How Much Money Does it Cost to Live as a Descendant of Slaves:

Reparations in the Court of Public Opinion

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Abstract

Resistance to the idea of reparations to descendants of American slaves continues to this day. This paper examines the psychological basis and mechanisms of such resistance in white Americans. We began with the hypothesis that resistance to the idea of reparations may stem from the very perception of the cost associated with being black. In studies (including six experiments) involving nine independent data collections totaling 796 research participants, we measured perceptions of the cost of being black by asking white participants the question: “How much would you need to be paid to continue to live your life as a black person?” Comparison questions were posed in a similar way about the cost of renouncing one’s statehood and giving up TV for life. In addition, variations were introduced to investigate the impact of (a) eliciting the lowest acceptable payment, (b) reminding about white privilege, and (c) emphasizing public perceptions of the proposed race change. Using samples that varied in age, geographic region, and gender, data consistently showed that the cost of being black and losing statehood were estimated at a low $75-$10,000 across samples, whereas the cost of giving up TV consistently came out around $1 million. Additional analyses showed that variation in black cost was not associated with explicit prejudice toward black Americans but higher estimates of black cost did predict increased support for reparations. Finally, to demonstrate that the low black cost estimate was not a function of a “forget the past” attitude, we showed that reparations for a hypothetical grievance to one’s own (white) family in the past was seen to be sufficient to file for reparations. We concluded that the policy question of reparations to descendants of slaves can be better understood by examining the psychological barriers that may stem from the perception of the cost of “living black” in America today.

KEYWORDS: reparations, racism, stereotypes, contingent valuation, slavery, attitudes
How Much Money Does it Cost to Live as a Descendant of Slaves: 

Reparations in the Court of Public Opinion

Extreme opposition to reparations among whites prevails\(^1\) even though most consider the institution of slavery to be one of the most despicable human rights catastrophes. Although slavery is often perceived as a Southern plantation affair, there is clear evidence that individuals, companies, public institutions, and the federal government all profited from slavery. Furthermore, although slavery was formally abolished in the U.S. in the mid 1800’s, institutionalized discrimination persisted well into the 1900’s in many parts of America, and prejudice and discrimination persist to this day.\(^2\, 3\)

There are a number of probable reasons for the lack of support for reparations among whites. Most obviously, paying reparations entails a transfer of capital from the white majority to the black minority. Hence, simple self-interest would predict lack of reparations support among whites. It is also likely that continuing prejudice against blacks by whites also plays some role in reparations opposition. In addition, there are a number of rationalizations that may accompany opposition to reparations. Whites may feel that the crime occurred too long ago, and that they were not personally responsible for it. They may also feel that the payment of reparations may do more harm than good by exacerbating racial tensions. In this article, we propose another possible factor involved in reparations opposition: the perception among whites that after decades of social change and affirmative action Black Americans have already achieved acceptable income parity with whites (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995).

In reality, economic disparities between blacks and whites persist. Furthermore, the disparities between blacks and whites in the distribution of wealth and capital can be regarded as a tax on race: “the cost of being black amounts to a tax unfairly imposed solely because of race”
(Allen, 1988, p. 12). An analysis of economic disparity (Wolff, 2001) showed that the overall objective wealth disparity between white and black heads of household is about $150,000 (Table 1); the overall disparity is more than $200,000 between white and black heads of household who are 45-54 years old; and the black/white net worth ratio, 0.18, has remained relatively unchanged for about 20 years (Table 2).

The disparities identified by Wolff (see also Oliver & Shapiro, 1995) are attributable primarily to starting off on an unequal footing; the disparities are negligibly attributable to other factors such as differential savings rates. Wolff concluded that, “decades would be required for the wealth gap to close” (ibid., p. 4). The extent to which whites are aware of the black/white wealth disparity is not clear. Furthermore, even when awareness exists, the disparity may be attributed to personal rather than societal factors. Our aim, then, was to estimate whites’ perceptions of the costs associated with being black, and to determine the relationship between such perceptions and support for reparations.

We asked whether the black/white wealth disparity calculated by Wolff, $150,000, would be estimated by the amount that resulted from a contingent valuation approach (e.g., Mitchell & Carson, 1989). Specifically, we asked white respondents to imagine that they were black, but had always passed as white. We then asked them how much they would need to be paid to have their racial status publicly corrected to black (a government tax-free award to persons with a black ancestor). We felt that this approach to examining whites’ perceptions of black costs might be more effective than asking white participants to directly estimate the costs of being black. It is one thing to impersonally estimate the burden of another, but it is something else entirely to consider that burden for oneself.
A similar approach was reported by Hacker who asked his students to respond to a race-change parable by indicating “how much financial recompense you would request” (Hacker, 2003, p. 42). “Most seemed to feel it would not be out place to ask for $1 million for each future year they would be living as a black American.” (ibid., p. 42). We speculate that a portion of the huge race-change request could be due to having to change (traumatically?) one’s appearance beyond recognition by friends and acquaintances as well as due to the enormous imputed wealth/power of a mysterious donor organization that could guarantee targeted persons “to live another sixty years.” At any rate, although Hacker never counted how many students responded to his parable and never tabulated their replies (A. Hacker personal communication, 12/1/04), $1 million per year has been the only published value until the present investigation.

Legal attempts to pursue reparations were the focus of a discussion by class-action specialists of suits seeking reparations on behalf of slave descendants (Hitt, Gary, Pires, Scruggs, & Sweet, 2000). The discussion tackled questions such as expiration of statutes of limitation, appropriate defendants, and profiling of persuasive plaintiffs. Most importantly, the discussion reflected consensus that a reparations class-action suit, to be effective, must be supported in the court of public opinion (Hitt et al., ibid, p. 46) and that, to be effective, damages must be quantified (ibid., p. 44). The present research attempts to quantify restitution in the court of white public opinion.

