

The Mythology of Racial Progress

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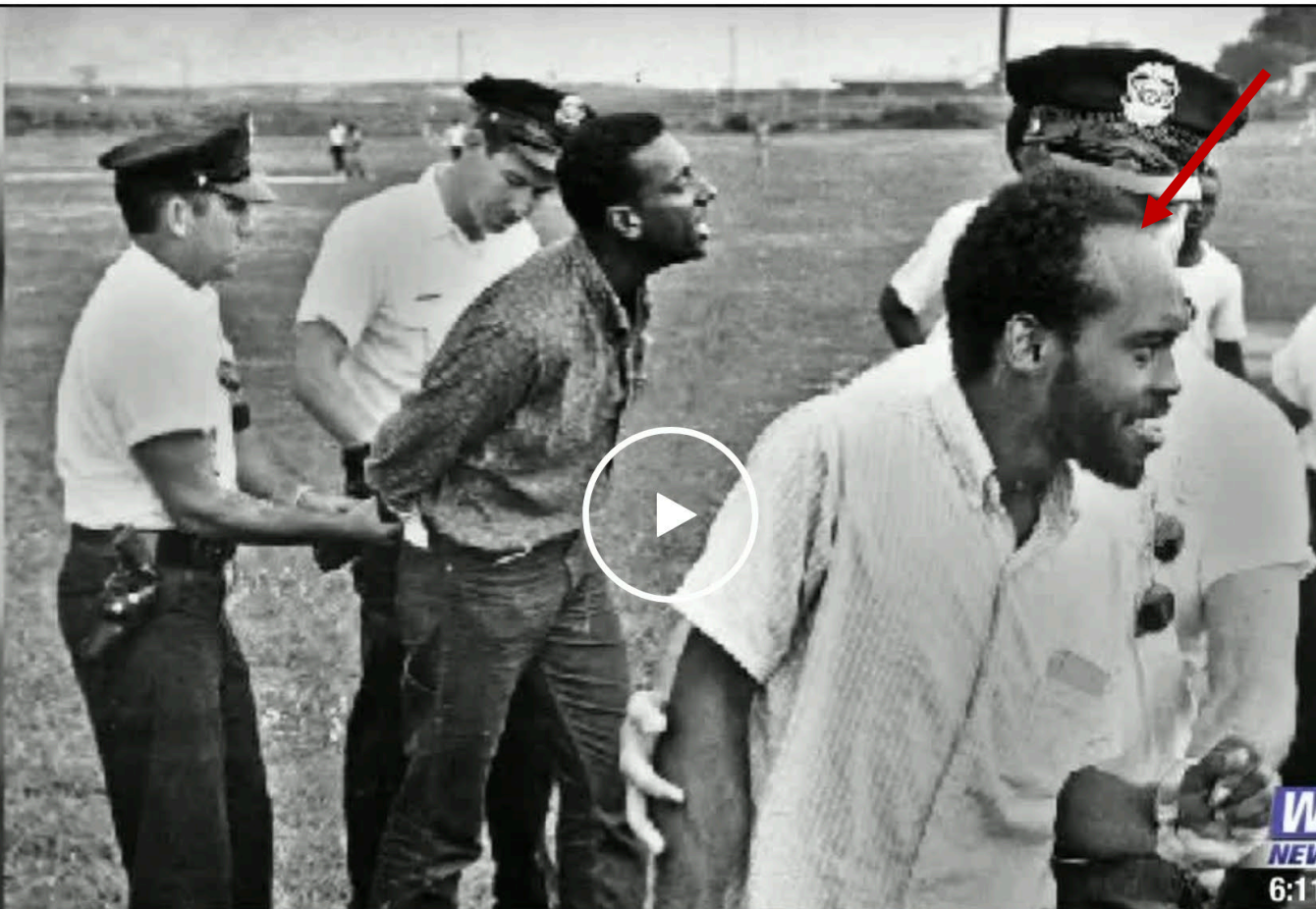
National Academy of Sciences Summit
June 29, 2021



