

# How the Legacy of Slavery Affects the Social and Economic Position of Black Americans to this Day

INEQUALITY BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE IN EDUCATION, WELFARE, AND HOUSING



Maike Duenk  
S1006577  
Bachelor Thesis American Studies

First reader: dr. P.B. van der Heiden  
Second reader: asst. prof. Albertine Bloemendal  
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Signed

Duenk, M.

Name of student: Maaïke Duenk

Student number: S1006577

## Abstract

Black people remain marginalized in contemporary United States society, socially as well as economically. This thesis explains how contemporary marginalization is a product and a legacy of slavery. In three chapters, this thesis respectively deals with the history of black people in the United States, four concepts of race relations, and three institutions in which this marginalization is apparent. The legacy of slavery, namely institutional racism and white privilege, is still very clearly present in contemporary United States society. This affects the social and economic position of black Americans in a negative manner. To show how black Americans are still disproportionately hindered, this thesis analyzes the difference between black and white Americans in terms of housing, education, and welfare.

*Keywords:* legacy of slavery; marginalization; black-white; racial resentment; institutionalized racism; white privilege; behavioral path dependency; welfare gap; achievement gap; segregation

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## Acknowledgments

My interest for this topic was sparked when I studied abroad at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill last Fall. While I was there, I volunteered at the Marian Cheek Jackson Center, a community center in the Northside neighborhood. Their motto is to renew and build the community while preserving and teaching its history. With a walking tour and ‘Northside Stories’, they share the history of the neighborhood and its residents with people in Orange County, NC. They also provide an after-school program, soup kitchen, and a housing initiative. In meetings I attended, I learned about the achievement gap, gentrification of the neighborhood, and the history of segregation in Chapel Hill and North Carolina specifically. Additionally, I enrolled in a course called ‘Race and the Right to Vote in the U.S.’ I learned that there still is a lot of inequality between white and black people in the United States, and I wanted to research for myself on which this inequality was based.

Writing this thesis in times of Covid-19 was challenging, but I learned how to find my focus and to ask for help. First of all, I want to thank my supervisor Dr. van der Heiden for his flexibility, feedback, and reassuring phone calls. Secondly, I want to thank Lisette Brussee and Denise Roodbeen for their peer feedback. I also want to thank Ivanka Hoenderboom, who helped me plan this huge project when it all seemed very overwhelming. My gratitude also goes out to Emiel van Rheenen who often got me out of my bubble and encouraged me to broaden my research. Lastly, I want to thank my roommates and friends for their moral support, our coffee breaks, and the board game nights to take our minds off our theses.

“There’s a prejudice against us...  
that will take years to get over.”

- *Reverend Garrison Frazier, January 1865*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 408.

## Introduction

In 2019, researchers Juliana Horowitz, Anna Brown, and Kiana Cox conducted a survey for Pew Research Center, a leading nonpartisan fact tank that conducts opinion polling and demographic research in the United States.<sup>2</sup> They polled how Americans think the legacy of slavery still affects black Americans to this day. The recipients were American adults of several ethnicities, but most charts only show the answers of people that identify as white and people that identify as black. The recipients were asked questions about race relations in the U.S., for instance about the Obama administration and the Trump administration, and if race relations in the U.S. have changed when the administration changed. They also polled how people of different ethnic groups estimate advantages of being white and how important race and ethnicity are for one's identity.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most interesting results of the survey for this thesis is that a whopping 63 percent of the recipients answered that they believe that the legacy of slavery still “affects the position of black people in American society today either a great deal or a fair amount.”<sup>4</sup> Of this 63 percent, most recipients are black themselves; eight out of ten black Americans feel that the legacy of slavery still affects their lives to this day. Six of them would even say that it does so “a great deal.”<sup>5</sup> More than half of the recipients of other ethnic groups agree with the statement as well, though acknowledge that black Americans are affected “a fair amount.”<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that, even though a large number of citizens recognizes the lasting effect of the legacy of slavery, black people are still affected socially and economically, and are still treated unequally.

Slavery was abolished more than 150 years ago, yet Americans still feel its lasting influence on society. When slavery ended, the population in the United States was around ten percent of the 328 million it is today. The world and the United States have changed these past 150 years. It is therefore a fair point of view to ask whether an economic system - where one population group exploited another - that was abolished one and a half-century ago can still have a lasting effect on contemporary society. The United States have had to come a long way since the system of slavery was abolished, with markers like the Reconstruction, the Jim Crow Era, the Civil Rights Movement, and now Black Lives Matter. It seems that the United States is still not past the root of it all. This root gave slavery the chance to become such a

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<sup>2</sup> Juliana M. Horowitz, Anna Brown, and Kiana Cox, “Race in America 2019,” Pew Research Center, April 9, 2019, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/04/09/race-in-america-2019/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

powerful system. This root set the laws for the Jim Crow Era. This root gave life to the Plessy v. Ferguson doctrine; separate but equal, where the equality part was hard to find. The name of this root? Racism; the belief that humans belong to certain races of which some are superior to others, and this superiority feeds behavior like prejudicing, discriminating, and hostility.<sup>7</sup>

Racism is still a problem in today's society. Some people are outspoken racist, but others would say that they are not racist at all, yet they might show signs of unconscious bias. The Implicit Association Test (IAT), done by Harvard researchers, "measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report."<sup>8</sup> For instance, a person can report that they think that men and women can be equally as good at being a surgeon. Yet, they might unconsciously associate the word 'surgeon' with a man. The same is possible with race; a subject might say that they do not care about race, but when they take the IAT a result might be that they prefer white people over black people. Racial views, even biases, can have a direct influence on people's lives and society as a whole. Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan did a study<sup>9</sup> where they sent resumes to businesses. All resumes were exactly the same, except for the name of the candidate. The result of the experiment was that the resumes with white-sounding names received 50 percent more callbacks than the resumes with black-sounding names.<sup>10</sup> This might be due to explicit racism or due to unconscious bias, but in both cases the result is that it is harder for black people to get hired. The second part of the study might be even more influential for black people's career prospects; when the researchers increased the quality of the resumes, the callbacks on the resumes with white-sounding names went up with 30 percent, while the change in callbacks for resumes with black-sounding names was negligible.<sup>11</sup>

Racism can surface in many different forms. Institutionalized racism, in which people of minority ethnicities are systematically disadvantaged, does not only come from the fewer outspoken racists who might be part of white nationalist organizations. The group of people that are unconsciously racist also have a large role in this, because even a little bias can change how people are treated. On a larger scale, this influences how people are treated in society and thus by social and economic institutions. This thesis will go into institutionalized racism, negrophobia, and racial resentment. Political scientists Edward Carmines, Paul

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<sup>7</sup> "Racism," Meriam Webster, accessed April 28, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism>.

<sup>8</sup> "Project Implicit," Harvard University, accessed May 4, 2020, <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination," University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, May 27, 2003, [http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract\\_id=422902](http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract_id=422902).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Sniderman, and Beth Easter discuss in their publication how white privilege gives life to this new kind of racism.<sup>12</sup> Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen discuss how racial resentment is present to a greater extent in places that have a history of slavery versus places where slavery was less prominent.<sup>13</sup> They say that the behavior of racial resentment, but also institutionalized racism itself, can be traced back to behavioral path dependency. While the aforementioned studies thoroughly discuss the effects of racism in general, racial hostility, institutionalized racism, white privilege, behavioral path dependency, and race relations, some do seem to miss the extra step to analyze what this means for contemporary policy in the United States and how this and the status quo influences specific displays of inequality, like for instance the achievement gap or gentrification. This thesis will take that extra step, therefore the question that arises is: what is the legacy of slavery in present-day U.S. society, and how does this legacy affect the social and economic position of black Americans.

