The movement to secure reparations for blacks in America: an analysis of fragmented models and methodologies

Reginald S. Muhammad
Clark Atlanta University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations
Part of the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center. For more information, please contact cwiseman@auctr.edu.
ABSTRACT

POLITICAL SCIENCE

MUHAMMAD, REGINALD S. B.A. WILBERFORCE UNIVERSITY, 1984

THE MOVEMENT TO SECURE REPARATIONS FOR BLACKS IN AMERICA: AN ANALYSIS OF FRAGMENTED MODELS AND METHODOLOGIES

Committee Chair: Dr. Hashim T. Gibrill

Thesis dated December 2011

This study analyzes the current and past-published materials of the black reparations movement to determine if in fact an effective model and methodology exists. This study is based on the premise that reparations are due blacks in America; yet the movement exists without an applicable model or methodology. The study attempts to establish some of the historic, social, and political framework for a collective culture model.

This research covers five different eras of the black reparations movement and two of its leading organizations. The conclusions drawn from this research affirms the original premise. A functional model to secure reparations for blacks in America does not exist; therefore, there is no applicable methodology.

Additionally, a collective culture model has been offered and the W. E. B. DuBois International Conference on Reparations is recommended at the Atlanta University Center.
THE MOVEMENT TO SECURE REPARATIONS FOR BLACKS IN AMERICA: AN ANALYSIS OF FRAGMENTED MODELS AND METHODOLOGIES

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

REGINALD S. MUHAMMAD

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

DECEMBER 2011
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am thankful first and foremost to Allah (God) for his many blessing, mercy and protection.

Additionally, I am so thankful for my parents, the late Charles D. Shorter Jr. Professor Emeritus, St. Petersburg College and Barbara C. Shorter retired principal of Gibbs High School, who provided a great example of more than seventy combined years of outstanding service in public and higher education. They provided me with the foundation, resources, and many opportunities that I need in my life's journey. Also my girls, Nadirah, Sakinah, and Sabira were part of my motivating force to finally finish this arduous body of work.

Next, a special thank you must be extended to my thesis committee, Dr. Hashim Gibrill and Dr. Abi Awomolo, whose critique, criticism, expertise and patients proved to be necessary for completing this research. Furthermore, Dr. Mack H. Jones , Dr. William Boone, and Dr. Marvin Haire challenged , corrected and gave me the years I needed to study, research, and teach . I am grateful and appreciative.

Finally, Mr. Gary T. Shorter, Dr. Stephane Dunn, Dr. Cynthia White, and Mrs. Yvonne Baskin, all have given their time and expertise during various phases of this thesis. Thank you all for your assistance!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.  INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumption</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Analysis Methods and Overview</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices of Reparations</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices of Opposition</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Assessment</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawaida Theory</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrocentric Theory</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparations Models</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atonement Model</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Model</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Model</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tort Model</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. A PROTRACTED, HISTORICAL STRUGGLE</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Slavery Era (1865-1920)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Nationalism Era (1920-1959)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights/Black Power Era (1950-1970)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Million Man March Era (1995-Present)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents (continued)

CHAPTER                              PAGE

V.       ADVOCATING WITHOUT A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL......................71

National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) ....72
Litigation Approach ..................................................................74
Reparations Coordinating Committee...........................................75
Collective Culture Model............................................................76

VI.      RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION ..................................81

National Debate ........................................................................86
International Tribunal ...............................................................87
Declaration for Reparations.........................................................87
Strategies for Securing Reparations .............................................87

BIBLIOGRAPHY............................................................................91
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Collective Culture Model</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Of the debt which the white world owes Africa, there can be no doubt. No black man can recall it without a shudder of disgust and hate. The white followers of the meek and lowly Jesus stole fifteen million men, women and children from Africa from 1400 to 1900 A.D. and made them working chattel in America; they left eighty-five million black corpses to mark their trail of blood and tears; then from 1800 to this day their scientist, historians and ministers of the gospel preached, wrote, and taught the world that a black man was by the grace of God and the law of nature so evil and inferior that slavery, insult, and exploitation were too good for him.¹

W. E. B. DuBois

The current efforts of select organizations and black leaders to secure reparations from the U. S. Government and targeted multinational corporations are perhaps ineffective. The current reparations movement lacks a functional model and methodology that would address its long and short-term objectives, personnel, equipment, funding, and the logistics needed to secure reparations for blacks in America. Within this context, the reparations movement does not command serious consideration or attention by those agencies being charged with various human rights crimes against the masses of black people in America. Moreover, one could make the argument that the current movement is stagnated or dying, based on a lack of visible movement from reparations organizations, leaders, very little media coverage, and the obvious missing student/youth participation.

Reparations, as defined by *Webster's Dictionary*, is "anything paid or done to make up for something else; compensation; specifically, usually plural, compensation by a defeated nation for damage done to civilians and their property in war, payable in money, labor and goods, etc."\(^2\) By most accounts, the term reparations is often used in a political context, and it is generally understood that it will be a political process or struggle, made up of political players, institutions and scientists who will provide the model and methodology to secure reparations.

This analysis is based on the premise that the entire reparations movement remains fragmented, with the lack of a common model or methodology. Depending on who is questioned or surveyed about the approach, process, model, or method for securing reparations, one generally receives a broad range of responses, which may be comprehensive, sound, reactionary, or incomplete. Furthermore, the organizations that comprise the movement seem to have individual plans and approaches that are vastly different from one to the other. Some proponents are demanding an apology and monetary payment. Others are asking for a release of political prisoners, repatriations, support of black institutions, and finally a set aside of states or territories for blacks.

Law Professor Alfred L. Brophy offers his critique of the reparations dilemma:

Part of the problem with evaluating reparations is that not only are the costs colossal but also we do not know what they would look like. One surprising element is that even one of the most major books on this topic, Ray A. Winbush’s “Should America Pay?” has hundreds of pages of discussion on whether the U. S. government and corporations should pay reparations but very little discussion on what they would pay, if they were going to do so, or of the form reparations would take.\(^3\)

---


If the various leaders or organizations are not clear about the final demands for reparations, for sure, the general public is clueless or worse, perplexed. In addition, reparations organizations appear to be undecided about which approach or model will secure reparations for blacks. There are those who believe the atonement model will be the most applicable, while others hold the belief that the tort model should be presented to the Supreme Court. Yet others believe the best model is the legislative model, which should be put forth in the United States Congress. Still others believe in the conversational model and a segment of the movement attempting to petition the United Nations or the World Court at The Hague to press their position.

Over a dozen black organizations have consistently demanded reparations for more than thirty years in the United States. For the sake of time and space, this research features two of the better known, consistent, and larger of the reparations organizations: The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBR’A), and the Reparations Coordinating Committee (RCC).

**Statement of the Problem**

After over a century of struggle, organization, and demanding of reparations for blacks in America, the movement has not produced a structured, uniform model from which the most effective methodology would evolve; a necessary component for securing reparations. Some would argue that the lack of an applicable model or methodology is yet another example of just how undeveloped the current reparations movement remains in the context of a larger politically conservative or liberal society. If this dilemma is not properly addressed, the existing disunited and underdeveloped movement for reparations
may falter without it ever being taken seriously by those organizations and institutions that have the fiduciary means to help correct this massive crime against humanity. In other words, neither the federal government, nor the multinational corporations would have to seriously address the demands from this movement. The absence of an effective model and methodology could be an indication of missing objectives, indecisiveness, and disunity from this broad based reparations movement.

Traditionally, the youth have been a key link to the success of various political movements at home and abroad. For example, the civil rights, and the anti-apartheid movements included a significant youth/student population that was vital to the eventual success of each movement. The reparations movement does not have such distinction. This dilemma should at least be addressed within the theoretical framework and the final model for reparations.

This process requires a thorough comparison of the plan, approaches, and commissions that currently exist within these organizations. It is possible to find within these organizational components or variables of the existing models and methodologies that need to be modified, amended, expanded or discarded all together to insure the success of today’s reparations movement. Both political and social scientists who are long time advocates for reparations should address this dilemma. We should assume they would have the skills and resources to use the most applicable documentation, empirical data or statistics that could be used to build and enhance the necessary theoretical framework for reparations.
Research Question

RQ: What would be the most effective model and methodology to secure reparations for blacks in America?

Assumption

Collectively, organizations, leaders, and scholars and youth, have not formerly gathered for the purpose of reviewing existing models, selecting, or drafting the most applicable model for reparations.

Research Methods

The procedures employed in this research are focused on gathering the primary writings of scholars, leaders, and organizations that have completed adequate research about the black reparations movement. Additionally, an effort was made to review books, journals, and other materials related to the black reparations movement. However, sufficient information needed to answer the actual questions were located in essays, books, articles written by scholars, or leaders who are advocates for reparations. In order to locate and obtain these works, several steps were followed: the first step was the selection of various titles from the researcher’s personal library of over 1,000 books, essays, and journals that have reparations content. The second step was to select reparations essays, books, and monographs from the personal collection of Mr. Obadele Williams who is known in the African centered community and who has an estimate of over 20,000 books and essays on the black experience. Next, the late Mrs. Njeri Al-Ghani the national Co-Chair for N’COBRA provided a few key publications on reparations. Additionally, the researcher visited the Robert Woodruff Library at the
Ghani the national Co-Chair for N’COBRA provided a few key publications on reparations. Additionally, the researcher visited the Robert Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center and selected the most applicable books and journals about reparations for blacks in America. The final step in collecting this material was to do an internet search whereby three different scholarly search engines were utilized to identify various scholarly journals, essays and online libraries that contained applicable reparations information. The search engines were: Proquest, JSTOR, Lexis Nexis and Galileo. From this overall process the researcher was able to select seventeen books and essays for inclusion in this research.

**Significance of the Study**

This research will allow one to determine to what degree there are similarities in possible models, levels of expertise, resources, goals, objectives, timelines, and the personnel needed to secure reparations. Moreover, this reparations study is very significant to the community and the larger society because it would provide a comprehensive look at where there are weaknesses, as well as missing components in various models, methodologies, and the conceptual framework for successfully reaching the objective. The study would also be useful as a guide in assisting the large and small organizations advocating for reparations. Finally, this study will provide a level of measurement for self-criticism, corrections, and suggestions needed to design the most effective model and methodology for reparations.
Definition of Terms

**Afro-centric Theory:** Literally, placing African ideals at the center of any analysis involving African culture and behavior. Notable theories or analysis include the work and writings of Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, he is currently Professor in the Department of African American Studies at Temple University.

**Culture:** The totality of thought and practice by which a people create, celebrate, sustain, develop and introduce themselves to history and humanity.

**Collective Culture Model:** The final approach, theory, example, and application utilized by leaders, scholars, and organizations to secure reparations for blacks in America. It includes variables from the other popular reparations models and the functional unity of black Churches, institutions, students, and the youth.

**Kawaida Theory:** The continuing quest for black/Africans to liberate themselves, live full and meaningful lives and become the best of what it means to be both African and human in the fullest sense. It involves an ongoing search for models of excellence and possibilities within the culture by which black/Africans speak to their own culture truth to the world and make their own contribution to the forward flow of human history. Longtime culture nationalist Dr. Maulaua Karenga developed this theory. He is the former Chair of the Black Studies Department at California State University at Los Angeles.

**Million Man March:** On Monday, October 16, 1995, The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan called for one million men to come to Washington, D. C. and nearly two million came. It was a massive effort of hundreds of black organizations, more than 300 local organizing committees, and a majority of black men of every class and belief joined the gathering from all over the world. It was the largest gathering of blacks in the city's history.

**N'DABA:** A Kiswahili term meaning the Great Sitting Down or Gathering. In August of 2003, black leaders within the reparations movement met in Chicago, Illinois and attempted unify the reparations movement.

**Nguzo Saba:** Known as the seven African principles: (1) Umoja [Unity], (2) Kujichagulia [Self Determination], (3) Ujima [Collective Work and Responsibility], (4) Ujamaa [Cooperative Economics], (5) Nia [Purpose], (6) Kummba [Creativity], and (7) Imami [Faith].
Limitations of the Study

The principal delimitation of this research was the exclusive search for possible models and methodologies presented by scholars, organizations, and advocates for black reparations in America. This study is not a critique of the vast range of literature for reparations as related to the history, education, social, or economic dynamic for such a vast movement. This study does not attempt to address other legitimate demands for reparations by Africans throughout the Diaspora or Caribbean nations.

Research Analysis Methods and Overview

The research methodology employed in this study is a content analysis of seventeen books, essays, speeches, and articles pertaining to black reparations movement in America. It is an attempt to document or verify our assumption that there is not an established, comprehensive model or methodology to secure reparations for blacks in America. As a result, we would argue the various approaches being employed are fragmented and the entire movement remains stagnated or declining due to the lack of a functional model for reparations.