Bob Smith, 75

NEWS

Civil Rights veteran joins the protest against George Floyd's death

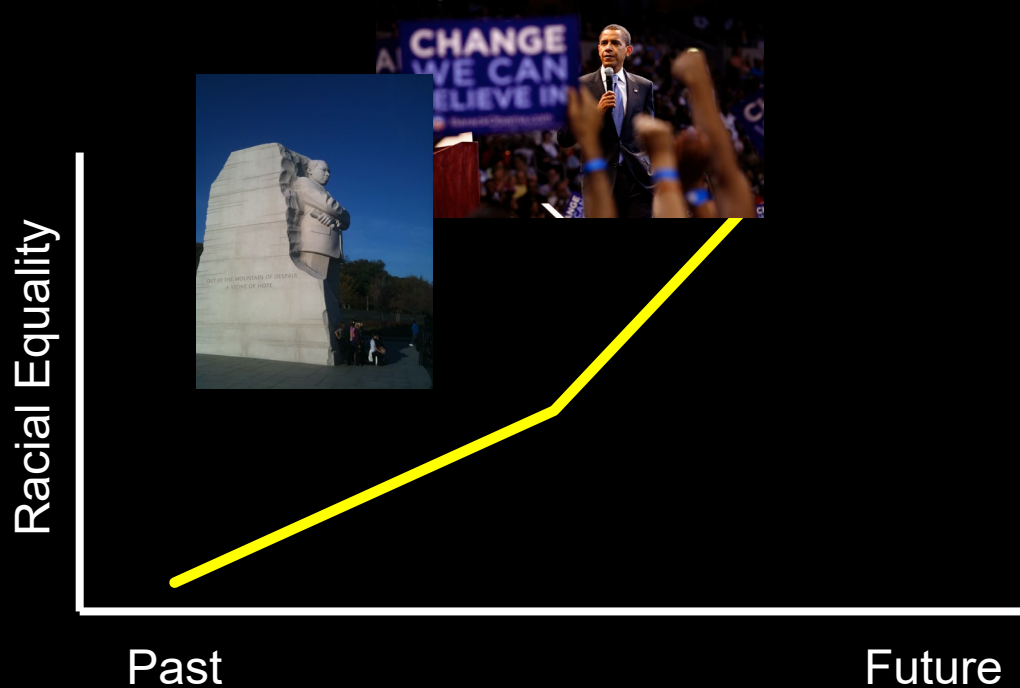


WLOX
NEWS NOW

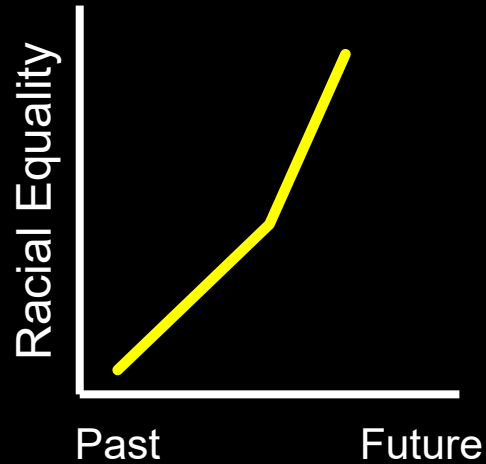
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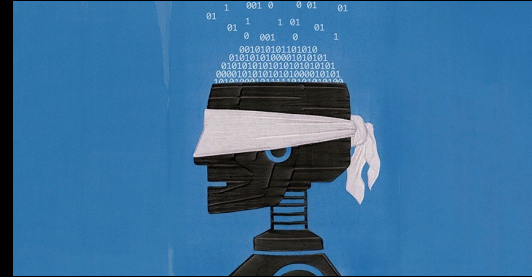
Mythology of Racial Progress