This thesis will deal with this question in three parts. To draw conclusions about the legacy of slavery on present-day policies and how the status quo might disadvantage the black community, we first have to look back at the history of the black population in the United States. The first chapter addresses slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Jim Crow Era, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement. When the history of the black community in the United States is discussed, we need to look deeper at race relations in the modern era. This is where Acharya's, Blackwell's, and Sen's theory on 'behavioral path dependency'<sup>14</sup> combined with theory on racial resentment, white privilege, and institutionalized racism comes into play. The next step is to research the achievement gap, welfare, and housing to see if there is a difference in opportunities for black people and white people, and what incites these hypothesized differences.

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<sup>12</sup> Edward G. Carmines, Paul M. Sniderman, and Beth C. Easter, "On the Meaning, Measurement, and Implications of Racial Resentment," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 634, no.1 (2011): 98–116.

<sup>13</sup> Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen, *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen, *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), p. 5.

## Chapter 1 – Historical Context

In order to understand how after 150 years, the legacy of slavery still has its grip on United States society, it is necessary to discuss some time periods, court cases, events, and counter-movements, and the consequences they brought. This chapter will chronologically go into the hardships that the black community has dealt with from the time of slavery until today.

### 1.1 Slavery

Out of the ten million slaves that survived the Middle Passage, around 430,000 were brought to what is now known as the United States.<sup>15</sup> For more than six generations white European nations approved and aided the intercontinental trade of black Africans. Marsh explains that this system had to be justified somehow. White slave traders and the nations that tolerated and initiated this fashion of commerce argued that black people were “inherently and by divine law” lower than white people.<sup>16</sup> After the American Revolution most white people justified slavery by arguing that “people of African descent were less than fully human.”<sup>17</sup> Around the American Revolution the concept of race, “the idea that the human species is divided into distinct groups on the basis of inherited physical and behavioral differences,”<sup>18</sup> began to form in American politics. This was merely to distinguish white European Americans from others, to assert European American beliefs in superiority.<sup>19</sup> The concept of race gave way to notions of behavioral differences, and thus to stereotypes. Thomas Jefferson, wrote in his Notes to the State of Virginia that blacks are inferior to whites, both in body and mind. While he argued that they have the same capacity of memory, he also claims that they are much inferior in reason.<sup>20</sup> Other stereotypes about black people were that they were lazy, unintelligent, sexually promiscuous, and that black men were after white women.<sup>21</sup>

Congress halted slave import from 1808, however, the abolishment of slavery and the

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<sup>15</sup> Ciara Campbell, *Slavery in America* (New York: Rosen Publishing, 2016), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Henry Marsh, *Slavery and Race: A Story of Slavery and its Legacy for Today* (Vancouver: David & Charles Limited, 1974), 97.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Beth Norton, Jane Kamensky, Carol Sheriff, David W. Blight, and Howard Chudacoff, *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 191.

<sup>18</sup> “Race,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/race-human>.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia; Query XIV,” *In A Norton Anthology: The Literature of the American South*, ed. William L. Andrews (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1998), .

<sup>21</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 191.

emancipation of slaves remained a state affair instead of a federal one. When the international slave trade ended, the domestic slave trade skyrocketed in the South. The plantation economy expanded and the white planters depended on the enslavement of black people for cheap labor.<sup>22</sup> For the years to come until the Civil War, white southerners referred to slavery as ‘a positive good,’ they argued that whites were the intellectual race, and that slaves were property protected by the Constitution. The North had abolished slavery since the late 1700s. At the start of the Civil War almost 250,000 free black lived in the northern states. However, black people in the North also did not have the chances their fellow white northerners had. With laws that denied blacks to testify in court, black men to vote, and forced black youth in indenture contracts to control them, black people were still segregated from northern society. Due to white racism, city laws barred black Americans from public buildings, and restaurants, streetcars, and theaters could refuse black Americans without being penalized. Furthermore, there was a lot of racial violence. Black-owned houses, churches, and businesses were destroyed, and white rioters clubbed and stoned black Americans.<sup>23</sup>

From the 1830s onwards, a majority of the slaves was U.S. born. In 1857 the federal Dred Scott decision overturned the Missouri Compromise.<sup>24</sup> The Supreme Court ruled that Congress had no power to bar slavery from any new territory and that the Declaration of Independence did not acknowledge the imported slaves or their free or enslaved descendants as part of ‘the people.’<sup>25</sup> The decision once more affirmed that the Founding Fathers never intended for black Americans to be citizens of the United States, not even if they were born there.<sup>26</sup> The decision brought the country closer to the inevitable Civil War.

## 1.2 Civil War and Reconstruction

In December 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was signed. The Amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude within the United States, and any place subject to their jurisdiction.<sup>27</sup> Slavery was an institution that defined the “social, economic, and political

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 236.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 284.

<sup>24</sup> In depth information on the Dred Scott decision: “The Slavery Question. Dred Scott decision: To the Free Voters of Ohio,” Library of Congress, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/item/92838825/>.

<sup>25</sup> “Image 18 of The Dred Scott Decision: Opinion of Chief Justice Taney,” Library of Congress, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/llst.022/?sp=18&st=text>, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 369.

<sup>27</sup> “Thirteenth Amendment: Abolition of Slavery,” National Constitution Center, accessed May 28, 2020, <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendment/amendment-xiii>.

landscape”<sup>28</sup> of the southern United States. The self-proclaimed Confederate States fought in the Civil War to maintain slavery in their states. Many whites in areas where blacks outnumbered whites, sometimes nine to one, felt threatened when slavery was abolished. Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen explain that the “prevalence of slavery, coupled with the shock of its removal, created strong incentives for Black Belt whites to try to preserve both their political and economic power by promoting racially targeted violence, anti-black norms, and, to the extent legally possible, racist institutions.”<sup>29</sup> To ensure that they did not have to pay blacks wages, Southern white landowners came up with a new form of labor coercion to succeed slavery.<sup>30</sup> Former slaves did not have the money to buy their own land, so they were forced to work for large plantation owners. This new way of exploiting former slaves and small white farmers was called sharecropping. The landowner would supply food and work gear, and received a portion of the crop as payment. However, the debt was often larger than the crop’s profit. Sharecroppers faced increasing debt that “bound them to landowners almost as oppressively as slavery.”<sup>31</sup>

In 1866, Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>32</sup> The amendment remitted the Dred Scott decision and proclaiming that black people were citizens of the United States. The amendment also called for fair protection from the law and entails that a state cannot deprive any citizen of “life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”<sup>33</sup> This second Reconstruction amendment was narrowed by the Supreme Court in the 1870s.<sup>34</sup> The Court limited section one<sup>35</sup> to federal citizenship instead of extending it to state citizenship. This meant that the protection of citizens’ equal rights rested with the states. This weakened the potential of the Reconstruction amendments.<sup>36</sup> In 1870 the third Reconstruction Amendment (the Fifteenth Amendment) was ratified, stating that the right “to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition

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<sup>28</sup> Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen, “The Political Legacy of American Slavery,” *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 3 (2016): 621.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 632.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 633.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 410.