One participant in the reparations class-action suit discussion (Dennis Sweet, Hitt et al, 2000, p. 45) bespoke the spirit of our inquiry with an anecdote: “Chris Rock, the comedian, said it best. He has a bit in his act where he’s talking to just a normal white guy and says, ‘Despite all the changes in society, you wouldn’t switch places with me, a black man.’ Then he pauses, ‘And I’m rich!’ The thing is, there are a lot of benefits to being white. A lot.” We presumed that the
ongoing benefit of being white is related logically to perceptions of the ongoing cost of not being white. Contingent valuation appeared well suited to exploring Chris Rock's challenge.⁶

Contingent Valuation

Human beings are observed in practice to be willing to pay money -- directly or through their government -- for the preservation of environmental resources that they do not intend to use or exploit personally (Mitchell & Carson, 1989). Examples are the use of tax funds to set aside or preserve wilderness areas, contributions to endangered species, preservation of national parks, and so forth. We asked here whether the white majority could construe reparations as a contribution to a deserving human resource: the slave-descendant minority.

The essence of contingent valuation is to ask respondents to value a set of circumstances that is counterfactual, which does not presently exist: “if this happens, what would you be willing to pay?” (Cummings, Brookshire, & Schulze, 1986, p. xi). Our approach was identical except the respondent became the payee: hence “if this happens, what should you be paid?”

By using parallel questions about familiar topics and by using an open-ended response format, we sought to minimize ambiguities of the contingent valuation method (e.g., Schwarz, 1997; Fischoff, 1997). One question asked respondents to indicate how much they would need to be paid to change their state citizenship. The state-change question was assumed to be similar to the race-change item in that participants would bear some inconvenience in having to change their legal status, and also that participants would need to give up an aspect of their identity, however important it might be.

A second question asked how much participants would need to be paid to give up TV for the rest of their lives. It was assumed that many people would have strong negative reactions to giving up TV. Would similarly strong negative reactions be associated with changing one’s
race? To assess the susceptibility of responses to irrelevant survey administration factors (Schwarz, 1997, p. 171), we also varied the order of the TV and race-change questions (state-change was always the second item).

In our adoption of a counterfactual tactic, viz., we asked primarily white people about the cost of being black, we were mindful of three caveats (Smith, 1986, p. 172). First, will each respondent really take the decision circumstances seriously since there are no tangible incentives to do so? Second, is each respondent capable of processing the information involved in what is often a completely new set of conditions? Third, does an individual’s response require repeated experience to form an appraisal of the hypothetical questions? These caveats, which certainly apply to valuations of complex public goods (e.g., Exxon Valdez oil spill), were seen as less applicable to the actual specific issues faced by our respondents: changing their statehood, being identified henceforth as black, and forgoing television. Nevertheless, pretesting showed that all respondents knew what state they were from and had had many occasions to be reminded of their statehood; had interacted with blacks and frequently observed blacks in real life and in the media; and had frequently watched TV. Hence, the caveats raised above should have had minimal impact on our findings.

Study 1: Initial Sample

Overview

Undergraduates at Ohio State University completed a questionnaire in which key questions addressed dollar compensation required for living out one’s life as a black person, for giving up TV, and for acknowledging a different statehood (official state of residence).
Participants and Design

Sixty-one white male (n = 27) and female (n = 34) Ohio State undergraduates completed surveys in exchange for partial course credit (mean age = 19.66; range from 17 to 37). We varied the order of presentation of the question so that for about half the participants the race-change question came first, and for about half the no-TV question came first. The state-change question always appeared in second position. Participants filled out the surveys in classrooms reserved for the experiment.

Instrument

The race-change, state-change, and no-TV contingent valuation items respectively were worded as follows:

Imagine that, although actually a black person, you have always been considered a white person (passing as white) and that a new government program offers a one-time tax-free cash gift to persons who can prove they have a black ancestor. As you can easily provide such proof, you are considering applying for the cash gift if it is sufficiently generous. What amount of cash would you require to continue your life, publicly (and correctly) identified as black?

Imagine that, although actually a citizen of Pennsylvania, you have always been considered a citizen of Ohio and that a new Pennsylvania program offers a one-time tax-free “bounty from surplus” to persons who can prove they are Pennsylvanians. As you can easily provide such proof, you are considering applying for the Pennsylvania gift if it is sufficiently generous. What amount of cash would you require to continue your life, publicly (and correctly) identified as a Pennsylvanian?
Imagine that there is a tiny invisible sensor (worn on an earring or watchband) which reliably detects TV watching by the wearer and which reliably tracks the wearer's normal daily movement. If the wearer watches TV or if the sensor is any way tampered with, a control station is notified. What amount of cash would you require to cease watching TV for the rest of your life? (If you “cheated” -- by watching TV -- the entire cash sum, plus compounded interest, would be legally seizable from you and all your assets).

For each item, participants were given a line to write in their required dollars.

Results and Discussion

The median race-change request was $1,500. This was comparable to the $1,000 median amount requested to change one’s state (of citizenship) but vastly smaller than the $1,000,000 median amount requested to forgo TV. We report medians because there were extreme outliers (as is common in open-response contingent valuations) that rendered means a poor measure of central tendency. The graph in Figure 1 conveys the variance in responses.

To analyze the race-change measures, and other open-response items (e.g. required compensation for state change, for no TV) we routinely used log-transformed scores that greatly reduced the influence of extreme outliers and, of course, means reported with those analyses were always log-transformed. The effect of question order (race first vs. TV first) did not reach conventional levels of significance ($M_{Race \ First} = 6.88, M_{TV \ First} = 8.71, F(1, 59) = 2.92, p = .093$.

The typical white participant in our sample requested very little to change his or her racial status. However, our ability to generalize from this sample was limited by several factors. The vast majority of our participants were between the ages of 18 and 20, and all were college students. In addition, the geographic location of our participants was limited to a particular
midwestern state. Hence, the next step was to administer our contingent valuations items to samples that varied in terms of age, student-status, and geographic location.

Study 1A: Additional Samples

**Samples Characteristics**

To examine different geographic locations, we collected samples of white college students from Harvard University (N = 125) and Georgia Southern University (N = 58). We also collected a sample of white older adults (N = 77) from the Columbus, OH area (at public settings such as waiting for a parade or an athletic event to begin). The Harvard sample included 42 men and 83 women with a mean age of 20.63 (range from 18 to 55). The Georgia Southern sample included 29 men and 29 women with a mean age of 20.81 (range from 18 to 56). The sample of older adults included 45 men and 32 women with a mean age of 44.63 (range from 21 to 89).