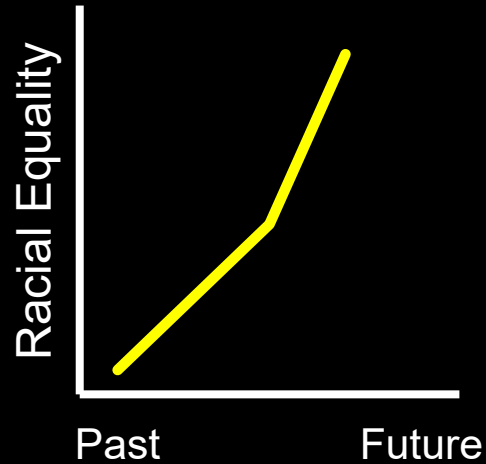
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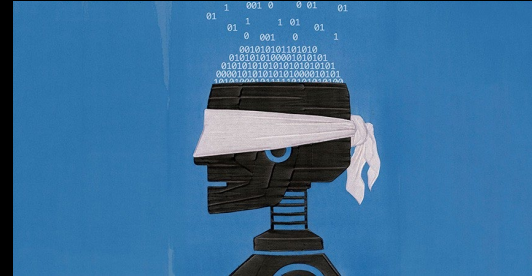
Perceptions of racial
equality



