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PERCEPTIONS OF RACIAL GAPS, THEIR CAUSES, AND WAYS TO REDUCE THEM

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ABSTRACT

Using new large-scale survey and experimental data, we investigate how respondents perceive racial inequities between Black and white Americans, what they believe causes them, and what interventions, if any, they think should be implemented to reduce them. We intentionally over-sample Black respondents, cover many US cities, and survey both adults and young people of ages 13 through 17. In the experimental parts, we consider the causal impact of information on racial inequities (such as the evolution of the Black-white earnings gap or the differences in mobility for Black and white children) and explanations for these inequities (i.e., the deep-seated roots and long-lasting consequences of systemic racism) on respondents' views. Although there is heterogeneity in how respondents perceive the magnitude of current racial gaps in economic conditions and opportunities, the biggest discrepancies are in how they explain them. There is a stark partisan gap among white respondents, particularly in the perceived causes of racial inequities and what should be done about them. White Democrats and Black respondents are much more likely to attribute racial inequities to adverse past and present circumstances and want to act on them with race-targeted and general redistribution policies. White Republicans are more likely to attribute racial gaps to individual actions. These views are already deeply entrenched in teenagers, based on their race and their parents' political affiliation. A policy decomposition shows that the perceived causes of racial inequities correlate most strongly with support for race-targeted or general redistribution policies, a finding confirmed by the experimental results.

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An online appendix is available at http://www.nber.org/data-appendix/w29245

1 Introduction

In the United States, median Black household income is around 60% of the median white household income. A Black man's life expectancy is on average 4.5 years shorter than that of a white man; a Black woman's life expectancy is three years shorter than that of a white woman. The share of Black Americans who live below the poverty line is more than twice that of white Americans. Black homeownership rates are just above half of white homeownership rates. These glaring racial gaps are by no means recent or unexposed, yet the public debate ebbs and flows with very little agreement on the sources of these problems and what should be done about them. Are many people simply unaware of the disparate opportunities and outcomes between Black and white Americans? Or do people see the same reality but explain its existence very differently? Perhaps people disagree on whether anything should be done at all, as shown by the longstanding undercurrent of racial attitudes in shaping support for redistribution (Gilens, 1995, 1996). Or is it that people agree that policy action is needed, but disagree on whether broad income-targeted redistribution or race-targeted interventions should be prioritized?

In this paper, we study what a large sample of Black and white Americans know about racial inequities, what they believe causes them, and what, if anything, they think should be done to reduce them. We are interested in documenting perceptions about racial gaps along many dimensions, focusing on respondents' views about the circumstances and opportunities of their racial group and that of the other group. Considering both race-targeted and income-targeted redistribution policies to reduce racial gaps, we investigate whether differences in policy views lie in people's perceptions of racial inequities or in their beliefs of what causes these differences. Finally, we want to understand whether these views are already formed early in life, during the teenage years.

To answer these questions, we run several large-scale surveys in the US, focusing on non-Hispanic Black and white respondents. We survey both adults and teenagers aged 13 through 17. The surveys are representative along the dimensions of income, age, and gender within race groups, but Black respondents are oversampled and represent half of the sample. Respondents are asked in detail about perceptions of the economic conditions, opportunities, and outcomes of both Black and white Americans. The survey also elicits a range of attitudes on racial issues and views on potential causes for racial inequities. Respondents are then asked their degree of support for race-targeted policies and general redistribution policies. Importantly, to minimize the risk of respondents distorting their answers, we formulate questions as impersonally as possible and do not ask respondents directly about what could well be their own racism. Our survey contains many more variables on a range of perceptions and attitudes than the ones we use in this paper, opening up possibilities for future research.

In the experimental part of the paper, we consider the causal impact of information on

and explanations for racial inequities on respondents' views. We show respondents one of three video treatments: information about the historical earnings gap between Black and white people in the US, an illustration of the differences in social mobility between Black and white children, and an explanation of systemic racism, in particular some of its deep-seated roots and long-lasting consequences.

We find significant racial and partisan gaps in the perceptions of the economic conditions and opportunities of Black and white Americans. But the biggest disagreements between respondents lie in their perceived causes of racial inequities and, subsequently, in what should be done to remedy them. Furthermore, the perceptions and attitudes of the average white respondent obscure a large heterogeneity by political affiliation. Along many dimensions, white Democratic respondents are more aligned with Black Democratic respondents than with white Republicans. Black and white Democratic respondents are much more likely to attribute persistent racial gaps to slavery, longstanding discrimination, and racism, and want to reduce them through income-targeted redistribution and race-targeted policies. White Republican respondents tend to view racial inequities primarily as the result of lack of effort or individual decisions, and to support less intervention to reduce them.

Strikingly, these racial and partisan gaps are already prevalent among teenagers. In particular, teenagers' views imply substantial partisan gaps in line with their parents' political affiliation. Their views are even more polarized across political lines than those of their parents.

We also leverage our fine-grained location data at the ZIP code level for respondents and their history of moves, and match their individual-level perceptions, views, and attitudes to the characteristics of their residential area. We find that for white adult respondents, exposure to more Black people and larger economic gaps in their ZIP code are strongly correlated with attributing racial gaps to adverse circumstances, slavery, racism, and discrimination, and with favoring policies to close them. Furthermore, some of our respondents were surveyed before the murder of George Floyd by Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, while the rest were surveyed shortly afterward. We can see clear changes in the racial attitudes of the average white respondent soon after Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020, but most of these are short-lived and fade by the end of June 2020.

When we decompose policy views into underlying factors that shape them, it is not the perceived magnitudes of racial gaps but rather their perceived causes that have the highest predictive power. Support for race-targeted policies is strongly correlated with the belief that past and present discrimination and racism are to blame. Support for general redistribution is positively correlated with perceptions of racism and discrimination today, more weakly associated with perceived past slavery and discrimination, and negatively correlated with the belief that Black people are poor because of lack of effort rather than due to adverse circumstances. Similarly, a decomposition of the partisan and racial gaps in policy views

shows that divergences lie in the explanations for racial inequities that people believe in, not in the magnitudes of racial inequities they perceive. The decomposition of policy views is similar for the teenager sample.

The experimental part of our study confirms these findings. Showing people information on the differences in earnings and opportunities between Black and white people has first-stage effects on their perceptions but does not move policy views. On the contrary, explaining some of the causes and consequences of systemic racism makes respondents more supportive of race-targeted and redistribution policies. Yet beliefs about the causes of racial inequities are entrenched and difficult to move for some respondents. Thus, while the treatment makes white Democrats support more policies to help close racial gaps, it has much weaker – and sometimes perverse – effects on white Republicans. The negative consequences of the treatment on white right-wing respondents appear to be partially driven by those who consider it to be left-wing biased, a perception that is itself endogenous to their prior views. These findings are consistent with earlier results in the literature that some groups can react defensively to information about inequities.

Our paper contributes to a deeper understanding of people's perceptions about the conditions and opportunities of their own and other racial groups. In a survey from 1994 in Los Angeles, Bobo and Johnson (2000) find that while "just about everyone sees and agrees on the presence of race-linked differences in economic standing," there is disagreement on what to do about it, which is consistent with our results on a broader sample. Yet people may not even be fully aware of the extent of disparities in economic circumstances. Kraus et al. (2017) document an "unfounded optimism" about Black people's economic circumstances, a pattern we find in our sample mainly among white Republicans (see also Kraus et al., 2019, and Onyeador et al., 2021). Like us, Davidai and Walker (2021) find that respondents tend to overestimate the mobility of Black children in the US. However, we also show that Black respondents and particularly Black teens are overoptimistic about the mobility of white children. In line with our results, Haaland and Roth (2021) point to large partisan gaps in perceptions of how much discrimination there is in hiring against Black applicants. Those gaps are not closed by experimental information on the extent of discrimination. Our experimental treatments provide some concrete information about racial gaps in economic outcomes, but importantly, the systemic racism treatment attempts to dig into some of the systemic and longstanding causes of disparities. Understanding the systemic causes seems critical for people to be able to think of systemic change to address racial gaps, as advocated by Spriggs (2020) in his call to action after the George Floyd murder.

Extensive work from political science, sociology, and economics focuses on the link between support for redistribution or race-targeted policies and racial attitudes. According to Gilens (1995, 1996), racial attitudes are some of the key reasons for opposition to welfare

among white people. Luttmer (2001) highlights the importance of racial group loyalty in attitudes toward welfare spending, whereby people perceive welfare recipients of their own racial group as more deserving (see also Fong and Luttmer, 2009, 2011). In addition to the "anti-solidarity effect" that leads voters to oppose transfers to racial groups viewed as "undeserving," racial issues may even lead voters to support a party that is more aligned with their views on racial issues, even if the party is also anti-redistribution through the "policy bundle effect" (Lee and Roemer, 2006; Lee et al., 2006). Importantly, stratification economics as explained in Darity (2005) provides explanations for how race as a group identity can function as a "positional good" and why white Americans may be supporting racist policies even if these are not in their best economic interests.

Regarding race-targeted policies, Bobo and Kluegel (1993) and Bobo and Johnson (2000) show that people's opposition to them results from a mix of self-interest (individual and group-specific), stratification beliefs, and racial prejudice. Kluegel and Bobo (2001) echo our findings that there are large racial gaps in both perceived discrimination and support for race-targeted policies, and that they are correlated. Yet such policies are likely to be crucial, as emphasized by Fryer et al. (2007), who cast doubts on whether race-blind policies can actually help achieve racial equality.

Political psychologists have highlighted the enduring and key role of racism – especially symbolic racism, in contrast to "Jim Crow" racism – for support for redistributive and race-targeted policies (Sears and Henry, 2003; Henry and Sears, 2009; Rabinowitz et al., 2009; Ditonto et al., 2013).[1] Krysan (2000) offers a review of the research on the sources of attitudes toward policies intended to benefit African Americans.

Our contributions come from the characteristics of our sample, our survey design, and the experimental analysis that allows us to make progress on causality. Our sample is large and geographically diverse, with a high share of Black respondents and both adult and teenage respondents. We dig into a broad range of perceptions about both Black and white Americans and their views on the causes of racial inequities. We furthermore contrast and compare both race-targeted and income-targeted policies.

Our paper also adds to the literature studying the effects of the racial composition and socioeconomic characteristics of one's environment. The two major hypotheses on how exposure to Black Americans could influence white Americans' perceptions can be summarized as the "intergroup competition hypothesis," according to which a higher share of minorities

[1] "Symbolic racism" is the term often used in this literature (Kinder and Sears, 1981; McConahay and Hough Jr., 1976; Sears and Kinder, 1971), but it has also been referred to as "modern racism" (McConahay, 1986), or "racial resentment" (Kinder and Sanders, 1996). It is contrasted with the so-called "old-fashioned," "redneck," or "Jim Crow" racism that incorporated social distance between the races, beliefs in the biological differences between races, and support for formal discrimination and segregation. "Symbolic racism" is described in the literature to signify that white people have become racially egalitarian in principle, but that new forms of prejudice, embodying both negative feelings toward Black people as a group and some conservative nonracial values, have become politically dominant.

is perceived as a threat to economic and political power by the majority group, and the "exposure hypothesis," whereby contact with the other group fosters more understanding and support for policies to reduce inequities. Glaser (1994) and Quillian (1996) find support for the intergroup competition hypothesis using county-level data. Krosch and Amodio (2014) show that perceived scarcity influences people's representations of race in a way that can foster discrimination, and that there are "motivated perceptions" through which racial and ethnic discrimination increases during hard economic times. Gay (2004) shows that living in high-quality neighborhoods decreases the salience of race for Black residents, making them less likely to believe that one's fate is closely linked to the fate of Black people as a group and less pessimistic about the severity of discrimination. Hunt et al. (2007) leverage a 1997 survey of Black women and find an inverse relationship between the share of Black residents in a neighborhood and perceived discrimination.

Also closely related is Cutler and Glaeser (1997), who show that Black people living in more segregated areas have worse schooling, employment, and family outcomes than those living in less segregated areas. Logan and Parman (2017b) find that segregation at the county level between 1880 and 1940 reduced homeownership rates for both Black and white households. Using a new and comprehensive measure of racial residential segregation to study both urban and rural areas, Logan and Parman (2018) show that segregation was correlated with higher mortality rates, but not always with worse mortality outcomes for Black residents than for white residents (for a history of the evolution of segregation in the US, see Logan and Parman, 2017a). Focusing on the interaction between segregation, racial animosity, and violence, Cook, Logan, and Parman (2018b) map this measure of segregation to interracial violence in the form of lynchings over the first half of the 20th century (see also Cook, Logan, and Parman, 2018a). Williams et al. (2021) emphasize the link between historical events and current inequality: places that historically had more lynchings are less likely to invest in social and labor market policies, with long-lasting consequences for Black Americans. Notably, Cook (2014) shows that increases in violence over the period 1870-1940 were associated with lower patenting activity of Black Americans, ultimately perpetuating economic inequality. Ananat and Washington (2009) find that higher segregation led to decreases in Black civic efficacy, as measured by the election of US Representatives who vote more toward liberal issues and in favor of legislation favored by Black citizens. Chetty et al. (2020) show the importance of neighborhood characteristics, in particular low levels of poverty and levels of racial bias, and high shares of Black fathers' presence, for the adult-life outcomes of Black men.[2] The outcome variables in our analysis are perceptions and attitudes rather than actual social or economic conditions.

Our work also extends the literature on teenagers' psychology and belief formation. Our

[2]The overall importance of neighborhoods for all children is highlighted by Chetty and Hendren (2018a,b) and Chetty et al. (2016).

detailed and tailored survey of teenage respondents allows us to compare their attitudes to those of adults. Psychologists consider childhood and adolescence to be "highly impressionable years" (Krosnick and Alwin, 1989). Social learning models of prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew et al., 1982; Sears, 1988; Katz, 1991) posit that individuals learn prevailing beliefs and attitudes about members of other racial groups from significant figures, such as parents, perhaps even before their own cognition has been developed. Our data corroborate this: teens with parents of a given political affiliation answer almost the same way as adults with the same affiliation.

Finally, it is impossible to write about racial issues without acknowledging that making these categorical distinctions in research itself may be perpetuating them. As highlighted by Fields and Fields (2012), racial categorization is a product of racism itself. We are still struggling with and reflecting on this important issue, and we welcome any feedback on this matter.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 describes the survey, data collection, and sample. Section 3 compares and contrasts perceptions of economic conditions, opportunities, and causes of racial inequities across respondents. Section 4 focuses on policy views and maps them into the factors that shape them. Section 5 presents the experimental results, and Section 6 provides concluding remarks.

2 Survey Design, Data Collection, and Sample

2.1 Data Collection and Sample

For this project, we only sample respondents who identify as "European American/White" and "African American/Black." We are thus excluding, among others, respondents who identify as Black, white Hispanic, or mixed race. We will use the terms "Black respondents" and "white respondents" for brevity. We ran an "adult survey" of respondents aged 18 to 69 and a "youth survey" on respondents aged 13 to 17.

We ran the adult survey in three waves: i) the first wave of 5,000 respondents from April 16 to July 4, 2019; ii) the second wave of 1,700 respondents from June 12 to June 29, 2020; and iii) the third wave without any treatment branch of 1,700 respondents from June 5 to June 29, 2020. The third wave is used for the descriptive part of the paper only. We will consistently control for the survey wave to filter out potential time-varying changes in perceptions. The total sample contains 8,407 respondents, out of which approximately 50% are Black and 50% white. We ran the youth survey between May 22 and July 23, 2020. That sample contains 2,005 respondents aged 13 to 17 and is also evenly split between Black and white respondents.

