THE COST OF BEING BLACK

White Americans' Perceptions and the Question of Reparations[1]

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Abstract

White Americans have long resisted the idea of reparations to the descendants of slaves. We examine the psychological basis of such resistance, primarily testing the possibility that resistance may be a function of Whites' perception of the ongoing cost of being Black. White participants (n = 958) across twelve independent samples (varying in age, student status, and geographic location) were asked variations of the question: How much should you be paid to continue to live the remainder of your life as a Black person? Participants generally required low median amounts, less than $10,000, to make the race change, whereas they requested high amounts, $1,000,000, to give up television. To the extent that larger amounts were requested, support for reparations also increased. Attempts to educate participants about Black cost/White privilege had negligible effects on assessments of the cost of being Black and support for reparations. Together, these results suggest that White resistance to reparations for Black Americans stems from fundamental biases in estimating the true cost of being Black. The implications of our findings for color-blind and multiculturalist conceptual approaches are discussed.

Keywords: Reparations, Racism, Stereotypes, Contingent Valuation, Slavery, Attitudes

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Short of a revolution, the likelihood that blacks today will obtain direct payments in compensation for their subjugation as slaves before the Emancipation Proclamation, and their exploitation as quasi-citizens since, is no better than it was in 1866, when Thaddeus Stevens recognized that his bright hope of "forty acres and a mule" for every freedman had vanished like the "baseless fabric of a vision."
—Derrick Bell, 1973 (p. 157)[2]

INTRODUCTION

Derrick Bell wrote the above words in 1973, but if the outlook for reparations depends upon the support of the White public majority, a similarly dreary picture of the chances for success may be drawn today. For example, a 2002 poll conducted by CNN and Gallup asked respondents to indicate their support for reparations to 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. A similar poll of 723 White adults conducted by Bobo and Dawson in 2000 gauged opposition to government-sponsored reparations to slave descendants at 96% (Dawson and Popoff, 2004, p. 62).

Research on attitude *change* has dominated the study of attitudes in social psychology. Less studied have been attitude *stability* and the related processes of attitude *resistance* and *persistence* (Cook and Flay, 1978; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; West et al., 2004). Furthermore, studies of persistence and resistance typically examine attitude stability over the course of a few minutes to a few weeks. Slave-related reparations present a rare opportunity to examine an attitude object that Whites in America have evaluated in a relatively consistent fashion for at least 150 years.

It is likely that the predominant reasons for opposition to reparations have changed over time. In the early 1900s, for example, blatant prejudice against Blacks may have been a driving force. However, blatant prejudice and acceptance of stereotypes have declined in the intervening period (Schuman et al., 1997). We propose that a critical factor influencing support for reparations in present times is the degree to which one acknowledges ongoing racial disparities. To the extent that racial disparities are perceived as trivial, or even nonexistent, support for reparations may be correspondingly reduced.

We used a version of contingent valuation that put White participants in the hypothetical situation of imagining themselves to be Black and asked them what "price they should be paid." If participants perceived high Black costs and/or if they believed, for public or private reasons, that higher requests were a politically correct response, then this method should have elicited high amounts to be paid. In other words, although high requests might be overestimates, low requests would be strong evidence of ignorance or denial of ongoing racial disparity. We further expected that those who did acknowledge ongoing racial disparity (as evidenced by higher requests) would be more supportive of slave-descendant reparations.

As discussed below, our work relates generally to theory and research regarding attitudes towards progressive racial policy. Our studies also have practical implications, in that an understanding of resistance to reparations can inform policy discussions (Dawson and Popoff, 2004). Before discussing our contingent valuation approach, we examine issues relating to racial disparity and reparations.

ONGOING RACIAL DISPARITIES

Disparities between Whites and Blacks continue to plague American society. Relative to Whites, Blacks fall on the negative side of a wide array of important social indicators, with infant morality rates 146% higher; life chances of imprisonment (state or federal facility) 447% higher; rate of death by homicide 521% higher; lack of health insurance coverage 42.3% more likely; median income rate 55.3% lower; poverty rates 173% higher; and proportion with a college degree or beyond 59.5% lower. Strikingly, the average White American will even live five and one-half years longer than the average Black American (seven years for males).[3]

White privilege has been likened to an "invisible knapsack" that Whites carry with them wherever they go (McIntosh 1988). The knapsack represents the hidden benefits that accrue to Whites as opposed to members of other races. For example, McIntosh argues that Whites can ask for the person in charge and be more likely to encounter someone of their own race. To take another example, Whites do not have to worry that the mere color of their skin will work against the appearance of financial responsibility. Whites have learned to ignore these privileges conferred by race (McIntosh 1988).

One of the most important racial disparities, and one that relates to each of those in the preceding paragraphs, is the racial wealth gap. An analysis of economic disparity has shown that the overall objective wealth disparity between White and Black heads of household is about $150,000 (Wolff 2001). The ratio between Black wealth and White wealth (about 0.18 overall) varies only trivially when controlling for a range of important factors such as marital status, age, and level of education of the household head. The wealth gap is consistent even across differences in income level between Blacks and Whites. In other words, even when focusing on Blacks in the top income quartile and Whites in their respective top income quartile, there is still a one-to-five wealth gap in favor of Whites. In addition, Black/White net worth ratios have remained relatively unchanged for more than twenty years.

It is not difficult to trace most racial disparities, especially the racial wealth gap, back to legalized slavery and the roughly hundred years of ensuing *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination, which still prevail in various forms to this day. Consistent with this claim, the wealth disparities identified by Wolff have been attributed primarily to starting off on an unequal footing; the disparities are negligibly attributable to other factors (such as differential savings rates). Wolff concludes that, at current rates, "decades would be required for the wealth gap to close" (Wolff 2001, p. 26; see also Oliver and Shapiro, 1995, p. 4).

REPARATIONS: BACKGROUND AND EXPLANATIONS FOR OPPOSITION

The history of the reparations movement is a long one (Coates 2004, pp. 845–847). Popular monographs have made strong and passionate cases for reparations (Bittker 1973; Robinson 2001). Currently, there are numerous lawsuits, either underway or being planned, aimed at companies that benefited from slavery (Kong 2002; Rigby 2002), as well as at the U.S. government, which not only benefited from slavery, but played an active role in shaping and maintaining it (Thornton and Yanochik, 2003). At the same time, there is also considerable resistance to reparations. For example, Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) has proposed a bill (H.R. 40) to Congress every year since 1989 that would provide a formal apology for slavery, and would study the ongoing effects of slavery and discrimination, as well as appropriate remedies. This

bill has yet to make it out of committee, even though it would not actually provide reparations. Resistance to Conyer's legislation is symptomatic of broader opposition to reparations among the White majority.[4]

Legal attempts to pursue reparations have been discussed by class-action specialists; the proposed suits would seek reparations on behalf of slave descendants (Hitt et al., 2000). The discussion has tackled questions such as expiration (statutes of limitation), appropriate defendants, and the profiling of persuasive plaintiffs. Most importantly, the discussion has reflected a consensus that, in order to be effective, a reparations class-action suit must be supported in the court of public opinion, and, furthermore, the damages must be quantified (Hitt et al., 2000, pp. 44, 46). Hence, research quantifying restitution in the court of White public opinion would be central to seeking reparations in the real world.

Resistance to reparations is also relevant to basic research on the *Principle-Implementation Gap* (*P-I Gap*) (Schuman et al., 1985). The *P-I Gap* describes the phenomenon by which most people support egalitarian ideals such as equal opportunity, fairness, and diversity, while at the same time opposing many of the specific policies designed to deliver these ideals (e.g., affirmative action, slave-descendant reparations). Two rather obvious explanations for the *P-I Gap* with respect to reparations are racism (Sears and Jessor, 1996) and economic self- or group-interest (Tuch and Hughes, 1996). Certainly these factors still play an important role in opposition to programs like reparations or affirmative action; however, there are a number of additional explanations that may explain resistance to reparations above and beyond these two factors.

One of the most popular explanations for the *P-I Gap* is based on beliefs and attitudes relating to social stratification (Kluegel and Smith, 1983; 1986). For example, to the extent that one's place in society is seen as a reflection of work ethic (i.e., assuming meritocracy), many social disparities can be justified (Son Hing et al., 2002). Work on social dominance orientation (Pratto et al., 1994) has examined the belief that some groups are inherently superior to others and deserve a greater share of the good things in life. Finally, there is evidence that many attitudes and beliefs regarding social stratification are based on justifying the status quo, whatever that might be [i.e., system justification theory; see Jost et al., (2004)].

There are several additional reasons that a given individual may oppose reparations. Opposition to reparations may, for instance, be based on political ideology. Conservatives may oppose programs like reparations and affirmative action to the extent that they are construed as unnecessary governmental interventions (Sniderman and Tetlock, 1986). And even one who is in favor of reparations in the abstract may disagree with the specifics of a given reparations plan (Kravitz 1995). Finally, some have suggested that many people do not really endorse egalitarianism when confronted with the full implications of the concept (Jackman 1996).

We focus here on yet another explanation for the *P-I Gap*: many Whites may desire racial equality, but feel that sufficient progress has already been made on that front, thus rendering reparations unneeded. In other words, although a primary focus of reparations is to redress past injuries, support may depend on perceptions of present-day inequalities that are the persisting results of past injustices. Kluegel and Smith (1983, 1986) and others (Swim and Miller, 1999; Tuch and Hughes, 1996) have previously demonstrated that perceptions of ongoing discrimination and disparities are positively correlated with support for programs such as affirmative action. However, that scholarship has now become somewhat dated. Not only have national attitudes regarding race continued to evolve, but major events (e.g., the September

11, 2001, terrorist attacks) have transpired that may influence attitudes toward intergroup disparities and related policy.[5]

In addition to possible differences in attitudes toward progressive racial policy in general, none of the prior mainstream social psychological work on perceptions of disparities has dealt directly with the issue of reparations. In fact, the topic of reparations has been widely ignored by social psychologists. An online literature review of major publication outlets within the field over the past twenty-five years yielded zero hits for the keyword *reparations*, although *affirmative action* generated fifty-five hits.[6] Given the opposition to reparations, there is reason to ask whether the work on affirmative action, and other less controversial programs, might not generalize to reparations. It is possible that when the topic is reparations, economic self-interest, or a focused critique of the program in question, could mask variance that would otherwise be accounted for by perceptions of disparity.