Mythology of Racial Progress



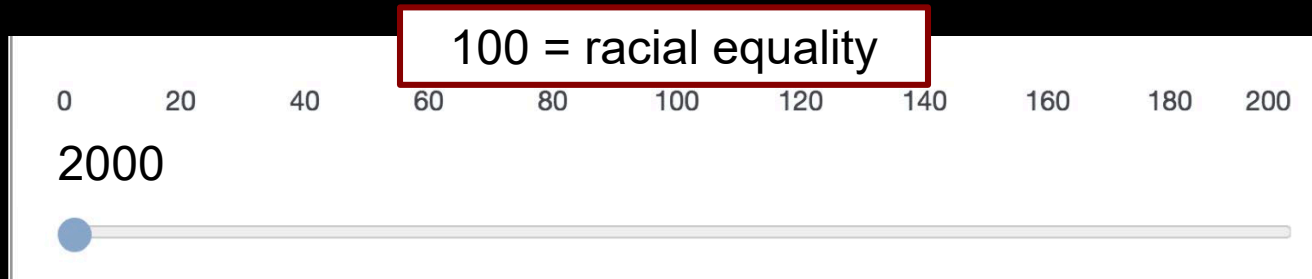
Perceptions of racial
economic equality



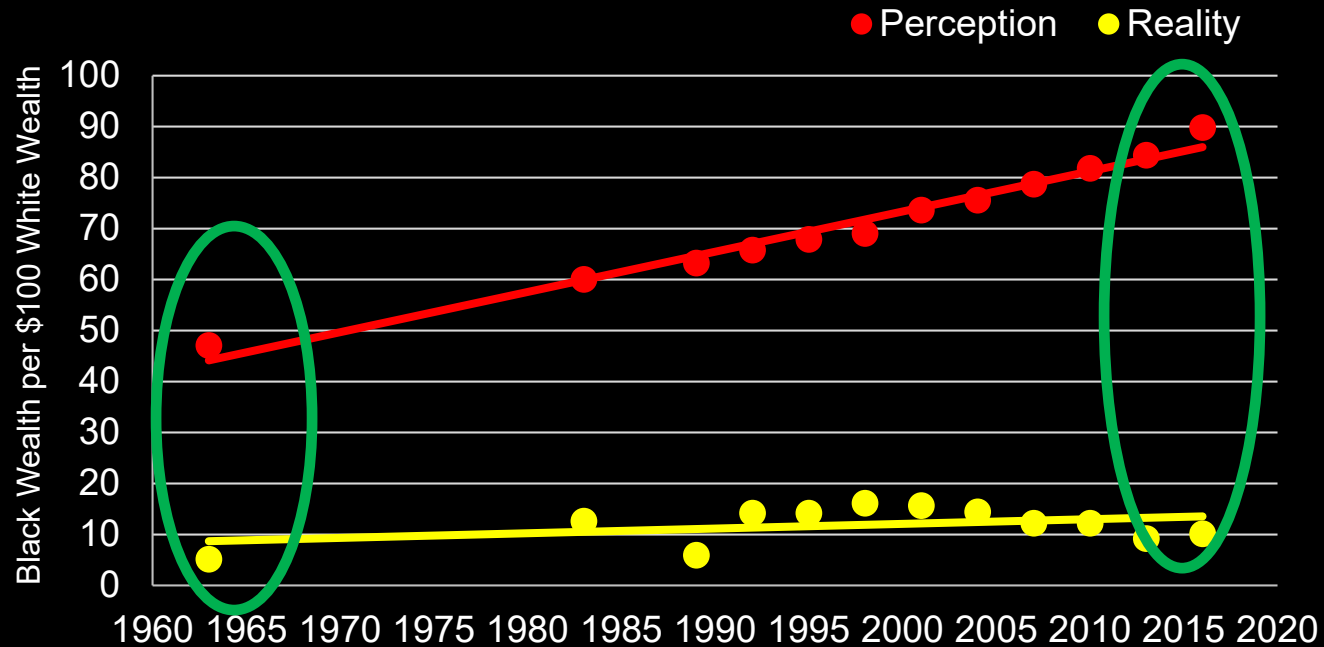
Perceptions of Racial Economic Equality

Perceptions of Racial Wealth Equality 1963-2016

For every \$100 of **wealth** accumulated by the average White family, how much wealth has the average Black family accumulated?

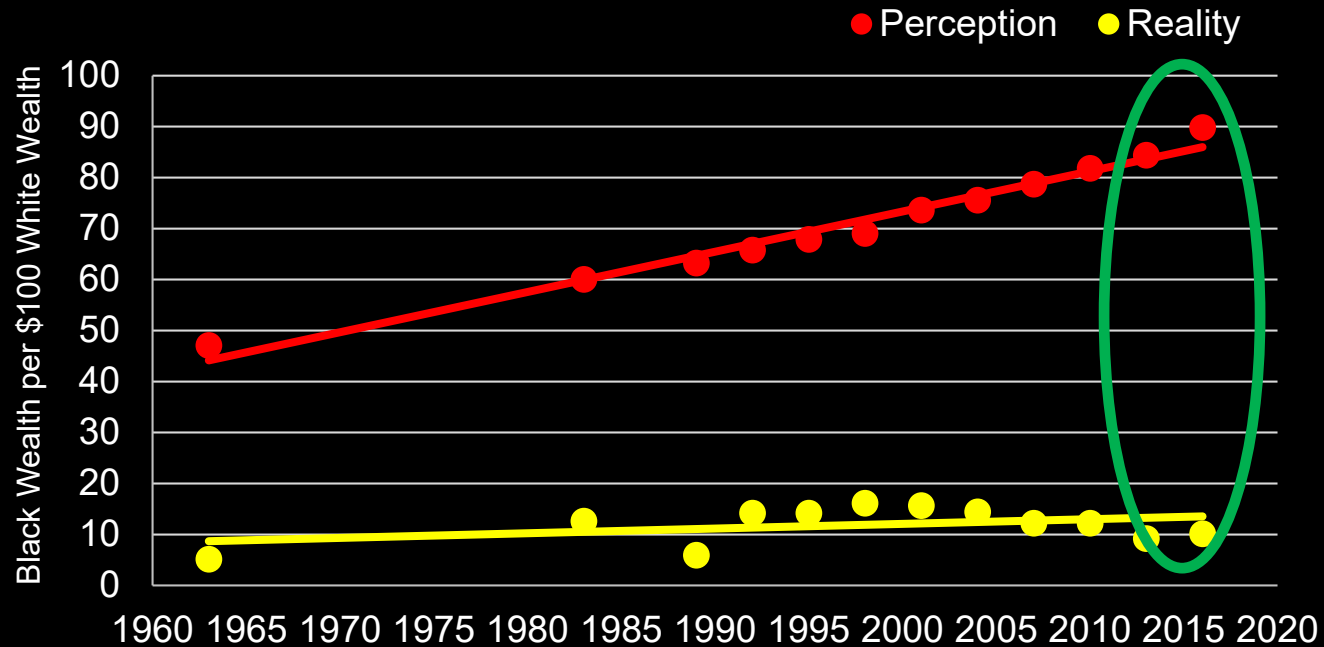


Perceptions of Racial Wealth Equality 1963-2016



Mythology of racial progress

Perceptions of Racial Wealth Equality 1963-2016



Americans *falsely* believe we have achieved considerable racial wealth equality.

