

CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS REPARATIONS

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

SARON ARAYA

Submitted to the LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research office at
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the designation as an

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Approved by
Faculty Research Advisor:

Dr. Brittany Perry

May 2021

Major:

Political Science

Copyright © 2021. Saron Araya.

RESEARCH COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION

Research activities involving the use of human subjects, vertebrate animals, and/or biohazards must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Texas A&M University regulatory research committee (i.e., IRB, IACUC, IBC) before the activity can commence. This requirement applies to activities conducted at Texas A&M and to activities conducted at non-Texas A&M facilities or institutions. In both cases, students are responsible for working with the relevant Texas A&M research compliance program to ensure and document that all Texas A&M compliance obligations are met before the study begins.

I, Saron Araya, certify that all research compliance requirements related to this Undergraduate Research Scholars thesis have been addressed with my Research Faculty Advisor prior to the collection of any data used in this final thesis submission.

This project required approval from the Texas A&M University Research Compliance & Biosafety office.

TAMU IRB #: 2020-1529M Approval Date: 02/25/2021 Expiration Date: 02/25/2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	2
SECTIONS	
INTRODUCTION	3
Literature Review	5
Theoretical Argument.....	10
Methods	12
Research Data	14
1. METHODS	16
2. DISCUSSION.....	27
CONCLUSION.....	29
REFERENCES	31

ABSTRACT

Changing Attitudes Towards Reparations

Saron Araya
Department of Political Science
Texas A&M University

Research Faculty Advisor: Dr. Brittany Perry
Department of Political Science
Texas A&M University

Perspective-taking is when an individual takes the point of view of a different, marginalized, or negatively viewed group in order to facilitate an understanding towards their situation and improve the marginalized group's social standing. Many research studies show that perspective-taking can reduce ethnic prejudice, but these scholars focus solely on the *beliefs and feelings* towards this group. This study will expand on this work by using the benefits of engaging with perspective-taking and applying them to not just changing the negative attitudes towards descendants of slaves but focus on changing the attitudes toward reparations as a public policy initiative. I argue that engaging in perspective-taking of slave descendants conditions attitudes on reparations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Contributors

I would like to thank my faculty advisor, Dr. Brittany Perry, for their guidance and support throughout the course of this research.

Thanks also go to my friends and colleagues and the department faculty and staff for making my time at Texas A&M University a great experience.

All other work conducted for the thesis was completed by the student independently.

Funding Sources

This work was also made possible in part by Carlos Cantu Research Endowment Grant. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Carlos H. Cantu Hispanic Endowment.

INTRODUCTION

Reparations is the restitution or compensation received by those who have been historically wronged. In the context of American history, this is specifically towards the descendants of African slaves unjustly brought to the country as laborers (Hannah-Jones, 2020). While this injustice historically caused direct harm to those who were enslaved, the plight of Black Americans did not stop there. From Black soldiers never receiving what they were owed by the GI Bill to inequalities still present in the workforce, it is undeniable that the descendants of African slaves have been at an enormous disadvantage since the moment they were forced on this continent (Hannah-Jones, 2020). Reparations is a possible solution to amend these injustices and repay the communities that have been abused by the past actions of this country.

Despite the legacy of slavery, many people disagree on whether reparations should be paid to the descendants of formerly enslaved persons. According to a recent study done by Reuters/Ipsos (2020), only 20% of Americans support reparations. Of this 20%, an overwhelming majority of these supporters are African American. Whether this is because of the lack of education on reparations or because of personal biases against this community, there is a lack of support for reparations working to shore up the economic disparities within the Black community that continue to this day. This disfavor for reparation, however, could possibly be remedied through perspective-taking. While there have been studies on whether perspective-taking is an effective method for changing negative attitudes towards a community that is considered an out-group (Grigorieff et al., 2016; Hunt and Hunt, 2004; Jewell et al., n.d.; Sherman et al., 2020; Simonovits et al., 2018; Todd et al., 2012; Vescio et al., 2003), there has not been as much research on whether this would be effective in changing negative attitudes

towards social policies. In this paper, I will be testing if perspective-taking helps change attitudes on reparations policy in particular.

Perspective-taking is defined as aligning people's perspectives with experiences from members of out-groups in order to reduce prejudice (Simonovits et al., 2018). In other words, perspective-taking is having someone take the point of view of a different, marginalized, or negatively viewed group in order to create understanding towards their situation and improve the marginalized group's social standing. In a recent research study, Aleksandra et al. (2020) shows that perspective-taking can reduce ethnic prejudice, but these scholars focus solely on the *beliefs and feelings* towards this group. Another study uses this perspective taking approach as a way to reduce negative attitudes and behaviors towards the LGBT community (Jewell et al., n.d.). My study will expand on this work by using the benefits of engaging with perspective-taking and applying them to not just changing the negative attitudes towards descendants of slaves, but focus on changing the attitudes toward reparations as a public policy initiative.

The research question of this study is: Can perspective-taking change attitudes towards reparations enough for participants to support it as a public policy initiative? My argument is that engaging in perspective-taking of slave descendants conditions attitudes on reparations by building empathy. Utilizing an original survey experiment, I assess whether individual attitudes toward reparations differ between subjects who watch a video interview with a former slave and are given a perspective-taking prompt, compared to those who watch the same interview and are given informational prompt. This is compared to those given no prompt at all. I find that watching the video of an enslaved person sharing his experience was key to changing attitudes towards reparations. Studying how to change the negative attitudes and increase support of reparations can be helpful with future movements towards passing beneficial public policies for

this outgroup. More broadly, the implications of this study can benefit not just reparation policies, but policies to help marginalized populations as a whole.