<sup>32</sup> “Fourteenth Amendment: Citizenship Rights, Equal Protection, Apportionment, Civil War Debt,” National Constitution Center, accessed May 28, 2020, <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendment/amendment-xiv>.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> In depth information on the Slaughterhouse cases: “Slaughterhouse Cases, 83 U.S. 36 (1872),” Justitia US Supreme Court, accessed May 28, 2020, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/83/36/>.

<sup>35</sup> “Fourteenth Amendment: Citizenship Rights, Equal Protection, Apportionment, Civil War Debt,” National Constitution Center, accessed May 28, 2020, <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendment/amendment-xiv>.

<sup>36</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 429.

of servitude.”<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, the wording gave a lot of room to restrict the right to vote on other grounds. States for instance inserted qualification and literacy tests to obstruct voting.<sup>38</sup>

### 1.3 Jim Crow Era

The nine-tenths of black Americans that lived in the South faced intimidation, violence, and exclusion.<sup>39</sup> The violence was so detrimental that more than seventeen hundred black Americans were lynched in the South between 1889 and 1909.<sup>40</sup> Besides having to fear for their lives, black Americans were subject to inferiority by legalized segregation, the so-called Jim Crow Laws. State-supported schools and offices excluded blacks, and voting rights were denied. While the Fifteenth Amendment stated that people could not be denied the vote on grounds of skin color or former servitude, white elites restricted the vote by poll taxes and literary tests to disproportionately disenfranchise blacks.<sup>41</sup>

In the North, black Americans were segregated by custom more than actual law. The discrimination in “housing, employment, and access to facilities such as parks, hotels, and department stores”<sup>42</sup> limited the opportunities of black Americans. The Supreme Court upheld segregation, whether by law or custom, with their ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.<sup>43</sup> The ruling legalized “separate facilities for black and white Americans as long as they were equal.”<sup>44</sup> Three years later, in 1899, the Court legitimated school segregation on grounds of race. The North also dealt with the Great Migration,<sup>45</sup> which began in 1910. Around one-and-a-half million black Americans moved to the North in search of industrial jobs and a better life. The migration doubled the population of black Americans in large northern cities like New York, Chicago, and Detroit. The fear of black people moving into white neighborhoods made neighborhood associations adopt “restrictive covenants”<sup>46</sup> to let homeowners vow not to sell

<sup>37</sup> “Fifteenth Amendment: Right to Vote Not Denied by Race,” National Constitution Center, accessed May 28, 2020, <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendment/amendment-xv>.

<sup>38</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 421

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 530.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 500.

<sup>41</sup> Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen, “The Political Legacy of American Slavery,” *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 3 (2016): 634.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 500.

<sup>43</sup> “U.S. Reports: *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896),” Library of Congress, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep163537/>, 543.

<sup>44</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 502.

<sup>45</sup> In depth information on the Great Migration: Stewart E. Tolnay, “The African American “Great Migration” and Beyond,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 29, no. 1 (2003): 209-232.

<sup>46</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 612.

or rent their houses to black Americans. Blacks were forced into cheap housing in crowded black neighborhoods. The competition between black and white Americans for housing and jobs incited racial violence in the North as well as in the South.<sup>47</sup>

Black participation in World War I did not much to change discrimination. The army too was segregated, and while black troops fought in Europe, the KKK revived and lynching continued at home. The Great Depression during the 1930s increased civil unrest and racial violence. Roosevelt's New Deal did not aid black Americans as much as white Americans as the national program was implemented at the local level. Especially in the South, black Americans were paid less for Works Progress Administration (WPA) jobs.<sup>48</sup> However, the New Deal did help black Americans, even though disproportionate from white Americans. 35 percent of black American households lived on an income from a WPA job.<sup>49</sup> When black Americans fought in segregated battalions in World War II, black leaders wanted to steer the focus of the United States to the parallels between racist "Nazi doctrines and the Jim Crow segregation."<sup>50</sup> They wanted a "Double V": victory at home and abroad. The victory at home would be to have a more enlightened attitude towards black Americans, to end segregation, and to ensure voting rights.<sup>51</sup>

#### 1.4 Civil Rights Movement

Black Americans who had fought in World War II were persistent to have a better life at home. Ever since 1909 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has battled to stop racial discrimination, lynching, and has fought for voting rights through court cases and other non-violent actions. At the start of WWI, the NAACP had 6,000 members. They grew to 50,000 members at the start of WWII. Then the numbers surged to 450,000 members by the end of WWII.<sup>52</sup> Besides the NAACP, who mostly fought their battles through court cases, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized "nonviolent direct action" by holding staged sit-ins to end segregation in public places.<sup>53</sup> Especially the northern state legislatures felt the pressure of the civil rights organizations. Due to NAACP lawsuits black students were granted admission to state universities, racially restrictive

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 478.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 658.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 659.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 685.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 531.

<sup>53</sup> "The Civil Rights History Project: CORE," Library of Congress, accessed June 2, 2020, [https://www.loc.gov/folklife/civilrights/survey/view\\_collection.php?coll\\_id=2915](https://www.loc.gov/folklife/civilrights/survey/view_collection.php?coll_id=2915).

housing covenants were declared illegal,<sup>54</sup> and interstate bus transportation desegregated.<sup>55</sup> Another NAACP victory was the desegregation of schools in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The Court ruled that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal,”<sup>56</sup> thus overruling *Plessy v. Ferguson*.<sup>57</sup> Other actions of the NAACP and CORE were non-violent, sometimes long-term actions, to draw attention to unconstitutional situations. For instance, the thirteen months Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted until the Supreme Court declared that “Alabama’s bus segregation laws [were] unconstitutional.”<sup>58</sup>

During the Civil Rights Movement, the KKK resurged, and white violence against black Americans increased. The White Citizens’ Councils, set up by white business owners and professional whites, reacted with a program they called “massive resistance.”<sup>59</sup> Through the state legislature they for instance pushed for private-school tuition so that white children could attend private schools and thus avoid integration. Racial discrimination remained an issue despite the efforts of Civil Rights’ activists. Suburbs, in both the North and South, remained racially segregated. Children went to schools in their neighborhoods, and as the neighborhoods were segregated, the schools were segregated as well.<sup>60</sup> Civil Rights activists continued with their actions to make civil rights a top priority on the political agenda. The Freedom Riders, for instance, traveled from Washington DC to New Orleans by bus to show that the interstate buses and stations were still segregated in the South, even though the Supreme Court ruled it illegal. They were met with baseball bats and steel bars by white crowds in Montgomery, and outside Anniston, a bus was bombed. The police did not intervene and the commissioner called the Freedom Riders troublemakers.<sup>61</sup> Another non-violent demonstration was Project C. This was a campaign of peaceful demonstrations, sit-ins, marches, and boycotts in Birmingham, Alabama in April 1963. The reaction of law enforcement, like using fire hoses and police dogs on men, women, and even children, made President Kennedy react to the chaos by saying that “the cries for equality cannot be ignored anymore by any state or legislative body.”<sup>62</sup> On June 11, Kennedy addressed the nation in a

<sup>54</sup> “*Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948),” Justitia U.S. Supreme Court, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/334/1/>.

