The influence of systemic racism on quarter-life crisis in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (as told to Alex Haley)*

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the influence of systemic racism on quarter-life crisis, experienced by Malcolm X, as seen in The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley). Its emphasis is to find the relation between racial segregation in American society and its influence on quarter-life crisis, which is a psychological crisis of uncertainty, self-insecurity and identity confusion, occurs during emerging adulthood. Therefore, by applying a qualitative method, this research is under Post-Nationalist American Studies and psychosocial approach as an integrated paradigm which accommodates the inter-disciplinary aspects of "self and society". The analysis showed that racial segregation, in the field of education and job occupation, is a form of systemic racism which influences Malcolm X's mental wellness as an emerging adult African-American. He experiences Robinson's phases of quarter-life crisis which are locked in, separation/time-out, exploration and rebuilding. In fact, racial segregation in this narrative works as "a function of blocked opportunities" which disallows young African-Americans to develop their own competencies and to achieve their "American Dream'. However, in the development of his quarter-life crisis, Malcolm X managed to rebuild his new long-term commitment contributing to the reconstruction of his adult identity as an African-American Muslim activist.

Keywords: *quarter-life crisis; racism; segregation*

INTRODUCTION

Racism in the United States has become the main social issue throughout decades. This polemic issue may have been strongly rooted from slavery, which was introduced and developed in the New World by European merchants in 1492 (Finkelman, 2012). After the slavery was abolished, its prominent legacy still exists and further affects the development of culture, society, education, economic and even politics in the United States. The complexity of this racial issue has deeply become a part of American identity which has already integrated in almost every layer of American social system.

In understanding of American society and its racial issue, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley)* offers a reality of racial

discrimination that appeared prior to Civil Rights Era. It is often called in American history as period of racial segregation which separated Blacks and Whites. It is an "American-style Apartheid" which promoted the racial disparity and inequality by separating both Whites and Blacks in public spaces such as school, restaurant, public transportation, theater, public restrooms etc. (Schill & Wachter, 2001). During this racially segregated period, as minority, Blacks or African-Americans also suffered from White violence and homicide, such as lynching and other forms of assault, which are considered by some scholars as racial genocide (Curthoys & Docker, 2008). Like many other Civil Rights activists' narrative, it is essentially a conspicuous theme that is embedded in Malcolm X's story.

Needless to say, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley)* has been studied extensively both in historical and literary context. This autobiography displays a genuine image of Black people's struggle, irony, tragedy and empowerment prior to and during the Civil Rights movement. Dubek (2014) in her essay entitled "The Autobiography of Malcolm X and the African American Quest for Freedom and Literacy" further explains that, in historical perspective, Malcolm X remains as an influential figure today as he was during the civil rights movement. His progressive approach in Civil Rights movement, compared to Martin Luther King Jr., inspired his young generation in achieving racial equality. Furthermore, in literary perspective, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley)* can be categorized as non-fiction genre which provides an alternative discussion in literary studies. This genre implies "something not fictionalized or "made up," which fluidizes the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction (Dubek, 2014). In other words, as a narrative, this autobiography offers social and historical aspects, as well as literary aspects, that can be studied in understanding the problematic racial issue in American society prior to Civil Rights Era.

For instance, in *The Role of Malcolm X's Speeches in Solidifying his Autobiography*, Aqeeli (2020) focuses on the linguistic framework of Malcolm X's speeches in which he is able to construct the complicated problem of race in the United States through his provocative and sentimental narrative. In *Malcolm X and His Autobiography: Identity Development and Self-narration* Gillespie (2005) criticizes the notion of the politics of "ideological becoming" by applying it to Malcolm's X self-narration. It construes the identity development of Malcolm X. Both researches do not only concern on the narrative itself but also on Malcolm X as a public figure. Therefore, this research is intended to focus on social and psychological aspects of Malcolm X as a Civil Rights movement figure and to elaborate the impact of racial segregation to African-American's mental wellness.

