



**Decolonizing
Wealth Project**

DECOLONIZING WEALTH PROJECT PRESENTS

SOLIDARITY BY DESIGN

**Data-derived strategies to cultivate ally support of
racial repair for Black people in America**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As President and Chief Data Strategist of J & J David, Dr. Cody leads a team of seasoned research scientists and industry experts that help business leaders, senior executives, and entrepreneurs unlock their organization's potential by translating data into value.



Dr. Cody leverages the scientific method and data science to create influential narratives, effective campaigns, immersive data experiences, and intelligent solutions for businesses and philanthropy. Dr. Cody drives long-term success for J&J David by encouraging her team to generate intelligent, ethical, and accessible solutions for clients built on data-derived strategies that connect data to an organization's goals and needs for sustainable revenue streams, differentiated client engagement, efficient data investments, and optimized investor relations.

For almost twenty years, Dr. Cody has created analytic solutions, quantified financial value, and evaluated the impact of campaigns, narratives, and government-funded programs in business, politics, advocacy, and education. She has conducted research for and advised Catalyst, Harmony Labs, Analyst Institute, North Carolina Central University, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and the Public Agenda Foundation. Dr. Cody has an M.A. and PhD in Political Science from the University of Notre Dame du Lac. She also holds a B.A. in Political Science from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

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ABOUT DECOLONIZING WEALTH PROJECT

Led by Edgar Villanueva, Decolonizing Wealth Project (DWP) works globally to disrupt the existing systems of moving and controlling capital using education and healing programs, radical reparative giving, and storytelling. Through its fund, Liberated Capital, DWP moves untethered resources to Indigenous, Black and other people-of-color-led initiatives working for economic and racial justice.

Between 2019-2023, DWP redistributed more than \$15 million to support critical areas such as the U.S. reparations movement, Indigenous-led climate and conservation, farmer and agricultural justice, and truth and healing efforts for Native Americans in California and nationally.

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PREFACE

When I wrote *Decolonizing Wealth* (2018, 2021), I spoke to several advocates who were leading campaigns and efforts to advance truth, healing and repair. Their efforts deeply politicized me and inspired my commitment and focus to this work over the last several years.

Across the spectrum of those working in this space, I learned that those who were on the frontlines of the movement for reparations faced unique challenges - both in expanding a base of support for campaigns that had been alive for decades, and in receiving philanthropic support for their efforts. Was this due to anti-Black racism? Black-led organizations and causes have been underfunded since the beginning; yet there was something about reparations that seemed particularly challenging and divisive. In fact, the mere mention of "reparations" evoked tension and discomfort for many.

I noticed this reaction to the "R" word spanned the political spectrum—even those who typically champion racial justice and support initiatives for Black communities would pause when we discussed the importance of funding the reparations movement. This visceral response propelled me to delve deeper into the narratives surrounding reparations; to understand why such a beautiful word that embodies healing, hope, and restoration for those who have suffered historical harm, could elicit such a strong, negative response.

In the quest to unravel this paradox, the team at Decolonizing Wealth Project (DWP) sought not only to understand the underlying discomfort but also to design and test new narrative frames that could increase buy-in from the general public, specifically white people in America who remain the largest percentage of the U.S. population. Our goal was to shift the perception of reparations from unjust enrichment to a necessary means of healing and hope for us all. In launching our Liberated Capital #Case4Reparations Fund, the first-of-its-kind philanthropic fund dedicated to supporting the reparations movement and grassroots efforts for repair in Black communities, we understood that we had to also influence and shift the narrative around reparations, particularly with white people, in order to create the conditions for policy victories. The same was true for philanthropy, given the demographics of the sector.

The good news is that our research uncovered reasons for optimism. We gained insights into narrative frames that can foster support for reparations and identified strategies to engage and educate the general public. This report represents a significant step in our ongoing journey to normalize the concept of reparations for Black people in America, support legislative actions like HR 40, and promote local and state-level reparations initiatives.

This research was rigorous and comprehensive, spanning two years and three rounds. Through qualitative analysis, we have begun to unravel the complexity of public perception about reparations. We have also created narrative frames targeted at persuadable audiences in the U.S. We designed these narrative frames to help movement and others build common ground, gain buy-in, and, in some cases, achieve narrative adoption.



This work is far from complete. There are still unanswered questions about transitioning from support to action— and we name several of those questions at the end of this report. We invite you to use our findings to test and discover new ways to increase support for reparations. We also acknowledge that anti-Black racism underlies most societal narratives; an admission that is crucial for any racial justice and wealth equity conversation.

While this report does not explicitly aim to dismantle these deeply entrenched narratives — we recognize the influence of anti-Black racism on the perception of reparations in the context of Black Americans and hope this report is helpful to others working to uproot the deep narrative that plagues society.

Our gratitude extends to Dr. Janay Cody for her tireless efforts in ensuring the thoroughness and rigor of this report; our grantee partners who provided their expertise during messaging design; and our funders, supporters, donors who participated in Round 3 of our research; and the Decolonizing Wealth Project team for hours spent writing, rewriting messages and reviewing results.

To the reparations movement, we hope you find this report helpful. Our intent is that this guidance acts as a catalyst for more productive conversations, fundraising, and media opportunities as you work to build and expand your bases of support and power.

To philanthropy, we invite you to use this report to better understand how complex and vital the fight for reparations is in the broader context of racial equity, truth, and healing. Use the learnings to guide conversations with your board and move more resources to undergird this fight for healing and liberation for our country.



Edgar Villanueva

Founder and CEO

Decolonizing Wealth Project and Liberated Capital

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR



Experiencing life as a scientist in a Black female body means my history, experiences, stories, relationships, and social interactions influence every single decision I make. To pretend otherwise would be intellectually dishonest.

Science, for me, is the art of balancing the rigidity required to create a generalizable body of knowledge with the authenticity necessary to extract cultural 'truths' from data. Rather than pretend to be objective, I inject lived experience into every aspect of the knowledge generation process - from research design to insight distribution. The result is a body of work that creates opportunities for science to serve a higher purpose - giving voice to an historically underestimated community while also serving as a bridge for intellectuals who will never know life in Black skin.

Thank you Kwesi Chappin for your faith, loyalty, and professional recommendation. Thank you, Edgar Villanueva and Tricia Levesque, for your patience, trust and confidence in my expertise, vision, and creativity for our project. Thank you Vanessa Thomas, John Okhiulu, William Cordery, Vhee Ananda, Nina Rodgers, and Dr. Amber Banks for your input on the direction, substance, and characterization of this project.

For every conversation, idea, critique, citation, and connection, I send a special thank you to Joshua Smith, Jordan Smith, Dr. Darren Davis, Sian Lewis, Dr. Christopher Agard, Tautianna Stringer, Risa Brown, Jehmu Greene, Erika Alexander, Ben Arnon, Kendrick Sampson, Dr. Riki Conrey, Dr. Jon Krosnick, Dr. Robert Cialdini, Gretchen Barton, K8 Damon, Liz Manne, Jon Stewart, Kirk Cheyvitz, and Faith Campbell.

When I set out with Decolonizing Wealth Project (DWP) to conduct this study two years ago, our goal was to create a ""billboard ready"" narrative that redefines reparations for the American public. But, in the course of strategizing with DWP leadership, creating audiences, designing and executing experiments, engaging the community of DWP grantee organizations, speaking and receiving the outpouring of love at DWP's Alight, Align, Arise National Conference on Repair, and delivering insights to funders, I realized our work was so much bigger than a billboard.

Together, Decolonizing Wealth Project and my strategic research firm, J&J David, created a blueprint for building a data-driven narrative for racial repair that lays the foundation for common ground, understanding, and racial harmony. This report shows what we did and did *not* do to construct a data-driven narrative that:

1. Respects and honors the different stories people hold about race;
2. Allows people to show up as they are; and
3. Shows people who do not have Black experiences a different way to think about their role in healing our country's deepest racial wounds.

This research has been a cathartic release of a 20-year research and social justice career filled with joy and pain - much like my Black American experience. This work compelled me to learn new ways of seeing myself, my people, and those who are different from me. I hope you learn and see as much as me.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dr. Ganay Cody'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

President
J&J David



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Measuring Narrative Change	

Decolonizing Wealth Project (DWP) partnered with J&J David to create a data-driven narrative that inspires everyday non-Black Americans to support Black reparatory justice. To understand the nature of the challenge, we conducted a scholarly literature scan, exploratory analysis of opinion polls, and text mining of *The New York Times* content related to reparations from 1965 to 2022, uncovering existing attitudes as well as the themes and concepts surrounding reparative narratives.

This preliminary research highlighted the need for research and experimentation dedicated to changing the will of the majority of Americans, whose support is necessary for wide scale substantive change.

1965-2022



This multi-year narrative research project focused on the specific use case of moving non-Black Americans to donate to reparations as a litmus test for positive racial change.

When we started this project, reparations for Black people in America was as unpopular as defunding the police, but with a history of disdain over a century longer¹. This study's premise is if we create a narrative that moves non-Black Americans to take any progressive action on such an historically despised policy as reparations, then it is possible that this narrative, and the process to generate it, can be adapted to other racial justice calls to action.

Our narrative research identified approaches to reframe reparations in terms of healing as opposed to punishment for whites, or Americans overall. The ultimate goal of this research is to determine how to persuade non-Black Americans to support reparations advocacy without alienating or misrepresenting Black people.

The guiding questions for our narrative research are:



How effective is our narrative at influencing our target audiences?

Which audiences are most engaged and persuaded by our narrative?

Our narrative works if it:

1. Increases engagement among target audiences; and
2. Makes these audiences more willing to:
 - a. Adopt positive definitions of reparations related to healing; and
 - b. Donate to support reparations advocacy group.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Using J & J David's audience discovery tools and insights, community participatory research frameworks, and online narrative content experimentation, over the past two years, DWP, in partnership with J&J David experts, accomplished the following:

- 1 Devised a data-driven, evidence-based narrative consisting of three frames with distinct appeals, themes, topics, tones, intentions, and analogies for content creation.
- 2 Engaged DWP's Liberated Capital #Case4Reparations grantees in two community participatory research workshops to present research findings and included Black reparations activists and organizers in co-creating narratives.
- 3 Engaged members of DWP's Liberated Capital donor community in requests for testimonials and conducted a briefing on research.
- 4 Distributed audience research and narrative experimentation insights in two stakeholder meetings and one conference.

The research produced an evidence-based narrative with distinct frames that accomplish audience-specific goals, in particular:

Two movement-informed narrative frames

Significantly increase buy-in and establish credibility of reparations content, including one frame that significantly reduces opposition to reparations among audience segments that are typically hostile to reparations.

One donor-generated narrative frame

Significantly engages and persuades target audiences to take desired action toward reparatory justice.

Addressing this narrative gap is complementary to (not a substitute for) the work of Black liberation movements. Black Americans only make up 13% of the US population. If the majority of the country is against the policy Black people want, there is no political incentive for elected officials and leaders to make sweeping changes in Black people's favor - no matter how organized and aligned Black advocates may be. Therefore, racial progress requires both mobilizing and organizing Black Americans **and** shifting the will of non-Black Americans to support Black-specific progress.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

No single narrative is going to bring about reparations for Black Americans. Rather, a multitude of narratives are required to supplant harmful outdated narrative frames that perpetuate inequality and prevent healing. The following report offers audience insights, narrative frameworks, and research findings integrated with strategic recommendations that empower you to create your *own* narratives.

Please note: **There is no single message that transforms alt-right conservatives into social justice warriors. *That's not how racial attitude or behavioral change works.***

This report is designed to support the ecosystem of movement leaders, policy advocates, philanthropists, culture makers, communicators, and change agents to collaborate locally and nationally for reparative justice. Our hope is that by grounding our work in evidence, we can make lasting positive change.



Report Reference Guide

Content creators who need to know about audiences and narrative frame selection:

- A Fresh Look at American Audiences on Race p. 14-17
- Decolonizing Wealth Project's Reparative Narrative at a Glance p. 20
- Narrative Frame Results and Usage Summary p. 38-39
- Opportunities to Make the Case for Reparations p. 40-52

Communication strategists, donors, and advisors who need guidelines for persuasion strategies and tactics:

- A Fresh Look at American Audiences on Race p. 14-17
- The Persuasive Power of Allies p. 28-37
- Narrative Frame Results and Usage Summary p. 38-39

Activists and advocates who want to expand their base of support:

- A Fresh Look at American Audiences on Race p. 14-17
- Creating a Breakthrough Narrative p. 18-20
- Moving Audiences with Movement-Informed Narratives p. 21-27
- Narrative Frame Results and Usage Summary p. 38-39
- Opportunities to Make the Case for Reparations p. 40-52

Scientists, research methodologists, and data analysts who crave technical details and future research ideas:

- Technical Appendix p. 54-56
- The Road Ahead p. 53

Building a Data-Derived Narrative for Reparative Philanthropy

In March 2021, Liberated Capital, a funding collaborative and donor community powered by Decolonizing Wealth Project, launched the first-of-its kind national funding opportunity to support local, regional, and national movement building and advocacy efforts for reparations for Black Americans in the United States. Since then, the #Case4Reparations Fund has invested nearly \$7 million in direct funding and has deployed an array of supports to help build movement infrastructure.