Participants in the Harvard sample filled out the survey in an online format (from home, a library, a computer lab, or other settings) in exchange for partial course credit. Participants in the Georgia Southern sample filled out surveys in introductory economics classes. Finally, the sample of older adults was approached and asked to voluntarily participate in a short survey.

Participants in each sample responded to the three contingent valuations items described above. For the state-change measure, names of states were changed for the Harvard sample (Massachusetts and New Hampshire) and the Georgia Southern sample (Georgia and South Carolina). In addition, the order manipulation from the initial experiment was included in the Harvard sample (about half read the race-change measure first, and about half read the TV item first – the state item was always in the middle). It should be pointed out the state change item may have been interpreted differently by people from different locals. For example, unlike the situation with OSU and GSU where many students are in-state, most students attending Harvard
do not come from Massachusetts, and hence may have attached less value to their Massachusetts residency-status.

Results and Discussion

The results across the three generalization samples and the initial sample were remarkably consistent (see first four data rows of Table 3 for a summary of contingent valuation responses). The race-change values ranged from $100 to $1,500, state-change values ranged from $100 to $1,000, and the no-TV values ranged from $150,000 to $1,000,000. The shapes of the distributions for each sample and for each item were similar to those shown in Figure 1. Because the Harvard race-change result was an order of magnitude smaller and also because the Harvard sample was the largest, we have shown the pattern of contingent valuation responses for each of the three contingent valuation items from Harvard in Figure 2.

As before, for all analyses including open-ended responses, logarithmic transformations were conducted to reduce the influence of outliers. The question order difference in the Harvard sample was not significant ($M_{\text{Race First}} = 5.69, M_{\text{TV First}} = 5.01), F(1, 123) = 0.74, p = .391.$

Within the sample of older adults, it was possible to examine the relationship between age and race-change requests. If race-change requests represent perceptions of black cost, older whites might have been expected to list higher values given that they have witnessed the struggles of blacks over the decades (positive correlation expected). On the other hand, they may list lower values if they feel that fortunes have improved for blacks since, say, the 1950’s (negative correlation expected). If race-change requests are related directly to prejudice, older adults, who are more prone to expressing prejudice (e.g., von Hippel, Silver, & Lynch, 2000), may be more inclined to list high values (i.e., “I would never be black”). Finally, if race-change requests are indirectly related to prejudice, older adults may list smaller values, reasoning that
any black costs are due to blacks themselves, and not societal factors (hence, they themselves would not be at risk). In fact, a negative correlation obtained between race-change requests and age, \( r(77) = -.31, p < .01 \), indicating that older respondents actually requested smaller amounts to change their racial status. This finding suggests, at the very least, that race-change request increases were not a proxy for increases in age-associated prejudice.

Study 2

One alternative account of the low race-change requests is that participants felt that they could continue to pass as white, and so they would not feel the full brunt of any racism. To address this issue, we ran an experiment in which the original race-change measure was compared with a measure that was the same except that participants were told that they would be identified as black “in any encounters” after accepting the money.

Participants and Design

Participants were 78 white male (n = 46) and female (n = 32) Ohio State University undergraduates who participated in exchange for partial course credit (mean age = 20.00; ranging from 16-36). Surveys were administered during the first week of an introductory psychology course.

Procedure and Materials.

The procedure and materials were the same as in Study 1 except that the last line of the race-change item was changed to: “What amount of cash would you require to continue your life, publicly (and correctly) identified as black in any encounters with other people?”

Results and Discussion

Results indicated no significant difference between the two forms (\( M_{\text{Old Version}} = 6.01, M_{\text{In Any Encounters}} = 5.60 \)), \( F(1, 76) = 0.18, p = .675 \). The corresponding medians were $100 dollars for
both the original version and for the “in all encounters” version. In general, the contingent valuation item median values for the full sample were consistent with those reported in Study 1 and 1A: race-change = $100, state-change = $100, no-TV = $400,000. The relatively small median race-change request of $100 was due in part to a relatively higher percentage of $0 requests in Study 2 (14.1% requested $0 in Study 2 as compared, for example, to 10.3% in Study 1), but in general, participants in Study 2 simply requested lower sums across the board.

In conclusion, white respondents across samples, regardless of age, student-status, or geographic region, requested relatively small sums to change their racial-status (especially in comparison to the large amounts required to forgo TV) even when it was made very clear that they could no longer continue to pass as white in any social encounters. Hence, the low perceived cost of being black appears to be relatively robust across different subject populations, and across variations in the administration of the race-change measure. This robustness is noteworthy given that we employed a “willingness to be paid” contingent evaluation approach that, if anything, would be likely to yield inflated requests (as opposed to a “willingness to pay” approach). In Study 3, we began to examine the construct validity of the race-change measure.

Study 3

Study 1 and Study 2 demonstrated that median requests were relatively small. However, inspection of the race-change request frequencies in the figures reveals that some participants requested relatively large sums (in excess of $10,000 dollars). If the race-change measure were really a measure of the perceived costs of being black, we would expect it to be positively correlated with support for reparations. In addition, we explored whether the degree of explicit prejudice predicted the race-change requests. Low race-change requests might indicate relatively little prejudice (i.e., I have no problem with being a black person), and high requests may
indicate higher prejudice (i.e., I would never be black!). Data from Study 1A provided evidence against a prejudice-tapping interpretation of the race-change requests (older individuals requested lower sums), however, no final conclusions could be drawn from the simple correlation between age and race-change requests. In Study 3, we directly examined the relationship between reparations support and the race-change measure by asking people whether or not they would vote for a reparations bill, and how much reparations should be paid. If the race-change measure actually did tap explicit prejudice, a negative correlation between the race-change requests and support for reparations would be expected. We also included the modern racism scale (McConahay, 1986) and a black feeling “thermometer” in Study 3 to more directly ascertain the relationship between race-change requests and explicit prejudice.

Participants

Eighty-two white male (n = 39) and female (n = 43) Ohio State undergraduates completed surveys for partial course credit. Surveys were administered during the first week of an introductory psychology course. The mean age was 20.53 (range from 17 to 55).