This research utilizes *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley)* as both literary and historical text which offers a rich picture of society that seems to be disintegrated due to racial prejudice and stereotype toward each other. It aims to elaborate and analyze the influence of systemic racism on quarter-life crisis by using psychosocial approach, under Post-Nationalist American Studies. In conducting an in-depth analysis, this research utilizes two main theories: systemic racism and quarter-life crisis to answer research questions of how does systemic racism and quarter-life crisis exist and how does systemic racism influence quarter-life crisis of African-American during

this period as depicted in this narrative. As research limitation, this research only focuses on Malcolm X's psychological crisis in finding his identity as a young African-American during his emerging adulthood period. Instead of religious aspect, it focuses on race-based maltreatment aspect which further impacts his psychological aspects.

Theoretical framework

This research is under Post-Nationalist American Studies which also utilizes a psychosocial approach. In this context, Post-Nationalist American Studies is a paradigm in American Studies which concerns with cross-cultural communication, race and gender, global and local identities, and the complex tensions between symbolic and political economies. The discussion of this paradigm is around the complex issues in American society which may deal with ethnic, race, gender and women's studies and other minor issues in the United States (Rowe, 2000). Thus, under Post-Nationalist American Studies, this research no longer celebrates Americanization nor American exceptionalism, but instead questioning and criticizing the domestic issues within American society which may have been overshadowed by the cosmetic appearance of American exceptionalism.

Meanwhile, psychosocial approach is an inter-discipline of psychology and sociology that focuses on the influence of psychological factors and the surrounding social environment toward individual's physical and mental wellness (Woodward, 2015). Therefore, there are relations between the social and the psychic, which become the scope of analysis (Woodward, 2015). In a research, this approach is commonly conducted in medical as well as social science field. As the University of East London (UEL) further describes that, psychosocial studies,

> "offers new ways of exploring the relationships between individuals and their society, encompassing both the individual focus of psychology and the broader cultural and historical concerns of sociology... [and providing] a unique opportunity to study a "socially-aware" psychology alongside an "individual-sensitive" sociology" (in Frosh, 2003).

It means that this approach tries to connect between individuals and their society. As an intersection of both psychology and sociology, the discussion that surrounded psychosocial approach involves the notable notion of "nature vs. nurture" which can be useful to understand human aspects in the field of both psychology and social science. It construes everyday problem which is faced by a certain individual within his/her social environment.

Furthermore, in this context, both Post-Nationalist American Studies and psychosocial approach consist of inter-disciplinary scope that connects and completes one to another. In this research, the combination of both is an integrated paradigm which accommodates the inter-disciplinary aspects of "self and society". Therefore, it creates a larger scope in the discussion. Thus, under Post-Nationalist American Studies and psychosocial approach, this research utilizes two main theories: systemic racism and quarter-life crisis, which aim to analyze the influence of systemic racism on quarter-life crisis as seen in this narrative.

Systemic racism

In definition, systemic racism, or also known as institutionalized racism, is a "material, social, and ideological reality that is well-embedded in major US institutions" (Feagin, 2006). It is a form of racial oppression which deeply rooted in societal levels of American society such as group relations, institutions, organizations, and power structures (Feagin & Elias, 2013). This racial oppression is fundamentally materialistic in which it is applied to limit some racial group for achieving equal rights as citizen. It puts one minority racial group hierarchically under the majority racial group regarding to power and resources within asymmetrical system. Thus, as Feagin and Elias say, systemic racism has produced racial treatments, which is unequal in American societal institutions including education, health, medical, and welfare. In the context of American social system, the systemic racism perpetuates the White domination over African-American in post-slavery period, especially prior to Civil Rights Era, which also still becomes an endless discussion until today.

Quarter-life crisis

Quarter-life crisis refers to a period of psychological crisis which includes identity confusion, job suitability, insecurity, pressure (from family or others), relationship and other psychological and social factors (Robbins & Wilner 2017, 3). In other words, this psychological crisis relies on both personal and social elements, which influence on an individual's mental wellness. Furthermore, according to Robert Thouless (in Habibie et al., 2019), the factors of quarter-life crisis can be categorized into two: internal and external factor. The internal factor includes personal experience, moral, emotion and affection, and intellectual capability. Meanwhile, the external factor includes social environment, education, tradition and culture, and everyday demand.