We examined the relationship between Whites' perceptions of disparity (Black cost vs. White privilege) and support for slave-descendant reparations using a somewhat novel method. Typically, perceptions of racial disparity are measured with simple Likert items, or occasionally short scales (Swim and Miller, 1999). Dawson and Popoff (2004) measured perceptions that equality had been achieved (response options: *equality achieved*, *equality soon*, *not in a lifetime*, *equality never*), but found no association between responses to this item and support for slave-descendant reparations. Likert items can tend to be impersonal, however, and they may not foster elaborated cost/benefit considerations. Contingent valuation, in contrast, is designed to elicit cost/benefit comparison and, as such, is well suited to assess Whites' perceptions of Black cost.

CONTINGENT VALUATION

The essence of contingent valuation is to ask respondents to ascribe a value to a set of circumstances that is counterfactual, i.e., which does not presently exist: "Should X happen, what would you be willing to pay?" (Cummings et al., 1986, p. xi). Our scenario was the same, except that the respondent became the payee, hence, "If X happened to you, what should you be paid?"

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 and 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 examined here whether the White majority could construe reparations as a contribution to a deserving *human* resource: the slave-descendant minority.

A contingent valuation approach to estimating White perceptions of Black cost seems more likely to elicit cost/benefit consideration than would be Likert scales. When considering Black costs, Whites may try to imagine themselves as Black and imagine how they would respond to resultant challenges. Specifically, we intended to estimate the amount of money that White participants would require to change their racial status to Black in a way that would relate to support for reparations. This estimate, then, could be used as an indicator of perceptions of racial disparity and would be expected to correlate positively with support for reparations.

A contingent valuation approach to perceptions of racial disparity was previously reported by Hacker, who asked his students to respond to a race-change scenario by answering this question: "How much financial recompense would you request?"

(Hacker 2003, p. 42). In the Hacker scenario, students were asked to consider that they were supposed to have been born Black, but a mistake had been made, and they were actually born White:

> 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 request? (Hacker 2003, p. 42).

Hacker reported that "Most seemed to feel it would not be out of place to ask for $1 million for each future year they would be living as a Black American" (Hacker 2003, p. 42). We speculate that a sizeable portion of these huge race-change remuneration requests could be due to having to change (traumatically?) one's appearance beyond recognition by friends and acquaintances, as well as the enormous imputed wealth/power of a mysterious donor organization that could guarantee targeted persons "to live another sixty years." In addition, the extent to which Hacker's scenario encouraged rumination about racial disparities is unclear, because the scenario held that the race change was a forced one. At any rate, although Hacker never counted how many students responded to his parable and never tabulated their replies,[7] $1 million per year to change one's race from White to Black has been the only published value prior to the present investigation.

In the studies below, we sought to sidestep problems in the scenarios used by Hacker. We asked White participants to imagine that they were actually Black, but had always *passed* as White. We then asked them to choose an amount that they would require to be paid to formally and publicly change their racial status to Black. This task should encourage a nuanced computation of the costs and benefits of being White versus Black, because an actual choice needs to be made. The hypothesized race change, however, requires no physical transformations, merely a change in public status.

Analogues of our race-change scenario are not without precedent. For example, famous civil rights activist Walter White looked White, but actually had significant Black ancestry. His decision to publicly "come out" as Black resulted in threats on his life (Janken 2005). Furthermore, new DNA technology that can detect Black ancestry could offer Whites a choice similar to the one presented in our scenario (Harmon 2006). Indeed, a recent Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) documentary showed Whites being told that they had varying levels of Black ancestry (Gates et al., 2006).

In addition to the race-change scenario (described in detail in Study 1), we developed two control scenarios. The first was analogous to the race-change scenario, but instead asked participants to consider changing their statehood status. The second asked participants to forgo watching television for the rest of their lives. Would the race-change scenario elicit compensation requests that were more similar to no-television amounts or to statehood-change amounts? State-change requests were predicted to be low because the change was nominal, with no apparent costs. People were not being asked to move to another state, but merely to change their statehood status. No-TV requests, in contrast, were expected to be quite large. Most people highly value television and consider it an important component of their lives. Asking them to forgo this medium for life was expected to be met with sharp resistance, reflected in high monetary requests. Hence, we attempted to place race-change compensation requests on a continuum, from life changes that were largely superficial, to life changes that would be considered by most to be central and encompassing.

We predicted that typical race-change requests, in contrast to the huge sums reported by Hacker (2003), would be relatively low. McIntosh (1988) has speculated that many aspects of White privilege are largely invisible to Whites themselves. In addition, Whites may harbor perceptions that many social disparities (economic and otherwise) are much smaller than they used to be (Eibach and Ehrlinger, 2006), are continuing to get smaller, and/or are issues of class as opposed to race. Denial of widespread discrimination and economic disparities plays a key role in several theories relating to racial-policy attitudes such as modern racism (McConahay 1986), symbolic racism (Henry and Sears, 2002; Kinder and Sears, 1981), and color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003). The logic of these various models is the same: If discrimination and economic disparities are minimal, programs such as reparations and affirmative action are no longer warranted (Kluegel 1985).

Despite our general predictions of relatively low race-change requests, we did expect substantial variance in the level of requests (corresponding with variance in perceptions of racial disparity). Further, we predicted that this variance would relate positively to support for reparations. These predictions were examined across a series of separate data collections using a wide variety of participants. In Study 1, we examined general patterns of race-change compensation requests using participants who varied in terms of age, gender, geographic location, and student status. In Study 2, we varied the wording of our key race-change scenario to address a potential criticism of the measure used in Study 1. In Study 3, we examined the correlation of the new race-change measure with support for reparations. Study 4, a conceptual replication of Study 3, also included an attempt to alter perceptions of racial disparities in order to ascertain the effects on race-change requests. Study 5 presented forms of the race-change scenario that were designed to address alternative interpretations, as well as to further examine the impact of altering perceptions of racial disparity. Following Study 5, we examined participants' explanations for their race-change compensation requests. Finally, Study 6 attempted to show that participants were willing to claim restitution today for a long-ago injustice to a distant ancestor.

STUDY 1

Initial Demonstration

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 television, and for acknowledging a different statehood (official state of residence). As discussed above, the race-change scenario was designed to sidestep many of the problems with previously reported, and related, scenarios. Participants were merely asked to imagine that they had always passed as White (i.e., were known to society as White—as was actually the case for all of our participants), though they were actually Black. Participants were asked to report desired compensation for publicly changing their racial status to Black. This willingness-to-be-paid variety of contingent valuation scenarios generally elicited higher dollar amounts than the willingness-to-pay variant (e.g., how much would you pay to stay White), and so our scenario allowed for a relatively conservative test of our hypothesis that Whites would undervalue the costs of being Black.

Participants and Design

Sixty-one White Ohio State undergraduates (twenty-seven male and thirty-four female) completed surveys in exchange for partial course credit (mean age = 19.66 years; range: 17 to 37 years). We varied the order of presentation of the question so that for about half of 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 were worded, respectively, as follows:

> *Race change*. 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?
>
> *State change*. 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?
>
> *No TV.* 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 dollar amount.

Results and Discussion

The median race-change request was $1500. This was comparable to the $1000 median amount requested to change one's statehood, but vastly smaller than the $1,000,000 median amount requested to forgo TV. We report medians because extreme outliers (common in open-response contingent valuations) rendered means a poor descriptive 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 and for no TV), we routinely used log-transformed scores that reduced the influence of extreme outliers. Means reported with those analyses were always log transformed. To examine differences between race-change requests and the two comparison scenarios, we conducted separate within-participants analyses using the log-transformed data. The difference between the race-change requests and no-TV requests was statistically impressive [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 7.84$, $SD = 4.24$; $M_{\text{No TV}} = 13.68$, $SD = 5.00$), $F(1,60) = 76.34$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.56$]. In contrast, although race-change requests were significantly larger than state-change requests, the differences were nowhere near as pronounced as the race/TV difference [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 7.84$, $SD = 4.24$; $M_{\text{State Change}} = 6.67$, $SD = 3.53$), $F(1,60) = 8.55$, $p = 0.005$, $\eta^2 = 0.13$]. In general, then, the race-change requests were much more similar to state-change requests than no-TV requests.

The effect of question order (race-change first vs. no-TV first) did not reach conventional levels of significance [($M_{\text{Race First}} = 6.88$, $SD = 4.64$; $M_{\text{TV First}} = 8.71$, $SD = 3.70$), $F(1,59) = 2.92$, $p = 0.093$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$]. Median raw race-change requests corresponding to the log means were as follows: Race-change first = $1000, no-TV first = $7500.[8]

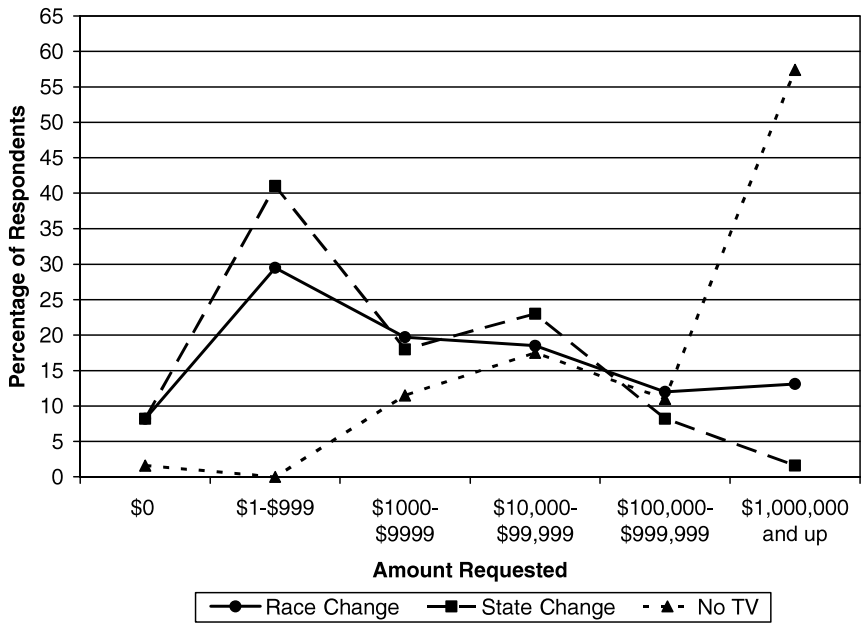

Fig. 1. Distributions of dollars required for *race change*, *state change*, and *no TV* for Study 1: Initial Ohio State sample. $N = 61$

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In sum, the typical White participant in our sample requested very little money 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 eighteen and twenty, 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 valuation items to samples that varied in terms of age, student status, and geographic location.