The surveys were distributed by the commercial survey company *Respondi* through its

mailing lists and dashboards. Respondents were only told the length of the questionnaire, but neither the topic nor the creator. They were assured that they were completely anonymous and that there was no way for us to ever link their responses to their identity. After clicking on the link, respondents were channeled to a consent page that informed them that they were about to take an academic research survey destined solely for research purposes and run by nonpartisan researchers. They were asked to respond accurately to the best of their knowledge and were assured that participation was entirely voluntary. The interface then guided respondents through some screening questions used to enforce the quotas, as we describe below.

The survey company rewarded respondents for completing the survey. Rewards take different forms, based on the respondent's preferences and the channel through which they are recruited, such as cash or reward points on loyalty programs with partners of the survey company (e.g., frequent traveler points for hotel chains or airlines). The median times for completing the first, second, and third wave were 31, 25, and 26 minutes. The median completion time for the youth survey was 25 minutes.

We imposed quotas on age, gender, and income for Black and white respondents separately. Geographically, we targeted respondents living in urban areas and ensured that we sampled enough respondents from the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. We somewhat under-sample the South to allow for more respondents from the other regions. Our sample contains respondents from 233 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) across the US.

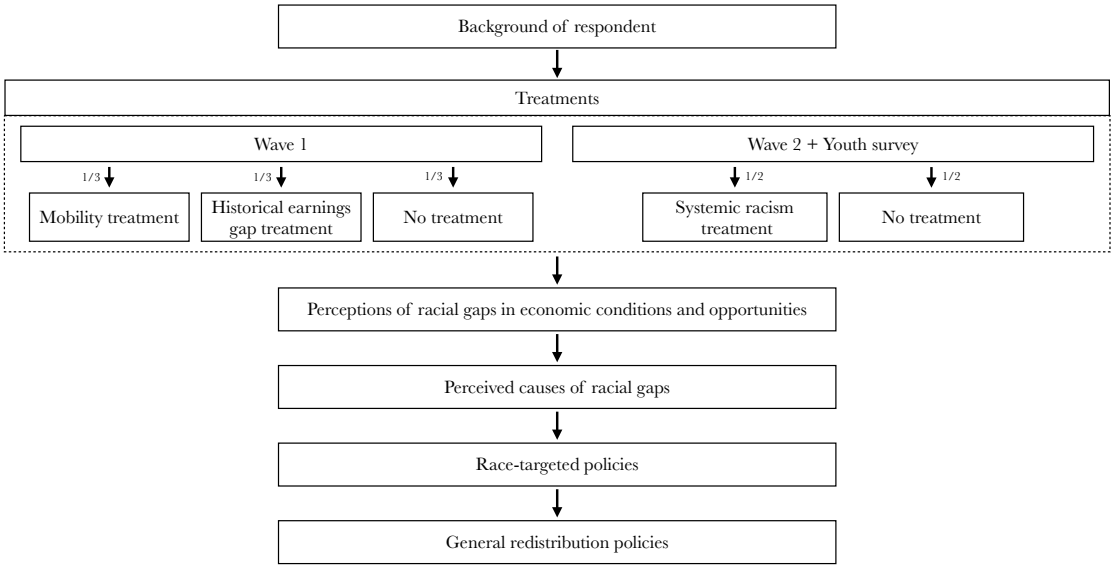
Tables 1 and 2 show the characteristics of the sample in each wave compared with those of the overall US population and the urban US population, which is the more relevant comparison group. The sample is by construction representative of the urban US population along the quota dimensions of age, gender, and income groups. In addition, the sample is also broadly representative on non-targeted dimensions such as the share of respondents who are married and those who are employed or unemployed. Overall, respondents are more likely to have completed high school and have at least a four-year college degree than the average adult. In the teenager sample, we are slightly skewed toward older Black teenagers, as 13 and 14 years old were particularly hard to reach. We also have more middle- to high-income teenagers, as compared to low-income ones.

2.2 The Survey

The complete questionnaires are in the Appendix, with a link that leads to the web interface of the survey. The adult and teenager surveys have the same structure, illustrated in Figure 1. The youth survey is shorter to avoid loss of focus. Questions are simplified, e.g., relying more on qualitative than on quantitative questions and using easier-to-understand wording. Teenagers were also given the option to answer that they "do not know" more often. We now

provide information on the blocks composing the survey and the core elements.

FIGURE 1: SURVEY STRUCTURE



Background socioeconomic questions. All respondents were first asked about their race and ethnicity, followed by a series of questions about their demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds, such as gender, income, education, employment status, ZIP code, marital and family status, and political leanings. We also queried them about their primary source of news and their overall media and social media consumption.

In the youth survey, 1,300 respondents were reached through their parents and 700 were contacted directly. In the former case, parents answered the questions about household income, their educational attainment, their own political affiliation, and their ZIP code before handing over the survey to their children. Teenagers were asked about their gender, age, race, city, and ZIP code in either case. We then elicited their family income, using a qualitative question asking them to rank their family on a scale from very poor to very rich and a quantitative one asking about the total income of their parents. We also asked whether their parents had graduated from college, what their parents' jobs are, whether they go to a private or public school, what their main source of news is, and how much time they spend on social media.[3]

[3]We have high confidence that the teens actually take the survey. The survey company tracks the respondent's age throughout their time in the panel and blocks respondents who give incoherent answers. The youth audience can only redeem their survey incentives (i.e., their rewards) via a 529 plan (a tax-advantaged investment vehicle designed to encourage saving for the future higher education expenses of a designated ben-

Our main measure of political affiliation is identification with a party: Democrat, Republican, or Independent.[4] Teenage respondents will be classified as belonging to Democrat, Republican, or Independent families depending on their parents' political affiliation. We collected this information in two ways. First, whenever possible, we asked the parents directly (when parents started the survey). Second, we also asked the teenager about their parents' political affiliation. To do so, we first asked whether they knew what the Republican and Democratic parties were and, if the response was affirmative (in 84% of the cases), we went on to ask if they thought their parents considered themselves Republicans, Democrats, or Independents. To classify the respondents, we prioritized the answer provided by the parents when available and otherwise used the response of the teenager. Overall, teenagers' answers about their parents' political affiliation appear to be very accurate. In 92% of the cases in which both the parents and the teenagers responded (41% of teenagers), responses were aligned. Only 17% of teenagers who knew the difference between parties said that they did not know their parents' political affiliation.[5] Overall, information on the parents' political affiliation is missing for only around 15% of teenagers. We also show that our results are robust if we restrict the sample to teenagers for which we have the parents' responses (see Appendix Section A-9). With some abuse of terminology, we will use the terms "Republican" or "Democratic teenagers" as a shortcut for teenagers "in Republican" or "in Democratic families."

Treatments. At this point in the survey, randomly chosen subsamples of respondents were shown one of three video treatments, described in more detail in Section 5.1. Two of them were information treatments. One provides information on the differences in intergenerational mobility between Black and white children (see the screenshots in Figure 2). The other shows the evolution of the earnings gap between Black and white people from the 1970s until today (see the screenshots in Figure 2). The third treatment is a narrative, explaining to respondents some of the origins and consequences of systemic racism (see the screenshots in Figure 3).

Perceptions of racial gaps. In this block, respondents are asked about their knowledge and

eficiary). There is no way to game the system and register in a 529 plan without being below 18. Furthermore, there are no clear incentives for adults to pretend to be teens, rather than simply take other surveys of similar lengths targeted toward adults, as they would then be paid weakly more and would not be constrained by the 529 plan.

[4] Adults were also asked to classify themselves in terms of their views on economic policy, along a spectrum ranging from "very conservative" to "very liberal," and for whom they voted in the 2016 presidential elections; and, if they did not vote, for whom they would have voted. In the 2020 wave, we also asked respondents which candidate they expected to vote for. As Jefferson (2020) points out, self-reported economic views on the liberal-conservative scale are strongly correlated with party affiliation for white Americans, but much less so for Black Americans. We therefore use party affiliation as our main measure of political views, and check for robustness using voting in the 2016 election.

[5] Most of the mismatched answers are when parents are Independent, but the teenager believes they are Democrats or Republicans. Only 0.5% wrongly considered their parents to be Democrats when they are, in fact, Republicans, or vice-versa.

perceptions of various socioeconomic outcomes for Black and white people in the US, such as intergenerational mobility, income levels, the evolution of incomes over time, inequality, educational attainments (e.g., share with a college degree, college completion rate, and college premium), reliance on welfare programs, labor market outcomes (e.g., unemployment rates), incarceration rates, teenage pregnancy rates, and share of single-parent households.[6] Many of the questions are asked about both Black and white people, in a randomized order to be able to benchmark perceptions of one racial group against the other. Questions about mobility and inequality were asked for the US overall and for the respondent's own ZIP code to see whether they correctly perceived their own neighborhood. We also ask respondents about their personal experience and expectations: Do they expect their effort will pay off in the future? Do they believe they or their children will become richer? The questions given to teenagers were nearly identical, with a few exceptions. For instance, teenagers were asked whether they expect their hard work at school to pay off and whether they will be better off than their parents in the future.

Perceived causes of racial gaps. In this block, we ask respondents to what extent they attribute racial gaps to past slavery and discrimination, to current enduring racism or discrimination, or to individual choices. We also seek out their own experience of racism and discrimination in a range of situations (e.g., at school, in getting a job, at work, in obtaining housing, in receiving medical care, on the street or in a public setting, by the police, in the judicial system); about how likely they think it is that Black people experience racism and discrimination in these exact situations; whether they believe racism is a severe problem in the US, and whether they think racism will decrease in the future.

Race-targeted policies. Respondents are next asked about their views on various policies to reduce racial gaps, namely whether the government should try to reduce inequalities in opportunities for Black and white children; whether Black people should be given preference in hiring and promotion or college admissions;[7] whether they believe that more changes are needed to give Black Americans equal rights with white people;[8] and whether they think that *"as a way to make up for the harm caused by slavery and other forms of racial discrimination*," the US should pay reparations.[9]

General redistribution policies. In this block, we ask respondents about their views on redistribution policies, namely whether the government should try to reduce inequality in opportunities for children from poor and rich families and income inequality between rich and poor people. We also ask to what extent high-income, middle-class, or low-income households

[6] Some of these questions were asked randomly only to subgroups of respondents to avoid making the survey too long for any respondent.

[7] Question taken from the American National Election Studies.

[8] Question taken from the Pew Research Center.

[9] Question taken from the Marist Poll.

pay their fair share in taxes and whether respondents support higher spending on a range of programs (e.g., helping low-income families, improving schools and overall conditions in poor neighborhoods, and providing decent housing and health insurance).

The survey ends by asking respondents whether they felt it was biased and inviting them to provide open-ended feedback.

3 Perceptions of Racial Gaps and Their Causes

In this section, we describe respondents' perceptions of the economic circumstances, mobility, and opportunities of Black and white people in the US and their beliefs about their causes. We compare and contrast views across racial groups and political party affiliations. For the latter dimension, the comparison is essentially between white Democrats and white Republicans, because the share of Black Republicans is small: 3.2% of Black adult respondents say they are Republican, and 3.3% of the Black teenagers in our sample live in Republican families.[10] In Appendix Section A-8, we provide results by vote for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, which are similar to the baseline results.[11]

We group survey questions by topic in Figures 4 through 6. In these figures, Panel A shows the results from the adult survey; Panel B shows those from the youth survey.[12] In each panel, the left sub-figures focus on racial gaps and depict the shares of Black and white respondents that satisfy the condition listed on the left vertical axis with its associated 90% confidence interval. The right vertical axis lists the coefficients and standard errors on the indicator for being Black (relative to the omitted category of being white) of a regression of the outcome on the left on an indicator for being Black, and the full array of individual characteristics (political affiliation, gender, age group, income group, education, state fixed effects, survey wave effects, and treatment indicators); we call these "partial correlations." The right set of sub-figures repeats this same analysis for white Democrats and white Republicans. The numbers on the right vertical axis are the coefficients on being a white Democrat (where the omitted category is the indicator for being a white Republican). Tables A-1 through A-10 provide the complete set of regression results associated with these figures, which also allow to formally test for the significance of differences in views between various groups. Due to space constraints, we do not depict the answers to all survey questions, but they are all summarized in Appendix Section A-4. In Table A-16, we formally test for the significance of

[10] Related, Washington (2006) studies how Black Republican candidates affect voter turnout as compared to Black Democratic candidates.

[11] The classification of respondents by vote allows us to assign those that considered themselves as Independents to one of the two political sides. 2,029 out of 8,400 respondents consider themselves as Independents; 580 respondents report not supporting either Trump or Clinton in 2016.

[12] Variations in the variable labels for adults and teens are due to the simpler formulations in the youth survey, where relevant, as explained in Section 2.

the differences in views and perceptions between teens and adults.

3.1 Perceived Economic Circumstances

Figure 4 shows some of the perceptions about the economic circumstances of Black and white Americans.[13] In each panel, the top set of rows depicts answers to qualitative questions; the bottom rows show answers to quantitative questions that can be compared to reality.

There are some stark and widespread misperceptions. For instance, regardless of race, all respondents overestimate the share of Black people in the US. The average perception is 42%, when the reality is 13%. Republicans overestimate the share only slightly more than Democrats do.[14] The answers do exhibit coherent patterns: when asked about the share of Black people in their ZIP code, white respondents decrease their estimated percentage of Black people, while Black respondents increase it.[15]

Respondents across the board also dramatically overestimate the shares of both Black and white people with a college degree. This highlights the importance of benchmarking respondents' views about Black people in the US to those about white people to avoid drawing false conclusions. Benchmarking is also essential when comparing respondents across the political spectrum. For instance, Republicans overestimate the share of Black people with a college degree significantly more than Democrats do, but they also overestimate the share of white people with a college degree. Democrats underestimate the share of Black men who are not employed, but they underestimate it for white men too.

Nevertheless, there are heterogeneities in perceptions. Republican respondents perceive better current economic circumstances for Black Americans than Democrats do.[16] Black respondents are overall more pessimistic about the economic conditions of Black people. They are more likely to think that Black children attend worse schools, that white applicants get more frequent job offers, that the earnings gap between Black and white people has not decreased, and that white people earn more than Black people at the national level

[13]Tables A-1 and A-2 provide more detailed regression results using all individual covariates and summary statistics. Additional variables related to economic circumstances that the survey asked about can be found in Table A-11.

[14]The median response is 40%, indicating that the distribution is not that skewed; prevalent responses are 30%, 40%, or 50%, with more than 45% of respondents choosing a number between 30% and 50%. In the 2000 wave of the General Social Survey (GSS), the estimated share of Black people in the US by white respondents was 29.1%, that of Black respondents was 37.8%. These answers are thus comparable to ours, especially given that the share of non-Hispanic Black people has increased in the US.

[15]The accurate average for the share of Black residents in white respondent's ZIP codes is 12%; for Black respondents, it is 38%. Black respondents believe that share to be 52%, and white respondents believe it is 35%. Note that the percentage of Black residents by ZIP code in our sample (25%) is higher than the US average since we oversampled Black respondents and ZIP codes in the US that exhibit racial segregation. Overall, white respondents starkly overestimate the share of Black respondents even in their own ZIP code. Black respondents do as well, but to a lesser extent.

[16]These gaps are noisier when considering unconditional means but are highly significant when considering partial correlations, controlling for other personal characteristics such as income or age.

and in their ZIP code. Overall, disagreement between respondents appears more significant on the qualitative questions, which one could view as more prone to subjectivity than the quantitative ones.

Youth survey. Teenagers' perceptions are similar to those of adults along the dimensions that were common to both surveys. The racial gaps are almost identical to those of adults, with Black teenagers more likely to think that the economic outcomes for Black people in the US are worse (see Table A-16 for a formal comparison). However, the partisan gaps in perceptions among teenagers are more starkly pronounced than among adults. This larger gap is mainly driven by teenagers from Republican families having on average more right-leaning perceptions than their parents along many dimensions. Furthermore, teens are more likely than their parents to think that there has been progress made on racial economic disparities, as measured by the racial gap in earnings since the 1970s.