Prior to the launch of DWP's #Case4Reparations Fund, the philanthropic landscape supporting reparations was dismal. The resistance faced when advocating for funding the Black reparative movement, particularly among progressive allies, paralleled the broader lack of support for the movement's actual policies and agenda. Central to the challenge is narrative – misguided perceptions and an overall lack of understanding of the mutual benefits of repair. Winning campaigns for reparations and repair for Black people requires financial resources and investment – and more importantly, the political support of allies.

For DWP, increasing resources redistributed to the reparative movement requires creating conditions that incentivize non-Black philanthropic leaders and the broader American public to support reparations advocacy and policy, aligning our narrative and case building around data-informed approaches outlined in this report.



BACKGROUND

Mass-scale narrative change is a core strategy to create incentives. Narratives are like organizations. When built well, they provide a system for accomplishing a goal. Our vision is to replace the belief that reparations is a form of unwarranted punishment levied against white people or America, with the idea that reparations is a form of healing that leads to racial harmony for us all. **We did not create a Black narrative. Our focus is strictly limited to developing a system that inspires conversations about racial issues that move people who are not Black to allyship through action.**

Our goal is to improve public support for reparations by focusing on the US population that is not Black and mostly unsupportive of reparations. Our theory of change is that transforming the will of those who feel differently about reparations will nudge leaders to be more hospitable to changes the reparative movement seeks, increase financial contributions to the movement, and improve the chances for successful reparations advocacy.



A Fresh Look at Americans on Race

To chart a course for who to talk to and how to talk about racial issues, we classified non-Black Americans based on their core beliefs about Black racial progress, racial norms they endorse, and racial encounters they have experienced.

What is an audience segmentation?

The process of grouping individual entities based on shared characteristics.

We gathered information about racial beliefs, norms, and experiences from surveys of over 8,500 non-Black US citizens over the age of 18. Then, we built predictive machine learning models weighted back to the US Census for an audience segmentation that depicts a nationally representative picture of non-Black American audiences on race.

We uncovered six racial audience segments or profiles of the non-Black American public. The audience profiles are organized from most politically progressive to most politically conservative.



THE CHOIR

% of Non-Black Americans **6.8%**

Most typical traits

Almost exclusively progressive base of racially diverse (white and non-Black PoC), liberal people under 50 who support pro-Black movements

Aware of anti-Black discrimination relative to whites

84.2%

Believe the government owes Black people

100%

Believe focus on race and racial inequality will improve Black lives

73.7%

Believe focus on race & racial inequality will lead to major racial policy change

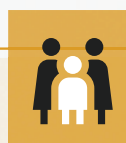
63.1%

Want the country to do more to achieve Black equality

75.3%

Top Preferred Racial Policy Solutions

Better social support systems/address systems of inequality



GOLDEN GIRLS

% of Non-Black Americans **20.8%**

Most typical traits

Mostly white progressive women under 50 with a majority who support pro-Black movements

Aware of anti-Black discrimination relative to whites

43.4%

Believe the government owes Black people

29%

Believe focus on race and racial inequality will improve Black lives

67%

Believe focus on race & racial inequality will lead to major racial policy change

53.20%

Want the country to do more to achieve Black equality

59.30%

Top Preferred Racial Policy Solutions

Treat people equally/do not look at race

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

**ESTABLISHED
LIBERALS**

% of
Non-Black
Americans **11.4%**

Most typical
traits

Slight majority of male, mostly white traditional liberal and moderate middle-aged and seniors who are split in support for pro-Black movements

Aware of anti-Black discrimination relative to whites

45.3%

Believe the government owes Black people

21%

Believe focus on race and racial inequality will improve Black lives

54.9%

Believe focus on race & racial inequality will lead to major racial policy change

48.8%

Want the country to do more to achieve Black equality

47.3%

Top Preferred Racial Policy Solutions

Acknowledge the history of racism in the U.S.

**IPoC**

% of
Non-Black
Americans **4.8%**

Most typical
traits

Mostly moderate, young to middle-aged Indigenous (I) and non-Black people of color (PoC) that are split in support for pro-Black movements.

Aware of anti-Black discrimination relative to whites

52.7%

Believe the government owes Black people

68%

Believe focus on race and racial inequality will improve Black lives

54.5%

Believe focus on race & racial inequality will lead to major racial policy change

56.2%

Want the country to do more to achieve Black equality

65.5%

Top Preferred Racial Policy Solutions

Acknowledge the history of racism in the U.S.

**KARENS**

% of
Non-Black
Americans **32.1%**

Most typical
traits

Mostly moderate to conservative white women across age who are mostly unsupportive of pro-Black movements

Aware of anti-Black discrimination relative to whites

40%

Believe the government owes Black people

18%

Believe focus on race and racial inequality will improve Black lives

49.4%

Believe focus on race & racial inequality will lead to major racial policy change

47.5%

Want the country to do more to achieve Black equality

41.1%

Top Preferred Racial Policy Solutions

Treat people equally/do not look at race

**THE OPS**

% of
Non-Black
Americans **24%**

Most typical
traits

Majority male, mostly white conservatives who do not support pro-Black movements

Aware of anti-Black discrimination relative to whites

43.3%

Believe the government owes Black people

0%

Believe focus on race and racial inequality will improve Black lives

41.4%

Believe focus on race & racial inequality will lead to major racial policy change

43.6%

Want the country to do more to achieve Black equality

43.4%

Top Preferred Racial Policy Solutions

Acknowledge the history of racism in the U.S.

The audience most supportive of pro-Black movements and systemic racial change is the smallest. The Choir only makes up about 7% of the non-Black US population. It is the only group where the overwhelming majority perceive anti-Black discrimination relative to white people. This group exclusively believes that the US government owes Black people, and is the only group that prefers racial policy solutions that offer better social support and address systems of inequality.

For every member of the Choir there are about 8 people who are either a Karen or one of the Ops.

Audiences with differing political orientations can have similar racial preferences.

Golden Girls tend to be more liberal and supportive of social movements dedicated to Black progress. Karens tend to be more moderate-conservative and opposed to pro-Black movements. Yet, both prefer racial policy solutions that treat people the same and are race-neutral. Similarly, Established Liberals and the Ops both prefer racial policy solutions that acknowledge the history of racism. While the majority of IPoC are more politically moderate than Established Liberals and Golden Girls, their views on the government owing Black people and the country doing more to achieve racial equality for Black people are closer to the Choir.

Persuasion and the Principle-Practice Gap:

People who are not Black will express support for racial equality in principle, but when it comes to implementing practices of racial equality, that support significantly drops (Sniderman, P.M. and Piazza, T., 1993. The scar of race. Harvard University Press.). These same groups also become hostile to racial progress when they believe Black Americans are advancing too far or fast. (Cody, J.C., 2013. Mistaking conservatives for racists and racists for conservatives: Threat and the intertwining of racial resentment and ideology. University of Notre Dame.).

People with strong attitudes and emotions about a given issue who are internally consistent with their behaviors are least likely to be persuaded. When presented with new information, they will seek out reasons to maintain what they already believe instead of considering a new thought (Zuwerink, J.R. and Devine, P.G., 1996. Attitude importance and resistance to persuasion: It's not just the thought that counts. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70(5), p.931.).

People alter their attitudes to be consistent with behaviors before they alter ingrained, habitual patterns in behavior to be consistent with attitudes. (Verplanken, B. and Orbell, S., 2022. Attitudes, habits, and behavior change. Annual review of psychology, 73, pp.327-352.).

Therefore, mapping audiences by the extent to which their attitudes match their actions allows us to discern who is a real ally, a true enemy and which audiences can be moved by new information to take action.

Delving into the differences between racial experiences and beliefs clarifies which audiences are persuaded, persuadable, and unpersuadable.

Pursuing reparations is a government solution to repair a community that has experienced historical harm sanctioned by the government. Yet, only the majority of IPoC and the Choir believe the government owes Black people. In order to distinguish which audiences are persuaded (already with us), persuadable (can be moved), and unpersuadable (hostile to us), we mapped each segment by the alignment of their racial attitudes and actions. First, we assessed the extent to which individuals believe it is important to live in a racially diverse community, educate oneself about Black-white inequality, support Black-owned businesses, advocate for pro-Black issues, and converse about race with people who are not of the same race.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

Then, we contrasted these beliefs by the extent to which individuals report actually living in a racially diverse community, educating oneself on Black-white inequality, supporting Black-owned businesses, advocating for pro-Black issues, and having interracial conversations about race.



We selected Golden Girls and Established Liberals as persuadable audiences because they engage in some positive racial actions, but their racial attitudes are not as consistently positive. While IPoC attitudes are on the positive side, their actions are less so. This makes the IPoC audience less likely to alter behavior to be consistent with their reported positive attitudes and more susceptible to misinformation about reparations. Since this research focuses on proactively creating healthy conversations around reparations, not countering misinformation, the IPoC segment was not prioritized as persuadable.

Creating a Breakthrough Narrative

What is a Narrative?

A narrative is an account of connective events, or a devise that makes meaning out of beliefs and lived experiences. It provides a structure to stories we tell each other and ourselves about reality.

After identifying our audience, we compared audience insights to social media data from DWP and Edgar Villanueva's (DWP Founder and CEO), social media channels. We also looked at descriptive insights and quotes from people who purchased Edgar's book, *Decolonizing Wealth*. From this social analysis, we determined that our narrative should expand upon Edgar's influential message that "money is medicine."

Our core narrative - *reparations is a form of healing that leads to racial harmony for us all* - allows persuadable audiences to see the best version of themselves to encourage them to maintain attitudes and behavior consistent with their positive self image.

What is the difference between a Narrative and Narrative Frames?

A narrative is the overarching device that structures a story. A narrative frame is a component of a narrative that tailors a story, or what a piece of content conveys.

In order for the narrative to function across audiences, we had to design distinct narrative frames to organize key concepts that support the core idea we want our target audience to adopt. Within each narrative frame, we created appeals, themes, topics, tone, intentions, and analogies. Then, we engaged our Liberated Capital #Case4Reparations grantee partners and donors for feedback.

Grantee Partner Engagement

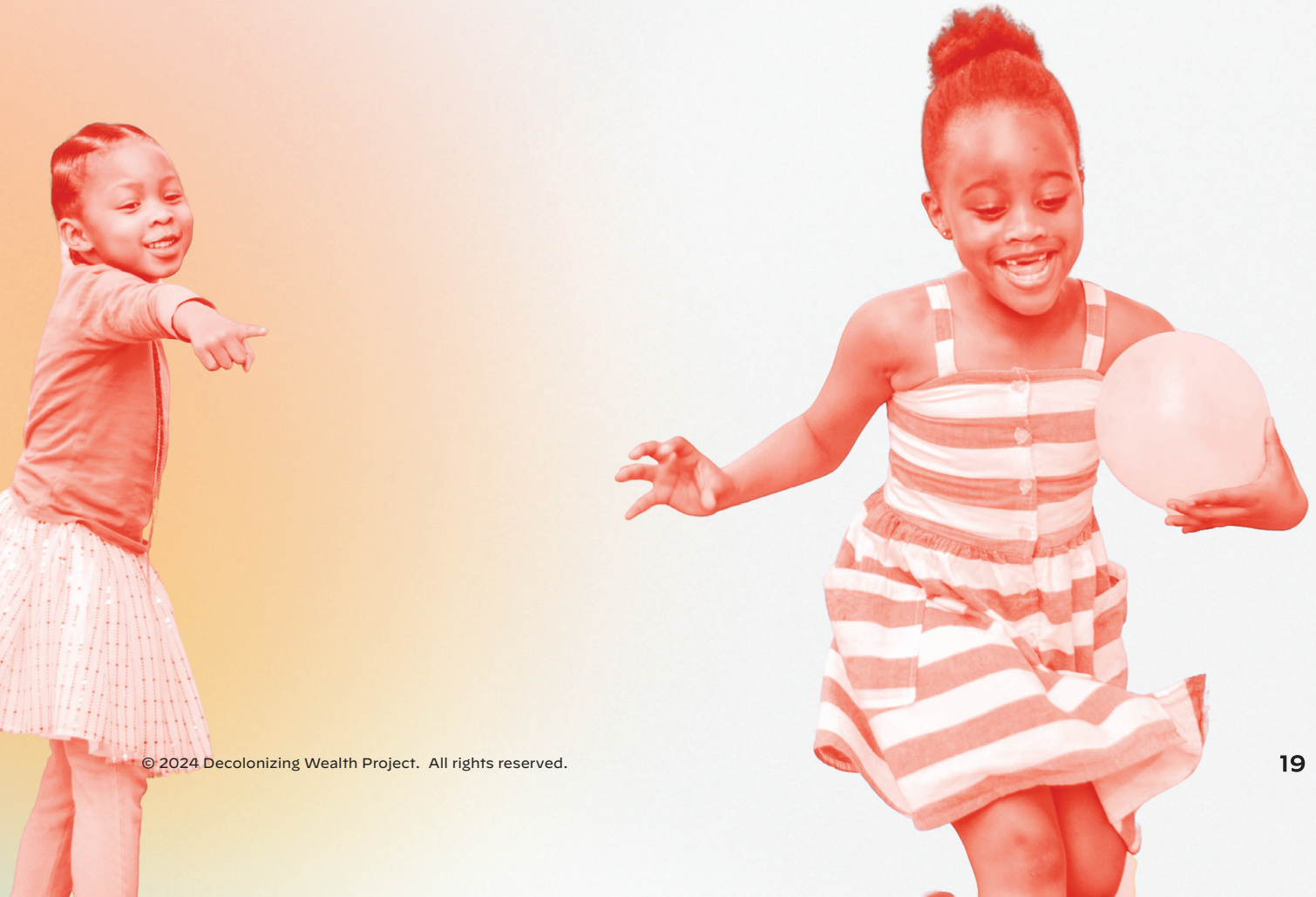
During the community participatory workshop, grantee partners were presented with audience insights and the goals of this project. We solicited insights from the grantees about what reparations means to them and discussed some of the complexities about reparations. Finally, we invited participants to condense the frames to the essential components they would like to see and hear repeated by our persuadable audience.

