

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

REPARATIONS FOR BLACK AMERICANS -
WHETHER, WHY, AND HOW?

Washington, D.C.

Monday, April 27, 2020

PARTICIPANTS:

Welcome and Moderator:

DAVID WESSEL
Director and Senior Fellow, The Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy
The Brookings Institution

Reparations in Perspective:

SUSAN NEIMAN
Director
Einstein Forum

Panelists:

WILLIAM "SANDY" DARITY
Co-Author, *From Here to Equality: Reparations
for Black Americans in the Twenty-First
Century*
Distinguished Professor of Public Policy, Duke University

A. KIRSTEN MULLEN
Co-Author, *From Here to Equality: Reparations
for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century*
Folklorist, Founder of Artefactual

* * * * *

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 600
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WESSEL: Good afternoon, I'm David Wessel, Director of The Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy at the Brookings Institution. We gather this afternoon, virtually because of the Covid plague, to talk about reparations for African Americans, for the descendants of slaves.

We planned this event before COVID-19 and, of course, Sandy Darity and Kirsten Mullen wrote the book we celebrate today long before COVID-19, yet as we discuss the long history of racial disparities in this country, it's worth noting that the Coronavirus seems to be afflicting blacks much more than white.

There's a piece in the "Journal of American Medical Association" which points out that more than half the COVID-19 cases in Chicago and nearly 70 percent of the deaths involve black individuals, although blacks make up on 30 percent of the population. There's a story on the front page of the Washington Post today about contrasting the intensive care unit in affluent Northern Virginia, which is largely empty, with the overwhelmed hospital in largely black Prince George's County on the other side of Washington, D.C. So although reparations has a long history and is not directly related to Covid-19, it does seem to me that Covid-19 puts an exclamation point on some of the issues in this book.

Our plan today is to begin by putting the notion of reparations in historical context. Germany of course paid reparations to the Jews and to the State of Israel for the evil done by the Nazis, the U.S. paid reparations to Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II.

And for that we're going to start with Susan Neiman, a philosopher, who since 2000 has been the Director of the Einstein Forum in Berlin. She's the author of "Learning From the Germans: Race, and the Memory of Evil", a book, as the title suggests, about what we can learn from the Germans. Then we'll turn to Sandy Darity and Kirsten Mullen and talk about their new book, "From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century".

We would have been selling autographed copies of the book if we were meeting in person. We can't do that, but you can buy the book on line at the UNC Press website or at your local bookstore's website.

Sandy is an economist with a Ph.D. from MIT and now the Samuel DeBois Cook

Professor of Public Policy at Duke. Kirsten is a Folklorist, a writer, a museum consultant, a lecturer whose work focuses on race, on art, on history, and politics. They happen to be married to each other.

Their book is really interesting. It's a sweeping look at American history going back to the really days of the country, goes through slavery, reconstruction, the New Deal, Jim Crow, and the persistent discrimination of the modern era, the huge differences in wealth between blacks and whites who are otherwise similar. They tell the long and fascinating tale of early debates about reparations for slaves, the whole 40 acres and the mule story and all that. And I think all that's very important.

One of my mentors, Claudia Goldin, an economic historian at Harvard, taught me you can't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been. But the book really goes beyond that to make the case for a program of acknowledgement, redress, and closure for grievous injustices. That's what reparation is. They respond to questions raised by skeptics, they sketch out the size, shape, and form of reparations that they say Congress should consider.

Now, each of our speakers is a scholar, but each brings a particular personal perspective to a discussion like this one. Susan Neiman is a white woman who came of age in the south during the civil rights era. She's a Jewish woman who has spent much of her life in Berlin. Sandy Darity is the son of the first man to get a doctorate from the University of North Carolina, a man who spent half his life under Jim Crow. And Kirsten Mullen is the great-granddaughter of a man, Walker Tolliver, who was born into slavery.

So these are both scholarly and personal issues for us.

You can post questions during the event at Events@Brookings.edu by email or on Twitter with #FHTE, "From Here to Equality", or on #ReparationsBrookings.

And, with that, I want to turn the screen over to Susan Neiman, who joins us from Berlin.

MS. NEIMAN: Let me start by saying that reparations in Germany are a part of a much bigger concept and Germans like long compound words. They have one for this -- actually, they have several ones for this -- (speaking in German). And I translate that as working off the past in the way you might work off a debt. And, in fact, the word for debt and guilt is almost identical in German.

And once you realize this you realize we don't even have a concept that would

correspond to this larger, much larger idea, which is -- I mean, David, you said you don't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been -- the idea that you cannot go forward if you don't take a serious look at your past and make some recompense for crimes, evils, misdemeanors that were committed in it, they will haunt you and they will haunt you for 150 years, as we can see in the United States.

The case for reparations is always made by starting with the German example, because Germany really was the first nation in the world to pay reparations voluntarily. It was of course the case that when wars were lost, the victorious armies would drag off whatever they wanted, but Germany was the first nation ever to voluntarily give up money as atonement, as recompense for the evil they had wrought.

People who were opponents of American reparations for slavery and neo slavery -- which I think is terribly important that one realizes that slavery didn't entirely stop in 1865, it just changed form -- people who are opposed to that like to point to the differences between the German case and the American case. Now, of course, every historical case is different. There's no denying that

But what I think might be most important to talk about is something that the German case and the American case have very much in common, which is that neither the Germans nor white Americans were in favor of paying reparations at all. In fact, the polls are much better in America now than they were in 1953 in Germany when Germany first paid a serious amount of reparations to the State of Israel. Eleven percent of the German people supported those payments. We are now up to 29 percent of the entire country. And I think it's very important to realize that you, you know, need bold leadership, you need push from a community. It isn't automatic. So that the objection, the first objection that comes up to reparations in America is always well so many people are against it. Well, guess what? Even more people were against that in Germany.