3.2 Perceived Social Mobility and Expectations

Figure 5 summarizes views on mobility and expectations about the future, with quantitative answers in the top set of rows and qualitative attitudes in the bottom set of rows.[17]

In the adult survey, in Panel A, respondents are overoptimistic about social mobility overall, but especially overestimate the chances of Black children. There is some understanding that chances are lower for Black children than for white ones, but the magnitudes are incorrect. On average, respondents believe that 43% of Black children from the bottom quintile will make it to at least the third quintile, whereas the actual share is 25%, and that 56% of white children will make this advancement whereas the reality is 46%.

There are apparent partisan gaps in the perceptions of mobility of Black children, especially, and more agreement on the mobility of white children. White Republican respondents are more overoptimistic than white Democratic respondents about the mobility of Black children.[18] Both Black and white respondents are strongly overoptimistic about the mobility of Black children, but only Black respondents tend to starkly overestimate the mobility of white children. Put differently, Black respondents overestimate overall mobility by more, but especially for white children, while white respondents are relatively accurate about the mobility of white children and strongly overestimate Black children's mobility.

According to Davidai and Walker (2021) white respondents may overestimate the mobility of Black people because they think that a lot more progress has been made on racial issues than is the case. "Self-preservation motives" have been argued to play a role among Black

[17] Tables A-3 and A-4 provide more detailed regression results using all individual covariates and summary statistics.

[18] They are also more likely to believe that their own effort has paid off or will pay off, consistent with a firmly held belief in individual effort and responsibility on the right of the political spectrum (Alesina et al., 2018).

Americans (Shepherd and Kay, 2012), although our findings here show that Black Americans greatly overestimate the mobility of white children. Right-wing respondents may underestimate the gap in mobility because of "system-justifying" motives. In contrast, left-wing respondents may be focusing on general inequalities and underestimate racial inequalities specifically (Davidai and Walker, 2021).

We also asked respondents about their own perceived mobility to date and expectations about the future. Black respondents appear to have similar levels of hope for the future but also more disappointment with their past experience. Indeed, they are equally likely to believe that their efforts will pay off in the future or that they or their children can make it to the top 20%. But when asked whether their past efforts have paid off, they are less likely to think so.

Youth survey. Panel B of Figure 5 shows that, on average, teenagers are aware that white children are more likely than Black children to move up the social ladder.[19] The share of teenagers who believe that the chances of Black children born in low-income families to grow up to be among the rich or very rich families are at least "fairly high" is less than half of the share that believe this for white children (16% versus 39%).[20] However, this hides a stark heterogeneity between white and Black teenagers. White teenagers perceive the chances of Black and white children to be somewhat different (respectively, at 14% and 23%). Black teenagers do not differ much from white teenagers in their perceived chances for Black children, but they are strikingly more optimistic about white children's opportunities.

When it comes to expectations about their own mobility, Black teenagers are somewhat less likely than white teenagers to think that their efforts in school will pay off, equally likely to believe that they will graduate from college, but more optimistic about becoming "rich" in the future and being better off than their parents. This can reflect differences in their perceptions of the economic condition of their parents and a different understanding of what "rich" means.

3.3 Perceived Causes of Racial Gaps

Figure 6 shows large differences between Black and white respondents in the perceived causes of racial gaps.[21] The share of Black respondents who believe in lack of effort as the root cause of poverty overall (43%) and Black people specifically (37%) is smaller than the share of white respondents. Less than a quarter of Black respondents believe that Black people could be "just as well off as white people" if only they tried harder, and 71% believe that "generations

[19] See also the more detailed Table A-4.

[20] Since adults were asked a quantitative question, the answers are not one-for-one comparable to the answers to the youth survey's qualitative question and we cannot compare teenagers' responses to reality.

[21] Tables A-5 and A-6 provide more detailed regression results using all individual covariates and summary statistics. Tables A-14 and A-15 show perceptions about discrimination in a variety of settings.

of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Black people to work their way out of the lower class."[22] White respondents are more likely to attribute being poor to low effort, especially for Black people, or think that Black people could be as well off as white people; only around half of them attribute today's racial gaps to past slavery and discrimination. 50% of white respondents, contrasted with 80% of Black respondents, think racism is a serious problem in the US. About one-fourth of Black respondents and one-eighth of white respondents believe the issue of racism will not improve or even worsen in the future.

The variable indicating that "Black people are often discriminated against" is constructed by averaging responses to the detailed questions that ask about their views on how often Black people are discriminated against in a variety of situations (in school, in finding a job, at work, in obtaining housing, in receiving medical care, in public, by the police, and in the judicial system), as summarized in Table A-14. We also ask respondents whether they "are themselves often discriminated against" in these settings. Black respondents are much more likely to believe that there is discrimination against Black people in all these settings and to report having experienced it firsthand.

Partisan differences in the perceptions of what drives inequalities in outcomes and opportunities are stark. White Democrats are much less likely to believe that Black people or people overall are poor because of a lack of effort and that Black people could be as well off as white people with more effort. They are more likely to say that past slavery is why Black people are economically worse off today. Among white respondents, the share of Democrats who thinks Black people are often discriminated against is consistently around twice that of Republicans for all the settings we ask about. White respondents are more likely than Black ones to agree with the statement that a white person is less likely to be admitted to a college or university program or hired, while an "equally or less qualified Black person" will be admitted or hired, but this is almost entirely driven by white Republican respondents (around 80% of which think this is the case).

Overall, partisan gaps in the perceived *causes* of racial inequities are much larger than partisan gaps in the perceived magnitudes of racial inequalities. Furthermore, Black respondents and white Democrats are relatively aligned in their views; the gap between white Democrats and Republicans is consistently more prominent than the gap between white Democrats and Black respondents (this can also be seen formally in Table A-5).

Youth survey. The large partisan gaps uncovered among adult respondents are even more pronounced among teenagers. For instance, 39% of white Democratic teenagers and 78% of white Republican ones believe that lack of effort is the cause for Black people being poor. 91% of white Democratic teenagers and 51% of white Republican ones believe that discrimination

[22]These two questions are taken from The Economist/YouGov Poll.

is the reason why Black people are economically worse off than white people. 71% of white Republican teenagers believe that white college applicants face a disadvantage in college admissions; only around one third of white Democratic teenagers believe this.[23] Furthermore, when it comes to the perceived causes of racial gaps, white Democratic teenagers are much more aligned with Black Democratic teenagers than they are with white Republican ones – similar to the patterns seen among adults. Overall, it appears that parents' beliefs about individual responsibility, the role of effort, and race, which are at the core of the partisan divide, have already been absorbed – and even amplified – by their teen children.

These findings echo the literature in social psychology and political science that shows that people are in general more prone to blame Black Americans for their hardships (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2019; Lei and Bodenhausen, 2017). The fact that respondents overestimate the mobility of Black people and their "chances of making it" could be further reinforcing the view that low-income Black Americans are to blame for their own situation (Kluegel and Smith, 1986), since, in a supposedly mobile society, individuals are more likely to be responsible for their outcomes.

In Appendix Tables A-12 and A-13, we further explore racial identity and attitudes toward the other racial group.

4 Views on Race-targeted and Redistribution Policies

This section focuses on support for two types of policies: race-targeted policies and income-targeted redistribution policies. The former directly condition on race. The latter do not explicitly depend on race but can indirectly shape racial gaps, given the income inequalities between Black and white people. We start with several descriptive statistics on policy views. We then decompose policy views into their determinants and explore what attitudes can account for the partisan and racial gaps in policy views that we observe. Finally, we study the impact of one's socioeconomic and demographic environment on views.

4.1 Description of Policy Views

Figure 7 summarizes respondents' views on race-targeted policies.[24] Racial gaps are particularly large in support for race-targeted policies, while partisan gaps among white respondents on these issues are typically smaller. But there are important nuances between different policies of this type, depending on where they lie on the spectrum from "equalizing outcomes" to "equalizing opportunities." First, an overwhelming majority of Black and white Democratic respondents believe that "*more changes are needed*" to give Black people equal rights, while

[23] Teenagers were only asked about college admission, not about hiring.

[24] Tables A-7 and A-8 provide more detailed regression results using all individual covariates and summary statistics. Tables A-9 and A-10 focus on redistribution policies.

less than a third of white Republican respondents do. Yet, there is no explicit agreement on how the government should do this specifically. Interventions to reduce unequal opportunities between Black and white children generate a lot of support across racial and political affiliation groups. But direct interventions such as preferential hiring or college admission for Black students are favored by only around a quarter of white respondents, regardless of political affiliation. It appears as if white respondents are supportive "in principle" of interventions to reduce racial gaps and that target children specifically but are more reluctant about policies that may affect them directly in college or the labor market. Notably, Black respondents are pretty divided too, with just about half supporting these direct types of interventions.[25] Finally, there is a huge racial gap on reparations, with little support among white Democratic and Republican respondents (33%) and strong support among Black respondents (79%).

The patterns on race-targeted policy views are similar in the youth survey but even more polarized by political affiliation because Republican teenagers are more opposed to many race-targeted policies than their parents. There are apparent differences by race too. Most notably, Black and white teenagers are very divided in their support for reparations. Furthermore, white teenagers are more strongly opposed than white adults to preferential college admissions, perhaps because they fear being directly affected by it.

Regarding redistribution policies, summarized in Figure 8, the biggest contrast is by far between white Republican and white Democratic respondents – adults and teenagers– which is more prominent than that between Black Democrats and white Democrats. Among adults and teenagers alike, there is no statistically significant difference in redistribution views among Black and white Democratic respondents (see Appendix Tables A-9 and A-10).

Policy views indices. To summarize policy views for the rest of this section, we create two policy indices. The "race-targeted policy index" is increasing in support for the direct policies that expressly condition on race from Figure 7. The "general redistribution index" is increasing in support for the general income-targeted policies from Figure 8 and decreasing in the view that upper-income people pay too much in taxes. In Panels A of Figure 9 (for adults) and Figure 10 (for teens), the bottom set of rows labeled "individual characteristics" shows some selected coefficients from a regression of the race-targeted policy index and the redistribution index on the full vector of individual covariates (all covariates are shown in Tables A-7 through A-10). This summary figure confirms that, among adults and teenagers, the partisan gap is significant on both race-targeted and redistribution policies. The racial gap is particularly large on race-targeted policies and much smaller on redistribution policies. Conditional on political affiliation, Black respondents are somewhat more supportive of redistribution.

[25] In fact, Ashok et al. (2015) find that African-Americans are one of the only groups (together with the elderly) for which support for redistribution has declined over time in the US, and map this to a decline in their support for race-targeted aid. The authors suggest that this is puzzling, given that the economic catch-up of Black people had stalled over that period.

Higher-income respondents are marginally more supportive of race-targeted policies but – as shown in abundant earlier work – less supportive of general redistribution. Similar patterns hold for college-educated respondents. Older respondents are significantly less supportive of race-targeted policies, even conditional on income, race, and political affiliation.

Overall, white Republican teenagers are even less supportive of race-targeted policies than their parents, while white Democratic teenagers do not hold significantly different views from theirs on that dimension. White Democratic teens are significantly more supportive of redistribution than their parents, but white Republican teens show similar support. As a result, partisan gaps in policy views are larger among teenagers than among adults.

To further identify patterns in support for these different policies, we use a clustering algorithm that identifies the groups of answers that tend to appear together and defines "profiles" of respondents based on these groups. Appendix Section A-3 describes this algorithm and the results.

George Floyd's murder. Our survey's second and third waves coincidentally happened shortly after George Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020, at the hands of Derek Chauvin, a white police officer. The first wave occurred several months before. Figure A-3 in the Appendix shows the evolution of policy views and perceived racism and discrimination. Among Black respondents, views are relatively stable from 2019 to the end of June 2020. Among white Democratic respondents, there is a temporary increase in the belief that racial gaps are due to current racism and discrimination and slavery, as well as in the perception that the police discriminate against Black Americans. They are also more likely to report being afraid of the police. By the end of June, however, their views have reverted to their 2019 levels. Support for race-targeted policies increases, and this effect persists until the end of June. Among white Republicans, there is a sharp increase in the belief that racial gaps are due to past slavery and discrimination and in support for race-targeted policies, but the effects dampen by the end of June. There are milder and more persistent upticks in the belief that racial gaps are due to current racism and discrimination and that Black people are discriminated against by the police and in the judiciary system. Although these results are noisy due to a lack of power, there is thus some suggestive evidence that attitudes among white respondents temporarily changed following Floyd's murder.

4.2 Decomposing policy views

Which underlying perceptions and beliefs are most strongly correlated with policy views on general redistribution and race-targeted policies? To answer this question, Panel A of Figure 9 shows the results from a regression of the race-targeted policy index and the redistribution index on variables capturing the underlying reasoning of respondents as well as the full array of

individual covariates. These coefficients are reported in the set of rows labeled "Mechanisms." Panel A of Figure 10 provides the counterpart from the youth sample.

The factors used are as follows: First, we construct an index that is higher if the respondent perceives the economic conditions of Black people as worse than those of white people (based on the variables in Figure 4) and an index increasing in the respondent's belief that the difference in mobility for white and Black children is larger (based on Figure 5). We also consider possible perceived causes of the racial gaps based on variables from Figure 6, i.e., current racism and discrimination (based on the variables "racism is a serious problem" and "Black people are often discriminated against"); past slavery and discrimination; and the belief that Black people could be as well off as white people if they tried. Furthermore, we control for whether respondents think that lack of effort (rather than luck) is the main reason people overall are poor; and whether they believe that white people are currently disadvantaged in hiring or college admission. Finally, to account for a respondent's self-interest, we control for their own perceived opportunities (i.e., whether they think that their own effort will pay off, from Figure 5), in addition to the usual controls, including race and income. To be able to compare magnitudes, all factors are standardized by subtracting the control group mean and dividing by the control group standard deviation; in case a factor is composed of several variables, we take the average of the underlying standardized variables and standardize again.[26]

The factors most strongly correlated with support for race-targeted policies are those pertaining to the perceived causes of racial gaps, i.e., the beliefs that racism and discrimination are serious issues today and that past discrimination and slavery still have adverse consequences for Black people. Other views are much less predictive. For redistribution policy views, these two factors remain important, although beliefs about current perceived racism and discrimination matter more than beliefs about past slavery and discrimination. Furthermore, perceptions of worse opportunities for mobility for Black people are also correlated with stronger support for redistribution. The belief that Black people's lack of effort is the reason they are poor (and that they could be as well off as white people if they worked harder) is correlated with lower support for redistribution, much more strongly than the belief that lack of effort is the reason people overall are poor. This can reflect a systemic bias and is also consistent with the misperception that Black people represent a large share of the recipients of welfare and the beneficiaries of redistribution. Indeed, as Table A-11 shows, respondents tend to think that more than half of SNAP, Medicaid, and welfare recipients are Black, when the reality was between 16% and 25% at the time of the survey for these three programs. The decomposition for the youth sample yields similar results.

[26] In Panel A of Figure A-4, we include these factors one by one instead of together. While the magnitudes differ, the relative effects are very similar.

Decomposing racial and partisan gaps in policy views. Panel B of Figure 9 performs Gelbach decompositions (Gelbach, 2016) of the racial and partisan gaps in support for race-targeted and redistribution policies. The goal is to understand what share of the racial and partisan gaps are explained by each of the factors. These shares are represented by the bars in the chart. The unexplained portion corresponds to the percentage of these gaps that remains, even after controlling for these mechanisms.[27]

We find that the same variables that most strongly correlate with policy views also make up large shares of the partisan and racial gaps. Lower support for race-targeted policies among white than among Black respondents can be traced to weaker beliefs in current racism and discrimination (34% of the racial gap) and the consequences of past slavery and discrimination (19%). Furthermore, 3% of the racial gap can be attributed to the fact that white respondents do not perceive worse economic conditions for Black people, 3.4% to the belief that Black people are poor because of lack of effort, and 2.2% to the belief that white people are currently disadvantaged.