First, proponents or supporters of the movement were selected and reviewed based on the relevant historic, social or political content. Next, an attempt was made to determine if in fact there were unknown existing models among scholars, leaders, or reparations organizations. Finally, their research and positions were evaluated by the criteria that Dr. Maulana Karenga proposed for as minimum cultured standard for a model that would eventually secure reparations for blacks in America.
Dr. Karenga’s criteria was not used to legitimize the selected authors’ work; however it is employed as a methodological tool to assist the reader in understanding the absolute necessity and value of a cultural based model and methodology for reparations.

**Organization of the Study**

The study has six chapters. The first chapter presents a general introduction of the black reparations movement, which appears to be ineffective at this critical period. It provides the bases for a needed model and methodology to secure reparations for blacks in America. Finally, the chapter states the various models and general demands for reparations.

The second chapter presents the entire literature review, which introduces the forty-year period for published information about the reparations movement in America. The chapter features eight scholars who have current published books, which attempt to present their theory of a particular model and methodology. Also, this chapter features six writers who oppose reparations for blacks in America.


The fourth chapter presents the Millions More Movement and the Kawaida theoretical framework as the most applicable political theory for the present black reparations movement.
The fifth and sixth chapters provide a summary of the research, recommendation for the 2012 W.E. B. DuBois International Reparations Conference to be held at the Atlanta University Center in Atlanta, Georgia, and the conclusion.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

"The reparations problem, which will undoubtedly become a social battle cry in the immediate future, the likes of which this country has never heard heretofore."¹

Audley M. Moore

An extensive literature review was conducted to gather all the relevant research and data for documenting the various models and methodologies used nationally by various bodies in an effort to secure reparations. Some of the secondary data has come directly from the officially printed documents or materials of two select black reparations organizations. Most of the data that was utilized came from the organizations’ national headquarters, local chapters, and the official websites of these organizations.

Historically, this movement covers a span of one hundred and forty years without a comparative body of research, based on select models or methodologies. Although this is a very critical period in American history, there is a limited amount of literature published on the reparations movement. Between 1970 and 1983, there were only three known books published in the United States documenting the reparations movement.

W. E. B. DuBois was a longtime advocate for reparations for blacks. Within Du Bois’ extensive body of published research, essays, editorials, dissertation and

applicable books, the historic, political and economic base for European and American Slavery is well documented.

This research reveals that as far back as 1917, Dr. Du Bois was one of the first black scholars to use the political term reparations. Du Bois' writings and work for most of his adult life clearly demonstrates his understanding and commitment to the liberation struggle for the continent of Africa and black people throughout America. In his published essay *The Negro's Fatherland*, he raises the question and describes the wretched position:

> Why are we so silent concerning the fate of something between 150,000,000 and 200,000,000 human beings? I presume that the cause of our indifference is largely psychological. It is the penalty of human degradation, which always exacts payment from oppressor and oppressed. Today it is possible to ignore the Negro because of a history of degradation the parallel of which the modern world does not furnish.²

It should be further stated that Du Bois recognized that as far back as the 15th and 19th centuries the severity of the damage that was done to both West and Central Africa regarding the slave trade. He clearly states restitution would be required to repair the damage. "It would be least that Europe could do in return and some faint reparation for the terrible world history between 1441 and 1861 to see that a great free central African state is erected out of German East Africa and the Belgian Congo."³

Dr. Du Bois' critique and analysis is very much applicable within this same research. He was able to contextualize the historic, political and economic base for those needing to arm themselves with information for the current demand for reparations.

---


3. Ibid., 654.
Modern African slavery was the beginning of the modern labor problem, and must be looked at and interpreted from that point of view unless we lose ourselves in an altogether false analogy. Modern world commerce, modern imperialism, the modern factory system along with modern labor problems began with the African slave trade.

The first modern method of securing labor on a wide commercial scale and primarily for profit was inaugurated in the middle of the fifteenth century and in the commerce between Africa and America. Through the slave trade, Africa lost at least 100,000,000 human beings, with all the attendant misery and economic and social disorganization.

The survivors of this wholesale rape became a great international laboring force in America on which the modern capitalistic movement has been built and out of which the modern labor problems have arisen.4

This research is but a small example of the time and attention that clearly outlines Du Bois' foresight and struggle as it relates to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and today's reparations movement.

In Dr. Karenga's widely used collegian text, Introduction to Black Studies, he makes a logical argument for the theoretical and conceptual frame work that must evolve, before there can be a comprehensive model and methodology which would allow blacks to obtain reparations. Dr. Karenga states:

But this struggle, like all our struggles, begins with the need for a clear conception of what we want, how we define the issue and explain it to the world and what is to be done to achieve it. The struggle for reparations begins with the definition of the horrendous injury to African people, which demands repair. To talk reparations is to first, identify and define the injury, to say what it is and is not, and define its nature and its impact on the ones injured. Unless this is done first and maintained throughout the process, there is no case for reparations only an incoherent set of claims without a basis in ethics or law. This is why the established order works so hard to define away the historical and ongoing character of the injury. This is especially done in two basic ways. First the injury is distorted and hidden under the category of 'slave trade.' The category trade tends to sanitize the high level of violence and mass murder that was inflicted on African peoples and societies. If the categorization of the

---

4. Ibid., 653.
Holocaust of enslavement can be reduced to the category of 'trade,' to things happen. First, it becomes more of a commercial issue rather than a moral issue. Secondly, since trade is the primary focus, the mass murder or genocide can be and often is conveniently understood and accepted as simply 'collateral damage.' Finally, we have argued that the injury just be defined as holocaust. By holocaust, we mean a morally monstrous act of genocide that is not only against the people themselves, but a crime against humanity. The Holocaust of enslavement expresses itself in three basic ways: the morally monstrous destruction of human life, human culture and human possibility.  

In consideration of the above theory or analysis by Dr. Karenga, perhaps, there is now a better understanding of why there has not been a complete effort to design and adopt an applicable model or methodology to secure reparations.

Dr. Ron Walters offers various angles of unity that should be seriously considered in securing reparations. Within his essay titled *Unity in the Movement for African Reparations*, could prove to be one of the many lynch pens for the success of this latest effort to secure reparations. Dr. Walters states:

> In the revolutionary period of African History, Somona Machel followed three phases, unity, criticism, unity, which would be to a higher stage of solidarity. He felt that it was as much the goal of the revolution to liberate the masses. Unity is then, not something static, a supernatural, and an absolute value that we place on a pedestal to worship. Rather in the process of struggling for unity we have always said: 'we must know with whom we are uniting and why.' Therefore, in the situation of attempting to achieve Reparations, we have the responsibility to search for the correct principles of consensus rooted in the history and culture of our people as the key to unity. And this situation, 'operational unity' is a necessary precondition, but political unity on key issues when necessary is the strongest posture that we can attain to reach this goal.  

---


In addition, Walter’s goes on to explain the context and the conditions whereby the mental and the spiritual are brought into order.

The task of maintaining the dignity and purpose of our movement for African Reparations in America must recognize that the cause that motivates us often does not allow for invitation, but conjures up and an uncontrollable spirit that stirs emotion which acts as a catalyst to act. This feature of the movement has brought many into the pursuit of Reparations. We are carriers of the sacred trust of those who were enslaved and thus we should be accepting and wise in the leadership of this project. To this end we, create some principals of unity that may guide our quest for Reparations in this era of history.7

(1) Mutual Respect

We must begin with a mutual respect of the organizations and individuals who lent themselves to this movement and refrain from public criticism of tactics of various organizations, recognizing that their strategic goals are the same. Although there were often internal problems, that kind of civility was the core of the way in which other movement organizations behave that were involved in successful movements such as the 1963 March on Washington, the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and others. Civility is important not only because it dignifies the movement and gives the others the perspective that the participants believe that it is a serious cause. It is also important because it is the key to the mobilization of people and organizations who want to be associated with something positive and which enhances the potential to develop movement resources necessary to achieve the eventual goal.

(2) Lawsuits

Lawsuits have become a major spear of the movement for Reparations and it is important that we recognize the different venues in which various groups are working to adopt an attitude that what may be gained in one suit may advance the cause of reparations in another.

(3) Popular Mobilization

There are many other avenues where the movement for African Reparations has become important and where activity is germinated on a consistent basis and where the movement could benefit from sharing of efforts in such areas as: public programs political actions, lobbying legislative bodies, etc. Media events-research and information, they are some of the fields of action where interaction among

7. Ibid., 4.
segments of the movement across the borders of organization of ideology could advance the entire project.\textsuperscript{8}

If political unity can be used at times, on the same project, with the same project, with the same tactics and strategies with the same resources, that is unity in its most powerful form. But wisdom must decide when operational unity or political unity is best. This is the reason for an occasional Summit, N’daba or a Great Sitting Down.\textsuperscript{9}

Both Karenga and Walters do offer critical points that have to be considered and implemented by those who are serious about the needed model and methodology which is necessary, for organizing and mobilizing the masses of blacks for reparations. Perhaps the glaring omission from Karenga and Walters is their failure to offer a model or methodology for reparations that specifically includes the black church, major civil rights organizations, and students. In short, it is another critical issue that has to be addressed for the immediate and long term success of the reparations movement.

\textbf{Voices for Reparations}

The current research list has less than twenty volumes of books with full reparations content. For the purpose of this research, the nine scholars that were considered have all published books or essays that attempt to make a demand, address, critique, suggest a model or methodology to secure reparations for blacks in America. The scholars are: Roy L. Brooks, distinguished professor of law at the University of San Diego, Charles P. Henry, Professor of African American Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, Attorney Chokwe Lumumba, Chairman of The New Afrikan People’s Organization and ranking member of the National Conference of Black

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 4.
Lawyers, the late Dr. Imari Obadele, former President of the Republic of New Afrika and a former Professor of Political Science at Prairie View A&M University, Clarence Mumford, professor of history at Guelph University in Guelph, Ontario, Randall Robinson, a member of Reparations Coordinating Committee, and former Director of Trans-Africa, Nkechi Taiga, a practicing attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union in Washington D.C., Dr. Raymond A. Winbush, Director of the Urban Research Institute at Morgan State University, and Omali Yeshitela, Chairman of the All African Peoples Socialist and Independent Democratic Uhuru Movement.

Roy L. Brook's *Atonement and Forgiveness: A New Model for Reparations* was published in 2007. Brooks examines and critiques two of the most popular models. He gives ample time and detail explaining the strengths and the weakness of both the Tort and Atonement Models. Professor Brooks has arguably provided the most extensive explanations and research for the Atonement Model. He states:

The atonement model-embraces the core belief that redress should be about apology first and foremost. It rejects the tort model's preoccupation with compensation and punishment. Atonement, however, entails much more than the tender of an apology. It requires making restitution—that is, providing reparation or reparations commensurate with the atrocity. Reparations are essential to atonement, because they make apologies believable. They turn the rhetoric of apology into a meaningful, material reality and thus, help to repair the damage caused by the atrocity and ensure that the atrocity will not be repeated.10

Additionally, Professor Brooks concludes by answering the growing voices of opposition to the reparations and redress movement. In fact, he responds to fourteen of the most popular arguments against reparations.

Long Overdue: The Politics of Racial Reparations, is one of the few recent publications (2007-08) regarding reparations. In this volume, Henry spends ample time documenting the more recent court cases, models, and personnel, both for and against reparations. He goes even further in his research to provide a needed case study of two black townships—Rosewood Florida and Greenwood Oklahoma both destroyed by white mobs in the early 1920s. The more recent cases have occurred at the state level. Of the two cases discussed, compensation was granted in the Rosewood, Florida case. Today’s proponents for reparations should carefully examine both cases. Blacks in Rosewood, Florida, were given compensation for the damages they sustained. However, in Tulsa, Oklahoma (Black Wall Street), blacks were denied restitution after mass destruction. In both cases, an angry mob of whites destroyed both towns and left more than five hundred black citizens dead and thousands homeless. These angry white mobs burned homes, blocks of business, and other institutions. Both incidents occurred after white women accused black men of raping them.11

In this volume, Professor Henry has provided research that demonstrates the expanded dimension of the reparations movement, which is Pan-Africanism. He states:

In the past, the reparations movement was organized and directed by Africans in the Diaspora. Many of the principal figures from Bishop Henry McNeil Turner to the activists of N’COBBA identified themselves as Black Nationalists. But when the reparations struggle expanded to include Africans in Africa, a wider normative shift was necessary. ‘Mazuri observed, which moved it from a demand of Diaspora blacks for restitution of their own countries to a new world-wide crusade for reparations for the African and black World as a whole.12


12. Ibid., 132.
Dr. Henry presents who, what, where, and when of today’s reparations movement in Africa. These key players are ideologically Pan-Africanists who have taken the necessary steps to organize and connect to current but various black reparations struggles worldwide.

