouraged by being threatened, beaten and killed. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregation in public spaces and banned discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion and sex and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, essentially gave blacks the right to vote. The 60s would be a decade when many felt optimism that equality for all could be achieved on all fronts. Indeed, Tourse, Hamilton-Mason and Wewiorski (2018) shed light that from 1963 to 1975, there was the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, the War on Poverty and expanding immigration which changed the face of the United States.

On the contrary, López-Narbona (2019) asserted that from 1975 to 1999, the racial and ethnic economic inequalities continued to grow, which was further fueled by globalization’s free-market strategies. By 1977, civil rights victories paved the way for a minority of African-Americans to reach middle-class status and to live freely. However, there remained issues of unemployment, poor housing and poverty which only intensified for many African Americans. Elias and Feagin (2020) contemplated that from 2000 to the present, these racial dynamics are still taking place. Although in 2008, Barack Obama was elected as the first African-American president; it did not mark a shift in the plight of African-Americans. Vallejo (2020) pointed out that it does not matter what era we observe in the history of blacks in America. Nothing has significantly changed in their favor. The reality of systemic racism from the time of slavery continues. A prime example of such a present reality is the case of George Floyd who was murdered in

broad day light by a white policeman in May of 2020. According to Keynejad et al. (2020), eradicating systemic racism will require strong legislations and regulations to be put in place by the government.

Branson (2016) describes that systemic racism affects every aspect of life for people of color. This form of racism is usually embedded in society as normal practices within a society or organization. The same was perceived in the narration of Coates (2014) article. Clyde Ross's father was taken into custody by the Mississippi authorities as the latter claimed that the former owed \$3,000 in back taxes. Due to having no ability to read or acquire a lawyer, the Ross family were unable to challenge claims and had no protection under the law (Coates, 2014). Eventually, Ross's land and possessions were seized by authorities and Ross's family were only able to work as sharecroppers.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was also observed that a sustained pattern of discrimination was taking place in access to homeownership for African Americans (Murdock, 2019). This particular form of discrimination began with the existence of restrictive practices, redlining, and currently focuses on predatory lending practices that are linked to attaining home mortgages (Cherry, Powell-Young & Giger, 2020).

Currently, African-Americans remain the most segregated race in America and have five times higher chances of living in high-poverty neighborhoods than white Americans (Fagan, 2018). The opportunity to earn higher wages could secure black people from disadvantages (such as not being able to purchase a home in a good locality or not being able to send their children to a well-resourced white American school) mitigating the challenges they have to go through, due to their race. But according to Burns (2019), black families earning \$75,000 or more a year continue to live in poorer conditions than white families. White families that earn less than \$40,000 a year live in relatively better conditions. Craemer et al. (2020) asserted that an average black family earning around \$100,000 a year continues to live in neighborhoods with people who earn an average income of \$54,000. According to the Federal Reserve's Survey of Consumer Finances, the median net worth of a black family in 2016 was around \$17,150 (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2020). On the other hand, the median net worth of a white family at the same time was observed to be \$171, 000, which is about ten times more.

According to Smith (2017), the foundation of white wealth in America began when they were able to attain black labour of slaves for free, and this particular reality continued to build



over generations. The author further stated that the accumulation of wealth among white American families over a generation has allowed them to create sustainable communities throughout the United States. Additionally, it also provides them with the ability to buy homes in safe neighborhoods with easy access to necessities and well-funded schools (Miller, 2018). White American families can easily send their children to college without having the burden of debt, as they would have an option to afford a down payment on a home (Dambo & Soejima, 2019). Black families, for the most part, do not have these options.

A question that arises is what if black communities had the financial and non-financial means to create wealth themselves as well? An example that can be cited here is the Tulsa Race Massacre in 1921. In the early 20th century, the Greenwood district in Tulsa, Oklahoma became known as the black Wall Street as African Americans began moving to the area and opening up local businesses and ventures and building up their community. However, after World War I, a sizable amount of black veterans moved there to enter the prosperous labor market. Social tensions and anti-black sentiment increased (Mathisen, 2018). It increased when white veterans felt their job opportunities were remotely in jeopardy and were being competed for by black veterans. During this period, some black veterans were looking to enforce their civil rights as they believed they had earned full citizenship because of their military service (Burnette-Bletsch, 2018). Adler (2017) identified that black veterans believed that by serving in the military they would be considered equal and earn full citizenship because they fought in the war and sacrificed their lives for their country. The tension came to a boil when an incident occurred in which a black 19-year old boy was accused of assaulting a 17-year-old white girl (Oliver & Shapiro, 2019). Several whites used the incident to instigate the massacre. More than 800 people were admitted to hospitals after being attacked. It is further believed that around 100 to 300 people were killed due to the attacks that took place on the ground as well as from private aircraft (Ritner, 2019).

Coates (2014) takes the reader on a journey through the life of Clyde Ross to illustrate how African Americans can grow up in a good home, attain quality education and financial means, only to continuously be met by systemic barriers, which solidified the wealth gap between black and white Americans. Clyde Ross was born in 1923 in Mississippi. Ross's parents possessed and cultivated a 40-acre tract of land with an abundance of cattle. The majority of

people in the state were persistently deprived of their right to vote, a hijacking conceived by the practice of poll taxes and the influence of the lynch mob. Between 1882 and 1968, more black people were killed in Mississippi than in any other state as can be seen in the figure below (Coates, 2014).