The partisan gap is also mainly explained by white Republicans not believing as firmly in current racism and discrimination (37%) or the consequences of past slavery and discrimination (20%). An additional 5% of the partisan gap is accounted for by the belief that people are poor because of lack of effort, 3% by the perception that white people are currently disadvantaged, and 4% because right-wing respondents do not perceive as large racial gaps in economic outcomes as left-wing respondents. Nevertheless, around 40% of the racial and partisan gaps on race-targeted policies remain unexplained, suggesting that there are additional concerns, ideologies, or beliefs that drive them.

On redistribution policy, lower support among white respondents on average is explained predominantly by weaker beliefs in current racism and discrimination (44% of the racial gap) and, to a lesser extent, by beliefs in the consequences of past slavery and discrimination (12%). Perceptions that racial gaps are due to lack of effort account for 14% of the lower support of white respondents – contrasted with only 2% due to perceptions that people, in general, are poor because of lack of effort. The belief that white people are disadvantaged makes up an additional 5%, and perceived economic conditions and mobility gaps account for close to 6%. These factors can explain the entire racial gap in views on redistribution policy.[28] We are thus much better able to capture the variation in general redistribution views between Black and white respondents – which is small to start with – than the variation in

[27] More precisely, the full partisan or racial gap is equal to the coefficient on the indicators for being "White" and "Republican" in a regression of policy views on all "individual characteristics," but excluding the variables from the panel "mechanisms." The unexplained portion corresponds to the coefficient on these indicators in a regression of policy views on all variables included in the panel "mechanisms" and "individual characteristics." The shares are expressed as a percent of the total racial or partisan gaps.

[28] The coefficient on the indicator for being "White" turns mildly positive after controlling for all these factors although it is negative when they are excluded.

their race-targeted policy views. The partisan gap on redistribution policy is driven by these perceptions as well. Yet, contrary to the racial gap in redistribution views, 28% of the partisan gap on redistribution remains unexplained. This could be because there are many other factors unrelated to racial issues that shape views on redistribution and that diverge across party lines (see Stantcheva, 2020).[29]

In Figure 10, the decomposition of policy views highlights the same essential factors and overall similar patterns for teens.

4.3 The Role of Exposure to Racial Gaps

Does the place of residence shape perceptions and attitudes on race-related issues and redistribution? Since we know respondents' ZIP codes, we can study the impacts of local racial gaps on their views. We use the following variables at the ZIP code level: the share of Black residents; the difference in unemployment rates for Black and white residents; the racial gap in income per capita; and the Gini coefficient. Variables that we match to respondents at the county level are the gap in mobility for white and Black residents (measured as the probability of children born to families in that ZIP code reaching the top quintile of the national household income distribution); the gaps in college degree completion, incarceration, and the share of children with two-parent families. We also use segregation at the MSA level, as measured by the dissimilarity index. Appendix Section A-1.2 describes the data sources.

We aggregate these variables into an index at the ZIP code level that is increasing in the disadvantages faced by Black people relative to white people, as well as when the racial composition tilts more toward Black residents. It measures respondents' exposure to Black people and the disadvantages faced by them in their community. We then define an indicator for "Exposure to racial gaps" to be equal to 1 for respondents who reside in a ZIP code for which the index is above its median value. An alternative specification using only the circumstances of Black residents (rather than the gap between Black and white residents) is shown in Table A-22. Because we have respondents' histories of moves, we can further distinguish between respondents who moved to their current MSA and those born there.

The columns in Table 3 report the coefficients on the exposure to racial gaps indicator interacted with indicators for being white and Black and the main effect of being white. The coefficients come from regressions of the outcomes in each row on these three covariates and indicators for political affiliation, gender, age group, income group, education, state, survey wave, and treatment status, as well as controls for log per capita income and log population

[29]Note that if we perform the partisan decomposition only on white Democrats and white Republicans (Panel B of Figure A-5), the patterns are similar because white respondents drive the partisan gap to start with. Suppose we instead focus on Black Democrats and white Democrats (Panel A of Figure A-5) and decompose the racial gap. In that case, the results look very different because Black Democrats' and white Democrats' views are relatively aligned (see Figures 7 and 8).

in the respondent's ZIP code.[30]

The numbers in the last column simply reiterate the findings from earlier sections, namely that white respondents are less likely to understand the existing gaps in economic outcomes or mobility between Black and white people, to attribute them to racism, past slavery, and discrimination, and to support policies to target the racial gap and redistribution directly. However, all of these effects are significantly dampened for white respondents who live in ZIP codes in which there are more Black residents and in which they witness more adverse circumstances for Black people. The most potent effects are on the perceived causes of the racial gap, which, as seen in Section 4.2, are most strongly correlated with policy views. Consistent with this, white respondents in areas where Black residents do significantly worse than white ones are more supportive of race-targeted policies and general redistribution (controlling for average income per capita at the ZIP code level). For Black respondents, these effects are mainly insignificant.[31]

Movers and non-movers. We can further compare respondents who have moved to their current MSA to those that have lived there since birth. This analysis is restricted to the 2019 wave of the survey, in which we elicited respondents' history of moves. Table A-29 replicates the regression results from Table 3 on the 2019 sample. Table A-30 then considers respondents who currently live in the same MSA as their MSA at birth, while Table A-31 focuses on respondents who have moved to a different MSA. The effects are significant only for those respondents who have lived in the same MSA since birth. This suggests that they are not driven by movers selecting residence based on their views about racial gaps. These patterns could be explained by several mechanisms: selection among those who remain in areas with large racial gaps, early life exposure being more correlated with views, and length of exposure being significant.

We can of course not give these patterns any causal interpretation. Still, they suggest a correlation between white respondents' racial attitudes and the circumstances of the Black residents that they witness in their daily lives. The sign of the correlation is more in line with exposure shaping views more favorably than exposure leading to exacerbated local inter-group competition, as suggested in Glaser (1994) and Quillian (1996).

Youth survey. Table A-21 shows that local effects are much noisier and more muted for teenagers. One possible explanation for this lack of strong effect is that teenagers' primary

[30]Due to space constraints, this table only shows some of the main outcome variables. Table A-23 provides results for the individual variables making up the index. Tables A-24 through A-28 show the effect of the index on all attitudes, perceptions, and policy view variables.

[31]One exception is that both Black and white people in areas with larger racial gaps believe that Black people could be as well off as white people if only they tried harder. Perhaps these respondents – regardless of race – express a more optimistic belief about what could happen in the future, even if they attribute the current disadvantages mainly to circumstances outside Black people's control.

sources of news are more likely to be "social media" (51% of teens relative to 35% of adults say so, see Tables A-19 and A-20), and social media could be connecting them to influences that are outside their local area. In addition, "news" on social media is generally less locally specific than local newspapers or TV channels.

5 Experimental Effects of Information on Systemic Racism

In the experimental part of the survey, we show respondents three treatments of two different types. The first two treatments provide information about the racial gaps in earnings and mobility in the US but do not address the sources of these disparities. The third treatment explains some of the causes of racial gaps by discussing the origins and consequences of systemic racism. Below, we present the experimental results and discuss how to interpret them through the lens of existing models.

5.1 The Treatments

Information treatments. In Wave 1 of the survey, respondents were assigned to watch one of two short videos, designed by us, telling them about the differences in mobility of children from Black and white families (the "Intergenerational mobility gap treatment," which is 2 minutes long) or the evolution of the earnings gap between Black and white people since the 1970s (the "Historical earnings gap treatment," which is 1:10 minutes long). To make the information easy to understand and intuitive, the first video uses ladders with rungs representing the quintiles of the income distributions of parents and children (see Panels A and B of Figure 2). A final screen compares the differences in mobility between Black and white children (see Panel C). The historical earnings gap treatment video depicts the average difference in earnings between a Black and a white person in the 1970s and today, by using simple language such as "for every dollar earned by a white person," a Black person "on average earned 63 cents" (Panels D and E). It shows that, although earnings have increased in absolute levels over the last 50 years, the racial earnings gap has not been closed.

The systemic racism treatment: explaining some of the causes of the racial gap. Our third treatment is a video used in Wave 2 of the adult and youth surveys. This 3-minute video is made by a media organization (`https://www.act.tv`). Its goal is to define in simple terms what systemic racism is and to highlight its causes and consequences for racial inequality. It points out that there is no single obstacle confronting Black people in the US today, but rather myriad hurdles and persistent disadvantages dating back several generations.

Screenshots from this video are shown in Figure 3. The animation starts by presenting a white child living in a wealthy, majority-white neighborhood and a Black child living in

a poorer, majority-Black neighborhood (Panel A). The video explains that Black children are more likely to attend disadvantaged schools, be in crowded classes, have less well-paid teachers, and have less access to tutors or extracurricular activities (Panels B and C). It then goes on to introduce the concept of systemic racism, taking a historical perspective. It tells respondents about the much worse opportunities for the grandparents of the Black child. They faced redlining and segregation that prevented them from owning a house, attending college, and building wealth (Panel D). Wealth – or rather the lack of it – is then passed on from generation to generation and ultimately leads to very different opportunities for today's children (Panel E). The video also emphasizes that, even if the Black child ultimately attends the same college as the white child and gets excellent grades (Panel F), they still get fewer job offers (Panel G). It also explains that implicit racism can be one of the reasons why the unemployment rate is higher among Black people, even if they have a college degree (Panel H). Note that the treatment does not go back to slavery because it attempts to show some of the many hurdles to racial equality in more recent history, something many respondents are not well-aware of (See Davidai and Walker, 2021, and the references therein on many people overestimating the progress that has been made on racial issues.).

5.2 Experimental Results

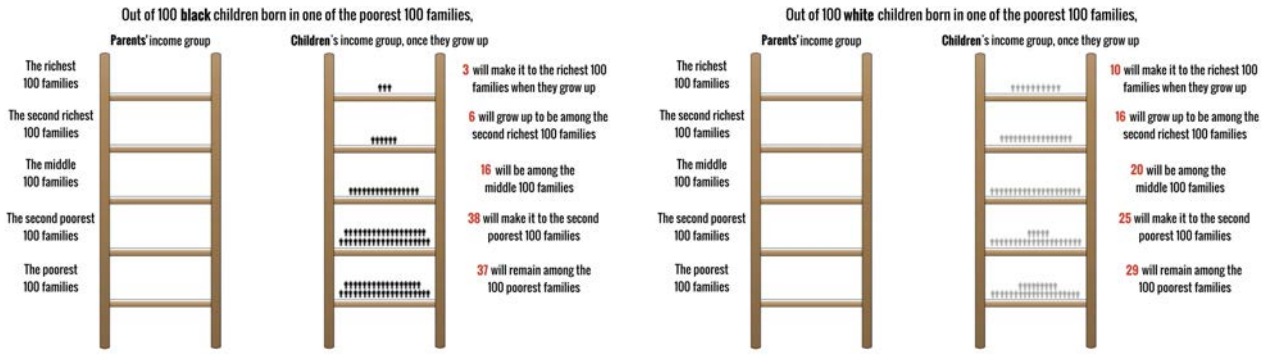
Figure 11 summarizes the effects of all three treatments on race-targeted and redistribution policy views. In the tables in Appendix Section A-6, Panel A reports the treatment effects of the mobility treatment, while Panel B reports the treatment effects of the historical earnings gap treatment. In each panel, we report treatment effects based on three separate specifications. The first row ("Treatment") shows the overall treatment effect; the next two rows show the effects of the treatment on Black and white respondents separately ("T × White" and "T × Black"); and the final two rows show treatment effects on white Democrats and white Republicans ("T × White Dem" and "T × White Rep"). Tables 4 and 5 report the first-stage effects of the systemic racism treatment, with more detailed policy variables in Tables A-7 through A-10. These heterogeneous treatment effects are also reported in the figures. As a robustness check, in Appendix Section A-8, we show the heterogeneity in treatment effects by Clinton-Trump voters. The experimental results are very similar.

The information treatments. The information treatments have significant first-stage effects. Thus, the mobility treatment significantly reduces treated respondents' perceived mobility of Black children (Panel A of Table A-33). The historical earnings gap treatment has significant first-stage effects on the perception that the Black-white earnings gap has not decreased (Panel B of Table A-32).

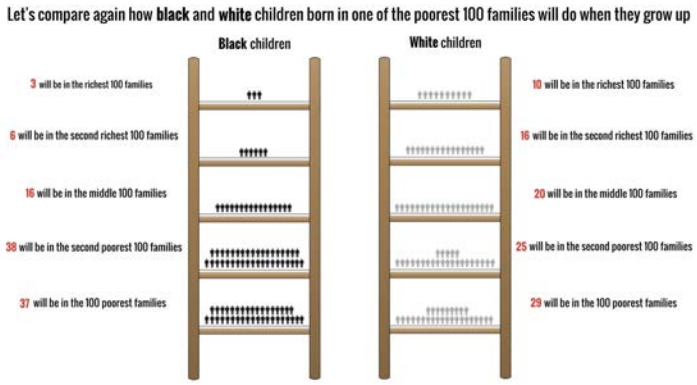
However, neither of these two information treatments change respondents' views on the causes for these gaps (see Table A-34). Because they only shift the perceived conditions and

Figure 2: Treatments Providing Information on Racial Gaps in Earnings and Opportunities

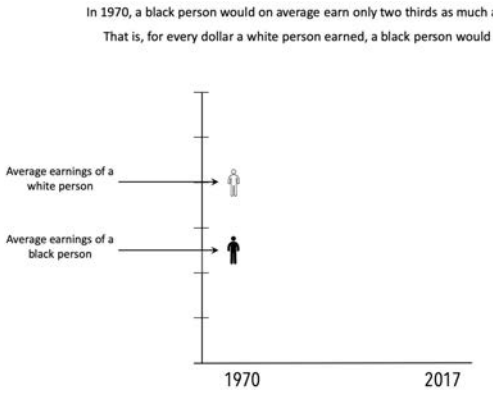
(a) Intergenerational Mobility for Black Children (b) Intergenerational Mobility for White Children



(c) Racial Gap in Intergenerational Mobility



(d) Black-white Earnings Gap in 1970



(e) Black-white Earnings Gap Today

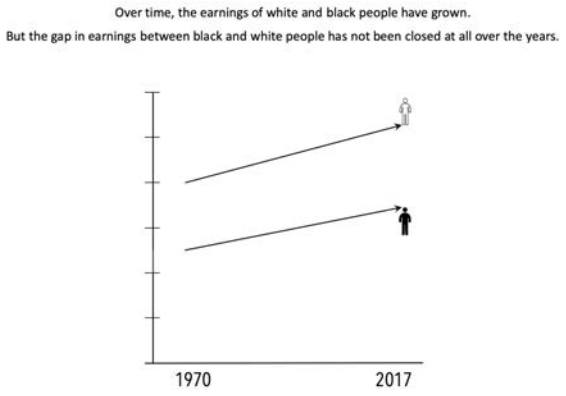
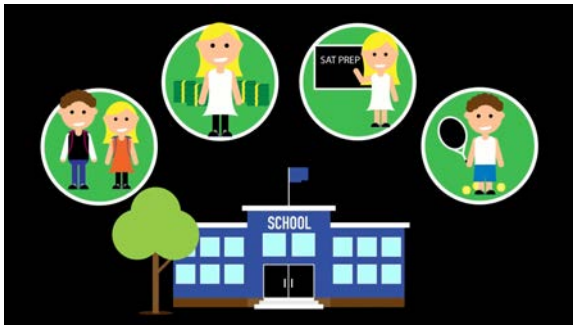


Figure 3: Systemic Racism Treatment: Explaining Some of the Long-standing Causes of Racial Gaps

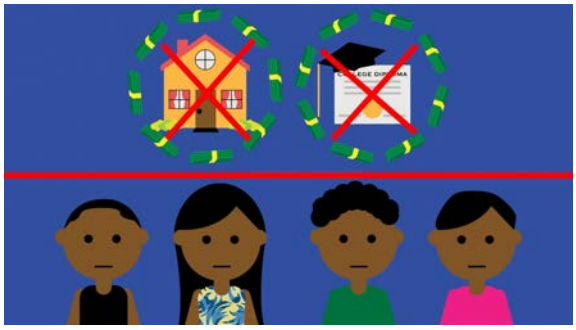
(A)

(B)



(C)

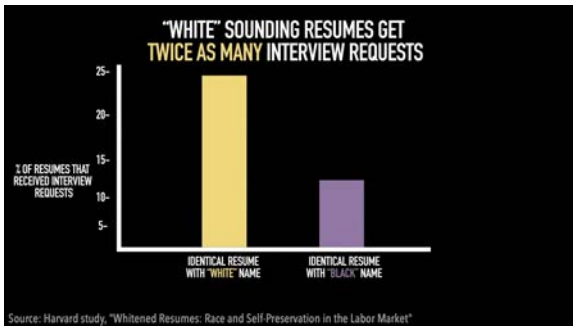
(D)



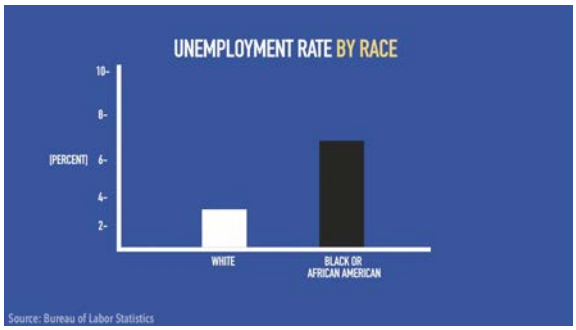
(E)

(F)

(G)



(H)



Notes: Video created by `https://www.act.tv`.

opportunities without changing the perceived causes, these treatments do not significantly impact support for either race-targeted or redistribution policies (see Panel A of Figure 11). This finding is consistent with the correlational results in the previous section.