The President of Nigeria, Ibrahim Babangia, took the lead in establishing a reparations movement during his tenure as head of the Organization of African Unity. The first meeting of the International Conference on Reparations was held in Lagos, Nigeria, in the winter of 1990. In 1992 the OAU formally embraced and endorsed reparations as the last stage in the decolonization process. The meeting of African heads of State in Dakar, Senegal, formally created an international committee called the Group of Eminent Persons and charged it with determining the scope of damages and strategy for achieving reparations. Jamaican diplomat Dr. Dudley Thomas was chosen to chair the group. After a second conference in 1993, the OAU issued the Abuja Proclamation, which articulated its grievances against the United States and Western European nations, linking slavery and Colonialism.¹³

The Abuja Proclamation is at least historic to the reparations movement. It documents and offers perhaps the best possible level of unity needed from African nations to solidify the Pan-African base for yet an evolving movement. In a broad but brief way, the model for reparations is described as:

Emphasizing that an admission of guilt is a necessary step to reverse this situation (damage to African peoples).

Emphatically convinced that what matters is not the guilt but the responsibility of those states whose economic evolution once depended on slave labor and colonialism and whose forebears participated either in selling and buying Africans, or in owning them, or in colonizing them.

Convinced that the pursuit of reparations by the African peoples on the continent and in the Diaspora will be a learning experience in self-discovery and in uniting political and psychological experiences.

¹³. Ibid., 139.
Calls upon the international community to recognize that there is unique and unprecedented moral debt of compensation to the Africans as the most humiliated and exploited people of the last four centuries of modern history.14

Professor Henry built portions of his argument on the continued theme of racial politics. He ends his critique by re-evaluating the year 2005 whereby, black life was neglected and disregarded by the federal, state, and local government during hurricane Katrina.

Race and Reparations: A Black Perspective for the 21st Century is presented in the tradition of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism. Dr. Clarence J. Munford attempts to make his case by placing white supremacy and its parasitic, capitalist machine on trial for slavery, murder, and the destruction of millions of blacks in the Western Hemisphere. He divides his thesis and research into three major sections by labeling them: White Supremacy, State of the Black World, and What Is to Be Done. Munford utilizes sub headings to clearly outline his historic and contemporary case for reparations. The author does well with his comparative analysis of other ethnic groups who eventually received compensation for their suffering. Dr. Munford states:

Germany and Austria have paid more than a billion dollars to Jewish individuals and many billions more to the state of Israel. A further $630 million more are earmarked for Eastern European Jews by year 2000. Both the United States and Canadian government have shelled out to Japanese-Americans (Nisei) and Japanese-Canadians restitution for wrongful internment after Pearl Harbor. The U.S. paid the Nisei $125 billion, amounting to $20,000 per person. In 1992, the U.S. Office of Reparation agrees to increase the amount to the Nisei or their descendant. Although American Indians continue to be shortchanged in all emoluments that make human existence tolerable, the federal government has at least sporadically recognized the principle of reparations in respect to aboriginals distributing one billion dollars and 44 million acres of land to the Native Americans of Alaska, $23 million to the Ottawa’s of Michigan, $81 million to the Klamath of Oregon, 31 million to the Chippewa of Wisconsin,

14. Ibid., 139.
$12.3 million to the descendants of the Seminole of holocaust and $105 million to the Sioux of South Dakota.\textsuperscript{15}

Overall, Dr. Munford’s 24 Chapter, 565-page book is quite extensive and documented. However, unlike Brooks, Henry, and others, Munford does not present an argument or research about the opposing voices for reparations. Missing from his research and demands are any discussion regarding a model or methodology.

*The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*, Randall Robinson is former President and Founder of Trans-Africa. Robinson documents the Black Holocaust, which spans more than three centuries. Robinson is very effective with the range of information that he presents to advocate for reparations. Robinson took a different approach than Winbush, Munford, or Brooks. He described and documented in the most graphic way, the individual and collective horrors of chattel slavery in America. Robinson presents his invective:

Yet the Black Holocaust is far and away the most heinous human rights crime forced upon any people in the world over the last five hundred years. For 246 years and with complicity of the United States government, hundreds of millions of black people endured unimaginable cruelties- kidnapping, sale as livestock, deaths by the millions during terror-filled sea voyages, backbreaking toils, beating, rapes, castrations maiming and murder. Let me try to drive the point home here; through keloids of suffering, through coarse veils of damaged self-belief, lost direction, misplaced compass, shit-faced resignation, racial trans-mutation, black people worked long hard killing days, years, centuries—and they were never paid. The value of their labor went into others’ pockets—plantation owners, northern entrepreneurs, and states treasuries, the United States Government.\textsuperscript{16}


In other words, the Black Holocaust cannot be compared with any other atrocity in human history, including the Jewish Holocaust in Nazi Germany, or the internment of the Japanese in America. The glaring omission from Robinson’s treatise remains the absences of a comprehensive model to secure reparations. Unlike others, many long-time leaders of the Nationalist movement, Robinson appears to be one of the recent voices and recent supporter of reparations.

_Should America Pay: Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations_, is the edited work of Professor Raymond A. Winbush. This extensive volume covers the various documents, discussions, and debates on reparations. Dr. Winbush has compiled the writings of more than twenty authors, scholars, historians, social scientists, and leaders. This nearly four-hundred page text is divided into six parts, which includes more than a few hundred citations, therefore making it is one of the most comprehensive texts, as it relates to the range of scholarly research, which addresses the past and present reparations or redress movement. Winbush does present a few essays in this anthology, which briefly speaks to some of the various methods utilized by the RCC and N’COBRA’s in their attempt to secure reparations. Dr. Winbush sums up this research as follows: Finally, this book deliberately seeks to provoke debate and conversation over the greatest crime in the world history, the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Until all people understand its causes and continuing impact on Africans throughout the world there will never be an honest dialogue about race and racism.¹⁷ Winbush, unlike the other featured voices of reparations, attempts to cover the broad aspects of the

---

reparations movement and demands. He does so without attempting to explain the model or methodology to secure reparations.

_Stolen Black Labor: The Political Economy of Domestic Colonialism: The Basis of the Demand by African People in the U. S. for 4.1 Trillion in Reparation_ is the work of Omali Yeshitela. Over the last three decades Yeshitela, seems to have established himself as arguably one of the most consistent writers and activist for reparations. This avid African Socialist presents a scathing indictment against capitalism, the United States Government, Multi-National Corporations and the Military Industrial Complex. Yeshitela’s research focuses on the actual wealth that was accumulated by the white male ruling class, and various industries, as well as the Federal Government, whereby they were able to accumulate enormous amounts of wealth, which occurred after more than three hundred plus years of free slave labor and sharecropping in America.

The obvious criticism or critique of the text is that the bulk of the research for reparations focuses only on attempted calculations of more than three hundred years stolen wealth, and free labor extracted from blacks as of result of U.S. capitalism. Yeshitela makes the point:

Before attempting a qualitative calculation of the amount of wealth stolen from African people, it is necessary to make an obvious but essential warning. These calculations measure stolen wealth used by the capitalist class to assure its supreme power, but there can be no quantitative, monetary measure of the countless horrors attendant on the slave trade. There is no calculation genre for massive murders, tortures, brandings, rapes, castrations, tearing of children from their mothers, and destruction of unborn generations through genocide. When we draw out the reality of the slave trade and plantation labor, the moral and human revulsion at the scene defies all calculation.  

Yeshitela has compiled a convincing volume of research that spans more than 300 years. The major criticism of this research is the extended attention given to Karl Marx regarding the class issue. And lastly, like other scholars, such as Henry, Munford, and Robinson, Yeshitela fails to address or suggest an applicable model or methodology to secure reparations.

*Reparations Yes! : The Legal And Political Reasons Why New Afrikans - Black People In The United States- Should Be Paid Now For The Enslavement Of Our Ancestors And For War Against Us After Slavery*, is made up of four brief essays presented by long time proponents and officials of the Republic of New Afrika, the provisional government. The authors, Chokwe Lumumba, Imari Obadele and Nkechi Taifa have presented various legal perspectives that should be given consideration based on the various legal and political arguments that they are able to render at the 1987 reparation workshop conference of Race and The Constitution, sponsored by the National Conference of Black Lawyers at Harvard University.19 Attorney Taifa’s essay *Reparations and Self Determination* effectively pursues the 13th and 14th amendment of United States Constitution, in an effort to frame her legal argument. She states:

The effects of the 13th Amendment, passed in December 1865, upon Afrikan people in North America should not be under estimated. This amendment imposed no political conditions whatsoever on the new freed Afrikans and contained no statement of citizenship or any other limiting status (aside from the prison slavery clause) in the American community. It has only two sections, whose words are matchless simple. Section One: Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime whereby the party shall have been duly convicted shall exist within the United States or any place

---

subject to their jurisdiction. Section Two: Congress shall have the power to enforce the article by appropriate legislation.

Attorney Taifa has placed great emphasis on only the 13th and 14th amendments to the U.S. Constitution for those who attempt to secure reparations for blacks in America. Taifa offers both amendments as the bases for any litigation at the state or federal levels. In addition, it is suggested that these amendments provide a broader legal position for today’s reparations struggle and demands. She continues:

If the relevant portion of the 13th Amendment is undisputed and thus far it is, no one, not even the ex-slave owner of the now free Afrikan could define the future status of the Afrikans for them and impose status upon them. This right was the Afrikan’s alone, fruit of self-determination.

She has placed great emphasis on the 13th and 14th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution whereby her approach is categorized as the tort model.

Thus, because we were free people, whose independent status was now recognized by the United States, the New Afrikan nation was possessed of rights—irrespective of action or inaction by the American community—and natural questions began to flow. How do we wish to govern ourselves, should we leave or should we stay here, what does this freedom mean? Well, this freedom in today terminology—the right to self-determination would extend to us four natural options, choices, as a political destiny: (1) the right to return to Afrika, as we were the victims of warfare and illegal kidnapping; (2) the right to emigrate to another place, as our families were cruelly fragmented and scattered throughout the Diaspora; (3) the right to seek admission, as citizens, into the American community and strive for a multi racial democracy, and (4) the right to land and remain where we are, negotiate with the native people of this land, and establish our nation in an independent separate territory.20

Attorney Nkechi is able to spell out four options stating that “free” blacks should consider, demand, and implement as an emancipated body of people.

Attorney Chokwe Lumumba’s essay utilizes the research of Attorney Daisy G. Collins whose work appeared in the Howard Law Journal in 1970. Her argument is

---

20. Ibid., 23.
based on her legal opinion of Article I and 55 of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Lumumba makes these observations:

Attorney Collins cites historical facts and the modern statistics, which demonstrate the badges of slavery attached to the New Afrikan population. Collins explains that reparation is the "redress" for an injury, amends for wrong inflicted. She asserts that the discrimination against New Afrikans is actually so well established as to be fact worthy of judicial notice. She also notes that the fact that wrongs have continued a long-time does not justify them, nor does it mitigate the liability. "There is no such thing as a vested right to do wrong." *Johannesen v. United States*, 255 U.S. 277 (1912).

Attorney Collins also notes that Article I and 55 of the United Nations Charter both refer to the principles of equal rights, self-determination of peoples, and the human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race. Collins states that as a signatory to the Charter, the United States is obligated to remove all racial inequality for which it is responsible.

Attorney Collins also notes that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights imposes obligations on the United States to eliminate all forms and relics of slavery and to afford all in its jurisdiction an adequate standard of living. Collins notes that the U.S. failure to meet these obligations supports the black reparations claim.21

Attorney Lumumba remains consistent with his colleagues from the Republic of New Africa. The core of their argument is a constitutional issue, centered on the 13th and 14th amendment. Finally Lumumba outlines a solution with a seven paragraph "Proposed Reparation Amendment."

Dr. Obadeles' demand for reparations is couched in what some political analysis may deem as extreme language or theory. Obadeles' essay raises at least two critical questions. He asked:

First was it a war? Second does New Afrikan have- self-determination rights? Also implicated is the question as to whether New Afrikans in the United States constitute a nation. We turn now to the first question.

In general, "war" has been held to be traditionally of two types, conflicts between states, which are governed by international law and practice, and civil wars, in which part of a state contends for sovereignty over territory claimed by the parent-state. Lately conflicts of liberation movements, including conflicts like that in South Afrika at the present time, where the liberation forces are unable to place armies openly in the field or to hold and govern territory openly, have gained status under the international law. The 1977 Protocol to the Geneva Convention of 1949, states in Article One:

The situations referred to in the preceding paragraph include armed conflict in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among states in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Dr. Obadeli takes the position that this particular reparations movement should evolve out of international law, which utilizes the 1977 protocol to the Geneva Convention whereby the remedy for two battling nations was to be litigated. The harm done to blacks in America, over the past 400 years constitutes a war, of one nation’s domination and oppression of another.

The record is replete with instances of armed conflict and armed suppression of suspected militants by the United States, during and after slavery. Moreover the general conditions of slavery also are that we were subject during the slavery era to "colonial domination and alien occupation." When one considers the persistent action of the United States and it political subdivisions against our communities in the woods and against the Apalachicola and Seminole states in Florida, against Tunis Campbell’s estate, set up on Sapelo and St. Catherine’s island, off Georgia, after the Civil War, the words of Justice Johnson, concurring in the decision against the Cherokee in *Cherokee Nation v. State of Georgia*, 5 Peters 1, 28-29, come readily to mind:
That in pursuance of those laws the functionaries of Georgia have entered their territory with and armed force and put down all powers, legislative, executive, judicial, exercised under the government of the Indians.