Donor Engagement

We provided DWP's donors with a brief synopsis of the research project. We asked them to share a short video about why they choose to support DWP, their reparative philanthropic journey, and how this process has been personally fulfilling. We transcribed and compiled these testimonials into a highlight reel consistent with the narrative frames.

NARRATIVE COMPONENTS

Frame	A point of focus that guides people to interpret content in a particular way
Appeal	Cues used to draw an audience into your content
Intent	The objective of content you communicate
Theme	The main values or idea that implicitly tie content together
Tone	Voice and attitude of your content
Topics	Subjects of focus that explicitly tie content together
Analogy	A figure of speech that take two seemingly different entities and shows how they are alike, to illustrate a larger, more complex point succinctly
Persuasion Principles	Scientific rules that guide how people can influence the thinking and behavior of others



Decolonizing Wealth Project's Reparative Narrative at a Glance

NARRATIVE VISION

(The idea or thought you want people to adopt that guides their future thinking about an issue.)

Reparations is for healing and harmony, not punishment

NARRATIVE FUNCTION

(What the narrative does (how it helps) for your target audience.)

Allow people to be and see their best self

Frame ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Appeal	Demand better for your country
Intent	Address objections to reparations head on; Remove novelty of reparations
Theme	Accountability and Choice
Tone	Factual, respectful, serious
Analogy	Ignoring the scar of slavery because you didn't own slaves is like buying a house with a cracked foundation and saying you don't have to fix it.
Persuasion Principles	Authority, Social Proof, Unity

Topics

- Myth of inferior races justified slavery and obscures the truth of present harm
- Repair options are beyond cash
- Even if you did not own slaves, this is still your country to fix
- Racist laws and policies still exist
- Intentional repair heals the damage once and for all so the country can move on
- Conservatives have used reparations before

Frame INHERITANCE

Appeal	Free us all because none of us are free until we all are
Intent	Reframe white privilege without guilt; Simplify steps to support reparations
Theme	Community and Empathy
Tone	Empathetic, light, peaceful
Analogy	America needs a new foundation because it is a house divided against itself that cannot stand.
Persuasion Principles	Reciprocity, Unity

Topics

- White advantage comes at the cost of enslavers' inhumane actions
- Trying to understand how slavery still creates Black trauma creates confusion and paralysis
- America will thrive with unity
- Recovery can be simple
- Commit to healing
- Acknowledge the damage
- Support efforts to pay Black people back for wealth they built but never received

Frame TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR

Appeal	Find joy and alignment in healing your community and rewriting your story
Intent	Shift perspective of who benefits from reparations; Provide new information about current racial injustice
Theme	Community and personal growth
Tone	Aspirational, passionate
Analogy	Reparative support is self-healing concrete for the roads to racial harmony [cracked by centuries of neglect and crimes against humanity].
Persuasion Principles	Liking, Reciprocity, Social Proof Authority, Unity

Topics

- Learning journey about Black American history and current racial injustices not taught in school
- Acknowledgment of personally benefiting from historical exploitation and colonization
- Personal story of why make the choice to focus on reparative philanthropy
- The personal relief, redemption, healing, connection, transformation experienced due to reparative giving and supporting reparations

Moving Audiences with Movement-Informed Content

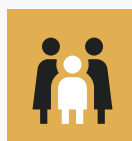
We created Atlantic Slave Trade content for Established Liberals and the Inheritance content for Golden Girls. This narrative content was reviewed and informed by grantee partners, and thus movement-informed. We tested this written, editorial content in two rounds of experiments. We randomly assigned 5,078 non-Black Americans to one of three conditions: Atlantic Slave Trade, Inheritance, and Reparations for Black Lives (a standard editorial based on the dominant reparations narrative).

After reading the assigned content, we measured the extent to which the content establishes buy-in and creates common ground by whether or not people believe and agree with the content, respectively (i.e., narrative agreement). To measure the impact, we asked people to allocate \$100 to themselves or DWP in any manner they saw fit. We compared the probability of donating and average donation amounts to DWP.²

1 Use movement-informed narrative frames to build consensus with allies.

Consensus building - **establishing buy-in** (i.e., believability) and **creating common ground** on an issue - is one of the most important aspects of engagement for the reparative movement because it is fundamental to increasing the number of allies who support reparations.

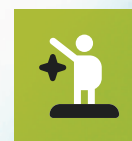
DWP's movement-informed content moves



GOLDEN
GIRLS



ESTABLISHED
LIBERALS

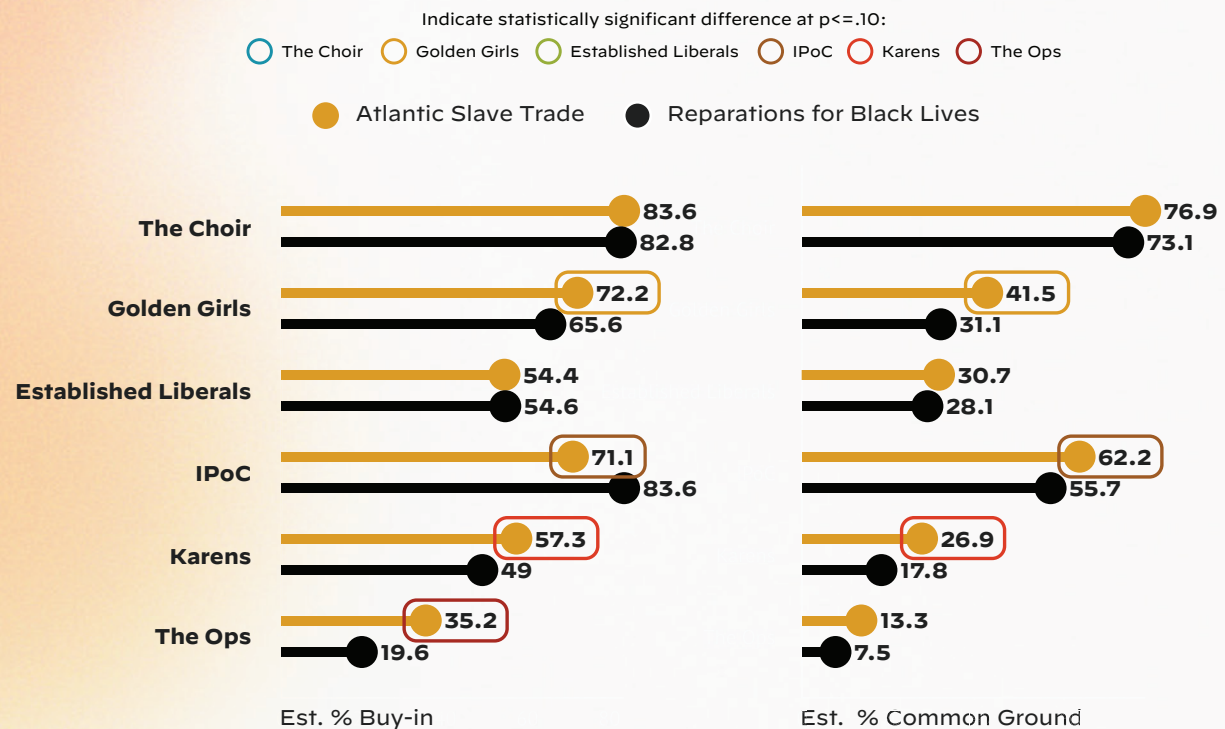


to build consensus.

NARRATIVE CHANGE RESULTS

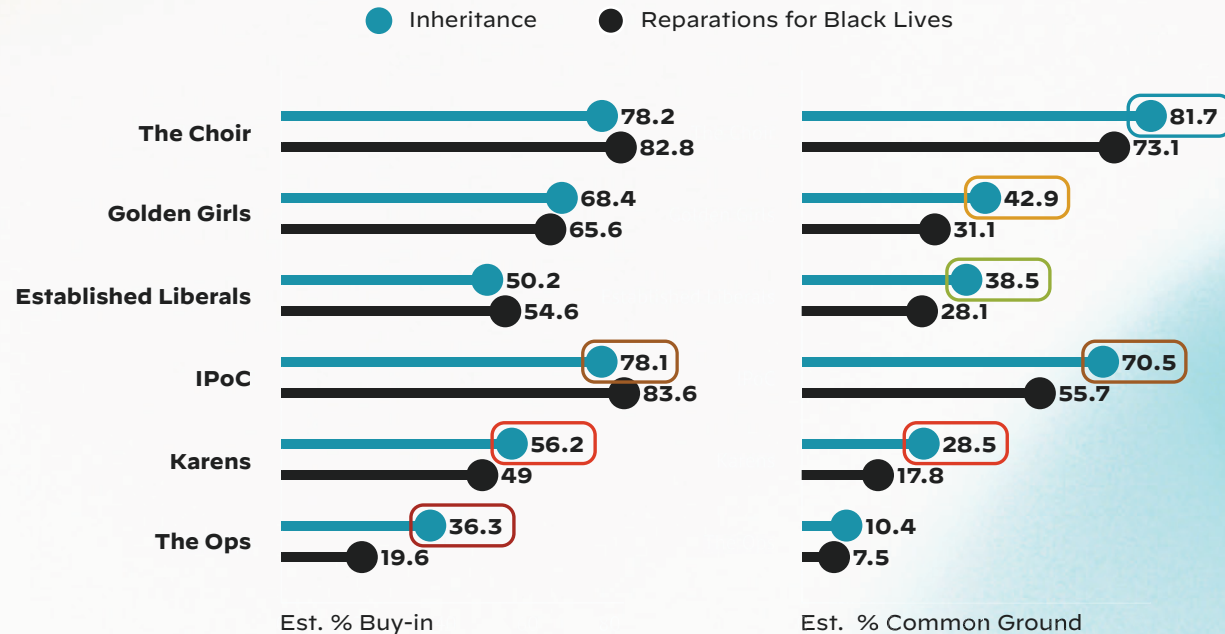
Narrative Content

ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE vs. REPARATIONS FOR BLACK LIVES



Narrative Content

INHERITANCE vs. REPARATIONS FOR BLACK LIVES



The Atlantic Slave Trade narrative frame ...

Establishes
buy-in among



**GOLDEN
GIRLS**

Creates common
ground for



**GOLDEN
GIRLS**



**ESTABLISHED
LIBERALS**



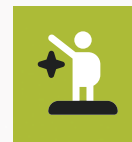
The Inheritance narrative frame helps you find common ground among both



**GOLDEN
GIRLS**



**ESTABLISHED
LIBERALS**



The Atlantic Slave Trade and Inheritance content performed as well as conventional reparations content in terms of establishing buy-in (i.e., believability) among Established Liberals. There were no significant differences in buy-in detected in either the Atlantic Slave Trade or Inheritance content in this audience. **On the other hand, the Atlantic Slave Trade content significantly increased buy-in among Golden Girls by close to 7 percentage points (pp).**

Inheritance content produced a significant lift in establishing common ground by almost 12pp among Golden Girls. Although unintended, the Inheritance content also significantly moved Established Liberals by 10pp in a positive direction.

The Atlantic Slave Trade content produced a 10pp significant lift in establishing common ground among Golden Girls, although they were not the target audience for this content. Established Liberals exposed to the Atlantic Slave Trade content moved slightly by 3pp. While this lift among Established Liberals does not rise to the level of statistical significance, it is an indication of movement in the right direction.

2

Separate consensus building from narrative change.

We generated positive consensus building results among Established Liberals and Golden Girls, but were less successful influencing narrative adoption or behavior.

