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THE MORAL JUSTIFICATION OF CRONYISM: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
WHITES AND BLACKS

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Moral Justification of Cronyism: Differences between Whites and Blacks

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The present study examined the differences between Blacks and Whites' perception of cronyism on the part of others. I also attempted to determine whether Whites and Blacks alike viewed cronyism as a means by which racial disparities are perpetuated in society. In that event, I expected participants to judge cronyism on the part of others as more normative when beneficiaries were White, as opposed to Black, regardless of race (Hypothesis 1). In fact, only Black participants viewed pro-White cronyism as more normal than pro-Black cronyism; White participants reported no differences. Further, I expected moral justification to reflect group-serving biases, such that participants would morally justify cronyism more when it benefits their ingroup than when it benefits outgroup members (Hypothesis 2). In fact, Blacks and Whites alike judged cronyism as more morally justified when Blacks benefited, as opposed to when Whites benefited. This

suggests that both groups acknowledged White's historical cronyism advantage by judging its continuation as more immoral. Finally, I expected that regardless of race, Black cronies would be selected over White cronies, due to Whites' motives to avoid bigotry and Blacks' motives to advance racial equality. This hypothesis was fully supported. Thus, Black participants supported each hypothesis, whereas Whites only supported my third hypothesis.

Implications of the findings for the importance of investigating cronyism are discussed.

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The Moral Justification of Cronyism: Differences between Whites and Blacks

“The crowning achievement in hypocrisy must go to those staunch Republicans and Democrats of the Midwest and West who were given land by our government when they came here as immigrants from Europe... [and] given education through the land grant colleges. They were provided with agricultural agents to keep them abreast of farming trends; they were granted low-interest loans... now that they have succeeded in becoming successful, they are paid not to farm, and these are the same people that now say to black people... that they must pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.”¹

--Martin Luther King Jr.

A controversial issue that remains in today's post-civil rights society is whether racism persists and whether it manifests in the way resources are distributed, such as education and employment. On the one hand, some argue that racial inequality is driven by anti-Black animus. Evidence suggests that overt (old fashioned) racism predicts opposition to policies designed to help minorities, like affirmative action (Jacobson, 1985; Harrison, 2006). Further, when opposition to affirmative action can be attributed to the unfairness of policy, Whites oppose the policy more when it aids Blacks than when it helps other groups (Murrell, Dietz-Uhler, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Drout, 1994). On the other hand, others argue that racial inequalities in access to resources are reproduced by Whites helping other Whites more than they do Blacks, instead of racial animus (DiTomaso, 2015). Supporting the idea that ingroup bias (not outgroup derogation) informs racial inequality, Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff (2006) found that the effect of a manipulation of affirmative action procedures on policy support was mediated by whether Whites expected the policy to negatively affect fellow Whites, but not by the expected positive effect on minorities. That is, Whites were more likely to defend their

¹ <http://randomnerds.com/martin-luther-king-jr-on-the-three-evils-of-society/>

ingroup by rejecting a policy that harms Whites than to help Blacks by embracing a policy that benefits Blacks. Adding further complexity, laboratory investigations of behavioral data reveal scant evidence that Whites are more likely to deliberately harm Blacks compared with White. In fact, when stimuli are obviously aversive (e.g., noise levels or electrical shocks), Whites are more likely to harm ingroup members rather than Blacks (for a review, see Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014). By contrast, field experiments suggest that Whites are more inclined to help Whites than Blacks in a variety of situations (Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980). Thus, it appears that as long as behaviors are not egregiously harmful, Whites are inclined to help other Whites, either overtly when they believe they are not being watched (Crosby et al., 1980), or by protecting Whites from affirmative policies that assist Blacks at their expense (Lowery et al., 2006). The present research investigated cronyism, a type of helping behavior that typically enables Whites more than Blacks to succeed, and is plausibly a principle means by which racial disparities are maintained (DiTomaso, 2013). However, a key question is whether Whites are aware of the negative effect of White cronyism on racial equality.

In the present research, I conceptualize cronyism as a form of White privilege that is largely overlooked by Whites as a means by which systemic racial inequalities are reproduced. In addition to testing whether Black Americans are more aware of White cronyism as a factor in racial disparities than White Americans, I examined reactions to cronyism that either benefits a White candidate at the expense of a better qualified Black candidate, or vice versa. The primary research question is, are people more likely to morally justify and engage in cronyism when it benefits an ingroup member, as opposed to an outgroup member? Further, I tested whether this is true of both White and Black

Americans. The significance of the research is that it illuminates how cronyism is viewed by both White and Black Americans. Is it viewed by both groups as a means by which racial disparities are perpetuated throughout our society? Or are Blacks particularly likely to recognize the negative effects of pro-White cronyism on racial equality? In conducting this study, I expected to provide a deeper understanding of cronyism by examining whether its normality, moral justification, and likelihood depends on the race of the beneficiary and the evaluator.