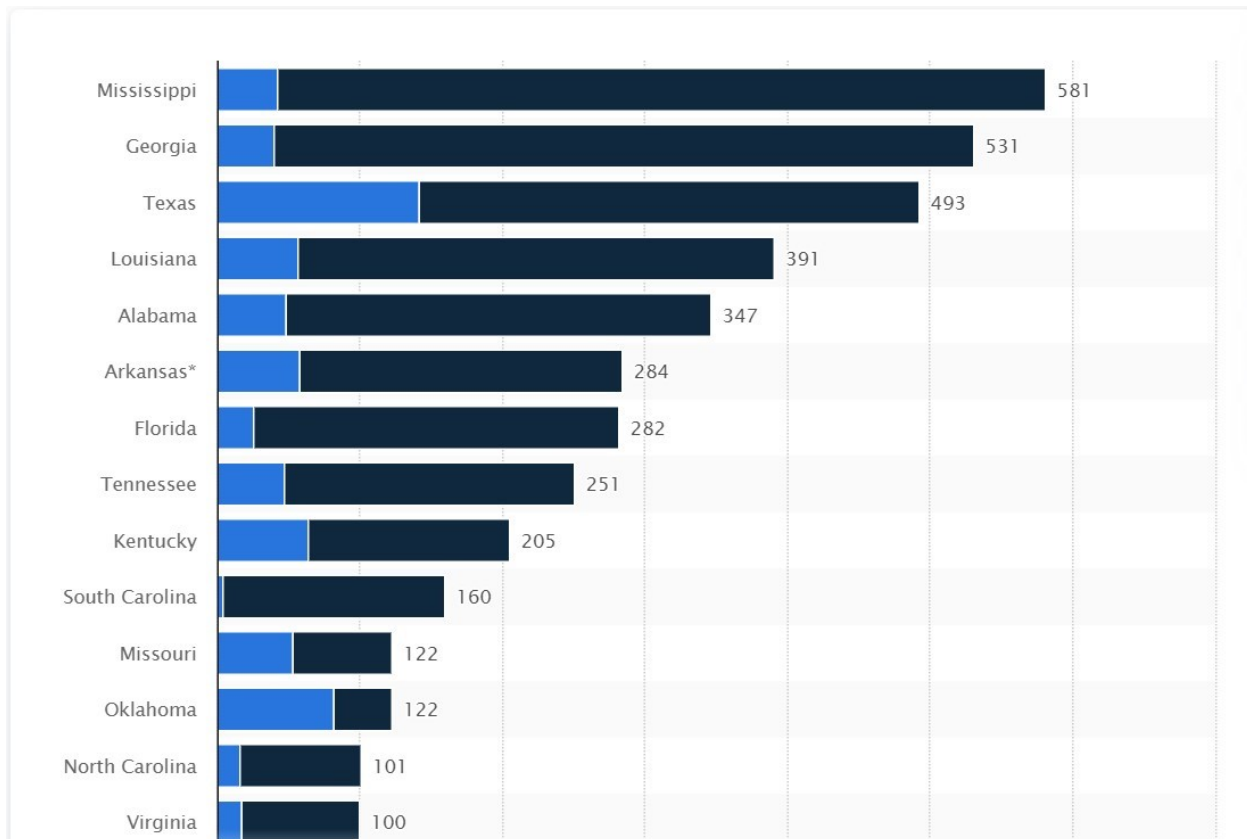


Figure 1 - Number of lynching in the U.S. by state and race 1882-1968 (Source – Statista, 2020)

The blue part represents white people and the black part represents the black people that were lynched.

### Systemic Barriers in Education

Kathuria-Prakash et al. (2019) described systematic barriers as policies, practices or procedures that tend to result in some people receiving unequal access or are usually completely excluded. It is imperative to note that systematic barriers occur in various areas, such as in the American educational system and the workplace. Hirano et al. (2018) asserted that systematic barriers in education are considered to be one of the worst forms of systematic barriers because

it deprives students of accessing a basic human need, which is a quality education. The author further states that systematic barriers in education have been rampant among African-American throughout their entire history in the country. It is considered one of the profound tragedies in America that transgenerational, racially motivated maltreatment of the African American race is the main objective of systematic barriers in education. Laurencin and Murray (2017) contemplated that quality education in America has been known to be given primarily to the white, rich and privileged. The ideology of providing everything to the white privileged first is still prevalent in the education system; however, it has been blanketed under diverse policies and systems. These policies and systems are related to the affirmative action movement which seeks to regard race and racial representation in the application process of schools. Felder and Freeman Jr (2016) noted that it is difficult to prove whether the systematic barriers are conducted intentionally or unintentionally; however, they exist and tend to prevent African-American children from gaining a quality education. Vallejo (2020) outlined that testing can be skewed in a way that will always disadvantage African Americans.

According to Danforth and Miller (2018), the expensive CSET is a prime example of a systematic barrier that prevents African-American children to have access to the quality education sector. The author further stated that CSET tests are considerably expensive, which means only rich white Americans or black Americans can afford them. Schools and colleges that are looking to prevent the admission of African-American children into their institution, tend to make it compulsory that the CSET test is taken and that specific marks must be attained. Because most African-American students are not capable of taking the CSET test, many simply drop the idea of being part of a school that their peers can get into.

Allen et al. (2018) discussed how unpaid internships play a factor as well. Unpaid internships are given to the African-American students in their desired field; however, they very rarely lead to a paid position or secured career. In contrast to this, white American students are given the chance to attain paid internships, and those who take unpaid ones; they tend to use them as the path for their paid career goals.

A noted illustration of the trajectory of the African American relative to a quality education was stated in the work of Coates (2014). Clyde Ross was perceived to be a smart child by his teachers and they wanted him to attend a more challenging school. However, due to extremely little or no support, educating black children in Mississippi was difficult or impossible. One of

the part-owner of Sears, Roebuck, and Julius Rosenwald initiated aggressive efforts to build schools for black children all over the South in the early 20th century. Clyde's teacher felt that he was qualified to be part of Rosenwald School; however, due to living a long distance away and having no means to travel back and forth in time for school, Clyde was not able to attend the school. The local white children had the luxury to travel on a school bus, which was not provided to black children. As a consequence, Clyde was not able to attain a better education. In addition, Baradaran (2017) demonstrated in their work that black children were not given the luxury of having a better education because they were not considered to be equal to white Americans. Black people were seen as slaves and so they were treated in the same way, by providing them with minimal needs that would be enough for them to live. Moreover, the author further stated that education was an opportunity that black people did not deserve, as their only purpose was to serve white Americans.