Dr. Obadele consistently attempts to establish that harm that was done to blacks in America over 400 years constitutes a war by Americans on a nation of its own black citizens. He provided two examples where the United States government has battled with native tribes in Florida and Georgia.

What does this series of allegations exhibit but a state of war and the fact of invasion? They allege themselves to be a sovereign independent state, and set out that another sovereign state has, by its laws, its functionaries, and its armed force, invaded their state and put down their authority. This is war in fact; through not being declared with the usual solemnities, it may be perhaps be (sic) war in disguise.22

Within the proceeding paragraphs, Dr. Obadele attempts to make his case by providing dates and details of the actual raid on the land he and the members of the Republic of New Afrika designated as it headquarters for its provisional government. He and others labeled it as an actual “war on Afrikan peoples and their nation.”23 He further states:

Even the “Malcomites,” who after March 1968 led the struggle for independent statehood and resolute practitioners of armed self-defense, eventually supported by the Black Liberation Army, pursued a strategy of attempting to organize, peacefully, an independent plebiscite. This parliamentary strategy was in accordance with the percepts of the New International Law Regime, ushered in by the United Nations’ Declarations on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, supra, in 1960. When the organizing of the armed, self-defense cadres of the Provisional Government accelerated in Mississippi in 1971, however, the United States turned to its military options. At Dawn on Wednesday, August 18, 1971, a force of FBI agents and Jackson city police, accompanied by an armed truck, attacked the official RNA Provisional

22. Ibid., 38.

23. Ibid., 40.
Government Residence. They shot it up and then charged the seven occupants of the house, along with the four who had spent the night at the office several blocks away, with murder of the police lieutenant who died in the attack with assault of the FBI agent and the policeman who were wounded.\textsuperscript{24}

This particular incident of nearly forty years ago is still very much remembered by historians, and activist supporters of the reparations movement. For some, it was seen as a very bold or courageous stance, for those who oppose reparations, this was the example which represented a very militant, radical, extreme and anti government group of blacks.

\textit{Illinois Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Commission} is perhaps the most comprehensive or the most recognized independent study ever conducted within the United States about the African holocaust and enslavement. In 2005 the Legislature of the State of Illinois and the Governor approved and funded this extensive study to determine what effects slavery in past and present had on living blacks in America. The mission of the Illinois Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Commission was three fold: (1) To find out what happened to African people before, during and after slavery, (2) To know what that system was, how it worked, who constructed it and what maintained it and sustained it, and (3) To research whether the vestiges of the aftermath of enslavement remain with us today. In short, what, if any, were and are lingering effects on present-day African Americans?\textsuperscript{25}

The Illinois Commission attempted to fulfill this enormous task by taking the following steps:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 41.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Illinois Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Commission Report I} (Chicago: Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies, 2007), 13.
\end{itemize}
1. The advancement of Knowledge and information on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and slavery as a system and a process, through scholarly research.

2. The transmission of knowledge of Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade through teaching, forms, symposiums, etc.

3. The presentation of knowledge of slavery and the slave trade through the preservation of acquired research in scholarly collections.

4. The diffusions of knowledge through publishing.\(^{26}\)

Mr. Anderson Thompson, Ph.D. at Northeastern Illinois University, and Jacob H. Carruthers Center, directed the Illinois Commission for Inner City Studies. This commission presented its findings in a two-volume report. Report 1, was published and released on June 30, 2007, followed by Report 2 in December 2008. The Commission was made up of more than fifty scholars, researchers, and contributors, from various universities, private and government agencies within the United States.\(^{27}\) Their final published work spanned more than four hundred fifty pages, which included seven major chapters and over one hundred sub headings in its completion. This final report was historic because of the large body of scholars who were utilized, the approved funding, and the wide range of information about slavery that was compiled to complete the report. Again there is no mention of a preferred model or methodology for reparations.

*Black Reparations: American Slavery & Its Vestiges: A Crime Against Humanity* features eight distinct writers who cover a wide range of issues that are

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 13.

applicable to the reparations movement. Many in the movement refer to this as the "handbook" or even the "Bible" for reparations. All of the writers of this book are members of N'COBRA except two of the contributors. Some of the major features of this publication that make it unique are the various detailed chapters such as Reparations and Restitution. It states:

There are many different ideals about the reparations movement. These differences and views fall in two sub-categories of reparations and restitution. We contend reparations is a repairing and restoring process that only 'black folks' can and must do for ourselves. Today the issue of restitution /compensation raises the most questions for the victims, perpetrators and beneficiaries of the Holocaust of Enslavement and it vestiges. We suggest the phrase, "The Reparations Movement" be used to identify the overall struggle for reparations and restitution. Reparations refer to our responsibility and actions toward self-repair, self-healing, and self-restoration, i.e. our historic and ongoing self-development and liberation project. Restitution refers to the U.S. government and the American people's responsibility and debt/compensation owed to black people for the American Holocaust of Enslavement and Vestiges.

Other features included in this volume are the emphasis placed on the importance of the mass participation of black people, the faith community, and global support. Under the sub-heading No Reparations without Mass Participation the writer stated:

The people (the victims) are the reason for reparations and restitutions. There can be no true reparations or restitution without mass participation. We must realize that fact. First of all if you don't have support of the victim you don't have a claim, i.e. a restitution case. Second, you cannot repair or restore someone who is not present (body and mind). Third, you can’t repair and restore yourself (family and community) alone.


29. Ibid., 13.

30. Ibid., 16.
N’COBRA recognizes the long history of participation, as well as the liberation struggle of the black church. The civil rights movement depended on the organizational structure and the spiritual base of the black church. It has been an important institution for blacks for more than century and a half. N’COBRA’s words are:

We recognize the faith community as the moral vanguard of the African-American community and call upon all of you to lead the way in declaring the holocaust of African enslavement, morally wrong and worthy of reparations. The African American faith community has been and still is the backbone of the black community during slavery and after. No one knows more about healing and restoring African Americans than the African-American faith community. The history of the black church speaks for itself. Reparations, as with the civil rights movement, cannot happen without the faith community.31

Their position in support of reparations struggles for Africans throughout the Diaspora is addressed under the sub-heading entitled *Four major stages of Reparations*. Point number two addresses the mass black support needed for reparations: “If reparations are due for slavery and injustices against black People, Africans in America should first recognize the injustices, the worthiness of African reparations and be willing to give our support before thinking others should.”32 This body of work has an impressive list of ten responses to the critics who publicly oppose reparations for blacks in America. It also has two hundred fourteen pages, seventeen chapters, endnotes, and an extensive index to complete this volume.

In his brief essay, *Reconceiving Reparations: Multiple Strategies in the Reparations Debate*, Law professor and Legal Scholar Eric J. Miller takes a contrary approach and offers the non-traditional argument for what he describes as a

31. Ibid., 30.

32. Ibid., 35.
"conversational model" for black reparations. Unlike Robinson, Munford or Yeshitela, Miller provides a general overview for the conversational model for reparations but attempts to categorize the remainder of the movement as a "confrontational model” or expression. Miller takes the position:

Much of the current debate over African-American reparations is characterized by a posture of confrontation and demand, and is exemplified in the law by redress using the doctrines of tort and unjust enrichment. This confrontational posture presents a variety of legal, political, and ethical problems for reparations advocates, and has alienated potential allies from the reparations movement.33

Throughout the essay Miller attempts to buttress his argument against what he labeled as a "confrontational model” by making a moral case for a conversational model for reparations. Miller views the conversational mode as the best alternative to the confrontational model. He states: "The conversational framework is not only a superior litigation strategy that more closely approximates traditional civil rights litigation, it also embraces the complexity of the current debate on race, permitting the nation to engage in a more inclusive discussion of the future of race in America."34

Miller’s essay may be as problematical as the “confrontational model” which he so opposes.

1. He fails to discuss the historic, political, and social or culture dynamic of the broader movement.

2. He assumes the position of some white liberals or conservatives. When black leadership or it organizations publicly call into question unjust behavior, it is often categorized as confrontational.


34. Ibid.
3. Miller's approach over emphasizes a moral appeal and position in pursuit of reparations.

4. Professor Miller doesn't examine or discuss the tort, legislative, or atonement models that are just as popular among reparations advocates.

Additionally, Miller's essay does meet the criterion for a reasonable theory but is consistently vague about the conversational model he proposes. Furthermore, he does not list or offer an example of the model he is advocating for reparations.

Ricardo Rene Laremont's essay *Jewish and Japanese American Reparations: Political Lessons for the Africana Community* provides a scholarly chronology and model for how both groups eventually received reparations from Germany and America.

Professor Laremont's research extends back to 1952 whereby reparations were embodied in what is known as the Luxembourg Agreement. Laremont makes the argument for why West Germany embraced reparations and why the Jewish were able to obtain them. He states:

The Federal Republic of Germany did not pay reparations to the Jewish people because of a moral compunction or a sense of moral obligation; officials within West Germany embraced reparations because paying reparations restored Germany's reputation in Europe and in the United States after the Nazi era. It enabled Germany to become eligible for Marshall Plan Funding and other forms of financial assistance. Additionally, the Cold War pushed the western alliances to integrate West Germany to counter the feared expansion of the Soviet Union and West Germany as a political entity was created in 1949. Lastly, Germany was moved to pay reparations because of worsening relations between the West and the Soviet Union and China. It felt forced to ally itself with the West rather than maneuver towards neutrality.\(^{35}\)

Furthermore, he provides a convincing historical, political, social and legal analysis for the success of the Japanese who were awarded reparations from the United

---

States to the tune of $1.6 billion. He concludes his essay by offering a few broad suggestions as well as the legislative model, which the Japanese used to secure reparations. In short, blacks should implement this same model in their pursuit for reparations.

Voices of Opposition

For nearly a decade the reparations movement has attracted a few, but consistent opponents for black reparations. Armstrong Williams, John H. McWhorter, Shelby Steele, David Horowitz, and Henry Louis Gates are perhaps the most known of those who firmly oppose reparations for blacks in America. In February 2001, during black history month, the former editor of Rampart magazine and now the head of the Study of Popular Culture, a conservative think tank, David Horowitz, placed ads in seven major college and university newspapers entitled Ten Reasons Why Reparations Is a Bad Idea for Blacks and Racist Too. The ad list is as follows:

1. There is no single group clearly responsible for the crime of slavery.
2. There is no one group that benefited exclusively from its fruits.
3. Only a tiny minority of white Americans ever owned slaves, and others gave their lives to free them.
4. America today is a multiethnic nation and most Americans have NO connection (direct or indirect) to slavery.
5. The historic precedents used to justify the reparations claim do not apply, and the claim itself is based on race not injury.

36. Ibid., 237.
6. The reparations argument is based on the unfounded claim that all African-American descendants of slaves suffer from the economic consequences of slavery and discrimination.

7. The reparations claim is one more attempt to turn African-Americans into victims. It sends a damaging message to the African-American community.

8. Reparations to African-Americans have already been paid.

9. What about the debt blacks owe to America?

10. The reparations claim is a separatist idea that sets African-Africans against the nation that gave them freedom.

Some observers argue that Horowitz's ad against reparations did in fact create and rekindle the reparations debate on all sides. 

*Presumed Victims* is the essay penned by black American Armstrong Williams. Williams is a nationally syndicated conservative columnist. He is arguably one of the most visible black conservative media voices who presents his positions against the reparations movement by stating the following points:

Sadly, this romantic notion of the white descendants of slave owners paying reparations ignores the fact that various African tribes directly participated in slave raids so as to solidify their own local rule. Furthermore, thousands of black Americans owned slaves during the antebellum period. Bottom line several groups; including no small amount of Africans and black Americans share responsibility for the mid-Atlantic slave trade. Consider that the reparations movement seeks to penalize our current government for what white slaveholders did centuries ago. By failing to draw a distinction between past and present, the reparations bill encourages the view that as blacks are victims, and that all whites are collectively responsible. Rather than staking its claim upon the proof of specific damages, the reparations bill simply takes for granted that all minorities are victims.38

---

Williams, like most of the reparations critics, deny there is a debt owed or they fail to acknowledge there is some long-term systemic issue, which blacks still suffer from today as relates to chattel slavery in America.

Against Reparations is a lengthy criticism written by John McWhorter, a black senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute in Public Policy. He attempts to take Randall Robinson to task in 2001, for his New York Times best selling book The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks. McWhorter's seventeen-page critique originally appeared in New Republic magazine as highly critical of The Debt arguments and theories presented by Robinson. McWhorter takes the following position:

Robinson's theme is The Debt, the definitive article dogmatically implying the existence of the bill that is owed us. In the face of such righteous certainty, those who question whether there is merit to the idea of reparations are certainly not welcome to join the discussion. What is being described as an exploration is in fact a call to arms. Robinson presents his position as representative of the race, and he sets things up so that the failure of America to heed his call can be explained only by the eternal hostility of white people toward black people. Yet to say that the foundation of Robinson's argument is questionable is to put the problem lightly. In truth, to embrace Robinson's assumptions about race in America would have the consequence only of perpetuating the very alienation that his book was written to dispel.  