Literature Review

Many scholars have studied ways to reduce prejudice across groups and change attitudes towards policies to support marginalized communities. Social psychologists studied how contact between two different groups can promote tolerance and improve attitudes towards each other, which is known as contact theory (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Another mode of prejudice reduction that has been explored is information sharing, which focuses on sharing information between groups to reduce negative attitudes toward the outgroup. The strategy of using educational resources, on the other hand, provides participants information that could potentially present new context or perspective towards an outgroup and change the participant's negative attitudes. The exchange of narrative refers to an outgroup sharing their story, perspective, or narrative with participants, who would then take the perspective of the outgroup member who shared their story, to increase empathy and understanding between the two groups. Giving factual information or dispelling false narratives towards a marginalized group can help change the attitudes towards this same group.

Among these studies, the use of perspective-taking for participants has been found to positively affect attitudes towards an outgroup (Galinsky and Moskowitz, 2000). When attempting to change these negative attitudes towards marginalized groups, there seems to be two different approaches: an exchange of narratives that can help participants engage with perspective-taking and the use of educational resources.

However, many existing perspective-taking interventions do not go far enough. In the literature, there are no studies, to my knowledge, on how perspective-taking specifically can

reduce negative attitudes towards a *public policy* initiative. While reducing negative attitudes towards marginalized groups in general has been shown many times in previous literature (e.g. Todd et al., 2012; Vescio et al., 2003; Jewell et al., n.d.), very few show the connection between reduction of negative attitudes to then supporting helpful or restorative public policies. This connection between perspective-taking and supporting outgroup-beneficial public policies is what is missing from the existing literature.

In contrast, Berndsen and McGarty (2012) assess perspective-taking specifically looking at how this affects support for reparations for Indigenous Australians. They found that when non-Indigenous Australians took an Indigenous Australians' perspective by answering questions from an Indigenous Australian's point of view, they experienced an increase in entitlement for monetary compensation. In other words, they began to believe they deserved payment for the suffering that had been caused while taking an Indigenous Australians' perspective. They also had a decrease in resistance towards receiving reparations to amend this previous harm.

While Berndsen and McGarty (2012) studied reparations specifically, Todd et al. (2012) focused on racial ethnic attitudes by examining whether perspective-taking can help combat the denial of discrimination towards Black and Latino people. Participants who engaged with perspective-taking wrote a narrative essay, taking the role of either a White or Black male. Those who did not engage with perspective-taking wrote an essay from an objective viewpoint. The study found that participants who engaged with perspective-taking were able to recognize ongoing discrimination towards these groups, while nonperspective-taking or those who wrote a narrative essay from a White male viewpoint were less likely to do so. The authors also found that participants who took the perspective of a Black or Latino person had a higher sense of psychological connection between themselves and the targeted group. In other words, the

participants felt more empathetic towards and connected with the Black or Latino person who they wrote about. This psychological connection may explain their increased acknowledgment of discrimination.

Another study on racial ethnic attitudes is by Sherman et al. (2020), who used perspective-taking to examine whether negative perceptions of Native Americans can change by having participants view photographs of Natives. While looking at the portraits, eye-movements and responses from participants were analyzed. The researchers found that the participants who engaged with perspective-taking were able to view the Native Americans in a more empathetic and humane way. However, the participants' negative cultural biases still remained despite the increase in empathetic feelings towards this group. In other words, participants felt empathetic towards the Native Americans while still holding onto the negative stereotypes towards these same Native Americans, essentially making the perspective-taking ineffective.

These pieces of literature do not invoke perspective-taking in the most effective way. Sherman et al. (2020) only has the participants view a photograph of Native Americans, which would not be enough to make concrete changes towards harmful cultural biases. It leaves an opportunity for participants to hold onto their own negative beliefs, since the study did nothing to combat the cultural biases and only relied on participants seeing Native Americans as human beings. This is perhaps reflected by the study's inconclusive results. Participants became more sympathetic, but no more understanding or equitable towards the Native Americans. Simply looking at a picture is just not enough for someone to take another perspective and change their own negative attitudes. The Jewell et al. (n.d.) study mentions that perspective-taking can have mixed results, depending on how much the participants are able to empathize with gay and lesbian people if they have never experienced discrimination themselves. Instead of

focusing on the feelings of injustice and frustration, this study attempted to get participants who have never experienced discrimination to imagine being discriminated against. This way of using perspective-taking is a common, but a difficult, method since it relies on participants having the ability to imagine the full experience of being discriminated against in the first place. How can someone who's never felt this issue before fully imagine the difficulties from it? The issue with these studies is how they do not utilize perspective-taking to its full potential.

Broockman and Kalla (2020) focused on negative attitudes in general, not specifically racial ethnic ones, and argued that exchanging narratives in a nonjudgmental environment helps reduce exclusionary attitudes. These exclusionary attitudes include prejudice towards outgroups and any resistance towards public policies that would help them. In their study, when participants engaged in an interpersonal conversation, there was a decrease in exclusionary attitudes. This included attitudes and voting patterns related with immigrants and transgender people. However, Broockman and Kalla (2020) do not explicitly engage with perspective-taking. Instead, they simply focus on having interpersonal conversations with a member of an outgroup.