<sup>55</sup> “*Morgan v. Virginia*, 328 U.S. 373 (1946),” Justitia U.S. Supreme Court, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/328/373/>.

<sup>56</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 740.

<sup>57</sup> “U.S. Reports: *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896),” Library of Congress, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep163537/>.

<sup>58</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 741.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 742.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 766.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 768.

televised address on Civil Rights. He asked Congress to pass a civil rights bill protecting all “voting rights, legal standing, educational opportunities, and access to public facilities.”<sup>63</sup> The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) saw the proposed bill “as too little, too late”<sup>64</sup> and organized their March on Washington for jobs and freedom in August 1963, where King Jr. delivered his famous ‘I Have a Dream’-speech.

President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in July after the southern bloc in the Senate had filibustered for 57 days.<sup>65</sup> The bill ended legal discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or origin in public places, schools, and employment.<sup>66</sup> Many conservatives felt that the federal government had overstepped the constitutional boundaries with this act. They wanted the reinforcement of the Act to lie with the local government and state government, instead of with the federal government. Civil Rights leaders wanted to call more attention to Voting Rights, which were not secured yet. A large group marched from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to mobilize federal action for voting rights. Peaceful demonstrators were attacked by state troopers with electric cattle prods, tear gas, and chains on the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 6, 1965.<sup>67</sup> As a reaction president Johnson spoke to Congress a few days later to call for voting rights legislation. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, the second civil rights bill, outlawed practices that disproportionately prevented black people from voting in the South. It also secured oversight in federal elections when a district had a discriminatory past.<sup>68</sup>

But even after these two bills, the United States remained largely segregated by custom. Racism outlasted legal segregation, and many black Americans felt that they would remain to be seen inferior in the white-dominated society.<sup>69</sup> The report of the 1968 Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders blamed white racism instead of black anger for the race riots and warned that the United States was heading for an unequally split society, white versus black.<sup>70</sup> On black ghettos the Commission concluded that “white institutions created it, white

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<sup>63</sup> “Televised Address to the Nation on Civil Rights,” JFK Presidential Library and Museum, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/historic-speeches/televised-address-to-the-nation-on-civil-rights>.

<sup>64</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 769.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 771.

<sup>66</sup> “Civil Rights Act (1964),” Our Documents, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=97>.

<sup>67</sup> “Selma to Montgomery March,” Stanford The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/selma-montgomery-march>.

<sup>68</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 772.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 792.

<sup>70</sup> Alice George, “The 1968 Kerner Commission Got It Right, But Nobody Listened,” Smithsonian Magazine, March 1, 2018, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/1968-kerner-commission-got-it-right-nobody-listened-180968318/>.

institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.”<sup>71</sup> Both in the North and South black Americans remained segregated from white society, they still faced discrimination in housing, credit, and employment. In the North blacks’ median income was half as low as that of northern whites, and their unemployment rate was twice as high.<sup>72</sup> Thus ending the height of the Civil Rights Era with two revolutionary bills, but also with a segregated society and lasting racism.

## 1.5 Black Lives Matter

The Black Lives Matter movement was set up in 2012 after the death of unarmed black teenager Trayvon Martin. The movement was an online movement in the early beginnings as #blacklivesmatter. The initiators call it an “ideological and political intervention”<sup>73</sup> because black people are systematically targeted. The Black Lives Matter movement is a decentralized organization with 16 chapters in the United States and Canada. The movement is always working towards a better world for black people in a peaceful, non-violent matter. However, #blacklivesmatter and the slogan Black Lives Matter is also used apart from the organization.

In June 2020, people in all states of the United States started protesting against the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who was choked to death under a police officer’s knee. ‘Black Lives Matter’ is one of the slogans that is used in these protests, and while the protests are largely peaceful during the day, protesting escalates into violent riots in the evenings. The slogan Black Lives Matter, which at that moment has nothing to do with the organization, is still used during these violent approaches of protesting. This can lead to disrespect for the movement because a little group ruins it for the rest. The official Black Lives Matter chapters condemn the violence used by these protesters and ensure that the organization has nothing to do with this violent approach.

A countermovement of the Black Lives Matter movement is the slogan ‘all lives matter.’ The thought behind this is that everyone is equal, and that society should be colorblind. Black Lives Matter agrees that all lives matter, but their objection is that due to racism and racist violence ‘all lives matter’ is not a thing that exists yet. Judith Butler, a

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<sup>71</sup> “1968 Kerner Commission Report,” Berkeley Othering and Belonging Institute, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/1968-kerner-commission-report>.

<sup>72</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 780.

<sup>73</sup> Janell Hobson, *Are All the Women Still White? Rethinking Race, Expanding Feminisms* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 23.

philosopher specialized in ethics, agrees and says about this subject: “if we jump too quickly to the universal formulation, ‘all lives matter,’ then we miss the fact that black people have not yet been included in the idea of ‘all lives.’”<sup>74</sup> Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, a professor in African-American studies at Princeton University, chimes in by saying that the “entire point of Black Lives Matter is to illustrate the extent to which black lives have not mattered in this country.”<sup>75</sup>

## 1.6 Chapter Conclusion

The United States has had a long-lasting history of oppression, racial violence, and segregation. A large part of the black community in the United States, but also in other places in the western world, is still subordinate to the white community in terms of welfare, employment opportunities, education, health care, housing, and they have to deal with police violence and ethnic profiling.<sup>76</sup> The ‘Race in America in 2019’-report showed that black adults are “skeptical about the prospects for racial equality in the future.”<sup>77</sup> Even after illegalizing segregation, communities are still largely segregated. Racism can be present in different forms, from implicit bias to being a member of an alt-right movement. To analyze how racism seeps through a society and how black Americans are still marginalized, the next chapter will deal with concepts like white privilege, racial resentment, institutionalized racism, and behavioral path dependency.

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<sup>74</sup> Daniel Victor, “Why All Lives Matter is Such a Perilous Phrase,” The New York Times, July 15, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/16/us/all-lives-matter-black-lives-matter.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> “Dit is het Verhaal Achter de Black Lives Matter-Beweging,” NOS op 3, accessed July 6, 2020, <https://nos.nl/op3/collectie/13842/artikel/2336375-dit-is-het-verhaal-achter-de-black-lives-matter-beweging>.

<sup>77</sup> Horowitz, Juliana M., Anna Brown, and Kiana Cox. “Race in America 2019.” Pew Research Center, April 9, 2019, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/04/09/race-in-america-2019/>, 4.

## Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework

The United States has dealt with racism for a long time. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century the system of slavery was based on the belief that black people were subordinate to white people. The notion of race made its way into people’s vocabulary, and value judgments were linked to physical and behavioral differences. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, black Americans have been treated as different, and sometimes still as being subordinate. This chapter will delve into four concepts to explain how racist behavior, in whatever gradation, is passed on through generations, embedded in institutions, and thus still affecting the place of black Americans in society.