Quarter-life crisis is experienced by emerging adulthood, which is described as a period of identity exploration. The range of this age period is "from (roughly) age 18 to 25", since the crisis during this age mostly focuses on identity exploration (Arnett, 2004). Previously, Erikson (1977) describes this age period as, "eager and willing to fuse their identity with others". Thus, for emerging adulthood that are in the transitional stage from teens to adults, quarter-life crisis includes some phases: locked in, separation/time-out, exploration, and rebuilding (Robinson et al., 2013). These phases are essential in identifying an individual who experiences quarter-life crisis.

METHOD

The qualitative method is used for this research since it emphasizes on the researcher's interpretation toward the data, which, in this case, is the narrative within *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley)*. This method is defined as "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2009). This qualitative research relies on qualitative data, which refer to material things to be investigated (Leedy, 2009). Moreover, this research employs technique of data analysis which is used to classify and to arrange the data, based on the research purposes and objectives (Mahsun, 2005). It includes (1)

data selection, (2) data classification, (3) data interpretation, and (4) data conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley) covers the non-fictional reality of racial segregation prior to Civil Rights Era, especially in the 1940s and the 1950s. Therefore, to elaborate and analyze the psychological and sociological aspect within the narrative, the discussion of this research is divided into three subchapters: racial segregation as systemic racism, Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis, and the analysis of the causal relation between both.

Racial segregation as systemic racism

This part attempts to discuss the systemic racism in this narrative which fundamentally relies on racial segregation laws. In *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley)*, a young Malcolm X lives in racial segregated society which consists of racial discrimination, disparity, violence and prejudice toward each other. In the end of 1940s until the 1950s (prior to Civil Rights Era), American society underwent many societal issues such as White and Black homicide, poverty, mob violence, gambling, drug and prostitution. It is a period where Malcolm X spends his late adolescent life in segregated Boston, Massachusetts and Harlem, New York with the emphasis of how to survive as a teenage African-American drop-out. As it is witnessed by Malcolm X in his autobiography, the finding shows that the influential issues within racial segregation which related to young African-American's future are highlighted into two points: education and occupation.

In education, American schools prior to Civil Right Era were racially divided, or at least, racially based. This segregation in education was enforced by the law and education policy. *Jim Crow* laws promoted the limitation of Black students in public schools based on *Plessy v. Ferguson* doctrine in 1896 in which it legalized that separated facilities, including public schools, for Blacks and Whites (Schauer, 1997). In Michigan, where Malcolm X spent his school period, *Milliken v. Bradley* shows that *Plessy v. Ferguson* doctrine in education was actually proven as racially imbalanced (Aloud & Alsulayyim, 2016). However, the practice of segregation in learning institutions still continued until its abolishment in 1954 when *Brown v. Board of Education* case prohibited the separation of public schools for Black students (Rothstein, 2013). Needless to say, this discriminative law impacts the experience of Black students as minority in White schools, which often become an object of racism.

In his autobiography, Malcolm X illustrates his school period with the emphasis how many Whites or Blacks who attend the school. In Lansing, Michigan, for instance, he describes his school period in Pleasant Grove School as racially intense since he and his siblings are the only African-American in the area (Haley, 1973). They sometimes involved in the fights with White students over racial matters, "Sometimes the fights would be racial in nature, but they might be about anything" (Haley, 1973). In this school, he and his siblings, Hilda and Philbert, become a minority which often received racist treatments from both their friends and teachers. Then, in his new school, Lansing's West Junior High School, he becomes the majority since this

school is located in the heart of Black community (Haley, 1973). It shows that American schools, prior to Civil Rights Act, are systematically divided which results in racially homogenous schools. They are either categorized as "Black schools" or "White schools" which provokes the racial disparity. Statistically speaking, most Black students in the United States come from low income families in which large numbers of qualified Black students cannot afford a better education (Aloud & Alsulayyim, 2016).

In other words, the homogenous school system only exaggerates the racial intense between both communities which can result in more severe discriminative treatments toward each other, especially for young Black students as minority. As a result, discrimination against Black students, as experienced by Malcolm X, is one of the common problems that Black students encountered. The school atmosphere during racial segregation period, as Malcolm X explains, shows a lack of racial toleration which prevents the social integration.