Jewell et al. (n.d.), however, draw from previous literature on homonegativity to recommend the best practices for changing negative perceptions. They argue that providing educational information can get rid of false ideas and that perspective-taking can also be used as a way for participants to apply and reflect on their new knowledge. Specifically, they suggest that participants should imagine an interaction with gay men and women to dispel negative stereotypes and attitudes towards this marginalized group. This can also help participants see the differences between their own egalitarian beliefs and how they personally treat gay men and women. While this study focuses on the treatment of gay and lesbian people, it is still about discrimination towards an outgroup. In other words, this article discusses best practices,

including perspective-taking, as a way to decrease negative attitudes towards a marginalized group.

Furthermore, the Vescio et al. (2003) study shows how perspective-taking aroused empathy towards a marginalized group. In this study, the authors had a group of White participants listen to an interview of an African American male who described the challenges that come from being a part of this marginalized community. The results indicated that participants who adopted the perspective of the African American interviewee showed more empathy towards the individual, identified the impact of situational factors (or factors beyond the interviewees control), and experienced a decrease in negative attitudes towards the outgroup as a whole when compared to participants who were asked to remain objective and not participate in perspective-taking. The findings from the study done by Vescio et al. (2003) also revealed that empathy, which is needed to be able to take one's perspective, played a strong role in the relationship between participants who engage with perspective-taking and their attitudes towards the outgroup. This connection is explained further in the theoretical argument section.

In my research, unlike these studies, I will have the participants engage in perspective-taking in a new way. In order for perspective-taking to have a more substantial impact, participants need to fully immerse themselves into the perspective of a disenfranchised group. While the previous study had participants visually connect and sympathize with Native Americans, I will have participants fully engage with the perspective of the descendants of African slaves, by way of a video recorded interview. This intervention is designed to bring a more complete understanding of the plight of this community and build a case for why reparations serve as a possible solution for these injustices. To really trigger perspective-taking, as opposed to just information acquisition, my treatment prompts respondents to consider their

responses from the viewpoint of a great great grandchild, while highlighting an emotional connection and response to the injustices of slaves in the past. Participants are prompted to imagine discrimination they have never faced themselves and attempt to empathize with those who have. Rather than having the participants simply imagine what it would be like to be Black and face discrimination, I would have them focus on the frustration and pain that this community feels and how experiences of the past may affect well-being today. This ability to truly connect with this perspective can be a key factor in changing negative attitudes towards reparations. Making these changes will improve upon the efficacy of the Jewell et al. (n.d.) study.

The existing literature on attitudinal change and perspective-taking goes far in showing how these methods can be an effective method in changing participants' negative attitudes towards an outgroup. However, as stated earlier, the gaps in the literature make it difficult to say there is a definitive answer for how such methods may be used to alter policy responses to institutional inequalities that persist in the US today. Beyond changing negative prejudices and feelings towards this outgroup, we need to look at how to increase support towards reparations as a possible way to restore damages done to the descendants of formerly enslaved people.

Theoretical Argument

In answering my research question, it's important to start by understanding *why* perspective-taking might be used to change policy attitudes. When someone engages with perspective-taking, they are forced to see a situation from someone else's point of view. The interpretations of a situation and their own feelings must be put aside to see another's perspective. While seeing this new way of thinking, a person would be more inclined to empathize with an outgroup. Empathy is reacting and sympathizing with another person's pain or discomfort. Many social science researchers have shown that empathy is a strong driver of

attitudinal change on a topic or towards an outgroup. Furthermore, when a person has empathetic concern or feelings toward these outgroups, they are more likely to want to help them (Batson, 1991). Actions and thought processes that once seemed confusing or irrational, might begin to make sense as world views are shifted. Those engaged with perspective-taking begin to understand outgroups, and are even able to empathize with their situation.

Psychologically, empathy manifests itself in two different ways: cognitive and emotional. While cognitive empathy results from taking the perspective of another and seeing things from their perspective, emotional empathy comes from an emotional reaction of a person's experiences (Stephan and Finlay, 1999). Cognitive empathy is the ability to put yourself in another person's position and understand their perspective, while emotional empathy requires you to feel their emotions as well. Both forms of empathy have often been connected to or also known as perspective-taking.

The results of Batson (1991) show that when the perspective-taking is in the form of hearing an empathetic story over just reading one, respondents have a stronger reaction. While it's clear how perspective-taking leads to an increase in empathy and changes in negative attitudes, how does this translate into attitude change towards policies? As stated earlier, when someone begins experiencing empathy towards these outgroups, they start to want to help these marginalized communities (Batson, 1991). In terms of policy changes, this desire to help descendants of formerly enslaved people, in the form of supporting reparations, is directly related to an increase in empathy. If people begin to want to help outgroups, they will support public policy initiatives, such as reparations, as a way to help these communities and move toward a more just outcome.

Drawing from this theoretical framework, I hypothesize that non-slave descendants who are asked to put themselves in the role of a slave descendant are more likely than those not engaging in such perspective-taking to support reparations as a policy.