### 2.1 White Privilege

Peggy McIntosh, a research scientist at the Wellesley Centers for Women analyzed the privileges that she has as a white woman in society. She refers to this privilege as having an invisible knapsack that aids her every day. McIntosh defines white privilege as an “unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed upon people solely because they are white.”<sup>78</sup> In her working paper she addresses everyday situations in which she can count on certain things to happen due to her white skin color. Three of the conditions she mentions are “When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is,” “I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection,” and “I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.”<sup>7980</sup> White people today receive this privilege as a byproduct of institutionalized racism, and it is an outcome of decennia of choices that aid white people and marginalize black people. Ashley Jardina, a political scientist at Duke University, asserts that it is important to recognize white privilege in combatting racial inequality.<sup>81</sup>

Zeus Leonardo, researcher at Berkeley University, addresses that white people recreate the history of white racial domination, individually and institutionally.<sup>82</sup> He points to the

<sup>78</sup> Peggy McIntosh, “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” Resources, Racial Equality Tools, June 11, 2020, <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>, 1.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>80</sup> The rest of the conditions can be found in Peggy McIntosh, “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” Resources, Racial Equality Tools, June 11, 2020, <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>, 2-5.

<sup>81</sup> Ashley Jardina, *White Identity Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 129.

<sup>82</sup> Zeus Leonardo, “The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the Discourse of ‘White Privilege’,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 36, no. 2 (2004): 139.

structural origins that made white people privileged over the back of minorities. While some would argue that this is a thing of the past, white privilege is still visible in contemporary society. Leonardo argues that whites have created a white world in which they can thrive as an in-group.<sup>83</sup> This is for instance visible in the conditions McIntosh describes, but also in something as little as the color of a bandage, and something as large as the job market, where a white person with the exact same resume and letter as a black person receives 50 percent more callbacks.<sup>84</sup>

It is important to recognize white privilege because these unearned advantages make the world less equal. It also aids to racial policies, as further discussed in paragraph 2.3 and withholds changes to ensure that people of different ethnicities are more equal, as discussed in 2.4. In a society where many white people argue to be colorblind and that skin color does not matter, it is important that white people recognize their skin color, the advantages it brings, but also the disadvantages it simultaneously brings to non-white people.<sup>85</sup>

## 2.2 Behavioral Path Dependence

Like language and religion, attitudes are somethings that can be passed on to a new generation. These attitudes may include political and racial attitudes. Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen introduce the term *behavioral path dependence*<sup>86</sup> to describe this form of intergenerational sharing of beliefs and attitudes. Behavioral path dependence explains how some attitudes can persist across generations, fueled by family bonds and communities, and tied to institutions.<sup>87</sup> Behavior, norms, and attitudes can become deeply rooted in a part of society and are reinforced by intergenerational socialization and institutional reinforcement.

Intergenerational socialization refers to upbringing and family ties. Children are exposed to “political, racial, and religious attitudes of their parents” and other family members, and therefore form similar attitudes than their relatives.<sup>88</sup> Political scientists also

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>84</sup> Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination,” University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, May 27, 2003, [http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract\\_id=422902](http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract_id=422902).

<sup>85</sup> Charles A. Gallagher, “Color-Blind Privilege: The Social and Political Functions of Erasing the Color Line in Post-Race America,” *Race, Gender & Class* 10, no. 4 (2003): 22

<sup>86</sup> While path dependency is a well-known concept in social sciences, it is normally used for the analysis of institutions rather than attitudes or beliefs.

<sup>87</sup> Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen, *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 11.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 36.

find that partisan attitudes or attitudes with a “strong affective or moral component,”<sup>89</sup> like racial attitudes, are the most apparent beliefs passed on to children by parents and older relatives.<sup>90</sup> Historian Jennifer Ritterhouse uses a similar concept when she explains how in the twentieth century, white children continued the system of segregation by enforcing traditional patterns of learned privilege and domination.<sup>91</sup> Kristina DuRocher also uses a similar concept to explain how white children grew up in the Jim Crow South, learning that they belong to a “superior race.”<sup>92</sup>

Institutional reinforcement also ensures the continuity of attitudes through generations. Institutions are reinforced by culture, and vice versa. For example, when slavery was abolished, white people often felt hostile toward black people. This racial hostility led to establishing institutions like Jim Crow laws. These institutions resultingly enforced racially hostile behavior in white children growing up with this institution. Simultaneously, beliefs and attitudes can reinforce and maintain institutions and policies.

### 2.3 Institutionalized Racism

Most researchers that look into institutionalized racism use the definition as provided by Sir William Macpherson in 1999. He defines institutionalized racism as “the collective failure of an [organization] to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their [color], culture, or ethnic origin.”<sup>93</sup> Institutionalized racism can manifest itself through ignorance, thoughtlessness, discrimination, and racial stereotyping. The effect of it can be that people belonging to a minority are consequently disadvantaged by social and political institutions. Institutionalized racism is closely tied to the behavioral path dependence theory, as institutions are set up to match (underlying) racial attitudes, and remain unchanged throughout generations.

Tourse, Hamilton-Mason, and Wewiorski argue that racist prejudices and discrimination have become rooted in societal institutions. Institutional racism is “composed of societal, governmental, educational, and political structures” working together as a force to

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<sup>89</sup> M. Kent Jennings, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers, “Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined,” *The Journal of Politics* 71, no. 3 (2009): 786.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Jennifer Ritterhouse, *Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Southern Children Learned Race* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006).

<sup>92</sup> Kristina DuRocher, *Raising Racists: The Socialization of White Children in the Jim Crow South* (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 2011), 14.

<sup>93</sup> William Macpherson, “The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry,” February, 1999, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277111/4262.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf), p. 49.

maintain a society that is founded on white privilege.<sup>94</sup> While practices that enforce institutionalized racism may look “race-neutral,”<sup>95</sup> they often do disadvantage certain population groups. Tourse and his colleagues attribute the blind spot within these racist practices to white privilege.<sup>96</sup> A large part of society would not blink twice, while others are disadvantaged by the same institution. Anthropologist Arthur K. Spears notes in his research on the achievement gap between black and white students that many people feel that racism is tied to the individual and has to do with intentional behavior. Spears argues that that racism is a basic feature of society and that it is “structured into its political, social, and economic institutions.”<sup>97</sup> Most importantly, he notes that this behavior is not per se intentional, but that the state of affairs will not change when no one challenges it.

## 2.4 Racial Resentment

Racial resentment as a term and a concept is developed by social psychologist David O. Sears and political scientist Donald R. Kinder,<sup>98</sup> and later finetuned by Kinder and his colleague Lynn M. Sanders.<sup>99</sup> Racial resentment is often called ‘a new form of racism’, and entails that the racial attitudes of whites are more subtle in nature, rather than they are with biological racism.<sup>100</sup> Racial resentment is a mix between American values, like individualism and self-reliance, and anti-black feelings.<sup>101</sup> According to Sears and the multiple colleagues he has worked with, racial resentment can be measured. Together with another social psychologist, P. J. Henry, Sears created the Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale (SR2K).<sup>102</sup> This scale measures contemporary racial attitudes.<sup>103</sup> Examples of questions and standpoints that are measured are “Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and

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<sup>94</sup> Robbie W.C. Tourse, Johnnie Hamilton-Mason, and Nancy J. Wewiorski, *Systemic Racism in the United States: Scaffolding as Social Construction* (New York: Springer Publishers, 2018), 79.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Arthur K. Spears, “Institutionalized Racism and the Education of Blacks.” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1978): 130.

<sup>98</sup> Donald R. Kinder and David O. Sears, “Prejudice and Politics: Symbolic Racism versus Racial Threats to the Good Life,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 40, no. 3 (1981): 414–431.

<sup>99</sup> Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 87.

<sup>100</sup> Biological racism is sometimes called scientific racism. It entails the belief that there is evidence that some races are inferior to other biologically. The argument is used to support racial discrimination and white superiority.