The systemic racism treatment. The systemic racism treatment has significant first-stage effects on perceived economic circumstances (columns 1 through 4 in Table 4), generally stronger on white respondents. The impacts on the perceived causes of the racial gap (columns 5 through 8) are generally only significant on Black respondents. However, the insignificant treatment effects on white respondents obscure a deep polarization between Democrats and Republicans. For white Democrats, the treatment increases both the perceived racial gaps and the likelihood to attribute them to adverse circumstances such as past slavery and discrimination. In contrast, for white Republican respondents, the treatment has almost perverse effects. They are more likely to think that the Black/white earnings gap has decreased, less likely to believe that today's poverty of Black people is due to slavery and discrimination, and less likely to say that Black people are often discriminated against. The only positive effect is on their perception that school quality is worse for Black children (and the treatment effect is more minor than for white Democrats). The explanations provided seem to "backfire" for white right-wing respondents and, instead of closing the partisan gap, deepen it.

The treatment, on average, increases support for both race-targeted and redistribution policies (see Panel A of Figure 11). The average treatment effect on race-targeted policy views equals 15% of the racial gap; the impact on redistribution policies is equal to 37% of the racial gap. Yet the effects are heterogeneous, with large significant impacts on Black and white Democratic respondents. The effect on white Democrats equals 36% of the racial gap for race-targeted policies and 58% of the gap for redistribution policies. The effects are negative and insignificant on white Republicans.

After the treatment, both Democratic and Republican white teenagers become more likely to perceive worse economic circumstances for Black people (Table 5). But they diverge on the perceived causes: white Republican teenagers become less likely to think racism is a serious problem; Democratic white teenagers become more likely to believe that Black people are often discriminated against. The first-stage effects on Black teenagers are highly significant in the expected direction. On policy views, the treatment makes Black teenagers significantly more supportive of both race-targeted and redistribution policies. The effect on white teenagers is marginally insignificant on policy views and significantly positive on redistribution views. Part of this is due to the much weaker effect on Republican teenagers (see Tables A-8 and A-10). However, we lack power to look at heterogeneous treatment effects by race and political affiliation for teens.

Interpreting the experimental results. Could the backlash among adult Republican

respondents to the perceived systemic racism treatment be due to them perceiving it as biased? Appendix Section A-7 replicates all our main tables, excluding all respondents who said that they thought the survey was left-wing biased (15.2% of all respondents are thus excluded, out of which 52% are Republican and 30% are Democrat).[32] The effects on white Republicans become weakly more positive, with some negative backlash effects turning insignificant and some turning positive and significant. For instance, treated white Republican respondents who did not consider the treatment as left-wing biased are less likely to say that Black Americans are poor due to a lack of effort and are more likely to support government intervention to reduce unequal opportunities between Black and white children, as well as income differences between rich and poor. Whether respondents consider the systemic racism video to be left-wing biased is endogenous to their own beliefs and, hence the exercise here, while instructive, is somewhat circular.

The insignificant effects of the Intergenerational mobility gap treatment and the Historical earnings gap treatment on attitudes and policy views – despite significant first-stage effects on perceived economic conditions and mobility – suggest that simply showing how unequal circumstances and opportunities are does not move people's priors on *why* they are unequal. Such information on racial gaps does not change the narrative that respondents have in mind. In fact, it barely moves Republican's perceptions of outcomes at all. The informational treatments to some extent mirror what is happening in the world: although there are clearly big racial gaps along many economic and social dimensions, and although many people are – at least to some extent – aware of them, they disagree on their causes and, hence, on the way or even need to resolve them. The systemic racism treatment instead gets at some of the causes of racial gaps. It explains why many factors that are outside of the control of Black Americans have contributed to creating racial inequities. That treatment has much stronger effects on support for race-targeted as well as redistribution policies. These experimental results bolster the previously described patterns. Section 3 showed some differences in perceptions of economic circumstances but also emphasized that the biggest differences lie in beliefs about their causes.

Similarly, the decomposition of policy views in Section 4.2 showed that the perceived causes for inequalities, rather than the perceived existence or magnitudes of these inequalities, are most strongly correlated with policy views. Nevertheless, the effects of the systemic racism treatment are not uniform, and right-wing respondents do not adjust their views as strongly toward more awareness of racial inequities or support for policies to act against them. The

[32]This share is a bit higher than in the control group or in the other treatment branches. For comparison, in the control group, 11% felt the survey was left-wing biased, out of which 45% are Republican and 39% are Democrat. In the Historical earnings gap treatment branch, 11.2% of respondents considered the survey to be left-wing biased, out of which 44.8% were Republican and 28.4% Democrat. Finally, in the Intergenerational mobility gap treatment, 12.7% thought the survey was left-wing biased, of which 48.8% were Republican and 31% Democrat.

beliefs that are simultaneously most polarized and most predictive of policy views are also the hardest ones to move.

To put these findings into the context of the broader literature, one can recall some of the evidence that people can react self-defensively to information about inequality. The literature has underscored how the "dominant" group can feel threatened in their self-and collective image if they perceive themselves as perpetuating injustice (Brown and Craig, 2020, and Unzueta and Lowery, 2008). Onyeador et al. (2021) find that reading about structural racism does not lead people to adjust their overestimates of current racial economic equality, but instead to assess the past as less inequitable. They explain this as respondents trying to avoid the thought that current racial equality is unjust. Our findings show that these reactions do not occur uniformly along the political spectrum.

In addition, there are at least three behavioral models which can explain the observed perceptions and beliefs about racial gaps as well as responses to information about them. These explanations are interrelated. The first is motivated beliefs (Bénabou and Tirole, 2016), whereby respondents have a functional benefit of holding the views they do. For instance, consistent with the findings in Section 3, respondents on the right of the political spectrum may hold on to the belief that society is ultimately just and that everyone who works hard has a shot at success. Related to this, the new information introduced by the systemic racism treatment can create cognitive dissonance (Akerlof and Dickens, 1982) between deeply held beliefs about fairness and equality of opportunity and the reality of causes of racial gaps. Cognitive dissonance has been explored in other contexts by Mullainathan and Washington (2009) and Bénabou and Tirole (2006). Furthermore, confirmation bias may prevent respondents from absorbing information that goes against their prior beliefs. In our case, the systemic racism treatment may violate right-wing respondents' priors about the causes of racial gaps (see also Rabin and Schrag, 1999). Models of stereotyping are also consistent with these results (Bordalo et al., 2016).

6 Conclusion

This paper leverages new large-scale survey and experimental data on Black and white teenagers and adults in the US. It highlights that, while people have disparate perceptions about the magnitudes of racial gaps in economic conditions and opportunities, the biggest divergences are in how they explain the existence of these gaps. Furthermore, the responses of an average white respondent obscure substantial heterogeneity by political affiliation. Black and white Democratic respondents tend to perceive larger racial gaps and attribute their existence to past slavery, discrimination, and racism across many settings. They are more likely to want to intervene directly through race-targeted policies and indirectly through income-

targeted redistribution policies. Strikingly, racial and partisan gaps in views and attitudes are already well-established among teenagers, in line with their parents' race and political affiliation.

People's beliefs about how racial gaps can be explained are also more predictive of their policy views than their perceptions of the prevalence or magnitudes of racial inequities. This finding is confirmed by the experimental results. Yet beliefs about the causes of racial gaps are entrenched – even among teenagers – and are not easy to shift. Clearly, the extent to which respondents are exposed to racial inequities, either directly or indirectly, varies tremendously. The causes of racial gaps are, however, likely even harder for people to directly observe or see. People's views are thus likely to heavily depend on their own knowledge (e.g., of history or politics), sources of news, longstanding narratives, and racial attitudes. Many of these factors vary by political affiliation, as well as by race.

One advantage of large-scale surveys is that they allow eliciting the preferences of some groups that are generally less likely to vote than others. Our results imply that voter attitudes on race may be quite different from those of the overall (voting and nonvoting) population. For instance, as Section 4 showed, younger respondents and Black respondents are more supportive of race-targeted policies, yet less likely to vote, in part because of costly and unjustified restrictions that act as substantial barriers to voting.[33]

This paper follows in the footsteps of an already abundant and rich literature in sociology, political science, and economics by bringing in new data based on customized and targeted surveys. But it barely scratches the surface of people's complex perceptions and attitudes on race, and points to the importance of narratives about the causes of racial gaps in shaping attitudes toward policies. There are also other stark racial inequities in the US and other racial groups that we did not include here. Future work leveraging these survey and experimental methods could dig much deeper into what shapes these narratives in the first place. There is also much more to do to discover what type of information or intervention can successfully shift entrenched attitudes.

[33] As shown by Cascio and Washington (2014), when some restrictions were relaxed historically, policies implemented changed drastically.

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Table 1: Summary Statistics for the Adult Sample

	Black Population					White Population				
	US	Urban	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	US	Urban	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Male	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.46	0.46	0.50	0.49	0.42	0.50	0.50
18-29 years old	0.27	0.27	0.30	0.28	0.28	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.23	0.23
30-39 years old	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	0.18	0.19	0.20	0.20	0.20
40-49 years old	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.18	0.19
50-59 years old	0.18	0.18	0.16	0.18	0.18	0.20	0.20	0.18	0.20	0.19
60-69 years old	0.17	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.23	0.22	0.22	0.19	0.19
$0-$19,999	0.21	0.20	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.09
$20,000-$39,999	0.21	0.20	0.24	0.22	0.22	0.13	0.12	0.16	0.12	0.12
$40,000-$69,999	0.23	0.23	0.26	0.23	0.24	0.19	0.19	0.24	0.20	0.20
$70,000-$109,999	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.12	0.13	0.22	0.21	0.23	0.17	0.18
$110,000+	0.18	0.19	0.09	0.19	0.18	0.36	0.39	0.27	0.42	0.41
Northeast	0.16	0.17	0.17	0.23	0.22	0.19	0.20	0.23	0.23	0.23
Midwest	0.17	0.18	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.26	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.24
South	0.59	0.56	0.51	0.43	0.45	0.35	0.35	0.36	0.30	0.30
West	0.09	0.09	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.20	0.21	0.16	0.23	0.23
Democrat	0.53	0.54	0.71	0.73	0.68	0.24	0.25	0.38	0.38	0.34
Republican	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.09	0.33	0.31	0.35	0.40	0.41
Independent	0.38	0.37	0.24	0.19	0.23	0.37	0.38	0.27	0.22	0.25
4-year college or more	0.25	0.26	0.34	0.37	0.43	0.39	0.42	0.56	0.63	0.61
High school or less	0.44	0.42	0.23	0.25	0.20	0.32	0.29	0.14	0.15	0.16
Employed	0.66	0.67	0.61	0.62	0.62	0.72	0.73	0.65	0.68	0.70
Self-employed	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.07
Unemployed	0.04	0.04	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.05
Married	0.32	0.33	0.27			0.58	0.57	0.54		
Sample size			2,500	851	847			2,509	850	850

Notes: The table shows characteristics of the US population that is Black (column 1), Black and urban (column 2), white (column 6), and white and urban (column 7). Data come from the 2019 Current Population Survey (Flood et al., 2020); data on political affiliation is from the 2019 Political Survey (Pew Research Center, 2019). Columns 3 to 5 report the characteristics of the Black respondents in our sample for all survey waves; columns 8 to 10 report the characteristics of the white respondents. See Appendix A-1.4 for details.

Table 2: Summary Statistics for the Teenager Sample

	Black Population			White Population		
	Pop (1)	Urban (2)	Sample (3)	Pop (4)	Urban (5)	Sample (6)
Male	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.52	0.51	0.50
13 years old	0.19	0.19	0.15	0.19	0.19	0.19
14 years old	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.19	0.19	0.20
15 years old	0.19	0.19	0.21	0.20	0.20	0.19
16 years old	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.21	0.21	0.20
17 years old	0.20	0.20	0.23	0.21	0.21	0.22
Share for which parents reported income			0.43			0.87
Parental income						
$0-$19,999	0.20	0.19	0.12	0.08	0.07	0.03
$20,000-$39,999	0.23	0.22	0.19	0.10	0.08	0.13
$40,000-$69,999	0.23	0.23	0.30	0.17	0.16	0.23
$70,000-$109,999	0.15	0.16	0.21	0.22	0.22	0.25
$110,000+	0.19	0.21	0.19	0.44	0.48	0.36
Northeast	0.16	0.17	0.19	0.18	0.20	0.24
Midwest	0.19	0.20	0.17	0.29	0.27	0.25
South	0.58	0.55	0.52	0.34	0.33	0.31
West	0.07	0.08	0.12	0.19	0.20	0.21
Democratic parents			0.73			0.35
Republican parents			0.08			0.39
Independent parents			0.20			0.26
Sample size			1,005			1,000

Notes: The table shows characteristics of the U.S population aged 13 to 17 and that is Black (column 1), Black and urban (column 2), white (column 4), and white and urban (column 5). Data come from the 2019 Current Population Survey (Flood et al., 2020). Columns 3 and 6 report the characteristics of the Black and white teenage respondents in our sample. See Appendix A-1.4 for details.