Methods

This study will be researched using human participants, gauging attitudes towards reparations and whether those attitudes change after engaging in perspective-taking. The primary mode of analysis will be a survey experiment. The perspective-taking in the study will take the form of a documentary video that the participants must watch, describing the results and long-lasting effects of slavery. Participants who watch this video will take a survey asking questions such as how they would feel if that was them and what they would think justice should look like. Another group of participants will be the knowledge-check group, who will view the same video as the perspective-taking group without any prompts on perspective taking. They will be asked a set of questions on the content of the video alone, not about their feelings or reflections regarding the content. Lastly, the control group of participants will receive an article on a non-related subject. This group will also be asked how the information made them feel and their feelings towards justice. After the participants' surveys are collected, the data will be compared to determine whether non-slave descendants who are asked to put themselves in the role of a slave descendant are more likely than those not engaging in such perspective-taking to support reparations as a policy.

The perspective-taking group will first fill out their demographic information, such as age and ethnicity. They will then be prompted to watch the interview of a formerly enslaved person and told "when watching this, imagine you are the great great grandchild of the main interviewee, Fountain Hughes." The video is an interview with Fountain Hughes, who was

enslaved as a child. He describes how, as a child, the enslaved people were treated by the white masters and the soldiers who came to inform them of their freedom. He described how enslaved African American people were like “wild people” who “didn’t know [anything].” He also described how the “Yankees came along and took” all of their supplies and “let it go down the river.” This interview illustrates how hard the life of an enslaved person was and how they were forced to start with less than nothing, even after they were granted freedom. The participants are then asked perspective-taking questions, such as "How much do you think your great great grandfather's experiences would affect your well-being today?" Lastly, they are asked about their views on different marginalized group's deservingness of governmental support, their support on a reparations bill, and their own history with slavery and discrimination.

The knowledge-check group will first fill out their demographic information, such as age and ethnicity. They will then be prompted to watch the same interview of a formerly enslaved person and told to just "watch the following video." They are then asked knowledge-based questions, such as "what is the name of the interviewee?" Lastly, they are asked about their views on different marginalized group's deservingness of governmental support, their support on a reparations bill, and their own history with slavery and discrimination.

Lastly, the control group will fill out their demographic information, such as age and ethnicity. They will not watch the Fountain Hughes interview. They are instead asked questions on cardiovascular health. They are then asked about their views on different marginalized group's deservingness of governmental support, their support on a reparations bill, and their own history with slavery and discrimination.

Participants will be able to find the study through LUCID. They will give their consent and opt-in to take the survey. The Qualtrics survey will be randomized and sent to participants

by Lucid. Participants will read each question and watch the video, if given to them, and answer the final questions. They will then submit the completed survey.

Research Data

The Qualtrics survey was uploaded to LUCID, where approximately 1,200 people opted into taking the survey and completed the questions. There was an even distribution about gender, age, highest level of education and political affiliation. However, there was a vast majority Caucasian people to take the survey as opposed to Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native America.

Of those who took the perspective-taking survey, the majority of participants agreed that the video of Fountain Hughes made them unhappy or extremely unhappy. The majority also agreed that what Fountain Hughes experience was extremely unfair. This shows that the majority of the respondents understand that the experience of an enslaved person was harsh, an unwanted life, and unfair for them to live it. However, these same respondents did not have the same agreement over how this way of living would affect them. On whether having to live like Fountain Hughes would affect their economic wellbeing today, many reported that it would not affect them at all. Respondents showed even less belief that it would affect their social or cultural wellbeing. This shows that although respondents see how being formerly enslaved would be unfair, they still do not believe it would have long-lasting effects on their life. They also did not have a necessarily strong reaction to supporting reparations

The second group, the knowledge-check group did show knowledge on watching the video. What is interesting here is that they did not have necessarily a stronger or weaker support for reparations in comparison to the perspective-taking group. However, both the perspective-taking group and the knowledge-check group had a noticeably stronger support for reparations in comparison to the control group, who did not watch the interview of Fountain Hughes at all. This

suggests that, while perspective-taking had somewhat of an effect on increasing the support towards reparations, the greatest strength in increasing this support was the interview itself.

Watching a video of a formerly enslaved person recount this time period in their life seemed to increase support towards reparations more than the use perspective taking alone. However, the use of perspective taking did still have an effect. One thing to note is that the vast majority of respondents considered themselves white and defiantly not descendants of slaves. This may skew the data greatly, since this is not an accurate representation of the United States. Another important thing to consider is that the support for reparations is much greater in this survey after respondents watch the video in comparison to the overall support for reparation in America, which is currently around 20%. This may suggest that there are many ways that support towards reparations can be increased.

1. METHODS

To test my hypotheses, I collect new data using a survey experiment. The purpose of the experiment is to generate a perspective-taking condition, by putting non-slave descendants into the role of a slave descendant to the extent that is possible in an online environment. This treatment condition involves respondents engaging with a slave narrative via a minute and fifty-three second video interview shown in Figure 1.1. The perspective-taking group will first fill out their demographic information, such as age and ethnicity. They will then be prompted to watch an interview of a formerly enslaved person and told "when watching this, imagine you are the great great grandchild of the main interviewee, Fountain Hughes." The video is a minute and 53 second interview recorded in 1949 but broadcasted from ABC News in 1999 with Fountain Hughes, who was enslaved as a child. He describes how, as a child, the enslaved people were treated by the white masters and the soldiers who came to inform them of their freedom. He described how enslaved African American people were like "wild people" who "didn't know [anything]." He also described how the "Yankees came along and took" all of their supplies and "let it go down the river." This interview illustrates how hard the life of an enslaved person was and how they were forced to start with less than nothing, even after they were granted freedom.

