

as racists), however, the hierarchical structuring of opportunities and life chances goes unmarked and unnamed.

This is the context in which reparations is situated. The conversation about reparations is a very sensitive and racially charged, and it is happening within a moment profoundly infused with the language of multiculturalism, diversity, color blindness and postrace. The language of multiculturalism, “race relations,” diversity, minority rights, and color blindness are all accepted within a white privilege society insofar as the society tries to incorporate (exceptional) nonwhites into its own terms, ideas, images, and so on. Consider the mainstream media, for instance. Within the discourse of multiculturalism, “exceptional” nonwhites such as prominent black politicians, television personalities, and select celebrities are celebrated and incorporated into its ideas and terms—that is, the “American Dream,” equal opportunity language, and others. However, when considering discourses that do not fit comfortably within the terms of the national racial hierarchy regime, they are not received in the same way. To date, this has been part of the dilemma faced by reparations activists.

The black reparations movement is so polarized and emotionally charged because the proreparations position holds, at its core, the indictment of a country responsible for practices that were fundamentally contrary to human affirmation and existence. Even beyond the historical wrong, reparations rhetoric raises questions regarding existing structures of power and current dilemmas of freedom. Linkages between national identity and selfhood constantly saturate the U.S. mainstream. Things that can be couched, then, as perceived threats to the nation or national cohesion are met with profound hypersensitivity, in this era as well as eras past.

In the case of black reparations, serious state-sponsored attempts to remedy the injury caused by slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and the implicit hierarchizing of race would require significantly more than the nation’s shifted moral compass. It would require the abolition of capitalism and the nation-state as we know it (Best and Hartman, 2005). This is not to say that reparations are forever unfeasible; reparations are already historic.

Monies have been granted, in the twenty-first century, to rural black farmers and their families in remediation for previous denial of government aid due to discriminatory loan practices. But mass-scale claims are not intelligible to the nation-state in the same way.

Claims for reparations on behalf of a racial group that has historically been commodified only continue to commodify that group. In order to grant mass-scale remediation for some historical wrong, the injury (and the people) have to be quantified. They have to be *made into* some measurable, observable, traceable object. In other words, persons have to be remade into commodities in order to determine how to “compensate” them.

These are a few dilemmas encountered when engaging questions of remediation for mass-scale injustices (formerly and currently) committed against an oppressed racialized group by an oppressive regime, while having the entire conversation situated within a contemporary political moment fraught with tensions and contradictions all its own. It is important to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the reparations conversation and its obstacles, encouraging a generation of thinkers and activists to push toward alternatives that more fully match those nuances and complexities in their solutions.

*Taurean J. Webb*

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### RESILIENCE

Resilience is defined as a certain set of character strengths that enables an individual to adapt, cope, and thrive in the face of adversity. Resilience is a learned aptitude rather than a personality trait. People are not necessarily born resilient, but rather learn to be resilient through experience.

Resilience can be learned from both direct and indirect experiences of adversity. For example, because Joseph was often bullied in school as a young child, he may be more resilient to the hazing by his fraternity brothers in college. On the other hand, because Sarah, Joseph's mother, fought against cancer and lived to tell about it, Joseph may be more resilient when he develops cancer after college.

People with resilience extract more positive meaning from negative experiences than nonresilient individuals. Thomas Edison, for example, portrayed resilience in his struggle to invent the light bulb in stating, "I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that do not work." A resilient person is more likely to use optimistic thinking, creative exploration, relaxation, and humor in everyday life. This, in fact, allows resilient individuals to perceive less negative feelings and emotions when faced with obstacles and challenges.

Resilience is especially related to self-efficacy, which is defined as the belief in one's own abilities to accomplish and succeed in a task or situation. People with high self-efficacy have strong belief in their ability to affect change and do not surrender in the face of complexity and adversity. Self-efficacy is different from confidence in that confidence is a general term that refers to a level of strength of belief. Self-efficacy, however, is both the affirmation of one's ability level as well as the strong belief in that ability. Self-efficacy enables one to feel in control of the situation and oneself, which is also referred to as having an inner sense of locus.

### *Resilience and Self-Efficacy*

Self-efficacy, the firm belief of one's ability to affect change in one's life, serves as a vital psychological buffer and empowers individuals to thrive in the face of adversity.

A quantitative meta-analysis study (Lee et al., 2013) found that protective factors such as self-efficacy, positive affect, positive adaptation, self-esteem, life satisfaction, optimism, and social support are most positively associated with resilience, in that order of strength. Self-efficacy (i.e., having the ability to cope with change using a repertoire of problem-solving skills), positive affect (i.e., being enthusiastic, active, and alert in

response to adverse situations), and self-esteem (i.e., positive judgment of self-worth and/or liking oneself)—the most positively correlated factors—may be the most essential factors in having resilience. In an interesting cyclic manner, optimism and positive affect, in turn, correlate to self-efficacy and self-esteem. Risk factors such as depression, anxiety, perceived stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and negative affect—in this order of correlation strength—were found to be most negatively associated with resilience. Greater levels of depression and anxiety—the most negatively correlated factors—may signify lower resilient capabilities in individuals.