In fact, the lessons within the school itself were mostly White-centered, since it prevents Black students to have better accomplishment than the Whites, regarding career. Malcolm X's dream to be a lawyer is one of the obvious examples of this racially discriminative practice. In this context, despite his intelligence in the class, Mr. Ostrowski's advice shattered his dream to be a lawyer in which it is seen as unrealistic for Black people (Haley, 1973). This colonial belief is imposed to Black students in which they become to experience double consciousness regarding their career. As a result, like what happens to Malcolm X, most Black school dropouts start becoming less interested in pursuing academic achievements and working as menial workers or criminals such as hustler, pimp, and drug dealer in some big city ghettos (Haley, 1973). In other words, the White-centered teachings within the schools only perpetuate Black backwardness in segregated American society.

Meanwhile, in occupation, prior to Civil Rights Era, African-Americans were socioeconomically backward compared to the Whites. Only a few African-Americans were able to be in the "upper-class" or "middle-class". In big cities such as New York City and Boston, they mostly lived in ghettos, which are known with inadequate living condition, crime, and gang violence (Hartmann & Venkatesh, 2002). They can only afford menial jobs, such as porter, servants, dishwasher etc., or involve in criminal activities. African-American workers mostly received lower income than the Whites since they were not protected by anti-discrimination laws (White, 2016). As a result, the numbers of urban poverty increased which mostly dominated by African-American workers who lived in ghettos. Therefore, racial segregation in working space evokes unequal race-based system which definitively determines the occupation or profession, based on people's race.

In this autobiography, as an emerging adult, Malcolm X experiences almost the same experience as other young African-Americans, live in American ghettos, separated from the Whites and work as menial workers or even criminals. As a school dropout, he is only able to work as menial worker, in order to survive. In fact, he later involves in crimes such as hustler, drug dealer, and burglary in Harlem and Roxbury. In this case, Black workers, like Malcolm X, are mostly depended on White people's money. For instance, during World War II, when Harlem is officially closed for White women by the

Mayor, Black workers begin to slowly lose their profit (Haley, 1973). In postcolonial perspective, this Black and White society in Harlem, which Malcolm X illustrated, creates a relationship of dependence which positions Blacks as White's inferior (Mannoni, 1956). In other words, it is a form of dependence and inferiority complex behavior of Blacks toward Whites, which strengthens White socioeconomic superiority.

Furthermore, this racial disparity in people's occupation creates Black urban poverty that leads to the increasing numbers of Black crime in American ghettos. In further study, communities that are racially segregated and have high concentrations of poverty, such as Harlem and Roxbury, experience higher levels of crime and violence (Sampson& Wilson, 1995). In fact, Blau and Blau (in Peterson & Krivo, 1993) argue that this violence crime is an expression of frustration toward the economic inequality. As a result, police brutality and harassment toward Black people often occurs during this period. As Malcolm X says that narcotics polices sometime harass suspects and also plant some evidence which is considered as a form of Black victimization (Haley, 1973). Thus, this systemic racism has serious impact on Black welfare since African-American job opportunities are limited due to racial segregation laws. The occupation can be determined by race which is both discriminative and unequal for the minority, in this case, Black workers.

In this case, racial segregation in education and occupation, as well as in residential and housing, embodies systemic racism which is embedded in American social system. As Feagin (2006) says, it is a form of material, social, and ideological reality that privileges the Whites in American society. This system socioeconomically avails the Whites, but, on the other hand, it discourages African-American, as minority, to achieve their "American dream". These practices are "a function of blocked opportunities" which disallows certain individuals to develop and to learn about their own competencies. It further evokes self-protective mechanisms that can prevent the individual's willingness to participate (Brondolo et al., 2011). The high numbers of African-American school dropouts, during this period, indicate the self-protective mechanism of African-American in which they become to be less interested in education and decide to pursue menial jobs or become criminals.

This racial segregation is a form of social exclusion, which prevents the minority to integrate with the majority. For African-American, as the excluded racial group, it develops the sense of double consciousness due to the limitation of self-awareness which contributes to self-knowledge. As being said, for Malcolm X, the social environment is racially discriminative to live in due to this limitation of self-awareness which is systematically constructed by the social environment. This discussion is further explained in the two following subchapter as part of his quarter-life crisis.

Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis

As a continuation of systemic racism, this part attempts to discuss Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis which is considered as an impact of systemic racism prior to Civil Rights Era. The finding highlights two important aspects: Malcolm X's identity exploration as an emerging adult and his quarter-life crisis.

As Arnett (2004) states, emerging adulthood is a period of identity exploration that young adults experience from their late teens to their mid–twenties. In this case, Malcolm X's emerging adulthood period may have come early because he has financially supported himself by working in several menial jobs since his junior high school dropout in Mason, Michigan. In his late adolescent, he began to explore his identity as an African-American who lived in segregated American society. Like most African-American teenagers, he becomes an urban hipster who is obsessed with his appearance to look more like White man.

In this context, the conk hairstyle that he adopts resembles his obsession of being a "White-like" Black man. It is a form of inferiority complex that is unconsciously experienced by most of African-American teenagers and young adults during that certain period. Moreover, his relationship with a White woman, Sophia gives him "a status symbol" in which a lot of African-Americans want to be. As later realized by Malcolm X that, this obsession and admiration of being White are form of self-degradation which perpetuates colonial set ups. It is a form of colonial mimicry which is the colonized's desire to reform themselves as "recognizable Other" caused by the inferiority complex (Bhabha, 2004). Therefore, instead of self-reformation, it is a self-degradation which contributes to Malcolm X's identity crisis.

Meanwhile, Malcolm X experiences quarter-life crisis when he is involved in various menial and criminal works in Roxbury and Harlem ghettos. As being said, the emphasis of quarter-life crisis is, "individuals relentlessly question their future and how it will follow the events of their past" (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). In this context, during his emerging adulthood period, Malcolm X undergoes many uncertainties involving career stagnation, meaningless romantic relationship, his obsession of being "White-like" Black man, and victimization by the American social environment that seems to be bias against Blacks. There are personal experiences which influence his quarter-life crisis as part of the dimension.

The driving factor of Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis are categorized into two: internal and external factor. The internal factor includes his personal experience, moral, emotion, which further continues to his identity confusion. Meanwhile, the external factor is the social system environment which is bias against Blacks as minority. In this context, systemic racism in education and occupation, which Malcolm X experienced throughout his life, influence his adult identity. During his phase development of quarter-life crisis, As a Muslim convert, Malcolm X emphasizes his thoughts toward racial inequality, under the name of his new religion. His quarter-life crisis can be elaborated in Robinson's phase of quarter-life crisis which are locked in, separation/time-out, exploration and rebuilding.

The first phase of Robinson's quarter-life crisis model is locked in, in which an individual experiences the feeling of being trapped by his/her commitment and has no desire to continue it. It will be followed by the termination of that commitment which may be caused by two factors: a "no longer wanted relationship" or a highly pressured or dissatisfying career path (Robinson et al., 2013). In other words, it a phase of questioning which further affects his decisions regarding future.

Malcolm X's locked in crisis can be seen after his first arrest in Harlem, New York and moved back to Roxbury, Boston, when he starts questioning his financial matter as an emerging adult who is involved in various crimes and being a drug addict. In the chapter entitled "Trapped", he illustrates his uncertainty toward his life choice as a criminal who works in various crimes, "Everything was building up, closing in on me. I was trapped in so many cross turns" (Haley, 1973). Here is a phase where he begins to question his life choice regarding his future. In the following chapter, when he moves with Shorty, in Roxbury, Malcolm X constantly loses his financial fortune due to his way of life (Haley, 1973). It is an indication of uncertainty and being trapped which drives him into more severe level of drug addiction.

However, despite his feeling of being trapped and uncertainty, he still involves in crimes, gambling and drug addiction. In his phase, he further drives into uncertainty since he only cares about present, without anticipating his future. His constant loss of money and being broke are an indication of this uncertainty. In other words, not only he is trapped in the criminal world but he is trapped in the psychological situation regarding his current identity and future. It is an acceptance of self-stereotype in which he begins to accept the stereotype of African-American who is mostly known for being criminal, in American social environment. In other words, his social environment and personal emotion are two factors, which lead to his locked in phase of quarter-life crisis.