Table 3: How Exposure to Racial Gaps Shapes Attitudes

	Exposure to Racial Gaps		
	x Black	x White	White
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Perceive worse economic conditions for Black people	0.06	0.13**	-0.35***
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Perceive worse mobility for Black people	0.00	-0.02	-0.20***
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Believe racial gaps are due to current racism and discrimination	0.04	0.09***	-0.52***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Believe racial gaps are due to past slavery and discrimination	0.10***	0.15***	-0.41***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Believe Black people could be as well off as white people if try harder	0.08**	0.09***	0.17***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Believe lack of effort is reason for being poor	0.01	0.04	0.09***
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Believe white people are disadvantaged	0.01	0.03	0.10**
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Own perceived opportunities	0.04	-0.01	-0.08*
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Race-targeted policies	0.03	0.24***	-0.70***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
General redistribution policies	0.02	0.09***	-0.25***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Race important for own identity	0.07**	0.18***	-1.06***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)

Notes: The table reports dependent variables in each row and covariates in the columns. *Exposure to Racial Gaps* denotes an indicator for respondents who live in a ZIP code where there is a higher share of Black residents and where there are larger racial gaps in economic conditions and mobility, as defined in Section 4.3 and Appendix Section A-2.4. Columns 1 and 2 show the coefficients on the interaction of being exposed to racial gaps with indicators for being Black and white. Column 3 shows the main effect on the indicator for being white (the omitted category is being Black.) All regressions include controls for gender, age group, income group, political affiliation, education, state fixed effects, treatment status, log of the ZIP code population, log of per capita income in the ZIP code, survey wave fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4: Treatment Effects on Perceived Racial Gaps and their Causes in the Adult Survey

	Perceived economic circumstances				Perceived causes of racial gaps			
	Black children attend worse quality schools than white children	White people get more job offers	White person earns more than a Black person (in US)	Black/white earnings difference has not decreased	Black people could be as well off as white people if they try harder	Reason Black people poor is slavery and discrimination	Racism is a serious problem	Black people are often discriminated against
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A: Descriptive Statistics (control group only)								
Mean	0.60	0.67	0.75	0.56	0.29	0.61	0.66	0.62
White mean	0.48	0.54	0.69	0.45	0.36	0.51	0.51	0.51
Black mean	0.73	0.81	0.80	0.66	0.23	0.71	0.80	0.73
White democrat mean	0.57	0.62	0.77	0.50	0.24	0.66	0.69	0.66
White republican mean	0.41	0.51	0.66	0.47	0.56	0.41	0.35	0.40
Black democrat mean	0.75	0.84	0.82	0.68	0.20	0.74	0.85	0.76
Black republican mean	0.71	0.62	0.70	0.64	0.46	0.55	0.49	0.60
Panel B: Partial Correlation								
White Dem	-0.15***	-0.12***	-0.05**	-0.15***	0.00	-0.09***	-0.13***	-0.08***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
White Rep	-0.36***	-0.33***	-0.23***	-0.28***	0.30***	-0.38***	-0.48***	-0.35***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Observations	1697	1697	3235	3232	8393	8393	8392	8376
R^2	0.138	0.137	0.076	0.102	0.128	0.135	0.173	0.184
Panel C: Treatment Effects - Causes of Racial Gaps: Systemic Racism								
Treatment	0.17***	0.13***	0.08***	0.03	-0.10***	0.04	0.04*	0.03*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
T x Black	0.13***	0.08**	0.08***	0.04	-0.10***	0.06*	0.06**	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
T x White	0.21***	0.18***	0.08***	0.01	-0.10***	0.02	0.02	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
T x White Dem	0.23***	0.26***	0.12**	0.13**	-0.21***	0.10*	0.01	0.09**
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.04)
T x White Rep	0.14***	0.05	0.02	-0.11**	-0.01	-0.10*	-0.00	-0.10**
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Observations	1413	1413	1412	1411	1413	1413	1413	1410
R^2	0.164	0.152	0.111	0.129	0.166	0.140	0.211	0.208

Notes: All dependent variables are indicator variables for whether the respondent agrees with the statements listed (for more detailed question formulations and definitions, see Appendix Section A-2.2). Regressions in all panels include controls for gender, age group, race, income group, political affiliation, education, state fixed effects, indicator variable for survey wave, and indicator variables for all treatments. Only some of these coefficients are reported due to space constraints. Panel A reports the mean of the dependent variables for respondents who saw no treatment video ("Mean") and separately for different race and political affiliation groups. Panel B shows the coefficients on being a white Democrat and being a white Republican, relative to the omitted categories of being Black. Panel C reports the coefficients from three different specifications. The first row shows the treatment effect of the systemic racism video ("Treatment") relative to the omitted category (no video). The following two rows show the treatment effects on Black and white respondents separately ("T × Black" and "T × White"). The last two rows show the treatment effects on white Democrats and white Republicans ("T × White Dem" and "T × White Rep." Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

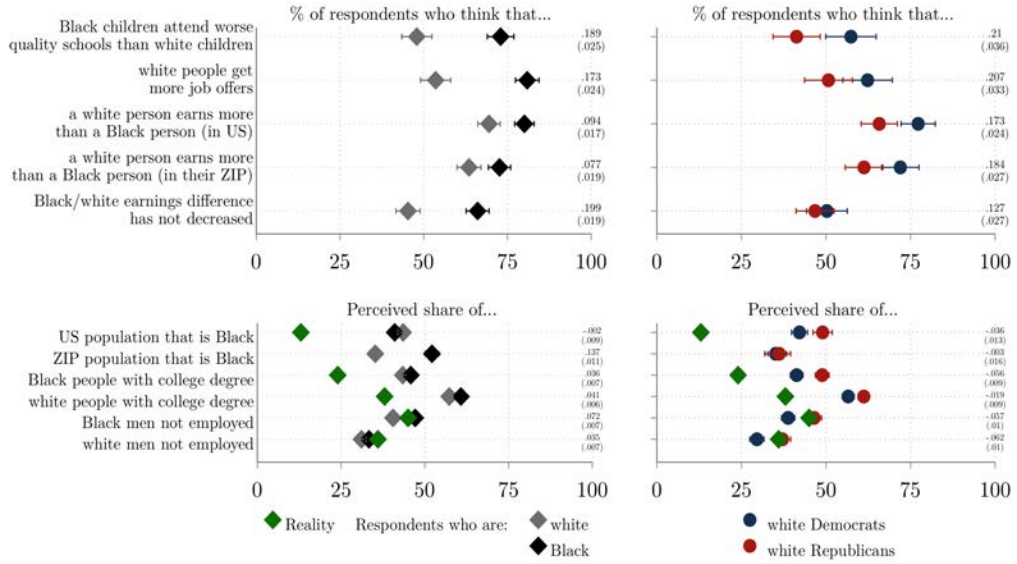
Table 5: Treatment Effects on Perceived Racial Gaps and their Causes in the Youth Survey

	Perceived economic circumstances				Perceived causes of racial gaps		
	Black children attend worse quality schools than white children	White people get more job offers	White person earns more than a Black person (in US)	Black/white earnings difference has not decreased	Reason Black people poor is discrimination	Racism is a serious problem	Black people are often discriminated against
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A: Descriptive Statistics (control group only)							
Mean	0.55	0.66	0.73	0.38	0.80	0.75	0.61
White mean	0.41	0.53	0.63	0.28	0.73	0.61	0.48
Black mean	0.68	0.78	0.82	0.48	0.86	0.89	0.74
White dem family mean	0.55	0.72	0.86	0.40	0.91	0.77	0.60
White rep family mean	0.25	0.34	0.42	0.22	0.51	0.41	0.34
Black dem family mean	0.73	0.81	0.86	0.48	0.88	0.92	0.77
Black rep family mean	0.54	0.62	0.71	0.36	0.64	0.71	0.62
Panel B: Partial Correlation							
White Dem Family	-0.07**	-0.05	-0.03	-0.15***	0.01	-0.10***	-0.11***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
White Rep Family	-0.32***	-0.38***	-0.31***	-0.29***	-0.31***	-0.51***	-0.40***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Observations	1588	1588	2005	2005	1649	1983	1997
R^2	0.162	0.174	0.112	0.112	0.136	0.232	0.214
Panel C: Treatment Effects - Causes of Racial Gaps: Systemic Racism							
Treatment	0.29***	0.21***	0.08***	0.02	0.07***	0.00	0.05***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
T x Black	0.22***	0.18***	0.07**	0.05	0.10***	0.06**	0.07***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
T x White	0.34***	0.22***	0.08***	-0.00	0.05*	-0.04	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
T x White Dem Family	0.35***	0.18***	-0.02	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.11**
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
T x White Rep Family	0.38***	0.23***	0.17***	-0.00	0.04	-0.10**	-0.01
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Observations	1366	1366	1505	1505	1256	1488	1501
R^2	0.199	0.213	0.148	0.106	0.173	0.267	0.236

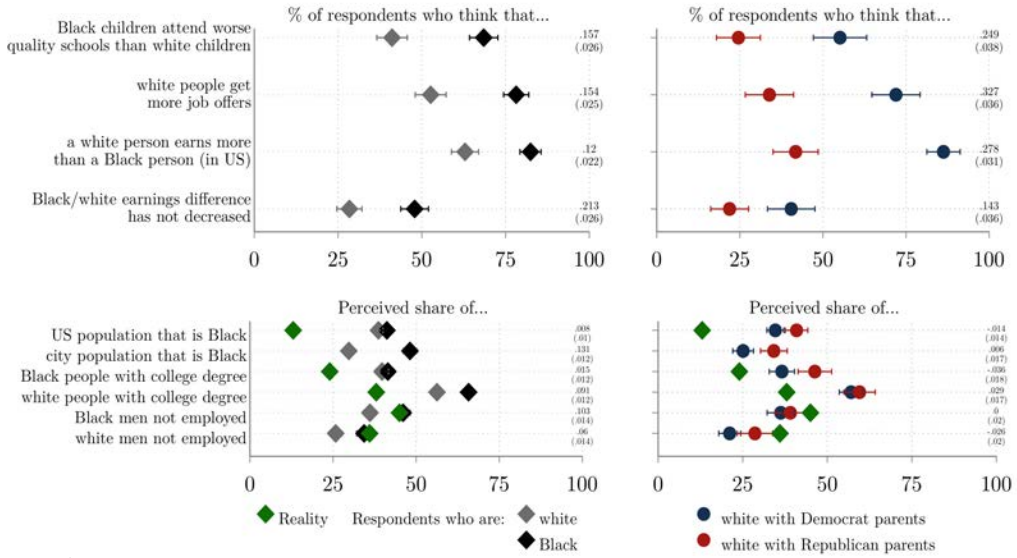
Notes: See the notes to Table 4. Regressions in all panels include controls for gender, age group, race, parents' income group, parents' political affiliation, state fixed effects, and indicator variables for all treatments. Only some of these coefficients are reported due to space constraints. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure 4: Perceived Racial Gaps in Economic Conditions

(a) Adult Survey



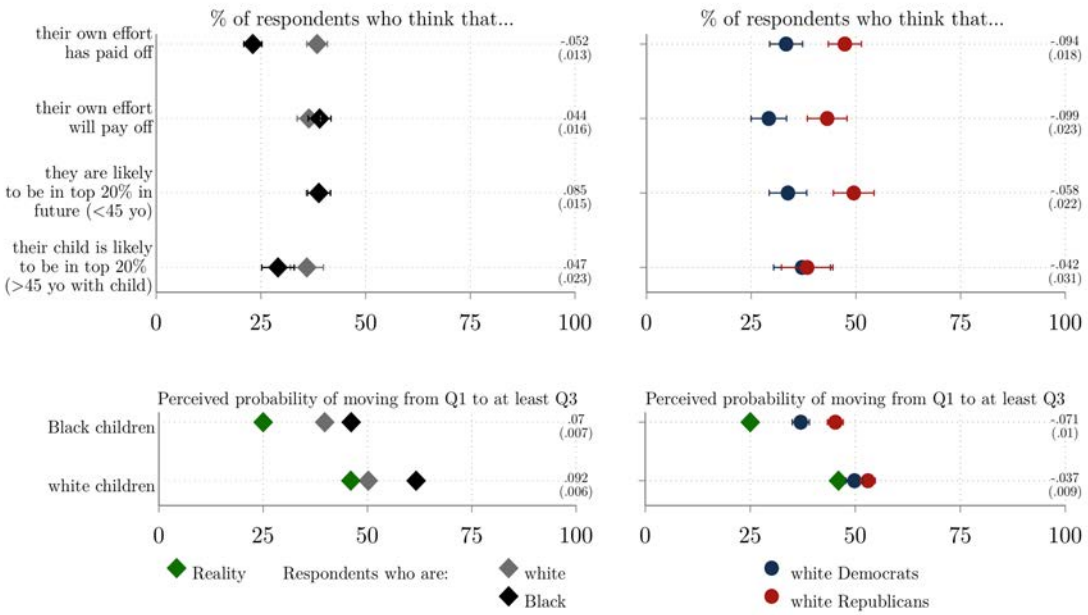
(b) Youth Survey



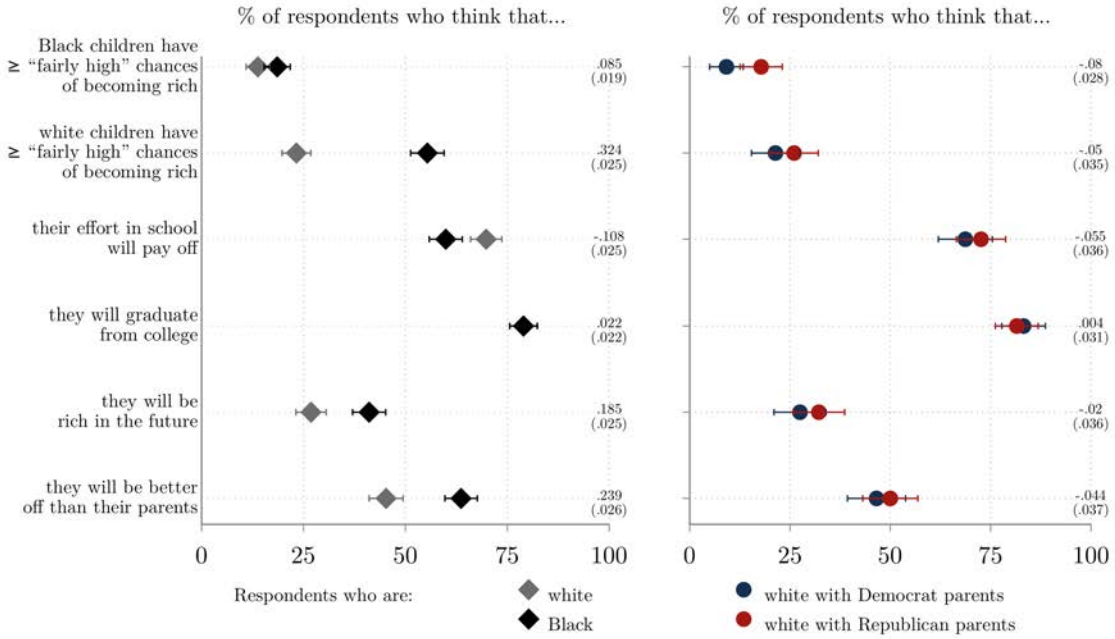
Notes: Panel A shows the results from the adult survey; Panel B shows those from the youth survey. In each panel, the left sub-figures focus on racial gaps and depict the share of respondents that satisfy the condition listed on the left vertical axis with its associated 90% confidence interval, for Black and white respondents in the sample. The right vertical axis lists the coefficients and standard errors on the indicator for being Black (relative to the omitted category of being white) of a regression of the outcome on the left on an indicator for being Black, and the full array of individual characteristics (political affiliation (or parents' political affiliation in the teens' sample), gender, age group, income group (or parents' income group for the teen sample), education, state fixed effects, survey wave effects). The right set of sub-figures repeats this same analysis for white Democrats and white Republicans. The numbers on the right vertical axis are the coefficient on being a white Democrat (where the omitted category is the indicator for being a white Republican) on the same controls as in the left panel. In each panel the bottom set of rows shows answer to quantitative questions, with the actual value ("Reality") depicted in green (the data sources on actual outcomes are described in Appendix Section A-1.3). Standard errors in parentheses.