### **Wealth Gap**

Rawlinson (2017) described in their work that the wealth gap is a major determining factor in the systemic barriers black Americans continue to go through. White Americans were sufficiently wealthy and were able to purchase anything they wanted during World War I time as well as post. However, the same could not be said for blacks as many of them were not wealthy, and as a result, they were not in the position to live a high quality of life and continued to face discrimination (Herring & Hynes, 2017). In the work of Coates (2014), it has been observed that the Ross family had a major wealth gap and had issues even in carrying out their daily activities. Baradaran (2017) asserted that wealth inequality (also termed as wealth gap) is mainly an unequal distribution of assets that takes place among residents of the United States. It is imperative to note that wealth can comprise the value of homes, automobiles and businesses, and so on. McIntosh et al. (2020) identified that an examination of the wealth gap in America has found a significant amount of racial disparities. The authors further stated that \$171,000 which is the net worth of a typical white family is considered to be ten times greater than that of a Black family (which was \$17,150) in 2016. It is important to recognize that the black-white wealth gap shows a society that has not ensured equal opportunities for all of its citizens.

Although the Clyde family had sharecropping jobs, their wages were seen as a slush fund by landlords. It was a rule that landowners had to split the profit among sharecroppers; but,

during the count, Bales (Ross's landowner) would disappear and Ross family would not receive what they were due.

As time passed, Clyde was sent into the army and fought in World War II to fight the cruelty and injustice that the world was facing. However, once he returned, Clyde had moved to the North for better wages and work opportunities. Clyde was able to secure a stable life (with his wife and children, stable job and the right to vote) when he moved to Chicago in 1947 and took up a job opportunity as a taster for Campbell's Soup; but, there was a major aspect missing. Owning his own home.

Seamster and Charron-Chénier (2017) stated that once the victory was attained in World War II, the chance for housing for veterans increased significantly. One of the nation's leading construction firms, Levitt and Sons, initiated a plan to mass-produce homes on the outskirts of New York City. The authors further stated that around 4000 acres of potato fields in Long Island purchased by Levitt and Sons, set the plan for the largest private housing project, which was named Levittown. Many Americans, especially veterans after World War II, did their best to take advantage of opportunities like this knowing it would place them in the coveted middle-class position in American society.

Coates (2014) demonstrated in his work that owning a home during the post-World War II era meant getting an entry into the American middle class and though Clyde endeavored to, it was extremely difficult for African-Americans to purchase a home due to various factors such as: being financially stable to make the down payment, intimidation from white Americans in desired neighborhoods, and resistance to allow black Americans to fully integrate into the society.

According to Armstrong (2020), African-Americans did not deserve to own a home because they were seen as people of a lower class who could not be brought up to the same level as whites. The author further stated that white Americans believed that having sufficient wealth was a luxury that only white people had and that they could own home easily in any area of the country. Supporting this belief, McIntosh et al. (2020) identified in their work that racism was so rampant during the post-slavery period that if any black individual tried getting another job that was better than sharecropping; he was forced to go back or face intense discrimination. For many analysts, this was seen as a justified approach to black Americans because they were beginning to forget their rightful place and were trying to integrate themselves with white Americans, which was a major crime (Palladino, 2020). African-Americans were born to serve white

Americans and that is how it should continue to be was the narrative; any kind of change in this structure was not accepted by many white Americans.

Reparations are a form of compensation that is given for abuse or injury. Reparations for African Americans have been discussed in the United States since the end of the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery, but it took on new energy when Ta-Nehisi Coates (2014) wrote about it in “The Case for Reparations” for *The Atlantic*. According to Coates (2014), in the outcome of the Civil War, progressive Republicans tried to remake the country on a foundation of something approximating universal parity; but they were challenged by a movement directed by whites who opposed and who were focused on sustaining a society formed for them and not blacks.

The story of Clyde Ross is the story and trajectory of many African Americans. It replicates hundreds of years of systematic exploitation of blacks frequently endorsed and authorized by public policy. From oppression to current-day labour, lodging and credit market discernment, African-Americans have faced enormous problems to amassing a similar sum of wealth as whites (Weller, 2019). In an economy that depends so profoundly on market actions as the United States, families require wealth to defend themselves against revenue variations, such as, in the case of joblessness, unanticipated diseases and other crises. Families likewise need capital to purchase a house, to start a business, to aid their children with money for college and to protect their retirement, among other key savings (Aliprantis, Carroll & Young, 2019). African-Americans then, have a lot fewer chances to both defend themselves in a crisis and to participate in their future, planning a safe retirement, passing on wealth to their families and communities; as white families can do. However, the question remains how can equal opportunities be afforded to African Americans? Replying to this question requires recognizing that the racial wealth gap is huge and has continued for decades, but likewise that the cause is from centuries of terrible abuses, violence, and discrimination.

### **The Case for Reparations**

According to Weller (2019), eradicating the racial wealth gap entails large-scale policy interferences, such as Racial Wealth Audit™ which helps to evaluate how policies in America impact black families in housing, education, and labour markets relative to the wealth gap to white families, and work to help African American families build wealth. The racial wealth hole

signifies the increasing impacts of hundreds of years of abuse, domination and exclusion that governmental policies must address. Reparations are compensations for one specific historical wrong - slavery. Weller (2019) goes on to make clear that equal access to quality education will not be the remedy to the wealth gap. The median African-American household with a college degree had \$68,200 in wealth in 2016 (Weller, 2019). Whites with a college degree had almost six times that much wealth at \$398,170 in 2016 (Weller, 2019). The median wealth of African-Americans with a college degree was 67.7% of the wealth of whites with a high school degree and only 10% more than the median wealth for white high school drop-outs that year (Weller, 2019).