Cronyism

Cronyism is a social phenomenon that creates unequal opportunity regardless of ethnicity. However, because more Whites than Blacks occupy power broker roles (i.e., the ability to dole out resources, such as jobs), its practice reinforces racial disparities. Khatri & Tsang (2003) separated cronyism into two types. Horizontal cronyism occurs among peers, such as business associates, friends, and colleagues, whereas vertical cronyism is downward patronage based on a superior-subordinate relationship. Of importance, cronyism involves a violation of meritocracy, whereby one person (the crony) is favored over another, better qualified candidate (the alternative). Khatri, Tsang, & Begley (2006) defined cronyism as a reciprocal exchange transaction where party A shows favor to party B based on shared membership in a social network at the expense of party C's equal or superior claim to the valued resource. They suggest that there must be four elements present for there to be cronyism. First, the reciprocal exchange listed above. Second, favor must be shown such that party B receives something of value from party A. Third, a shared membership of two parties in a social network, and finally a

cronyist exchange between parties A and B which comes at a cost to party C, who is denied the valued resource despite holding an equal or superior claim to it.

Therefore, I operationally defined cronyism as a willingness to select socially connected candidates (cronies) over more qualified applicants (alternatives) for a coveted position. Further, I manipulated crony race so that selecting White cronies would discriminate against Black alternates, and selecting Black cronies would discriminate against White alternates. As a result, the White crony condition reflected the systemic advantage that Whites typically have, whereas the Black crony condition reversed it.

Are people cognizant of cronyism as a form of White privilege? In comprehensive interviews with 246 economically diverse White Americans in three locations (New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee), DiTomaso (2013) found evidence that Whites deny the impact of cronyism on racial equality. First, respondents universally endorsed meritocracy as the only fair hiring practice. Thus, if an employer must choose between a Black and a White applicant, as in the present research, the only legitimate practice would be selecting the most qualified person. Second, respondents rarely obtained employment by being the best person for the job at the time of hire. Instead, due to social connections with family, friends, and mentors, they typically had been “given the chance to ‘get in the door’ and then learn the job after being hired” (p. 55). This practice was not considered “scandalous;” rather, it was just “the way things are” for “those in the know” (p. 58). Third, cronyism was ignored in favor of hard work and motivation in Whites’ attributions for their success. As is often the case, Whites relied on meritocracy narratives to explain racial inequality; in contrast, Black Americans are more likely to use structural explanations (Adams, O’Brien, & Nelson; 2006; Kleugel, 1990; Thompson & Bobo,

2011). Because White's social capital advantage contributes to unequal opportunity, denial of cronyism is a means by which racial disparities are preserved.

Justifications for Cronyism

Like other forms of discrimination, preferential treatment does not occur arbitrarily; it must be justified (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Because Whites' admissions of cronyism as "just the way things are" conflicts with their viewing only merit-based hiring as legitimate (DiTomaso, 2013, p. 58), I considered two ways that cronyism be might rationalized: perceptions of its normality and group-serving biases that influence moral judgments.

Social norms. First, because social norms influence unethical behaviors, including discrimination (Allport, 1954; Crandall & Eshleman, 2003, Miller, 1999), willingness to engage in cronyism might reflect its perceived normality. However, if cronyism is recognized as a form of White privilege, both Whites and Blacks should view it as more normative when it benefits a White crony, compared with a Black crony.

Moral justification. Second, people generally engage in behavior if it is viewed as moral (Gino & Galinsky, 2012). Further, unethical behavior may be judged as less wrong and more appropriate under conditions of psychological closeness (Gino & Galinsky, 2012). Just as people rationalize their own transgressions (Ayel & Gino, 2011), they may judge transgressions that benefit ingroup members as less punishable, compared with those that advantage outgroup members (Wright, Dinsmore, & Kellaris, 2013). Because cronyism is a moral transgression (i.e., an illegitimate means of attaining success; DiTomaso, 2013), then cronyism benefiting Whites should be judged as more

moral by Whites than by Blacks. Conversely, patronage benefiting Blacks should be judged as more moral by Blacks than by Whites.

Willingness to Engage in Cronyism

After evaluating the cronyism of others, participants were asked about their own willingness to select the crony over the alternative. What should I expect? If ingroup biases affecting moral justification were the main influence, then Whites should be more likely than Blacks to engage in patronage benefiting Whites, whereas Blacks should be more likely than Whites to bestow benefits on Black cronies. In effect, both groups should show evidence of ingroup loyalty (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Alternatively, if social norms were the main influence, then, provided pro-White cronyism is recognized as more normative than pro-Black cronyism, both Whites and Blacks should be more willing to select White than Black cronies. However, because White cronyism unfairly maintains the racial hierarchy, I instead expected both Whites and Blacks to react more negatively toward White than Black cronies (i.e., to show pro-Black bias when they considered personally selecting cronies over alternatives).

The prediction for Blacks stems from their expected desire to equalize the playing field. That is, Blacks should select Black over White cronies because they are generally motivated to advance racial progress by disrupting extant power structures (Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008; Wright & Lubensky, 2009). By contrast, Whites may bend over backward to avoid perpetuating White privilege in order to avoid the shame of bigotry, which threatens Whites when prejudice is evaluated (Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Rudman, Dohn, & Fairchild, 2007). For example, doctors who suspected that disparate treatment of Black and White cardiac patients would be interpreted as racism favored

Black over White patients (Green et al., 2007). Because they are given a choice between Black and White candidates, Whites are likely to interpret the study as evaluating their racism, which is likely to lead to pro-Black bias on the crony selection task for Whites (see also Axt, Ebersole, & Nosek, 2016; Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014; Norton, Vandello, & Darley, 2004). In effect, avoiding bigotry will inhibit group-serving biases only for Whites, who face a mixed-motives dilemma in interracial contexts (Lewis & Sherman, 2003). Specifically, for Whites, avoiding the stigma of racism (Goff et al., 2008) conflicts with ingroup loyalty (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), whereas Blacks should be less conflicted.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Black and White participants will judge cronyism on the part of others as more normative when beneficiaries are White, as opposed to Black. In effect, both groups will acknowledge cronyism as a form of White privilege.