Who overestimates Contemporary Racial Economic Equality?

White Americans (more than racial minority
Americans)

High-income Americans

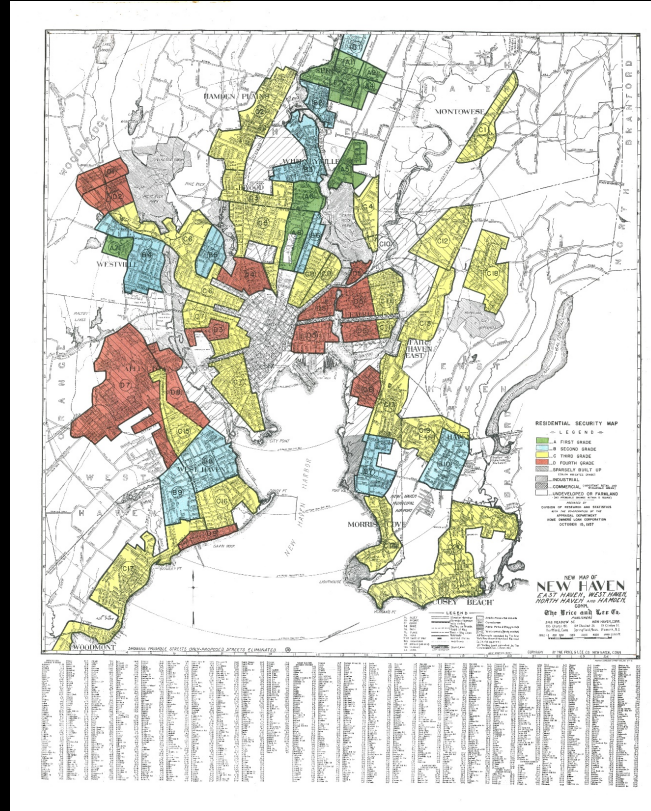
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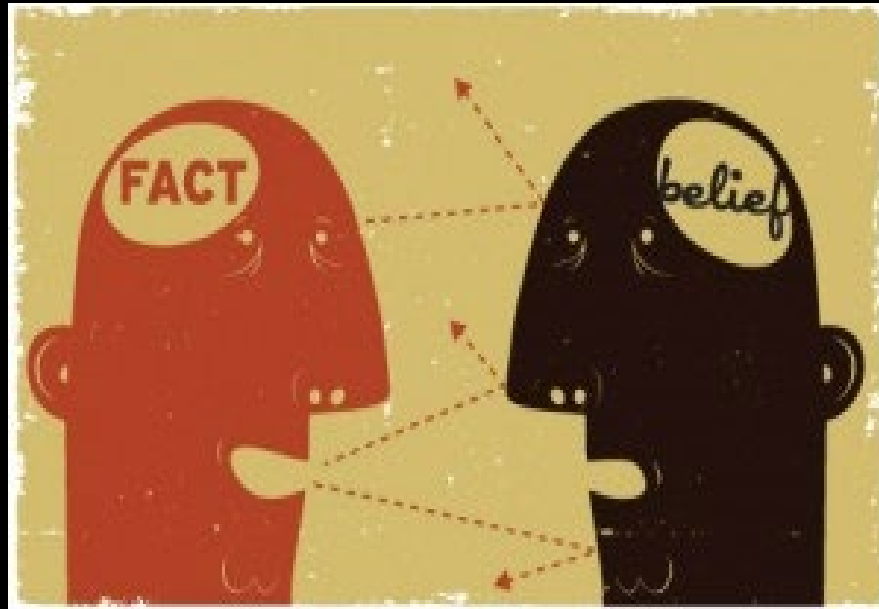
High-income Americans

Why?