STUDY 1A

Additional Samples

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, Ohio, area (in public settings, such as waiting for a parade or an athletic event to begin). The Harvard sample included forty-two men and eighty-three women, with a mean age of 20.63 years (range: 18 to 55). The Georgia Southern sample included twenty-nine men and twenty-nine women with a mean age of 20.81 years (range: 18 to 56). The sample of older adults included forty-five men and thirty-two women, with a mean age of 44.63 years (range: 21 to 89).

Participants in the Harvard sample filled out the survey in an online format (from home, a library, a computer lab, or in another setting) 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 valuation items described above. Approximately half of the participants in each sample were asked to provide a brief, one-line explanation for their race-change requests (analyzed in Study 5 below). 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 no-TV item first—the state-change item was always in the middle).

Results and Discussion

The results across the three generalization samples and the initial sample were remarkably consistent (see the first four data rows of Table 1 for a summary of contingent valuation responses). The race-change values ranged from $100 to $1500; state-change values ranged from $100 to $1000; and the no-TV values ranged from $150,000 to $1,000,000.

As before, for all analyses including open-ended responses, logarithmic transformations were conducted to reduce the influence of outliers on statistical analyses. The three samples of participants did not differ with respect to the race-change item, $F(2,257) = 2.29$, $p = 0.103$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$; hence, the data from these samples were collapsed for the subsequent analyses. As in Study 1, there was a large difference between the race-change and no-TV requests [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 6.04$, $SD = 5.25$; $M_{\text{No TV}} = 11.36$, $SD = 5.97$), $F(1,259) = 160.04$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.38$]. Also as in Study 1, the difference between the race-change and state-change requests was

Table 1. Median responses to the contingent valuation items across samples varying in region, age, and student status

Participants	Study	N	Mean Age	Race Change	State Change	No TV
College Students (midwestern)	1	61	19.66	$1500	$1000	$1,000,000
Older Adults (midwestern)	1A	77	44.63	$1000	$500	$1,000,000
College Students (southeastern)	1A	58	20.81	$1000	$1000	$1,000,000
College Students (northeastern)	1A	125	20.63	$100	$100	$150,000
College Students (midwestern)	2	78	20.00	$100	$100	$400,000
College Students (midwestern)	3	82	20.53	$75	$100	$500,000
College Students (midwestern)	4	73	18.41	$10,000	$1000	$100,000
College Students[a] (mixed)	5	49	21.70	$1000	$200	$100,000
College Students (midwestern)	Endnote 9[b]	222	18.65	$100	—	—
College Students (midwestern)	Endnote 10	133	18.50	$5000	$1000	$1,000,000

Note: See text for wording of contingent valuation items.
[a]The information in this row pertains only to the median race-change requests for the status-change scenario.
[b]The state-change and no-TV scenarios were not administered (see text).

significant, but unimpressive [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 6.04$, $SD = 5.28$; $M_{\text{State Change}} = 5.25$, $SD = 4.34$), $F(1,259) = 7.45$, $p = 0.007$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$].

In addition, the question-order difference in the Harvard sample was not significant [($M_{\text{Race First}} = 5.69$, $SD = 4.44$; $M_{\text{TV First}} = 5.01$, $SD = 4.36$), $F(1,123) = 0.74$, $p = 0.391$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$]. Median raw race-change requests were as follows: Race-change first = $150, no-TV first = $100.

Within the sample of older adults, it was possible to examine the relationship between age and race-change requests. If race-change requests tapped perceptions of Black cost, older Whites might have been expected to list higher values, given that they might have witnessed the struggles of Blacks over the decades; in addition, older participants might be more sensitive than undergraduates to the distinction between income and wealth and therefore more likely to reflect wealth disparities (positive correlation expected). On the other hand, older participants might list lower values if they felt that fortunes had improved for Blacks since, say, the 1950s (negative correlation expected). Finally, if race-change requests are related directly to prejudice, older adults, who are more prone to expressing prejudice (von Hippel et al., 2000), may be more inclined to list high values (e.g., "I would never be Black"). In fact, a negative correlation obtained between race-change requests and age [$r(77) = -0.31$, $p < 0.01$], indicating that older respondents actually requested smaller amounts to change their racial status. This finding suggested, 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 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 seventy-eight White Ohio State University undergraduates (forty-six male and thirty-two female) who participated in exchange for partial course credit (mean age = 20.00; range: 16 to 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 for half of the participants 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?" Approximately half of the participants were also asked to briefly explain their race-change requests (as in Study 1A).

Results and Discussion

Results indicated no significant difference between the two forms [($M_{\text{Original Version}}$ = 6.01, SD = 4.07; $M_{\text{In Any Encounters}}$ = 5.67, SD = 4.49), $F(1,76) = 0.12$, $p = 0.729$, η^2 = 0.00]. The corresponding medians were $100 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 Studies 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 $0 in Study 2, as compared to 10.3% in Study 1). However, in general, participants in Study 2 simply requested lower sums across the board.[9] Within-participants analyses indicated a large difference between the race-change and no-TV requests [($M_{\text{Race Change}}$ = 5.84, SD = 4.26; $M_{\text{No TV}}$ = 12.73, SD = 7.06), $F(1,77) = 54.99$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.42$], and no significant difference between the race-change and state-change requests [($M_{\text{Race Change}}$ = 5.84, SD = 4.26; $M_{\text{State Change}}$ = 5.70, SD = 3.68), $F(1,77) = 0.10$, $p = 0.757$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$].

In summary, 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 valuation 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

Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated that median race-change requests were relatively small. However, inspection of the race-change request frequencies in Figure 1 reveals that a fair percentage of participants requested relatively larger 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. As discussed above, those who perceive more extreme present-day inequalities (ostensibly due to the lingering effects of slavery) should be more open to remedial programs such as reparations. In addition, we explored whether degree of

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explicit prejudice was correlated with race-change requests. Low race-change requests might indicate relatively little prejudice (e.g., "I have no problem with being a Black person"), and high requests may indicate higher prejudice (e.g., "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 strong 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 such a bill were to pass. If the race-change measure tapped explicit prejudice, a negative correlation between the race-change requests and support for reparations would be expected (higher race-change requests equaling more prejudice, leading to lower support for reparations). We therefore 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 prejudice.

Participants and Design

Eighty-two White Ohio State undergraduates (thirty-nine male and forty-three female) completed surveys for partial course credit. Surveys were administered during the first week of an introductory psychology course. The mean age was 20.53 years (range: 17 to 55).

Instrument

Participants first completed the three contingent valuation items (race change, state change, and no TV)—all participants provided brief explanations for their race-change requests. Participants then responded to two items related to support for reparations: "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 completed a "Black feeling-thermometer rating" [feelings toward African Americans, on a hundred-point scale, where higher scores indicated more positive affect or "warmth"; see Campbell (1971)]. Finally, all participants completed the seven-item Modern Racism Scale (MRS) as a second measure of explicit prejudice (McConahay 1986). Examples of MRS items include: "Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights," and "Blacks should not push themselves where they're not wanted." The seven items from the MRS were appropriately scored and averaged into a reliable composite ($\alpha = 0.79$). It should be noted that the MRS has been criticized on the grounds that many of the items are consistent with principled conservatism, and need not be indicative of negative prejudice (Sniderman and Tetlock, 1986). Furthermore, it has also been suggested that the MRS is rapidly becoming outdated and that participants will often censor their true responses toward the statements (Cunningham et al., 2001). These caveats should be taken into consideration when interpreting results related to the MRS, below.

Results and Discussion

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

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very similar to the previous samples. As in the previous studies, logarithmic transformations were used to examine the differences between the race-change scenario requests and the other two scenarios. As before, race-change requests diverged widely from no-TV requests [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 4.58$, $SD = 4.86$; $M_{\text{No TV}} = 10.54$, $SD = 5.97$), $F(1,81) = 63.71$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.44$]. State-change requests, in contrast, did not differ significantly from race-change requests [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 4.58$, $SD = 4.86$; $M_{\text{State Change}} = 4.70$, $SD = 3.90$), $F(1,81) = 0.07$, $p = 0.786$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$].

In response to the support-for-reparations item, 14.6% said *yes*, and 85% said *no*, numbers similar to the poll reported above (Dawson and Popoff, 2004; Viles 2002). The median suggested-reparations payment was $5.50; of course, most of the people who said they would not support reparations listed $0 in response to this item.

A logarithmic transformation was performed on the open-ended reparations payment item for the purposes of correlational analyses. Relevant correlations are reported in Table 2 (column 1). Most importantly, positive correlations were found between requested race-change dollars and both support for reparations ($r(82) = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$) and suggested reparations payments ($r(82) = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$). That is, the greater that Black cost was perceived to be, the higher the amounts of recommended reparations were. Finally, the race-change measure was not correlated with the Black feeling-thermometer rating ($r(82) = -0.13$, $p = 0.24$) or the MRS ($r(82) = 0.10$, $p = 0.39$). 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 indicate 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 costs among Whites are widespread; hence, the weak support for reparations found in national polls (Dawson and Popoff,

Table 2. Correlations of various measures with race-change requests across Studies 3–5

			Study 5			
	Study 3	Study 4	Status/No Costs	Birth/No Costs	Birth/ Costs	Atria/ Costs
N	82	73	49	46	49	44
Reparations Support[a]	.22*	.27*	.13	−.25	−.01	−.00
Suggested Payment	.45**	.44*				
Black Warmth	−.13	−.15	−.34*	−.11	−.18	−.24
Modern Racism Score	.10	.17	.32*	.33*	−.01	−.14
Measure of Black Cost[b]		.03	−.12	−.03	.04	.04
White Privilege Scale			−.14	.01	.06	−.16
CSES: Private			−.02	.27	.15	.02
CSES: Public			−.10	.07	.30*	.12
CSES: Identity Importance			.09	.22	−.07	−.19

Notes: For all measures, except Black cost, higher scores entail "more" of the given construct.
CSES = Collective Self-Esteem Scale.
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.005$
[a]See text for all item descriptions.
[b]Note that in Study 4, higher numbers on the *Black-cost* item correspond to perceptions of lower Black costs, whereas in Study 5, higher *Black-cost* ratings correspond to perceptions of higher Black costs.