Hypothesis 2: Regardless of race, participants will morally justify cronyism on the part of others more when patronage benefits their ingroup, as opposed to when it benefits outgroup members. In effect, moral justification will reflect group-serving biases.

Hypothesis 3: Regardless of race, Black cronies will be selected over White cronies, due to Whites' motives to avoid bigotry and Blacks' motives to advance racial equality.

Method

Participants and Design

Participants (N = 824; 413 Blacks) were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in exchange for \$0.50. Exclusion criteria were nationality (U.S.) and race

(White or Black). A power analysis determined that 394 Blacks and 394 Whites provided 80% power to detect a small effect ($d = .20$). The full design is a 2 (participant race) x 2 (crony race) x 4 (scenario) mixed factorial with repeated measures on the last factor. However, because I expected to collapse each of the dependent variables (normality, moral justification, and willingness to engage in cronyism) across the four scenarios, the analytic design is a 2 (participant race) x 2 (crony race) x 2 (participant gender) between subjects factorial.

Materials

Participants read four scenarios in which they envisioned power brokers having to choose between a socially connected candidate (crony) and a more qualified alternative for a coveted position. The scenarios are presented in Appendix A. Situations included power brokers (1) deciding on student enrollment as board members of a Charter school and the crony is the grandson of a former teacher; (2) hiring as small business owners and the crony is a friend of the couple's son; (3) serving as members of a faculty search committee and the crony is a friend of the department's Chair; and (4) searching for a company manager as HR officers and the crony is a friend of the company's president. Depending on crony race condition, cronies were White and superior alternatives were Black, or cronies were Black and superior alternatives were White.

After reading each scenario, participants responded to three questions on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*), in the following order. Appendix B shows the full set of measures. To summarize here, I will use "power brokers" and "the crony," but these were always identified and never described as such. Power brokers were either Board members, Business Owners, Faculty Search Committee, or Human Resource

Office, and cronies were either the White or Black grandson, son, or friend. The items were as follows: “How morally justified would the power brokers be if they chose the crony?”; “How normal would it be for the power brokers to choose the crony?”; and “How likely would YOU be to choose the crony?” Averaged across the four scenarios, responses formed the moral justification index, the normality index, and the cronyism likelihood index (α s = .81, .84, and .89, respectively).

Procedure

Participants were recruited for a “decision-making study” and randomly assigned to one of two crony race conditions. After reading each of four scenarios (in random order), they answered three questions (moral justification, normality and willingness to select the crony). After completing demographics (gender, race, age), they were fully debriefed and compensated.

Results

To test hypotheses, normality, moral justification, and choice were submitted to separate 2 (Crony Race: Black, White) x 2 (Participant Race: Black, White) x 2 (Participant Sex: Male, Female) between subject ANOVAs. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations as a function of crony race and participant race.

Justifying Cronyism

Normality. Hypothesis 1 states that participants will judge others' cronyism as more normative when beneficiaries are White, as opposed to Black. A main effect for Crony Race emerged, $F(1, 816) = 14.49, p < .001, d = .27$, such that it was seen as more normative for others to select White cronies ($M = 3.47, SD = 1.08$) over more qualified

Black candidates ($M = 3.21$, $SD = .84$). However, there was also an unexpected Crony Race x Participant Race interaction, $F(1, 816) = 22.67$, $p < .001$. Blacks viewed cronyism as more normative when the crony was White versus Black, $t(411) = 6.08$, $p < .001$, $d = .61$. Whites viewed cronyism as similarly normative whether the crony was Black or White, $t(409) = -.74$, $p = .46$, $d = -.07$. Therefore, only Blacks supported Hypothesis 1.

Additional analyses examining participant race differences (see Table 1) revealed that, compared with Whites, Blacks judged pro-White cronyism to be more normative, $t(411) = 4.64$, $p < .001$, $d = .49$. By contrast, compared with Blacks, Whites judged pro-Black cronyism to be more normative, $t(409) = 2.10$, $p = .034$, $d = -.18$. In other words, Whites not only did not acknowledge their patronage advantage (as noted, they viewed cronyism as similarly common regardless of the beneficiary), they were also less likely than Blacks to judge pro-White cronyism as normal, and more likely than Blacks to judge pro-Black cronyism as normal.

Moral justification. Hypothesis 2 states that regardless of race, participants will morally justify others' cronyism more when it benefits their ingroup, as opposed to when patronage benefits outgroup members. Results showed a significant main effect of crony race, $F(1, 816) = 46.92$, $p < .001$, $d = -.87$, such that selecting Black cronies ($M = 2.38$, $SD = .96$) was viewed as more morally justifiable than selecting White cronies ($M = 1.92$, $SD = .92$). Although there was a nonsignificant Crony Race x Participant Race interaction, $F(1, 816) = 3.40$, $p = .07$, I examined the means for both groups. Hypothesis 2 was supported by Black participants, who viewed others' cronyism as more morally justifiable when the crony was Black ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.02$) versus White ($M = 1.88$, $SD = .98$), $t(411) = 6.12$, $p < .001$, $d = -.63$. Unexpectedly, White participants also viewed

cronyism as more morally justifiable when the crony was Black ($M = 2.28$, $SD = .88$) versus White ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .86$), $t(409) = -3.65$, $p < .001$, $d = -.33$. Thus, the pattern I expected for normality emerged instead for moral justification. This may indicate that both Whites and Blacks acknowledged that Whites have historically benefited from patronage more than Blacks and if that advantage continued, it would be immoral. However, only Blacks perceived that Whites still have a cronyism advantage by judging it to be normative.