Another randomly selected group of participants are exposed to an information sharing condition where they watch the same slave narrative video, yet are prompted to watch and answer questions regarding the video content. This group was not asked about emotional responses to the film, nor were they prompted to consider the perspective of the narrator or his descendants. Therefore, this group was only asked about the video itself and not the emotions that results from it.

Lastly, the control group of participants did not view a video or receive prompts to generate emotions about slavery or the lasting effects of slavery today. All respondents in all conditions were asked for attitudes on a range of groups, including former slaves and African Americans and importantly, attitudes towards reparations (my key dependent variable).

WATCH the following video clip.

When watching this, **imagine you are the great great grandchild** of the main interviewee, Fountain Hughes and respond to the following questions regarding the content.



Figure 1.1: Screenshot of Fountain Hughes' interviewee that the participants watched

After the participants' surveys are collected, the data will be compared to determine whether non-slave descendants who are asked to put themselves in the role of a slave descendant are more likely than those not engaging in such perspective-taking to support reparations as a policy. The three conditions are perspective-taking, knowledge-check, and control.

The perspective-taking participants are then asked perspective-taking questions, such as "How much do you think your great great grandfather's experiences would affect your well-being today?" Lastly, they are asked about their views on different marginalized group's deservingness of governmental support, their support on a reparations bill, and their own history with slavery and discrimination.

The knowledge-check group will be prompted to watch the same interview of a formerly enslaved person and told to just "watch the following video." They are then asked knowledge-based questions, such as "what is the name of the interviewee?" Lastly, they are asked about their views on different marginalized group's deservingness of governmental support, their support on a reparations bill, and their own history with slavery and discrimination.

Lastly, the control group will fill out their demographic information, such as age and ethnicity. They will not watch the Fountain Hughes interview. They are then asked about their views on different marginalized group's deservingness of governmental support, their support on a reparations bill, and their own history with slavery and discrimination.

The experiment was conducted through LUCID Theorem, an online crowdsourcing marketplace. They will give their consent and opt-in to take the survey. The three conditions were randomized across Lucid respondents, with approximately 1,200 people opted into taking the survey and completed the questions. While looking at the data, it is evident that there was a vast majority of Caucasian people who took the survey as opposed to Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American.

After collecting the data, the three variables were the perspective-taking, knowledge-check, and control variables. The variables then created included: "video," non-white, black, and only black. The variable video is a binary indicator variable if the subject was exposed to the

interview with Fountain Hughes. So, it is coded as 1 if the respondent was part of the perspective-taking or the knowledge check groups. Non-white is a binary indicator variable that is coded 1 if the respondent was not Caucasian. Mixed-raced people with caucasian heritage were coded as 1, too. Black is a binary indicator variable that is coded 1 if the respondent was at least partially African American, but were coded 0 otherwise. Lastly, only black is a binary indicator variable that is coded 1 if the respondent was only African American and not of any other race, but were coded 0 otherwise. The other controls were age, political ideology, education, whether the participant has experienced discrimination, and whether the participant is a slave descendent.

As discussed in the theoretical argument section, empathy is an important factor when studying perspective-taking. If an individual is able to feel empathetic, it is expected that this will translate into a desire to help outgroups who experience negative stereotypes or consequences (Batson, 1991).

Empathy, in this study, is best measured by two of the questions in the perspective-taking survey. First, the respondents are asked “if you were the great great grandchild of the person in this video (Fountain Hughes), how would hearing this story make you feel?” This question best measures empathy because it requires respondents to reveal whether they are able to sympathize or relate with Fountain Hughes and his descendants. They are then asked “thinking about justice and fairness, how ‘just’ or ‘fair’ was what happened to Fountain Hughes?” This question measures empathy by revealing how the participants felt about justice and fairness, which are concepts that require someone to feel empathy if they agree. If participants agree that what happened to Fountain Hughes was unjust or unfair, then that means they were able to feel for Fountain Hughes enough to recognize the wrongdoings done to him. The perspective taking

group was also prompted to write a short response, answering the question “Continuing to imagine you are the great great grandchild of this interviewee, what would justice look like to you?” This is also part of the treatment in prompting empathy because it gets respondents to reflect on their feelings of justice and what they would look like for descendants of formerly enslaved people.

To measure the dependent variable, attitudes on reparations, two questions were asked of respondents in all three groups. First, respondents were given a description of the H.R. 40 bill, which would “establish a commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African-Americans.” They were then asked whether or not they would support this bill. Then, participants were directly asked if “The government should make cash payments to Black Americans who are descendants of slaves.” Both of these questions measure the respondent’s attitudes towards reparations. The second question, however, is asked in a more direct way compared to the first question, which uses more legal jargon.