2004; Viles 2002) may indicate a widespread ignorance of Black costs within the broader society.

STUDY 4

In Study 3, higher race-change requests were associated with increased support for reparations and higher suggested reparations payments. However, the majority of race-change requests were very low, indicating that most participants were unmindful or unaware of Black costs, or corresponding *White privilege*. If that is the case, one way to increase support for reparations may be to increase awareness of White privilege (and correlative non-White costs). We sought to manipulate such awareness in Study 4, hypothesizing that awareness of White privilege would increase support for reparations. The same race-related measures from Study 3 were included in Study 4 to ensure that the correlations in Study 3 were stable, and to examine the effects of awareness of White privilege on those items as well.

We have argued that thought-provoking contingent valuation scenarios may have advantages not shared by simple Likert-type items. In this study, as a foil to our contingent valuation methodology, we simply asked people to report on a Likert rating scale whether they thought it was easier to be Black or White.

Participants and Design

Participants were seventy-three White Ohio State undergraduates (seventeen male and fifty-six female), who for partial course credit completed questionnaires in classrooms reserved for the experiment. The mean age was 18.41 years (range: 18 to 27). Approximately half of the participants read a list of White privileges/Black costs, and about half did not.

Instrument

Participants in the White-privilege condition read sixteen 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." In addition, a seventeenth item on the list described the wealth gap between Blacks and Whites (also included in Appendix A). Participants in the control condition went straight to 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 3, 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). Finally, participants completed the Black feeling-thermometer rating and the MRS ($\alpha = 0.77$).

Results and Discussion

The overall median values were as follows: race change = \$10,000; state change = \$1000; no TV = \$100,000. Although the race-change value was higher than those from the previous studies, the general pattern of medians across the three items was

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consistent with previous samples. Within-participants analyses indicated a significant difference between the race-change and no-TV requests [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 8.63$, $SD = 4.57$; $M_{\text{No TV}} = 11.25$, $SD = 4.83$), $F(1,72) = 15.26$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.18$], and a significant, yet smaller, difference between the race-change and state-change requests [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 8.63$, $SD = 4.57$; $M_{\text{State Change}} = 7.28$, $SD = 3.28$), $F(1,72) = 7.10$, $p = 0.010$, $\eta^2 = 0.09$].

The mean score on the measure of Black cost was 2.85 ($SD = 1.14$), 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 participants answered *yes*, whereas 74% of participants 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 cost, such that participants receiving the White-privileges manipulation reported marginally less Black cost [($M_{\text{White Privileges}} = 2.59$, $SD = 1.06$; $M_{\text{No White Privileges}} = 3.11$, $SD = 1.17$), $F(1,71) = 3.91$, $p = 0.052$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$].

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 of the privilege induction on race-change requests [($M_{\text{White Privileges}} = 8.37$, $SD = 4.81$; $M_{\text{No White Privileges}} = 8.91$, $SD = 4.37$), $F(1,71) = 0.25$, $p = 0.619$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$]. Median-dollar requests associated with these conditions were as follows: White privileges = $10,000; no White privileges = $15,500. The privilege induction also did not influence suggested reparations payments [($M_{\text{White Privileges}} = 5.34$, $SD = 3.58$; $M_{\text{No White Privileges}} = 5.15$, $SD = 4.21$), $F(1,71) = 0.04$, $p = 0.834$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$]. Corresponding median dollar values were as follows: White privileges = $500, No White privileges = $400. With respect to stated support for reparations, slightly more participants reported support for reparations when given the White-privileges induction (32.4% indicated support; 67.6% did not) as compared to those not given the White-privileges induction (19.5% indicated support; 80.5% did not), but this difference was not significant (as indicated by a chi-square test, $\chi^2(1, 73) = 0.53$, $p = 0.465$). Hence, our one-shot instantiation of White-privilege awareness did not significantly affect measures of reparations support.

We also examined the patterns of correlations among the measured variables (see correlations in Table 2, column 2). These patterns were very similar to those observed in Study 3. The race-change measure was positively correlated with both support for reparations [$r(73) = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$] and suggested reparations payments [$r(73) = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$]. Once again, the race-change measure was not significantly correlated with the Black feeling-thermometer rating [$r(73) = -0.15$, $p = 0.22$] or the MRS [$r(73) = 0.17$, $p = 0.15$].

The race-change measure was also not correlated with the simple measure of Black costs, where people were simply asked to report if it was easier to be Black or White [$r(73) = -0.03$, $p = 0.79$]. Furthermore, the simple measure of Black cost (higher numbers indicated perceptions of Black cost), although sensitive to the White-privileges manipulation, was not significantly correlated with either reparations support [$r(73) = -0.17$, $p = 0.15$] or the suggested reparations payment [$r(73) = -0.19$, $p = 0.12$].

It is 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.[10]

Summarizing across Studies 1 through 4, Whites appear to be relatively unaware of ongoing racial disparities (as evidenced by the low median race-change requests). However, several conceptual issues with the race-change measure potentially confound our interpretations of the generally low requests found in the first four studies. Most notably, the race-change scenario does not require one to change in any physical way (e.g., skin color remains unchanged). Perhaps if such a physical change were required [as in the Hacker (2003) scenario], the costs of being Black might become salient to a greater number of participants. Participants may reason that if they had been passing as White, then they might continue to do so (the "in any encounters" language in Study 2 may not have been strong enough to counter this notion). In addition, participants may have felt that many of the costs associated with being Black are experienced at a relatively young age (e.g., impoverished neighborhoods, school systems, etc.). Hence, they may have felt that many of these costs would have been effectively skipped by age eighteen or so. Study 5 was designed to address these types of issues, by creating alternative versions of the race-change scenario.

STUDY 5

In Study 5, participants received either the original status-change scenario, or one of three alternative scenarios. We desired to interpret the low median race-change requests found across the first four studies as evidence of a general ignorance of racial disparities, but alternative explanations for these low requests required consideration. As discussed in the previous section, there are a number of Black costs that the original status-change scenario potentially allows participants to avoid (growing up as a Black person, having unambiguously dark skin and "Black" features). However, it may be unfeasible to instruct participants to re-imagine their own childhood through a different lens. And, as with the Hacker scenario, fantastic scenarios involving a change of appearance may encourage artificially high requests. To avoid these problems, we chose a minimalist approach to counterfactual thinking. Participants were asked to imagine that they were about to be born as a random White person in America, but that they were being offered a cash gift to switch to being born as a random Black person (similar to John Rawls's 1971 "veil of ignorance" thought experiments). Presumably, race-change requests would be heavily influenced by perceptions of the *total costs* of the average Black person across the lifespan (versus perceptions of the *total benefits* of the average White person). Furthermore, participants were not asked to imagine a radical skin-change procedure—skin color would be initially assigned as a part of the supposed birthing process.

To further examine the effects of educating participants about Black costs, in one condition, this birth-change scenario was followed with a list of disparities suffered by African Americans. The third new condition was nearly identical to the new birth-change condition, except that instead of referring to *America*, the scenario referred to a fictional land called *Atria*. In addition, instead of referring to *Black* and *White*, the scenario referred only to a *majority* and a *minority*. This scenario was also followed by the list of costs (to the fictional minority group). The idea was to obtain a baseline for the valuation of the costs, and then to see if this valuation differed from when the groups in question were Blacks and Whites in contemporary America. The original status-change scenario, in which participants were asked to consider a switch

in public racial status at the present time in their lives, was the fourth condition. As in prior studies, the status-change scenario did not include information relevant to racial disparities.

In addition to the new scenarios, several additional measures were included in Study 5. To further explore the relationship of the race-change measure to the other measures of perceptions of racial disparity, Swim and Miller's (1999) five-item White Privilege Scale (WPS) was administered, as well as a variant of the single-item measure of Black cost from Study 4. We also included items from the Crocker et al. (1994) racialized Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES). One important alternative explanation of the various contingent valuation scenarios is that race-change requests reflect the extent to which an individual has become personally invested in his or her own (White) racial identity—regardless of racial disparity perceptions [similar to the endowment effect; see Thaler (1980)]. Inclusion of a measure of collective self-esteem allowed for a simple check on this possibility.

Participants and Design

The 188 White participants included 98 males and 89 females (one participant failed to report his or her gender). The average age of the participants was 22.00 years (range: 17 to 77)—however, twelve participants declined to report their age. Most of the participants (n = 170) reported being students, with eighteen reporting a different occupation. The three participant populations in the study were represented as follows: Georgia Southern, n = 73; Boston area, n = 45; Ohio State, n = 70. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of four versions of the race-change scenarios: Atria/costs, birth/costs, birth/no costs, status/no costs (original scenario).

Procedure

The Ohio State trials were run in classrooms in small groups (ranging from one to five people). These participants were rewarded with partial course credit in their introductory psychology classes. Participants at Georgia Southern were students in larger groups, also in classroom settings. Boston-area participants were approached at a train station and offered candy in exchange for their participation.

The contingent valuation race-change scenarios were as described above (all participants briefly explained their requests). The full wording of the three alternative scenarios (Atria/costs, birth/costs, birth/no costs) can be found in Appendix B. Responses to these items were logarithmically transformed prior to analysis. Participants also received the state-change and no-TV scenarios. The state-change scenario was presented as in previous studies; however, the no-TV item was altered, by removing the references to monitoring (a potential alternative explanation for the high requests in previous studies). In addition to the scenarios, participants indicated the extent of their agreement with two statements relating to reparations: "Cash payments by the government to the descendants of slaves," and "Cash payments by the companies who profited from slavery to the descendants of slaves." Both items were rated on nine-point scales (1 = "Strongly opposed to," 9 = "Strongly in favor of"). These two items were highly correlated (r = .81), and so they were averaged into a composite.