Instrument

After filling out the three contingent valuation items (race-change, state-change, and no-TV), participants answered a series of secondary questions: “Do you support the payment of reparations to the descendants of slaves?” (no = 1, yes = 2); “Imagine that congress passed a bill to pay reparations to the descendants of slaves. What do you think the amount of reparations should be per person (in one lump sum)?” (open ended). In addition, participants were asked to address a black thermometer rating (ratings of “African Americans” on a 100 point scale where higher scores indicated more positive affect). Finally, all participants completed the 7-item modern racism scale as a second measure of explicit prejudice (McConahay, 1986).
Results

The overall median values were as follows: race-change = $75, state-change = $100, no TV = $500,000. Hence, the pattern of medians across the three items was very similar to the previous samples. In response to the support for reparations item, 14.6% said ‘yes’, and 85% said ‘no’, numbers very similar to the CNN/Gallup poll reported earlier (see footnote 1). The median suggested reparations payment was $5.50; of course, most of the people who said they would not support reparations listed zero dollars in response to this item.

As in Study 1, logarithmic transformations were performed on the race-change item and the open-ended reparations payment item. Relevant correlations are reported in Table 4. Most importantly, positive correlations were found between requested race-change dollars, on the one hand, and support for reparations, $r(82) = .22, p < .05$, and suggested reparations payments, $r(82) = .45, p < .001$, on the other. That is, the greater the black cost was perceived to be, the greater the value of reparations recommended. Finally, the race-change measure was not correlated with the black thermometer rating, $r(82) = -.13, p = .24$, or the modern racism scale, $r(82) = .10, p = .39$. Hence, the race-change measure was predictive of two indicators of support for reparations in the expected direction, and was not significantly associated with two different measures of explicit prejudice. These findings indicated that to the extent that black costs are perceived as negligible (i.e., people would assume the “burden” for very little compensation), the perceived need for reparations decreases. The low median race-change requests found in Studies 1 and 2 indicate that low perceptions of black cost among whites are widespread; the wide lack of support for reparations among whites may flow from this perception.
Study 4

In Study 3 higher race-change requests were associated with increased support for reparations, and higher suggested reparations payments. However, because the majority of race-change requests were very low, most participants did not perceive high costs associated with being black. Hence, it appears that most of the participants in our sample were unmindful of black costs, or corresponding ‘white privilege’. If that is the case, it is suggested that one way to increase support for reparations is to increase awareness of white privileges (and corresponding nonwhite costs). We sought to manipulate such awareness in Study 4. We hypothesized that awareness of white privilege would increase support for reparations. The same additional race-related measures from Study 3 were included in Study 4 for correlational purposes to assure that the correlations in Study 3 were stable, and to examine the effects of awareness of white privilege on these items as well.

In addition, we wanted to compare our measure of the perceived costs of being black with a direct measure; hence, we simply asked people to report whether they thought it was easier being black or white.

Participants and Design

Participants were 73 white male (n = 17) and female (n = 56) Ohio State undergraduates who completed questionnaires in classrooms reserved for the experiment for partial course credit. The mean age was 18.41 (range from 18 to 27). Approximately half of the participants read thirteen aspects of white privilege/black costs while about half did not.

Instrument

Participants in the white privilege condition read thirteen points relevant to white privilege (excerpted from McIntosh, 1988; see Appendix A for all points). For example, “I can
be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.”, and, “If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.” Participants in the control condition began with the contingent valuation items. After filling out the three contingent valuation items (race-change, state-change, and no-TV), all participants completed the same dependent measures as in Study 2, with the addition of the following item: “Do you feel that it is easier being black or easier being white in America right now?” (1 = much easier to be white, 2 = easier to be white, 3 = slightly easier to be white, 4 = no difference, 5 = slightly easier to be black, 6 = easier to be black, 7 = much easier to be black).

Results and Discussion

The overall median values were as follows: race-change = $10,000, state-change = $1,000, and no TV = $100,000. Although the race-change value was higher than those from previous studies, the pattern of medians across the three items was similar to the previous samples. The mean score on the measure of black ease was 2.75, which corresponded most closely with the rating label, “Slightly easier to be white.” The median suggested reparations payment was $500. In response to the question about support for reparations, 26% of respondents answered ‘yes’, while 74% of respondents answered ‘no’.

As partial evidence that participants were responsive to the manipulation of awareness of white privileges, there was an effect of the manipulation on the measure of black ease such that participants receiving the white privileges manipulation reported less black ease ($M_{White Privileges} = 2.59, M_{No White Privileges} = 3.11), F(1, 71) = 3.91, p = .052.$

As in the previous studies, logarithmic transformations were performed on the open-ended items to reduce variance associated with outliers. We examined the effect of the white privilege induction on the race-change measure, as well as the two indicators of support for
reparations. We found no significant effects on race-change requests \( (M_{\text{White Privileges}} = 8.37, M_{\text{No White Privileges}} = 8.91), F(1, 71) = 0.25, p = .619, \) or suggested reparations payments \( (M_{\text{White Privileges}} = 5.34, M_{\text{No White Privileges}} = 5.15), F(1, 71) = 0.04, p = .834. \) With respect to stated support for reparations, slightly more participants reported support for reparations when given the white privileges induction (32.4% indicated support vs. 67.6% did not) as compared to those not given the privileges induction (19.5% indicated support vs. 80.5% did not), but this difference was not significant (as indicated by a chi-square test), \( \chi^2(1, N = 73) = 0.53, p = .465. \) Hence, our one-shot instantiation of white privilege awareness did not significantly affect any of the key measures.