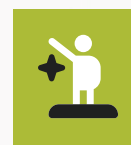
DWP's movement-informed content does not create positive narrative or behavioral change in



**GOLDEN
GIRLS**



**ESTABLISHED
LIBERALS**



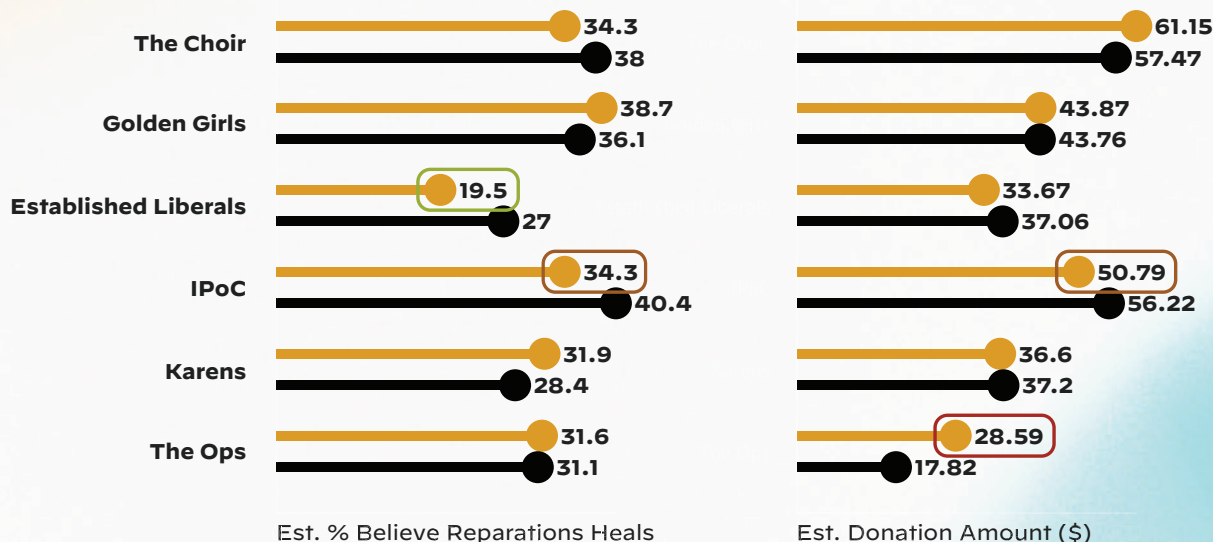
Narrative Content

ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE VS. REPARATIONS FOR BLACK LIVES

Indicate statistically significant difference at $p \leq .10$ compared to "Reparations for Black Lives":

○ The Choir
 ○ Golden Girls
 ○ Established Liberals
 ○ IPoC
 ○ Karens
 ○ The Ops

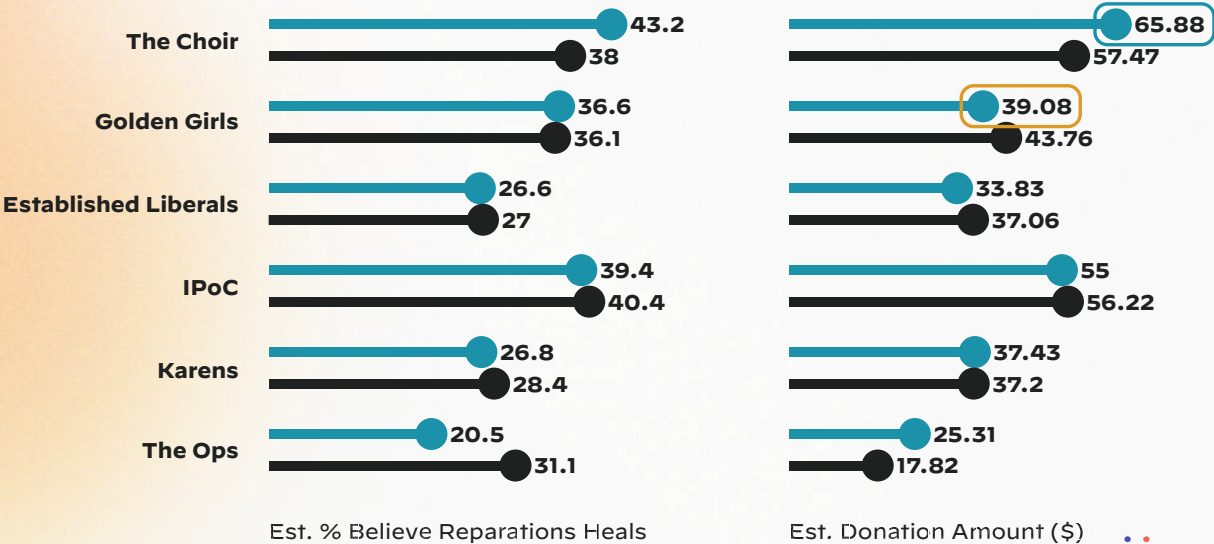
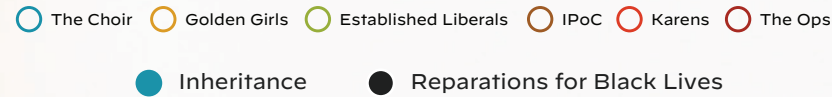
● Atlantic Slave Trade
 ● Reparations for Black Lives



Narrative Content

INHERITANCE VS. REPARATIONS FOR BLACK LIVES

Indicate statistically significant difference at $p \leq .10$ compared to "Reparations for Black Lives":



There was no significant difference in the likelihood of Golden Girls defining reparations as healing across any of the content. Established Liberals were significantly less likely to define reparations as healing in the Atlantic Slave Trade content by about 7.5pp. There was no significant difference in how Established Liberals defined reparations as healing due to the Inheritance content.

On average, Golden Girls donated significantly less to DWP (by about 5pp) when exposed to the Inheritance content than when exposed to the conventional reparations content. There was no significant difference between amounts donated for the Atlantic Slave Trade and conventional reparations content. There were also no statistically significant differences in donations among Established Liberals for any of the content.

While movement-informed narrative frames may be optimized for consensus building, we have more work to do to determine how to use these frames for narrative change for our target audiences.

3 Carefully consider your strategy for non-Black people of color.

Both the Atlantic Slave Trade and the Inheritance content significantly moved the IPoC audience to create greater common ground over and above the conventional reparations content. Yet, both narratives produced a statistically significant decrease in buy-in for IPoC. Furthermore, the Atlantic Slave Trade created a statistically significant decrease in narrative adoption (i.e., saying reparations is healing) and donating.



IPoC

Even though IPoC hold beliefs that align with racial equity, their behavior maps more toward racial antagonism with respect to Black Americans. Thus, IPoC are less susceptible to positive persuasion.

Care should be taken when introducing new narratives to IPoC. Such attempts may backfire to the extent that the new content and calls-to-action are at odds with their existing worldviews about and behaviors toward Black Americans.

4 Handle objections to neutralize opposition.

The Atlantic Slave Trade and Inheritance content significantly increased buy-in and common ground among Karens.



KARENS

We had no intention of moving opposition audiences with our content, but we did. Karens had a significant lift in buy-in by approximately 8pp and 7pp for the Atlantic Slave Trade and Inheritance content, respectively. Likewise, the Atlantic Slave Trade and Inheritance content significantly lifted buy-in by about 9pp and 11pp, respectively.



THE OPS

The Atlantic Slave Trade and Inheritance content significantly increased buy-in by about 16pp.

NARRATIVE CHANGE RESULTS

The Atlantic Slave Trade content significantly lifted donation amounts among the Ops by about 11pp. While there were considerably less people in the Ops audience saying reparations is healing (close to 11pp less), this drop did not reach the level of statistical significance.

With both the Inheritance and Atlantic Slave Trade content, unlike the conventional reparations content, we paid special attention to and directly addressed objections DWP commonly encounters when discussing reparations with their audiences. These objections include white privilege, reparations being hard or new, reparations being a cure-all for racism, reparations strictly as a cash handout, and not all white people owned slaves. In the Atlantic Slave Trade content, we provide contemporary examples of ongoing harm being done specifically to Black communities in America to address the issue of reparations being conflated limited as redemption for slavery.

The Atlantic Slave Trade narrative frame emphasized accountability for choices, provided new information that addresses objections and disentangles reparations from slavery by connecting reparations with prominent conservative leaders to show that reparations is not new for the US.

This framework may have neutralized conservative objections and prevented significant backlash.



THE OPS

The key win from these tests was that the Atlantic Slave Trade narrative frame can neutralize opposition from the Ops

The Persuasive Power of Allies

From the first two rounds of experiments, we learned that our movement-informed narrative frames did not work as expected for persuading our target audiences. Given this result, we tested a third narrative frame - **Transformation through Repair**.

To test this frame, we used ally-generated video content from DWP's supporters. We compiled videos from three DWP donors (1 white male, 1 South Asian woman, and 1 white woman) into a 76-second highlight reel that was tailored to be an aspirational story of how successful philanthropists (with discretionary wealth available to donate) have been transformed through reparative philanthropy.

In an online survey setting, we randomly assigned 3,655 non-Black American adults to view either DWP's video content or a placebo video about how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.

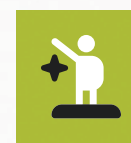
DWP's video was designed to specifically influence



**GOLDEN
GIRLS**



**ESTABLISHED
LIBERALS**



but we also paid
close attention to



IPOC

because of the inclusion of a South Asian female donor.

The change from a written to video content format allowed us to enhance our analysis with additional metadata (i.e., response times and page clicks) to understand engagement.³ In order to measure persuasion, after viewing the video, respondents were asked to define reparations and complete the same donation task as prior rounds of experiments.

1 Survey interactions offer engagement clues.

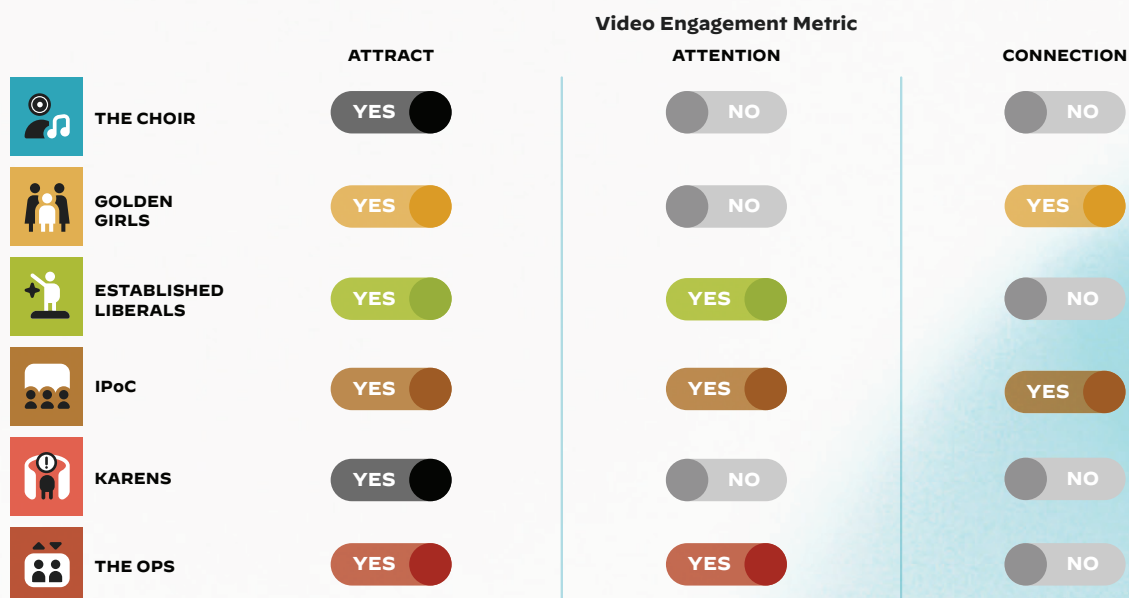
An online survey is a contained environment, but participants control if they complete the survey, the amount of time spent reviewing experimental content, and if they respond to voluntary questions. These kinds of behaviors are indicators of engagement provided by the survey environment. If individuals are less willing to engage with content in a survey, we can expect greater challenges creating engaging content for real-world campaigns when individuals can choose not to consume the content at all with no consequence.⁴ If individuals are more willing to engage and take more time with treatment content, we have initial evidence of the potential for the new narrative to reach and resonate with the target audience - a precursor to persuasion.

We measured video engagement by whether or not people were

- 1 **Attracted** enough to the content to watch the entire video;
- 2 **Attentive** to the content based on the proportion of time people spent watching the video weighted by the amount of interaction they have with the video page; and
- 3 **Connected** to the content based on whether or not people voluntarily define what reparations means to them or not.⁵

Is DWP's video more engaging than a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly?

☐ No
 ☒ Yes, not significant
 ☒ Statistically significant



NARRATIVE CHANGE RESULTS

Overall, yes, DWP's ally-generated content is more engaging. All audiences are significantly more likely to complete the video when exposed to DWP's video versus watching a caterpillar become a butterfly. DWP's video sustains more attention for 2 out of 3 persuadable audiences compared to the placebo. DWP's video content connects with 2 out of 3 persuadable audiences compared to the placebo.

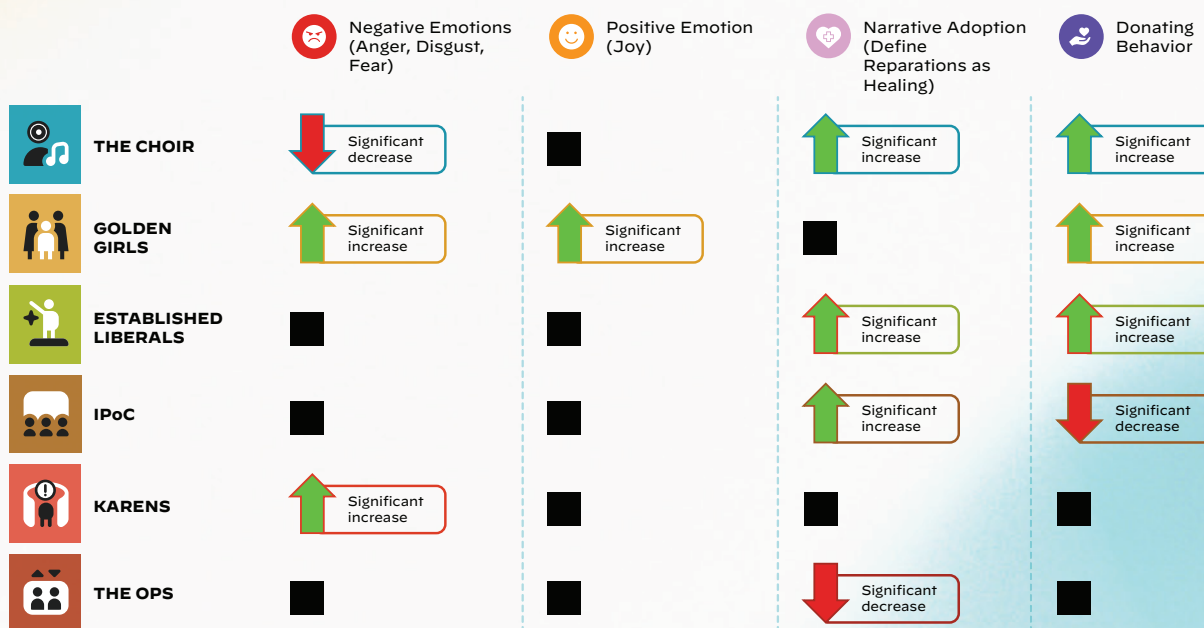
2 Let allies talk to each other.