Participants were then asked: "How difficult is it to be the average Black person in America relative to the average White person?" This item was accompanied by a nine-point response scale (1 = "Much more difficult to be White," 5 = "Equal," 9 =

"Much more difficult to be Black"). Participants also completed Swim and Miller's (1999) five-item WPS (McIntosh 1988). Examples of these items include: "White people have certain disadvantages that minorities do not have in society," and "My skin color is an asset to me in everyday life"—all answered on nine-point Likert scales (1 = "Strongly Disagree"; 9 = "Strongly Agree"). These five items were appropriately scored and then averaged into a reliable composite (α = .79). As in Study 4, participants completed both a Black feeling-thermometer rating, and the MRS (α = .81).

To explore participants' feelings and perceptions regarding their "Whiteness" we administered the private, public, and identity importance subscales of the Crocker et al. (1994) racialized Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992). These three subscales were also averaged into separate composites: public (α = 0.67), private (α = 0.72), identity (α = 0.72).

Results and Discussion

Main Analyses

Contingent Valuation Scenarios. There were no significant effects or interactions involving participant location, so we collapsed across this variable for the remainder of the analyses. The median requests in the status/no-costs condition ($1000) and the birth/no-costs condition ($5500) were relatively similar. Making participants aware of the costs of being Black (the birth/costs scenario) led to markedly higher median request ($500,000). However, removing the issue of race from the equation (Atria/costs scenario) led to a still higher median request ($1,000,000). As in previous samples, the median no-TV requests were quite large ($1,000,000), despite the deletion of the text relating to being monitored for life, whereas the median state-change requests were quite small ($1000).

Log-transformed requests were entered into an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) with *scenario type* as the independent variable. A significant main effect was obtained [($M_{\text{Atria/Costs}}$ = 12.42, $M_{\text{Birth/Costs}}$ = 10.85, $M_{\text{Birth/No Costs}}$ = 7.75, $M_{\text{Status/No Costs}}$ = 7.15), $F(3,184) = 6.47$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.10$]. LSD (Least Significant Difference) posthoc tests were conducted to probe for significant differences between conditions. The Atria/costs condition was found to be significantly different from both the birth/no-costs condition ($p = 0.001$) and the status/no-costs condition ($p < 0.001$), but was not appreciably different from the birth/costs condition ($p = 0.262$). The birth/costs condition was significantly different from the birth/no-costs condition ($p = 0.026$) and the status/no-costs condition ($p = 0.007$). Finally, and of particular importance, the difference in requests between the status and birth (no-costs) race-change conditions was not significant ($p = 0.666$).

Responses in each of the four conditions were then compared to the two baseline measures: state change and no TV (using the log-transformed means—see Table 3). The within-participants comparisons with the state-change measure were as follows: Atria/costs, $F(1,43) = 30.76$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.42$; birth/costs, $F(1,48) = 8.86$, $p = 0.005$, $\eta^2 = 0.16$; birth/no costs, $F(1,45) = 3.38$, $p = 0.073$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$; status/no costs, $F(1,48) = 4.47$, $p = 0.040$, $\eta^2 = 0.09$. The within-participants comparisons with the no-TV measure were as follows: Atria/costs, $F(1,43) = 0.16$, $p = 0.693$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$; birth/costs, $F(1,48) = 1.45$, $p = 0.234$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$; birth/no costs, $F(1,45) = 19.68$, $p < 0.000$, $\eta^2 = 0.30$; status/no costs, $F(1,48) = 9.26$, $p = 0.004$, $\eta^2 = 0.16$. Generally, responses in the status/no-costs and birth/no-costs conditions were sim-

Table 3. Median and log-transformed responses to the various scenarios presented in Study 5

Participants	N	Median Request	Log-Transformed Mean Request
Status Change/No Costs	49	$1000	7.16 (6.15)
Birth Change/No Costs	46	$5500	7.75 (6.99)
Birth Change/Costs	49	$500,000	10.85 (7.24)
Atria/Costs	44	$1,000,000	12.42 (6.39)
State Change	188	$1000	6.31 (5.29)
No TV	188	$1,000,000	11.99 (7.01)

Note: Participants in Study 5 completed only one of the first four contingent valuation scenarios, but all participants completed both the state-change and no-TV scenarios. See text and Appendix B for wording of contingent valuation items. Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

ilar to the state-change scenario, whereas responses to birth/costs and the Atria/costs scenarios were more similar to the no-TV scenario.

In summary, despite the encompassing scope of the birth-change scenarios (which might have been expected to increase the race-change compensation requests), when no mention of Black costs was made, the status-change and birth-change conditions yielded similarly low requests ($1000 vs. $5500, respectively). When costs were described, the median request jumped to $500,000. Perhaps most strikingly, when only considering the costs of being a minority, without referring to race in America (Atria/Costs condition), compensation requests soared. Hence, there seem to be some factor or factors that can mitigate Whites' perceptions of the seriousness of certain racial disparities when thinking in terms of Black versus White (discussed below).

Similar to the benefits induction (Appendix A) in Study 4, scenario type did not significantly influence support for reparations [($M_{\text{Atria/Costs}} = 3.15$, $SD = 2.12$; $M_{\text{Birth/Costs}} = 3.03$, $SD = 2.42$; $M_{\text{Birth/No Costs}} = 2.61$, $SD = 2.17$; $M_{\text{Status/No Costs}} = 3.81$, $SD = 2.58$), $F(3,184) = 2.15$, $p = 0.096$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$].

Correlational Analyses

Although we report (Table 2, columns 3–6) the correlation between race-change requests and other measured variables (e.g., reparations support) within each of the four Study 5 scenarios, our purpose was to clarify the original status-change measure. Comparison with the birth/no-costs results (column 4) was key to the clarification and the focus of our present use of Table 2 results for Study 5.

As in previous studies, we predicted that, to the extent that any of the scenarios tapped into perceptions of racial disparity (Black cost/White privilege), corresponding requests should be positively associated with support for reparations. However, within none of the four scenario-type conditions were race-change requests significantly correlated with support for reparations. The correlation within the status/no-costs condition was in the expected direction (positive), but smaller than in Studies 3 and 4. It is possible that this attenuation was the result of the specificity of the reparations questions used in Study 5. In Studies 3 and 4, participants were asked whether they supported reparations *in general*. Consistent with work on the *P-I Gap* (Schuman et al., 1985), the more specific reparations items (specifying either the government or corporations as payees) may have aroused more resistance.

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Next, we examined the patterns of correlations within the status/no-costs condition and the comparison birth/no-costs condition. Beginning with the status/no-costs scenario, in contrast to Studies 3 and 4, race-change requests were significantly correlated with both MRS [$r(49) = 0.32$, $p = 0.024$], and the Black feeling-thermometer scale [$r(49) = -0.34$, $p = 0.015$]. Race-change requests were not significantly correlated with either the single-item measure of Black costs [$r(49) = -0.12$, $p = 0.406$] or Swim and Miller's (1999) WPS [$r(49) = -0.14$, $p = 0.349$]. Finally, race-change requests in the status/no-costs condition did not relate significantly to private CSE [$r(49) = -0.02$, $p = 0.890$], public CSE [$r(49) = -0.10$, $p = 0.499$], or CSE identity importance [$r(49) = 0.09$, $p = 0.539$].

The pattern of correlations with race-change requests for the birth/no-costs condition (Table 2, column 5) was similar to status/no costs (column 4), except that there was a marginal association with private CSE [$r(46) = 0.27$, $p = 0.065$]; the association with Black warmth was nonsignificant; and the relationship with reparations support tended to be negative.

Finally, we examined the relationships between support for reparations and the two measures of perceptions of White privilege/Black costs within both the status/no-costs and birth/no-costs conditions. The results for the status/no-costs condition were as follows: WPS [$r(49) = 0.36$, $p = 0.012$]; single-item measure of Black costs [$r(49) = 0.30$, $p = 0.036$]. In contrast, these two correlations were nonsignificant in the birth/no-costs condition: WPS [$r(46) = 0.07$, $p = 0.670$]; single-item measure of Black costs [$r(49) = 0.17$, $p = 0.274$]. This pattern of results may help to explain the negative, though nonsignificant, correlation between race-change requests and reparations support in the birth/no-costs condition (Table 2, row 1), in that participants in the birth/no-costs condition appeared not to be focused on racial disparities when rating their support for reparations. We further examine possible reasons for these patterns of within-condition correlations below, where participants' explanations of race-change requests are analyzed.

The patterns of correlations between race-change requests and other variables were relatively similar, despite the differences noted between the status/no-costs scenario and the birth/no-costs scenario. One of these was that, in the birth/no-costs scenario, race-change requests were marginally correlated with private CSE—a variable not related to perceptions of ongoing Black suffering. This finding suggests that Black suffering may have been discounted under the birth/no-costs scenario, and thus helps to explain the aforementioned negative association between compensation requests and reparations support in the birth/no-costs condition. The White CSE results are consistent with an interpretation that most birth/no-costs participants were not relying on perception of Black costs.

Study 5 helped to clarify our original status-change measure of perceptions of racial disparity. Overcoming several of the possible critiques of the status-change scenario (as accomplished by the birth/no-costs scenario) did not lead to substantial increases in race-change requests. Although we interpret the correlation of status-change requests with support for reparations as due to the shared link with perceptions of racial disparity, race-change requests were not correlated with simpler measures of Black cost and White privilege. Fortunately, the majority of participants in Studies 1 through 5 provided brief explanations for their race-change requests. Their explanations helped to shed light on the correlations of race-change requests with other measures of disparity.