We also examined the patterns of correlations among the measured variables (see correlations in Table 5). These patterns were very similar to those observed in Study 3 (Table 4). The race-change measure was positively correlated with both support for reparations, \( r(73) = .27, p < .05, \) and suggested reparations payments, \( r(73) = .44, p < .001. \) Once again, the race-change measure was not correlated with the black thermometer rating, \( r(73) = -.15, p = .22, \) or the modern racism scale, \( r(73) = .17, p = .15. \)

The race change measure was not correlated with the direct measure of black-cost where people were simply asked to report if it was easier to be black or white, \( r(73) = -.03, p = .79. \) Furthermore, the direct measure of black-cost (higher numbers indicated perceptions of black ease), although sensitive to the white privileges manipulation, was not significantly correlated with either reparations support, \( r(73) = -.17, p = .15, \) or the suggested reparations payment, \( r(73) = -.19, p = .12. \) Hence, there is tentative evidence that the contingent valuation measures of black costs may be more useful for studying perceptions of others’ hardships than more direct measures.
It was possible that the white-privilege framing did not cause participants to make the intended link to black costs. To check this possibility, we ran a separate experiment in which the items in Appendix A were reframed in terms of black costs (together with the original white-privilege framing and a control condition). However, we still found no differences on the key race-related measures.\textsuperscript{10}

Study 5

Study 4 demonstrated that providing participants with a list of white-benefits did not affect support for reparations (see also footnote 9). Perhaps more striking, however, was the absolute levels of opposition to reparations for descendants of slaves. When asked if they would support reparations in Study 3, 85\% were opposed. In Study 4, the level of opposition in the control condition (for those who had not just read a list of white privileges) was 81\%. These numbers are generally similar to the 2001 CNN/Gallup poll that recorded 90\% opposition to reparations among whites (see footnote 1). Perhaps people’s opinions regarding reparations are difficult to influence because they are strongly held convictions. It is possible that people can summon multiple justifications for opposing reparations. If so, one particularly salient justification for opposing reparations may be that slavery was a crime that occurred long ago. Related to this conviction is the idea that the true victims (the slaves themselves) cannot receive compensation, and the perpetrators (slave-owners) have died long ago. Hence, reparations would unfairly sanction whites for a crime they did not commit, and unfairly rewards blacks for hardships that they themselves did not suffer. The force of this logic led us to wonder if people would be opposed in general to the payment of reparations for long-ago sufferings, or whether their opposition might be more specific to slavery-related reparations. If any suffering that is ancient reduces thereby the press for reparations, the effects observed in Studies 1-4 may not
reflect race bias as much as a more general sense to ‘forget the past’. To examine this issue, we devised a simple scenario wherein participants were asked to imagine that their own distant relatives had suffered a transgression. If people are opposed to reparations payments for long-ago incidents regardless of the particular antagonists and protagonists, then opposition to reparations should be similar to that found in the 2001 CNN/Gallup poll, and in Studies 3 and 4.

Participants and Procedure

Sixty-six midwest college students (in classrooms reserved for the study and for partial course credit) were asked to read the following scenario:

“Imagine that about 150 years ago, in the mid-1800s, your great, great grandfather was kidnapped by Fineus Jones. Jones demanded a million dollars from your great, great grandfather’s shipping business. The family borrowed the money and paid the ransom and your great, great grandfather was released. Jones escaped to Europe and was apprehended, but none of the million dollars was found. Your great, great grandfather lost his business to pay back the ransom loan and died in poverty. Recently it was proven that the lost money had been transferred to one of Fineus Jones’ sons who started a successful banking company with a successor firm now worth 100 million dollars. Your cousins have found a respected attorney who will press a claim on the successor firm and will do the work on a contingency basis, that is, the attorney will receive a portion of the amount awarded by the court. If all costs are included in the claim, the amount awarded to each claimant will be about $5,000.00. Your cousins have asked if you would wish your name to be included on the list of claimants.”
Participants were asked to indicate their decision to allow, or not to allow, their name to be included and, furthermore, to supply reasons for their decision.

Results and Discussion

In all, 40 (61%) participants agreed to have their name listed, while 26 (39%) did not. Of the 26 that said “no”, only four gave some variant of “it happened too long ago” as a reason. Hence, almost two-thirds of participants were willing to accept a reparations payment when it benefited them, and more than 90 per cent of participants were readily able to disregard long time-intervals in a decision involving economic injustice. This simple demonstration showed that people do not invariably oppose reparations on time-perspective grounds. Instead, there are some restitutions that are seen as justifiable, and some that are not.

General Discussion

Reparations to slave-descendants is increasingly promoted and, importantly, increasingly argued in the courts (Robertson, 2000). Therefore whites’ perceptions of the “cost of being black” (Allen, 1998, p.12) is not only relevant--it is likely to become material in future litigation. Actual implementation of reparations to American slave descendants, a program with a symbolic significance that is beyond reckoning, could depend in part on financial feasibleness and therefore on the amount determined in the court of (white) public opinion.

A new measure of perceptions of the costs associated with being black was described that embodied a contingent valuation approach. Specifically, white participants were asked to imagine that they were black and had always passed as white, but now had the opportunity to receive compensation for publicly changing their racial status to black. Across nine studies, race-change requests were relatively slight (median requests ranging from $75 to $10,000 – see Table 3) in comparison to the actual black-white wealth gap of $150,000 (Wolff, 2001), and in
comparison to the large sums required to forgo TV for a lifetime (median requests ranging from $100,000 to $1,000,000). Furthermore, the obtained race-change requests were far smaller than the previous anecdotal report ($60 million, Hacker, 2003). Race-change requests were, for the most part, unchanged despite variations in region, age, and student status across samples (Study 1). In Study 3 we presented evidence that supported the interpretation of the race-change measure as a measure of the perceived costs of being black (as opposed to simply another measure of prejudice). Specifically, the race-change measure was shown to be positively related to support for reparations, yet not correlated with two different explicit measures of prejudice.

The patterns of correlations exhibited in Study 3 were replicated in Study 4. Study 4 also featured a comparison of the race-change measure with a measure of perception of black costs (black ease). The null correlation between these two measures, and the general ineffectiveness of the ease measure in predicting support for reparations suggested that race-change measures of black costs should continue to be utilized. The main focus of Study 4, however, was to examine the proposition that increasing awareness of white benefits would increase support for reparations. However, reading a list of white privileges had no significant effects on the race-change measures, or on the indicators of support for reparations.