What we tend not to realize looking at Germany from the outside, is that instead of, you know, falling on their knees and realizing what horrors they had committed -- which is of course now how it is painted and remembered to the rest of the world -- the Germans didn't think of themselves as criminals, they thought of themselves as the war's worst victims. Their cities had been burned, their men

killed or imprisoned, you know, there was hunger, there was disease, everyone was, you know, impoverished. And on top of that those damn Yankees were trying to tell them that the war was all their fault. And there was a moment when I was doing the research for my book when I realized you know who they sound like, the defenders of the lost cause. We've heard all this before. We are the worst victims of the war and not the perpetrators. And to this day, you can read all kinds of people in America who truly believe that the war was not the south's fault and that slavery was not the thing that they were fighting for.

So it took a relatively long time, even for the German nation, to stand up to its guilt and to start paying its debts. Now, German reparations can be seen in three parts, of which I think only the last is really relevant to the American case. Now, the first was in East Germany right after the war was over. The Soviet Union just simply took a lot of industrial plant, railroads, electronic equipment, as reparation for the devastation that the German army had wreaked on the Soviet Union all the way to Moscow. They basically laid waste to it; 27 million citizen of the Soviet Union died in the war. So that was in East Germany.

What's interesting is that because of the political education there, the East Germans I know don't resent the reparations, they seem to feel that they were fair.

The second wave of reparations began in 1952 and that was the result of negotiations between Conrad Adenauer, the first West German Prime Minister, and the David Ben-Gurion the first Israeli Prime Minister. They were, as I said, very controversial. The majority of people in both nations were actually against them and they went through very hard negotiations to see what they should be and exactly how they should be calculated. I know that Kirsten and Sandy are going to tell us how they believe the reparations should be calculated today. It's a really complicated and interesting question, and it was back then.

But in paying reparations to Jews who had been victims of the Holocaust or the State of Israel as a body, the Germans made a fairly awful bargain, which is that they weren't actually going to engage in what I called (speaking in German), this attempt to actually look at their history and look at the past and acknowledge what had been done. It was kind of well, we'll pay for it and in exchange don't

point your finger to look at how many old Nazis we have in our government, don't ask us to look at the police departments or the schools or the universities, which were very largely staffed by old Nazis, don't ask us to do anything more. And that was a mistake that persisted for a very long time. I mean the reparations were paid and there were some reparations that are still continuing.

But in 1998 there was third wave, which I think could actually be a model for the United States. We had a progressive government that was elected in '98, a combination of coalition of the Social Democrats and the Greens. And one of the things that they decided to do was to get payment for those slave laborers who were still alive but who had not fallen under any of the other categories that got paid, largely because they were living in Eastern Europe. And what was interesting about this is that the foundation that was created to pay these reparations is called (speaking German), Memory, Responsibility and Future. And one of the things that they put money into is actually projects and initiatives to remember what happened. So very much in contrast to the first almost 50 years of reparations payments.

The other thing that I think was really important is that this is a joint foundation of the German government and German industry that profited from slave labor. And I believe, although I haven't had a chance to read the book yet, but I believe just from the first time Sandy and I met at a podium discussion, that he believes reparations should be solely paid by the U.S. government. I think there's a strong argument to be made for industry to make serious contributions because there are companies that are the, you know, heirs to companies that profited from slave labor, even going into insurance companies today.

So I think a joint fund of industry and government, which has worked quite well in Germany, could be a really good model for the United States to follow, along with the sense that -- cash is important -- don't get me wrong -- cash is terribly important -- but that it's important to remember what it is we're paying for, in particular the idea that slavery did not end in 1865, but forms of it permeated legally the United States, you know, up until -- you can argue about whether it stopped already. I'm not sure. And you mentioned rightly that African Americans are still suffering disproportionately from the Coronavirus. But in any case, these are forms of oppression that white people in particular -- and I can

also speak for myself before I began to do this research -- need to be reminded of along with the just recompense for them.

MR. WESSEL: Thank you very much.

And now I'd like to turn the screen over to Sandy and Kirsten, who are in their house in North Carolina.

MS. MUSSEL: -- also thanks to you, David Wessel, who can see this event, to Susan Neiman, and to the Brookings Institution team, Adrianna Pita, Anna Dawson, Harold Dahling (phonetic), Andrea Risotto, and Paula Kostiuk. We also tip our hats to our collaborators on "From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century" at the University of North Carolina Press, and especially to all of you who are participating in this event here in person and across the globe.

As David said, at the point when this event was planned, the pandemic was not on the radar. We realized a book launch is insignificant in this context, but we are grateful for this opportunity.

So we're going to read from the book fairly extensively a bit later, but first we're going to talk about some current events.

MR. DARITY: My father, William Darity, Senior, was the first -- and I like to use this adjective -- the first known black Ph.D. recipient from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. When many years later he was asked whether or not he thought it was wonderful that he was the first recipient, his response was, well, no, it's terrible. It's terrible it took that long for somebody to be the first black recipient of a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. And he received his in 1963. And his point was that there was a long, history of exclusion of blacks from opportunities like that, that's reflected in the conversation that we pursue in our book, "From Here to Equality".

As David mentioned, the current excess relative black mortality from the Coronavirus is another indicator of the scope of the kinds of harms and damages that continue to be inflicted on the black community. Reparations and the pandemic is a topic that Kirsten and I wrote about in an op-ed about a week ago in the Philadelphia Enquirer in which we argued that the pandemic itself reinforces the intensity of the case for black reparations for descendants of United States slavery.

In the Philadelphia Enquirer article we talk about the excess mortality that's associated

with the pandemic, and I'd like to provide some additional examples. In our own state of North of Carolina, blacks constitute approximately 22 percent of the population, but blacks are 32 percent of the confirmed cases of the Coronavirus and 44 percent of the state's deaths.

And in Louisiana, as another example, blacks constitute approximately 32 percent of that state's population but 70 percent of the mortality associated with the virus.

