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Third Party Punishment Preferences Toward White and Black Perpetrators: A Comparison in U.S. Dollars

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THIRD PARTY PUNISHMENT PREFERENCES
TOWARD WHITE AND BLACK PERPETRATORS:
A COMPARISON IN US DOLLARS

Gabriel Habtemariam

Mentor: Bryan Koenig

Abundant research suggests that the races of both the perpetrator and the victim play an important role in determining preferred punishments, but little research has related victim loss and perpetrator gain in directly comparable units to the penalty the perpetrator would receive. Following Koenig & Riley (in press), the current research employs a method that relates victim loss and perpetrator gain to the third party's fine within the context of theft. In this preregistered and high-powered study, 1079 participants read a scenario intended to activate punitive sentiment toward wrongdoers. Victim's loss and perpetrator's gain were manipulated in comparable units (US dollars). Punishment preferences of the participants (the third party) were measured in those same units. Afterward, we collected demographic data, including participant race. To reduce the risk of demand characteristics, we used a between-subjects experimental design. There are four experimentally manipulated variables, each with two levels: perpetrator gain (\$50 and \$1,000), victim loss (\$50 and \$1,000), perpetrator race (African American and Caucasian), and victim race (African American and Caucasian). Currently, data collection is complete and the data is being analyzed.