Darity (2020) claims that reparation plans have been utilized tactically in the United States and all over the world to offer compensation for significant prejudices. It has comprised of the U.S. government's delivery of reparations for Japanese Americans unfairly imprisoned ("interned") through World War II; the German government's facility of compensations for victims of the Nazi Holocaust; and the Canadian government's delivery of reimbursement to the native population who were eradicated by force from their families and confined to Christian, church-run, Indian residential schools (Davis, 2020). After World War II, when the argument began to be made for reparations to the Jewish people for the sufferings of the Holocaust, opposition to it was compelling (Neiman, 2019). Many felt, as with the argument against reparations for African Americans, that it was unachievable. According to Neiman, it took a sustained and unrelenting effort to convince the German people and government to act. In the Comparative Analysis of Reparations for the Holocaust and for the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Craemar (2018) argued that sufferings endured by both the Jews and blacks were illegal under international law but that in the Jews case, where the case for reparations was eventually won; it was not successful due to legal reasoning. What allowed the German government to move forward with awarding the Jews reparations, was the acknowledgement of themselves first; that it was morally wrong.

Chappine (2011) makes clear that the process by which Jews received compensation for their sufferings was not a smooth, linear path. As the War ended, advocates and the global community were more focused on justice being done to all the surviving criminals of the Holocaust, not the victims. It was not until 1949 that attention gained steam regarding compensation for the victims. In 1950, a formal agreement called the Luxembourg Agreements was estab-

lished between Israel and Germany. The agreement began the process of Germany paying Jewish victims but not without challenges. Germany initially refused to pay victims who lived in Communist countries and it would not be until decades later as the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union broke up, that many victims received their compensation.

Approximately two months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, which marked the United States entrance into World War II, President Roosevelt sanctioned the imprisonment of Japanese people living in America. It was based on the assumption that the Japanese people in the United States were working on behalf of their homeland and against the interests of the US. Over 100,000 of them were rounded up and placed in cramped barracks (Daniels, 1991). The path by which Japanese victims eventually received compensation was not an easy path either. Not only did Americans on a whole resist the idea, but there was division amongst the Japanese themselves. Those who arrived in America as adults, widely felt there was no need to vigorously seek reparations for what they went through. Their children on the other hand who were kids during the imprisonments or born after the war were coming of age during the Civil Rights Movement, and with deep passions felt that justice needed to be served. By 1978, their energy helped bring both generations together and the campaign for reparations began (Daniels, 1991). In 1988, 10 years later and almost 40 years after the barracks were closed, the American government passed the Civil Liberties Act which involved a formal apology and \$20,000 to each survivor.

One of the country's earliest struggles for African Americans to receive compensation for slavery was the federal government's post-Civil War plan to give at least forty acres of unrestricted and seized land along with a mule to each previously incarcerated family by giving four or ten acres per person (Stelzner, 2020). There are several historical records that reveal reparations are not a myth, and that it was part of the federal legislative process. In 1865, around 40 acres of allocation was provided to the formerly enslaved Africans as the second measure that the federal government had taken to deal with the problem (Rawlinson, 2017). The argument that reparations might be the right method to address the impacts of slavery and white supremacy is known to have an in-depth history that has been in and out of the national policy debate in America (Oliver & Shapiro, 2019). Reparations are as timely today as they were in the 1860s (Dambo & Soejima, 2019).



Reparations are defined as a database of credit, compensation, and conclusion for severe unfairness. Reparations have been used in America before in several suits, one of which was the African American Slave Descendants. Sell (2019) stated that this was a high-profile suit that was against a number of businesses that had ties related to slavery. It is important to note that in context to reparations, the high-profile suits were dismissed completely and payment was actually made to keep the entire situation hidden. Dickerson (2019) asserted that reparations are considered to be controversial because particular aspects of it do not resolve any specific issues that Black people face today, but offers them money with the notion that it can resolve everything. The author further stated that black people would not accept reparations because it would be an insult to everything they endured during slavery, which cannot simply be compensated with money. However, Darity Jr and Mullen (2020) contemplated that there has been no solid proof that reparations have not worked. The author states black people would take the compensation amount afforded them, as they believe it would aid them in their economic independence and pursuits. As far as the argument for reparations specifically where African Americans are concerned one must look keenly at the horrific prejudices they've endured unabated throughout their history in America including slavery, legal isolation, and constant judgment and stigmatization (Oliver & Shapiro, 2019). Markedly, reparations for African Americans would eradicate racial inequalities in wealth, income, education, health, and would ensure they are given opportunities to be involved in American political and social life. It will provide the United States not only the opportunity to reimburse for historical oppression and abuse but also the chance to counterbalance prevailing barriers to full black participation in American political and social life (Davis, 2020). However, Vallejo (2020) asserted that by providing African-Americans with the aforementioned benefits, in light of reparations; there is a need to consider that it could create major issues. There are white people who do not want African-Americans to gain an equal chance at powerful positions, which in itself is a major hurdle in ensuring that reparations can be considered a process that would gain mass support in the country.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

### **Methodology**

Van de Ven and Poole (2017) stated that methodology is a significant part of the study as it emphasizes research methods (an umbrella terms used for all procedures and analysis used in the study) that will be part of the study. For the capstone, I used interpretivism philosophy as a distinct method as it focused on concepts of interpreting elements that are part of human interest, along with the primary qualitative approach of interviews. Park and Park (2016) stated that interpretivism helps the researcher in assessing and focusing on the thoughts and expressions of human factors to get a better comprehension of the topic of research. The inductive research approach was used to assess observations and theories related to the research process.

### **Participants' Description, Sampling and Site Description**

This capstone paper focused on understanding how middle-class African Americans experienced systemic racism in their lives and to what extent they believe reparations can address those inequalities. The data collection comprised of two methods which are primary and secondary. Hair Jr, Page and Brunsveld (2019) asserted that the secondary data collection comprises of using existing sources that have already been published, such as journals, academic books, past research papers and academic online portals. On the other hand, the primary data collection method comprises of using quantitative and qualitative approaches which is about attaining first-hand information from participants (Bougie & Sekaran, 2016). Bell, Bryman and Harley (2018) demonstrated that in the primary qualitative approach, the focus is on interviews which are conducted by the researcher with participants that are related to the topic of research. The rationale of using a primary qualitative approach is that it would provide me with an in-depth view of how reparations could be a helpful factor for African-Americans in their efforts for sustainable community development. In this study, for the qualitative method of data collection, I used interviews with 10 participants.