The second phase of Robinson's quarter-life crisis model is separation/time-out. Separation is a phase when an individual "starts to distance themselves mentally and physically from the commitments that defined" (Robinson et al., 2013). Meanwhile, time-out is a phase which occurs during the separation when an individual "takes time away to reflect on their transitional situation, to resolve painful emotions and to develop a new foundation for their adult identity" (Robinson et al., 2013). Thus, separation/time-out phase involves an individual's reflection on his/her past and the desire to reform himself/herself regarding future.

In the case of Malcolm X, his phase of separation/time-out can be seen throughout his prison time in Charlestown Prison, and Concord Prison. During this period, Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis enters new phase of separation by distancing himself with his past and further reflecting on his transitional situation. Despite being known as anti-religious person who condemns any religious topic in the beginning of his prison time, his encounter with Bimbi and Islamic teachings of Nation of Islam from his siblings change his views toward himself and racial issue that occurs in the segregated society where he lives in.

Religiosity, in Malcolm X's case, provides resilience during his quarter-life crisis which later leads to the construction of his adult identity. In fact, Islamic teachings of Nation of Islam are different traditional Sunni Islam, since this religion is propagated as the counterpart of White religion (in this case, Christianity), which is intentionally founded to improve the spiritual, mental, social and economic condition of African-Americans in the United States (Nation of Islam, n.d.). Therefore, as a Muslim convert, the separation phase is a phase of self-realization which becomes Malcolm X's new foundation to spiritually and intellectually reform himself from his past situation.

In this phase, Malcolm X begins to distance himself with his criminal-like behaviors such as unethical and immoral. Although he has not fully converted to Islam, he begins to practice Islamic teachings of Nation of Islam, such as the prohibition to eat pork and smoke, which he learns from his siblings' letters (Haley, 1973). These religious practices are fundamental aspects in Islamic teachings which obviously against his wild habits in Roxbury and Harlem ghettos. Therefore, Malcolm X develops a pattern of separation phase in his quarter-life crisis.

Furthermore, in this phase, Malcolm X also subsequently develops a sign of time-out which can be seen in his view on Black and White issues. He begins to build a new foundation for his adult identity. In this case, besides its religious practice, the doctrine of "The white man is the devil" of Nation of Islam seems to be embedded to Malcolm X's adult identity. He follows the path of Nation of Islam which, as a political movement, condemns the existence of White oppression over Blacks in the segregated American society. He further deconstructs American racial society with his critical thoughts, which is an indication of self-knowledge improvement. It is a process of decolonizing his mind that fundamentally constructs his adult identity as a human rights activist.

The third phase of Robinson's quarter-life crisis model is exploration in which "new commitments and goals are proactively tried out and explored" (Robinson et al., 2013). At this point, since the new life foundation is built, an individual starts to explore the new commitment within his/her new life. The narrative within *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley)* shows that this phase experienced by Malcolm X when he moves to Norfolk Prison Colony where he begins to be actively involved in the intellectual discussion.

Malcolm X's exploration phase includes his conversion to Islam. It includes self-teaching and brain storming of knowledge regarding racial issue, Black history and civilization that later develop his adult identity. It includes the exploration of Elijah Muhammad's teachings and its meaning for Black people. In other words, Malcolm X's self-teaching and brain storming is regarded as, not only the process of knowledge exploration but also his identity exploration as an African-American, who is socioeconomically oppressed by the Whites. Furthermore, in this phase, Malcolm begins to practice his new foundation of life by participating in an intellectual debate and discussion forum with his fellow inmates in Norfolk Prison Colony, in which he develops his oratory skills (Haley, 1973). In psychosocial perspective, it is an essential phase in Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis since he starts believing to his new commitments: Islam and Black activism. Fundamentally, his adult identity has already been reconstructed by his new commitments which he strongly believes as a true reality.

The last phase of this psychological crisis is rebuilding which is an engagement with new long-term commitments. This period consists of satisfied, enjoyable, passionate, and more reflective feeling toward personal interests, compared with pre-crisis period (Robinson et al., 2013). In other words, it is a recovery process that involves particular actions toward his new commitments.

