

Original Paper

Jim Crow Laws in The United States and Apartheid in South Africa: A Political and Critical Analysis

Earnest N. Bracey^{1*}

¹ Social Sciences Department, College of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

* Earnest N. Bracey, Email: earnest.bracey@csn.edu

Received: July 13, 2025

Accepted: July 28, 2025

Online Published: August 11, 2025

doi:10.22158/sshsr.v6n1p48

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sshsr.v6n1p48>

Abstract

This paper gives us a glimpse into the early features that defined two racist and inhumane political systems: Jim Crow laws in the United States and Apartheid in South Africa. A broader understanding of these worlds should change how we view critical issues of race, segregation, and discrimination. In addition, this work provides insight about the long struggles of black people against white supremacy and hegemony on two, very different continents. Meaning, we can learn about the maddening and heinous crimes against humanity rendered by white supremacists in the United States and South Africa. In other words, racism, segregation, and discrimination played a central role in the harsh, political systems of both countries. Equally important, white supremacists in the United States and South Africa brutalized the black communities in both places, while feeling superior to all other ethnic groups. Of course, white supremacists always tried to hide their violence and sanitize the ugly truths of their respective governments. They also exerted their will on others, primarily for their own benefit, which triggered acrimony in both minority populations. This paper also exposes the underlying facts about the deprave actions of white supremacists who went too far in both societies against mostly black people — in the United States and South Africa. Meaning, both countries were enmeshed in the realm of horrifying inequality and racism. In the final analysis, we should be able to see clearly the striking similarities between the American Jim Crow laws and Apartheid system in South Africa with their white supremacy traditions.

Keywords

apartheid, Jim Crow, white supremacy, racism, prejudice, inequality, marginalism, segregation

1. Introduction: Political Systems of Racial Injustice – A Comparison

It is unfortunate, but white supremacists in the United States and South Africa clung to the ideals of their racial superiority. Indeed, black people in the United States and South Africa are still experiencing racial trauma, given the level of *animus* by white people toward them. To be sure, whites in both countries advanced their white supremacy *ethos* and hegemony. This is to say that white supremacists continue to see the world in black and white, or through racist lens, without nuance. To wit, white supremacists in the past and even today are willing to do almost *anything* — including *murder* — to gain and keep political power. In this regard, blacks have always understood the need to adapt, survive, and fight against white supremacy — at all cost.

Some might ask: Why should we continue to dwell on these messy, racial histories, as if doing so is irrelevant. But *everyone* should know *something* about the ugliest times in American and South African history. Also, such matters are more important than ever, because racism and discrimination still exist in the United States and South Africa. In the past, whites in both countries formerly implemented racist, segregation policies, in pernicious ways, to maintain their control. Hence, it is not hard to compare the racist systems of *Jim Crow* and *apartheid*. White supremacists were very comfortable with the terrible worlds they created against black people in both nations, which mirrored each other, because of their systemic racism and societal imperfection. The similarities or parallels between the two racist societies were brutally apparent; and today, as in the past, it included the *juxtaposition* of blacks sharing political power and *wealth*, which was unacceptable to them. But what happened to blacks in America and South Africa at the time was *inhumane*, separate, and unequal, to say the least. Therefore, the two societies certainly had a lot in common. Altogether, of course, whites were highly offended that blacks wanted to politically participate, to have social justice, and to be treated like human beings.

In the United States, “The system of race relations that replaced [black] slavery in the [American] South was *de jure* segregation, sometimes referred to as the *Jim Crow* system.” Moreover, under Jim Crow segregation, “the minority [black] group [was] physically and socially separated from the dominant [white] group and consigned to an inferior position in virtually every area of social life” (Healey, 2003, p. 213). Black people were segregated, controlled, and scrutinized in every capacity, creating “a vicious [discriminatory] cycle” (Healey, 2003, p. 213) (Note 1). Similarly, the segregated system in South Africa resembled the bias and racial *incongruities* and policies of the United States, because “the system of *apartheid* was constructed to firmly establish white superiority” (Healey, 2003, p. 529) (Note 2). Additionally, *authoritarianism* was simply the key to “minority rule” in South Africa, where whites mistreated its black majority, which was also all-encompassing. Professor of sociology at Christopher Newport University in Virginia, Joseph F. Healey (2003) writes:

In Afrikaans, *apartheid* means “separate” or “apart;” the basic logic of [this racist] system was to separate white and blacks in every area of life: schools, neighborhoods, jobs, buses, churches, and so forth. Apartheid resembled the Jim Crow system of

segregation in the United States except it was even more repressive, elaborate, and unequal (pp. 529-530) (Note 3).

Apartheid was a blight on the entire continent of Africa; and Jim Crow laws in the United States were an embarrassment to a nation that prided itself on being a model Democracy. In fact, these idiosyncratic countries displayed the offensive, uncouth behavior of white supremacists at their worse, with their calculated evil, and anti-humanist positions. To be sure, white supremacists believe that they were justified in doing whatever they pleased or wanted to do to lesser, so-called humans. Therefore, white people could have cared less about the humanity of others, which underscored their ignorance. Or was this sentiment a *myth* or misconception? To be clear, white supremacists wholeheartedly believed in *ethnocentrism*, which is “the feeling that one’s group has a mode of living, values, and patterns of adaptation that are superior to other groups. It is coupled with a generalized contempt for members of other groups” (“ethnocentrism,” 1975, p. 898) (Note 4). Hence, the reign of terror toward blacks and other people of color spread across two continents — and two multi-racial nations. White supremacists have also been prone to incorporate far-right ideologies, extremism, and radicalism, which dictated their racial prejudices.