PARTICIPANTS' EXPLANATIONS FOR THEIR RACE-CHANGE REQUESTS

Participants' race-change requests may have reflected a variety of motivations beyond perceptions of racial disparity. It is possible that low race-change requests were indicative of perceptions that the scenario allows the bulk of Black costs to be avoided (the change is made after the childhood experience; skin color does not change). Low requests may have also indicated opposition to being paid for one's racial status (due to pride-based or political concerns). Given that the race-change measure entailed a willingness to be paid, it is possible that race-change requests (particularly high requests) were indicative of greed. By coding participants' explanations for their race-change requests, we were able to address these and other alternative interpretations of the median race-change requests (Table 1) reported in Studies 1 through 5 and endnotes 9 and 10.

In total, 632 participants across the previously reported studies provided brief written explanations for their race-change (status-change only) requests immediately after making them.[11] Interpretable race-change explanations were coded into two categories. The first were indicative of perceptions of costs and/or benefits of being Black versus White (*valuation relevant*). The second were not indicative of costs and/or benefits of being Black versus White (*valuation irrelevant*). Responses in the valuation-relevant category included direct statements about the relative costs of being Black versus White, statements that indicated a perception of racial parity, and statements that indirectly indicated a minimization of the importance of disparities. Indirect indicators of valuation were of two kinds. The first included explanations detailing nuisance factors based on the specifics of the race-change scenario (e.g., the annoyance cost of filling out paperwork), which indicated that the participant in question was not overly concerned about racial disparities. Responses based on greed were also taken as indirect indicators of low perceived racial disparities (e.g., explaining the request as a reaction to "free money"; also entailing negligible perceived costs of the race change).

In the valuation-irrelevant category, the following subcategories were exhaustive: (1) cited Black costs that would be avoided by the scenario; (2) cited issues involving pride in one's racial status; (3) cited perceptions of past injustices that require compensation; and (4) cited opposition to receiving government funding related to racial status. All responses that could not be categorized into one of the two basic categories were coded as *nondiagnostic*. Within this nondiagnostic category, the following explanations were coded either as indicative of difficulties with the scenario (misunderstandings, perceived ambiguities) or as entirely nondiagnostic (left blank, completely unclear or illegible).

Responses were coded by the first author and a research assistant who was blind to expectations about category frequencies. These two coders agreed on the placement into one of the three main categories 81.8% of the time (*Kappa* = 0.67, $p < 0.001$). When considering the eleven subcategories separately, agreement was similarly high (*Kappa* = 0.68, $p < 0.001$). These initial levels of agreement were deemed acceptable [see Landis and Koch (1977) for a discussion of the *Kappa* statistic], and disagreements were settled via discussion.

Results and Discussion

Generally, the coding data supported our contentions that the race-change measure is sensitive to perceptions of racial disparity (though sometimes indirectly), and that perceptions of Black costs are responsible for much of the variation in participant

requests. Indeed, when considered apart from the actual race-change requests, the explanations themselves provide evidence consistent with our general hypothesis that Whites are largely unaware of racial disparities.

Table 4 contains descriptive information relating to the three main coding categories, as well as the eleven subcategories for all data collections (n = 632) that included the status-change scenario and also elicited participants' explanations for their race-change compensation requests (including the status/no-costs condition in Study 5). Overall, 361 (57.1%) of the responses were coded as valuation relevant, 178 (28.2%) as valuation irrelevant, and 93 (14.7%) as nondiagnostic of the given race-change request. Hence, when focusing only on the first two categories where meaningful responses were given, 67.0% of the responses were valuation relevant.

The relative percentages of the five subcategories within the 361 valuation-relevant responses were as follows: 79 (21.9%) indicated Black costs, 12 (3.3%) indicated White costs, 140 (38.8%) indicated racial parity, 53 (14.7%) explained their requests based on trivial technicalities, and 77 (21.3%) appeared to be motivated only by greed. Hence, approximately 78.1% of the valuation-relevant explanations seemed to indicate perceptions of either racial parity, or at least only trivial racial disparity. A small percentage of participants (n = 12; 1.9%), in fact appeared to perceive net *benefits* of being Black.

For each of the three main categories and the eleven subcategories, median race-change requests were calculated as in the previous studies (Table 4, columns 3 and 4). The median request for the valuation-relevant group was $1000, a number strikingly similar to the overall values reported in the previous studies. The corresponding median requests in the valuation-irrelevant and nondiagnostic category were $0 and $1000, respectively.

The median requests across the five valuation-relevant subcategories were as follows: perceived Black costs = $300,000; perceived White costs = $75; perceived racial parity = $37.50; scenario-specific Black costs = $1000; greed = $50,000. For the group whose explanations cited Black costs, race-change requests were corre-

Table 4. Frequency of various race-change explanations, and corresponding race-change requests

Explanation for Request[a]	N	Relative Percent	Race-change Medians	Log-Transformed Mean Request (*SD*s)
Valuation Relevant	361	—	$1000	7.51 (5.23)
Perceived Black Costs	79	12.5	$300,000	11.82 (3.52)
Perceived White Costs	12	1.9	$75	4.53 (4.48)
Perceived Racial Parity	140	22.2	$37.50	3.44 (3.55)
Greed	77	12.2	$50,000	10.67 (4.01)
Scenario Specific Black Costs	53	8.4	$1000	7.95 (4.44)
Valuation Irrelevant	178	—	$0	2.73 (4.21)
Past Suffering of Blacks	5	0.8	$25,000	8.98 (2.57)
Black Costs Avoided by Scenario	12	1.9	$62.50	4.24 (4.26)
Pride in One's Race	132	20.9	$0	2.64 (4.22)
Opposed to Race Payments	29	4.6	$0	1.43 (3.32)
Nondiagnostic	93	—	$1000	5.99 (5.41)
Difficulties with Scenario	18	2.8	$550	4.70 (4.65)
Explanation Unclear or Missing	75	11.9	$1000	6.31 (5.55)

Note: Summarizes the race-change request explanations of 632 participants across Studies 1A–5, and other studies reported in endnotes 9 and 10.
[a]See text for descriptions of the various race-change request explanations.

spondingly high. In contrast, for those seemingly unaware of Black costs (the four remaining groups), the median request was only $500.

In summary, participants, by and large, were not sensitive to the massive racial disparities that still exist today. For the rather small group of participants who were race sensitive (n = 79 out of 632), race-change requests were relatively high. For the remainder of the participants (excepting the "greed" group), race-change requests tended to be minimal.

The analysis of the race-change explanations may also help to shed light on the lack of correspondence between race-change requests and other measures of racial disparity in Studies 3, 4, and 5. When confronted with a simple question attempting to gauge racial disparity, participants most likely responded in a relatively reflexive fashion, indicating mild discrepancies. The race-change scenario, however, required participants to imagine a counterfactual scene, and gave them great latitude in choosing a set of factors with which to make their response. While we had hoped that more participants' explanations would involve direct assessments of racial disparities, a full one-third of participants gave nondiagnostic responses (notably, issues involving pride).

The race-change scenario was intended to mirror the issue of reparations (participants imagined being paid based on minority status). Although the issue of reparations involves past injustice, the race-change requests indicate that considerations of the past may play a relatively minor role in determining support for reparations. There are many different factors (direct perceptions of racial disparity being only one) that would seem to relate to the complicated issue of reparations. Our contingent valuation procedure appeared to elicit rumination regarding this myriad of factors, and this may simultaneously explain the positive correlation with reparations and the null correlations with simpler measures of racial disparity.

Finally, Table 5 examines the race-change explanations within the four conditions of Study 5. Although the within-cell sample sizes are quite small (ranging from

Table 5. Frequencies (relative percentages) of various race-change explanations for the four conditions in Study 5

Explanation for Request[a]	Status/No Costs	Birth/No Costs	Birth/Costs	Atria/Costs[b]
Total N	49	46	49	44
Valuation Relevant	23 (46.9)	37 (80.4)	42 (85.7)	37 (84.1)
Perceived Black Costs	4 (8.2)	15 (32.6)	27 (55.1)	28 (63.6)
Perceived White Costs	1 (2.0)	3 (6.5)	2 (4.1)	0 (0)
Perceived Racial Parity	9 (18.4)	11 (23.9)	7 (14.3)	2 (4.5)
Greed	8 (16.3)	7 (15.2)	6 (12.2)	7 (15.9)
Scenario Specific Black Costs	1 (2.0)	1 (2.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Valuation Irrelevant	20 (40.8)	1 (2.2)	2 (4.0)	1 (2.3)
Past Suffering of Blacks	2 (4.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Black Costs Avoided by Scenario	4 (8.2)	0 (0)	1 (2.0)	0 (0)
Pride in One's Race	9 (18.4)	1 (2.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Opposed to Race Payments	5 (10.2)	0 (0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.3)
Nondiagnostic	6 (12.2)	8 (17.4)	5 (10.2)	6 (13.6)
Difficulties with Scenario	1 (2.0)	1 (2.2)	0 (0)	1 (2.3)
Explanation Unclear or Missing	5 (10.2)	7 (15.2)	5 (10.2)	5 (11.3)

[a]See text for descriptions of the various race-change request explanations.
[b]In the case of the Atria/costs condition, comments refer not to *Black* and *White*, but to *minority* and *majority* groups, respectively.

forty-four to forty-nine), given eleven coding subcategories, several interesting findings emerged. Most strikingly, the three new conditions (birth/no costs, birth/costs, and Atria/costs) all dramatically increased the percentage of valuation-relevant explanations, and decreased the percentage of valuation-irrelevant responses. Also instructive is the fact that the percentage of participants acknowledging Black costs increases from column 1 to column 4. This finding may appear inconsistent with the null to negative correlations between race-change requests and reparations support reported in columns 4 through 6 in Table 2, but it is consistent with the main-effect findings of Study 4, in that cajoling participants into recognizing and acknowledging privileges and costs did not have a corresponding effect on support for reparations. There appears to be a difference between people who acknowledge racial disparities on their own (people who can be detected using the original status-change scenario), and those who are *informed* of racial disparities—a distinction we discuss below under *Cognitive Frames and Racial-Policy Attitudes*.