Finally, John McWhorter concludes his essay by delivering a scathing, detailed, indictment of both Robinson and "The Debt." Overall he challenges the very motive and theory of this ilk within the black reparations movement. In addition, McWhorter attempts to use his argument against Robinson without ever citing an extensive position on slavery or reparations.

Or a Childish Illusion of Justice? Reparations Enshrine Victimhood,

Dishonoring Our Ancestors is the work of Shelby Steele. Dr. Steele of the Hoover  

39. Ibid., xix
Institute at Stanford University remains yet another black critic of the black reparations movement. His brief essay presents a personal resentment for today’s advocates of black reparations. Steele utilizes the same familiar terminology expressed by most white critics of reparations. In other words, blacks who fight for reparations have a “victim’s mentality.” Mr. Steele attempts to make an oversimplified comparison about reparations by stating the following:

So my first objection to reparations for slavery is that it feels like selling our birthright for a pot of porridge. There is a profound esteem that comes to us from having overcome four centuries of oppression. This esteem is an irreplaceable resource. In Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, a black elevator operator makes pocket money by letting white men kick him in the behind for a quarter. Maybe reparations are not quite this degrading, but when traded on the past victimization of your people, you trade honor for dollars.40

Mr. Steele attempts to frame much of his argument generalizing symbolically the black reparations movement without specifically addressing more than 300 years of forced free labor, lynching, Jim-Crow, and the loss of land and property of blacks in America. He fails to mention any of the recorded, social, political, and economic grievances of those who advocate for reparations.

And this trading is only uglier when you are mere descendants of those who suffered but nevertheless prevailed. I believe the greatest problem black America has had over the past thirty years has been precisely a faith in reparation uplift—the idea that all the injustice we endured would somehow translate into the means of uplift. When you fight for uplift you have to fit yourself into a victim-focused, protest identity that is at once angry and needy. You have to locate real transformative power in white society, and then manipulate white guilt by seducing it with neediness and threatening it with anger. And now the demand for reparations is yet another demand for white responsibility, when today’s problem is a failure of black responsibility.41


41. Ibid., 207.
Mr. Steele reiterates and once more pens the label of victimhood on those who dare raise the question of reparations on behalf of the masses of black people in America. His brief commentary lacks dept and sound research. Also, he fails to highlight the major points of contention for such broad but detailed reparations movement.

Overall, there are many voices of opposition to black reparations. Public opinion polls clearly indicate a firm stance in opposition to blacks receiving reparations in America. According to University of Alabama Law Professor Alfred L. Brophy:

Reparation payments, even apologies, are incredibly controversial and unpopular. When the Mobile Register polled Alabama citizens in the summer of 2002, it found that the question of reparations was the most racially divisive issue it had ever studied. The differences between whites and blacks outstripped even the gap seen by the paper during the Civil Rights struggle over integration. During the Civil Rights era, many moderate whites supported integration. That's not the case with reparations for slavery. Whites overwhelmingly oppose reparations payments, and the majority of blacks support them.42

Poll indications for blacks suggest just the opposite. Depending on the region, state, or city, where blacks make up a higher concentration, generally the support for reparations is higher. The city of Atlanta would be an example aided by the Atlanta University Center. Professor Brophy’s brief poll seems to be a good indicator of black support for reparations:

The contrast is stark. Only 5% of whites Alabamans support reparations for slavery from the Federal government, but 67% black Alabamans support them.43 Lest one think that Alabama is out of step with attitudes elsewhere in the United States, that ratio is fairly constant. According to a study by Harvard University and University of Chicago researchers reported the spring of 2003 only 4% of

43. Ibid., 5.
whites support reparations payments. The bare poll numbers—revealing as they are—do not begin to capture the anger that many expressed at mere suggestion of reparations.\textsuperscript{44}

Overall, the wide range of literature offers and documents that the majority of whites oppose reparations for blacks at all cost. Furthermore, there is a notable conservative body of blacks who oppose reparations as well. Subsequently, Professor Brophy places them in at least five broad categories:

1. There have already been adequate reparations paid through the Civil War and social welfare programs, like the Great Society.

2. Those taxpayers should not have to pay, because they are innocent; that is, they have no culpability for the actions of past legislators and private individuals, and they have no benefit from the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow.

3. That compensation is impracticable or politically unworkable.

4. Those reparations are divisive and focus attention of the black community in the wrong place.

5. That slavery is, on balance, a benefit to the descendants of the slaves.\textsuperscript{45}

The various polling organizations cited by Brophy indicate that the general population remains divided among racial lines as relates to reparations for blacks in America, regardless of those who classify themselves as liberal or conservative. Brophy's research does not indicate what percentage of the population opposes or favors reparations. More current studies and in-depth research are required for both those who support and those who oppose reparations for blacks in America.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 6.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., xvi.
Perhaps the most extensive essay against reparations was published in October 2004 by the National Legal Policy Center located in Falls Church, Virginia. *The Case Against Slave Reparations* was penned by Peter Flaherty who is President of National Legal Policy Center and John Carlisle Director of Policy. This lengthy thirty seven-page monograph spells out at least nine reasons to oppose reparations for blacks in America. Their arguments against reparations are as follows: (1) False precedents, (2) Forcing innocents to pay, (3) A Pandora’s Box, (4) Non-victims punishing the innocent, (5) Slavery did not cause poverty among today’s blacks, (6) Reparations would exacerbate race relations, (7) American wealth is not based on slavery, (8) Africa’s complicity in the slave trade, and (9) America has paid for slavery. According to the writers, this particular essay was drafted to give “corporate executives, directors, and shareholders the information necessary for an effective and credible response” against the current movement for reparations for blacks in America.46

Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr. of Harvard University wrote an Op-Ed in the New York Times entitled *Ending the Slavery Blame-Game* on April 23rd, 2010. In this opinion piece, Dr. Gates takes the position against reparations by using one of the main arguments that most opponents have consistently used, which is, to place most of the blame of the slave trade on the African leaders themselves. In defense of this argument, Gates states:

The historians John Thornton and Linda Haywood of Boston University estimate that 90 percent of those shipped to the new World were enslaved by Africans and then sold to European traders. The sad truth is that without complex business partnerships between African elites and European traders and

46. Peter Flaherty and John Carlisle, *The Case Against Reparations* (Falls Church, VA: National Legal and Policy Center, 2004), 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 22, 30.
commercial agents, the slave trade to the new world was impossible, at least on the scale it occurred.47

In addition, Gates’ other objectives appear to promote the joint efforts of Harvard and Emory Universities, *Tran-Atlantic Slave Trade Data Base*, which stores key information about Africans, populations, and DNA of those who were enslaved. Finally he states why President Barak Obama might be in the best position to bridge the “Reparations divide” in America.48

**Summary and Assessment**

From the accumulated published works, several general assessments can be made about the movement to secure reparations for blacks in America. (1) There are at least three approaches to the movement, which are scholastic, nationalistic, and the legal; (2) The movement is fragmented based on ideology, model, and methodology, and (3) There is opposition to the reparations movement.

The scholastic approach for reparations are those students and organizations who directly write, research, and advocate within the current movement for reparations from various college and university campuses. The nationalistic approach is the organizations that have a long-term history, works, and struggle with securing reparations for blacks. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the Republic of New Africa, All African Peoples Socialist Party, the Nation of Islam, and the US Organization. The legal approach consists of attorneys and staff personnel who advocate, push and attempt to secure reparations in various courts, internationally and domestically.

48. Ibid., 3.
The research and observations of Brooks, Henry, Lumuba, Munford, Obadelie, Karenga, Robinson, Taifa, Winbush and Yeshitela, all presented their definitive cases for reparations. But what remains missing from these various volumes of books is a comprehensive model that outlines the methodology for securing reparations for blacks in America. Finally, both essays by Miller and Laremont present aspects of the tort and conversational models, which should be considered in the final proposed model. Noteworthy is the fact that both essays make the assumption that a moral appeal to a political body of legislators or judges will secure reparations for blacks in America.

In summary, the voices of opposition are consistent on a number of general points regarding reparations for blacks. A few of their positions are as follows: Blacks have actually benefited from slavery in America; African leaders and countries are responsible for selling their own people into slavery; Reparations advocates have a victim mentality; Slavery happened in the past, and blacks should forget about it and move on with their lives; and finally, Reparations for blacks would further divide this country along racial lines.
CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Therefore, in the situation of attempting to achieve reparations, we have the responsibility to search for the correct principles of consensus rooted in the history and culture of our people as the key to unity. And in this situation, operational unity is a necessary precondition, but political unity on key issues when necessary is the strongest posture that we can attain to reach this goal.1

Dr. Ronald Walters

We argue that this particular case for reparations is perhaps the most contentious, compelling, and the most catastrophic of any case to be considered in all of human history. American history does not record, nor has this researcher successfully produced any evidence in history where millions of people were separated from their native land, culture, and their God. Because of this unique political position, and due to the special circumstances of this case, an alternative or non-traditional Eurocentric political theory would be better suited for the purpose of establishing a sufficient model and methodology to secure reparations.

Kawaida Theory

For this particular research, time and consideration was given to the most applicable or relevant social, political, and culture theory, which we have found to be the Kawaida

1. Walters, Unity In The Movement For African Reparations In America, 8.
theory. Noted scholar, author, activist, and culture nationalist Dr. Maulana Karenga developed it in 1967. The base of this philosophy defined in the following manner:

As the constant practice of asking questions and seeking answers from African culture to the fundamental and enduring concerns of the African and human community. At the heart of this project is the continuing quest to free ourselves, live full and meaningful lives and become the best of what it means to be both African and human in the fullest sense of the words. Moreover, it involves an ongoing search for models of excellence and possibilities within our culture by which we speak our own special truth to the world and make our own unique contributions to the forward flow of human history. In addition it involves, constantly engage its texts, its paradigms, its worldview and values, its understanding of itself and the world, in an ongoing search for ever better answer to the fundamental question and challenges of our time.\(^2\)

Furthermore, the utility of this theory, as it pertains to the reparations movement, centers on the seven core areas of culture that are history, spiritual, social organization, economic origination, political organization, creative production, and ethos.

Additionally, Dr. Karenga’s Kawaida theory is a good example of the implementation and effectiveness of this model. For over forty years, this theory is firmly rooted in the US organization, the Afro-American Culture Center, The University of Sankore Press, and the international holiday of Kwanzaa. The Kawaida theory is fixated or built on the culture base, with the understanding that it is essential for the success of any social or political model that organizations should develop to secure reparations for blacks in America. In fact, the African revolutionary leader Amilcar Cabral makes this timely observation:

The study of history of national liberation struggle shows that generally these struggles are preceded by an increase in expression of culture, consolidated progressively into the dominated people, as means of negating the oppressor culture. Whatever may be the condition of people’s political and social factors

in practicing this summation, it is generally that within the culture that we find the seed of opposition, which leads to the structuring and development of the liberation movement.3

Between 1960 and the early 1970s, both Karenga and Cabral seem to have taken an active role in the political struggles at various levels whereby culture was utilized as a key variable and account for some measure of success. This decisive understanding of culture provides for us an applicable foundation by which the reparations should evolve from, in order to deliver the most applicable model that will ultimately determine the methodology for securing reparations for blacks in America.

**Afrocentric Theory**

In 1980, Dr. Molefi Asante of Temple University published *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*. This relatively new theory was considered in our overall research as a way of attempting to address and design a model for reparations for blacks in America. It was given serious consideration because it places “African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior.”4 In addition, centeredness means roundedness in observation and behavior in one historic experience. Asante does present some valid components within this theory, but with even a closer examination, it is obviously missing critical political variables in the way of institutions, organizations, and economic mechanism that would be required before any serious discussion about a model for reparations. Additionally, the reparations movement would probably require a fully functional theory, not a well-intended abstraction. In fact,

---


Asante has never left the University setting to test or build on his theory and for all intents and purposes, Afrocentricity seems to have faded from the media and much of the public after much exposure and debate more than a decade ago.

In conclusion, the current research into past contemporary political theory does not reveal a supposition or an explanation that could be utilized within the framework of the current reparations movement. In part, there are historic, social, political, and cultural dynamics that are not considered or omitted. Before discussing the author’s proposed “Comprehensive” model to secure reparations, the atonement, conversational, legislative, and tort models are defined.

**Reparations Models**

**Atonement Model**

To atone, one must make restitution that is commensurate with the atrocity. The Atonement Model is based on the premise that government tenders an apology, and backs this apology with financial restitution to the victims. This model does not include engaging the support of black organizations or institutions. Also, this model does not include any form of a consolidated effort to secure reparations.