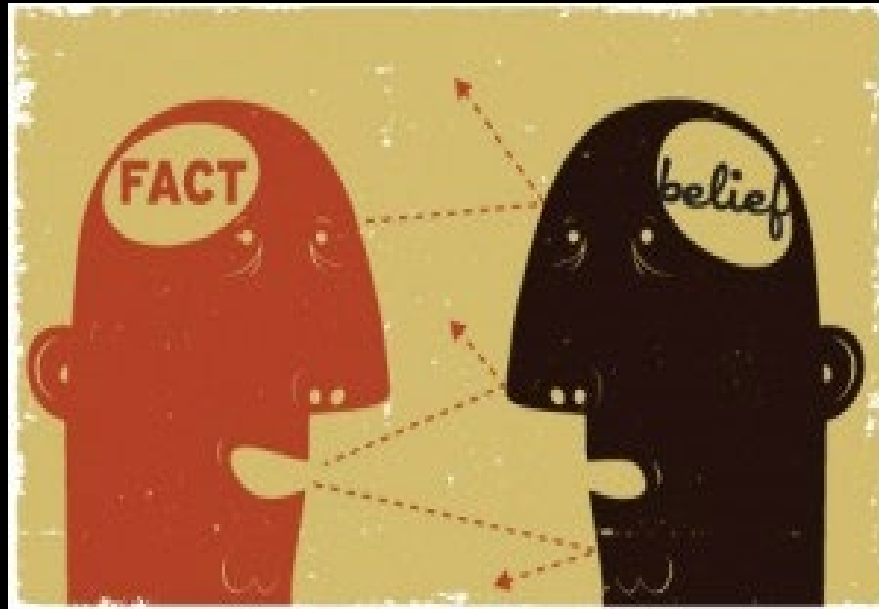
Racial & Socio-economic Segregation



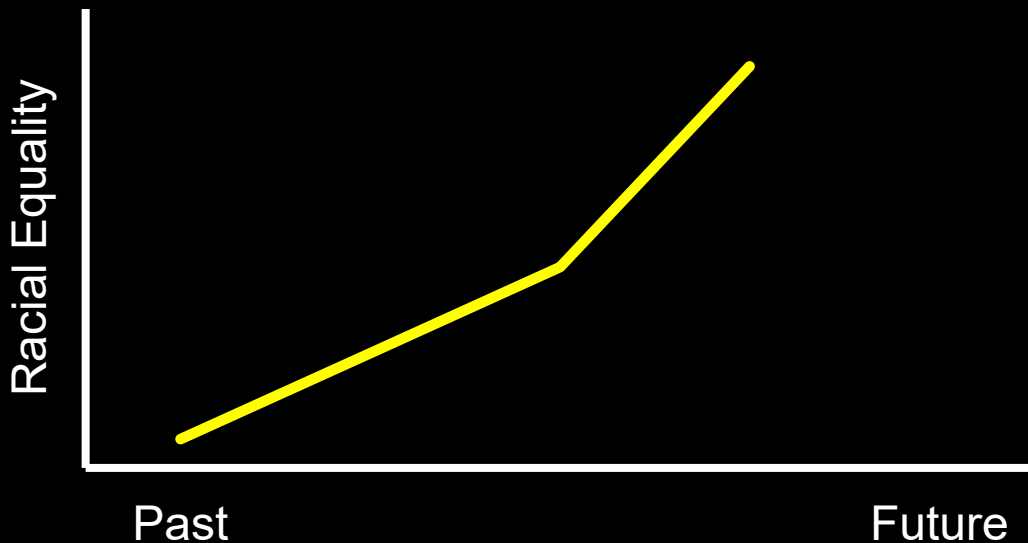
Motivated Cognition



Motivated Cognition



Motivated Belief in the Racial Progress Narrative



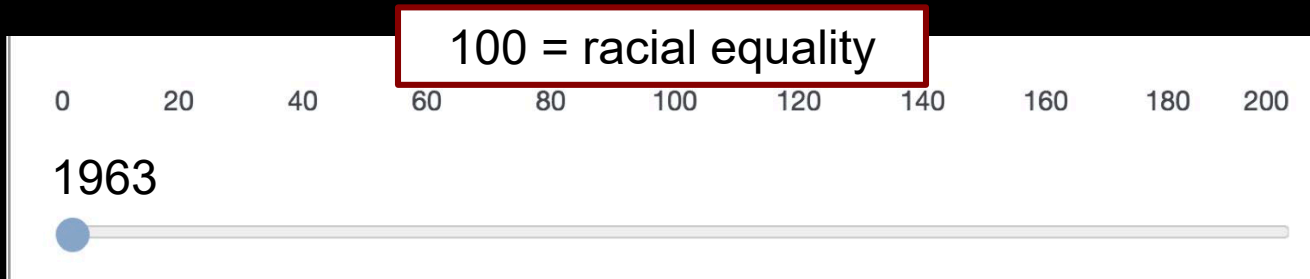
Disrupting the narrative



“Racism is Alive”

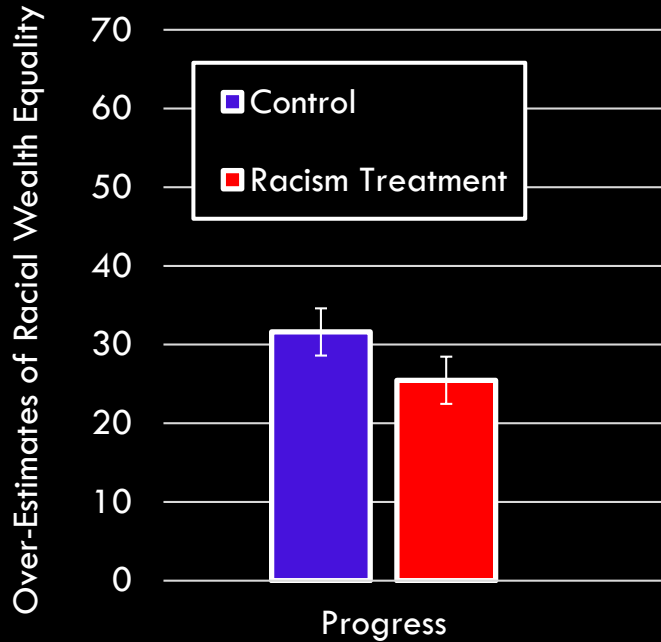
Individuals harbor fairly high levels of racial bias, which contributes substantially to racial disparities in