STUDY 6

Up to this point, we have focused on the relationship between White perceptions of Black costs and support for reparations. However, another pervasive rationale for opposing reparations is that the crime of slavery occurred too long ago. This sentiment has been echoed by antireparations advocates such as conservative pundit David Horowitz (2001) and Congressman Henry Hyde (Dawson and Popoff, 2004, p. 49). Although a full empirical investigation of this form of opposition is outside the purview of this paper, we wanted to provide an example of how the counterfactual scenario methodology that we employed in the preceding studies could be adapted to address this issue as well.

Those who oppose reparations on the grounds that slavery (the crime) occurred in the distant past reason that the original victims (the slaves themselves) cannot receive compensation, and the perpetrators (slave owners) died long ago. Hence, they feel that reparations would unfairly sanction present-day Whites for a crime that they did not commit, and unfairly reward present-day Blacks for hardships that they themselves did not suffer. The logic of this line of reasoning appears, on the surface, relatively straightforward, and so we wondered if people would oppose the payment of reparations for *any* long-ago sufferings, or whether their opposition might be more specific to slavery-related reparations. To examine this issue, we devised a simple scenario wherein participants were asked to imagine that a distant relative had been kidnapped. The culprits were said to have demanded a large ransom, which bankrupted the family and was used to start a business that still prospers to this day. After reading this scenario, participants were asked if they would agree to be included in a class-action lawsuit aimed at recovering wealth from the descendants of the kidnappers. If people oppose restitution for long-ago incidents, regardless of the particular antagonists and protagonists, then opposition to being included in the lawsuit should be extreme [similar to 90% opposition to reparations reported in the 2001 CNN/Gallup poll or the 96% reported in Dawson and Popoff (2004)].

Participants and Design

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

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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's 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, in addition, to supply a reason for their decision.

Results and Discussion

In all, forty participants (61%) agreed to have their name listed, while twenty-six (39%) did not. Of the twenty-six 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% of participants were readily able to disregard long time intervals in a decision involving economic injustice. This simple demonstration showed that Whites do not invariably oppose reparations on time-perspective grounds. Instead, there are some restitutions that are seen as justifiable, and some that are not.

Future studies might run participants through the above scenario and then point out inconsistencies between support for personal restitution for long-ago wrongs and opposition to reparations for slavery and related crimes.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Reparations to slave descendants is increasingly promoted and, importantly, argued in the courts (Robertson 2000). Therefore, Whites' perceptions of the "cost of being black" (Allen 1998, p. 12) are not only relevant—they are likely to become material in future litigation. Actual implementation of reparations to U.S. slave descendants, a program with a symbolic significance that is beyond reckoning, could depend in part on financial feasibility and therefore on the amount determined in the court of (White) public opinion. In contrast, opposition to reparations may be based in part on the perceived need for such a program, which, again, will be largely determined in the court of public opinion.

A new measure of perceptions of the costs associated with being Black, which embodied a contingent valuation approach, has been described. 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 seven studies (with twelve independent samples), race-change requests were slight (median requests ranging from $75 to $10,000—see Table 1) in comparison to the actual Black/White wealth gap of $150,000 (Wolff 2001), and in comparison to the large sums required to forgo television for a lifetime

(median requests ranging from $100,000 to $1,000,000). Furthermore, the race-change requests obtained were far smaller than in a previous anecdotal report [$60 million in Hacker (2003)].

The no-TV responses attested to the sensitivity of the contingent valuation measure. Respondents were willing to ask for very large amounts of money; the amounts were just as enormous even when verification (monitoring/surveillance) was omitted, as in Study 5. The perceived onus was clearly forgoing television, not the intrusive verification. The same respondents might have asked for substantial amounts in order to carry on as persons who were now publicly considered Black [$60 million, as in Hacker (2003)]. However, the observed amounts were not much larger than the amounts required if one were to be designated henceforth as coming from a different state. The low amounts appeared to reflect a negligible valuation of Black-White economic disparity.

Race-change requests were, for the most part, insensitive to variations in region, age, student status, and scenario wording across samples (Studies 1 and 2). In Study 3, we presented evidence that supported the interpretation of the race-change measure as indicative of the perceived costs of being Black (as opposed to being simply a measure of prejudice). Specifically, the race-change measure was shown to be positively related to support for reparations, yet was 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 perceived ease of being Black versus White. The general ineffectiveness of the ease measure in predicting support for reparations suggests that contingent valuation measures of Black costs should continue to be explored and utilized in studies involving perceptions of racial disparities. The main focus of Study 4, however, was to examine the proposition that increasing awareness of White benefits should increase support for reparations. In fact, reading a list of White privileges had no significant effect on the race-change measures, nor on the indicators of support for reparations.

Study 5 employed additional race-change scenarios, one of which (the birth/no-costs scenario) was designed to address alternative interpretations of the low race-change requests elicited by the original status-change scenario. This birth-change measure, however, also elicited low median requests. Finally, analysis of explanations of race-change requests (following Study 5) provided further confirmation of the hypothesis that most Whites are relatively unaware of ongoing racial disparities.

METHOD SOUNDNESS AND REPLICABILITY

Empirical Footing for Reparations Discussions

Subsequent reparations discussions 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-aged 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 satisfied a checklist of contingent valuation criteria (Fischoff 1997, pp. 196–197): the procedure for eliciting values must be accessible to any citizen willing to invest the effort; extensive prior knowledge is not required; questions are not vague; participants should not have to read between the lines of the questions; respondents' beliefs must be expressed in a common format; respondents must understand the size of the changes at stake; time for rumination, if

needed, must be provided; the quality of the measures must be assessed by determining how sensitive responses are to relevant and irrelevant changes in procedure; and consumers of the results must understand what the results mean for their concerns.

The present instrument is usable by anyone. The hypothetical questions were clear to the bulk of respondents (only 2.8% of explanations indicated some kind of difficulty with the scenarios—see Table 4); 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 television); and there was no time limit for responding. The role of an "irrelevant" factor, the order of presentation of the questions, was statistically evaluated. With respect to the final criterion, consumers of the present research will likely assign importance to the results to the extent to which 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, et al.), Whites' perceptions of the "continuing cost of being black" (Allen 1998, p. 12) are clearly relevant.

COGNITIVE FRAMES AND RACIAL-POLICY ATTITUDES

Cognitive frames are mental structures that assimilate complex or bewildering stimuli into a simpler and more familiar understanding (Goffman 1974; Kinder 1998a). Extant work on racial-policy attitudes has highlighted the importance of such cognitive frames (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Henry and Sears, 2002; McConahay 1986).

As blatant discrimination and prejudice continue to decrease among Whites in general (Schuman et al., 1997), it is likely that cognitive frames related to the understanding and interpretation of economic (and other) disparities will become increasing powerful predictors of racial-policy attitudes. As our data demonstrate, most participants seemed to be relatively unaware of the extent of ongoing racial disparity. Those who were, however, as shown in Studies 3 and 4, supported reparations more strongly. More generally, to the extent that racial disparities are perceived as absent, minimal, or diminishing (as opposed to present, extreme, or persisting/widening), support for proactive racial policies such as reparations or affirmative action is likely to be slight.

Of course, acknowledgment of extreme and persisting racial disparities does not guarantee support for proactive racial policy. Indeed, our attempts to educate participants on racial disparity (Studies 4 and 5) fell on seemingly deaf ears. This failure of a simple injection of disparity information is unsurprising in light of the posited denial of racism and racial disparity. As noted above, explanations for racial disparities will also play a pivotal role in support for racial policy. For example, racial disparities may be easily explained as a by-product of a deficient Black culture—consistent with the work on color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Neville et al., 2000), symbolic racism (Henry and Sears, 2002), and modern racism (McConahay 1986), as well as other work relating to Whites' perceptions of Black culture (Bobo 1998, 2000; Bobo et al., 1997). To the extent that these elements of Black culture are biologized or essentialized, there may be little hope for any positive change (leading to reductions in support for social programs aimed at reducing racial disparities).

Regarding explanations for racial disparities and other racial phenomena, there is also the possibility that some will feel that no special explanations are required. For example, those with a social-dominance orientation feel that racial disparities are normal and acceptable phenomena (Sidanius et al., 1992; Sidanius et al., 1996; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). In a similar vein, disparity-generating segregation may

be explained in terms of social preferences (e.g., Blacks prefer to live near other Blacks), and hence does not require solutions.

Even if racial disparities are seen as a troubling result of past discrimination and present-day structural disadvantages, opinions regarding solutions to such problems may still prevent support for proactive programs such as reparations and affirmative action. Policies may be opposed based on perceived inconsistencies with cherished American ideals such as meritocracy (Son Hing et al., 2002) and the Protestant work ethic (Kinder 1998b; Kinder and Sanders, 1996). Generally speaking, proactive programs such as reparations necessarily entail targeting a given group for some advantage (a color-conscious approach to racial policy), and it is this targeting that is seen as especially inconsistent with "the American way." As a result, a color-blind approach to racial policy has become increasingly popular among Whites (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Neville et al., 2000). The color-blind approach to racial policy, however, should actually exacerbate racial disparity, given persistent and systemic White privileges (Rothenberg 2004).

In summary, cognitive frames relating to perceptions of, explanations for, and solutions to racial disparities are likely to play an important role in support for proactive racial policy programs. As should be clear from the preceding discussion, awareness of the presence, extent, and persisting nature of disparities is a necessary but not sufficient precursor to support for proactive racial policies. In the present work, we established that most of our White participants did not appear to perceive persisting racial disparities—to the extent that they did, support for reparations generally increased. But correlations between race-change requests and reparations support were slight to moderate (between 0.13 and 0.45 across Studies 3, 4, and 5), perhaps due to the influence of cognitive frames related to explanations for and solutions to racial disparities. Similarly, our attempts to educate White participants about Black cost/White privilege may have failed to affect reparations support because we did not attempt to counter these same cognitive frames. Finally, the difference in requests between the Atria/costs and birth/costs scenario in Study 5 may indicate that when typical race labels are used (as opposed to a fictional country with nondescript majority and minority groups), an alternative set of cognitive frames is activated, leading to generally, though not significantly, lower compensation requests. These speculations deserve further empirical attention, and the newly developed race-change methodology should prove useful in this regard.