Now, what the reasons for this excess mortality? The first I think is the occupational distribution in the United States where blacks have jobs that we would describe as being in the missionary or care category, that require an intensive degree of personal contact and personal service activities. And so that increases significantly the risk of exposure to the virus. In addition, because of the long trajectory of racial inequality in the United States, which affects health outcomes, blacks have a disproportionate amount of preexisting health conditions that create greater vulnerability to the disease, including asthma, diabetes, hypertension, and other variations on heart disease.

But there is a fundamental -- and this is the third point -- there is a fundamental preexisting condition which explains the kinds of disparities that we're observing now, and that's the resource gap, which is best captured by the black-white wealth gap. Wealth inequality in the United States can be described as follows: blacks represent approximately 13 percent of the United States' population, but possess 2.6 percent of the Nation's wealth. That translates into roughly an \$800,000 gap in net worth on average per household.

So from our perspective, a core objective of reparations for black American descendants of U.S. slavery must be elimination of the racial wealth gap. And so that's the starting point for much of the analysis that we pursue in the pages of "From Here to Equality".

MS. MULLEN: So we'd like to read some from the introduction of the book, "From Here to Equality". "Standing at the Crossroads". Sandy is going to begin by reading the first paragraph.

MR. DARITY: This is actually somewhat similar to the quotation, David, that you mentioned from your former advisor. This is actually from Ella Baker, the black political activist, where she said "In order to see where we are going, we not only must see where we have been, but we must also understand where we have been."

MS. MULLEN: And from Fredrick Douglass from Celebrating the Past, Anticipating the Future, "The world has never seen any people turned loose to such destitution as were the four million slaves of the south. They were free without roofs to cover them or bread to eat or land to cultivate, and as a consequence, died in such numbers as to awaken the hope of their enemies that they would soon disappear."

MR. DARITY: So we'd like to frame the conversation today with some of the passages from the opening portions of "From Here to Equality". I'd like to start by reading from the first page of the book.

"Racism and discrimination have perpetually crippled black economic opportunities. At several historic moments, the trajectory of racial inequality could have been altered dramatically, but at each juncture the road chosen did not lead to a just and fair America. The formation of the republic provided a critical moment when black might have been granted freedom and admitted to full citizenship. The Civil War and the reconstruction era each offered openings to produce a true democracy thoroughly inclusive of black Americans. Had the New Deal project and the GI Bill fully included blacks, the Nation would have widened the window of opportunity to achieve an equitable future. Passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s might have unlocked the door for America to eradicate racism. However, at none of these forks was the path to full justice taken."

"From Here to Equality" is a book primarily about the economic divide between black and white Americans, how it came to be and how it can be eliminated. Specifically, we contend a suitably designed program of reparations can close the divide. Black reparations can place America squarely on the path to racial equality."

MS. MULLEN: Reparations programs have been used strategically in the United States and throughout the world to provide redress for grievance injustices. These include the U.S. government's provision of reparations for Japanese-Americans unjustly incarcerated and interned during World War II, the German government's provision of reparations for victims of the Nazi Holocaust, and the Canadian government's provision of compensation to indigenous peoples who were removed forcibly from their families and confined to Christian church run, Indian residential schools.

Reversing the effects of slavery for newly emancipated human chattel was the goal of several plans put into action during and immediately following the Civil War. One of the country's earliest efforts to dramatically alter black's economic condition was the American government's post-Civil-War plan to give at least 40 acres of abandoned and confiscated land, as well as a mule, to each formerly enslaved family of 4, or 10 acres per person.

While some maintained that this planned payment of land and work animal to the newly freed men and women in the 19th century is a figment of the black imagination, historical records confirm that the promise of reparations was not a myth, it was inscribed in federal legislation. In fact, the allocation, activated in 1865, of 40 acres for formerly enslaved Africans was at least the second such measure the Federal Government had developed to assign land to the former chattel.

The idea that reparations could be an effective method of addressing the effects of slavery and white supremacy has a long history, cycling in and out of popular discourse and the national policy arena. Reparations are as timely today as they were in 1860s.

The ultimate goal of "From Here to Equality" is to help rejuvenate discussions about and to promote reparations for African American. As the final chapter of this book will show, there are several mechanisms for reversing gross inequalities between blacks and whites that overcome the frequent reflexive reaction that this is impractical or infeasible.

Real equality is a worthy goal and it can be achieved.

MR. DARITY: Reparations are a program of acknowledgement, redress, and closure for a grievous injustice. Where African Americans are concerned, the grievous injustices that make the case for reparations include slavery, legal segregation, or Jim Crow, and ongoing discrimination and stigmatization. A-R-C, ARC, the acronym that stands for acknowledgement, redress, and closure, characterizes the three essential elements of the reparations program that we are advocating. Acknowledgement, redress, and closure are components of any effective reparations project.

Acknowledgement involves recognition and admission of the wrong by the perpetrators or beneficiaries of the injustice. For African Americans, this means the receipt of a formal apology and a commitment for redress on the part of the American people as a whole, a national act, a declaration that a

great wrong has been committed. But beyond an apology, acknowledgement requires those who benefitted from the exercise of the atrocities to recognize the advantages they gained and commit themselves to the cause of redress. Redress potentially can take two forms, not necessarily mutually exclusive -- restitution or atonement. Restitution is the restoration of the survivors to their condition before the injustice occurred or to a condition they might have attained had the injustice not taken place.

Of course, it is impossible to restore those who were enslaved to a condition preceding their enslavement, not only because those who are enslaved are now deceased, but also because many thousands were born into slavery. But it is possible to move their descendants toward a more equitable position commensurate with the status they would have attained in the absence of the injustice. Atonement, an alternative form of redress, occurs when perpetrators or beneficiaries meet conditions of forgiveness that are acceptable to the victims.