Moreover, whites in both the United States and South Africa have histories of targeting *only* black people, subjecting them to horrendous hate crimes, like rapes, unprovoked beatings, deaths, and lynchings, which was meant to make *hapless* blacks feel afraid, even in their own communities. Also, the *marginalization* and demonization of blacks were par for the course. Indeed, inculcating *fear* was also part of the racist, white agenda and *playbook* for white supremacists — that is, when it came to black people. Equally, there were not a lot of concerning whites who ran interference by creating inclusive laws and policies that helped the respective black populations at that time; and the situations for black people in the United States and South Africa got exceedingly worse, making their lives miserable — and in many cases *unbearable*. It should also be remembered that white supremacists in both locations were responsible for exasperating the racial problems in the first place. In so many words, white supremacists were not even afraid of expressing their hateful feelings too bluntly — or in a *direct* way, because they were given cover by the power elites. And their draconian, racist actions and intransigent tactics were absolutely cruel and despicable, because *Jim Crow* laws and *apartheid* were both disgusting regimes of inhumanity and abominations of inhumanity, not just aberrations.

White supremacists also believed that people should understand and embrace their separatist points of view. Mostly, though, white racists wanted to essentially hurt people that they didn’t like or understand, particularly blacks and other people of color. Perhaps subconsciously, whites in both countries understood their own fundamental weakness or shortcomings and lack of morality, empathy, and compassion. Of course, *cruelty* toward others was the norm for these heartless, white supremacists, because they really didn’t concern themselves with the *pain* and *tribulations* of black people, in general. Not surprisingly, the struggle of blacks against white oppression in both the United States and South Africa for decades took place; and in many respects, they (black people) are still struggling today. Of

course, white supremacists believed that they could do no wrong, as they continued to vilify blacks and other people of color. Today, some hateful whites in South Africa are casting themselves “as victims because of [black people’s] efforts to right the historical wrongs of [white] colonialism and South Africa’s previous apartheid system of force racial segregation, which oppressed the black majority” (Lee, Santana, & Magome, 2025, 4A).

In this regard, we must be clear about what has already occurred in the United States and South Africa — that is, the intense competition for racial *superiority*, especially in terms of Jim Crow laws and apartheid. More importantly, what exactly distinguishes these two racist, political systems or parallel governments? Was there really a difference, all things considering? An even finer point is: In the same way that white South Africans injected their racial and political bias into their respective nation, whites in the United States did the same with their Jim Crow laws. Furthermore, whites accepted the entire notion of racial inequality in both countries, while justifying their horrendous actions and *massacre* of black people. Unfortunately, in context, the two divisive, political systems have continued beyond their so-called ending. In the final analysis, Jim Crow segregation has supposedly been replaced by the *Rule of Law* in the United States, whereas South Africa’s “repressive *apartheid system*, based on a racist ideology of white supremacy, was [so-called] abolished and replaced by majority rule” (Magstadt, 2006, p. 115) (Note 5). In both countries, there is irrefutable and demonstrable evidence of the irreparable harm done to blacks, wrought by white supremacists in both nations, because of racism and discrimination. Who would have thought that such *unsavory*, political systems could have been duplicated in two countries across the Atlantic Ocean — and elsewhere in the world. Again, it was like blacks were living in comparable societies; or white supremacist systems that paralleled, mostly because of their similar, warped, racist ideologies.

See the following chart or exhibit 1.

POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF WHITE SUPREMACY	
<p><u>UNITED STATES JIM CROW LAWS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Civil War: 1861-1965 • Black codes enacted after American Civil War (restricted the freedom of former black slaves; provisions of the black codes were reenacted in the Jim Crow laws; remained in force until the 1964 Civil Rights Act) • Reconstruction: 1865-1971 (established military districts in the south and southern, slave-owning states of acceptance of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution to ensure the black freed men's civil rights; the Freeman's Bureau led to the formation of terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan) • Plessy vs. Ferguson in 1896 (established the legality of racial segregation - U.S. Supreme Court decision) • Jim Crow laws (legislation requiring segregation of whites and "persons of color") • Establishment of redlining and sun-down, white towns/neighborhoods (designed to assure white supremacy) • Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954 (blacks and whites attempted to end entrenched segregationists practices) • Civil Rights Act of 1964. 	<p><u>SOUTH AFRICAN APARTHEID</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African War: 1899-1902 • Afrikaans: "apartness" or "separateness" (human-right violations under white rule) • National Party in 1948 (racial segregation, sanctioned by law, established black African "homelands") • The Group Areas Act of 1950 (established residential & business sections in urban areas for respective races) • Separate education standard (forbade social contacts with blacks; authorized segregated public facilities) • Engendered violent protests and acts of sabotage of white rule by blacks • Political and economic discrimination of non-European groups (denied nonwhite participation in white government) • Created the "pass laws" (required nonwhites to carry identification papers; denied certain types of jobs to black majority) <p>*Apartheid legislation was repealed, though segregation remains deeply entrenched in South African society.</p>