Additional analyses examining participant race differences (see Table 1) showed similar responses in the White crony condition, $t(411) = .92$, $p = .36$, $d = -.08$. Thus, both groups agreed that it was immoral to benefit a poorly qualified White crony at the expense of a superior Black alternative. However, Blacks morally justified pro-Black cronyism more than Whites did, $t(409) = 2.17$, $p = .03$, $d = .21$. Thus, Blacks rationalized advancing their group by means of patronage, even at the expense of a superior White alternative, more than Whites did.

Cronyism. Hypothesis 3 states that regardless of race, Black cronies will be selected over White cronies, due to Whites' motive to avoid bigotry and Blacks' motive to advance racial equality. As expected, results showed a significant main effect for crony race, $F(1, 816) = 86.31$, $p < .000$, such that Black cronies ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.07$) were more likely to be selected than White cronies ($M = 1.99$, $SD = .96$), $d = .62$. Unexpectedly, there was also a significant Crony Race x Participant Race interaction, $F(1, 816) = 31.14$, $p < .001$. Table 1 reveals that both Blacks and Whites showed the expected main effect for crony race, but it was almost five times stronger for Black participants ($d = -1.00$) than for White participants ($d = -.23$).

Additional analyses examining participant race differences (see Table 1) showed that White participants were more likely to choose White cronies ($M = 2.17$, $SD = .99$) than Black participants ($M = 1.83$, $SD = .90$), $t(411) = 3.67$, $p < .001$, $d = .32$. Conversely, Black participants were more likely to choose Black cronies ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.12$) than White participants ($M = 2.42$, $SD = .97$), $t(409) = -4.62$, $p < .001$, $d = .45$. Thus, even though both groups were more likely to choose Black, rather than White, cronies, as I expected, there was also some evidence for ingroup bias.

Unexpected Participant Gender Effects

Finally, I found unexpected three-way interactions between participant race, crony race, and participant sex for moral justification, $F(1, 816) = 10.42$, $p < .001$, and cronyism, $F(1, 816) = 9.75$, $p = .002$, described next.

Moral justification. I decomposed the interaction by crony race, shown in Figure 1. In the White crony condition, there was a main effect for participant sex, $F(1, 409) = 18.87$, $p < .001$, such that men ($M = 2.31$, $SD = .97$) were more likely than women ($M = 2.02$, $SD = .94$) to morally justify cronyism, $d = .30$. The Participant Race x Participant Gender interaction was also significant, $F(1, 409) = 18.87$, $p = .01$. Simple effects showed no significant difference between White men ($M = 2.05$, $SD = .85$) and Black men ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 1.03$), $t(177) = -1.23$, $p = .22$, or between White men and White women ($M = 1.89$, $SD = .87$), $t(201) = 1.29$, $p = .20$. However, White women were less likely to morally justify selecting a White crony than Black men, $t(206) = 2.53$, $p = .01$, $d = .34$. Further, Black women ($M = 1.61$, $SD = .85$) viewed selecting a White crony as less morally justifiable than White women, $t(232) = 2.55$, $p = .01$, $d = .30$; White men, $t(203) = 3.70$, $p < .001$, $d = .45$; and Black men, $t(208) = 4.75$, $p < .001$, $d = .64$. Thus, Black

women were especially likely to judge cronyism that benefits White candidates at the expense of better qualified Black candidates as immoral.

In the Black crony condition, there were no significant main effects, both $ps > .05$, but the Participant Race x Participant Gender interaction was significant, $F(1, 407) = 4.01, p = .046$. Simple effects showed that White women ($M = 2.11, SD = .86$) were less likely to morally justify selecting a Black crony compared with Black women ($M = 2.49, SD = .98$), $t(225) = 3.02, p = .003, d = .38$; White men ($M = 2.12, SD = .88$), $t(206) = 2.94, p = .004, d = .36$; and Black men ($M = 2.47, SD = 1.06$), $t(206) = 2.64, p = .009, d = .36$. No other comparisons were significant (see Figure 1). Thus, White women were especially likely to judge cronyism that benefits Black candidates at the expense of better qualified White candidates as immoral.

Cronyism. Results decomposing the interaction by crony race are shown in Figure 2. In the White crony condition, there was a main effect for participant sex, $F(1,409) = 20.88, p < .001$, such that men ($M = 2.23, SD = 1.02$) were more likely than women ($M = 1.81, SD = .87$) to engage in pro-White cronyism, $t(411) = 4.48, p < .001, d = .39$. The Participant Race x Participant Gender interaction was also significant, $F(1,409) = 6.31, p = .01$. Simple effects showed no significant differences between White men ($M = 2.27, SD = 1.03$) and Black men ($M = 2.19, SD = 1.01$), $t(177) = .56, p = .576$; between White men ($M = 2.27, SD = 1.03$) and White women ($M = 2.09, SD = .95$), $t(201) = 1.34, p = .18$; or between White women ($M = 2.09, SD = .95$) and Black men ($M = 2.19, SD = 1.01$), $t(206) = .74, p = .46$. However, echoing results for moral justification, Black women ($M = 1.60, SD = .85$) were less likely to engage in pro-White cronyism

than White women, $t(232) = 5.03, p < .001, d = -.51$; White men, $t(203) = 6.12, p < .001, d = -.68$; and Black men, $t(208) = 5.50, p < .001, d = -.61$.