**Conversational Model**

The Conversational Model can be defined as a litigation strategy similar to the strategies used by the traditional civil rights litigators. This model uses the moral argument as its focal point. This model does not include the mass mobilization or participation of the general population.
Legislative Model

The Legislative model requires both bodies of congress to pass legislation, which grants reparations to blacks in America, either at the state or federal level. The approval authorizes various benefits, restitution of compensation for reparations. Additionally, reparations can be an official apology, land, money or other forms of compensation. This model allows for public participation at various levels. Also, a key virtue of the legislative model is that it can provide various forms of relief. At times, it provides no specific amount for any individual, but it does offer community-based repair. At other times, it provides a fixed amount for each victim. Overall, the legislative model provides more flexibility than the other models.

Tort Model

The Tort Model is based on a litigation approach. The Tort Model is the legal process and argument for reparations within a court of law either at the state, federal or international level. This approach can appear in the form of legislation. However, it is problematic because it is considered contentious in nature, very confrontational, and provides no means for racial reconciliation. The Tort model also does not include any strategies to include participation of black organizations or institutions, or any means of a consolidated effort to secure reparations. Lastly, this model is prone to abuse by lawyers. The tort model requires advocates and attorneys to utilize the various courts at the federal and state level in order to secure reparations. This approach can seek damages from multinational corporations, federal government or individuals.
CHAPTER IV

A PROTRACTED, HISTORICAL STRUGGLE

America owes to my people some of the dividends. She can afford to pay, and she must pay. I shall make them understand that they can never repay. At least, then, they must make amends.  

Sojourner Truth

The black reparations movement has a long and extensive history dating back to at least 1865. Over these past one hundred forty five years, key individuals and a variation of reparations organizations have stepped forward formally or informally to present their case and demand for reparations. Historically speaking, the case and the demand are inextricably linked to America’s shameful past of not only chattel slavery, but also lynching, sharecropping, Jim Crow, segregation, and discrimination.

There are scholars, historians, and proponents of reparations who would agree that this movement for reparations can best be documented in America in at least three or more different political eras or stages. Law Professor and author Roy L. Brooks states that “In sketching the contours of the movement’s history, I shall divide the movement into three eras: slavery: post-slavery; and post-Holocaust. The last, which represents the modern movement, is the most important of the three.  


Dr. Raymond A. Winbush presents four similar stages, but with more details of the reparations movement. He states:

Many people are unaware that the discussion of reparations for African people has a long history in the United States, going through three distinct stages with a recent fourth beginning in 2002. *Stage I*, from 1865 to 1920, included the United States government’s attempt to compensate its newly released three million enslaved Africans from bondage. This period also saw Callie House’s heroic efforts at establishing the Ex-slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association when she organized hundreds of thousands of ex-slaves for repayment from the government. *Stage II*, from 1920 to 1968, saw Marcus Garvey, Queen Mother Audley Moore, and numerous Black Nationalists press for reparations by educating thousands of persons about the unpaid debt owed to Africans in America. This is the period during which the reparations movement was seen as a Black Nationalist endeavor and civil rights organizations saw its goal as being unrealistic and extreme. *Stage III* began in 1968 and continues today. The founding of several Black Nationalist groups including the Republic on New Africa (1968), the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (1987), and James Forman’s *Black Manifesto* (1969), which demanded $500 million from Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, served as catalysts for what some called the modern reparations movement. *Stage IV*, of the movement began 2002 with the filing of several lawsuits against corporations and ultimately the government. This legal stage was temporarily discouraged by the Cato decision in 1995 in which a liberal federal court in California ruled that suing for reparations occurred too long after the incident (slavery) had happened.³

For the purpose of this research, the reparations movement is divided into the following eras: (1) Post Slavery—from 1865 to 1920, (2) Black Nationalist—from 1920 to 1950, (3) Civil Rights—from 1950 to 1970, (4) Assimilation and Unification—from 1970 to 1995, and (5) Post Million Man March—from 1995 to present.

**Post Slavery Era (1865-1920)**

Between the periods of 1865 thru 1920, ex-slaves organized, petitioned and demanded redress, and repatriations, from their former slave masters, as well as the

---

Federal Government. This early period in American history established the current historic, political, and economic bases for today’s reparations movement. In fact, the current organizations and leaders within the reparations movement consistently recall, connect, and present today’s debt as uncollected after more than 300 years of free labor, murder, rape and an incalculable amount of suffering. Ex-slaves still had the will, courage and enough intelligence to petition their former slave master and the Federal Government. Reparations scholar and Attorney Roy L. Brooks does document at least two individuals and organizations during this Post Slavery Era who petitioned for compensation. Brooks documented that “After chattel slavery ended, Jourdan Anderson wrote his former master Colonel P. H Anderson on August 7, 1865, and asked him for compensation for more than 32 years of free labor and 20 years free labor for which his wife had provided. He requested, Colonel Anderson pay eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars in overdue wages."4

Attorney Brooks goes even further to document the 1865 Special Field Order No. 15 by Major General William T. Sherman, the infamous forty acres and a mule legislation. This legislation allocated 400,000 acres to be distributed to 400,000 ex-slaves after the Civil War. The bill failed when President Andrew Johnson vetoed the measure. Without the passage of Special Order No. 15, free blacks were without any form of compensation.5

---


5. Ibid., 7.
Also during this era, Walter R. Vaughan, a wealthy white businessman from Omaha Nebraska appears to be one of the few who actively petitioned the Federal Government for compensation for newly freed black slaves in America. Vaughan is perhaps the first United States Citizen to write an entire book on reparations, titled *Freemen's Pension Bill* first published in 1891.  

In 1894, Ms. Callie House and the Rev. I.H. Dickerson are credited with organizing 600,000 black ex-slaves for the Ex-Slave Mutual Relief and Bounty and Pension Association to petition the United States Congress for the repayment. According to some historians, the United States Government targeted Rev. Dickerson and Mrs. House for their demands and activism. Eventually, they both were charged with mail fraud, and subsequently the organization was neutralized without the needed leadership.  

**Black Nationalism Era (1920-1950)**

This period of the reparations movement begins with advocates and leaders such as the Honorable Marcus Garvey, Queen Mother Moore, and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad championed the call for reparations for blacks in America. This period is perhaps the era whereby the reparations movement developed a solid grass root, but nationalist base among the working class population. Editor Michael T. Martin and Mainly Yaquinto state:

Under his Universal Negro Improvement Association, incorporated in July 2, 1918, Marcus Garvey sought as his goal the establishment of a central nation for black people. By 1925 he had established 996 branches in the United States and

---


7. Ibid., 209.
around the World, with a membership of more than two million. Garvey's movement provided a clear articulation of the need for reparations. Not only would the return home be a means to escape the hardship of America, but it would also lead to the redemption of Africa. He envisioned 400 million black people worldwide uniting in a common effort to rid Africa of European control and exploitation. 8

During and after the Garvey movement, Queen Mother Audey Moore was the other known nationalist leader who demanded reparations. The editor of Harpers Magazine states:

She is considered the high priestess of the reparations movement. Moore worked and struggled for more than sixty years within the movement. In 1955 she founded the Reparations Committee Descendants of United States Slaves after reading "in an old Methodist encyclopedia that a captive people have one hundred years to state their judicial claims against their captors or international law will consider you are satisfied with your condition." 9

Furthermore, Moore's activism included the former charges against the United States for centuries old human rights violations. This historian records that "In 1962 Queen Mother Moore and Dara Abubakari delivered a petition to the United Nations demanding the United States be made to pay reparations." 10

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam states in national best selling book, Message to the Black Man in America:

During the time of the Emancipation Proclamation we were scattered to the winds without any knowledge or ability to undertake the responsibility of a half freedom. Our fathers lacking the skills and training needed to provide for themselves, were forced to remain with the master in order to receive even the barest necessities of life. Our former slave-masters, knowing of our dependence upon them, maliciously and hatefully adopted attitudes and social and educational


10. Ibid., 203.
systems that have deprived us of the opportunity to become free and independent right up to the present day. We and our fathers have been robbed of all that we originally possessed. We now must have justice and some of this earth and wealth that we can call our own.11

The above excerpt captures the spirit of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s more than forty years of work as advocate and spiritual leader within the reparations movement. Muhammad clearly indicates that America owes black Americans a great debt for building this country’s vast wealth.

All three of these national leaders in their own unique way have demonstrated a non-theoretical approach to the movement for reparations. In addition, all three would prove to be very effective in organizing, and mobilizing large segments of the black working class population.


This period in American history is referenced by those who advocate for reparations due to the political and social climate, which some suggest, helped fuel the reparations movement. During this era, internationally, the Afro-Asian Conference took place and domestically, the civil rights movement was born. Historian, Peniel E. Joseph described it:

The April 1955 Afro-Asian conference, convened in Bandung Indonesia, would provide hope for black radicals burned by the Cold War’s scalding political climate. Presided over by Indonesia president Sukarno and convened by prime minister of Indonesia, India, Burma, Ceylon, and Pakistan, the conference featured representatives of twenty-nine non-white nations whose populations exceeded one billion. Bandung’s declarations against racism, colonialism, and imperialism represented a watershed event: ‘third bloc’ opposing capitalism and totalitarianism. In the United State one modest, but powerful, act of political

dissent coincided with the radicalism that Bandung expressed in bold strokes. In 1955, Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as the young leader of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott. Coupled with 1954’s Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court desegregation decision, the 1950’s would then be christened as the start of the modern civil rights era.  

Arguably, during this era three important black leaders would emerge, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Minister Malcolm X, and James Forman, who in their own unique way, publicly reminded America there was a debt owed to blacks in America. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. the most noted of the civil rights leaders and founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, states in his book, *Why We Can’t Wait:*

Certainly, the Negro has been deprived. Few people consider the fact that in addition to being enslaved for two centuries, the Negro was, during all those years robbed of the wages of his toil. No amount of gold could provide an adequate compensation for the exploitation and humiliation of the Negro in America down through the centuries. Not all the wealth of this affluent society could meet the bill. Yet a price can be placed on unpaid wages. The ancient common law has always provided a remedy for the appropriations of the labor of one human being by another. This law should be made to apply for American Negroes. The payment should be in the form of massive programs by the government of special, compensatory measures, which could be regarded as settlement in accordance with the accepted practice of common law.  

Clearly, Dr. King takes the position that there is a debt owed to black America. Generally, Dr. King’s name is not mentioned in discussions or research regarding reparations within the context of the civil rights movement. Without the utilization of his voice or moral support, the reparations movement potentially omits a broader constituency of black educated, Christians, liberal and middle class within the reparations movement.

---


Minister Malcolm X is another great historic figure of this era that publicly acknowledges a debt that is owed to black America. In two different public speeches, one in Paris France on November 23, 1964 and the second one was on April 8, 1964 in New York at the Militant Labor Forum, Malcolm X states:

If you are the son of man who had a wealthy estate and you inherit your father’s estate, you have to pay off the debt that your fathers incurred before he died. The only reason the present generation of white Americans are in a position of economic strength...is because their fathers worked our fathers for over 400 years with no pay. It is we who have fought your battles for you, and have picked your cotton for you. We built this house that you’re living in. It was our labor that built this house. 14

In a symbolic and simplistic way, Malcolm X makes his demand for reparations. Allegorically, he described the condition and immediately asked for restitution. You sat beneath the old cotton tree telling us how long to work or how hard to work, but it was our labor, our sweat and our blood that made this country what it is, and we’re the only ones who haven’t benefited from it. All we are saying today is it’s payday-retroactive. 15

To date, there are no known writings or publications that document Dr. King, or Minister Malcolm X offering suggestions of how to secure the debt they believed was owed to blacks in America.

James Forman, the former National Secretary of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is the author of the historic document, *The Black Manifesto*, which he made the demand of five hundred million dollars for reparations for the Black Holocaust. Forman is perhaps best known for his 1969 interruption of a


Sunday morning church service of the large white Riverside Church in New York.

According to Professor Charles P. Henry, Forman was able to produce very "few dollars but he created a great deal of conflict between the black and white Clergy."\(^{16}\) Often those who advocate within the broader movement for reparations leave these key voices out of the current discussion and literature.


For at least twenty-five years, it appears that a political void consumed time, and valuable resources, and personnel drifted away from the reparations movement. During this period, much of black America was lulled by the illusion of social and political integration and immediate gratification within the larger Euro-dominated society. This process led to an abandonment of major potential forces, away from ideological and theoretical struggle around the question of reparations for blacks in America.

During this period the largest black political convention was held in the United States. According to Dr. Peneil E. Joseph, in 1972, more than eight thousand people gathered in Gary, Indiana for the National Black Political Convention. He describes the convention as the most important political gathering of its kind ever, because of the scope and diversity of the participants. The motto for the convention was "Unity without Uniformity." This large gathering consisted of students, labor activist, elected officials, welfare rights organizers and feminist. The objective of this meeting was to build a permanent National Political Assembly. In attendance at this large political gathering were national advocates for reparations such as Queen Mother Moore, Dr. Imari Obadele,\(^{16}\)

Dr. Maulana Karenga, and Minister Louis Farrakhan. But the remainder of this era indicates a decline in the still evolving “Black Nationalist Movement” whereby the demand for reparations is a constant theme at least among its participants.