Exhibit 1. Political Systems of White Supremacy

2. Jim Crow Laws in the United States

The commodification of racial segregation in the United States became normalized because of white supremacy, particularly in the Deep South after the American Civil War. Indeed, whites forged the slave south and Jim Crow system. Sadly, whites deified their racial hatred and division between blacks and whites, as they were more that politically motivated, while imposing their *repugnant*, discriminatory rules on the black minority, which were designed to disfavor them. It became an undemocratic, sad way of life across the United States for its black population, even as black Americans established their own successful communities. But as associate professor of law at Ohio State University, Michelle Alexander (2012) explains, "The backlash against the gains of African Americans in the Reconstruction Era was swift and severe" (p. 30), mostly because of white supremacists. Alexander (2012) goes on to write: "As

African Americans obtained political power and began the long march toward greater social and economic equality, whites reacted with panic and outrage” (p. 30) (Note 6). Of course, the dominant group’s perverse actions against black people were nothing more than an attempt to demean, provoke, and marginalize them, in particular. For example, as Alexander (2012) tells us:

Jim Crow laws mandated residential segregation, and blacks were relegated to the worst parts of town. Roads literally stopped at the border of many black neighborhoods, shifting from pavement to dirt. Water, sewer systems, and other public services that supported the white areas of town frequently did not extend to the black areas. The extreme poverty that plagued blacks due to their legally sanctioned inferior status was largely invisible to whites — so long as whites remained to their own neighborhoods, which they were inclined to do (p. 195) (Note 7).

White supremacists in America claimed their racist, ideological and segregationist beliefs actually reflected mainstream American values. But nothing could have been further from the truth, as their atrocities against the black minority went too far. For example, “Railways and streetcars, separate schools, hospitals, and other public institutions, generally of inferior quality were designated for [black Americans]” (“Jim Crow laws,” 1975, p. 1416) (Note 8). To be certain, there was no shame with white supremacists at that time in American history, because they didn’t care about their awful misdeeds when it came to their ideological racism, which is “a belief system asserting that a particular group is inferior. Although individuals may subscribe to racial beliefs, the ideology itself is incorporated into the culture of the society and passed on from generation to generation” (Healey, 2003, pp. 600-601) (Note 9). Instead of focusing on the togetherness of racial or ethnic groups, white supremacists threatened and upended the lives of blacks or the decedents of black American slaves. To be certain, many whites, especially in the Deep South embraced the so-called “intellectual doctrine of racism,” which was “particularly cherished by many [white] politicians who saw it as a moral justification for the oppression of other peoples through imperialist conquest and rule” (Fields, Barber, & Riggs, 1998, p. 871) (Note 10). And through political socialization, white Americans were able to legitimize the inferior status of blacks, while incorporating it (the racist doctrine) into American culture.

White supremacists in the United States during the *Jim Crow era* “was also about attitudes and unwritten codes of behavior.” For example, black people or African Americans “were expected to show deference to whites at all times.” Further, “No African American could ever imply that a white person was lying or dishonest. Nor could an African American man comment on the appearance of a white woman or demonstrate superior knowledge or intelligence” (Gitelson, Dudley, & Dubnick, 2016, p. 155) (Note 11), or he would (possibly) be lynched. Also, motivated, perhaps, by their bias or racial hatred, white supremacists continued to target law-abiding blacks or African American citizens who dared to question the *status quo* of “white rule;” and their horrible laws, norms, and policies, which were specifically designed to control every aspect of a black person’s life — and their black communities. It should be understood that:

Generally, such infractions were dealt with by personal rebukes or, in more serious cases, mob violence, not law. Indeed, mob violence played a crucial role in enforcing Jim Crow. Sometimes, [white] mobs would attack individuals, believed to have violated some norm, but often the mobs, angered by some alleged violation of Jim Crow norms, would raid whole [black] neighborhoods, destroying property and killing or injuring African Americans, simply because they lived in the [black] community (Gitelson et al., 2016, p. 155) (Note 12).

Unfortunately, blacks or African Americans (today) are still trying to come to terms with what happened to their hapless ancestors, or their historical trauma, despite words to the contrary. Furthermore, “After Reconstruction, southern states created a ‘Jim Crow’ system of social, political, and economic inequality that made a mockery of the [U.S.] Constitution’s promise” (Ginsberg et al., 2023, p. 153). Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court “ruling in 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that separate facilities for whites and blacks were constitutional [and] encouraged the passage of discriminatory laws that wiped out the gains made by [blacks] during Reconstruction, which created the separate-but-equal doctrine” (“Jim Crow law,” 1975, p. 1416) (Note 13) — and put African Americans in precarious and vulnerable positions. And to say the least, “In U.S. history,” amid the turmoil and burst of white nationalist fervor, “statutes [were quickly] enacted by [mostly] southern states and [other American] municipalities, beginning [also] in the 1880s, that legalized [cursed] segregation between blacks and whites” (“Jim Crow law,” 1975, p. 1416). No doubt, black people were being hurt by such increasingly shocking laws and policies by the dominant group; and *Jim Crow* “came to symbolize a regime of apartheid,” which “demeaned African Americans and furthered the separation of the so-called races” (Gitelson et al., 2016, p. 155). In this respect, racism and discrimination escalated. According to premiere Harvard University professor, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (2019):

In the years that witnessed the demise of Reconstruction, the challenge to the quest for equal rights before the law, and the institutionalization of Jim Crow segregation, academics, politicians, and other political figures, most of them apologists for segregation, argued that black Americans indeed faced challenges, but black leadership or black self-determination would not be up to meeting those challenges. Instead, white Americans were morally obligated, in the most paternalistic way, to step in and solve the so-called Negro Problem *for* the Negro, not *with* him (p. 80) (Note 14).