If movement-informed content is optimized for engagement that builds consensus and increases the believability of reparative viewpoints, ally-generated narrative content is optimized for allies to persuade each other. Instead of using DWP's or grantee partners' voices to persuade potential allies to retell the story of Black harm, we invited allies to tell their transformation stories as a way to persuade people like them.

DWP's ally-generated narrative content persuades target audiences.

NARRATIVE PERSUASION BY ALLY-GENERATED 'TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR' VIDEO CONTENT

↑ Increase ↓ Decrease ■ No change



The Transformation through Repair narrative content emotionally arouses Golden Girls while reducing anger in the Choir.

DWP's video increases narrative adoption for



while increasing donating behavior among



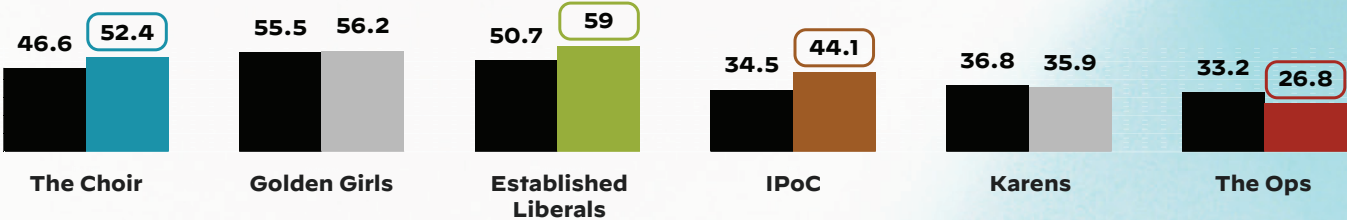
We have limited backlash from the Ops, and none from Karens despite increased negative emotional arousal for this audience in particular. We see a positive change in behavior for the Choir, Golden Girls and Established Liberals. There is a decrease in donating among IPoC, this behavior is consistent with our prior research.

Two out of three target audiences - Established Liberals and IPoC - were significantly more likely to define reparations as healing.

○ The Choir
 ○ Golden Girls
 ○ Established Liberals
 ○ IPoC
 ○ Karens
 ○ The Ops

● Narrative Frame: Caterpillar - Butterfly Placebo
 ● Narrative Frame: Transformation through Repair
 ■ Not statistically significant

Est. % Define Reparations as Healing



Established Liberals and IPoC significantly increase narrative adoption by close to 9pp and 10pp, respectively, with exposure to DWP's video versus the placebo. We also detected a significant increase in defining reparations as healing in the Choir - and a significant drop among the Ops.

Golden Girls have a higher baseline level for defining reparations as healing compared to all other audiences. Golden Girls who viewed DWP's video have comparable levels of narrative adoption to Established Liberals' elevated narrative adoption levels after viewing DWP's video.

3 Check the emotions you trigger.

We noticed that while Golden Girls had increased attraction and connection to DWP's video, **we did not see a significant change in narrative adoption for this group.** To provide insight into why, we compared the emotional content of each audience's definitions of reparations by the DWP video and placebo experimental conditions.

While we successfully triggered a statistically significant increase in joy among Golden Girls who viewed DWP's video, we also triggered a statistically significant increase in anger, disgust and fear. We triggered significantly higher levels of anger, fear, and disgust among Karens, but no statistically significant increase in joy among this audience. We significantly reduced anger among the Choir.

It is worth noting that someone's anger can be directed at different things. For instance, one Golden Girl's anger was directed toward perceived undeservingness of Black people today demanding reparations:

“ *I just am angry that the generations that are demanding reparations are the same generations that sat on their asses while I worked to better myself. That's it in a nutshell for me ... Where's my reparations for forcefully being made to pick veggies and peaches and pecans, of which I got no pay. My parents got paid. Should I have sued them for reparations[?]* ”

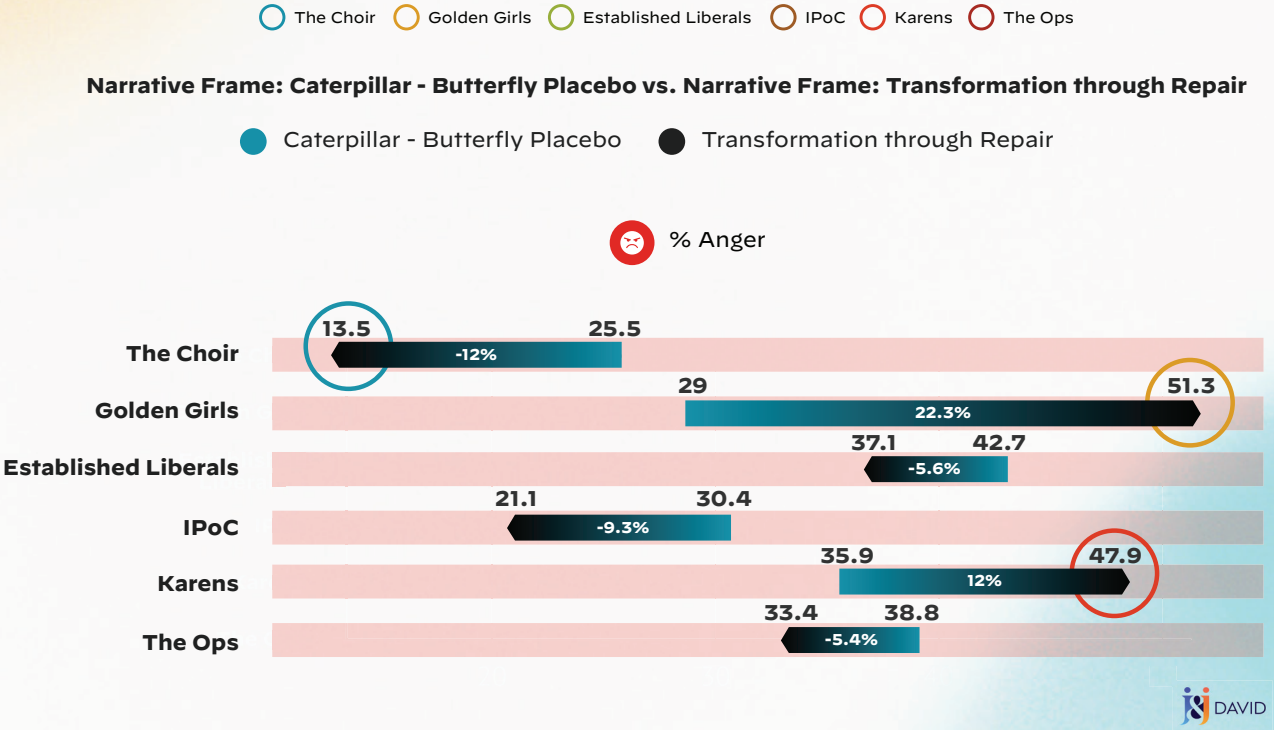
NARRATIVE CHANGE RESULTS

While another Golden Girl’s anger was directed toward white privilege and the corruption of the criminal-legal system:

“[S]top making it hard for minorities to vote, prosecute police for using excessive force, stop charging blacks more than whites for crimes[,] prosecute assistant attorneys for prosecutorial misconduct[,] reform the prison system[,] recognize that inequality in that system.

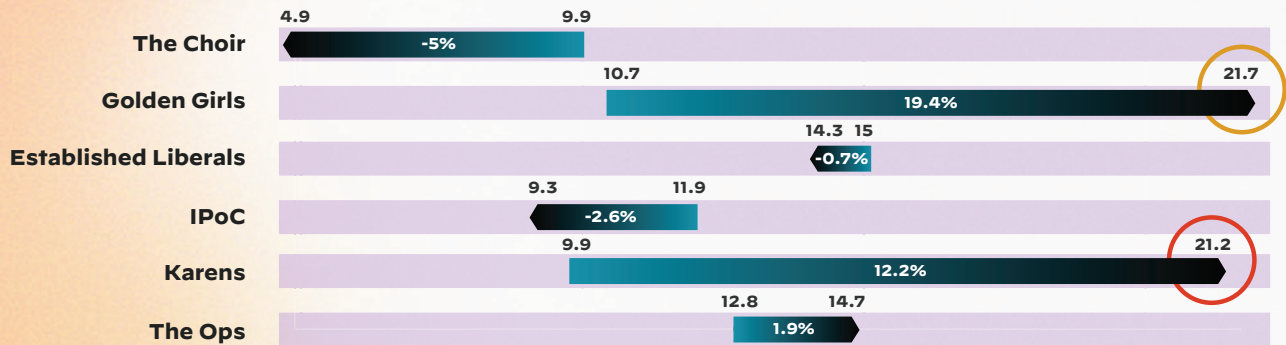
It may be the case that any positive influence that joy could have on Golden Girls may be offset by heightened negative emotions. This offset of emotional arousal may be at least partially responsible for no change in narrative adoption among Golden Girls.