The research focused on 10 participants that are from the African-American communities residing in California and of middle-class status (Adler, 2017). From an empirical perspective, this ensured that the I was able to attain relevant material from African-American commu-

nities of middle-class status. This is the topic of the study which would help researchers significantly. They were accessed through email and interviewed through Zoom sessions. The affected African-Americans were invited to participate in the research so they could share their insights on how the history of systemic racism extends to the present.

In order to choose the participants, a sampling technique was used. Non-probability sampling was used in the study, and convenience sampling focused upon as participants were selected based on their availability for the study. The convenience sampling is feasible for the researcher because due to COVID-19, researchers cannot physically approach the participants. Therefore, a researcher would choose one participant whom they know, who in turn could then refer the researcher to other participants and so on (Esser & Vliegthart, 2017). The sample size chosen for semi-structured interviews is 10 Middle-class African-Americans. The purpose of picking this particular group is that middle-class African-Americans provide a unique perspective on systemic inequality, racism and reparations. They have gained a level of educational and financial success, and they are the center point of society. Middle-class African Americans can share views on the various aspects of inequality and racism occurring at their level of attainment, as well as with those that are below their class and those that are above their class. Moreover, it is imperative to note that middle-class African-Americans may tend to go through a unique form of systemic racism because they technically embody what many Americans of all races strive for with their position in society- the American Middle class.

The interview responses were recruited through convenience sampling, which means I interviewed one individual from the Middle-class African-American group. This individual referred me to other people of the same societal class. The interview questions comprised of four questions related to the extent of systemic racism existing in the life of the participants, and how it has impacted them and where they see it. The remaining four questions were related to reparations, which sought to discover what they know about it, what they think about it and their beliefs regarding the extent to which reparations might dismantle systemic racism in America (why and why not). Particularly, with the study being conducted in the United States, participants were sought who have attained all their accomplishments (such as being part of the military/having served in the army, bought a home in a white American community and children not being able to get admitted in the same school as white American children) while living in the country since the research focused on personal experiences and perspectives in the U.S. The

personal experiences and perspective in the U.S. from participants provided a better insight into what 10 Middle-class African-Americans feel relative to how slavery has affected them and what measures should be taken to provide them with better living environments in the U.S.

### **Ethics of Research**

Maintaining ethical considerations during this study was one of the critical elements that ensured the research results' quality. For this study, I endeavored to make certain that I abided by all the ethical norms to ensure that the study did not face any kind of dishonesty issues that could fail the study. I ensured that credits were given to the authors whose papers were used in the literature review and analysis parts of the capstone. Secondly, I ensured that confidentiality was maintained related to all the personal information that participants shared during the commencement of the study, as this helped in building trust with the participants and also assisted in providing honest responses. Furthermore, if I somehow violated the confidentiality aspect, participants would have had the right to take legal actions against me. I focused on maintaining the privacy of the participants and did not share any personal information of participants relative to any third party. Maintaining the anonymity of participants was my top priority, as I did not want them to get into any trouble with their respective employer, family or community, just because they were part of this study for research purposes. I ensured that I informed the participants that they would be asked questions which could trigger memories for them related to racism. There were chances that the trigger of memories could lead to issues for participants but I made clear that they would have complete rights to decide if they want to be part of the study or not.

### **Researcher's Positionality**

Globally, human rights are regarded as fundamental even though they are not respected equally by all nations, possibly due to racial discrimination and unequal distribution of resources such as wealth. The violation of African-Americans' rights in the United States dates back to the years of slavery but has progressed into racial segregation in the modern world (Yoshida & Chandok, 2020). I am the son of Jamaican parentage and was born in the United States. My experience growing up with Caribbean parents is distinctly different from African-Americans in that I never grew up hearing stories about my grandparents or great-grandparents experiencing racial discrimination and slavery. It must be noted that black people from different parts of the

world have markedly diverse experiences. As I conducted this capstone project, I was a somewhat objective observer of the plight of African-Americans although I am black. That said, I do believe that reparations for families affected by racial discrimination will be a viable path to developing a sustainable community for African Americans.

### **Data Management and Data Analysis**

Concerning this part of the study, the amount of data that was collected required proper management and analysis to improve its quality and bring about understanding and transparency. Allen (2017) asserted that the inductive approach focuses on patterns, resemblances and regularities in experiences. The data was recorded in the form of a video because the interview was taken on the Zoom platform. The interview responses were stored in a password-protected laptop, which was only accessed by me. No third party was allowed any access. The responses that were transcribed were done in the form of thematic analysis. The raw data of responses were coded in the form of themes which I then analyzed in the form of textual data. I used Nivo software to assess the codes to themes and analyzed the amount of qualitative data from the study. The capstone paper used qualitative analysis. The data for the qualitative findings were analyzed through the use of thematic analysis in which responses were categorized under specific themes in light of the research objectives of the study. The software allowed me to code the responses according to themes, such as “types of racism” or “logic of reparations”.

### **Credibility of Findings**

Since credibility was an essential aspect of the construction of knowledge, I endeavored to ensure that any kind of biases in the interpretation of findings were prevented by asking my advisor to go through the draft work. According to Sinkovics, Penz and Ghauri (2008), preventing biasness is an essential aspect of trustworthiness formation. The credibility strategies that were used in the study are linked to the use of primary data (interviews), the focus on sampling size and the data collection principles stated. The aforementioned aspects helped in maintaining credibility by ensuring that all aspects were in line with the chosen method as this helped in getting the appropriate outcomes for the study. I made certain that no biases or any kind of discrepancies occurred in the stated areas while conducting the study, as this helped in attaining factual results for the research. This was accomplished by ensuring I remained neutral in my approach towards providing information related to various areas of the study. Therefore, the cred-

ibility of this study's findings are related to the topic of the study and are laid out in the same way as it was provided to me by the respondents, without misrepresenting the information in any way. The validity was maintained by ensuring that appropriate questions were asked relative to particular aspects being viable for the research study and whether it helped it in any way to attain better results. The reliability was maintained by running a pilot test of the study.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study involved unique contexts that could have easily affected and hindered the entire research process. According to Radu (2019), the researcher's methods of using qualitative interviews provides only non-quantifiable elements, and no statistical elements were used which means no statistical information was assessed. The Covid-19 pandemic presented unique challenges. Face-to-face interaction to collect data had to be altered. I had to use the Zoom platform to conduct the interviews. Another limitation that occurred, concerning the study, is that I had only limited access to certain databases and libraries due to only the abstract section being available for access. Therefore, only the abstracts could be used to prepare the work since my access to completed articles required a premium account.