But these white individuals of which professor Gates speaks are surprisingly wrong. Indeed, it should be pointed out that *only* African Americans can ultimately solve the disgusting remnants of *Jim Crow* laws in the United States, not liberal or progressive whites, in general, who don’t even believe that racial discrimination and systemic racism exist. So, do they believe in the welfare of its black citizens? Equally important, white supremacists and white hate groups, like the Ku Klux Klan, continually tried to mislead white Americans — and distract the general public from the reality of their dangerous, hateful, and violent activities, like the “public lynching” of African Americans. Of course, during *Jim Crow* in the United

States, “lynching was a [deplorable] public act [that] demonstrated the intention to further terrorize African Americans into accepting second-class treatment.” Moreover, “Lynching was a means of suppressing any thoughts of social equality” (Gitelson, 2016, p. 155). Basically, African Americans also had no say in the U.S. government, as they were being denied the franchise. But they never accepted Jim Crow laws because of their civil disobedience.

Furthermore, African Americans were treated without respect and dignity; and prevented from having a chance to politically participate and getting a leg-up financially, so to speak, or having the means of creating *generational wealth* — and/or providing a financial lineage. Therefore, as Healey puts it: white racists and extremist groups [were] no strangers to Jim Crow and our ugly U.S. history. Professor Healey (2003) goes on to cogently write:

The Klan, for example, was founded [over] 150 years ago, shortly after the Civil War, and has since played a significant role in local and state politics and in everyday life at various times and places (and not just in the South). During the turbulent 1920s the [Ku Klux Klan] reached what was probably the height of its popularity. It had a membership in the millions and was said to openly control many U.S. Senators, governors, and local politicians (p. 146) (Note 15).

Fortunately, in 1964, because of black men like Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., a Nobel Peace Prize winning activist, and other civil rights leaders against Jim Crow, the landmark legislation or Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed, which “ended [legal] segregation in public spaces and prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, sex, and national origin” (Ginsberg et al., 2023, p. 159) (Note 16). Previously, however, “the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown Board of Education*... led to the end of *de jure* segregation.” Nonetheless, “*de facto* segregation [remained] in many areas” of American life, “including housing and schooling” (Ginsberg et al., 2023, p. 159) (Note 17). This means that aspects of *Jim Crow* still exist in our society or the United States today — that is, in terms of racial discrimination, and even though it’s been decades. Overall, we must thoroughly recognize and understand the racial nuances of the *Jim Crow* years, because from the inception of the United States, we have (always) been living in a divided nation, ready to burst violently at the seams, to use the *metaphor*, mainly because of white supremacy. In this regard, white supremacists seem to have *never* carried *any* guilt for what their ancestors have done to blacks or the African American population. This is to say that real harm was inflicted on black people. Hence, as a nation, the United States must *never* forget their awful, *corrupt* misdeeds; and even more important, white Americans should never pretend that *nothing* really happened to its black citizens, while conveniently forgetting the past.

3. Apartheid in South Africa

First and foremost, what happened in South Africa was a most protruded, complex, and serious humanitarian crisis. Therefore, we should be appalled that a white, European minority took over a land that was not their own. Or the black lands in South Africa didn’t belong to them; hence, these white

Europeans from Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands, or the Dutch claimed *terra nullius*, which means territory not belonging to “any particular country.” Or this *Latin* term means “the land of no one” (“*terra nullius*,” 1999, p.1483) (Note 18). This belief, however, was a ridiculous notion, given that thousands of black indigenous people lived in the black lands that would eventually become South Africa, and where black people spoke a plethora of different languages. Indeed, various black tribes were territorially anchored. As Columnist Lydia Polgreen (2025) explained: “The white minority” would eventually subjugate and rule “the black majority after expropriating their [sacred] land, herding them [the black majority] into poor *Bantustans* and profiting from their cheap labor...” (4) (Note 19). And this was the *unequal*, daily lives of the black majority in South Africa. But it must be clearly understood that the dark or black lands were not just given (or handed over) to the white, European *interlopers*. Meaning, blacks fought the good fight of the courageous — and without “the force of arms” to keep whites out of Africa. Meanwhile, white supremacists in South Africa believed *wholeheartedly* that they didn’t owe the black people an explanation about what they were doing with the land — that is, extracting the vast resources of the area, like gold, diamonds, different gems, and other valuable minerals and metals, stripping the black majority of *wealth* and a comfortable livelihood — and a sense of security.

The white supremacists at this time also used their racist intersectionality to prioritize and segregated the various other ethnic groups by implementing an *apartheid* government, “where a white minority that comprised less than 15 percent of the population [and] brutally repressed a black majority that represented three-quarters of citizens” (Berman, 2024, p. 77) (Note 20). Of course, “The policy of segregating whites and nonwhites,” in South Africa, “was known as *Apartheid* (Afrikaans = apartness), in almost all social relations, [which] was further implemented by a varied series of laws that included additional curbs on free movement (partly through the use of *passbooks*, which most black Africans were required to carry) and the planned establishment of a number of independent homelands for black African ethnic groups” (“South Africa, Republic of,” 1975, p. 2569) (Note 21). This particular policy was much like the “redlining” that took place in the United States, where black people couldn’t settle or live. To be certain, white supremacists used these mechanisms for empowering the white minority government. About *apartheid*, Thomas M. Magstadt (2006) writes that: “The South African system [was] designed to perpetuate racial domination by whites prior to the advent of black majority rule there in the early 1990s” (p. 621). Accordingly, “In practice, the [racist] system was one of white supremacy, [with] blacks having no representation in the central state parliament” and white [apartheid] government. Even more important, “Many of the provisions of apartheid regarding labor, land segregation (*reserves*, *Home lands*, *Bantustans*), municipal segregation, social and educational separation, and a virtually exclusive white franchise, were in place before the [so-called] nationalist victory of 1948.” Moreover, “after that date it [South Africa] was erected into a complete political, social, and ‘petty apartheid’ relating to transport, beaches, lavatories, park benches, etc.” (“apartheid,” 1994, p. 75) (Note 22), which was the same as it was in the United States with (cursed) *Jim Crow* laws. In essence, white supremacists in South Africa

were only bolstering their hardline stance against the black majority, which was shortsighted and revolting.