In the Black crony condition, there was a main effect for participant race, $F(1, 407) = 19.30, p < .001$, such that Black participants ($M = 2.89, SD = 1.12$) were more likely than White participants ($M = 2.41, SD = .96$) to engage in cronyism, $d = .45$. The Participant Race x Participant Gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 409) = 3.80, p = .052$. For the sake of clarity, I examined the means. Simple effects showed there was no significant difference between Black men ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.21$) and Black women ($M = 2.96, SD = 1.04$), $t(201) = .86, p = .39$, or between Black and White men ($M = 2.57, SD = .96$), $t(182) = 1.57, p = .12$. However, White men were less likely to engage in pro-Black cronyism than Black women ($M = 2.49, SD = .98$), $t(201) = -2.75, p = .007, d = -.36$. Further, echoing the results for moral justification, White women were less likely to engage in pro-Black cronyism ($M = 2.11, SD = .86$) than White men, $t(206) = 1.99, p = .048, d = -.25$; Black men, $t(206) = 3.45, p = .001, d = -.49$, and Black women, $t(201) = -2.75, p = .007, d = -.62$.

Discussion

Cronyism is favoritism based on social networks linking decision makers to less qualified candidates at the expense of better qualified candidates. To date, theorists have focused on the antecedents and consequences of cronyism in the workplace and across cultures (Khatri et al., 2006; Khatri & Tsang, 2003). Further, a legal scholar has examined the role of cronyism in reproducing racism (Rothmayr, 2014) with arguments that are supported by structured interviews with American Whites, who acknowledged both the illegitimacy of cronyism and its prevalence in hiring practices (DiTomaso,

2013). However, experimental research has been scant. In an exception involving nepotism, non-beneficiaries of nepotism were viewed as more capable than beneficiaries, whose organizational success was attributed to their political skills, not their qualifications (Padgett, Padgett, & Morris, 2015). To my knowledge, the present study is the first to experimentally examine Blacks' and Whites' reactions to others' cronyism in a racial context, and their own willingness to engage in it, depending on the race of the beneficiary. I investigated cronyism because it is an interpersonal form of White privilege that individuals are likely to recognize and have the power to resist (DiTomaso, 2013; Rothmayr, 2014). Therefore, I sought to discover whether Whites and Blacks alike recognize that persistent racial inequalities can stem from Whites' ingroup favoritism in the form of cronyism.

Each of my hypotheses were supported by Blacks; Whites supported only my expectations for cronyism. First, I expected both groups to view pro-White cronyism as more normal than pro-Black cronyism, but only Blacks showed this pattern, whereas Whites viewed others' cronyism as similarly normal whether it benefited Blacks or Whites. Thus, only Blacks acknowledged that Whites today have a patronage advantage; for Whites, the patronage advantage was seen as reversed, albeit not significantly. However, Whites were also less likely than Blacks to judge pro-White cronyism as normal, and more likely than Blacks to judge pro-Black cronyism as normal. Although I can only speculate, these findings may reflect a growing belief in anti-White prejudice on the part of Whites. For example, the Public Religion Research Institute (2011) found that 46 percent of Americans agree that discrimination against Whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against Blacks and other minorities. Further, Norton and

Sommers (2011) found that Whites see anti-White bias as more prevalent than anti-Black bias. Their research suggests that Whites believe that equal opportunity is a zero-sum game whereby progress for minorities equals a decrease in equality for themselves. Indeed, Wilkins and Kaiser (2014) found that Whites who held legitimizing beliefs (e.g., "America is a just society where the differences between ethnic groups reflect actual group differences") were threatened when racial progress was experimentally made salient, resulting in increased beliefs that Whites were victims of racial discrimination. Therefore, Whites' perception of increased anti-White bias and the view of racial progress as a zero-sum game may contribute to our White participants' stronger belief that pro-Black cronyism is today more normative than Blacks perceive it to be.

Second, I expected participants to morally justify others' cronyism to a greater extent when it benefited their racial ingroup than their racial outgroup, given that doubtful behavior may be judged as more ethical under conditions of psychological closeness (Gino & Galinsky, 2012) and people tend to rationalize unethical behaviors more when they advantage ingroup compared with outgroup members (Wright, Dinsmore, & Kellaris, 2013). Again, only Blacks supported this hypothesis. Because both Whites and Blacks judged cronyism as more morally justified when Blacks (rather than Whites) benefited, it appears that both groups acknowledged Whites' *historical* advantage by judging its continuation as relatively more immoral. This was particularly true for Black women, who condemned White cronyism more than all other groups. By contrast, White women were particularly likely to judge Black cronyism as immoral, compared with other groups.

Finally, I expected participants to personally select Black cronies over White cronies, due to Whites' motives to avoid bigotry (Goff et al., 2008) and Blacks' motives to advance racial equality (Saguy et al., 2008; Wright & Lubensky, 2009). This hypothesis was fully supported, reflecting a mixed motives dilemma for Whites (Lewis & Sherman, 2003). However, the effect size was robust for Blacks and small for Whites. Moreover, there was some evidence of ingroup loyalty (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), such that Blacks were more likely than Whites to choose Black cronies, whereas Whites were more likely than Blacks to choose White cronies. Ingroup loyalty was especially prominent for Black women, who were less likely to select a White crony than all other groups, and for White women, who were less likely to select a Black crony than all other groups.