Method Soundness and Replicability: Empirical Footing for Reparations Discussion

Subsequent reparations discussion may now be put on an empirical footing because contingent valuation can provide relevant quantitative evidence. The contingent valuation questions used here are quickly and easily administered; they pose little difficulty to college-age and older adult respondents; the bulk of the respondents provided answers that showed sensitivity to the differential implications of the questions. The questions and design used here readily met a checklist of contingent valuation criteria (Fischoff, 1997, pp. 196-197): (1)
Procedure for eliciting values is accessible to any citizen willing to invest the effort: extensive prior knowledge is not required; (2) questions are not vague; participants should not have to read between the lines of the questions; (3) respondents’ beliefs must be expressed in a common format; (4) respondents understand the size of the changes at stake; (5) time for rumination, if needed, is provided; (6) the quality of the measures is assessed by determining how sensitive responses are to relevant and irrelevant changes in procedure; and (7) consumers of the results understand what the results mean for their concerns.

The present instrument is usable by anyone -- without extensive prior knowledge. The hypothetical questions were clear to the bulk of respondents, replies were expressed in an open-response format, reported amounts tracked the magnitude of the changes implied (low for statehood change, high for giving up TV), and there was no time limit for responding. The role of an “irrelevant” factor, order of presentation of questions, was statistically evaluated. With respect to the seventh criterion, consumers of the present research will likely assign importance to the results to the extent that they believe that reparations to descendants of slaves will be determined in the court of (white) public opinion. For these consumers of research (attorneys, politicians, journalists, teachers, economists, sociologists, etc.) whites’ perceptions of the “continuing cost of being black” (Allen, 1998, p.12) is clearly relevant.

Perception of Past Damages versus Present Conditions

The present approach did not emphasize past slavery-related damages per se but rather perception of the ongoing costs of being identified, correctly, as black. To focus upon the ongoing consequences of past damages was in fact to address an injustice that has been perpetuated by the intractable intergenerational black/white wealth disparity (Allen, 1998; Oliver & Shapiro, 1995; Robinson, 2001; Wolff, 2001). Study 5, however, provided evidence that
participants did not disapprove of payments related to a long-ago damage; indeed, most participants were willing to be listed as claimants for compensation attributable to damage experienced by a distant ancestor. In future studies, a list of common justifications for opposing slave-descendant reparations can be compiled. If participants can be shown that they only apply these justifications to slave-reparations, and not to other reparations scenarios, perhaps support for slave-reparations would be increased.

Public Reactions to Reparations: Role of Contingent Valuation

The details of the feasibility of a reparations program to slave descendants (screening recipients, source of funds, administration, scheduling payments, use of tax returns) were beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, official commitment to a future reparations program (akin to official commitments aimed at wildlife conservation or to reduce auto emissions) might well have desirable consequences. Determination of a dollar range for the amount of future reparations can be illuminated by empirical approaches that can enjoy currency in the court of public opinion. Asking white individuals what they should be paid to continue living as blacks can provide an empirical framework for evaluating cash reparations proposals even though most whites do not presently agree that slave descendants are owed.

Another advantage of contingent valuation is the method’s ability to begin to address the post-reparations world. Adroitly constructed contingent valuation questions could gauge the extent to which reparations to slave descendants are perceived as a public good (Allen, 1998; Robinson, 2001) versus a public “bad” (e.g., Schmoke, 2001; Williams, 2001).

Implications for the Reparations Debate and Future Directions

One main implication of our studies is that if the perceived cost of being black is slight, and reparations are commensurate, then a reparations program becomes more financially
feasible. Another implication is that the importance itself of reparations may be associated with the perceived cost of being black; if the cost is perceived to be slight, perhaps the need for reparations can be slighted as well.

Future research can further examine the role of perceived costs in support for reparations and similar initiatives (e.g., affirmative action). In our current studies, it is clear from Figure 1 that some individuals did list high race-change values. Study 3 and Study 4 showed that those who listed higher values were more likely to support reparations. We interpreted the mostly low race-change values as indicating widespread ignorance of black-costs. Hence, we reasoned that one way to increase support for reparations might be to educate white individuals on the ongoing costs associated with being black. Reading a list of white privileges in Study 4, however, did not affect support for reparations. While it is possible that ignorance of white privilege is not an issue, there are several other possibilities. To the extent that white children are not taught about white privilege, it seems unlikely, in retrospect, that a one-time manipulation of white privilege would be sufficient to counter a lifetime of ignorance. Perhaps a more substantial manipulation of white privilege would be sufficient to educate whites on their relative advantages. However, it is also possible that whites are motivated to ignore “white privilege”; hence, attempts to educate whites about black costs may be met with both rationalization (e.g., the wealth gap is due to blacks’ laziness) and/or reactance (Brehm, 1966). Furthermore, while perceptions of disparities were shown to play a role in support for reparations (as indicated by the positive correlations between the race-change measure and the measures of support for reparations in Study 3 and Study 4), what may be equally or more important are individual attributions regarding disparities. If whites attribute black costs to black dispositions, then opposition to reparations might be expected. On the other hand, if disparities are attributed to a history of
social oppression starting with slavery and continuing inexorably to the present, then support for reparations might be anticipated. These implications can be examined and addressed more confidently to the extent that the perceived costs of being black can be measured in a meaningful and reliable fashion.
References


Savage, MD


Scribner.


Thomson & Gale.


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Footnotes

1 A 2002 poll conducted by CNN and Gallup asked respondents to indicate their support for reparations for the descendants of black slaves (Viles, 2002). Among 820 white respondents, 90% indicated that they would not support reparations payments, while only 6% indicated support (margin of error was plus or minus 4%). Nonetheless, Representative John Conyers, a Detroit Democrat has been promoting a reparations bill in Congress (H.R.40) because he believes reparations “really ought to be given serious scrutiny and examination” (Robertson, 2000).

2 The Secretary of the Treasurer during the 1850s, and also president of the Georgia Cotton Planters’ Association (Howell Cobb), proclaimed that for the planter “the largest source of prosperity is in the negroes he raises” (Gutman, 1975, p. 97). Not limited to the South, black slavery was at the base of fortunes and wealth accumulation throughout the United States. The District of Columbia, including the Capitol building, was largely built by slaves whose owners were paid five dollars per month per slave by the government (Robinson, 2001, p. 3). The governments of the colonies and of the newly formed United States taxed slaves, slave transfers, and slave insurance arrangements. The government, as much as individuals (planters, shipbuilders) and corporations, benefited financially from the unpaid work of slaves. Indeed, the cost of slave management to the slave owners was partially shifted to the government via massive public works (e.g., slave rentals to railroad building) and via services (e.g., capturing of runaway slaves) (Thornton & Yanochik, 2003).