It seemed that white South Africans, for whatever reasons, had a deep contempt and hatred for black South Africans, instead of working side-by-side with the black majority during this turbulent time. Unfortunately, white supremacists didn't really want to work to compromise or work together with the black majority, as if they wanted to hurt the original people of the South African lands, with prejudice and evident relish. Or so it seemed. But what they did to black people and other human beings couldn't be justified, and made life incredibly difficult and distressing for those who were different. Furthermore, white supremacists in South Africa didn't shy away from violence, as they committed heinous acts toward the black majority. Nor did they care about the human condition, particularly when it came to people of color. Meanwhile, black South Africans abhorred the white minority, who were advocating for their depraved, racist, political beliefs. Moreover, white South Africans were certainly clear about their intentions. In other words, white supremacists were motivated by greed, as well as by their bias, disrespect, and hatred toward black people in South Africa. Indeed, what white supremacists actually did to the black majority in South Africa was possibly worse than we can imagine.

To wit, whites, because of their unambiguously harsh and inhumane actions and treatment of the black majority in South Africa should have been brought before the International Court for crimes against humanity; but "The system of [white] racial privilege called *apartheid* lasted about 40 years." Nevertheless:

Through the 1970s and 1980s, changes within South Africa and in the world in general built up pressure against the [apartheid] system. Internally, protest against apartheid by blacks began in the 1960s and continued to build in intensity. The South African government responded to these protests with violent repression, and thousands died in the confrontations with police and the army (Healey, 2003, p. 531) (Note 23).

Unfortunately, white law enforcement authorities were involved in brutalizing the black people at every turn, cracking down on *any* dissent, by using tear gas, vicious dogs, and "*sjamboks* (rawhide whips) and water cannons against the black majority" (Allen, 2006, p. 3), which enabled white South Africans to assume the mantle of power without participation from the original people of the land. Although "segregationist attitudes might have been more stringent in South Africa than in the United States and Britain's colonies, they were not much different" (Allen, 2006, p. 55) (Note 24).

Again, white supremacists opted for violence against the black majority in South Africa to put in place their racist, segregationist ideology and laws, instead of doing the right thing or hard thing of embracing blacks in their *apartheid* government. Additionally, the white minority violated "the human rights of their [black] citizens to preserve their own hold on power" (Frieden, Lake, & Schultz, 2022, p. 535) (Note 25) and control. Unfortunately, under the white South African government, there wasn't any humanitarian laws; and despite the horrific suffering of the black majority, "anti-apartheid activism continued to attack the [apartheid] system from below" (Healey, 2003, p. 531), or in a secret way. Nonetheless, anti-black

hostility continued unabated, as white supremacists thought of black people as sub-humans who should be exploited and tamed in some way. More important, many whites in South Africa had the mistaken belief that they were superior to all other people of color; and they prioritized their desire for power over social and political *niceness* for ideological expedience, rather than recognizing the human *agency* of the black majority. Of course, the black majority firmly believed that there was no place in South Africa for this kind of *apartheid* hatred. As discussed, the nation was “colonized by their mostly [white] Dutch ancestors, who implemented a racist apartheid regime against the majority black citizens until it crumbled [over] 31 years ago” (Johnson, 2025, p. 3) (Note 26), and much to the chagrin of white supremacists in South Africa, who eventually had to “yield to democracy and a new constitution that would grant the right to vote to all South Africans” (Polgreen, 2025, p.4), which opened the doors for South Africa’s first “all-race elections in April 1994” (“Mandela, Nelson,” 1994, p. 696), where black activist and politician, Nelson Mandela, who spent over twenty years in prison during the white apartheid era for his activism, was elected as South Africa’s first black president, serving until 1999 (“Mandela, Nelson,” 2000, p. 1006). It should also be noted that Mandela won the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to dismantle *apartheid*. In this regard, it was both predictable and understandable that the days of dominant white supremacy in the white government of South Africa were numbered. Another black man, Desmond Tutu, was a famous Archbishop who “worked passionately, tirelessly, and nonviolently to tear down *apartheid*,” which was “South Africa’s brutal, decadeslong regime of oppression against its black majority that ended in 1994” (Meldrum, 2021, 1A). Archbishop Tutu, “the uncompromising foe of apartheid” was also a Nobel Peace Prize-winning icon (Meldrum, 2021, 1A) (Note 27), for his freedom-fighting efforts. Both Mandela and Tutu were fierce champions of racial justice, who were instrumental in putting in place a more equitable, pragmatic nation.