Achieving these elements of a reparations program requires good faith negotiations between those who were wronged and the wrongdoers. There is not existing mechanism for establishing when African Americans collectively will have reached an agreement that sufficient steps have been taken to justify forgiveness. Consequently, atonement is difficult to accomplish. That is why, in our proposal, we treat restitution as the appropriate form of redress and we have clear metric for determining when restitution has been achieved that we do not have for establishing the same for atonement.

Specifically, restitution for African Americans would eliminate racial disparities in wealth, income, education, health, sentencing and incarceration, political participation, and subsequent opportunities to engage in American political and social life. It will require not only an endeavor to compensate for past repression and exploitation, but also an endeavor to offset stubborn existing obstacles to full black participation in American political and social life.

Reparations, demonstrably, would be effective if an improved position for blacks is associated with sharp and enduring reductions in racial disparities, particularly economic disparities, like racial wealth inequality and corresponding sharp and enduring improvements in black well being.

Closure involves mutual recognition between African Americans and the beneficiaries of slavery, legal segregation, and ongoing discrimination toward blacks. Whites and blacks would come to

terms over the past, confront the present, and unite to create a new and transformed United States of America.

MS. MULLEN: I'd like to speak briefly to several arguments that have been raised in opposition to reparations.

The first is in fact a charge only against what we and others refer to as slavery reparations. So slavery is indeed the fulcrum from which the grievous injustices we cite in "From Here to Equality" that constitute the case for reparations for black American descendents of slavery flow. The black people were not admitted to full citizenship when slavery ended.

In chronological order, the charges we make are slavery, legal segregation or Jim Crow, and ongoing discrimination and stigmatization. The case we are making for reparations is based upon all three of these injustices and not solely on slavery.

So another point of opposition, why didn't black America or America in general already pay its debt -- or hasn't white America or America in general already paid for its debt for slavery in blood by waging the Civil War, which resulted in emancipation?

So while listening to Osha Gray Davidson's podcast, "The American Project", I learned that then House GOP Conference Chair Mike Pence said -- and this is in 2009, and I quote "I don't believe there should be reparations." After identifying himself as a student of American history, he asserts that "Reparations were paid in the lives of 600,000 Americans who fell on both sides in the Civil War". So Pence fails to acknowledge that nearly half of those fighting, the Confederates, were fighting to maintain slavery, not to end it. Enslaved black people were freed not because white confederates liberated them, they were freed because the Union Army forces, which included more than 180,000 black men and women, won the war.

Some contend black already had received reparations in the form of Barack Obama's election as the 44th President of the United States. Pence and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell have made this claim even though the majority of white Americans voted against Obama -- 39 percent of whites voted for Obama versus 90 percent of black, and 71 percent of black mix.

If by black reparations you mean the elimination of the huge black and white wealth gap,

which we do advise, Obama's election, for all of its salutary effects, did not significantly move that needle.

So another comment we hear is slavery was so long ago, it was just so long ago. Why do we keep bringing this up? We memorialize plantations across the American south. It's very big business. All too often, though, the central and essential black presence on those plantations is downplayed, or the institution of slavery is described as benign, or we are told that blacks were delighted by the association, they had nothing better to do. This notion that slavery is not so distant falls away when one looks at the institution from a generational standpoint.

So I want to read another passage from our book about an amazing woman who we met five years ago, Hortense McClinton. So on page 241, "Sebrone Jones King, a man with a prodigious intellect" -- no, excuse me. "More than half a century after slavery ended, whites holding positions of authority continued to exert power over blacks. Blacks no longer could be bought and sold like livestock, but they did not enjoy an easy coexistence with whites and their lives and livelihoods could be subjected to harm at any time.

Sebrone Jones King, a man with a prodigious intellect and a keen survival instinct, emerged from the shadow of slavery only to find that his successful lumber business made him a target for whites who resented his prosperity and tried to thwart him at every turn.

When a white railroad dispatcher in Kilgore, Texas refused to allow King's hired hands to load his milled timber onto the train for delivery to a buyer in 1924, King confronted the dispatcher, the men argued, and the dispatcher told King he would kill him if he continued to press his case. King is said to have replied, well, you better kill me quick, because if you don't I'll shoot and kill you before I hit the ground. The dispatcher did not act on his threat.

Born in East Texas on January 14, 1865, about 150 years ago, nearly a year before slavery was declared illegal in December 1865 with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, King conferred with his parents and siblings after the altercation with the dispatcher. He decided his best option was to pull up stakes and move his young family to Bowie, Oklahoma, one of the state's all black towns. King's daughter, Hortense McClinton, was five years when the family moved to Bowie.

In 1966 McClinton became the first black faculty member hired at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She taught in the school of social work. Vigorous, lively, and vital at 101 years of age, she recently urged us to finish this book. McClinton, the daughter of a slave, is one generation removed from slavery."

Now, some of you may recall another 21st century child of enslaved black Americans, Ruth Odom Bonner, whose father, Elijah Odom, was born enslaved in Mississippi and later became a physician. Elijah Odom's daughter, Ruth, became active in the civil rights movement in her hometown of Cleveland. But we remember her, especially, because the Smithsonian Institute and President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama invited her and members of three generations of her family to ring the freedom bell at the dedication ceremony for the National Museum of African American History and Culture in September 2016. That bell had originally graces Williamsburg, Virginia's first Baptist Church, which was founded by blacks in 1776 "in defiance of local law." If we wait long enough, all black Americans whose parents were enslaved and all who lived through nearly 100 years of racial apartheid in this country, will have died. But the atrocities keep coming, and that is why we need a program of reparations for black Americans.

MR. DARITY: The continuity of the atrocities (inaudible) us to try to actually put some numbers on the idea of black lives matter. So the Black Lives Matter movement, which we view as an important effort to spark the kinds of social changes that we think are essential in the United States, the Black Lives Matter movement never actually said what the discount factor is on black lives.