Malcolm X experiences this phase of quarter-life crisis since he converted to Islam and is actively involved in religious and intellectual activities in

Norfolk Prison Colony. Furthermore, his rebuilding phase can be seen clearly when he is released from the prison and starts actively joining Nation of Islam at Detroit's Temple No. 1. He further rejects his last name, Little, and replaces it with "X" to decolonize his identity from the White oppressors as an African-American, "The Muslim's "X" symbolized the true African family name that he never could know" (Haley, 1973). It is an anti-White doctrine within religion which emphasizes his stand toward systemic racism in American society. Therefore, there is a formation of self-determination, which can be seen in his passion toward Islam and Black movement.

The influence of systemic racism on Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis

Racial segregation in American social system prior to Civil Rights Era prominently influences the emerging adult's mental wellness, especially for African-American who often received racial discrimination. In their research entitled "Racism as Psychological Oppressor", Brondolo et al. (2011) explains that "racism can affect cognitive and motivational processes that influence the development of self-regulatory capacities that are necessary for achievement and health". Furthermore, ethnicity-related maltreatment such as racial discrimination experienced either directly or vicariously, is able to become a persistent source of stress. It means that systemic racism and other ethnic-based maltreatment can be considered as psychosocial stressor which reduces an individual's motivation and devalues his/her self-concept. It further influences on mental wellness. Thus, racial segregation as a form of systemic racism has psychological impacts on minority. In this case, personal experience and social environment are able to drive an emerging adult into quarter-life crisis in which an individual may feel ostracized and disoriented because of race or ethnicity.

Malcolm X's mental wellness development during his quarter-life crisis shows that both personal and social environment, play important role as both internal and external factor. The internal factor involves his personal experience which is often treated unfairly by White people such as his ghetto lifestyle and lawyer-dream discouragement by his schoolteacher. This internal factor is fundamentally formed by systemic racism within American social system, such as in education and occupation. In the case of Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis, both internal and external factor are connected to each other since it mostly deals with racism which he faces in his everyday life.

However, unlike other young African-Americans who may experience the same psychological crisis, Malcolm X manages to develop his self-determination and self-knowledge during his quarter-life crisis and further dedicates himself to a path of activism to uplift of Black people from White oppression. His encounters with Bimbi, and the Islamic teaching of Elijah Muhammad give him new revelation and meaning regarding his future. For Malcolm X, quarter-life crisis is a form of "spiritual and psychosocial decolonization" in which he finally explores his self-knowledge to further develop his competence which is systematically limited by the social environment because of his race. Thus, Black activism becomes his new long-term commitment which becomes his foundation of his adult identity.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (As Told to Alex Haley)* shows that systemic racism, in the form of racial segregation, is able to influence mental wellness, especially for African-American as minority during racial segregation period. It is a social system which avails the Whites, but, on the other hand, it discourages African-Americans to achieve their "American dream". These practices are "a function of blocked opportunities" which disallows young African-Americans to develop and to learn about their own competencies. It is a psychosocial stressor which reduces African-American's motivation toward their future and devalues self-concept.

In Malcolm X's case, as an emerging adult, he experiences Robinson's phases of quarter-life crisis; locked in phase involves a realization regarding his future, separation/time-out phase is when he starts distancing himself with his past in Charlestown Prison and Concord Prison, exploration phase includes his conversion to Islam and rebuilding phase includes his new commitment to actively involved in Civil Rights movement under the name of his new religion, Islam. His quarter-life crisis is mostly influenced by his personal experience and social environment, which is systematically divided by racism, especially in societal levels such as housing, education and occupation. Both education and occupation play a pivotal role since they directly affect his future career.

Furthermore, a quarter-life crisis functions as a reconstruction of his adult identity in which he manages to develop his self-determination and self-knowledge and further dedicates himself to the path of activism to uplift of Black people from White oppression. In conclusion, the analysis shows that systemic racism which is embedded in American social system during racial segregation period is the main factor of Malcolm X's quarter-life crisis. Racial segregation is, indeed, a psychosocial oppressor which affects mental wellness, as well as other influential psychological and social aspects of African-American life in the racially segregated American society.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.