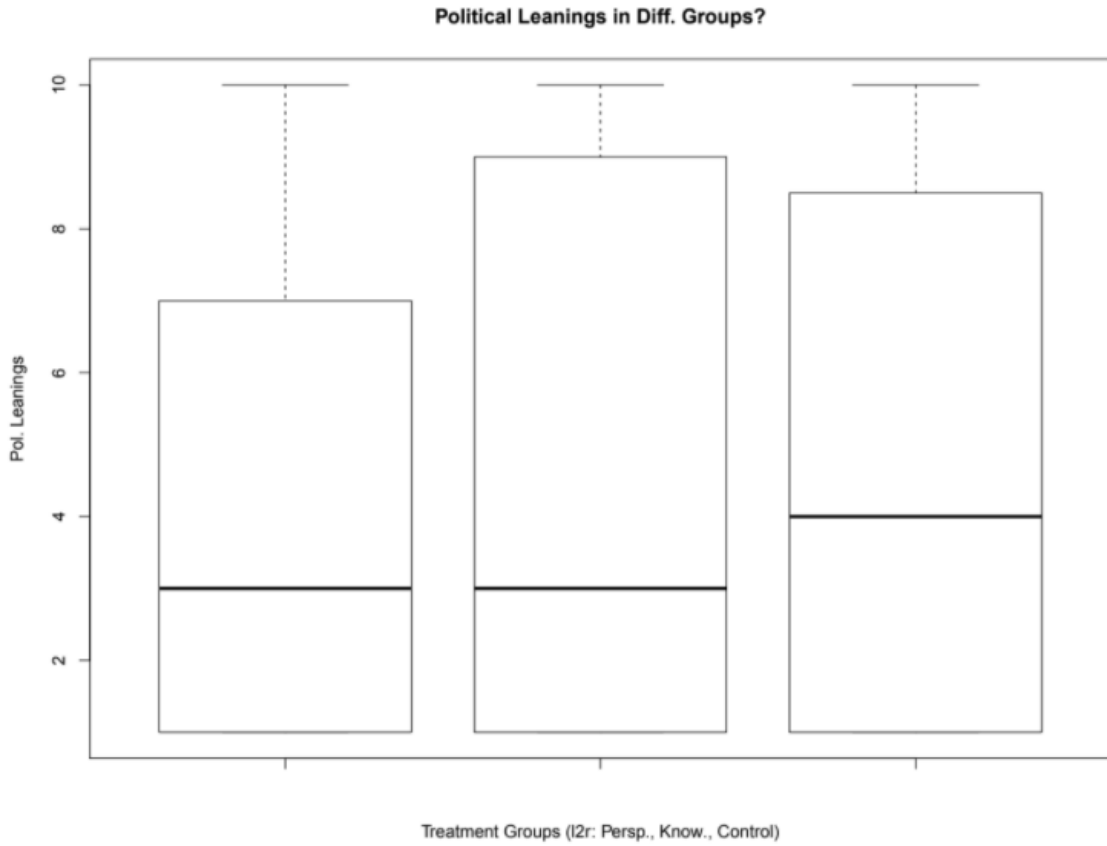


Figure 1.2: Boxplot of the political leanings of the three different treatment groups

Figure 1.2 shows the political leaning of the three groups in this experiment. While the respondents were completely randomized, the box plot shows that the mean political leaning is more conservative than both the video groups.

Table 1.1: Table showing the agreement of Reparations

Dependent Variable: Agreement with Reparations

Video	0.465*** (0.138)	0.477*** (0.140)	0.471*** (0.140)	0.479*** (0.140)
Perspective Group	-0.302** (0.141)	-0.309** (0.142)	-0.348** (0.143)	-0.340** (0.143)
Non-White	0.983*** (0.131)	0.782*** (0.134)	0.625*** (0.137)	0.615*** (0.138)
Political Ideology	-0.173*** (0.017)	-0.178*** (0.017)	-0.178*** (0.017)	-0.180*** (0.017)
Education	0.190*** (0.043)	0.142*** (0.044)	0.121*** (0.045)	0.111** (0.045)
Discrimination		0.387*** (0.043)		0.242*** (0.050)
Slave Descendant			0.426*** (0.046)	0.294*** (0.053)
Observations	1031	1030	1029	1029

Note: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

Table 1.2: Table showing support towards the H.R. 40 bill

Dependent Variable: Support for H.R. 40 Bill

Video	0.343** (0.137)	0.334** (0.138)	0.317** (0.139)	0.317** (0.139)
Perspective Group	-0.239* (0.142)	-0.223 (0.143)	-0.262* (0.144)	-0.249* (0.144)
Non-White	0.612*** (0.131)	0.438*** (0.133)	0.241* (0.138)	0.236* (0.138)
Political Ideology	-0.190*** (0.018)	-0.192*** (0.018)	-0.196*** (0.018)	-0.198*** (0.018)
Education	0.168*** (0.043)	0.130*** (0.044)	0.105** (0.045)	0.097** (0.045)
Discrimination		0.314*** (0.043)		0.157*** (0.050)
Slave Descendant			0.412*** (0.046)	0.325*** (0.053)
Observations	1029	1027	1027	1026

Note: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 show results across the Video, perspective-group, and non-white groups' responses over whether they would support reparations and, more specifically, the H.R. 40 bill respectively.