My findings regarding Black and White women's polar reactions to cronyism benefiting racial outgroup members are puzzling. Past research has typically not examined gender differences in perceptions of racism or White privilege on the part of Black Americans. Therefore, I can only speculate that for Black women, the concept of double jeopardy may explain their strong stance against White cronyism. Double jeopardy is defined as the heightened disadvantage of Black women due to the adverse consequences of the Black and female subordinate identities (Rosette & Livingston, 2012). If Black women perceive cronyism as a form of White privilege that doubly disadvantages them, they may be especially vehement in their resistance. Alternatively, because cronies were always men, Black women may be exhibiting loyalty to superior Black male alternates, protecting them from being overlooked in favor of a White crony. Similarly, White women may be expressing loyalty to superior White male alternatives, defending them against an "illegitimate" hire that favored a Black crony. Future research

should manipulate the crony's gender to discern whether women show particular loyalty to ingroup men, given the interdependence of heterosexuals (Rudman & Glick, 2008).

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this study that should be addressed in future research. First, the study should be replicated with a different sample to have confidence in its conclusions. Second, future research should examine moderators of support for cronyism. For example, to solve a problem, people must acknowledge it exists; therefore, perceptions of racial progress in America should be assessed. In part, due to their ignorance of history, Whites may deny racial inequality (Nelson, Adams, & Salter, 2012), which helps to explain why they routinely score higher than Blacks on measures of racial progress. Specifically, in a recent national survey, 88% of Blacks agreed that racial equality had not yet been achieved in the U.S., compared with 53% of Whites (Pew Research Center, 2016). Another national survey found that Blacks are three times as likely as Whites to say that discrimination against minority groups is a critical issue (PRRI, 2011). Thus, in a future study, I expect Whites to outscore Blacks on a measure of racial progress perceptions. Further, denying racial inequities undermines support for corrective policies (e.g., affirmative action; Bobo & Klugel, 1993; for a review, see Lowery, Knowles, & Unzueta, 2007). Therefore, belief in racial progress should negatively covary with choosing Black cronies over more qualified White candidates and positively covary with choosing White cronies over superior Black candidates, for both Whites and Blacks.

But beyond just recognizing that racial inequality exists, it is important to identify White privilege as its cause. Although cronyism is inarguably an interpersonal form of White privilege (Rothmayr, 2014), I did not measure people's awareness of this fact. Research has shown that it is difficult for Whites to recognize their privilege as a cause of racial inequality (Norton & Sommers, 2011), perhaps because doing so causes Whites to think less of their group and by extension, themselves (Branscombe, 1998; Hornsey, Spears, Cremers, & Hogg, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Therefore, I would expect Black participants to acknowledge Whites' cronyism advantage more than White participants. Nonetheless, because correcting biases requires being cognizant of them (Wilson & Brekke, 1994), awareness of cronyism as a feature of White privilege should increase participants' willingness to resist it when it benefits Whites. Whites who acknowledge their structural advantages are more likely to embrace policies that dismantle them (Knowles, Lowery, Chow, & Unzueta, 2012; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002; Swim & Miller, 1999). Therefore, acknowledging White's interpersonal advantage should positively covary with selecting Black cronies over superior White candidates, and negatively covary with selecting White cronies over superior Black candidates, regardless of participant race.

Finally, future research should assess whether White participants' pro-Black responses when judging the morality of cronyism was genuine, or a form of social desirability bias. Despite judging pro-Black cronyism to be more moral than pro-White cronyism, Whites did not engage in pro-Black cronyism themselves. Were their morality judgments due to motives to appear unprejudiced? This could be examined using the External and Internal Motives Scale (Plant & Devine, 1998), which measures participants

internal and external motivations to respond without prejudice. The EMS assesses people's desire to respond without prejudice because of concern over how others would evaluate them if they responded with prejudice. The IMS assesses people's internal motivations to respond without prejudice. Research suggests that Whites have more positive attitudes and less negative feelings towards Black people to the extent they are internally motivated to respond without prejudice, ostensibly for genuine reasons (Plant & Devine, 1998). By contrast, external motives are associated with dissembling on prejudice measures. Therefore, if Whites high on IMS are especially likely to morally justify pro-Black cronyism, but morally reject pro-White cronyism, the pattern would signify a genuine desire to be unprejudiced. However, if the same pattern emerges instead on the part of Whites high on EMS, the findings would indicate social desirability bias.

Conclusion

As the first experimental investigation of reactions to cronyism that benefited either Whites or Blacks, the present study begins to fill a critical gap in the literature. Although my hypotheses were not always supported for Whites, I uncovered evidence that (1) Whites believe that reverse racism (Norton & Sommers, 2011) is as prevalent as pro-White bias in the context of cronyism; (2) both Whites and Blacks view pro-Black cronyism as more morally justifiable than pro-White cronyism, apparently acknowledging that cronyism has historically and unfairly advantaged Whites (DiTomaso, 2013; Rothmayr, 2014); and (3) although both Blacks and Whites expressed more willingness to engage in cronyism that benefited Blacks rather than Whites, group differences showed they were more enthusiastic when patronage advantaged their racial

ingroup. Given the prevalence of White power brokers, these results suggest that the power of cronyism to perpetuate racial disparities deserves further investigation.