Magisterial and compelling scholarship (Allen, 1998; Robinson, 2001) has shown that the white-black wealth gap was sustained by laws and explicit practices (housing) for 80-100 years beyond Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation (see also Oliver & Shapiro, 1995).
3 “How many Americans know that 25 million blacks died in slavery? And how many know that virtual slavery was perpetuated for nearly a century after emancipation? Peonage laws made unpaid workers out of debtors. There were sharecropping schemes. Then Jim Crow laws. Until 1950 the federal government included in mortgage loans restrictive covenants preventing blacks--and only blacks, no other group--from buying houses in white neighborhoods. So blacks could not make their equity work for them. They couldn’t move up. That policy effectively delayed the arrival of the black middle class by half a century. And banks kept it up -- denying loans to blacks, often by redlining, by which they literally would draw lines on a map around a neighborhood and not give loans to even creditworthy people living there. That happened until almost last week.” (Hitt, Gary, Pires, Scruggs, & Sweet, 2000, p. 38)

4 The full text of Hacker’s (2003) race-change scenario is as follows: “You will be visited tonight by an official you have never met. He begins by telling you that he is quite embarrassed. The organization he represents has made a mistake, something that hardly ever happens. According to their records, he tells you, you were supposed to have been born black: to another set of parents far from where you were raised. However, the official rules being what they are, this error must be rectified, and as soon as possible. So at midnight tonight, you will become black. And this will mean not simply darker skin, but the bodily and facial features associated with African ancestry. However, inside, you will be the person you always were. Your knowledge and ideas will remain intact. But outwardly you will not be recognizable to anyone you now know. Your visitor emphasizes that being born to the wrong parents was in no way your fault. Accordingly, his organization is prepared to offer you some reasonable recompense. Would you, he asks, care to name a sum of money you might consider appropriate? He adds that his group is by no means poor. It can be quite generous when the circumstances
warrant, as they seem to in your case. He finishes by saying that their records also show you are
scheduled to live another sixty years – as a black man or woman in America. How much
financial recompense would you require.” (p. 42).

5 In 1994 Florida agreed to pay $2.1 million to the survivors of the 1929 Rosewood
massacre. In April 2002 survivors of the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, the bloodiest in U.S. history,
received the first reparations payment from the Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry. The Ministry is
continuing to collect funds to make additional reparations payments.

In April 2002 three slave descendants filed suit against Aetna, FleetBoston Financial and
railroad giant CSX on behalf of themselves and millions of other blacks, claiming the companies
-- or their corporate predecessors -- unjustly profited from slavery (Kong, 2002). In May 2002
the California Department of Insurance received records under a new state law that requires
insurance companies to divulge any connection they have had to the slave trade. Aetna, AIG,
New York Life, Royal & Sun Alliance provided records indicating they or their predecessors
issued policies to slaveholders (Kong, 2002). One California suit was filed by Timothy Hurdle,
whose father was a slave (Rigby, 2002, p. A.5).

More recently other descendants of black slaves filed lawsuits in New York demanding
corporations pay back profits reaped from the work of their enslaved ancestors. Edlee Bankhead,
the son of a slave and, at 119, the oldest man in the country, filed a similar suit in New York.
“Back then, black folks were treated as if they were no more than animals, they were just bought

The California and New York suits target 12 corporations in finance, railroads and
tobacco which allegedly benefited most from slavery: Investment banks J.P Morgan Chase &
Co., Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. and Brown Brothers Harriman; insurers American

6 The hypothetical transformation posed to the present participants was similar to the one actually experienced in the 1950s by John Howard Griffin, a white journalist (Griffin, 1961). Griffin used skin-altering chemicals to change his appearance to that of a black man. In his travels through the Deep South, as a “black” man, Griffin was treated with frequent and severe hostility.

Mark Twain addressed a similar change of racial status in “Puddn’Head Wilson” (Twain, 1894). The story took place in antebellum Virginia. A slave woman who was 15/16 white, and appeared white, switched her son with the nearly identical looking white child of her master. Her true son went on to live a life of privilege and luxury (at least for some time), while the actual white child was consigned to a life of slavery.

In both Griffin’s and Twain’s work, the costs of being black were extremely high in reflection of the social circumstances of the 1950s and the 1830s. Would contemporary whites similarly assign a high cost to being black?

7 For all samples in which race-change requests were reported (Studies 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4, and studies in footnotes 8 and 10) the effect of gender on the race-change measure was also examined. No significant effects or interactions were observed.

8 Given the wording of our contingent valuation measures, it was possible that the accuracy of reports would be compromised due to requests that were unrealistically high (e.g., if free money is being given out, I’ll take as much as I can get). To address this concern we
incorporated a set of instructions designed to reduce high responses. Specifically, participants in the “lowest value” instructions condition were given the following instructions prior to completing the contingent valuation items: “Please try the following imagination exercise: I will pay you to do something. I have a particular amount of money that I am willing to pay, but I will not tell you what it is. Your job is to request some amount of payment. If your request is higher than my secret value, I will refuse. If your request is lower than my secret value, or if you actually request the secret value, I will agree. The dilemma is as follows: you want to request the highest value you can, but the higher the value you request, the less likely you will get paid anything. Say I want you to sing an embarrassing song in front of a large group of people. Assuming that this is something that you would be need to be paid to do, here is an example of a reasoning process that would help you to maximize both your payment and your chances of getting paid: You reason to yourself, ‘I would definitely sing for a million dollars. And I would sing for $10,000. I would sing for $100. I would sing for $50. But, if it was any less than $50, even 49$, I would not sing. Hence, I should request $50. Guessing any lower would not be worth it. Guessing any higher makes it less and less likely that I will get paid at all.’ This reasoning process helps you to discover, ‘What is the lowest value that I could be paid that would make it worthwhile to do this act.’ You may, of course, decide that you would do this thing for free.”