And so we decided that we would try to provide some estimates of that in our text. So the following from page 219: "The message of the Black Lives Matter movement encapsulates the racialized injuries of the 150 years since the end of legal American slavery. The movement's message alerts us to the many ways in which black life has been devalued and unprotected so thoroughly in the United States. The discount rate on black humanity has been enormous. A variety of metrics indicate that even after the end of Jim Crow black lives are routinely assigned a work approximately 30 percent that of white lives.

There are a number of ways in which numerical estimates can be placed on the

differential value assigned to black versus white lives in the United States. For example, as early as the 1840s New York Life typically insured whites from anywhere from \$1,000 to \$5,000 while enslaved blacks typically were ensured on behalf of their owners for no more than \$400, and sometimes for as little as \$200. It has been estimated that in 1928 there was 1 hospital bed for every 139 white Americans, but only 1 for every 1,941 black Americans, indicating that the average black life was worth only 7 percent of the average white life.

During the Jim Crow years, when the dual system of schooling operated, the gap in per capital expenditures provides a powerful index of the magnitude of the discount rate on black lives. For example, in 1939, 1940, per pupil expenditures for white students in most of the southern states were 3 times more than they were for black students, suggesting that a young black life was worth about 30 percent of a young white life. In Mississippi, per pupil expenditures were 7 times greater, suggesting that in Mississippi at that time a young black life was worth 15 percent of a young white life. In Alabama in 1912 a cluster of counties spent \$.32 on black students' education per every \$15 spent on white students' education, implying that white youth's life was deemed to be worth an incredible 4700 percent more than a black youth's life.

Today the estimated differences in spending per black and white students has been reduced substantially, although a 13 percent gap remains. Unfortunately, the narrowing of the spending gap disguises a profound racial gap in curriculum and instruction in a world of desegregated schools. The disparity in the rate of placement of black students in gifted and talented programs provides a marked indicator of the devaluation of black youth in the Nation's educational system. Black students constitute 40 percent of America's public school students, but only 26 percent of the students enrolled in gifted and talented programs.

The average black child is 66 percent less likely to be referred for gifted math and reading than their white classmates. The gross underrepresentation of black children and overrepresentation of white children in gifted education suggests that black youth are being assigned a value of less than 40 percent of the worth of a white child in the Nation's schools.

Moreover, the gap in the rates at which blacks and whites are killed in police shootings

delivers another contemporary message on the devaluation of black lives similar to some estimated magnitudes under legal segregation. For example, black men are killed by the police at three times the rate of white men each year. This would imply that black men's lives are worth one-third of white men's lives. Discriminatory wage penalties, differential exposure of black children to lead poisoning, and the far greater use of black bodies for medical experimentation afford additional avenues for estimating how heavy the discount rate continues to be on black lives."

Now, I think we're going to stop our readings there and open the floor for questions.

MR. WESSEL: Great. So thanks very much to Susan and to Sandy and Kirsten.

You do a very good job in the book, and I know you're well equipped to handle some of the things one hears from people who are uncomfortable with the idea of reparations.

I've got a number questions about that, and then I want to put to you a number of questions about practicality, how this would work.

So one question, which is typical, is what do you say to people who say, look, it's unfair to ask white Americans whose ancestors never owned slaves or people who are the children of immigrants to the U.S. who came in the 20th and 21st century to pay reparations to the descendents of slaves? How do you answer that?

MR. DARITY: So the response to the question concerning the obligation or responsibility of recent immigrants has two faces, or two forms, I think. The first is, if an individual immigrates a country, they are immigrating to its history and its obligations. And so no one who newly arrives in a country that has the characteristics that it possesses in the present moment as a consequence of, for example, the exploitation of black labor over a number of years, no one who newly immigrates is devoid of that particular historical obligation.

But let me say this, we don't view a reparations program as a matter of individual guilt. It is a matter of national obligation, national responsibility, and that's why we place the onus of the status as the culpable party on the Federal Government, not any particular individuals.

But that's the first type of argument. The second argument that's related is the notion of what are the reasons why individuals actually have come to the United States. And presumably they've

come to the United States because it has certain attributes that are attractive to them, and those attributes are usually linked to the degree of economic development in the United States. And to the extent that the U.S. economic development is heavily, heavily linked to its history of enslavement, to the ways in which black labor continued to be exploited during the Jim Crow period, then we have a situation in which there is a benefit that redounds to folks who are more recent immigrants from coming to the United States that's associated with the historical exploitation of black Americans.

MS. MULLEN: So I'm going to speak to the second part of your questions, David, this notion that the majority of white people's families were not slave owning families or they had no connection to the institution.

So our research suggests that's not true, that's not the case. That people have not done the research and they need to conduct their own investigations so they're more informed.

But I'm going to point to page 65 in our book where we say "Slavery and slave holding were direct and intimate parts of the lives of many white Americans, particularly those in the southern states that would form the Confederacy. Far from slave ownership being the purview of a tiny few, slave holding families enjoyed a wider presence and prevalence than frequently acknowledged among whites, particularly those in the south. Slavery truly was a family affair on the eve of the Civil War.

In 1860, at the national level, approximately 8 percent of all American families owned at least -- at least -- 1 slave. But this seemingly low aggregate national percentage was influenced heavily by the 21 non southern states where no families owned slaves during the last days of the antebellum period. By 1860, the southern experience with slave holding stood in marked contrast with the northern pattern. Among the 11 states that seceded from the Union in 1861 to establish the Confederacy, Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, Texas, and Louisiana registered at the lower end with at least 20 percent of white families owning slaves; 20, 25, 26, 28, 28, and 29 percent respectively. The remaining 5 states all registered proportions of 34 percent or higher, peaking at staggering rates of 46 and 49 percent in South Carolina and Mississippi respectively.

So a still more dramatic indicator of the scope of white engagement with slave ownership is the proportion of white people who were members of slave holding families. While the national figure

was 13 percent in 1860, 1/4 of whites in Arkansas and Tennessee lived in families that owned at least 1 slave. In Texas, Virginia, and North Carolina at least 1/3 of whites lived in slave owning families. This proportion rose well above 40 percent in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana, cresting at a fantastic 55 and 57 percent in Mississippi and South Carolina respectively."