The findings, overall, indicate that an increased emphasis in the protective factors may be more effective in increasing resilience than the attempt to reduce the risk factors (Lee et al., 2013). In fact, resilience may be a system of dynamic processes that both protects and actively fights against in the risk factors debilitating to the human mind and body, such as depression, anxiety, perceived stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and negative affect (Lee et al., 2013). In addition, demographic factors such as gender and age are not associated with resilience.

### *Characteristics of Resilient Individuals*

Resilient individuals can obtain the resources needed to handle stressors, perceive obstacles as challenges, have a sense of control or self-efficacy, and are primarily driven by a sense of commitment to various life domains. A meta-analysis study (Eschleman, Bowling, & Alarcon, 2010) found that resilience is: (a) positively associated with stress-mitigating or stress-resistant attitudes, such as self-esteem, positive affectivity, and optimism, indicating that these attitudes protect individuals against the effects of stressors and help them respond adaptively to the stressors; (b) negatively associated personality traits that worsen the effect of stressors, strains, and regressive coping (such as neuroticism and negative affectivity); (c) positively associated with active coping strategies, indicating that resilient individuals often have a repertoire of coping strategies that are more proactive than regressive; (d) positively associated with school and work performance; and (e) positively associated

with social support, indicating that resilient individuals either have or seek out support resources necessary to handle adversity.

The main components of resilience include (a) commitment, (2) sense of control, and (3) seeing obstacles as challenges (Eschleman et al., 2010). Although these three components are interrelated, they are rather distinct from one another. Among the three, commitment was shown to be the most valuable component of resilience that enables one to effectively cope with stress rather than engaging in withdrawal behavior (Eschleman et al., 2010).

### *Resilience in Survivors of Holocaust*

Research showed that many survivors demonstrated resilience and even manifestations of growth (Eitinger & Major, 1993); many survivors showed a remarkable capacity to overcome adversity, whereas some developed psychopathology. The difference between these two groups could be explained by resilience. Helmreich (1992) found ten qualities in Holocaust survivors that led positive lives despite the traumatic experience endured (Eschleman et al., 2010), which can be broken up into the three core components of resilience aforementioned: commitment, sense of control, and seeing obstacles as challenges.

Qualities such as optimism and finding meaning in one's life can be linked to commitment, which enabled Holocaust survivors to focus on active adaptation and commitment to rebuilding their lives. Qualities such as assertiveness, tenacity, courage, and group consciousness could be linked to sense of control. Using the available means to gain a sense of control by finding support within the Jewish community, survivors became more perseverant, capable, and resilient—individually and as a group. Qualities such as flexibility, intelligence, and distancing ability, may be linked to seeing obstacles as challenges. Using their flexibility, intelligence, and the ability to distance themselves from their Holocaust-related past, survivors could overcome the traumatic experience and even gain in psychological growth (Barel et al., 2010).

Research shows that extreme trauma does not necessarily beget disorder (Lomranz, 1995). Although Holocaust survivors did present stress-related symptoms, they also portrayed many aspects

of adaptive resiliency. A meta-analysis study (Barel, Van IJzendoorn, Sagi-Schwartz, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010) found that although Holocaust survivors were overall less adjusted than others, showing more psychopathological symptomatology, less psychological well-being, and more post-traumatic stress symptoms, they demonstrated positive adaptation in other aspects such as physical health, stress-related physiology, and cognitive functioning (Barel et al., 2010).

### *Resilience and Children in Maltreatment*

Resilience is related to children's characteristics in face of maltreatment. A meta-analysis study (Nasvytienė, Lazdauskas, & Leonavičienė, 2012) found that for adaptive and positive functioning in the face of maltreatment, children's individual characteristics (such as child cognition, self-perception, and temperament/personality traits) are more related to resilience for their positive functioning than their characteristics of interpersonal relatedness, such as close relationships within family and outside family (i.e., connectedness with peers and competent or trusting adults outside the family), or characteristics of community network.

There is no relationship between resilience and children's age even though self-perception in face of maltreatment becomes stronger with children's age (Nasvytienė et al., 2012). Resilient children are not simply common, as they have their own individual characteristics, and they overcome and cope with profound stresses until they arrive at the level of adaptive functioning. Resiliency cannot be equated to social competence, cognitive mastery, positive mental health, or other related psychological phenomenon (Nasvytienė et al., 2012).

### *Types of Resilience*

*Emotional* resilience refers to a person's capacity to experience multiple positive emotions per each negative emotion experienced. Personal crises, such as job loss, illness, death in one's family, and divorce, can be especially detrimental for individuals lacking resilience. People with emotional resilience make use of positive, effective coping skills to overcome personal crisis. Emotional resilience is the most centrally important form of resilience in effectively coping with any adversity.