Table 1.3: Table showing how deserving African American are of financial governmental support

Dependent Variable: Support for African Americans

Video	4.32** (2.263)	5.003** (2.265)	4.820** (2.254)	4.967** (2.254)
Perspective Group	-1.512 (2.316)	-1.575 (2.320)	-1.686 (2.309)	-1.878 (2.311)
Non-White	8.948*** (2.131)	8.326*** (2.165)	6.427*** (2.221)	6.377*** (2.221)
Political Ideology	-2.101*** (0.273)	-2.079 (0.273)	-2.104*** (0.272)	-2.095*** (0.272)
Education	0.857 (0.709)	0.767 (0.720)	0.290 (0.723)	0.383 (0.725)
Discrimination		1.047 (0.669)		-0.478 (0.787)
Slave Descendant			2.721*** (0.701)	3.004*** (0.828)
Constant	66.567*** (2.804)	64.170*** (3.134)	62.814*** (2.952)	63.200*** (3.128)
Observations	1.012	1009	1009	1008
R ²	0.090	0.092	0.103	0.103
Note: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01				

Table 1.4: Table showing how deserving slave descendants are of financial governmental support

Dependent Variable: Support for Slave Descendants

Video	9.245*** (2.319)	9.346*** (2.319)	9.351*** (2.308)	9.396 (2.311)
Perspective Group	-2.958 (2.376)	-2.860 (2.377)	-3.195 (2.367)	-3.244 (2.372)
Non-White	8.157*** (2.191)	7.682*** (2.223)	5.972*** (2.280)	5.951*** (2.282)
Political Ideology	-2.471*** (0.280)	-2.468 (0.280)	-2.476*** (0.279)	-2.472*** (0.279)
Education	0.507 (0.731)	0.227 (0.743)	-0.141 (0.745)	-0.117 (0.748)
Discrimination		1330* (0.685)		0.020 (0.803)
Slave Descendant			2.632*** (0.717)	2.626*** (0.844)
Constant	65.080*** (2.876)	62.421*** (3.205)	61.606*** (3.025)	62.409*** (3.206)
Observations	1006	1003	1003	1002
R ²	0.110	0.115	0.123	0.123
Note: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01				

Table 1.5: Table showing how deserving the interviewee is of financial governmental support

Dependent Variable: Support for the Interviewee

Perspective	-0.008	0.232	-0.063	-0.086
Group	(2.169)	(2.171)	(2.160)	(2.160)
Non-White	1.464	1.750	-0.080	0.073
	(2.503)	(2.545)	(2.580)	(2.578)
Political	-1.410***	-1.442***	-1.437***	-1.449***
Ideology	(0.317)	(0.317)	(0.315)	(0.315)
Education	1.197	0.945	0.460	0.452
	(0.834)	(0.853)	(0.858)	(0.861)
Discrimination		0.284		-1.455
		(0.773)		(0.928)
Slave			2.372***	3.213***
Descendant				
Note: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01				

Tables 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 show the groups' responses to whether African Americans, descendants of enslaved people, and the interviewee specifically deserved reparations. The last figure is useful in determining the groups' ability to empathize with the interviewee's plight, as discussed in the Methods section.

2. DISCUSSION

After looking at the data, it is clear that there is not a distinct difference in the perspective-taking group's empathy or support toward reparations in comparison to the knowledge-check group. Between support for reparations, the H.R. 40 bills, and reparations for the interviewee (Fountain Hughes) specifically, both the perspective-taking group and the knowledge check group seemed to answer similarly.

However, the variable "Video" shows that just being exposed to the video had an effect - regardless of how the video was framed. Those who watched the video (perspective-taking and knowledge-check group) supported reparations consistently more across the board in comparison to the control group. Watching a video of a formerly enslaved person recount this time period in their life seemed to increase support towards reparations more than the use of perspective-taking alone.

Participants in the perspective-taking group short response answers also varied greatly. While this is also a good indicator of whether or not the participant feels empathy towards the interviewee, it is not quantitatively measured. An example of a participant's response included "Financial help from the institutions that made profit from the slavery." This respondent responded in favor of all forms of governmental support and strongly supported the H.R. 40 bill. Some respondents were unsure of what justice would look like, such as the participant who answered "I don't know how to answer that because the situation back then is so different than the situation today." Others felt like "[There was] nothing that can be done to correct what happened so long ago."

The two strongest factors that contributed to a respondent's attitude towards reparations was political ideology and their own history with slave descent. The data shows that being more conservative led to a respondent being less likely to support reparations and to score lower on a group's deservingness of governmental support. This finding is unsurprising, and even expected, since reparations is more likely to be supported by liberals. It requires financial compensation from the government, a fiscally liberal policy. The data also shows that the more sure a respondent is of being a slave descendant, the more likely they are able to feel empathy towards the interviewee and support reparations. This could be due to the fact that those who are more sure of their personal ties to slavery feel more connection to and empathy towards Fountain Hughes. They may see the interviewee not as a random formerly enslaved person, but as a reflection or surrogate of their own enslaved ancestors.

CONCLUSION

For centuries in the United States, Black Americans have been wronged and abused by its institution. This pattern of wrongdoing started with the enslavement of African people. Since the start of the cruelly forced servitude, African Americans have been beaten, traded, and exploited at the allowance, and even encouragement, of the government. After centuries of this institution prospering and millions of lives suppressed, the descendants of formerly enslaved people still suffer. From voter right suppression to unequal job opportunities to police brutality, many of these descendants are still grappling with the many negative aftermaths of slavery.