I mean do you want say something about just all the other ways that the whites were engaged with, you know, retaining the institution?

MR. DARITY: So one of the other things we point out in the book is that individuals who were not necessarily from slave holding families might have a strong economic tie to the entire system of slavery, whether they are individuals who served as slave catchers, whether they were individuals that served as "managers" on plantations, whether they were individuals who were engaged in trade with the plantations. So there was a set of what we might call backward and forward linkages that were closely connected to the overall system of slavery.

We also point out in the book that actually there was a significant benefit from the system of slavery for many of the northern states, but in a most pronounced way for Connecticut and New York, and that New York City itself, its entire economic growth was closely, closely tied to the cotton sector in the United States. Slave grown cotton was decisive there.

So there is kind of a permeation of the effects of the slavery system across many, many families in the United States. And I would add, though, we emphasize also that the case for black reparations of descendants of U.S. slavery is not restricted to the harms of slavery, but also must take into account the Jim Crow period and ongoing forms of discrimination and stigmatization. And individuals like, for example, the Senate Majority Leader, who says no one living was present at the time of slavery, is actually being disingenuous because he himself certainly was alive during the Jim Crow period, as were Kirsten and myself.

MR. WESSEL: Sandy raised an issue, and there are some questions about this. And I think the gist of it is, well, there were -- and the book is just remarkable interesting on the big discussions of how to compensate the slaves immediately after the Civil War and what went wrong during reconstruction -- but there is a sense that, okay, the Germans came to grip with this, unwillingly as you

point out, relatively soon after the war. It took the U.S. quite a while to deal with the question of Japanese-Americans, but a lot of them were still alive.

Does it matter that so much time has passed since the original sin of slavery in thinking about questions of redress and reparations, Susan?

MR. DARITY: So I think we say that --

MR. WESSEL: Sandy, let's let Susan in on this.

MR. DARITY: Yeah, sorry.

MR. WESSEL: Can you unmute Susan?

MR. DARITY: Oh, you want Susan in on this? Sorry,

MS. NEIMAN: I mean I think we're basically in agreement that what counts is not simply the ending of chattel slavery, but the ending of legal discrimination, legal terror. I mean in 1951 -- this is one of my favorite Einstein stories -- Einstein with a group of clergymen petitioned Harry Truman -- some of them went to the White House -- asking for a federal bill against lynching. I didn't understand this initially because I thought, hey, lynching is murder, wasn't it illegal. Well, yes, of course, but none of the states were going to prosecute where it was being taken. And Harry Truman told Albert Einstein and group of clergymen he couldn't pass a federal bill against lynching because it was politically inopportune. Okay, this is the second half of the 20th century. And those are the kind of things that were also other forms of, you know, neo slavery that have been documented in books like "Slavery By Another Name" by Douglas Blackmon, a terrific book, or by Bryan Stevenson. If slavery really had ended and reconstruction had worked and the 40 acres and a mule were seen as fair, just pay for all of the wealth that the slaves had been creating, then, yeah, maybe you could have an argument saying, you know, 150 years is a long time. But as Kirsten and Sandy are pointing out, it just didn't end there.

Now, I think the white Americans have a huge gap in our historical memory. Black Americans of course are much more aware of things that we were able until fairly recently just to kind of brush over. Yes, there was -- I mean I think Jim Crow is actually an obscene term. Everybody knew it, but Jim Crow sort of prettifies or turns what was really apartheid, as Kirsten put it, or the age of racial terror, is what Bryan Stephenson calls it. So, you know, you sort of vaguely knew about something called

Jim Crow. And, of course, I grew up in the middle of the civil rights movement, so we knew about that. But the depth to which slavery continued or the effects of slavery continued I think is something that we simply didn't know.

So if you actually look at the parallels, if you say that legal discrimination in the United States ended with the passage of the Civil Rights Act, with the end of red lining, certain things like that, this isn't to say that oppression and humiliation and murder (inaudible) doesn't keep going on to this day, but let's just say the legal (inaudible) ended. Well, that's 50 years ago, you know. And that was about the amount of time that it took for Germany -- not the reparations that were paid just after the war, but the ones that started to be paid in the year 2000, really sort of with a full heart and a full recognition, yeah, this is what we need to do to make up for our history.

So I know people talk about the historical distances, but I think the people who emphasize that really don't know enough about the history of post slavery. I certainly didn't until I began to research it.

MR. WESSEL: Thank you.

So, Sandy and Kirsten, I wonder if we could turn a little bit to the practicalities here. When you look at the amount of money, how much money do you think it will take to narrow the wealth gap and who do you think we can distribute it and to whom?

MR. DARITY: So the estimate that we advance in the book is that closure of the racial wealth gap in the United States would require somewhere in the vicinity of \$10-12 trillion. We would distribute that in large part -- although there could be some other potential uses of the fund, as long as those other potential uses of the fund contributed to elimination of the racial wealth gap -- we would distribute that to eligible recipients who we identify as follows: there will be two criteria for eligibility. The first is an individual would have to demonstrate that he or she or they had an ancestor who was enslaved in the United States, at least one ancestor who was enslaved in the United States. And then the second criteria would be that an individual would have to show that for at least 12 years before the adoption of a reparations program or the adoption of a study commission for reparations program, they would have had to have self identified as black, negro, or African America. So there are two standards. There's a lineage

standard that's associated with a connection to United States slavery and there is an identity standard, a self identification standard that's associated with a connection to the black community in the United States.

So those are our two criteria.

It looks like Susan has a comment here. I don't know. I can't hear you.