*Physical* resilience refers to a person's capacity to tolerate and endure physical pain and discomfort. People with physical resilience often have outstanding physical endurance and emotional resilience. Thus, an Olympic athlete needs to have both physical and emotional resilience in order to commit to the countless exhausting, long hours of practice.

*Social* resilience plays a vital role in overcoming social and socioeconomic adversities, such as discriminations of gender, race, sexuality, or poverty. People with social resilience can cope and even thrive in the face of adversity, which can involve lack of social integration, support, and financial struggles. For example, this type of resilience was crucial for Ida B. Wells, a black woman and journalist of the late 1800s, who led the bold and relentless fight for equality despite life-threatening risks.

These types of resilience are often situational in its categorization and are not necessarily independent of each other. Traits and factors of emotional resilience can be usually found in all types of resilience.

### *How to Improve Resilience*

Research has shown that high levels of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism are integral in facing, overcoming, and thriving in everyday situations of adversity. First, focus on things that you do have and are grateful for. Make a list of these things. Be confident of your abilities and focus on your personal strengths and remember the past accomplishments in your life. Make sure to understand that what's happened is already in the past and choose to believe in a brighter future.

Discover a sense of purpose in your life. Try to make each day meaningful to you. Finding a passion or an activity that holds meaning to you can play a large role in being able to effectively cope and overcome stress.

Understand that everything in life is transient, and learn to embrace change. Flexibility is a big component of resilience and it is important to be flexible and adaptive to all of life's ups and downs. Learning to be actively adaptive to change enables one to make the most out of and even thrive in the face of adversity.

Establish strong support systems and maintain positive relationships, which can provide support,

encouragement, and guidance throughout your time of adversity. Do not be afraid to ask for help when you're in trouble, and be resourceful in coping with challenges.

Make sure to take a good care of your health, physically. Getting regular sleep, exercising often, and eating well will not only improve your physical health but also serve as the base for a better mental health. Good physical health is vital to better mental health wellness.

### *Implications*

All successes—whether it is achieving financial success, overcoming a difficult childhood, surviving a physical trauma, rediscovering love, or weight loss—are achieved through the individuals' repertoire of resilience factors. However, factors of resilience are not created equal; some factors are more present and integral than other factors in various types of success. Self-efficacy and optimism are integral in most stories of success achieved through resilience. Factors such as having a strong inner sense of locus or maintaining optimism are considered respectable and carry positive connotations. However, factors that carry more negative connotations, such as vengeance, the desire to gain affirmation, or the desire to seek attention from other(s), are rarely discussed in relation to resilience and should be more studied.

A qualitative synthesis study (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010) attempted to reorganize previous research regarding resilience in order to clarify and indicate potential intervention points for increasing resilience and positive mental health. Davydov et al. (2010) suggested that the absence of mental disorder should not be considered as synonymous with mental healthiness and that positive well-being should not be explained as the inverse of poor mental health. It was further suggested that various protective factors have a powerful, indirect role in mitigating risk factors and should be identified; memories of previous experiences of successful coping in adversity could contribute to more effective coping in later adversities, thus allowing greater mental and physical health. Furthermore, resilience mechanisms should not be restricted to the individual level as resilience can serve communities and societies at the group level involving the

interactions of cultural and group mentality factors (Davydov et al., 2010).

Harmony Onyu Lee  
Kyung-Hee Kim

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### RIGHT-WING PHILOSOPHY

Right-wing philosophy includes conservative and neoconservative views on cultural, social, political, and economic theories. In the history of right-wing philosophy of economics, the Austrian School of Economics, including Carl Menger (1840–1921), Friedrich Hayek (1899–1992) and his work *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), Ludwig von Mises (1881–1973), Eugen Böhm von Bawerk (1851–1914), and Friedrich von Wieser (1851–1926), championed free-market capitalism. Inspired, in part, by the classical political economy of Adam Smith (1723–1790) and his *Wealth of Nations* (1776) with its theory of the “Invisible Hand” at the cornerstone of laissez-faire economics, Milton Friedman (1912–2006) and the Chicago School of Economics have also endorsed a right-wing philosophy of economics, what would become part of the larger neoclassical tradition in economics. In the long history of political right-wing philosophy, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) in his published work *The Prince* (1532), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) in his book *Leviathan* (1651), and Edmund Burke (1729–1797) in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) provided cases for the justification and enforcement of right-wing political philosophy and its acts of political suppression by repressive government. There have been conservative readings of the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) leading to the right-wing school of Hegelians in classical German philosophy.

The political philosopher Leo Strauss (1899–1973) was a leading figure in the neoconservative movement and its ideology. Allen Bloom (1930–1992), and his *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), provided a conservative-oriented critique of society. Francis Fukuyama (1952–), in his *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), applied certain aspects and interpretations of Hegel's philosophy of history to develop a conservative cultural criticism. Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) documented a wide variety of conservative political philosophy in her *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), while Frankfurt School philosopher and sociologist Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969), a neo-Marxist critical theorist, participated in the writing of a book on *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), highlighting and