## Analysis

### Introduction

This chapter is based on the results of the interviews that were conducted in order to attain the primary responses for the analysis. Moreover, the method used to analyze the following research was based on the thematic analysis process which was applied to the interview transcripts. Primary data were analyzed by using this thematic analysis technique.

### Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is one of the techniques used to analyze interviews in context to specific content or relative to a particular topic (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Through using thematic analysis, collected data has been divided into various themes which are based on the common aspects of the respondents' responses. Concerning the interviews relative to the research aims and objectives, collected responses are divided into five themes named as "Equality and Discrimination", "attitudes about Reparations", "Systematic racism", "Slavery affected lives of African-America children" and "Wealth gap".

### Systematic racism

Systematic racism is considered as one of the factors that have had a strong impact on the lives of the African Americans interviewed. The theme was selected based solely on their responses to the questions raised and their personal experiences. One of the respondents mentioned racism in the context of systematic racism stating:

*"I still remember that in my childhood, when my parents were looking for affordable housing in the USA, they faced severe issues as many communities did not allow blacks to reside in their neighborhoods which prevented us from accessing safe housing."*

It could be noted from the above response that blacks growing up feeling that barriers to diverse and equitable opportunities for them are ingrained in the culture of America (Evans, et al., 2020). According to various surveys, it was highlighted that those in positions of power discourage blacks from being included in beneficial spheres of society and admittance to good-paying jobs (Assari, 2018). This culture of discrimination could continue to keep America from a harmonious and peaceful society. Moreover, it was also highlighted by numerous scholars that many high-level working job vacancies in the country are simply not open to black Americans as

they are to white Americans, and those in positions of influence hesitate to recommend black Americans for these jobs (Gerstle, 2017). Due to systematic racism, many black Americans are stuck in a lifecycle of poverty. According to reports published by various universities in America, black people are not adequately supported by their white counterparts in terms of raising their voices against injustice and non-equity from official organizations and agencies (Alexander and Hermann, 2016). As one of the respondents mentioned:

*“In my view inequality between black and white people has been something I have witnessed in almost every aspect of my life both economically and socially. Being a middle-class American citizen, I have always witnessed racism and discrimination whether it is education, health or employment. There are always people who do not consider us as part of society. Being a middle-class African American, I have observed that we are not able to gain a level of financial success as compared to white Americans even if we possess the same or higher set of skills.”*

It could be noted from the stated response that there is a feeling in the African American community that racism and discrimination are deeply entrenched in the very fabric of American society. Some scholars believe that the status quo could lead the country towards increased violence and civil strife. They predict that the continued culture of discrimination against blacks could potentially destroy America’s moral standing in the world and could shift the power and influence towards other nations (Gerstle, 2017). It was discussed in many of the previous research and literature that systematic racism specifically in terms of employment and educational opportunities severely compromise aspects of American daily life (Paradies, et al., 2015). Racism in American society could continue to harbour animosity in black people from the time they are children, posing a constant threat to communities throughout the country as they enter adulthood.

Another interviewee responded that:

*“I do not think that my educational attainment has anything to do with my success or failure. I feel like I am on my own. I have always seen my family struggling for food and basic healthcare rights in the USA so I strongly believe that the discrimination against middle-class African Americans will always exist in the society and government is just not willing to do anything about it.”*

The above response is highlighting realities that educational attainment does not translate into blacks feeling they have now reached a place in American life where they will no longer feel systemic racism will be a factor in their lives. It is a feeling that is constant in their minds



even as they climb the educational ladder. (Alexander and Hermann, 2016). Middle-class blacks consistently suffer despite their achievements in higher education and the landing of a high paying job (Johnson, et al., 2015).

### **Slavery affected the lives of African-American children**

The legacy of slavery is an ever-present fixture in the minds of African Americans as their family histories is a reminder of what their great and great-great-grandparents went through. It is a fact that African Americans were working as slaves in America before 1860 (Franklin and James, 2015). Yet, due to present-day discrimination, many African American children grow up in America feeling similar emotions to their ancestors because of the conditions and environments in which they live. As one of the respondents replied when asked about the history of slavery in America:

*“I feel I somewhat face similar emotions they must have felt although not physically because of my own experiences being a part of a middle-class family whose ancestors were once slaves and am still dealing with many challenges throughout my life. Since my childhood, I feel I am fighting a quest for equality, whether it was getting admission into a school or whether just to feel accepted socially. Slavery affects the lives of black children susceptible to stereotyping as children and I felt I was always fighting against it from birth.”*

From this response, it seems that the after-effects of slavery are like a dark cloud hanging over the head of African Americans. The feeling of insecurity that comes from the inability to move forward toward success due to the treatment of blacks throughout their history in America, is a feeling unique to them (Jones, 2020). The inequality in communities and systems throughout American society has forced a generation of blacks to remain stagnant in their quest for equality. As a consequence of this reality, criminal involvement has increased in their communities (Lowery, 2020). Moreover, according to the literature reviewed, the rapid increase of criminal activities are due to an unequal and discriminatory culture towards blacks. According to a respondent:

*“I think the effect of slavery in America has seriously affected the African American family structure with the scars leading all the way back to the plantations in the South. Generationally, it affected us with respect to high mortality and low fertility. In addition, children from enslaved*

*families had to work for their owners at a very young age such that they could not even gain a proper education. That legacy continues until today.”*

This legacy continues to hinder the lives of black Americans even after they've achieved some level of success. The lower status jobs and employment in areas such as cloth washing, farming and other types of jobs reflect the slavery culture that once was their normal station (Boutte, 2015).