DWP’s video significantly arouses conflicting emotions among Golden Girls

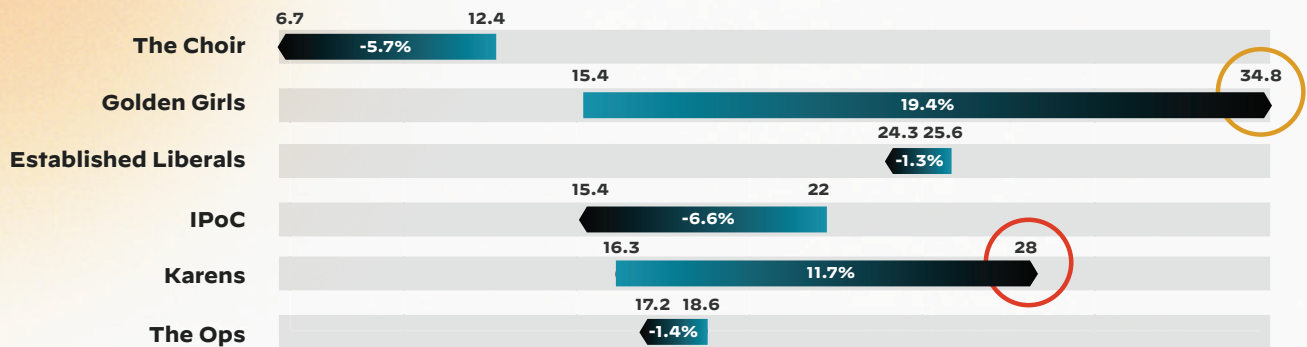


NARRATIVE CHANGE RESULTS

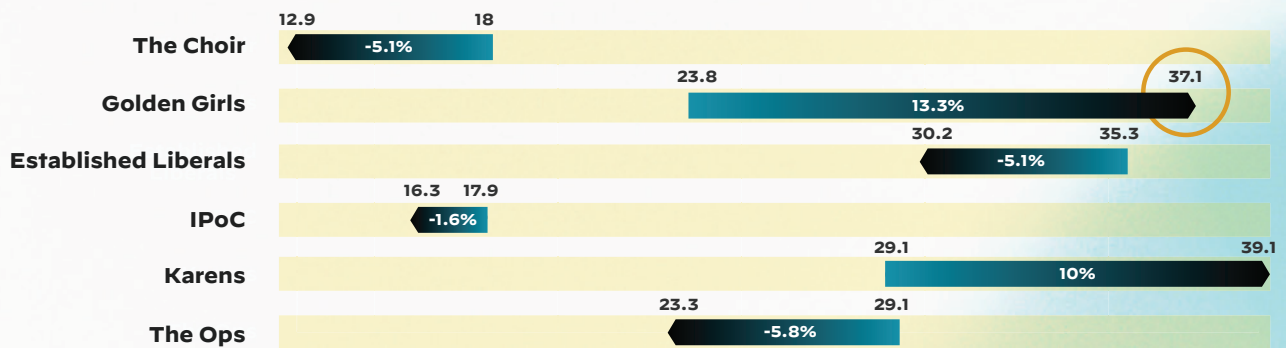
% Disgust



% Fear



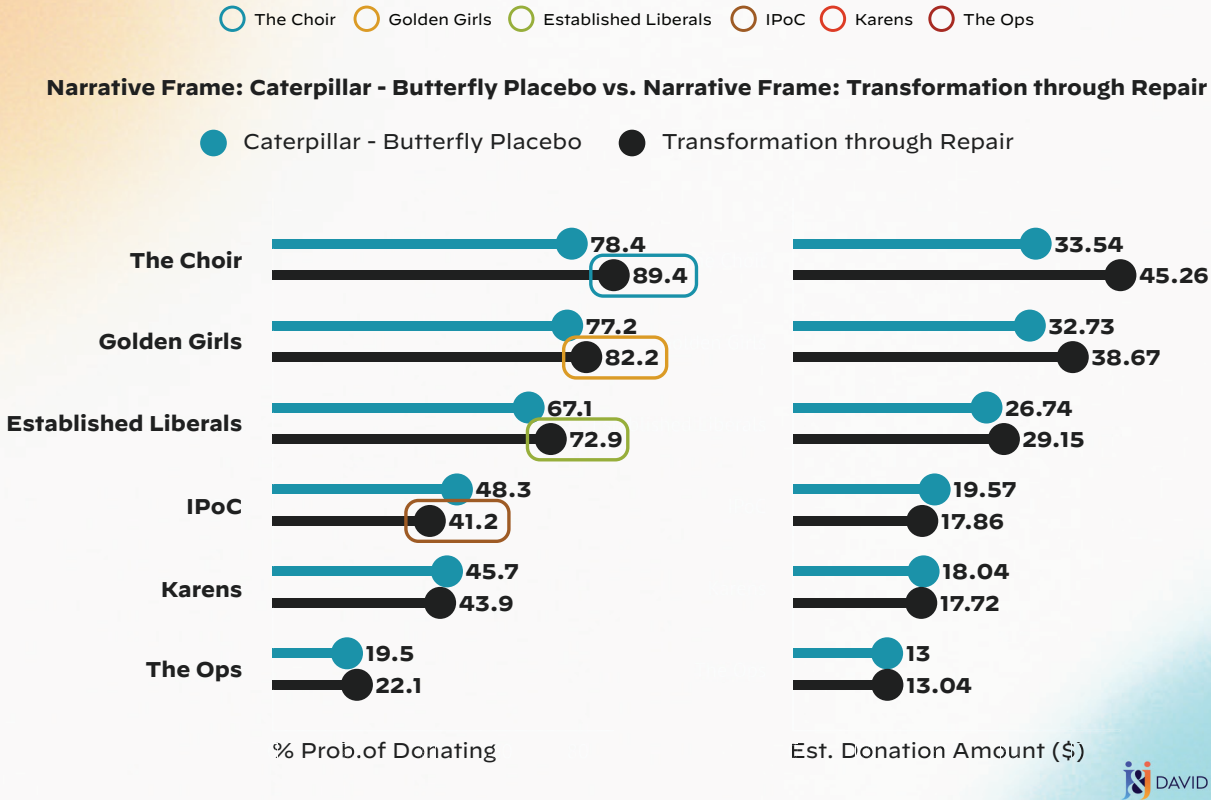
% Joy



4 Focus on behavioral change for impact.

An effective narrative expands an audience’s worldview to include a new perspective. The ultimate impact of this expansion is a change in behavior. There is about a 5pp lift in the probability of donating for both Golden Girls and Established Liberals due to DWP’s video. While the differences in donation amounts based on video do not reach statistical significance, directionally, donation amounts appear higher among those exposed to DWP video content compared to the placebo. These findings suggest that **DWP’s video has a positive impact on moving allies to action.**

Golden Girls and Established Liberals are significantly more likely to donate to DWP’s video content



While IPoC appear to change their attitudes in terms of increased narrative adoption, their behavior tells a different story. IPoC were significantly less likely to donate when exposed to DWP’s video compared to the placebo content. This finding is consistent with existing literature in behavioral

science - it is unlikely that people will adopt new behaviors to be consistent with new attitudes.

5 Keep it respectful.

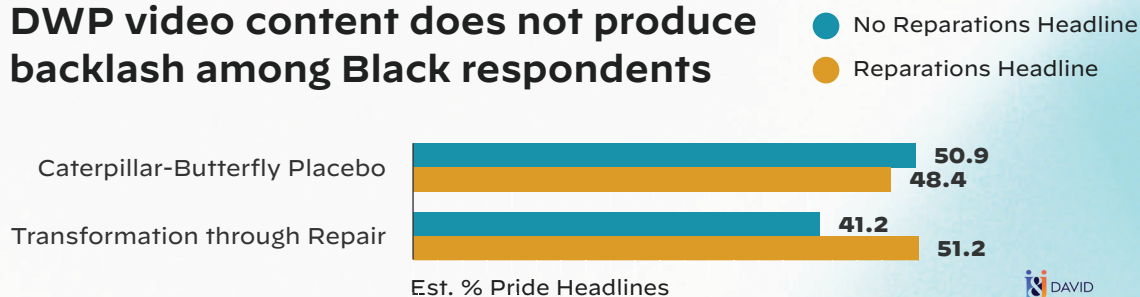
Because this narrative content featured people who are not Black talking about how supporting Black issues helps them, we wanted to ensure we were not creating backlash among Black people. After randomly assigning 567 Black people to watch either DWP's video or the placebo, we randomly varied whether or not people saw a list of either 4 or 5 headlines (one list with the headline "Congress Considering a New Proposal to Pay Black Americans Reparations" and one without this headline).

We asked Black respondents to tell us how many statements - just the quantity - would make them feel proud. Due to random assignment of the video and lists of headlines, any difference in the percentage of headlines respondents reported would make them proud is due to inclusion or exclusion of the headline and assignment to DWP's video.

Two conditions must be met in order for DWP's video content to produce backlash:

- 1 Among those who viewed DWP's video content, the inclusion of a reparations headline must reduce the percentage of headlines respondents reported would make them feel proud.
- 2 This percentage reduction for DWP video content must be greater than any reduction in the percentage of headlines respondents reported would make them feel proud among those who viewed the placebo video.

DWP video content does not produce backlash among Black respondents



Neither of the above conditions for backlash is met.

In the condition where Black respondents viewed the placebo video content, including a reparations headline (“Congress Considering a New Proposal to Pay Black Americans Reparations”) decreased the percentage of headlines respondents reported would make them feel proud 2.5pp. **In the condition where Black respondents viewed DWP’s video content, including a reparations headline, the percentage of headlines respondents reported would make them feel proud increased by 10pp.** This increase is also greater than the decrease of the placebo condition. This evidence suggests that DWP’s video content was received positively by Black people.

6 Bring it all together.

There is no single magical narrative, frame or piece of content that will eliminate anti-Black racism and its wide-reaching impacts. Narrative change requires a long-term, intentional, cooperative commitment to replace existing structures and stories with a multitude of new ones to expand what non-Black audiences believe is possible for a racially harmonious future. We conclude this section with a recap of the narratives and guidance for selecting a frame based on your goals and audience.

Considerations to Keep in Mind When Using Audiences and Narratives:

1. *The narrative frameworks and audience insights are guides. You can adapt them for your goals as you see fit.*
2. *When speaking to audiences, it is not recommended that you refer to an individual person by their audience classification (i.e., do not call a Karen, a Karen to their face).*
3. *There are potential ceiling effects for Golden Girls.*
4. *You can use multiple frames for distinct purposes to structure a conversation.*

Decolonizing Wealth Project's Narrative Results Summary

Narrative Vision: Reparations is for healing and harmony, not punishment

Frame

ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Appeal	Demand better for your country	Evidence-Based Best Use Engagement - Establish buy-in - Neutralize opposition
Intent	Address objections to reparations head on; Remove novelty of reparations	
Target Audience		

Frame

INHERITANCE

Appeal	Free us all because none of us are free until we all are	Evidence-Based Best Use Engagement - Create common ground - Galvanize base supporters
Intent	Reframe white privilege without guilt; Simplify steps to support reparations	
Target Audience		

Frame

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR

Appeal	Find joy and alignment in healing your community and rewriting your story	Evidence-Based Best Use Persuasion - Influence narrative adoption and donating - Reach and resonate with persuadable audiences
Intent	Shift perspective of who benefits from reparations; Provide new information about current racial injustice	
Target Audience		

Decolonizing Wealth Project's Narrative Usage Summary

Objective:

Select the appropriate narrative frame that promotes our overarching narrative

STEP

1

Select your purpose

STEP

2

Select your audience

STEP

3

Choose your frame

		Purpose		Purpose	
		ENGAGEMENT FOR CONSENSUS BUILDING		PERSUASION FOR NARRATIVE CHANGE	
		Establish common ground: Agree with narrative content	Create buy in: Believe narrative content	Adopt narrative: Define reparations as healing	Influence behavior: Donate to DWP
	THE CHOIR	INHERITANCE	ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE	TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR	TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR
	GOLDEN GIRLS	INHERITANCE	ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE	TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR	TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR
	ESTABLISHED LIBERALS	INHERITANCE	Not a buy-in audience	TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR	TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR
	IPoC	INHERITANCE	Not a buy-in audience	TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REPAIR	Not a donation audience
	KARENS	INHERITANCE	Either Atlantic Slave Trade or Inheritance	Not a narrative adoption audience	Not a donation audience
	THE OPS	ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE	ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE	ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE	ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Opportunities to Make the Case for Reparations

We conclude our study with a textual analysis of qualitative data generated by 3,338 non-Black Americans voluntarily defining reparations. **This analysis detected language patterns so that we could identify opportunities for narrative change for DWP and the reparative movement at large.**

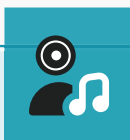
1 Spark conversations with your audience's words.

When defining reparations and developing narrative frames, there is an opportunity to live in the future and direct new stories away from the past. Money is top of mind across all audiences, but most assume money is for the past and not for co-creation of a new future.

When the Choir disagrees with reparations it is about policy.

When the remaining audiences disagree with reparations, it is about the policy AND Black people.

Indicate phrases that are unique to the audience



THE CHOIR

Top 10 2-word phrases

Pay money Financial payment Address past African American American slavery Apology right
Cannabis industry Black people (Jim) Crow era Egregious injustice



GOLDEN GIRLS

Top 10 2-word phrases

Black people African American Money pay Black family Monetary compensation Black community
Give money Pay money National apology Damage cause

NARRATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS



ESTABLISHED LIBERALS

Top 10 2-word phrases

Black people Give money Pay money Past wrong Wrong doing Black family Past injustice
Cash payment Money pay African American



IPoC

Top 10 2-word phrases

Black people Give money Injury compensate Loss damage Free money Money pay Wrong doing
African American Cash payment



KARENS

Top 10 2-word phrases

Give money Black people Pay money Wrong doing African American Past wrong Pay people
Money pay Black family Free money



THE OPS

Top 10 2-word phrases

Give money Black people Free money Money pay Pay money Pay people White people
Deserve reparation Slave owner Civil war

Each audience uses distinct words when defining reparations that cluster into three major categories:

Objections

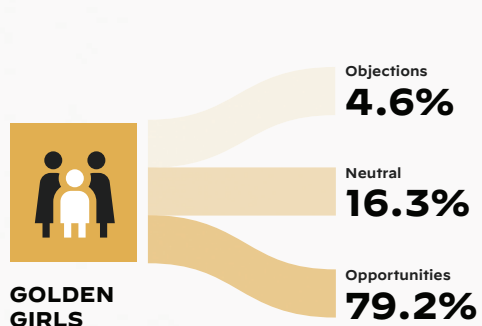
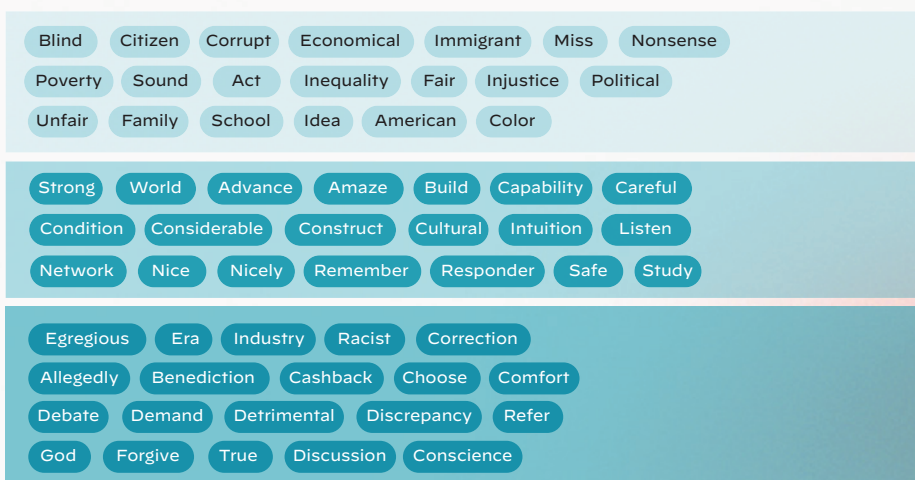
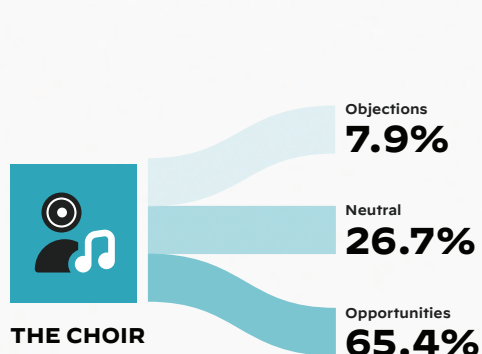
Neutral

Opportunity

NARRATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Words falling into the objections category focus on reparations being punitive, unwarranted or otherwise a negative liability. Words falling into the neutral category focus on defining reparations without offering an opinion one way or another for or against it. Words falling into the opportunities category focus on reparations being healing, redemptive, or otherwise offering the promise of a positive outcome.