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Table 1
Descriptive Statistics by Crony Race and Participant Race

	<u>Crony Race</u>				<u>Effect</u>
	<u>White</u>		<u>Black</u>		<u>Size</u>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>
<u>Black Participants</u>					
Normality	3.71 _{a,x}	1.11	3.12 _{b,x}	.82	0.61
Moral Justification	1.88 _{a,x}	.98	2.48 _{b,x}	1.02	-0.63
Cronyism	1.83 _{a,x}	.901	2.90 _{b,x}	1.12	-1.00
<u>White Participants</u>					
Normality	3.23 _{a,y}	.99	3.30 _{a,y}	.85	-0.07
Moral Justification	1.96 _{a,x}	.86	2.28 _{b,y}	.88	-0.33
Cronyism	2.17 _{a,y}	.99	2.42 _{b,y}	.97	-0.23

Note. Row means not sharing a, b subscript differ significantly. Positive effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) reflect more normality, moral justification, or cronyism when cronies are White versus Black. Column means not sharing x, y subscripts differ between White and Black participants. Effect sizes in the White [Black] crony condition were $d = .49$ [-0.18] for normality, $d = -0.08$ [0.21] for moral justification, and $d = -0.32$ [0.45] for cronyism, computed so that high scores reflect Blacks outscoring Whites.

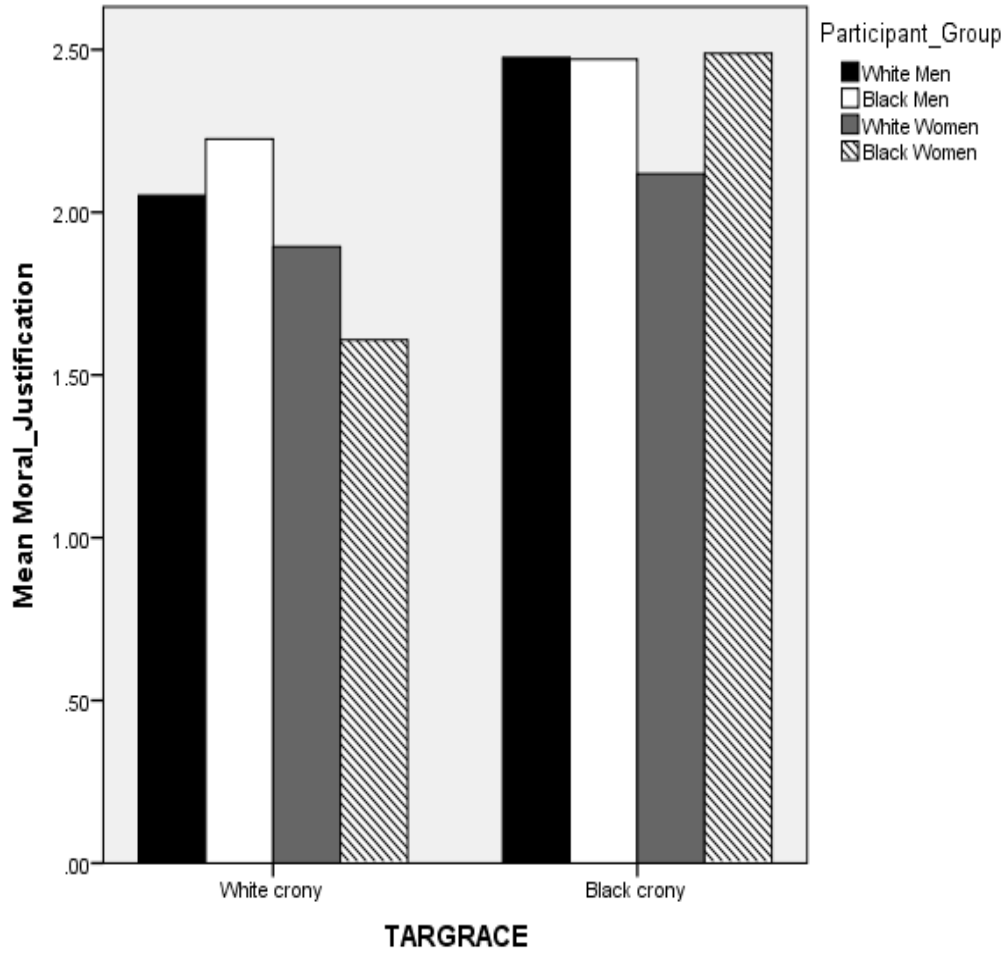


Figure 1. Participant Race X Crony Race X Participant Sex interaction for moral justification.