### **Wealth gap**

The wealth gap remains a dilemma that has affected the whole world in terms of non-equity and discrimination amongst human beings. In the context of America, the wealth gap has been a catastrophic barrier to African American advancement (Aloni, 2018). As one of the respondents mentioned in the interview:

*“The persistent racial wealth gap leaves African Americans in a position that perpetuates a cycle of economic struggle for us. I think the wealth gap also creates serious obstacles for us due to the difference in educational opportunities, as access to higher education is not easily accessible to us because we lack access to wealth like white Americans. My family which is middle-class are able to achieve higher education and attain a degree of financial status, but we are still not given the same status that a white American from a middle-class background would have.”*

The wealth gap is considered as the main factor keeping black people at a lower level in American society (Burd-Sharps and Rasch, 2015). This wealth gap speaks directly to the lack of employment opportunities and also in terms of educational opportunities (Wolff, 2018).

One respondent stated”

*“There is not only one aspect which is causing major wealth gaps between black and white Americans. The racial wealth gap is observed due to the differences in educational attainments, but also tax policy.*

Scholars feel that black families are facing a major challenge legally regarding tax policies (Kijakazi, 2016). It was highlighted in the national survey that the majority of people that are investigated in regards to their taxes in 2019 were black American families (Herring and Henderson, 2016). As a consequence, a percentage of black Americans have always reacted against society by unfortunately turning to criminal activities (McIntosh, et al., 2020). According to one of the responses it is highlighted that

*“There is definitely a wealth gap between African Americans and white Americans which I feel begins with the relatively low wages for Black people compared to white people. There is a widening racial wealth gap that has affected us specifically as black individuals, families and communities and has contributed to intergenerational economic stagnancy.”*

### **Equality**

Tourse, Hamilton-Mason and Wewiorski (2018) stated that the face of the United States changed from 1963 to 1975 due to the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement and the war on poverty but most importantly the expansion in immigration. Therefore, the 60s could have been thought of as an optimistic year for equality amongst the people. However, López-Narbona (2019) claimed that economic inequality based on race and ethnicity continued to grow significantly from 1975 to 1999 and that was further enhanced by free-market strategies of globalization. The study further stated that the success of the civil rights fight, in 1977, allowed the black minority community to attain middle socio-economic status and the right to live freely. However, issues of unemployment, poor housing and poverty continued to grow for African Americans. A respondent who earlier shared her experiences regarding the inequality she faced during childhood because of racism stated:

*“I still remember that in my childhood when my parents were looking for affordable housing in the USA they faced severe issues as many parts of town they were hoping to live in did not allow black Americans to reside in their neighborhood which prevented us from accessing safe housing.”*

When further asked that if she still faces inequality or any form of discrimination, she responded

*“As an individual from a middle-class background, my view is that African Americans in the USA have always been vulnerable in the labour market because we regularly feel left out of promotional opportunities and we usually are relegated to lower pay and experience higher rates of unemployment. Also, even if we get a reputable job there is always the high possibility that our wages are lower as compared to the white workers in the same job.”*

Her responses shed light on research conducted by López-Narbona (2019) which compliments the respondent’s feeling on how her parents faced difficulty in finding a good neighborhood during her childhood, which was the case in the 1970s when African-Americans were fighting for their basic rights to housing. In addition, it shows that even though she is of middle-class background she still feels her status cannot secure her from discrimination relative to moving up higher in society. Her feelings add weight to the study brought forward by López-Narbona (2019) which states that African-Americans are still vulnerable when it comes to employment opportunities. They are still not given equal work opportunities and their wages are still comparatively low as compared to whites, even when doing the same work. It is clear from her responses that she feels African-Americans will continue to face inequality when it comes to employment.

Another respondent was asked the same question regarding discrimination that he might have experienced and to which he replied,

*“There are many obstacles that have created a number of difficulties for blacks in the USA. There is a lack of relevant social networks for black people which creates a barrier to getting good jobs. Also because of a lack of wealth and savings, we cannot move somewhere else for a better job as compared to white people. Discrimination is also in the form inequity in income as most of us as new workers do not get the earnings a white person would get doing similar jobs.”*

This response also goes along with the study provided by López-Narbona (2019) that the African-American community continues to face inequality when it comes to employment opportunities and pays scale. From the response, it can be judged that African-Americans do not have social networks that could link them with people in their own community to connect to reputable jobs, which shows that the inequality in employment has been persistent for a long time. Lack of wealth and disposable income also keeps them from being flexible to go elsewhere as

per the response. This shows generations of African-Americans continue to live in poverty which restricts their job opportunities in their local communities and elsewhere even if they qualify for it. There is inequality in the pay scale that does not allow them to raise their socio-economic status.

### ***Attitudes about reparations***

Systematic barriers in policies, practices and procedures tend to create an unfavorable environment by giving undue access to a certain group which deprives the other group, creating an imbalance. Kathuria-Prakash et al. (2019) explained that there are systematic barriers in the American education and workplace system. This explanation is further supported by Hirano et al. (2018) that claims that systematic barriers in education tend to be a violation of human rights that prevents a student from a basic quality education. The same study continues to claim that systematic barriers in education have been common in the African American community throughout history. The tragedy of it all is that the main objective of systematic barriers in education in America is based solely on race. A respondent who belongs to the African American community was asked whether reparations would help their community in overcoming the damage that has been done to them due to racial discriminations.