health, wealth, and overall well-being. ... although changes to the law now make explicit forms of discrimination illegal, compared to the 1960's, neighborhoods and, thus, schools have remained largely racially segregated, as has the work force.

For every \$100 of wealth accumulated by the average White family, how much wealth has the average Black family accumulated?

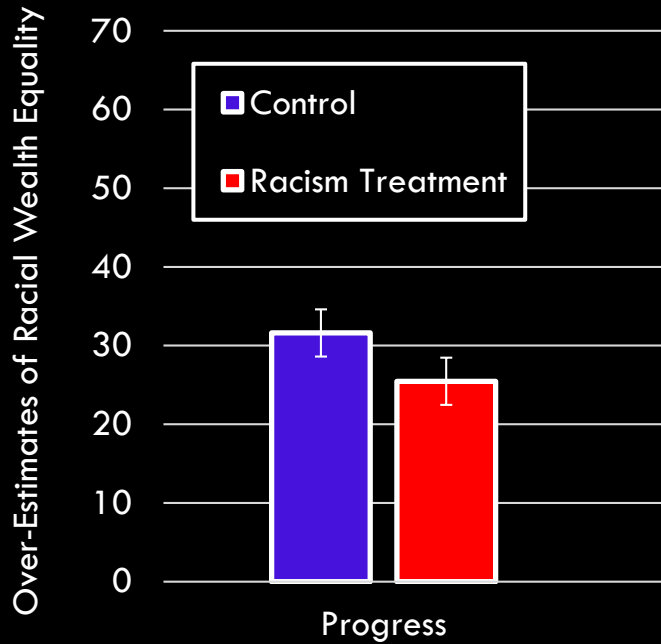


Did we disrupt the racial progress narrative?