FIGURE 5: PERCEIVED RACIAL GAPS IN MOBILITY AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT OWN OPPORTUNITIES

(A) ADULT SURVEY



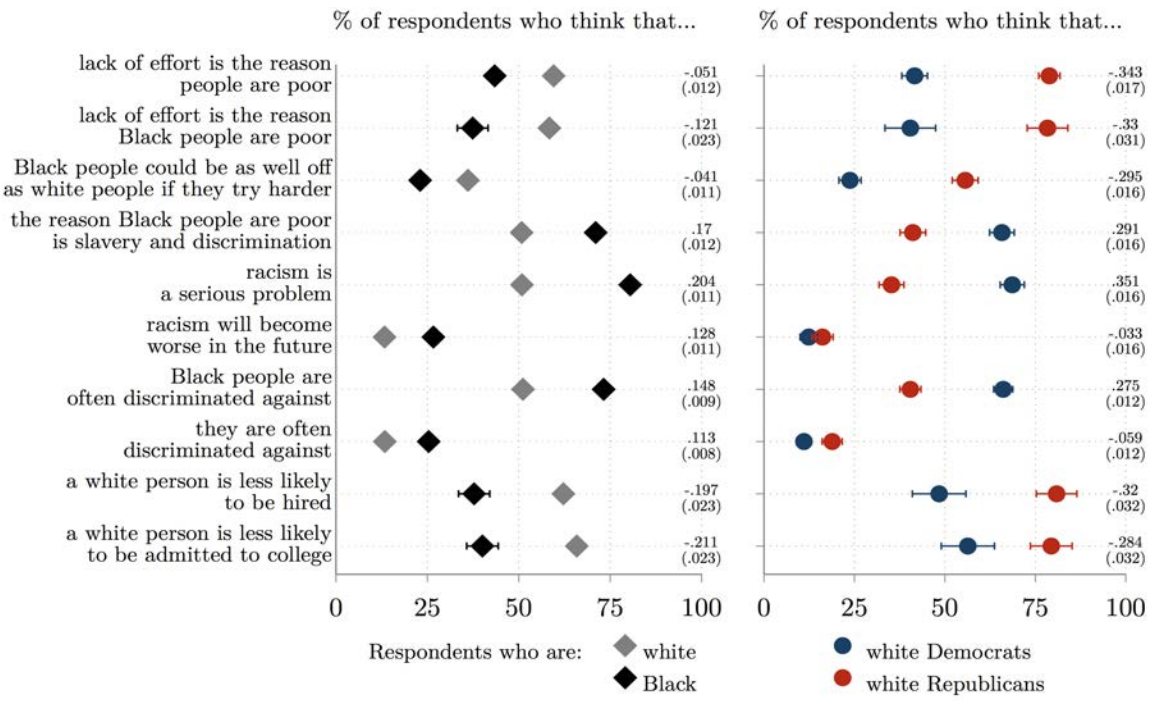
(B) YOUTH SURVEY



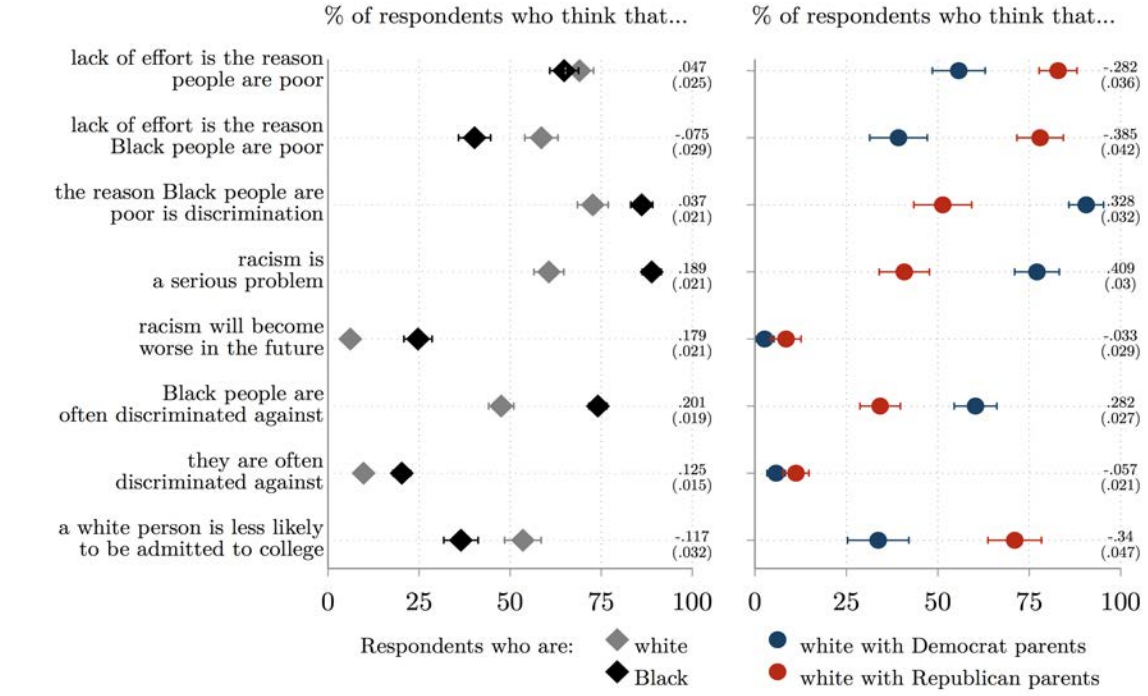
Notes: The figures show the share of respondents who believe in the statements listed on the left vertical axes. In Panel A, the bottom set of rows shows the perceived probability of Black and white children born in the lowest quintile of the national income distribution moving to at least the third quintile, against the true value ("Reality") (the data sources on actual mobility are described in Appendix Section A-1.3). See the notes to Figure 4.

Figure 6: Perceived Causes of Racial Gaps

(a) Adult Survey



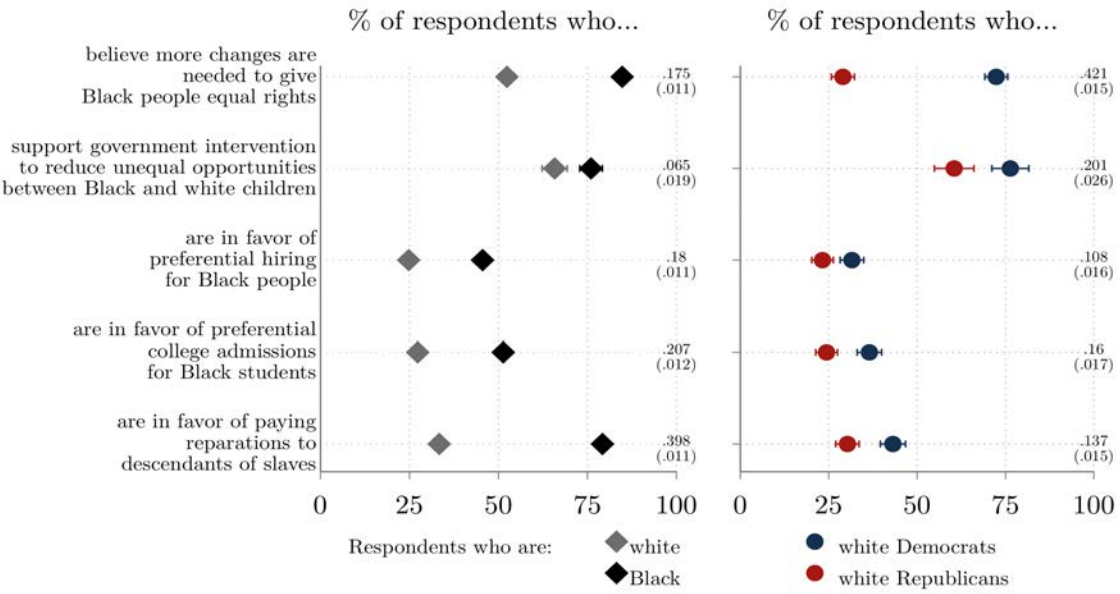
(b) Youth Survey



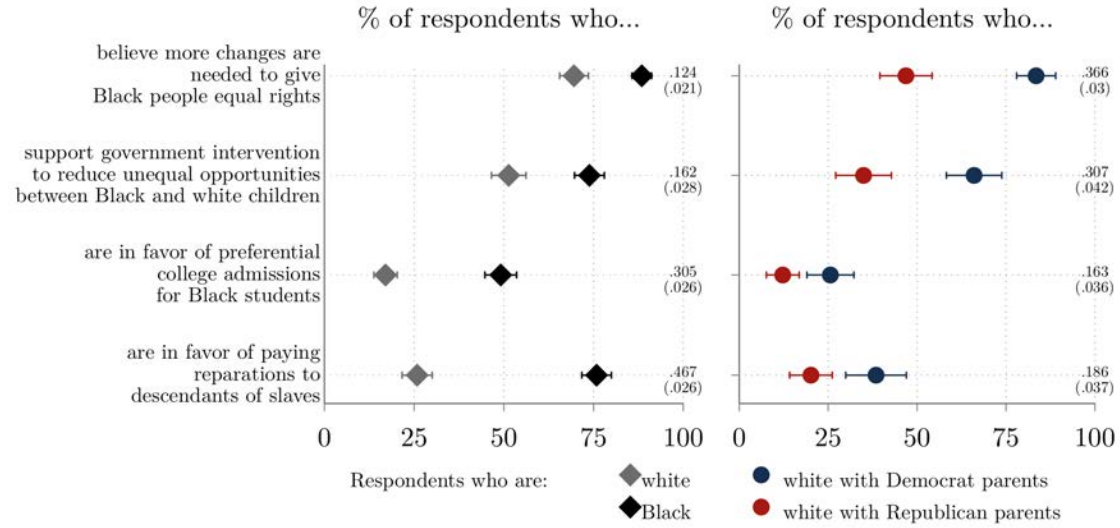
Notes: See the notes to Figure 4.

Figure 7: Views on Race-targeted Policies

(a) Adult Survey



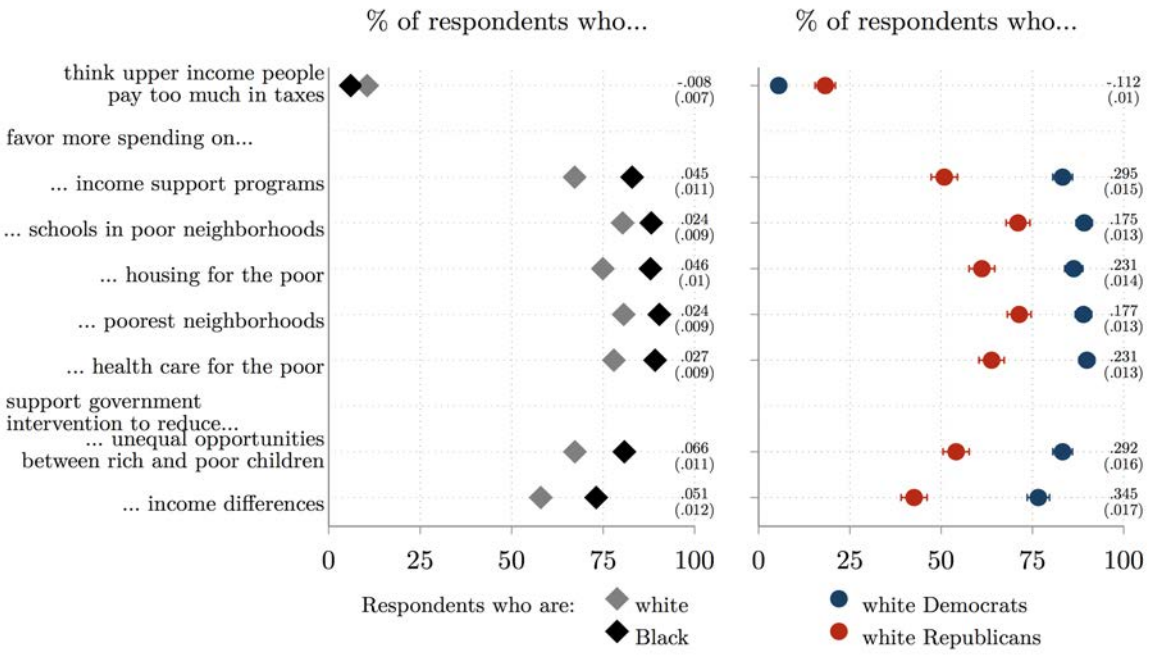
(b) Youth Survey



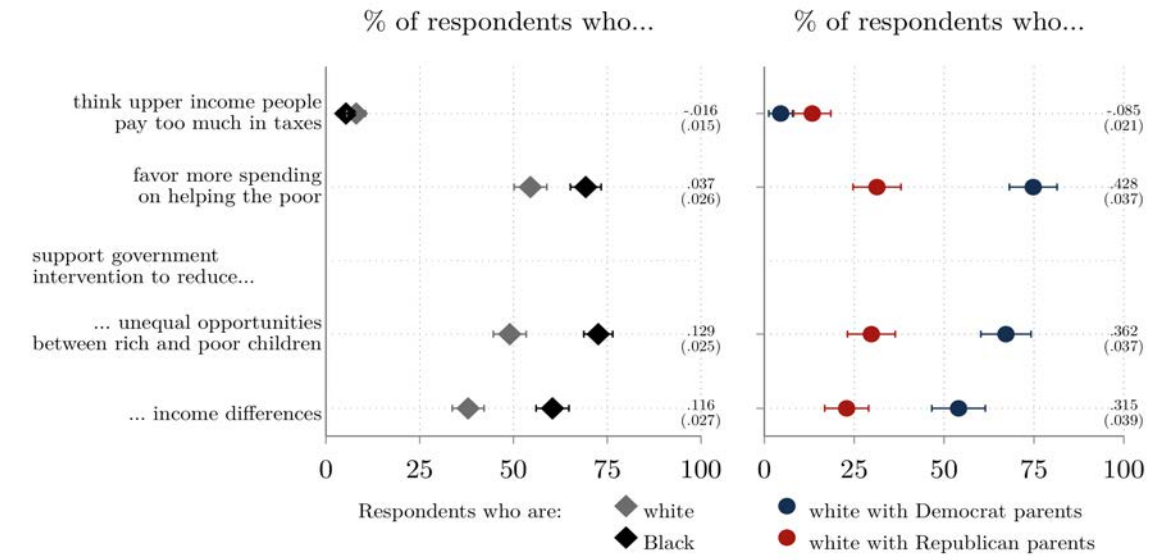
Notes: See the notes to Figure 4.