Select words that focus on opportunity for productive conversations.



NARRATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS



**ESTABLISHED
LIBERALS**

Objections
9.7%

Neutral
14.4%

Opportunities
75.9%

Money Grandfather Honestly Ago Deserve Slave Cash Create Deal
Opinion Revenge Tribe Equally Relative Start System Taxpayer Ancestor
Payment Directly

Idea Color Commission Cost Country Injustice
Time War Black Definition Depend Hard
Payback Feel White Answer Hear
Family Race Levy

Disadvantage Affirmative Lot Economic
White College Ensure Native Poverty
Power Teach Wrongful Inequality
Property Historically Inequity
Cash Fair Racial
Historical



IPoC

Objections
26.9%

Neutral
20.9%

Opportunities
52.2%

Black Rate Money Enslave Liberal Sex Steal Worry Slave Amount
Arbitrary Beg Bit Capitalize Cartel Cheat Cultural Death Enslaved
Ethnicity

Respect Stand History Ability Belong Call Cool Disaster Dress None
Good Improvise Save Thanks Action Definition Environment Income Past
Investigate

Correction Injure Real Party Referred
Ancestors False Band-aid Root-canal Misuse
Capitalism Choice Counsel Creed Ongoing
Displacement Hang Involvement Passage
Mindedness

NARRATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS



KARENS

Objections

30.2%

Neutral

17.6%

Opportunities

52.1%

Job Black Month Payment Ago Sell Vote Correct
Deserve Issue Stop Support Holiday Mom
Pay Day Slave Buy Care

Unsure Slavery Equal Hear Race Cash Idea A lot Representation
Assistance Benefit Blame Compare Conflict Contrive Decade Indifferent
Partner Reality Relate

Method Previously Reason Directly
Basically Indiscretion Industry Item
Learn Bring Allotting Alternative
Appease Approach Attention Back
Bill Board Commodity Compare



THE OPS

Objections

44.8%

Neutral

12.8%

Opportunities

49.8%

Money Injury Payment Slave Call Civil Entitlement Law
Personal Handout Joke Pay Move Ancestor Deserve Slavery
Actual Grand Hold Insult

Bring Care Descendent Event Humanity Mind Prepay Previous
Ratio Reimbursement Rise Idea Depend Equal Equally Financial
Life Slave Reward Treat

International Insult Property Loud Offensive Priceless Recover
Apologetic Barbaric Dependent Inhumanely Justify Legitimately
Distribute Entity Extend Food stamps
Forefather Holder Humanitarian



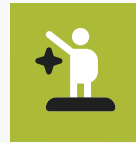
THE CHOIR



GOLDEN GIRLS

The path to move these audiences runs through equity, justice, community, and healing. When the Choir does not support reparations, it is about the policy, not Black people.

Desire to help uplift the Black community and remove barriers in concrete, measurable ways that address specific disadvantages.



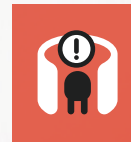
ESTABLISHED LIBERALS



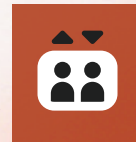
IPoC

Focus on modern examples of Black racial injustice. Historical references to slavery activate zero-sum thinking and trigger objections based on oppression experienced by their, and other non-Black racial groups.

Do no harm by appealing to respect, human dignity, accountability, and choice. They understand the need for a humanitarian approach to inhumane crimes that are current and directly experienced.



KARENS



THE OPS

2

Mood Matters.

There are pronounced differences in how reparations is defined and discussed based on sentiment. Responses with negative sentiment are opposed to the idea, plagued with resentment, and prone to zero-sum thinking. Responses with neutral sentiment are predominately about money. Responses with positive sentiment discuss a wider set of alternatives for reparations (including restitution and symbolic acts) while defining reparations in terms of making amends, redress, justice, and healing.



THE CHOIR

Sentiment	NEGATIVE	"Not a good idea"
	NEUTRAL	"Correction"
	POSITIVE	"Refers to measures to redress violations of human rights by providing a range of material and symbolic benefits to victims or their families as well as affected communities"



ESTABLISHED LIBERALS

Sentiment	NEGATIVE	"So honestly I think that it's just the government giving free money to them that they don't deserve or work for I think it's unfair and not necessary for sure"
	NEUTRAL	"Money compensation"
	POSITIVE	"Reparations refer to actions taken to compensate for past wrongs or harm done to a group or individual. It can involve financial compensation, apologies, or other forms of restitution. The goal of reparations is to acknowledge and address the lasting effects of historical injustices and promote healing and reconciliation."



GOLDEN GIRLS

Sentiment

NEGATIVE

"Reparations is an idea that has been moving around at least a century. Back then I'd have felt more inclined to say yes, these people need to be paid for their suffering. But black people have had an entire 123 years since then to quit turning and driving and killing each other and others. Have they? No. Have they really tried? No I believe not. I grew up dirt poor. And nothing I ever had was handed to me just because I'm white. I'm sure there are plenty of cases where that was so for others but not the people I grew up with. Another prickly point is that no one that is over the age of say, 75, isn't due anything. They have had the same crappy opportunities I had and I'm not homeless, never killed, robbed sold drugs. I could have. But that's where it becomes a responsible choice vs a sit on my butt and collect welfare choice."

NEUTRAL

"Giving back the monetary gains and equitable value of land back that is owed."

POSITIVE

"Reparations is an attempt to restore justice through monetary contributions where other solutions don't really [exist]. It doesn't undo any damages but is an attempt to make right what wrong has been done."



KARENS

Sentiment

NEGATIVE

"Reparations were a governmental solution to act as an apology to blacks that were owned as slaves. This was 150 years ago. Why should today's congress be responsible for finishing what was never started? Too much attention is given to race today. No black people are slaves and no white people are slaveowners TODAY. In 150 years the US has reached the point where the black are no longer the oppressed and discriminated minority. In an effort to be politically correct, white people have become the oppressed and discriminated. If a white person remotely says anything that can be construed as "off color", it is treated as a hate crime and the individual is persecuted. ...The tables in the US have turned. Politicians still publicly comment and put focus on racism in order to gain support from the black community. The white race has become the oppressed race today."

NEUTRAL "Benefit of some sort like monetary"

POSITIVE "MAKING AMENDS FOR WRONG DOINGS, BY PAYING MONEY TO OR HELPING THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN WRONGED."



IPoC

Sentiment

NEGATIVE

"Taking money from one group of Americans by force and giving it to another based solely on an arbitrary political value. My ancestors were slaves too yet no one is talking about giving reparations to us."

NEUTRAL

"Money paid for past actions"

POSITIVE

"Reparations are a means to restore justice and dignity to individuals or groups who have experienced harm, trauma, or loss."



THE OPS

Sentiment

NEGATIVE

"Taxpayer money given to people that were never slaves, never picked any cotton, and were never harmed by anybody, simply because their skin is dark enough. Reparations serve no purpose other than to make idiotic white people, and [so-called] Social Justice Warriors, feel better about themselves."

NEUTRAL "Repayment"

POSITIVE "Making things right by paying money to individuals or groups that have been wronged in some way by society."

3 Uncertainty is an agenda setting opportunity.

One of the biggest obstacles to improving political will for reparations is the uncertainty around the success of the policy. Between 63%-82% of all audiences are uncertain reparations will reduce Black-white inequalities.

One of the most frequently mentioned phrases in individual responses across audiences is “I’m not sure.” Respondents are either referring to being uncertain of how to define reparations, if the policy is a good idea, or what the reparations should look like.

Unlike other forms of racial justice where opinion is certain and crystallized, the uncertainty around reparations represents an opportunity for the movement to lead by establishing clarity around what reparations success looks like, what it means for reparations to “work,” and for whom should reparations work. Movement, philanthropy, and other allies can collaboratively create stories within the narrative we created to define reparations, lay out the benefits for a future of racial harmony, describe what it should look like, and explain what role allies and supporters can play.

4 Let the movement decide on the details.

When synthesizing definitions to the forms of reparations mentioned, we detected five major forms.

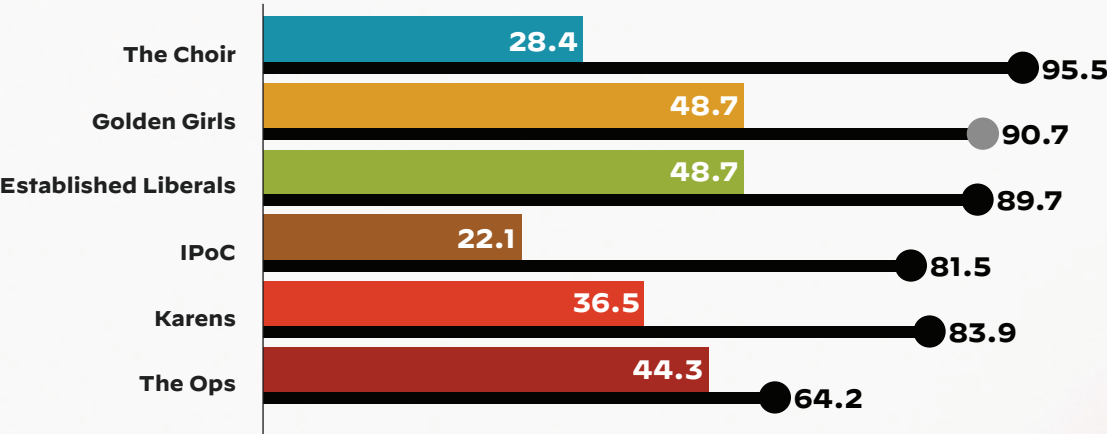
COMPENSATION Payment	NONRECURRENCE Institutional and legal reforms	REHABILITATION Social, medical, psychological, or legal services
RESTITUTION Restoration of rights, jobs, benefits, or property lost	SYMBOLIC Recognition or acknowledgment of wrong doing with the purpose of developing collective memory with public acts.	

The graph below summarizes the top 3 forms of reparations mentioned and the sentiment of those forms. We found that compensation is the most frequently mentioned form. Generally, when someone explicitly mentions compensation, it is associated with positive sentiment. Only the Ops have a positive sentiment level under 70% when they explicitly mention compensation.

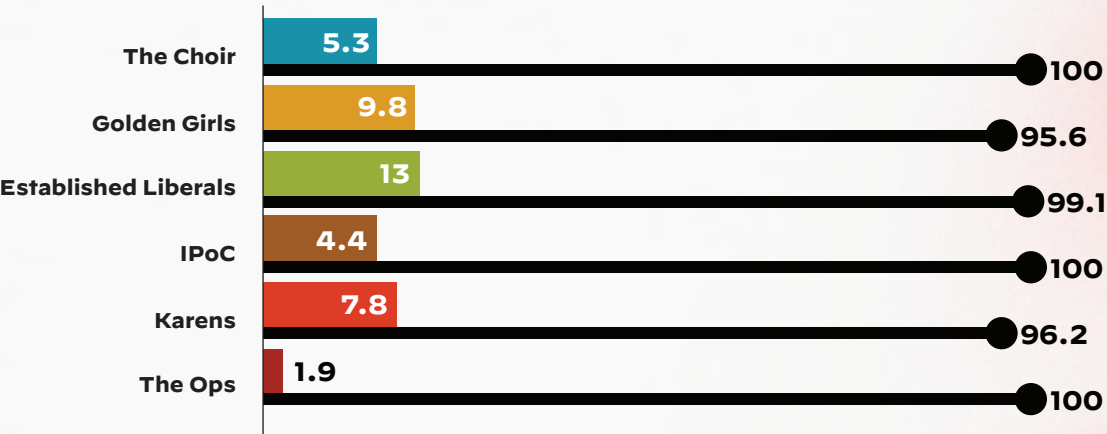
Top 3 Reparations Forms

Reparations Form
COMPENSATION

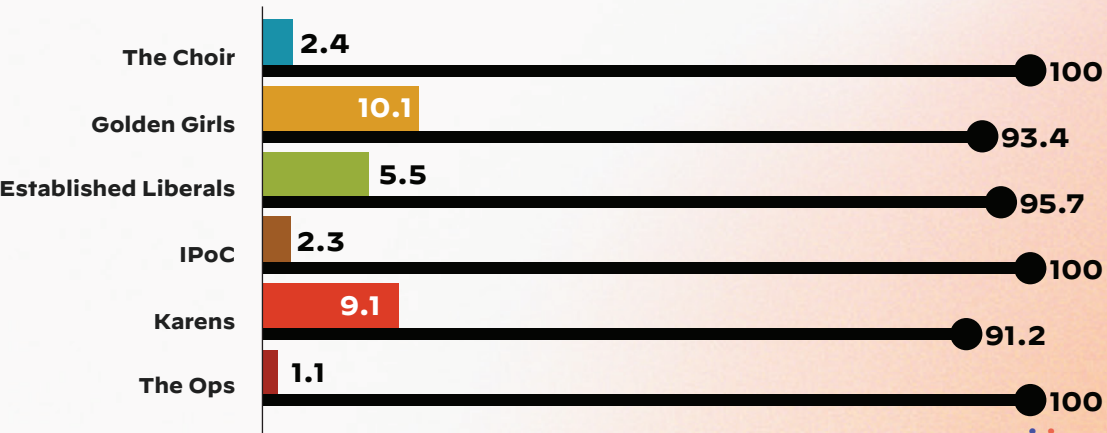
% Est. Prop of Mentions for each audience
 % Mentions with Positive Sentiment