<sup>101</sup> David O. Sears, “Symbolic Racism,” In *Perspectives in Social Psychology*, ed. by Phyllis A. Katz and Dalmas A. Taylor (New York: Springer Publishers, 1988), 54.

<sup>102</sup> P. J. Henry and David O. Sears, “The Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale,” *Political Psychology* 23, no. 2 (2002): 253 – 283.

<sup>103</sup> Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 93.

worked their way up. Blacks should do the same,”<sup>104</sup> and “How much discrimination against blacks do you feel there is in the United States today, limiting their chances to get ahead?”<sup>105</sup><sup>106</sup>

Political scientists Edward G. Carmines, Paul M. Sniderman, and Beth C. Easter,<sup>107</sup> doubt if these feelings of resentment really are based on a racist worldview, or rather a consequence of protestant values like work-ethic, self-reliance, and discipline. However, Jonathan Knuckey, professor in politics, finds that racial resentment is still a powerful variable when you control other variables in research.<sup>108</sup> He used racial resentment to explain how partisanship is mostly Republican in southern whites. Stanley Feldman and Leonie Huddy also have researched if opposition to racial policies is based on racial prejudice or ideological principles. They found that both racial prejudice and ideological principles can cause opposition to race-conscious programs, but that racial resentment means something different to liberals and conservatives.<sup>109</sup> In their research, Donald Kinder and Tali Mendelberg<sup>110</sup> measure racial and nonracial policy positions. When people scored high in the racial resentment index, they often also were against government assistance to blacks or positive discrimination for racial minorities, but they did support nonracial policies designed for working-class Americans in general. This refutes the idea that the effects of racial resentment can be caused by American values like individualism.<sup>111</sup> Sears and Henry agree and specify that it is important that ‘government involvement’ is not mentioned in any of the measurements, to ensure that it only addressed racial attitudes.<sup>112</sup>

Racial resentment has a large impact on political and cultural policies. Jardina calls affirmative action one of the prime examples where racial resentment is seen. Affirmative action entails that people belonging to minorities, or marginalized groups, are now positively

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<sup>104</sup> P. J. Henry and David O. Sears, “The Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale,” *Political Psychology* 23, no. 2 (2002): 279.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> The rest of the SR2K can be found on page 279 of P. J. Henry and David O. Sears, “The Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale,” *Political Psychology* 23, no. 2 (2002): 253 – 283.

<sup>107</sup> Edward G. Carmines, Paul M. Sniderman, and Beth C. Easter, “On the Meaning, Measurement, and Implications of Racial Resentment,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 634, no. 1 (2011): 98–116.

<sup>108</sup> Jonathan Knuckey, “Racial Resentment and the Changing Partisanship of Southern Whites,” *Party Politics* 11, no. 1 (2005): 9.

<sup>109</sup> Stanley Feldman and Leonie Huddy, “Racial Resentment and White Opposition to Race-Conscious Programs: Principles or Prejudice?” *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 1 (2005): 168.

<sup>110</sup> Edward G. Carmines, Paul M. Sniderman, and Beth C. Easter, “On the Meaning, Measurement, and Implications of Racial Resentment,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 634, no. 1 (2011): 98–116.

<sup>111</sup> Donald R. Kinder and Tali Mendelberg, “Individualism Reconsidered,” In *Racialized Politics: The Debate about Racism in America*, ed. David O. Sears, Jim Sidanius, and Lawrence Bobo (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 44 – 74.

<sup>112</sup> P. J. Henry and David O. Sears, “The Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale,” *Political Psychology* 23, no. 2 (2002): 278.

discriminated, for example with college quotas. Jardina suggests that such a policy can feel like a threat to whites' status.<sup>113</sup> What is also interesting to note is that the history of a place matters in whether a lot of racial resentment is measured. Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen discuss in their research how racial resentment is present to a greater extent in places that have a history of slavery versus places where slavery was less prominent.<sup>114</sup> Due to behavioral path dependence, the focus on racial differences still exists in its many forms and gradation in the past two centuries. Racial resentment and opposing measures that only aid the marginalized are part of these lasting consequences, and reasons why white people are still privileged.

## 2.5 Chapter Conclusion

It is important to keep these concepts in mind when looking at how black Americans are still disadvantaged in society. All these concepts come from a time where white people ruled, and black people were their subordinates. Through behavioral path dependence, racist behavior remains a problem. Even when people argue that they are not racist, most of them would not recognize the status quo: a society where certain groups of people are systematically disadvantaged, while another group is privileged. Simultaneously, racial policies are often resented. Sometimes on the ground that everyone has had the same chances in America when they are born as a tabula rasa. Other times because white people do not want minorities to enjoy a part of the privilege they have enjoyed for centuries. The next chapter will analyze three institutions where black Americans are still marginalized, based on their contemporary position in society, their history, and the aforementioned concepts.

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<sup>113</sup> Ashley Jardina, *White Identity Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 202.

<sup>114</sup> Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen, *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 5.

## Chapter 3 – Three Examples of Contemporary Marginalization

There are many institutions in contemporary American society in which institutionalized racism can be identified. This chapter will look at inequality in housing, education, and welfare between black and white people. By analyzing the history and current status of these three institutions, this chapter shows how black people are still marginalized through institutionalized racism.

### 3.1 Housing

From the Reconstruction onwards, black Americans mostly lived in segregated neighborhoods. In 1917, the Supreme Court outlawed specific zoning rules, in which blacks and whites were assigned different neighborhoods. This law was mostly there to protect the property rights of white homeowners, so they could sell their house to anyone. However, racial zoning did not stop there, and was still applied in the late 60s.<sup>115</sup> For a large part of the twentieth century Congress has obstructed legislation to prohibit racial discrimination and segregation in “federally funded public housing programs.”<sup>116</sup> The Housing Act of 1949,<sup>117</sup> which financed public housing federally, gave room to local governments in both the North and South to segregate white and black Americans by separating housing project.<sup>118</sup> When white families moved to the suburbs in the 50s, public housing was placed mostly in black neighborhoods. Simultaneously, the government prohibited blacks to relocate to suburbs, while whites were subsidized to relocate.<sup>119</sup> According to Richard Rothstein, an American historian specialized in economic policy regarding education and segregation, urban renewal programs from the 50s onwards forced working-class blacks “away from universities, hospital complexes, or business districts and into new ghettos.”<sup>120</sup> These ghettos were created, upheld, and deteriorated by government policy. By distancing white neighborhoods from black neighborhoods by routing interstate highways between them, black neighborhoods became more secluded. The conditions in these black ghettos were created and sustained by governmental actions, for instance causing overcrowded neighborhoods by refusing black

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<sup>115</sup> Richard Rothstein, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods: A Constitutional Insult,” *Race and Social Problems* 7, no. 3 (2015): 24.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

<sup>117</sup> “Housing Act of 1949,” Library of Congress, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/81st-congress/session-1/c81s1ch338.pdf>.