MULTICULTURALIST APPROACHES

Our work is also relevant to the debate between the color-blind and multiculturalist approaches to race. Park and Judd (2005) recently reviewed the work on the color-blind approach to race relations, which entails making race less salient by either encouraging a focus on individuals (Gaertner et al., 2000), or fostering recategorization of different groups into a larger and more inclusive group such as humanity (Gaertner et al., 1993). They suggested that the color-blind approach was fraught with peril due in large part to the pervasiveness of social categorization. And although the "color-blind" approach as studied in the person-perception literature is not entirely synonymous with the "color-blind" approach to racial policy, the societal implications are similar. Namely, both approaches divert attention from racial categories and, necessarily, from racial disparities and related race-based structural advantages and disadvantages. Work on multiculturalism (Park and Judd, 2005) suggests that a focus on race and racial categories can foster an appreciation of the

unique gifts that various groups have to offer society. Similarly, a multicultural approach may allow an understanding of the unique challenges faced by certain groups in society—challenges that may warrant a more progressive racial policy.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Alternative methods of measuring perceptions of Black cost can be developed. We have employed contingent valuation measures (willingness-to-be-paid) because of their enhanced potential to evoke thoughtful cost/benefit reasoning. However, additional methods for measuring Black costs (e.g., cost-listing protocols and direct assessments of costs, economic and otherwise) may also prove useful in future studies.

We are also mindful that *reparations* means different things to different people. Polling has shown that certain types of reparations programs are more desirable than others to Whites [e.g., scholarship funds set up by corporations are seen as more desirable than are cash payments administered by the government (Viles 2002; Kravitz 1995)]. Future studies might include variations on the type of reparations plan (e.g., government sponsored vs. corporate sponsored; cash payments vs. social programs).

Studies 4 and 5 attempted to educate White participants either about Black costs or about White benefits, but these one-shot informational interventions had no effect on support for reparations. Furthermore, in the conditions in Study 5 where focus on racial disparities was the greatest (birth/no costs, birth/costs, and Atria/no costs), correlations between race-change requests and reparations support ranged from null to negative. As discussed above, these correlations may be due to a failure by participants to make situational attributions for racial disparities. In fact, prior research has established the tendency to prefer dispositional accounts (e.g., laziness) for outcomes rather than situational accounts (e.g., ongoing discrimination), due to the inability to adopt others' perspectives (Ross 1977). Techniques that would put people "into the shoes" of others may be promising. Such techniques include powerful narratives that may transport (Green and Brock, 2000) White readers into a vivid world of Black costs (à la *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), or even virtual reality technology (Blascovich et al., 2002), which can portray typical Black costs from a first-person perspective.

PUBLIC REACTIONS TO REPARATIONS

The 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) are 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. 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 currently agree that slave descendants are owed such reparations.

Another advantage of contingent valuation is the method's ability to begin to address the postreparations 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) as opposed to a public "bad" (Schmoke 2001; Williams 2001).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REPARATIONS DEBATE

The present approach does not emphasize past slavery-related damages *per se*, but rather *perceptions* of the ongoing costs of being identified, correctly, as Black. Study 6, 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. More importantly, to focus upon the ongoing consequences of past damages is in fact to address an injustice that has been perpetuated by the intractable intergenerational Black/White wealth disparity (Allen 1998; Oliver and Shapiro, 1995; Robinson 2001; Wolff 2001). One implication of our studies is that, if the perceived cost of being Black is minimal, and reparations are commensurate, then a reparations program becomes more financially feasible. However, if the perceived need for reparations is associated with the perceived cost of being Black, and if that cost is perceived to be slight, perhaps the need for reparations can be slighted as well.

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NOTES

1. This work was facilitated by a postdoctoral fellowship to the first author from the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University. In addition, we are greatly indebted to Hal Arkes for comments on an earlier draft of this manuscript.
2. Stevens was the dominant Republican member of Congress from 1861 to 1868. Bell, a prominent professor at Harvard Law School, authored what has become a standard text of American law schools, *Race, Racism, and American Law* (1973). In 1985, he received the Teacher of the Year Award from the Society of American Law Schools.
3. With the exception of imprisonment rates, all statistics were taken from the Compilation of Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2004–2005. This document is available on the web at ⟨http://www.census.gov/statab/www/sa04baa.pdf⟩ (accessed October 13, 2006). Imprisonment rates were reported from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (available at: ⟨http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/crimoff.htm⟩; accessed October 13, 2006). All statistics are from 2001 or later, with the exception of poverty rates (1999), and homicide rates (2000).
4. Dawson and Popoff (2004, pp. 47–58) offer an exemplary and concise essay on the need for reparations, as well as a summary of opposing viewpoints.
5. Skitka et al. (2004) showed that fear and anger following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks were positively associated with value affirmation. Although not measured in their study, to the extent that Whites value meritocracy, opposition to programs such as reparations and affirmative action, which can be perceived as conflicting with meritocracy, may have been galvanized. Interestingly, Skitka et al. (2004) also found that both ingroup enhancement and outgroup derogation were positively associated with postattack fear and anger. Although only 80% of their American sample was White, and although attitudes towards Blacks specifically were not measured, this finding could indicate increased resistance to programs seen as aiding an outgroup member. On the other hand, Skitka et al. did measure attitudes towards "Americans in general." To the extent that the attacks, and the issue of terrorism in general, encourage a recategorization of ingroup boundaries (i.e., from Black vs. White to Americans vs. "terrorists"), support for remedial racial policy might actually increase. Finally, given an Americans/terrorist categorization, mentions of remedial racial policy may elicit anger from Whites

due to the perception that interracial conflicts should take a back seat to concerns regarding terrorism.

6. The review was conducted on November 9, 2005, using the *analyze* function of the ISI Web of Science search page. The review included all articles (n = 13,662) from 1980 to 2005 in the following publication outlets: *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Social Issues*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, and *Social Cognition*. See Coates (2004) for similar analyses in other social science areas.
7. This detail was discovered through a personal communication with Hacker on December 1, 2004.
8. For all reported studies (Studies 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4, 5, and the studies referred to in endnotes 9 and 10), gender effects were examined. No significant effects or interactions were observed aside from a single main effect of gender on log-transformed race-change requests in the study reported in endnote 9, $F(1220) = 8.49$, $p = 0.004$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$. In this case, males ($M = 6.21$; $SD = 5.48$; corresponding raw median value = \$500) made higher race-change requests than did females ($M = 4.16$; $SD = 4.97$; corresponding raw median value = \$10).
9. It is possible that respondents who listed *zero* for the race-change request 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 his or her racial status. To examine these alternative interpretations, 222 White Ohio State University participants (107 male and 115 female) (mean age = 18.65 years; range: 17 to 29) were given the race-change item, and then asked to explain the value that they had listed. Because the focus of the study involved the *zero* responses to the race-change scenario, the state-change and no-TV scenarios were not included. Surveys were administered during the first week of an introductory psychology course. Overall, median race-change requests were \$100. Within this sample, eighty-four people listed a value of zero, and their explanations were examined. Only five (5.95%) explanations indicated that the respondent would not change his or her racial status. The texts 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"; and "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 of the reported samples.
10. 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, "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. A group of 133 White Ohio State University undergraduates (twenty-seven male and ninety-six female) completed surveys (mean age = 18.50 years; range: 18 to 24) in classrooms reserved for the experiment for partial course credit—in this sample, all participants provided brief explanations for their race-change requests. 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 = \$5000; state change = \$1000; no TV = \$1,000,000. Within-participants analyses of the log-transformed means revealed that whereas race-change requests were quite dissimilar from no-TV requests [($M_{\text{Race Change}} = 7.87$, $SD = 5.54$; $M_{\text{No TV}} = 13.09$, $SD = 5.90$), $F(1,132) = 69.02$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.34$], state-change and race-change requests were only negligibly discrepant [($M_{\text{State Change}} = 6.45$, $SD = 4.28$), $F(1,132) = 8.97$, $p = 0.003$, $\eta^2 = 0.06$]. Most importantly, there were no significant effects of the racial disparity framing on any of the measures reported in Study 4.
11. Approximately one-half of the participants in Studies 1A (n = 105) and 2 (n = 41) provided race-change request explanations. All participants in Study 3 (n = 82) and the studies reported in endnote 9 (n = 222) and endnote 10 (n = 133) provided explanations. Finally, the race-change explanations of participants in the status/no-costs condition of

Study 5 (n = 49) are included in Table 4 and shown separately in Table 5 (column 1). Participants in Studies 1 and 4 did not provide race-change explanations.

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APPENDIX A

White Privileges from Study 4

- 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.

APPENDIX B

Additional Scenarios from Study 5

Atria/Costs

Imagine that you are waiting in line to be born. You will be born a citizen of Atria. In Atria there is a majority group, and a minority group. Presently, you are scheduled to be born as a member of the majority group. However, you are offered an alternative arrangement. In exchange for a cash gift, to be deposited in a bank account for you when you are born, you can choose to instead be born into the minority group.

Relative to the majority group, the average member of the minority group has the following characteristics:

- Is the target of negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination
- Imprisonment rates almost 10 times higher
- Family income rates 40% lower
- Infant (0–1 years) mortality rate 2.5 times higher
- Poverty rates twice as high
- Household wealth about 80% lower
- Life spans about 5 years shorter

Birth/No Costs

Imagine that you are waiting in line to be born. You will be born a citizen of the United States of America. In the USA there is a majority group (whites), and a number of minority groups (for example, blacks). Presently, you are scheduled to be born white. However, you are offered an alternative arrangement. In exchange for a cash gift, to be deposited in a bank account for you when you are born, you can choose to instead be born black.

Birth/Costs

Imagine that you are waiting in line to be born. You will be born a citizen of the United States of America. In the USA there is a majority group (whites), and a number of minority groups (for example, blacks). Presently, you are scheduled to be born white. However, you are offered an alternative arrangement. In exchange for a cash gift, to be deposited in a bank account for you when you are born, you can choose to instead be born black.

Relative to whites, the average black person has the following characteristics:

- Is the target of negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination
- Imprisonment rates almost 10 times higher
- Family income rates 40% lower
- Infant (0–1 years) mortality rate 2.5 times higher
- Poverty rates twice as high
- Household wealth about 80% lower
- Life spans about 5 years shorter

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