It is also worth highlighting what happened in South Africa to the black majority, because today, remnants of right-wing ideologies, as well as threats and intimidation toward black people, continue to exist in the country by some whites, who try to trivialize the (past) pain and suffering of black South Africans, while reinforcing racial stereotypes. In the past, of course, white supremacists were creatures of hate and racial *negativity*, who seemed always to espouse controversial views about race, mainly because they believed that they were better; hence they treated the black majority in South Africa (during the apartheid era) as a *monolith*, ignoring the diversity and/or different black cultures, communities, and histories of the black indigenous people in the area. Indeed, their disagreeable, reckless laws and policies caused real harm to the black majority populations. Nonetheless, “In exchange for [black] political power, the fundamental economic arrangements,” and “virtually all of the country’s wealth” are still in the hands of whites (Polgreen, 2025, p. 4) (Note 28). Therefore, white South Africans have gained legitimacy, while continuing to divide the black, brown, and white communities. To be sure, the racism in South Africa has evolved, but not entirely disappeared. To be abundantly clear, we must recognize that, “Having dominated [South] African politics for most of the century, they [whites] were obliged to give up national power after the first all-race elections in 1994.” However, “Much of the country’s economic wealth,” as

mentioned, “remains in [white] Afrikaner hands” (“Afrikaner,” 2000, p. 21) (Note 29). Fortunately, black South Africans now have a dominant and permanent seat at the political table.

In the final analysis, white supremacists in South Africa have been able to effectively avoid accountability for their many crimes and political misdeeds, while disregarding the humanity of the black majority. Also, white South Africans have never received their due *comeuppance* or really paid a price for their racial biases and *dehumanizing* work.

4. Conclusions

Unfortunately, black people have been victimized by virtue of their so-called race and skin-color in both the United States and South Africa. Indeed, whites’ bad intentions and discriminatory policies produced the worst results for black Americans in the United States. Equally, the harsh intentions and ridiculously extreme *apartheid* laws in South Africa stifled the ability of blacks to get ahead for an extended period. Also, generational theft by whites has existed in both countries — that is, in terms of force labor and taking of valuable resources. Unfortunately, many white Americans still haven’t come to terms with the ugly history of their white ancestors, particularly when it comes to black American slavery and *Jim Crow* laws. As professor John W. Blassingame (2001) writes:

African enslavement in North America was a deeply isolating [inhumane and humiliating] experience. After enduring the middle passage, [black] newcomers underwent a brutal “seasoning process” intended to accommodate them to an alien culture and break their independent wills. Torn away from the families, communities, landscapes, and cultures they had known, survivors faced the Herculean task of reconstructing their lives, individually and collectively, within the harsh, hostile confines of the New World slavery system [and later Jim Crow system] (p. 717) (Note 30).

After black American slavery, white supremacists instituted the *Jim Crow* system, which was put in place to further hurt African Americans with audacious laws and policies. How blacks have been unfairly treated in the United State has been vile, vicious, and disgusting. Indeed, the hate crimes committed, and the violence/attacks by white supremacists have been deliberate and *insane*. Unfortunately, the United States is *backsliding* on human rights, as when the *Jim Crow* system was fully in place. To say the least, we still have a racial, ideological crisis in America. But we must not forget that all humans should have equal opportunities for a decent and fulfilling life. Oftentimes, white supremacists made truly horrendous decisions by denying black Americans their right to politically participate — and to even exist. Deeply rooted in their racial hatred and marginalization of black people, white supremacists in the United States did certain things to maintain control, while attempting to undermine the collective identity of a race of human beings. Furthermore, the dominant (white) group had been extraordinarily aggressive in attacking those who disagreed and criticized their unique brand of racism.

Similarly, white supremacists in South Africa used *segregation* as a means to an end to subordinate the black majority as in the apartheid system or practice. Accordingly, this type of segregation means:

The cultural, political, organizational, and typically geographical separation of one group of people from another. It is often based on perceived ethnic or racial divisions, an extreme example being apartheid (literally ‘separateness’) in [South] Africa where physical segregation between whites and blacks was most apparent (e.g., in public transport, washrooms, housing, [and] sports). It also characterized the period of black slavery in the USA, generally being associated with the exploitation of poorer ethnic groups by a politically dominant [white] elite (“segregation,” 1994, p. 993).

To be honest, the racism that existed in both countries was almost indistinguishable — that is, in the United States and South Africa. This is to say that white supremacists had almost the *exact* same racial superiority arguments. And this concern should be tempered by the fact that both nations still have *systemic* racism, despite words to the contrary. As mentioned in this work, racism and discrimination haven’t been *eradicated* — and probably never will be. In this regard, perhaps we are preaching to the *choir*, so to speak, that some white people, in general, still have an aversion to black skin or black people. As such, it is difficult to ignore the *egregious* actions of white supremacists who believed that they had some kind of *messianic* view that they were/are superior in all things. But their superiority was/is only in their own minds. No doubt, the hateful, segregationist policies of *Jim Crow* laws and *apartheid* were mostly in alignment. And for a while, and somewhat surprisingly, whites in both the United States and South Africa had almost complete *carte blanche*, to do whatever they wanted to do to the black populations. *Segregation* and *marginalization*, of course, was also par for the course. In this respect, white supremacy is universal, as it continues to transcend all ethnic groups. Hence, breaking down barriers of *Jim Crow* and *apartheid*, in some form, will always be an intractable thing to do. Or so it seems.

White supremacists in both the United States and South Africa placed an *undue* burden on respective black communities, as they wanted different minorities to acquiesce to their racist and discriminatory demands. And beyond the importance of black people finding their place in two separate, racist societies, many whites today have embraced the “mutability of the past,” which means to ignore, omit, or pretend that the truths presented in this paper never happened. Is this a *paradox*? Or is this discussion a harsh *juxtaposition* of two racist practices that seem contrary? Clearly, what is outlined in this paper did occur, whether we like it or not. And this finally brings us to what is really important: Can we accept the truth about *Jim Crow* laws and *apartheid*? And can we reconcile the past, so that we can move forward as humans into the future? Or will white supremacists be allowed to crash the *proverbial* party, to use the metaphor, and continue their reign of terror and hostility toward blacks and other people of color across our planet?