<sup>118</sup> Richard Rothstein, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods: A Constitutional Insult,” *Race and Social Problems* 7, no. 3 (2015): 25.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

Americans to move to the suburbs. Local governments also denied black neighborhoods of “adequate public services.”<sup>121</sup> In low-income black neighborhoods streets usually were not paved, garbage was not collected as often as in white neighborhoods, and “water, power, and sewer services were less often provided.”<sup>122</sup>

Even after the Fair Housing Act of 1968<sup>123</sup> was enacted, neighborhoods remained largely segregated. This still has an influence on how black and white families live today. Rothstein claims that color-blind housing and redevelopment policies today still have a disparate impact on the black community. This is a legacy of de jure segregation in the twentieth century.<sup>124</sup> The fact that many black Americans still cannot afford a house in a middle-class neighborhood also has to do with the governmental policies on housing in the twentieth century. Because black Americans were prevented from living in the suburbs, they now miss the home equity because they could not invest their money in middle-class real estate. This leads to a financial gap between black middle-class Americans and white middle-class Americans. Moreover, black working-class Americans remain in secluded neighborhoods and ghettos. This status quo, based on institutionalized racism in the twentieth century and today, leads to all sorts of other differences and gaps between black and white Americans. For instance, the achievement gap and the welfare gap.

### 3.2 Education

In the Jim Crow Era, schools for black students were underfunded. The State of Alabama, for instance, passed a law in 1891 that authorized the Department of Education to distribute funding “just and equitable.”<sup>125</sup> Because of this and legal segregation, funds for black schools were cut, the average income for black teachers declined, but the time the students and teachers had to be in school increased. Due to segregated neighborhoods, black students had to walk long distances to second rate schools, had old books, and barely any supplies. At that time, it was just assumed that black students would underachieve compared to white students.<sup>126</sup> In 1954, the Supreme Court overruled *Plessy v. Ferguson*<sup>127</sup> in the *Brown*

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> “Fair Housing Act,” Department of Justice, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/crt/fair-housing-act-1>.

<sup>124</sup> Richard Rothstein, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods: A Constitutional Insult,” *Race and Social Problems* 7, no. 3 (2015): 27.

<sup>125</sup> Theresa D. Hill, *Every Closed Eye Ain't Sleep: African American Perspectives on the Achievement Gap* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 12.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> “U.S. Reports: *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896),” Library of Congress, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep163537/>.

v. Board of Education of Topeka court case.<sup>128</sup> Thus outlawing segregation in public schools. However, Rothstein claims that schools remain largely de facto segregated because black and white neighborhoods are also geographically isolated from each other.<sup>129</sup>

Standardized testing, like IQ tests, college entrance exams, and student screening tests, was also more regularly administered from that time.<sup>130</sup> These tests show a gap in scores between black students and white students. White students show better achievements in these tests. In an article for the Economic Policy Institute, Rothstein gives two analyses for decreased student performance, namely (1) social and economic disadvantages, and (2) racially and economically homogenous schools.<sup>131</sup> He substantiates his analyses by remarking that isolation and school segregation are not only a problem of economic status, but also of race. For instance, in cities with a larger achievement gap, isolation between black and white students is also more extreme.<sup>132</sup> Teresa Hill, an author, researcher, and school teacher, agrees that race influences the achievement gap. However, she remarks that schools still are not fully desegregated. When black students and white students learn together, it is often the case that a few black students enter a ‘white school’, or vice versa. These are still environments in which black students cannot thrive.<sup>133</sup> The Coleman report already addressed the impact of race and segregation on educational accomplishment in 1966,<sup>134</sup> and as Rothstein showed,<sup>135</sup> this is still a problem today. Emma García and Elaine Weiss, both specialized in education policy, point out that the achievement gap already starts in early education. Inequalities due to race and social class begin as early as Kindergarten and continue in K-12, middle school, and high school.<sup>136</sup> Hill agrees and writes that black students have a larger chance to be placed in special education, are more likely to repeat a grade, are more often suspended than white children, and have less possibility to take “pre-college, honors, or AP level courses.”

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<sup>128</sup> Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Brief 10th Edition)* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 740.

<sup>129</sup> Richard Rothstein, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods: A Constitutional Insult,” *Race and Social Problems* 7, no. 3 (2015): 27.

<sup>130</sup> Theresa D. Hill, *Every Closed Eye Ain't Sleep: African American Perspectives on the Achievement Gap* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 10.

<sup>131</sup> Richard Rothstein, “Modern Segregation,” Economic Policy Institute, March 6, 2014, <https://www.epi.org/publication/modern-segregation/>.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Theresa D. Hill, *Every Closed Eye Ain't Sleep: African American Perspectives on the Achievement Gap* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 32.

<sup>134</sup> Elizabeth Evitts Dickinson, “Coleman Report Set the Standard for the Study of Public Education,” *John Hopkins Magazine*, Winter Edition, 2016, <https://hub.jhu.edu/magazine/2016/winter/coleman-report-public-education/>, pp. 22.

<sup>135</sup> Richard Rothstein, “Modern Segregation,” Economic Policy Institute, March 6, 2014, <https://www.epi.org/publication/modern-segregation/>.

<sup>136</sup> Emma Garcia and Elaine Weiss, “Education Inequalities at the School Starting Gate; Gaps, Trends, and Strategies to Address Them,” Economic Policy Institute, September 27, 2017, <https://www.epi.org/publication/education-inequalities-at-the-school-starting-gate/>, pp. 38.

Furthermore, black students are less likely to graduate on a high school level, and less likely to go to college than white students.<sup>137</sup>

In conclusion, education is a large stepping stone to upward mobility. Rothstein, therefore, argues that there should be more policies to desegregate neighborhoods, and thus schools. He believes that that will narrow the achievement gap.<sup>138</sup> Hill, just like Rothstein, believes that decades of segregation have aided the achievement gap, but she also argues that institutionalized racism benefits white students and disadvantages black students in educational expectations.<sup>139</sup> It is clear that throughout the twentieth century, black students have been marginalized by governmental policies. The contemporary measurements to test educational achievement show that black students are benefiting less from the current educational system. To create upward mobility through education, there have to be more race-conscious policies and especially more fund to aid black students and black schools. Especially children that live in black working-class families, and in ghettos, need to be aided financially.

### 3.3 Welfare

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF) is a welfare program. It started as a federal program, but was decentralized to the states after a short while. Congress believed that states and its counties would have better understanding of what was needed to aid the poor in their state. However, this resulted in 50 different approaches to implement TANF.<sup>140</sup> The states have to set up their own criteria to decide who can apply for welfare assistance, within the constitutional limitations. Furthermore, they do not have to provide cash assistance. States and counties can also decide to use the funds for educational programs, child care, transportation, and other programs that meet the goals of TANF.<sup>141</sup>

Risa Kaufman, executive director of the Human Rights Institute at Columbia Law School, warns that the decisions can be “tainted with racial bias.”<sup>142</sup> This way, minorities have a larger risk to be discriminated against in the welfare system. Zach Parolin, researcher at

<sup>137</sup> Theresa D. Hill, *Every Closed Eye Ain't Sleep: African American Perspectives on the Achievement Gap* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 10.

<sup>138</sup> Richard Rothstein, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods: A Constitutional Insult,” *Race and Social Problems* 7, no. 3 (2015): 27.

<sup>139</sup> Theresa D. Hill, *Every Closed Eye Ain't Sleep: African American Perspectives on the Achievement Gap* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 35.