Did we disrupt the racial progress narrative?



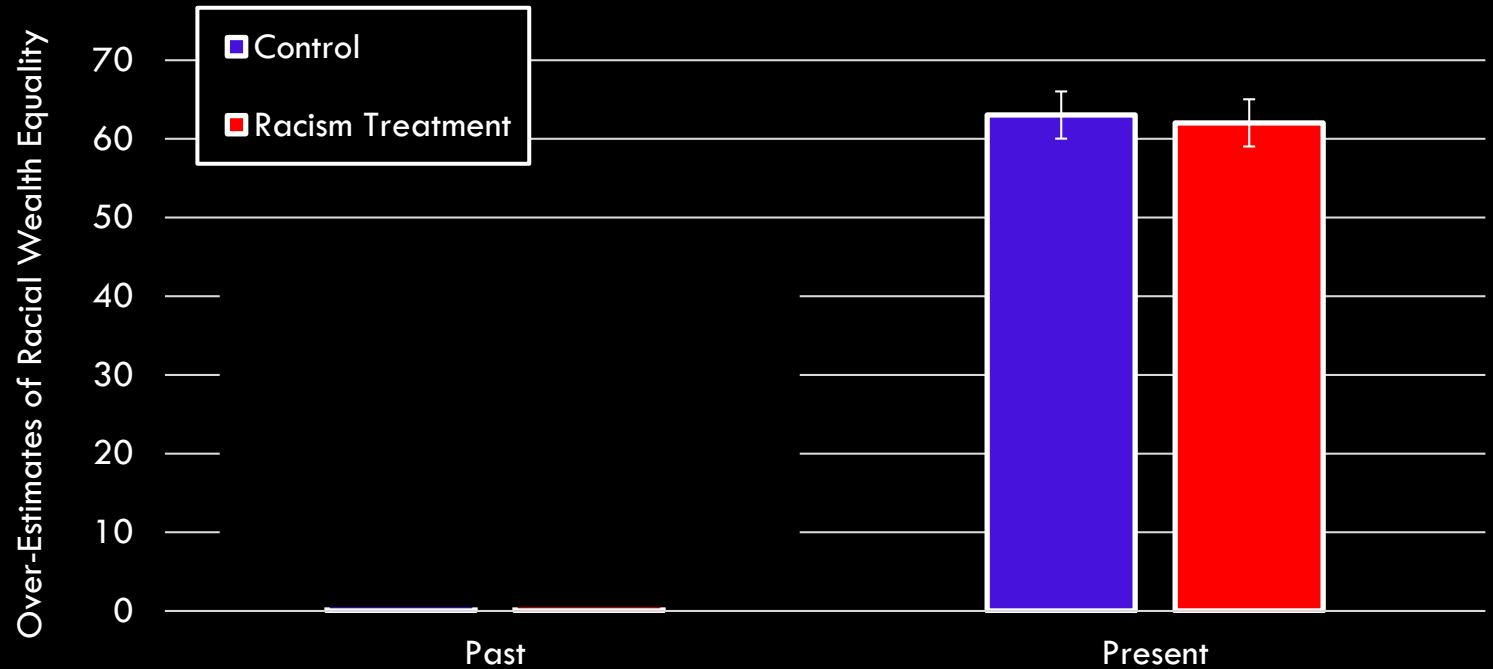
N = 667



Did perceptions of
current racial wealth
equality become
more accurate?

N = 667

Perceived Past & Present Racial Wealth Equality



N = 667

If we have not made as much progress as I thought, then perhaps racial inequality in the past was not as bad as I thought!

Disrupting the narrative is not enough

Our commitment to the misperception of
racial economic equality & the mythology
of racial progress is staggering.

Reality not Mythology

*A vast wealth gap, driven by
segregation, redlining, evictions
and exclusion, separates black
and white America.*

Essay by Trymaine Lee



*How Much Wealthier Are White
School Districts Than Nonwhite
Ones? \$23 Billion, Report Says*



Thank You



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