References

- Afrikaner. (2000). In *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Encyclopedia*, 1st ed. Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc.
- Alexander, M. (2012). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-blindness*, revised ed. New York: The New Press.
- Allen, J. (2006). *Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The Authorized Biography of Desmond Tutu*. New York: Free Press.
- apartheid. (1994). In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia* (2nd ed.).
- Berman, A. (2024). *Minority Rule: The Right-Wing Attack on the Will of the People – And the Fight to Resist It*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous.
- Blassingame, J. W. (2001). Slavery, Slave Families, Communities, and Culture. In *The Oxford Companion to United States History* (1st ed.).
- ethnocentrism. (1975). In *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* (4th ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fields, L. B., Barber, R. J., & Riggs, C. A. (1998). *The Global Past* (comprehensive volume). Boston: Bedford Books.
- Frieden, J. A., Lake, D. A., & Schultz, K. A. (2022). *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Gates, H. L. (2019). *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Ginsberg, B., Lowi, T. J., Weir, M., Tolbert, C. J., Campbell, A. L., & Francis, M. M. (2023). *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics* (14th ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Gitelson, A. R., Dudley, R. L., & Dubnick, M. J. (2016). *American Government: Myths and Realities*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Healy, J. F. (2003). *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class: The Sociology of Group Conflict and Change* (3rd ed.). California: Pine Forge Press.
- Jim Crow laws. (1975). In *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* (4th ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Johnson, R. (2025, May 21). No shade, but these Afrikaner migrants shouldn't be here. *Las Vegas Sun*.
- Lee, M., Santana, R., & Magome, M. (2025, May 13). Government Welcome White South African Refugees. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.
- Magstadt, T. M. (2006). *Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions & Issues* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Mandela, Nelson. (1994). In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia* (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mandela, Nelson. (2000). In *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Encyclopedia* (1st ed.). Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc.

Meldrum, A. (2021, December 27). Archbishop Tutu: Apartheid foe dies. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.
Polgreen, L. (2025, May 25). Dealmakers Enter the Oval Office, and No One Wins. *The New York Times*.
segregation. (1994). In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia* (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.
South Africa, Republic of. (1975). In *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* (4th ed.).
terra nullius. (1999). In *Black's Law Dictionary*. Minn: West Group.

Notes

Note 1. It should be noted that, “The more African Americans were excluded from the mainstream of society, the greater their objective poverty and powerlessness became.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 2. Much was made by whites about blacks not being intelligent enough to rule or politically participate in any government. This sentiment, however, is/was utter nonsense.

Note 3. We must keep in mind that, “Although the official government propaganda claimed that apartheid would permit blacks and whites to develop separately and equally, the system was clearly intended to solidify white privilege and black powerlessness. By keeping blacks poor and powerless, white South Africans created a pool of workers who were both cheap and docile.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 4. Rather than internalize their shame and guilt for their inhumane actions toward blacks and other people of color, whites attacked and blamed their victims.

Note 5. It should also be understood that, “The South African system [of apartheid was] designed to perpetuate racial domination by whites prior to the advent of black majority rule there in the early 1990s.” See the same reference, p. 621.

Note 6. It should be understood that white supremacists are intellectually bankrupt, because of their hatred and racism; and their *all-out* political assault on black Americans was unforgivable — or at least very disappointing.

Note 7. It should be understood that “Racial segregation rendered [the] black experience largely invisible to whites, making it easier for whites to maintain racial stereotypes about black values and culture. It also made it easier to deny or ignore their suffering.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 8. In the same way that a white supremacist system existed in the United States, such a system was just as prevalent in South Africa, too. Or racism was part of both white supremacist societies — that is, Jim Crow in the United States and (cursed) apartheid in South Africa.

Note 9. Unfortunately, white supremacists will never become just another *footnote* in history, because in obsequious ways, the remnant of white superiority will always remain with us. Or will racism always be something that we have to deal with and think about, without *gaslighting*?

Note 10. It should be pointed out here that *Jim Crow laws* also prevented only black individuals from having a decent life, as they were considered second-class citizens, worthy of abuse, and exploitation.

Note 11. It should be noted that, “Jim Crow is best known for the laws requiring segregated schools, drinking fountains, restrooms, restaurants, and transportation services. But these were only the tip of the iceberg. Few activities were beyond the purview of the Jim Crow laws.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 12. It should be understood that the *Jim Crow* name was derived from a white man from a popular minstrel show. In other words, racial segregation “laws and the social norms surrounding this era came to be called ‘Jim Crow,’ which was the stage name of Thomas Dartmouth Rice,” who was, as mentioned, a white minstrel performer (1808-1860). With his blackened face and grotesque manner, Rice became famous for his extravagant and demeaning caricatures of [black] slaves.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 13. It should be pointed out that, “The first *Jim Crow laws* were adopted in the 1870s... criminalizing racial intermarriage and segregating railroad travel. These were followed by state-level laws segregating all public accommodations, and within 10 years all southern states had adopted laws segregating public schools.” See Ginsberg, B., Lowi, T. J., Weir, M., Tolbert, C. J., Campbell, A. L., & Francis, M. M. (2023). *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*, 14th ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. p. 153.