<sup>140</sup> Risa E. Kaufman, “Bridging the Federalism Gap: Procedural Due Process and Race Discrimination in a Devolved Welfare System,” *Hasting Race and Poverty Law Journal* 3, no. 1 (2005): 5.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Columbia's Center on Poverty and Social Policy, agrees and argues that the difference in how states allocate their funds "contributes to the black-white poverty gap."<sup>143</sup> He shows that how states spend their TANF funds is racially biased. For instance, states with more black residents more often spend their funds on programs than on cash assistance. Programs that are funded are for instance programs that reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, aid two-parent families, or provide abstinence-only sex education.<sup>144</sup> Parolin explains that "a state's racial composition is the strongest predictor of how it allocates TANF resources."<sup>145</sup> He argues that stereotypes and biases that surround black Americans, like laziness, already receiving a lot of government assistance, and being unworthy of help, are the reason that in states with more racial minorities, TANF money is mostly invested in programs rather than cash assistance. A consequence of this is that the black-white poverty gap is broadening.<sup>146</sup>

How states allocate the TANF funds is not the only problem that black Americans face concerning the welfare they should be entitled to. Kaufman finds that "individuals [suffer] differential treatment" because of caseworkers that make subjective decisions, and that people of color have to do more as white people to actually receive some form of TANF.<sup>147</sup> Harvard economists, Alberto Alesina, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote conclude their research<sup>148</sup> by saying that more social welfare and redistribution to the poor are unappealing to many Americans due to racial animosity, as the poor are disproportionately black.

### 3.4 Chapter Conclusion

By analyzing these three institutions, we can conclude that black Americans are marginalized in their day to day life. Education, housing, and welfare are huge aspects of someone's life, and it is really important that everyone enjoys the same chances. However, this is not the case. Historically, this chapter has shown that especially in the twentieth century, the federal government has found leeway's to disproportionately aid white Americans over black Americans. Socially it has shown that institutionalized racism is very

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<sup>143</sup> Zach Parolin, "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Black-White child poverty gap in the United States," *Socio-Economic Review* 0, no. 0 (2019): 2.

<sup>144</sup> Zach Parolin, "Welfare Money Is Paying for a Lot of Things Besides Welfare," *The Atlantic*, June 13, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/06/through-welfare-states-are-widening-racial-divide/591559/>.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Risa E. Kaufman, "Bridging the Federalism Gap: Procedural Due Process and Race Discrimination in a Devolved Welfare System," *Hasting Race and Poverty Law Journal* 3, no. 1 (2005): 25.

<sup>148</sup> Alberto Alesina, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote, "Why Doesn't the US Have A European-Style Welfare State?" Harvard Institute of Economic Research, November, 2001, [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/glaeser/files/why\\_doesnt\\_the\\_u.s.\\_have\\_a\\_european-style\\_welfare\\_state.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/glaeser/files/why_doesnt_the_u.s._have_a_european-style_welfare_state.pdf).

much present in governmental decisions and that racial bias and racial resentment causes individuals to marginalize minorities even more.

## Conclusion

This thesis was set up in three parts, to fully analyze the legacy of slavery on the contemporary social and economic position of black Americans. Chapter one has dealt with the history of black people in the United States. Black people have been marginalized since they set foot in the United States. As slaves, they were property of their white masters. These masters, and fellow white citizens, believed that the white race was supreme and that black people were inferior to white people in all sorts of ways. After the Civil War, black people still could not enjoy their freedom as a fully accepted American citizen. Jim Crow Laws established segregated communities and a segregated America. Black Americans have fought for their rights time and again, but they only slowly gained progress. After the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, black Americans could finally enjoy the same constitutional rights as white people. However, due to decades of being treated as subordinate to white people, decades of segregation, and decades of limited upward mobility, their social and economic position is not similar to white Americans' social and economic position.

Chapter two analyzed four concepts that explain the slow emancipation of black Americans today. Due to behavioral path dependency, racism, and implicit bias ripple through society. Some white children today still grow up with the idea that they are worth more than their black peers. While not every white child is raised with these ideas, they still enjoy the privilege of being white in their day to day life. This goes together with institutional bias. Over time, decisions that were made were always made to aid white people. To this day, this still disadvantages black people. Furthermore, racial resentment throws a spanner in the works by creating opposition to race-conscious programs like positive discrimination. 'Race-neutral' programs and policies often still aid white people more than black people. Chapter two shows that racism is still present in all kinds of levels of government and society.

Chapter three gives three examples of institutions in which black Americans are still marginalized. Due to decades of de jure segregation, neighborhoods remain segregated today. Black people disproportionately do not have the chance of upward mobility through home equity. Due to segregated living, education still remains largely segregated. There is an achievement gap between white and black students, and black Americans are less likely to finish high school or enroll in college than white Americans. This achievement gap is also a result of institutionalized racism: black students benefit less from the current education system. The third thing that is analyzed in this final chapter is how black Americans that need welfare are disproportionately aided by state and county governments. States with a larger black population often allocate their TANF funds to community programs rather than cash

assistance. Black Americans in need of welfare often have to do more or prove more to receive welfare than white Americans.

In small steps, this thesis has formed an answer to the question: What is the legacy of slavery in present-day U.S. society and how does this affect the social and economic position of black people? As shown in this summary, the legacy of slavery and institutions that were created with its demise are ever-present in today's society. For centuries, white people have felt superior to black people. This way of thinking has crept into how American society is set up. First, very clearly with segregation, denying black people their rights, and de jure segregation. Later, hiding under the surface with institutionalized racism, implicit bias, and racial resentment. The research on three institutions has shown contemporary examples of how black people are still marginalized to this day. So, to conclude this thesis, it can be said that the legacy of slavery is institutionalized racism. This racism affecting the lives of black Americans every day. Black people remain marginalized in American society, and the norm remains that the American Dream might be harder to achieve, just because of something as superficial as the color of your skin.

## Further Research

This thesis was limited to the position of black Americans in the United States. A suggestion for further research is, therefore, the contemporary position of other population groups in the United States, based on their history. During this research, a lot of sources – like Gallagher,<sup>149</sup> Garcia and Weiss,<sup>150</sup> and Horowitz<sup>151</sup> - also touched upon other population groups, like Native Americans and Latino Americans. They too have had their struggles in this country, where being white is still the norm.

To fully understand how the present is affected by history, this thesis paid attention to historical markers on which the concepts in the theoretical framework are based. To provide a hands-on approach, the last chapter analyzed three institutions in a brief manner. There is a lot of opportunity for further research within these and additional institutions to evaluate how institutionalized racism affects certain population groups.

June 2020 was a turbulent month in which problems regarding race relations have

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<sup>149</sup> Charles A. Gallagher, "Color-Blind Privilege: The Social and Political Functions of Erasing the Color Line in Post-Race America," *Race, Gender & Class* 10, no. 4 (2003): 22 -37.

<sup>150</sup> Emma Garcia and Elaine Weiss, "Education Inequalities at the School Starting Gate; Gaps, Trends, and Strategies to Address Them," Economic Policy Institute, September 27, 2017, <https://www.epi.org/publication/education-inequalities-at-the-school-starting-gate/>.

<sup>151</sup> Horowitz, Juliana M., Anna Brown, and Kiana Cox. "Race in America 2019." Pew Research Center, April 9, 2019, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/04/09/race-in-america-2019/>.

been highlighted once more. Many people protested against racism in the United States and in other places in the world. These events are interesting to analyze for both Americanists as historians specialized in modern European history. The assumed polarization between black and white and left and right opens a world of research opportunities.

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