On the contrary, this research indicates a noticeable decline during this period as it relates to black leaders and organizations in the way of publishing, organizing or public demonstrations for reparations. During this era, there was very little activity or movement regarding black reparations. It is widely accepted that this inactivity is due to the social, economic, educational, and political gains by blacks during this era. In fact, this was the period where some of the fundamental gains through the efforts of the civil rights movement and affirmative action are highlighted. Blacks were seeing some improvements in housing, education, employment, and public accommodations.

Socially, there were visible levels of integration for blacks within various institutions in America, but it appears to have had adverse effects on grassroots organizations and black radicalism: (1) It appears to be less activity or movement from black radical or nationalist organizations and leadership, and (2) It appears to be a decline in protest and demonstrations from civil and human rights organizations.

Domestically, there were visible proponents and leaders of organizations within the reparations the movement. Men and women who were considered radical or militant, such as Kwame Tou’re, Dr. Conrad Worrell, Dr. Robert Brock, Attorney Chokwe Lumumba, Dr. Imari Abubarki Obadele, Mrs. Viola Plummer, Dr. Maulana Karenga, Dr. Jacob Caruthers, Dr. Kallid Muhammad, Dr. Leonard Jefferies, Dorothy Benton Lewis,

---


During this same period, to their credit, these organizations were still holding small conferences and lectures demanding reparations. Personally, this researcher is aware of the first ever International Reparations Tribunal held in Saint Petersburg, Florida in 1981. This gathering is believed to be the first of its kind within the United States, whereby, select members of Non-Government Organization (NGO) from various countries presented their case and demands for reparations, all within a mock trial format. The United States of America and several European nations were tried for major crimes against humanity.

In April 1990, during a national “Stop The Killing” tour in Atlanta Georgia, Minister Louis Farrakhan’s message included what some say is one of his most memorable public lectures and demands for reparations. Farrakhan’s message included a responsive chant with the audience that emphasized “ADD IT UP,” meaning the astronomical amount of wealth owed to blacks in America. This lecture was held at the Omni Arena before a crowd of more than 15,000 people.

Between 1970 and 1995, this research reveals only three known published books, regarding black reparations and the redress movement. Beacon Press published the first
major research in 1973 by white law school Professor Boris Bittker, the book entitled, *The Case for Black Reparations*. The second little known published work was distributed in 1983, more than decade later by Chairman Omali Yeshitela, (a.k.a. Joseph Waller) *Stolen Black Labor; The Political Economy of Domestic Colonialism; The Basis of the Demand for African People in the U.S. for $4.1 Trillion, in Reparations*. The final book that was published during this period was in 1995, *Reparations Yes!* This small one hundred fourteen-page book represented the work of three leaders in the reparations movement. Authors Chokwe Lumumba, Imari Obadele, and Nkechi Taifa are members of the Republic of New Afrika.

The Assimilation and Unification Era does document significant reparations movement outside the United States. Dr. Munford notes the efforts in both Africa and Brazil. Dr. Munford states:

There is much similar agitation outside North America. In 1987, a formal demand for reparations was submitted by African Brazilians to their countries Constituent Assembly. A world conference on Reparations to Africans and Africans in the Diaspora met in Lagos Nigeria in December 1990. In January 1992, Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary General Salim A. Salim endorsed the idea at OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa. Twelve months later, the First Pan-African Congress on Reparations brought together in Nigeria, black members of the British parliament and representatives from the OAU, NAACP, SCLC, the Reparations Movement of Brazil, the Reparations Committee of Jamaica, and the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus.

The above reparations activities are an indicator of some organizing efforts of blacks in the Caribbean’s and Africa, during this period of assimilation and integration within the United States.

---

Million Man March Era (1995-Present)

The historic Million Man March took place on Monday, October 16, 1995. The march proved to be one of the largest gatherings on the Mall rivaled only by the recent 2008 Presidential Inauguration. Throughout the day, several speakers made the demand for reparations before millions of television viewers and those on the Mall in Washington D. C. The demand for reparations was not by accident. In fact, the National Planning Committee for the Million Man March made reparations a key issue on the social policy agenda and it was included in the final published Mission Statement:

Section IV. THE CHALLENGE TO THE GOVERNMENT

17. Historically, the U.S. Government has participated in one of the greatest holocaust of human history, the Holocaust of African Enslavement. It sanctioned with law and guns the genocidal process that destroyed millions of human lives, human, culture and the human possibility inherent in African life and culture. It has yet to acknowledge this horrific destruction or take steps to make amends for it.

18. Moreover, even after the Holocaust, racist suppression continued, destroying lives, communities and possibilities. And even now, members of the government are pushing the country in a regressive right wing direction, reversing hard won gains, blaming the victims, punishing the vulnerable and pandering the worst of human emotions.

19. We thus call on the government of the United States to atone for the historic and current wrong it has committee against African people and other people of color especially, do call on the government of this country to address the morally compelling issue of the Holocaust of African Enslavement. To do this the government: a. publicly admit its role and the role of the country in the Holocaust; b. publicly apologize for it; c. publicly recognize it moral meaning to us and humanity through establishing institutions and educational process which preserve memory of it, teach the lessons and horror of its history and stress the dangers and destructiveness denying human dignity and human freedom; d. pay reparations; and discontinue any and all practices which continue it effects or threaten it repetition.19

The above section was selected from The Million Man March/Day of Absence mission statement. It is evidence that the body of men and women that produced this document clearly stated their position regarding black reparations.

This march evolved without the approval or support from the major political machines, leaders, think tanks, funding, or civil rights organizations. Minister Louis Farrakhan, architect of the historic gathering, asked black men to go back home and take responsibility for their families, their communities, and join an organization that would work on behalf of black people. As result of this spirited effort and unity, there was reduction in crime throughout the major cities in the United States the following year.

The Million Man March impacted the black community in many ways. According to the National Association of Black Social Workers there were more than 10,000 new applications filed to adopt black children. Black churches and organizations saw an immediate increase in new membership and rededication of existing members.

According to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington D.C., there were 1.7 million black men registered as new voters. These instructions were given to the participants at the Million Man March. This research reveals the impact of Million Man March socially and politically and how it ushered in a new era for what appeared to be dormant reparations movement.

Columbia University's long-time professor, historian, and author, the late Dr. Manning Marable, describes the impact of the Million Man March in this way:

In the Immediate aftermath of the Million Man March, many black organizations reported significant increase in membership. Even groups that had not endorsed

the march or that had long histories of hostility toward Farrakhan personally, such as the National Urban League and Nation Association for the Advancement of Colored people, gained fresh recruits and renewed commitment. One measure of the long-term impact of the Million Man March was seen a year later, on Election Day in November 1996. The total Number of American voters declined from 104.4 million in 1992 to 95.8 million in 1996, despite the addition of 5 million more registered voters during this four-year period. Turnout declined from 55.2 percent in 1992 to 48.8 percent in 1996, the lowest rate since 1924. Nearly 500,000 fewer African American women voted in 1996 than in 1992. Against this downward trend African American male voter's exit polls estimated that approximately 1.5 million more African American men participated in the 1996 presidential election than the election of four years earlier. 21

Manning Marable concludes his point about the impact of the Million Man March by utilizing research of David Bositis, an analyst of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Bositis observed:

There was only one major relevant event of note in the past year or so that focused primary on black men, and that was the Million Man March at which Farrakhan exhorted black American men to take more responsibility for their lives by registering to vote and by voting. In reviewing a variety of possible alternative hypotheses to account for the sharp increase in the black male vote, I find highly implausible that there was another factor that rivaled the Million Man March in bringing about this change. 22

The Million Man March appears to be a major model for functional unity and an effective methodology for that time period, brief political prowess, and significant boost for the current era of reparations discussions and demands. The empirical data suggest, much of the Executive Council of Million Man March were made up with some of the most consistent national leaders, who were already established within the reparations movement for decades. It included Ron Daniels, Dr. Maulana Karenga, Mr. Bob Law, Mr. Haki Madhubuti, Dr. Imari Obadele, Minister Louis Farrakhan, Dr. Conrad Worrill,


22. Ibid., 163.
and Reverend Willie Wilson. This Executive Council was enhanced by more than 300 effective local organizing committees within major cities throughout the United States. Furthermore, major support was provided by hundreds of black leaders, women organizations and students, with vastly different political ideologies, religions, educational, and class labels. 23

The Million Man March ushered in a vastly different paradigm that centered on black self-interest. In this case, the National Planning Committee placed them in a position to self-define; they would speak for themselves, and they decided for themselves logistically what this historic day and movement would be all about. Empirically speaking, within this brief period the reparations movement expanded its ability to disseminate information, and widened its base of participants among the masses of blacks in America.

Post Million Man March, a range of activities occurred directly related to broader support or interest in reparations. Books, scholarly journals, print media, radio, city council resolutions, and national collegian conferences on reparations were now a part of the political mainstream and discourse in America. On the continent of Africa, the movement for reparations continued in a small but significant way.

In early 2000, the reparations movement got a significant boost in terms of its publicity and political support after Penguin Putnam published and released The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks by Randall Robison. This was the first major commercial book written by a black scholar and activist that received wide acclaim and became a

New York Times best seller. Some argued against, while others agreed that this was a period where the movement was not just seen or labeled as some wild, extreme or radical demand.

For some members of the black middle and professional class, the reparations movement now somehow appeared, legitimate. Because of this book, more blacks joined, attended, and supported conferences, workshops and major lectures on reparations. What one would naturally assume, because of the new support for reparations there would be an increase in the degree of fragmentation with the overall movement for reparations.

In addition, what seems to be emerging within the movement is a growing conservative segment of the black middle class population that appears to be against this budding movement. Also, the movement is missing the voices of the major black elected officials, who could be instrumental in evolving the movement to a concluding stage. Thus far, select officials have not taken a collective position or raised their voices in a significant way of support for a larger grass-root effort regarding black reparations.

A good example of the struggle for reparations is Congressman John Conyers from Michigan first introducing bill HR. 40 in 1989 to United States House of Representatives, where it was voted down. Consistently, he re-introduces the bill again and again for more than seventeen years, without significant support from the majority of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). This bill died every year on the house floor due to the lack of support by even some members of the Congressional Black Caucus.²⁴ By

²⁴. Ibid., 8.
2007, Conyers finally received the minimum support to get HR. 40 into a congressional committee.25

This bill asks the government to only study the institution of slavery. Historically, this was the first strategic but legal move that other oppressed groups such as the Japanese, Jewish, and Native Americans used to secure reparations from the United States Government for violating their human and civil rights. One might conclude that members of the CBC did not make this bill a priority because of the lack of demands from their constituents and because most whites, whether liberal or conservative, oppose reparations for blacks in America. It appears N'COBRA has provided minimum, but consistent lobbying for this bill for at least a decade.

The Million Man March Era would produce critical support for the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban South Africa. Two key organizations within the reparations movement are the National Black United Front and the December 12 Committee, which were instrumental in getting the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva Switzerland to draft a resolution to identify the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade as crime against humanity.26 At the African Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference Against Racism held in Dakar, Senegal, the African ministers drafted what is now known as the Dakar Declaration that states the following:


1. The slave trade is a unique tragedy in the history of humanity, particularly against Africans, a crime against Africans, a crime against humanity that is unparalleled, not only in its abhorrent barbaric feature but also in terms of its enormous magnitude, its institutionalized nature, its transnational dimensions, and especially its negation of the human nature of the victims.

2. That the consequences of this tragedy, accentuated by those of colonialism and apartheid, have resulted in substantial and lasting economic, political, and cultural damage caused to the descendants of the victims, the perpetuation of the prejudice against Africans on the continent and people of African descent in the Diaspora.

3. Strongly reaffirm that States that pursued racist policies or acts of racial discrimination, such as slavery, colonialism, and apartheid, should assume their full responsibilities and provide adequate reparations to those States, communities, and individuals who were victims of such racist policies or acts, regardless of when or by whom they were committed.27

In addition, the first national march on Washington for reparations drew thousands to the Mall in Washington D. C. One could assume this gathering helped publicize and expand the existing network for reparations.

Also during this era, it appears to have been a period of growth for the needed youth and student participation at least within the South. For example, in 2002, the Black Law Student Association at Georgia State University hosted a complete three-day conference on reparations, which drew many of the marquee names and organizations within the reparations movement. This conference was followed by two other successful reparations conferences in 2003 and 2004, hosted by the graduate students of Ujamaa Society, at Clark Atlanta University.