MS. NEIMAN: I have a (inaudible) because all of us are in agreement about, you know, the lingering effects of slavery and discrimination. I remember when President Obama was running the first time and there was a question of was he black enough, was he mixed race, and he said, you know, when I'm trying to get a cab in Manhattan, nobody says there's that mixed race guy, okay. And so I wonder about your criterion for having to have an ancestor. If someone obviously -- President Obama doesn't need reparations, but if someone else who had seriously suffered --

MR. DARITY: Well, reparations is not predicated on whether or not you "need it", it's a debt. I mean we didn't examine what the economic status was of Jewish victims of the Holocaust in the moment in which they received payments. That wasn't an issue. There was a moral obligation to provide them with support regardless of what their economic status was.

MR. WESSEL: That's not what she's asking. She's asking why do you exclude people like Barack Obama who are black who may have suffered discrimination, but won't be eligible because they can't trace their lineage to a slave. That's the question.

MR. DARITY: Well, the iron is, of course -- there is an irony. Barack Obama actually does have an ancestor who was enslaved on his mother's side of the family, but not enslaved after the formation of the republic. So not enslaved after 1776. So it's not entirely accurate to say that Barack Obama doesn't have any enslaved ancestors.

MR. WESSEL: Okay, but --

MR. DARITY: However, this is the key point. The premise here is that there was a denial of compensation to the formerly enslaved at the end of the Civil War. And that denial was associated with the failure to provide them with the promised 40 acre land grants. And their descendants are the individuals who should be beneficiaries of a reparations program. That's the first point.

The second point is I think that there's something peculiar about individuals who effectively were voluntary immigrants to the United States, not descendants of folks who were forced or compulsory immigrants to the United States saying, well, I've incurred a certain type of harm that is not something that can be treated by the laws of crime in the country that I've come to, but I deserve some form of reparations.

If you migrate to a racist country, how can you presumably require or request reparations for the racism that you experience?

MR. WESSEL: Sandy, \$10-12 trillion is a lot of money, even in America. And how do you think about where this money should come from, particularly in the context that whatever resources we had before Covid-19, we seem to be spending a lot of them right now to deal with this crisis? So where is the money going to come from and how does the pandemic and the cost of the pandemic figure into your thinking?

MR. DARITY: Well, actually I would kind of flip that around. I would think that the remarkable speed at which the country came up with the funding to try to cope with the pandemic -- whether or not we think that the money is being used wisely, the remarkable speed with which it came up with the funds to do that, and similarly the remarkable speed with which it came up with funds during the Great Recession is actually an indicator that the country has a tremendous capacity to fund virtually anything that it so desires.

I think that the ultimate barrier to additional public spending is really the inflation effects. And so we would have to design a reparations program in such a sensible way that we could avoid the inflation risk.

But apart from that, the government can purchase or spend on whatever it wants to do. If we're really, really concerned about a one shot allocation of \$10-12 trillion, we suggest in the book that you could space it with a goal perhaps of making sure that you eliminate the racial wealth gap over the course of a decade. And then, you know, we're talking about allocation of \$1-2 trillion per annum, which is certainly not out of the scope of something that's entirely manageable by the Federal Government.

MR. WESSEL: It's very interesting to see the questions come in -- having read the book -

- things that you've dealt with, I think is really good sign that you dealt with a lot of issues.

So one of the questioners asks how you think about the responsibilities of institutions, particularly institutions of higher education. We've seen what Georgetown, for instance has begun to acknowledge. And also states, which, for instance, what Florida has done regarding the Rosewood Massacre.

So what do you think is the responsibility of colleges and universities, state governments, and local governments in this sphere?

MS. MULLEN: So one of the things we've learned through our research is that colleges and universities played an integral role in characterizing black Americans as deficient and suggesting that we were built for slavery. And so rather than see them engage -- or perhaps in addition, maybe, to engaging in self studies, looking at their own involvement with slavery or changing the curriculum or taking the names of, you know, virulent white supremacists off their buildings, we would like to see those institutions instead forming a coalition and lobbying Congress for reparations for black Americans. I mean they have a tremendous amount of cloud and we would like to see them putting that to work in service of black reparations.

Our own city, Durham, North Carolina, has decided to just that and to help form a coalition of cultural institutions, municipalities, communities of faith, you know, any organizations that are willing to talk about, not these what we call piecemeal reparations. I mean I think there may be some will on the part of these groups to focus, you know, on their communities, which I think is a terrific idea, but also to say that that is not enough. You know, these individual efforts of Georgetown, which affects, you know, probably about 15,000 black Americans, these efforts -- and as I'm -- and I don't know that Georgetown actually has acted on any of these suggestions. I mean I think the only thing I've seen them talk about was the possibility of preferential treatment in admissions, but I don't think that actually passed.

MR. DARITY: Well, there was some conversation about some \$400,000 fund or --

MS. MULLEN: You're correct. So there's approximately about \$400,000 fund that would be distributed across all of these black descendants of the 272 enslaved folks that the Jesuits sold in the 1830s.

MR. DARITY: And what, there's about 12,000 descendants?

MS. MULLEN: 12-15,000 of them. So they would get about \$38 a piece, or something like that. We did the math.

MR. DARITY: Yeah.

MS. MULLEN: So none of these efforts, even if all of them were enacted, would significantly move the wealth gap needle. What we need is a focused holistic program of reparations.

MR. WESSEL: Why do you think giving money to individuals is the way to go rather than creating institutions and programs that might succeed in narrowing the wealth gap?

MS. MULLEN: Well, again, these institutions are not going to change the wealth gap. You know, in our minds, you know, that is the key determinant. This is what we're trying to reverse, this is the damage that can be measured to black descendants of enslaved people. You can create all kinds of institutions. We have all kinds of institutions. But it hasn't made a significant difference in these wealth outcomes.

MR. DARITY: And I would add that I think it's vital that the individuals who are members of the community that should be receiving reparations, the community that merits reparations, should have discretion over the use of the funds.

You know, there are some people who said that what the U.S. government should do is support repatriation of African Americans to the African continent. Well, I don't think there's a significant number of black Americans who would choose that option rather than staying in the United States to achieve full citizenship and full participation. But if there are individuals who receive reparations payment could opt to use the funds for that purpose.