One hundred nine male (n = 58) and female (n = 51) white Ohio State University undergraduates completed surveys (mean age = 18.71; range from 18-21) in classrooms reserved for the experiment for partial course credit. Approximately half of the participants received the contingent valuation items with no instructions, and half received the ‘lowest value’ instructions. Medians for the three contingent valuations were consistent with previous samples: race-change
Cost of Being Black 36

= $500, state-change = $200, no TV = $1,000,000. Results indicated no significant difference between the instructions and no instructions conditions for the race-change measure \( M_{\text{Lowest Value}} = 6.44, M_{\text{No Lowest Value}} = 5.24 \), \( F(1, 107) = 2.44, p = .121 \).

As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 a significant number of respondents listed a value of zero for the race-change item. It was possible that respondents were indicating that they would change their race, but that they would not need to be compensated for doing so. On the other hand, zero could indicate that the respondent would not change their racial status. To examine these alternative interpretations, 222 white Ohio State University participants were given the race-change item, and were then asked to explain the value that they had listed. Surveys were administered during the first week of an introductory psychology course. Within this sample, 84 people listed a value of zero. Their explanations were examined. Only 5 (5.95%) explanations indicated that the respondent would not change their racial status. The text of these five explanations were as follows: “I wouldn't change who I am (race has nothing to do with it) for all the money in the world.”; “If you didn't want to be known, no amount of money would help.”; “Wouldn't do it, not right.”; “That would be cheating.”; “I have absolutely no black background.” Due to the extremely low percentage of “would not do it” zero requests we included all zero responses in all the samples reported in this paper.

In Study 4, having participants read a list of white-benefits did not influence race-related attitudes. To examine whether a black-costs framing may have been more effective, we altered the listings in Appendix A to reflect black costs rather than white-benefits. For example, the white-benefit, “Members of my race are on the positive side of a $180,000 wealth gap between whites and blacks in this country – a gap that exists regardless of differences in education.” Was changed to “Members of my race are on the negative side of a $180,000 wealth
gap between whites and blacks in this country – a gap that exists regardless of differences in education.” for the black-costs framing.

One hundred thirty three male (n = 27) and female (n = 96) white Ohio State University undergraduates completed surveys (mean age = 18.50; range from 18-24) in classrooms reserved for the experiment for partial course credit. The design included three levels of racial disparity framing (white-benefits, black-costs, no information control). Medians for the three contingent valuations were consistent with previous samples: race-change = $5,000, state-change = $1,000, no TV = $1,000,000. There were no significant effects of the racial disparity framing on any of the Study 4 measures.
Appendix A - Some benefits of being a white person in America (see Study 3)

- I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
- I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
- If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
- I can choose blemish cover or bandages in flesh color and have them more or less match my skin. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven’t been singled out because of my race.
- I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and magazines featuring people of my race.
- I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
- I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to “the person in charge,” I will be facing a person of my race.
- I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
- I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
- When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
• Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area that I can afford and in which I would want to live.

• I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

• Members of my race are on the positive side of a $180,000 wealth gap between whites and blacks in this country – a gap that exists regardless of differences in education.
### Table 1

*Wealth by Characteristics of Head and Family Income, 1994 (from Wolff, 2001, p. 3)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Head and Family Income</th>
<th>Mean Values</th>
<th>Median Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All families</td>
<td>180.7</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>131.5</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>252.4</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>313.7</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>254.7</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>122.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>164.8</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>329.4</td>
<td>75.9</td>
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</table>
### Table 1 (Continued)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Marital Status of head</th>
<th>Mean Values</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>252.8</td>
<td>64.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not married</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Quartile</th>
<th>Mean Values</th>
<th>Median Values</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>135.5</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>412.2</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** Wealth is measured in thousands of 1998 dollars. Calculations use the cross-sectional samples. About 2 percent of families are excluded from calculations by the education of the head for each year and about 7 percent for those by income quartile because of missing data. Sample sizes: 7,415 (4,804 whites, 2,611 African Americans). From “Racial Wealth Disparities”, by E. N. Wolff, 2001, *Public Policy Brief, 66A*, p. 3.
Table 2

*Net Worth, 1984, 1989, and 1994 (from Wolff, 2001, p. 3)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Values</th>
<th>Median Values</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>139.8</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>179.0</td>
<td>34.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>180.7</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3

*Median responses to the contingent valuation items across samples varying in region, age, and student status.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age(^a)</th>
<th>Race-Change</th>
<th>State-Change</th>
<th>No TV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>19.66</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<td>(midwestern)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Older Adults</td>
<td>1A</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>44.63</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>(midwestern)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>1A</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20.81</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>(southeastern)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>1A</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>20.63</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>(northeastern)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$100</td>
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<td>(midwestern)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>20.53</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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<td>(midwestern)</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>18.41</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>Footnote 8</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>18.71</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$200</td>
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<td>(midwestern)</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>Footnote 10</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>(midwestern)</td>
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*Note.* See text for wording of contingent valuations items.

\(^a\) Mean, not median, age.
Table 4

*Correlations for Race-Related Measures in Study 3*

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<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Race-Change (Log Transformed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Reparations Support</td>
<td>.224*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Suggested Reparations Payment</td>
<td>.453**</td>
<td>.575**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Black Thermometer Ratings</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>.267*</td>
<td>.111</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Modern Racism Score</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>-.403**</td>
<td>-.179</td>
<td>-.534**</td>
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*Notes. For all measure, higher scores meant “more” of the given construct. N = 82.*

* *p < .05, ** *p < .005

* See text for item description.
Table 5

*Correlations for Race-Related Measures in Study 4*

<table>
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<td>Race-Change (Log Transformed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reparations Support</td>
<td>.265*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Suggested Reparations Payment</td>
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<td>.584**</td>
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<td>Measure of Black Ease a</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.287*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Modern Racism Score a</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>-.180</td>
<td>-.163</td>
<td>.342**</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Notes. For all measure, higher scores meant “more” of the given construct. N = 73.*

* p < .05, ** p < .005

a See text for item description.
Figure Captions

*Figure 1.* Distributions of Dollars Required for Race Change, State Change, and No Television for Study 1: Initial Ohio State sample.  \( N = 61. \)

*Figure 2.* Distributions of Dollars Required for Race Change, State Change, and No Television for Study 1A: Harvard sample.  \( N = 125. \)
Figure 1

Cost of Being Black 47