Reparations Form
REHABILITATION



Reparations Form
RESTITUTION



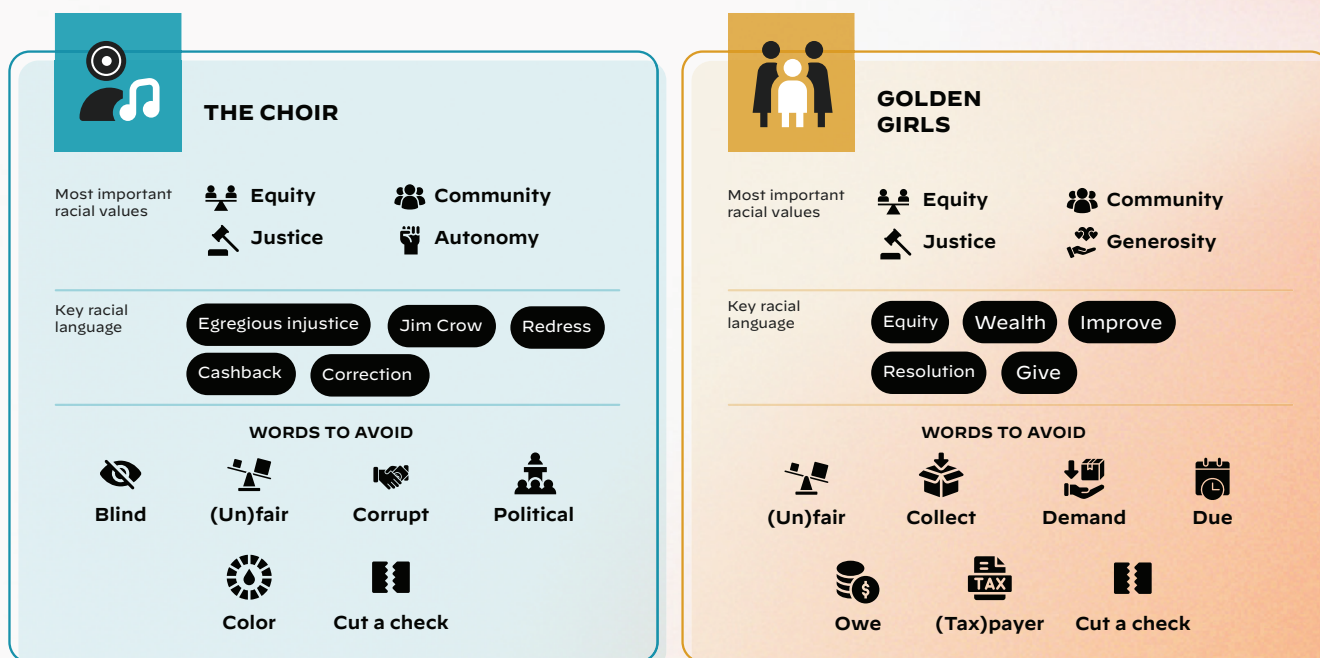
By expanding the realm of reparative possibilities, movement may improve overall sentiment and increase receptivity to new reparative proposals. Other forms of reparations (i.e., restitution and rehabilitation) are mentioned less frequently, but when mentioned have near unanimously positive sentiment, even among the Ops.

It is up to the reparative movement to determine the details of the form(s) reparations should take. Yet, these findings suggest an expansion opportunity where other reparative forms may create new considerations about what is possible in the minds of non-Black Americans.

5 What you do not say matters too.

While most of this report's advice is about what to create, we summarize each audience's key values and language and offer red flags to avoid for each audience to prevent activating people's defenses and blocking progress.

The major finding that applies across all audiences is to **steer the conversation away from “deserve,” “entitled,” “owe,” “cash,” “taxpayers,” or “fair.”** These words frame reparations in punitive terms where something is being illegitimately taken away from white people or (hardworking) Americans and given to undeserving Black Americans. These words cue images of Black people as entitled children using the government as their enabling parent. Deservingness triggers resentment because it cues stereotypes of undeserving, lazy black people who want something for nothing. When non-Black Americans think of fairness, they consider what is fair either for their specific racial group or everyone as a whole, not what is fair for Black people. **Avoid frames around deservingness and fairness to prevent movement from being stuck defending their claims instead of proactively defining the future for reparations.**



NARRATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

ESTABLISHED LIBERALS

Most important racial values

Equity
Achievement

Accountability
Generosity

Key racial language

Uplift **Legacy** **Power**

Resource **Past wrong**

WORDS TO AVOID

Deserve
Justify
(Tax)payer
Owe

Revenge
Payback
Levy
Cut a check

IPoC

Most important racial values

Fairness (for all)
Integrity

Accountability
Respect

Key racial language

Choice **Creed** **Injury**

Correction **Wrongdoing**

WORDS TO AVOID

(Un)fair
Liberal
Take
Slavery

Special consideration
Suffering
Culture
Cut a check

KARENS

Most important racial values

Fairness (for all)
Order

Accountability

Key racial language

White **Learn** **Reason**

Approach **Wrongdoing**

WORDS TO AVOID

(Un)fair
Deserve
Owe
Slavery

Money
(Tax)Payer
Special consideration
Cut a check

THE OPS

Most important racial values

Authority
Independence

Accountability

Key racial language

Rise **Barbaric** **Property**

Distribute **Humanitarian**

WORDS TO AVOID

(Un)fair
White
Owe
Slavery

Special consideration
Entitled
(Tax)payer
Cut a check

The Road Ahead

The past two years of research and experimentation culminated with this framework and manual. Our goal in sharing our work is that our learnings serve as a guide. This narrative provides a common language between movement and supporters about how to tell stories that positively shape the future for Black people in America to people who are not Black. Our evidence-based narratives are ready for real world testing. As with any research project, there are always more questions. As we transition out of the lab and into the world, questions for future testing include:

Future Research Agenda

QUESTIONS

RESEARCH AREA

EFFECTIVENESS

What are the most effective and cost-effective ways to integrate audiences into advocacy, philanthropy, and digital campaigns?

What is the most effective way to use movement-informed narrative frames for calls to action beyond consensus building?

Can we enhance narrative effects if we include healing imagery or prime other wellness considerations before calls to action?

Which messengers are most effective at engaging and persuading audiences? Could we generate similar results with a successful Black philanthropist delivering a video message? How would our results change if we used single, first-person narratives instead of a compilation?

Do our results hold if our target audience is presented with a multitude of organizations to support?

DIMINISHING RETURNS

How durable are the engagement and persuasion effects we detected? Are these effects short-term or long-term?

What is the optimal number of times someone should encounter a narrative to maximize impact?

GENERALIZABILITY

How can these findings be adapted for other forms of activism and advocacy?

CAUSAL MECHANISMS

What is the relationship between emotions and narrative change? Are some emotional cues more effective than others at facilitating narrative versus behavioral change?

Is uncertainty around reparations masking underlying racial bias? What are the boundaries of impression management when it comes to discussing reparations?

Measuring Narrative Change

This study embedded experiments in online surveys in lieu of directly testing in a digital campaign. We chose survey experimentation over field testing in a campaign because introducing content about racial issues in the world without first understanding how non-Black people will respond and the probability of backlash posed too great a reputational risk to DWP.

We tested written and video content in three rounds of survey experiments. We tested the written content in the first two rounds. Survey respondents completed an audience segmentation screener. After respondents were appropriately screened for their audience, they were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions – Inheritance, Atlantic Slave Trade, or a conventional reparations narrative⁶. This comparison allowed us to answer the question of whether or not our narrative is an improvement over what is already being done.

Following the experimental manipulations, respondents were asked how much they agree with the content; how believable the content is to them; to define reparations in their own words; and to donate to DWP. Evidence of whether or not the narrative strategy engages or persuades an audience was produced by comparing the effect of the interactions between audience segment and experimental condition on outcome measures immediately following the treatment.



Our success metrics for the written content in the first two rounds are below.

ROUNDS 1 AND 2
N=5078
Written Content Metrics

Consensus Building (Engagement)		Persuasion (Narrative Change)	
ATTRACTION	CONNECTION	ATTITUDE	BEHAVIOR
Concept Establish common ground	Concept Establish buy-in	Concept Narrative adoption	Concept Donate
Measure Does a respondent agree at least somewhat with a given piece of DWP content? % who say they agree strongly or somewhat with content of the article	Measure Does a respondent find a given piece of content at least somewhat believable? % who say they the content of the article is somewhat or very believable	Measure Is a respondent more likely to define reparations as healing after reading a piece of content? % use any of the following terms in their definition of reparations: "giving back", "make amends", "repair", "past harm", "admit wrong", "make up for the past", "give and receive", "move forward", "heal", "alleviate suffering", "rectifying", "correcting" AND do NOT use any of the following terms in their definition of reparations: "payback", "punish", "entitlement", "extortion", "get back", "theft", "stealing", "make white people pay", "crimes I/we didn't commit", "punished for something I/we did not do", "an excuse"	Measure Is a respondent more willing to donate to DWP after reading a piece of content? \$ amount donated to DWP

For the final round, we tested video content exclusively. Our goal was to use an audience-first strategy with ally-generated content. As a result of this change in content type and vantage point, our test was designed to answer the question of whether or not this narrative works better than doing nothing at all.

After respondents were appropriately screened for their audience, they were randomly assigned to one of two conditions - the DWP video or a placebo video where a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.⁷

Evidence of whether or not the narrative strategy “works” to engage and persuade an audience was produced by comparing the effect of the interactions between audience segment and experimental condition on outcome measures immediately following the treatment. We also measured backlash with Black people in America using the list experiment described in the “Persuasive Power of Allies” section of

this report. We compare the differences in the number of items subjects report would make them proud due to the list experiment to determine if DWP's video is creating backlash.

Our metrics for the final round of testing are specifically designed to leverage both the opinion data and metadata captured due to the video content. These measures are described below.⁸

ROUNDS 3
N=3655
Video Content Metrics
Engagement
ATTRACTION

Concept

 Video completion⁹

Measure

Does a respondent complete the video or not?

The percentage of individuals who watch the video and click submit to the next page in the survey

ATTENTION

Concept

 Engaged video views¹⁰

Measure

How much time does a respondent spend watching the video weighted by their interaction with the video page?

The proportion of time spent watching the video weighted by the number of times a respondent clicked on the video page

CONNECTION

Concept

 Dialogue engagement¹¹

Measure

Does DWP's video elicit a response from people who complete the video?

The presence or absence of a response to the voluntary question asking to define reparations

Persuasion
ATTRACTION

Concept

 Emotional Arousal¹²

Measure

Is a respondent more likely to express anger, fear, disgust, or joy after viewing DWP's video?

% of words that connote anger, disgust, fear, joy, or trust divided by the total number of meaningful words

ATTENTION

Concept

 Narrative adoption¹³

Measure

Is a respondent more likely to define reparations as healing for Black people after viewing DWP's video?

% use any of the following terms in their definition of reparations: "giving back", "make amends", "repair", "past harm", "admit wrong", "make up for the past", "give and receive", "move forward", "heal", "alleviate suffering", "rectifying", "correcting" AND do NOT use any of the following terms in their definition of reparations: "payback", "punish", "entitlement", "extortion", "get back", "theft", "stealing", "make white people pay", "crimes I/we didn't commit", "punished for something I/we did not do", "an excuse"

CONNECTION

Concept

 Donate¹⁴

Measure

Is a respondent willing to donate to DWP after viewing DWP's video?

The probability that a respondent donates to DWP

The amount of money donated to DWP

⁹Survey participants had no access to video player controls to adjust the video speed, fast forward or rewind the video. Once a participant hit the play button, the video played all the way through. Participants had the option to replay, go back to a previous item in the survey or press submit to move forward to the next page.

¹⁰Specifically, we measure the number of times a respondent clicked on the video page and weight this count by duration of time spent watching the video in seconds divided by video length in seconds. We used this measure of the proportion of video viewed to account for differences in video length. We removed outliers at the 1 and 99 percentiles to standardize our results.

¹¹Individuals were asked to define reparations. If an individual provided a definition or opinion about reparations, their response was coded as a response. If an individual answered the question "don't know," said they do not define reparations, refused, said "n/a", did not provide an intelligible response, or left the item blank, this was coded as nonresponse.

¹²We used Saif Mohammad's NRC Emotion lexicon to classify and count the occurrence of words associated with anger, disgust, fear, and joy. We divide the total number of occurrences of words associated with a given emotion by the total number of meaningful words across all definitions.

¹³Responses to the open-end reparations definition item were coded based on use of terms described in the table. Presence of any of those terms and absence of negative terms was coded as "1" and everything else was coded as "0."

¹⁴After watching a video, respondents were asked to allocate \$100. They could split the \$100 however they saw fit between themselves and DWP. Our measure determines whether they donated at all to DWP and how much they donated.



**Decolonizing
Wealth Project**



**FOR QUESTIONS AND MORE DETAILS
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