By 2005, there were four additional conferences hosted by N'Daba (The Great Sitting Down). These conferences were held at Historically Black Colleges and

27. Ibid., 207.
Universities (HBCUs) that included Morgan State University, Texas Southern University, Jackson State University, and Clark Atlanta University.

Select organizations within the reparations movement have presented limited theories, outlines and various approaches that will require more development in order to put forth a successful major collective thrust for reparations. At this point in the movement, the probability and desire for developing such a national coalition model and methodology has the potential to evolve based on the works of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America.

Currently, the entire call for overdue compensation is in the hands of a small number of committed black grassroots, scholars, politicians, educators, and select organizations. The most notable of these organizations are as follows: The New African People’s Organizations, The Republic of New Africa, Black United Front, All African People’s Revolutionary Party, All African People Socialist Party, New Black Panther Party, Nation of Islam, Lost Found’ Nation of Islam, National Coalition of Black for Reparations in America, December 12 Movement, and the Reparations Coordinating Committee.

For the past thirty years, these organizations, as well as lesser known groups have kept the demand for reparations on the hearts and minds of a very progressive, but small and scattered grassroots network. It consists of both the working class and a more “educated” population within the black community. It appears that these organizations were able to establish a foundation in the earlier decades and received some support in their demands for reparations. What one would naturally assume, that with this new
support for reparations was an increase in the degree of fragmentation with the process for securing reparations. In short, the model or methodology is not clearly defined or known.

The movement and call for reparations in many instances is stagnated or idled because of a seemingly self-imposed ideology or class struggle within the body and leadership of these organizations. This appears to have left no room for coalition building or massive networking with other organizations or their leaders. In other words, individual organizations are not able to make any significant progress as relates to developing a comprehensive model or methodology for securing reparations.

By 2005, Dr. Conrad Worrell recognized this dilemma and asked the Nation of Islam leader, Minister Louis Farrakhan, to use his office and influence to call reparations organizations and various leaders together for a national conference and strategy session. The sole purpose of this session was to unify the various factions within the movement that historically have different approaches or theories for reparations.

In August of 2005, a conference entitled N’daba (A Great Sitting-Down) was held in Chicago as result of this initiative. Subsequently, there were four other N’Dabas' held in four different southern states. This was a major effort in an attempt to address and implement the best-united front for the development of the best theory that will eventually secure reparations.

By all appearances, these conferences were well organized and attended. They included the most known leaders, organizations, and participants within the reparations

movement. After such a huge effort and display, the N'Dabas' failed to produce and adopt a model for reparations.

Thereby, the entire reparations movement remains in an idea stage void of a sound model or methodology. After more than three decades, there is not a functional model or methodology in place that has established a broad base of support for the reparations movement. Therefore, it is both critical and peculiar in a historic, social and, political context. For such a broad base of organizations and leaders not to have formerly addressed the need for a comprehensive model and methodology for reparations is somewhat perplexing, considering most would claim a civil rights or nationalist base which has identifiable models and methodologies. Can these organizations or leaders really expect to secure reparations in the distant or near future?

Traditionally, our youth have been a key link for the success of various political movements at home and abroad. For an example, the civil rights movement, the Black Nationalist and the antiapartheid movement included a significant youth/student population that was vital to the eventual success in each movement. The civil rights movement included students from SNCC, NAACP, CORE, and SCLC. Furthermore, youth participation from the black colleges was well documented from North Carolina A&T, Florida A&M, and Atlanta University Center. The reparations movement does not have such distinction.
CHAPTER V

ADVOCATING WITHOUT A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL

The truth is that the more practical sides of the black problem in America are bogged down organizationally and methodologically precisely because of culture confusion and disorientation on the part of most blacks. Thus its only through the culture analysis of the black approach to group politics that errors, weakness and goal failures can cogently be analyzed and positively worked out.¹

Harold Cruse

Four nearly one hundred years various organizations have called for, advocated, and demanded reparations without the use of a model. We would argue, because of this major missing component, the reparations movement has placed itself in a peculiar position, and in a critical hour. The absence of its own model suggests a gross oversight by those who have advocated and struggled for reparations or perhaps it is an indication of just how underdeveloped the entire movement is within this time period.

Reparations are now a common word without clear meaning for the various bodies of people, communities, and university campuses. Furthermore, the actual demands are not specified by either a featured organization, even after nearly two decades of grassroots, national or international struggles for reparations.

Both the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’COBRA) and the Reparations Coordinating Committee (RCC) are arguably the most known, consistent, and the most visible advocates for black reparations in America. Most would

agree they have been very effective at presenting this major case for reparations. In addition, both have kept the dialogue ongoing at the national as well international level via the media, courts, legislative bodies, conferences, lectures, and the Internet. This research suggests that all of the above occurred without the use of an effective model. The argument is based on a much needed broader base to secure a single victory on behalf of blacks who are attempting to utilize either the legislative or tort model. In fact this is an ongoing dilemma for various organizations and the others who consistently make their demands for reparations.

Research or observation suggests that other major movements either established its own model or adopted the most applicable one. Dr. King publicly spoke of studying and adopting Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence model, and 1960s Black Nationalists often speak of the revolutionary model of Mao Tse Tung or Franz Fanon.

Based on this research, it appears that both N’COBRA and the RCC never attempted to develop their own models to secure reparations but have done well to support-existing models such as the legislative model of H.R. 40 or the tort model.

**National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’COBRA)**

Extensive research of N’COBRA’s public printed material and website does not present or display a comprehensive model for reparations. Perhaps the best way to understand N’COBRA’s extensive work without a comprehensive model is in part based on the original design and makeup of the organization. The founding member and chair

---

of the Legal Strategies Commission Adjou A. Aiyetoro describes what the original intent of N'COBRA:

It was agree on that efforts should be focused on obtaining reparations; it should be a coalition in which individuals and organizations work without stripping them of their rights to engage in independent work on reparations; and it would not endorse any one form of reparations; embracing all forms including land, money, repatriation and social justice and community-based programs. The question of endorsing any one form of reparations was critical since it was agreed that in order to be a broad-base coalition that was inclusive of all positions on the nature of reparations for African descendants. She goes on to say: N'COBRA could not place a greater value on one form over the other.³

In short, these brief remarks by Aiyetoro explain and place into context just why there is no model in place by the leading black reparations organization to address and assist in such a long and protracted struggle for blacks in America. For sure, there are those who would make the argument that N'COBRA has been highly effective in this posture for twenty years. However, the other side of the argument is that this research presents the level of fragmentation that comes automatically with such broad based growth, and the absence of a comprehensive model. In addition, critical questions now must be raised above N'COBRA and the entire movement: (1) Can this posture remain, does it set the stage for a decline in participation and public interest for the reparations movement? (2) Will there ever be a better political climate or opportunity to put forth a model for reparations? (3) Why are there still public demands being made for reparations by N'COBRA and other organizations without a designated model and a comprehensive declaration of final demands for reparations?

Litigation Approach

N'COBRA has supplied the movement with a very skilled attorney in Deidra C. Farmer-Paellman. Paellman, for more than a decade, has researched, negotiated, litigated against dozens of major corporations and institutions that either owned slaves, supported the institution or made huge profit form slavery. They include, but are not limited to Aetna Insurance, American International Group, Liggett Group, Fleet Bank, Leman Brothers, J.P. Morgan, Providence Bank, Lloyds of London Bank, Barclay Banks, Standard Oil, Exxon, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, Williamson Tobacco Corp. CSX, Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern, and Brown Brothers (Brown University). The results of the litigation model used by Perelman and N'COBRA have not been favorable. All of the cases have been dismissed for various legal reasons. The above cases are but another example of the missing model or approach by which N'COBRA utilized, which has proven to be ineffective in an effort to sustain its legal battles and the public struggle for reparations for blacks in America. In other words, one could assume from the documentation and the results of the movement, N'COBRA is in need of its own comprehensive model.

In summary, the black reparations movement has grown over the past decade due to the efforts and influence of N'COBRA. However, the resulting growth has produced more fragmentation for the reparations movement.

Reparations Coordinating Committee

By late 2000, the reparations movement added another dimension to the struggle with a formal public introduction of the Reparations Coordinating Committee based in Washington D.C. This would be the first non-grass roots organization that got the attention of the national media, critics of reparations, and the long time advocates of reparations. The RCC was made up some of the nation’s most prominent black lawyers such as; Charles Olgetree of Harvard University, Jonnie H. Cochran Jr., Willie Gary, Michele Roberts selected as Washington D.C.’s best trial attorney in 2002, Adjoa Aiyetoro of N’COBRA, famed civil rights attorney J.L. Chestnut, and Randall Robinson lawyer and author of the national bestselling book, The Debt: What America Owes Blacks.5

So far, the only reparations model that was implemented by the RCC is the litigation model. The RCC is perhaps known best for the representation it provided in the case of Alexander vs. Governor of the State of Oklahoma. The RCC filed a complaint on behalf of the 200 victims or descendants for what is now known as “Black Wall Street,” the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. In summary, whites attacked black residents in the Greenwood district where they destroyed 18,000, black homes and businesses. These structures were burned, and another 304 structures were looted. The final report documented 4,241 blacks left homeless, and another 300 were killed after a white woman falsely accused a black man of attacking her in a downtown Tulsa department store.

This was a major case where the state was charged as opposed to the Federal Government. The other significant aspect of the case was it happened during the Jim Crowe and not during the Slavery era. This case was dismissed in 2004 after only one year by Judge James Ellison because a two-year statute of limitation had long passed.6

In short, there are not any other known major cases or efforts at this time for that the RCC is attempting to litigate on behalf of blacks who are still seeking redress for the past and present injustices. The website for RCC and the countless pages written about the organization by other scholars fail to offer or mention an alternative or a comprehensive model or methodology to secure reparations for blacks in America. It does present a sound mission statement, and an average outline for reparations.7

In conclusion, this researcher makes the argument that the overall RCC approach is yet another glaring example of an ineffective model, which will never secure reparations for blacks in America.

Collective Culture Model

The only viable solution for this dilemma is the introduction and implementation of the Collective Culture Model (CCM) which addresses various missing political concepts, variables and culture for blacks in America who have suffered for more than four hundred fifty years in America without proper redress. This model is designed to put the entire reparations movement on a systematic course and timetable. This model


requires a public apology from the President of the United States, compensation from the U. S. Congress and selects multi-national corporations. The CCM is designed to utilize and consolidate applicable, key concepts from other existing reparations models. Furthermore, the CCM would be the most comprehensive model for the current reparations movement because of its inclusion of a needed, broader segment of black organizations, institutions and its population.

   For the first-time, this model provides the methodology, if you will, a complete blueprint for reparations for blacks in America. None of the existing models have provided such clarity. Within this model, traditional reparations organizations are utilized as well non-reparations organization, such as black professionals, labor unions, fraternities, and sororities.

   From an institutional standpoint, this model includes the black church, as well as various religious bodies and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In addition, this model requires for massive participation from the broader segment of the black population along with its youth, and students.

   This CCM consist of an executive committee made up of representatives from existing reparations organizations, the civil rights, community, scholars and youth. This body of twenty-four men and women will ultimately decide the actual demands, amount of compensation, land and resources needed to complete the most comprehensive reparations package to ever be presented to United States citizens. Furthermore, this committee is designed to manage and oversee the long-term process of methodology an ensure reparations for blacks in America becomes a reality. By adopting the CCM, the
black reparations movement should have more structure, clearly defined objectives, and provide greater manageability, which would help eliminate some errors and contradictions from such a vast movement.

The suggestion for a model for reparations should take into consideration and begin to formulate based on at least three existing models which blacks have gotten some measure of utility at various points in their struggle for liberation in America. These models are the civil rights, Million Man March and Millions More Movement. The drafting and declaration session should consist of the 24 men and women of earlier mentioned reparations organizations, scholars, leaders, workers and youth. Within this initial session, this select body of men and women should be prepared to begin to outline what the final demands for reparations and restitution will include. This final model for reparations is called the “Collective Culture Model.”

The collective culture model includes the participation, implementation, and mobilization of five critical variables in support of reparations for blacks in America. The existing reparations organizations, the black church, civil rights organizations, black fraternities and sororities and a student/youth population. From this august body of men and women a select committee will be formed which make-up the functioning arm of leaders, administrators, and activist who are then charged with mobilizing the masses for black reparations. The following points highlight the Collective Culture Model for reparations:

1. The Collective Culture Model (CCM) for reparations recognizes and utilizes various useful components of all the existing, fragmented or smaller models.
2. The CCM is designed to consolidate and manage the existing movement and simultaneously broaden the base for reparations.

3. The CCM does include a large participation of black churches, civil rights organizations, labor unions, fraternities and sororities and student/youth populations.

4. The CCM by design would have the widest appeal, and finally, it would be the most comprehensive of all models.

Figure 1 graphically illustrates the components, organizations, as well as the targeted organizations of the Collective Culture Model. The reparation models include components of the Atonement, Legislative, Conversational, and the Tort model. The target organizations include the federal government, and selected multinational corporations.
Figure 1. The Collective Culture Model