So I think it's a matter of individual discretion that has to be validated by a reparations program.

It's also interesting that in the other cases of reparations that we've been talking about, the German payment to victims of the Holocaust, the United States government's payments to Japanese-Americans, monetary payments were made, but nobody seems to have been concerned about that in the way people seem to be concerned about monetary payments being made to black folks in the United

States.

MR. WESSEL: Interesting. One of the questioners, someone named Natasha Howard at the University of New Mexico, asks what you think about public memorials and how the erecting of public memorials can play a role in this. And I know that's something you address in the book.

MS. MULLEN: I mean we do talk at length in the book about this whole concept of dismemory and active efforts that were made at various points in our history to whitewash our history, to either eliminate the black presence, to belittle the black presence, and to alter textbooks so that school children and college students also don't receive the actual history of our country.

We made a research trip to Charleston and visited the Confederate Museum and read every single caption in the museum and found only one that mentioned the word slave in the entire museum. It was extraordinary. There's been a very focused effort to create this dismemory, you know, a different memory, an inaccurate memory. And I think that's one of the difficulties, you know, that we have in this whole conversation, because all of us were educated in schools where we received that information as fact. And it's not that the primary documents aren't there, they exist, they're in the archives of state libraries across the country, but most of us haven't read them, most of us haven't done that research. And the textbooks are still many of them woefully inaccurate, many of them still are 20-30 years old.

There was a case of a Texas students were reading about -- some parents realized that blacks were depicted as coming to the U.S. for opportunities and seeking their fortune, you know, by coming to the U.S. This was recent.

MR. DARITY: In the 17th and 18th centuries.

MS. MULLEN: In the 17th and 18th centuries, right.

MR. DARITY: Yeah, yeah. And I would add, Susan has emphasized to a great extent the significance of the memory project in Germany with respect to the horrors of the Holocaust. And we mention this in the context of our book saying that one of the things that a reparations program should achieve, apart from the monetary payments, is "de-confederatization". That is to say actually providing Americans with an accurate story of the Civil War, of reconstruction, and reversing the lies that are

embedded in the lost cause myth.

So the memory dimension is also critical in this type of a reparations program.

MR. WESSEL: Susan, we have a couple of minutes left. I have the sense that you wanted to add to that?

MS. NEIMAN: No, no, I'm in agreement.

MR. WESSEL: All right. Let me then ask one final question.

As I've mentioned a number of times, Sandy and Kirsten, you stand on the shoulders of people who had tried so hard to get reparations in some form, and I was looking through the book and I can't find the story I'm looking for, so I'm hoping if I give you enough clues you can tell us.

It was about an African American women who was petition for reparations --

MS. MULLEN: Callie House.

MR. WESSEL: Yeah, tell us about her.

MR. DARITY: So Mary Francis Berry, the historian, has done a superb biography of Callie House. It's called "My Face Is Black Is True."

So Callie House in the latter part of the 19th century managed to establish a movement to get pension funds for the folks who had formerly been enslaved. And I think she got approximately --

MS. MULLEN: 300,000 petitioners.

MR. DARITY: -- 300,000 petitioners, yeah. But the United States government was not particularly enthusiastic about her efforts. They brought mail fraud charges against her. She was convicted and she had to go to jail for a while.

And it's interesting -- it's the same type o charges that were brought against Marcus Garvey in the early part of the 20th century that undermined his movement. And I think -- does Dr. Berry's book indicate that there were followers of Callie House --

MS. MULLEN: Yes, yes.

MR. DARITY: -- how moved into the Garvey movement.

MS. MULLEN: Who migrated to the Garvey movement. Yeah, yeah.

MR. DARITY: Yeah, so very, very interesting set of connections. But she quite

remarkable.

MS. MULLEN: Dave, may I say something briefly just about "de-confederatization"?

You know, one of the problems that we have in this country that comes as a consequence of our not having told the truth about our history -- and I should say the truth was told immediately after the Civil War, it was just in the subsequent years that the history was changed -- but what you end up with is folks celebrating the Confederacy. You know, I think about these numerous incidents where, you know, South Americans serving in the military all over the world --

MR. DARITY: Southern -- southern Americans.

MS. MULLEN: Southern Americans who fought in the military who would raise the Confederate Flag in Viet Nam, in Iraq, you know, the Gulf War sites. Like why is this the case?

I think Susan wants to add something too.

I mean it's ubiquitous in many public places.

MS. NEIMAN: So what really pulled me up short was after I had handed in the manuscript of my book already to the publishes, so the story doesn't appear in it -- I was driving on the New Jersey Turnpike and the song The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down came on the radio. Now, that song was covered by Joan Baez who really -- you know, she was a stand up person during the civil rights movement, she was in Selma, she was in Mississippi. This is somebody whose decent credentials are not in question, and yet without even thinking about it, she could cover this song, which is actually an elegy for the Confederacy.

And so it isn't just southerners who join the Marines and go to Iraq, it's, you know, progressive folks not really hearing what we are singing along to because, you know, the Confederacy is covered with this sort of myth of moonlight and magnolias and Spanish moss looks really great and ethereal. And so I think we need to pay attention to how deep that Confederatization is even among people who would consciously deny that they support any part of the Confederacy.

MR. WESSEL: Great. Well, I want to thank you, Susan, for joining us from Berlin, and Sandy and Kirsten for joining us. I regret that we couldn't do this in person, so I owe you all lunch sometime in Washington when the plague passes.

But in the meantime I recommend this book, particularly as you've been able to tell, because of the historical nuggets in it are so interesting and resonate so much as we think about where we are today.

So, with that, thank you, Susan, Kirsten, and Sandy, and all of you who joined in and all of you who asked questions. And if you enjoyed this so much you just want to watch it again, the video will be on our website.

So have a good day.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2020