Figure 8: Views on General Redistribution Policies

(a) Adult Survey



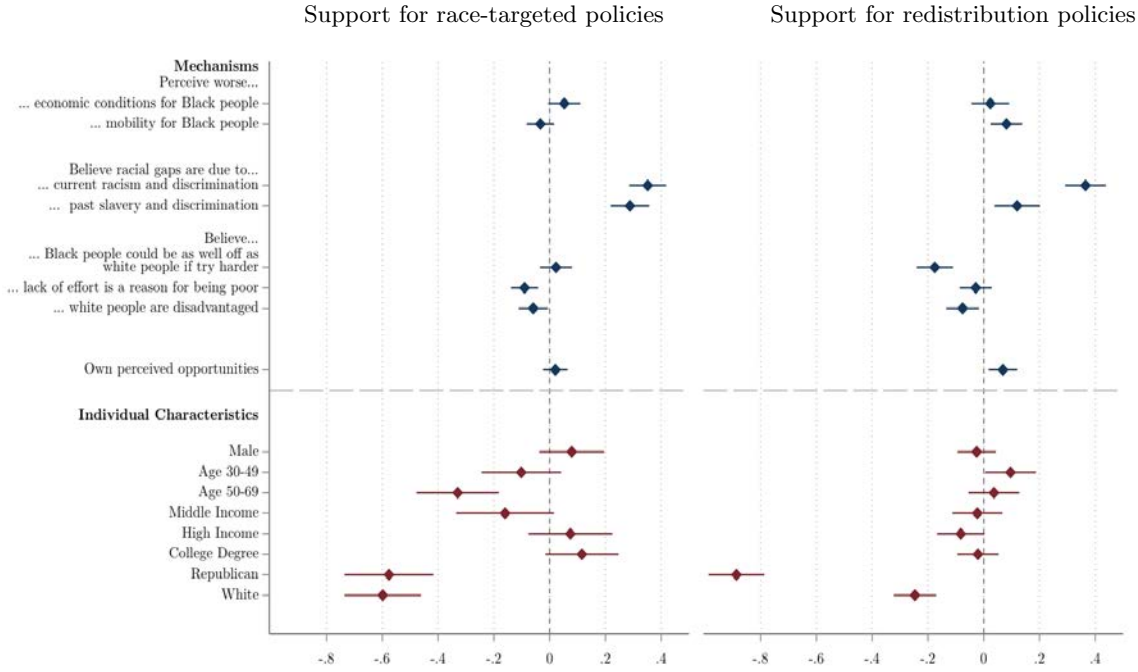
(b) Youth Survey



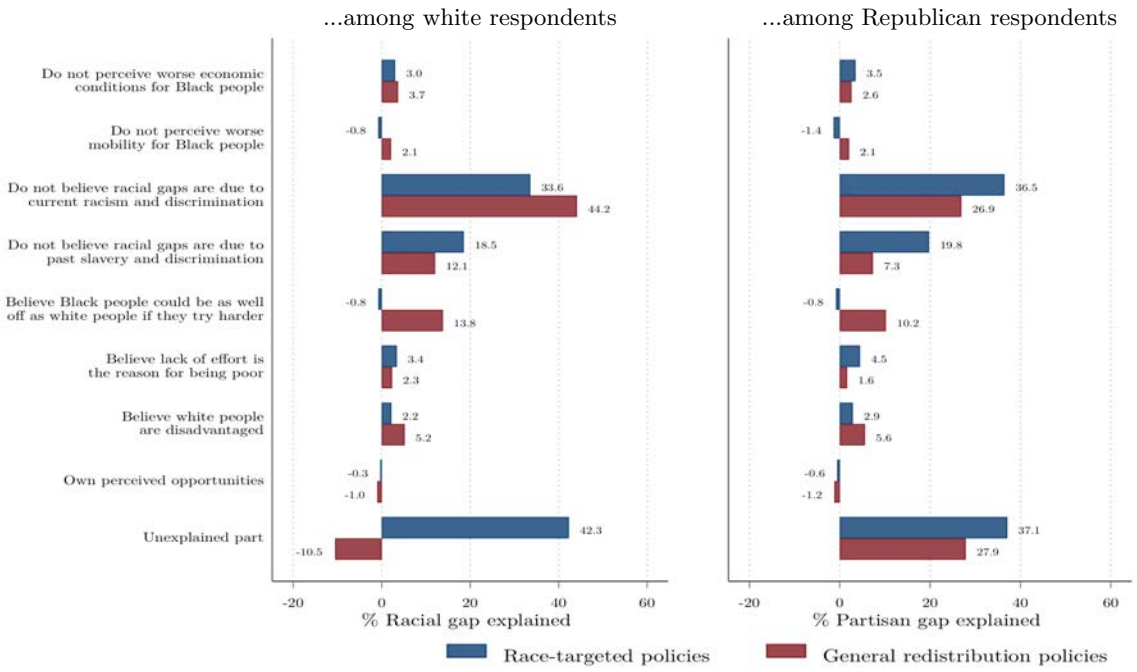
Notes: See the notes to Figure 4.

Figure 9: Decomposing Policy Views for Adult Respondents

(a) Individual covariates and mechanisms correlated with policy views



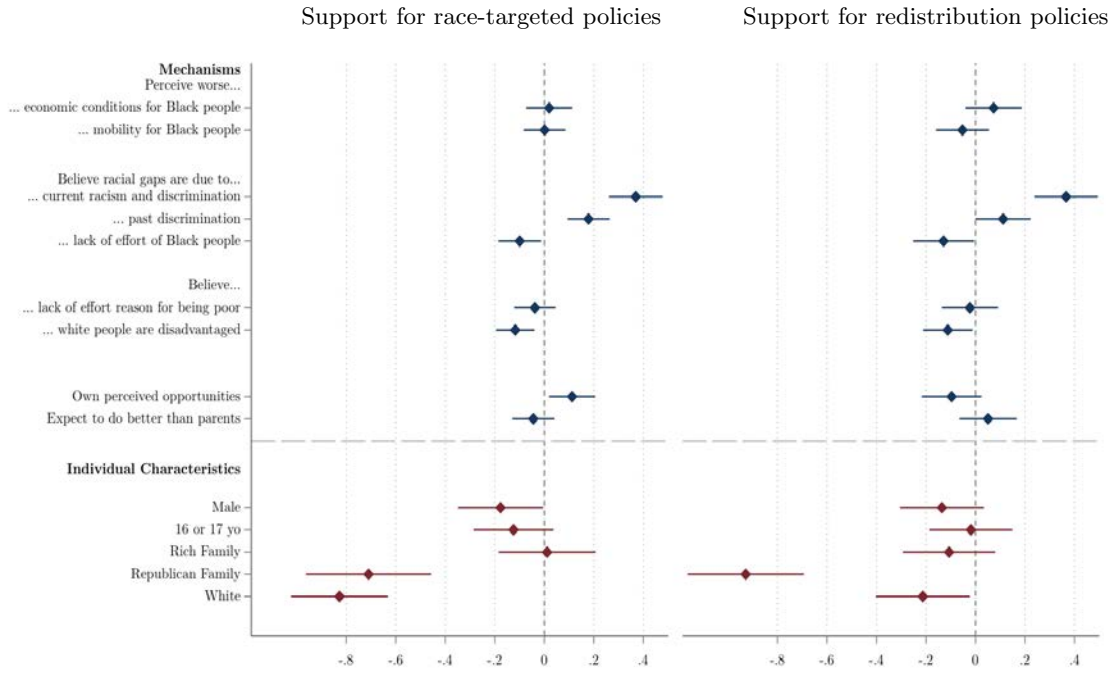
(b) Gelbach decomposition of the racial and partisan gaps in policy views



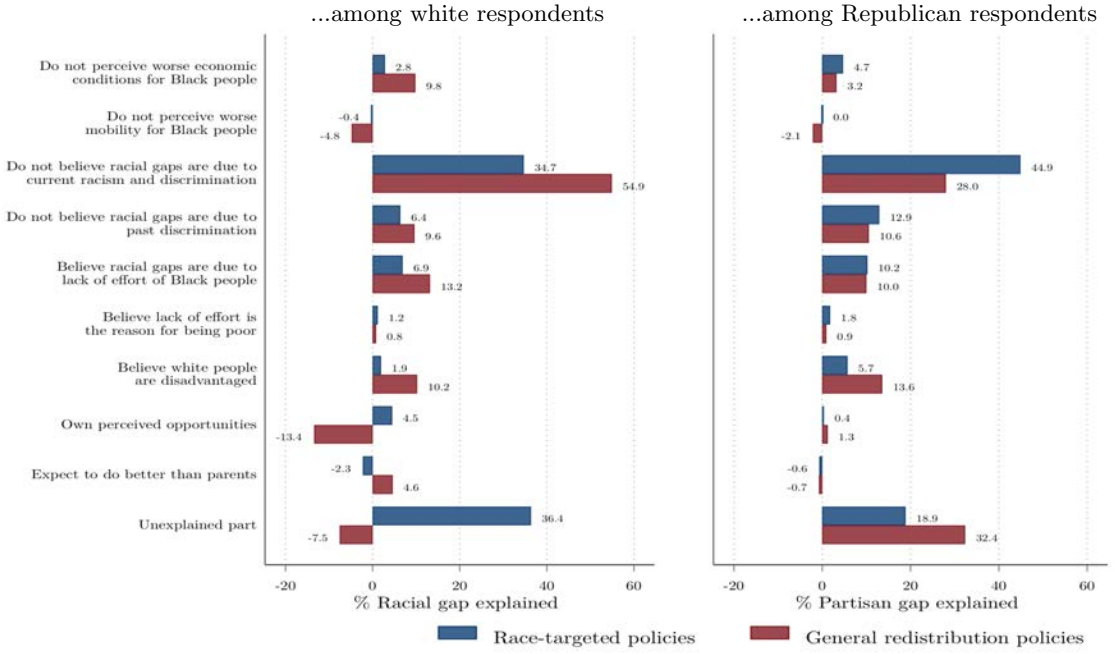
Notes: In Panel A, the dependent variables are the race-targeted policy index capturing support for these policies (left sub-figure) and the redistribution index (right subfigure). Depicted are coefficients on two different types of variables and from two different specifications. In the set of rows labeled "Mechanisms," we show the coefficients on the factors described in Section 4.2 from the regressions of each policy index on these factors, controlling for the full array of individual covariates (we do not show the coefficients on the latter). For more detailed definitions of each factor, see Appendix Section A-2.4. The second sets of rows, "Individual characteristics" reports coefficients on individual covariates from a regression of the policy index on (only) the full set of individual covariates (the factors from the panel "Mechanisms" are not included here). The figure includes only respondents who were not assigned to any of the video treatments. In Panel B, we report the Gelbach decompositions of the racial and partisan gap in policy views, following Gelbach (2016). Each bar indicates the share of the partisan gap explained by each of the factors, as explained in Section 4.2.

Figure 10: Decomposing Policy Views for Teenage Respondents

(a) Individual covariates and mechanisms correlated with policy views



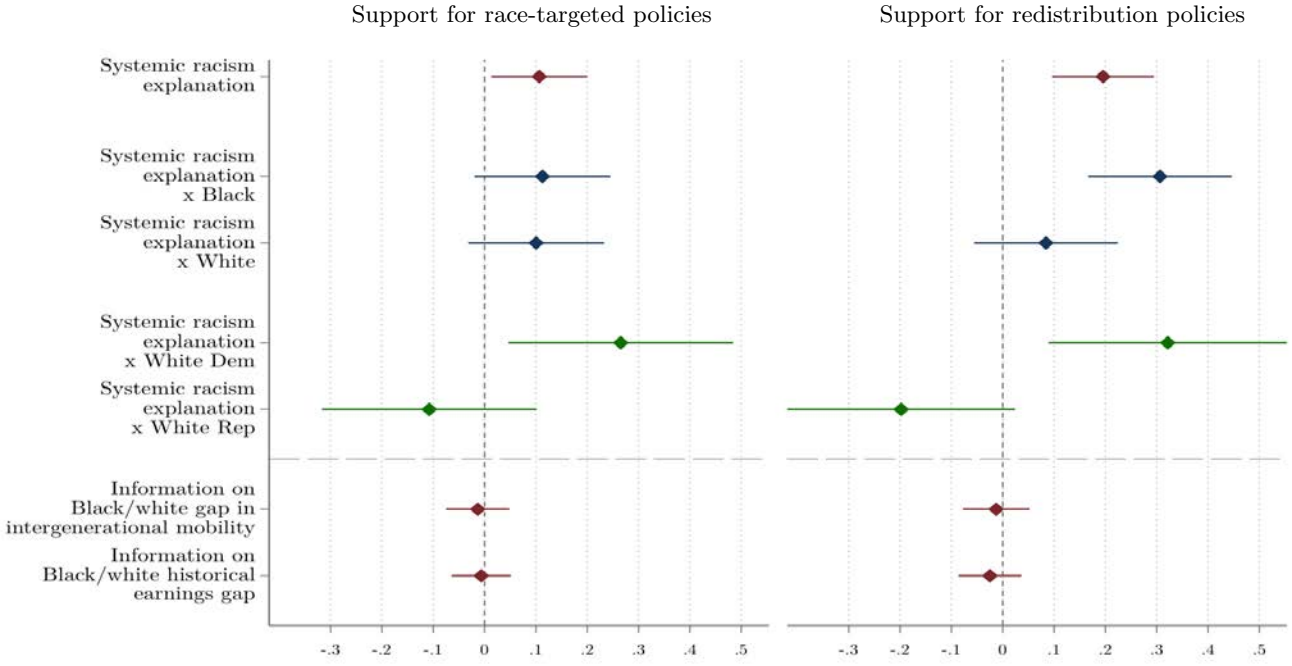
(b) Gelbach decomposition of the racial and partisan gaps in policy views



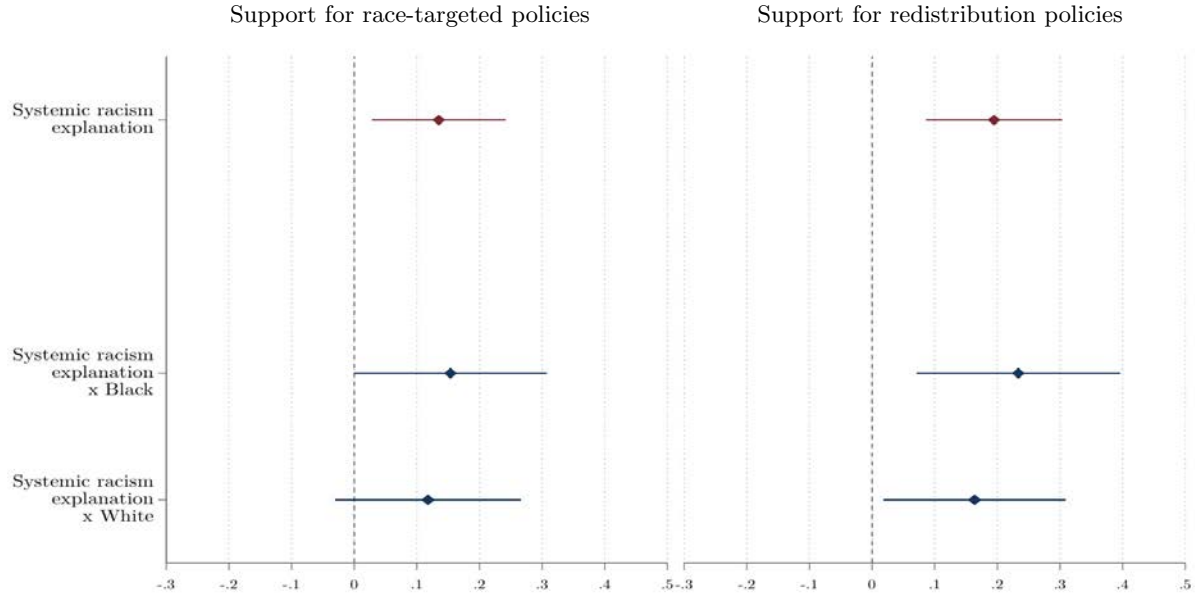
Notes: This figure is based on the youth survey. See the notes to Figure 9.

Figure 11: Treatment Effects

(a) Adult Survey



(b) Youth Survey



Notes: The figure shows the treatment effects in the adult survey (Panel A) and in the youth survey (Panel B). "Support for race-targeted policies" shows treatment effects on the race-targeted policy index; "support for redistribution policies" shows the effects on the redistribution index. The regressions include the full set of covariates, as described in the notes to Tables 4 and 5. For the full set of regression results on the adult sample see Tables A-7 and A-9 for the systemic racism treatment and Tables A-35 and A-36 for the Black/white gap in mobility and earnings treatments. For the youth survey, the full set of results can be seen in Tables A-8 and A-10.