Note 14. The so-called good intentions of whites in any situation or circumstance will never guarantee rights for African Americans in the United States, as white supremacy (today) has taken on a new life, and racism has become a political and social art form to further hold back and discriminate against black people, in general.

Note 15. Keep in mind that when it came to violence and attacking the black community, some “local police departments were actively involved.” See Gitelson, A. R., Dudley, R. L., & Dubnick, M. J. (2016). *American Government: Myths and Realities*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 155.

Note 16. It is unfortunate, but there will always be an on-going struggle for black recognition and survival against the actions of white supremacists in our modern world.

Note 17. It should be pointed out here that, “One of these accomplishments was the Civil Rights Act of 1875 (also called the Enforcement Act),” but it never passed in Congress. “Antedating President Lyndon Johnson’s 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1875 version forbade the separation of prejudices and the race in place of public accommodation — transportation, hotels, and theaters. The 1875 act also banned states from excluding blacks from jury duty.” See Gitelson, A. R., Dudley, R. L., & Dubnick, M. J. (2016). *American Government: Myths and Realities*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 154.

Note 18. It should be noted that the descendants of white Europeans are the same individuals who tell the world that South Africa is their land, claiming that they actually purchased the land legally with proper deeds. But these people essentially stole the African lands, giving them the right to do whatever they wanted with their so-called property, even implementing the *apartheid* system.

Note 19. It should be noted that white South Afrikaners arrived as settlers or colonizers; hence, they had no real claim what-so-ever to the specific dark, black African lands.

Note 20. Unfortunately, under the white minority government, white South Africans at that time systematically dismantled the very ideas of Democracy and racial equality. Indeed, whites weaponized *apartheid* as the black majority was viewed with contempt.

Note 21. Although white South Africans were concerned with the independence and national sovereignty of the country, their political standing and legitimacy were questionable at best.

Note 22. Instead of treating the black majority with respect, common decency, dignity, and equal degrees of importance, white Europeans, in a foreign black land, chose to establish a government that was an *inhumane* and brutal repressive, segregated system called *apartheid*.

Note 23. To be certain, the black majority in South Africa fought to protect their homelands from the white European colonizers without the force of arms. The white settlers eventually populated the lands where black people already lived; and they fought other whites from Europe as in the *Boer War*, to keep their stolen lands.

Note 24. The simple question: Why did these white Europeans engender such awful tactics and hateful, and degrading separatist policies without specific or particular *rhyme* or *reason*, while they blamed the oppressed black people for their oppression.

Note 25. According to Frieden et al., governments like South Africa, during the apartheid era, justified their actions by claiming “that national security trumps the human rights of individuals.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 26. There was nothing great or *exquisite* about apartheid culture. More important, there has never been a *rosy* past in South Africa. Furthermore, white supremacists will never admit that their ancestors were wrong about how bad the black majority was treated.

Note 27. See also Tutu, Desmond (Mpilo) later Sir Desmond. (2000). In *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Encyclopedia*, 1st ed. p. 1657. Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc.

Note 28. Given this time in the history of South Africa, perhaps nothing would turn back the tide of political empowerment of the black majority, as they had faced bigotry and untold mistreatment for decades.

Note 29. It should be noted that white Afrikaners “number about 6.4 million.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 30. New York: Oxford University Press. It should be understood that Jim Crow “is a nickname for US state laws passed after the end of slavery to keep black people in a segregated subordinate condition.” See Jim Crow Laws. (1994). In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. p. 591. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Biographical Sketch

EARNEST N. BRACEY is a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel, with over twenty years of active military service. He was commissioned through Reserve Officer Training (*Distinguished Military Graduate*) at Jackson State University, where he graduated with honors (*Magna Cum Laude*), and received his

Bachelor of Arts degree in political science in 1974. In addition, he received the Masters of Public Administration in 1979 from Golden Gate University, his Masters of Arts degree in International Affairs in 1983 from the Catholic University of America, his Masters of Business Administration in 2009 from California Coast University, and his doctorate of Public Administration (with emphasis in Public Policy) in 1993 from George Mason University. Dr. Bracey also earned his Ph.D. in Education from Capella University in 1999.

A recipient of numerous military awards and civilian honors, he is also a graduate of the United States Naval War College and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and previously served as Director of Administration at the prestigious Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D.C. He was also recognized as Who's Who Among America's Teachers in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Dr. Bracey is professor of political science, and currently teaches American Politics and Black American History at the College of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas. He was formerly Chair and Professor of Political Science at Jackson State University and Chairperson of the Political Science and History Department at Hampton University. He has also served as an editorial board-member for the Nevada Historical Society Quarterly. His work has appeared in professional journals and other publications, and he is the author of the books, *Prophetic Insights: The Higher Education and Pedagogy of African Americans*, University Press of America, 1999, *On Racism: Essays On Black Popular Culture, African American Politics, and the New Black Aesthetics*, University Press of America, 2003, *Daniel "Chappie" James: The First African American Four Star General*, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003, *Places in Political Time: Voices From the Black Diaspora*, University Press of America, 2005, *The Moulin Rouge and Black Rights in Las Vegas*, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009, and *Miles Davis and Jazz as Religion*, Lexington Books, 2021. He also co-authored the book, *American Politics and Culture Wars* (2001). He is also the author of the novels, *Choson* (1994) and *The Black Samurai* (1998), and the books of short stories, *Requiems for Black Folks* (2002) and *The Big Black Three* (2022).