Many believe that reparations are a viable solution to mending the injustices done to the Black American community and leveraging the playing field. However, the vast majority of Americans, especially White Americans, do not see this potential solution as a desirable one. This study aimed to explore whether perspective-taking can decrease these negative attitudes towards reparations.

While many studies have been conducted over the use of perspective taking to change negative attitudes towards our groups and decrease stereotypes, none have been done on this particular topic. Whether perspective taking could be used to increase support towards reparations for the descendants of formerly enslaved people as a public policy was still unknown.

The data, however, shows that perspective-taking by itself did not have the greatest effect on increasing support for reparations. Instead, just watching the video of an enslaved person sharing his experience was key. By having respondents connect in this way, it increased a desire for compensating the interviewee directly, supporting reparations, and supporting the H.R. 40

bill. The two strongest indicators of a respondent's attitude towards reparations was political ideology and their own history with slave descent.

There are many possible reasons why perspective-taking did not induce more support for reparations from respondents in comparison to those who just watched the interview. One reason could be that watching the video of Fountain Hughes was the primary way respondents would experience empathy towards the interviewee. In other words, watching the interview changed their attitude towards reparations, making the questions they were asked unnecessary or insignificant to making them more empathetic or likely to experience attitudinal change. Based on these results, maybe a way for the conditions to be strengthened could be for the knowledge condition to just be a video on factual information without a narrative. The video clearly holds significance in changing the participants' attitudes towards reparations.

Another important thing to consider is that the support for reparations is much greater in this survey after respondents watch the video in comparison to the overall support for reparation in America, which is currently around 20%. This may suggest that there are many ways that support towards reparations can be increased.

REFERENCES

- Batson, C D. *The Altruism Question: Toward a Social Psychological Answer*. Hillsdale, N.J: L. Erlbaum, Associates, 1991. Print.
- Berndsen, Mariëtte, and Craig McGarty. "Perspective Taking and Opinions about Forms of Reparation for Victims of Historical Harm." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 38.10 (2012): 1316-28. *MEDLINE*. Web.
- Courtney Shelton Hunt, and Brandon Hunt. "Changing Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities: Experimenting with an Educational Intervention." *Journal of Managerial Issues* 16.2 (2004): 266-80. *ABI/INFORM Global (Corporate)*. Web.
- Galinsky, A. D., and G. B. Moskowitz. "Perspective-Taking: Decreasing Stereotype Expression, Stereotype Accessibility, and in-Group Favoritism." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 78.4 (2000): 708-24. *MEDLINE*. Web.
- Grigorieff, Alexis, Christopher Roth, and Diego Ubfal. *Does Information Change Attitudes Towards Immigrants? Representative Evidence from Survey Experiments*. 10419 Vol. Bonn: Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), 2016. Web.
- Hannah-Jones, Nikole. "It is Time for Reparations." *The New York Times Magazine*. Web. June 6th 2020 <<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/24/magazine/reparations-slavery.html?smid=tw-share>>.
- Iyengar, Shanto. "Framing Responsibility for Political Issues: The Case of Poverty." *Political behavior* 12.1 (1990): 19. *Periodicals Index Online Segments 1-50*. Web.
- Kalla, Joshua L., and David E. Broockman. "Reducing Exclusionary Attitudes through Interpersonal Conversation: Evidence from Three Field Experiments." *The American political science review* 114.2 (2020): 1-16. *CrossRef*. Web.
- Lisa M. Jewell – (candidate), et al. *Modifying Heterosexuals' Negative Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Gay Men and Lesbian Women: Recommended Practices for the Design of Attitudinal and Behavioural Change Interventions*. Web.

- Pettigrew, Thomas F., et al. "Recent Advances in Intergroup Contact Theory." *International journal of intercultural relations* 35.3 (2011): 271-80. *CrossRef*. Web.
- Sherman, Aleksandra, Lani Cupo, and Nancy Marie Mithlo. "Perspective-Taking Increases Emotionality and Empathy but does Not Reduce Harmful Biases Against American Indians: Converging Evidence from the Museum and Lab." *PloS one* 15.2 (2020): e0228784. *MEDLINE*. Web.
- Simonovits, Gabor, Gabor Kezdi, and Peter Kardos. "Seeing the World through the Other's Eye: An Online Intervention Reducing Ethnic Prejudice." *The American political science review* 112.1 (2018): 186-93. *CrossRef*. Web.
- Todd, Andrew R., Galen V. Bodenhausen, and Adam D. Galinsky. "Perspective Taking Combats the Denial of Intergroup Discrimination." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48.3 (2012): 738-45. *CrossRef*. Web.
- Vescio, Theresa K., Gretchen B. Sechrist, and Matthew P. Paolucci. "Perspective Taking and Prejudice Reduction: The Mediation Role of Empathy Arousal and Situational Attributions." *European journal of social psychology* 33.4 (2003a): 455-72. *CrossRef*. Web.
- . "Perspective Taking and Prejudice Reduction: The Mediation Role of Empathy Arousal and Situational Attributions." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 33.4 (2003b): 455-72. *CrossRef*. Web.
- Walter G. Stephan and Krystina Finlay. *Empathy*. Journal of Social Issues, 1999. Web.
- Zebel, Sven, et al. "Dehumanization and Guilt as Distinct but Related Predictors of Support for Reparation Policies." *Political psychology* 29.2 (2008): 193-219. *CrossRef*. Web.