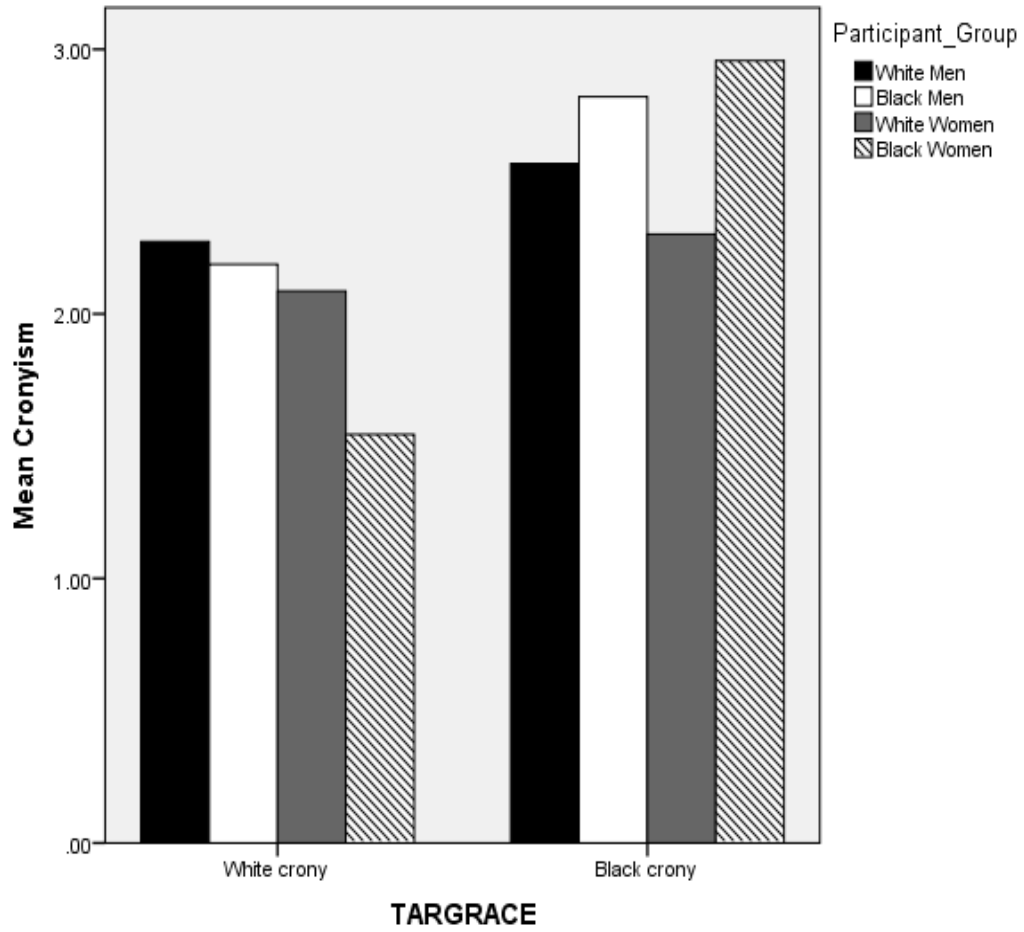


Figure 2. Participant Race X Crony Race X Participant Sex interaction for choice.

Appendix A

Cronyism Scenarios

White Crony Condition

The Board of a popular Charter school in NYC has only one opening left for two remaining student applicants, one White, one Black. The White child is the grandson of a former teacher at the school. The Black child scored higher on aptitude tests, but has no connections.

A couple runs a small business and must to choose between two candidates for one coveted job. Either they can hire their friend's son (who is White) or the better candidate, who is Black.

A faculty search committee is charged with finding a new Assistant Professor for their department. The Chair of the department has a White friend who has applied for the job.

The Office of Human Resources is seeking to hire a manager. Of the two candidates with the most promise, one is a White friend of the company's president; the other candidate is Black and has more education and experience

Black Crony Condition

The Board of a popular Charter school in NYC has only one opening left for two remaining student applicants, one Black, one White. The Black child is the grandson of a former teacher at the school. The White child scored higher on aptitude tests, but has no connections.

A couple runs a small business and must to choose between two candidates for one coveted job. Either they can hire their friend's son (who is Black) or the better candidate, who is White.

A faculty search committee is charged with finding a new Assistant Professor for their department. The Chair of the department has a Black friend who has applied for the job.

The Office of Human Resources is seeking to hire a manager. Of the two candidates with the most promise, one is a Black friend of the company's president; the other candidate is White and has more education and experience.

Appendix B

Dependent Measures

Morality Index - White Crony Condition

How morally justified would the Board be if they chose the White child?

How morally justified would the couple be if they chose the White son of the friend?

How morally justified would the committee be if they recommended hiring the White friend over better qualified Black applicants?

How morally justified would the HR office be if they hired the White friend over the more qualified Black applicant?

Mortality Index- Black Crony Condition

How morally justified would the Board be if they chose the Black child?

How morally justified would the couple be if they chose the Black son of the friend?

How morally justified would the committee be if they recommended hiring the Black friend over better qualified White applicants?

How morally justified would the HR office be if they hired the Black friend over the more qualified White applicant?

Normality Index- White Crony Condition

How normal would it be for the Board to choose the White child?

How normal would it be for the couple to choose the White son?

How normal would it be for the search committee to choose the White friend?

How normal would it be for the HR office to choose the White friend?

Normality Index- Black Crony Condition

How normal would it be for the Board to choose the Black child?

How normal would it be for the couple to choose the Black son?

How normal would it be for the search committee to choose the Black friend?

How normal would it be for the HR office to choose the White friend?

Cronyism Likelihood- White Crony Condition

How likely would YOU be to choose the White child?

How likely would YOU be to choose the White son?

How likely would YOU be to choose the White friend?

How likely would YOU be to choose the White friend?

Cronyism Likelihood- Black Crony Condition

How likely would YOU be to choose the Black child?

How likely would YOU be to choose the Black son?

How likely would YOU be to choose the Black friend?

How likely would YOU be to choose the Black friend?