*“I think it would be definitely helpful for African Americans in the USA if the government focused on different forms of reparations to reduce the effects of discrimination. There are some recommended forms of reparations for the city, county, national governments and private institutions including settlements, individual monetary payments, scholarships, waiving of fees and land-based compensation. Some black communities are already working for reparations for those injustices related to slavery. Because many people of color have been discriminated against, I think it is an easy argument to say that Black people should be compensated for the amount of discrimination they have been facing in education, and employment from the time of slavery.”*

It can be analyzed from this response that the study conducted by Kathuria-Prakash et al. (2019) and Hirano et al. (2018) is true to a great extent because African Americans have been worst affected by discrimination in education and employment opportunities. The respondent suggests that scholarships and waiving of fees could be one of the few measures that could act

as reparations because it would give African Americans access to a quality education. The lack of a quality education has led to a large percentage of blacks not being qualified for opportunities even if they were available, relegating many to low incomes. Lack of education leads to low-income jobs which leads to not having enough money to sustain a good life. As a result, lack of fair opportunities in education has kept a gap in almost all aspects of life for African Americans.

Another respondent was asked the same question and the response was rather discouraging, in the sense that he did not consider it as means of justification to the experiences he has had when it comes to discrimination.

*“It can be helpful but I am not sure it would ever be enough for what our people have suffered. As a middle-class African American, I believe reparations would have been helpful if they actually helped to undo the centuries of discrimination that we and our forefathers have continued to face. That's why I believe that reparations are of no use and does not really serve the purpose because I doubt it would be enough.”*

The respondent claimed that reparations would not suffice the discrimination the African American community has been facing for generations. He also showed mistrust in the American government that goes along with the study done by Hirano et al. (2018). However, this is a common response received from other African American respondents as well. They do not trust the government to adequately provide reparations for the damage that has been done throughout the history of blacks in America. They feel that the government that did not take steps for many years, could not possibly change overnight and remedy the needs of the African-American community. In this regards, socioeconomic instability is a vital element of conflict dynamics and needs to be investigated and comprehended. It has been noted that conflicts are embedded in deeper socioeconomic inequalities that further leads to exploitation.

## **Summary**

The study was focused on the analysis and discussion of the responses gathered from the interviewees. The analysis and discussion are based on the various themes that were generated through applying thematic analysis. It was concluded that black people are still facing

racism and non-equity issues in the United States. Moreover, although the government has taken numerous steps to overcome these differences and the culture of racism, black people are still living without a sense of satisfaction and equality. Black Americans are even judged and treated differently by the legal authorities. There remains a significant gap in the lifestyles of white and black Americans that needs to be analyzed and discussed in future studies.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

1. Do you feel systematic racism exists in your personal life?
2. How do you think it has impacted your life?
3. In what aspect of your life have you witnessed systematic racism personally?
4. Have you tried doing something to prevent it from getting worse or stopping it?
5. Do you know what are reparations?
6. What are your views about reparations?
7. In your view, to what extent does reparations help in eliminating systemic racism?
8. Do you think reparations would help in a country like the United States? Why or why not?





# SIT Graduate Institute

School for International Training

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Form

**Title of the Study:** A Case for Reparations

**Researcher Name:** Randal McKoy

My name is Randal McKoy and I am a student in the Sustainable Development Masters Program at SIT Graduate Institute. I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting for partial fulfillment of my MA in SD. Your participation is voluntary. Please read the information below, and feel free to ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and return it to me.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

African-Americans continue to face systematic discrimination to their economic and sustainable well being. Much research has been done on how they can achieve this goal; many observers feel through attainment of a quality education and financial independence. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the reality that none of these achievements have proven to undue the systemic barriers they still face. This study will seek to answer the question as to what extent reparations could be the solution.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES**

Your participation will involve answer the relevant questions listed and it should take approximately 45 minutes of your time.

**POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study and no penalties should you choose not to participate; participation is voluntary. During the interview, you have the right not to answer any questions or to discontinue participation at any time.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

The benefits to you participating in this study may be minimal but the benefits to the African-American communities throughout the United States have the potential to be significant. With your participation advanced awareness and knowledge could be gained in the continued efforts to achieve true and sustainable equality for black people in America.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. I will create a pseudonym(fake name) for you and modify any of your personal, identifiable information. Upon completion of the study, I will destroy all transcripts and recordings of your interview. As a participant, you are free at any time to share your questions or concerns with me relative to the confidentiality of the research and your responses.

At the completion of the study when the results are published, or shared with the public, no identifiable information will be used.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

“I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.”

Participant’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please also indicate your preference below by signing your initials:

\_\_\_\_ I would like to participate and agree to be recorded for the interview

\_\_\_\_ I would like to participate but I do not wish to be recorded for the interview

**RESEARCHER'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at [randal.mckoy@mail.sit.edu](mailto:randal.mckoy@mail.sit.edu) or my advisor Dr. Bruce Dayton at [bruce.dayton@sit.edu](mailto:bruce.dayton@sit.edu).

**RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION**

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by an SIT Institutional Review Board. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or the research in general and are unable to contact the researcher please contact the Institutional Review Board at:

School for International Training Institutional Review Board

1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676

Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA

[irb@sit.edu](mailto:irb@sit.edu)

802-258-3132

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Guide**

#### **Background**

1. Please tell me about yourself. What is your families history in the United States?
2. How would you describe your families social and economic status growing up?
3. What challenges did you face growing up as an African American?

#### **Education and Career**

1. What is your highest level of education achieved?
2. What do you do for a living?
3. Describe how your educational attainment has allowed you to be successful?
4. Do you feel there are still barriers holding you back despite your educational achievements?

#### **Wealth Gap and Need for Reparations**

1. In your opinion, do you think African-Americans are suffering after-effects of slavery in the current time?
2. How do you think slavery has affected the lives of African-American children in the U.S. currently?
3. Do you think there is such a thing in the society known as a wealth gap for African Americans?
4. Do you think government is doing enough to curb the situation of wealth gap that exists between black Americans and white Americans?
5. How do you feel African-Americans are still facing discrimination in the U.S.?
6. Do you think any kind of reparation would be helpful to African-Americans for all the discrimination they have gone through?

