

Daily Experiences of Racism and Forgiving Historical Offenses: An African American Experience

Bengü Ergüner-Tekinalp

Abstract—This study explored the correlates of forgiving historical racial offenses and the relationship between daily experiences of racism and forgiving historical racial offenses. 147 African Americans participated to the study. Results indicated that guilt attribution, distrust, need of reparations, religion, and perception of apology relate to forgiving past racial offenses. In addition the more individuals experience racism related events, the less likely they forgive the past mistreatments of African Americans.

Keywords—African Americans, forgiveness, historical offenses

I. INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH there are many efforts to improve the experiences of the members of underrepresented groups, their experiences are still shaped by cultural forces that often demean, disadvantage and deny them equal access and opportunity [1], [2], [3]. Experiences of historical and current discrimination, prejudices, stereotypes and oppression are a daily reality for many diverse groups. Therefore, the worldview of historically underrepresented groups including African Americans is linked to historical and current experiences of oppression in the United States [4].

Africans were enslaved and arrived on American shores in 1619. Upon their arrival they were subjected to dehumanization and relegation to second class citizenry [5]. For centuries, the status of African Americans kept as inferior. In 1865, the United States government ended all forms of slavery; in 1954, segregated schools were dismantled; and in 1964, the Civil Rights Act guaranteed broad citizen protections that the legal underpinnings for treating African Americans as equal and acceptable were secured [6]. However, legal ending of slavery only terminated the economic aspects; the social facet of slavery could not be erased in the society just through the courts. Consequently, the focus of White society on maintaining rigid control over Blacks has continued [7].

In spite of the efforts to develop more positive inter-racial relations; lack of communication or miscommunication, distrust, and segregated lives still characterize contemporary Black and White relationships in the United States [8], [9],

[10], [11]. Hundreds of years of slavery, segregation and continual oppression and discrimination have created unresolved relationship dynamics between White and African Americans. The contemporary theories of racism [12], [13], [14], [15], [16], [17] suggest that today racism is expressed in more subtle or indirect ways because there are social norms which are against direct expressions of prejudice. Discrimination against African Americans can be observed in many segments of society. The examples are higher education [18], the restaurant industry [19], housing rentals and sales [20], [21], automotive sales [22], hiring practices [23], employment [20], poor education [24], discrimination within the judicial system and incarceration and [25], health and social services [26], [27]. Besides the discrimination in different areas in society, African Americans have also reported some subjective experiences of racism and discrimination as well. For example, it was found that that almost all (98%) African American participants experienced some type of racial discrimination in the past year [28]. These experiences include discrimination by waiters and store clerks, discrimination by health and helping professionals, being called a racist name, being hit, shoved, harmed, or threatened with physical harm because of their race. Moreover, no gender, social class, or education differences were found in these reports. Negative attitudes toward interracial friendships [29], interracial dating [30], and interracial marriage [31], [32], [33] were also reported. Individuals engaged in intimate relations are at risk of being subjected to racial harassment.

In addition, African Americans and White Americans live in racially segregated areas with a minimal contact [34]. Along with segregation, interpersonal relationships are also affected by a prolonged history of oppression. Miscommunication and distrust characterize the interpersonal racial relationships [9]. Trust is necessary to develop long term positive relations. However, distrust is one of the major characteristics of racial relations in the United States [9]. For example, the majority of Black Americans have a profound distrust for the police and legal system, and some are overtly distrustful of White Americans in general [35].

In a racially divided society such as United States, the concepts of reconciliation, public apology, and the offering and acceptance of forgiveness should well be considered for overcoming the harmful effects of prolonged racial discrimination and offenses. Public apology and accepting

B. Ergüner-Tekinalp is with Drake University, Des Moines, IA 50311 USA (phone: 515 2712170; fax: 515 271 4848 ; e-mail: bengü.tekinalp@drake.edu).

offering forgiveness may serve as a balm for healing the wounds of both the oppressed and the oppressor.

A. Forgiveness

Forgiveness has been explored in social sciences for decades however; until recently forgiveness studies have mostly focused on intimate relationships [36], [37], [38], [39]. Although there are numerous studies exploring the concept of forgiveness, there is still a lack of consensus among researchers in the definition of forgiveness [37]. Forgiveness is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that forms interplay between cognition, emotion, and behavior [40], [41]. Therefore, forgiveness is not solely an act or behavior but rather it is a combination of cognitive, affective and behavioral processes. In this conceptualization, forgiveness is seen as a process in which individuals overcome the resentment, negative judgment toward the offender and foster compassion, generosity, even love toward the offender [40]. The distinctive part of this definition is that it includes compassion toward the offender; however reconciliation is excluded from the definition. Therefore the forgiver develops positive feelings toward the offender but does not necessarily reconcile the relationship. Forgiveness is also defined as a process of restoring love and trustworthiness to end the destructive relationship for both to the offender and the offended [42]. Therefore, forgiveness is viewed within an ongoing relationship of the parties. Forgiveness is also conceptualized as a motivational system [43]. In this model, forgiveness is described as a change in one's motivation from revenge-seeking and avoidance of contact with the offender to increased feelings of goodwill and movement toward reconciliation [38]. Forgiveness is also a transformation of the perception of the transgression, transgressor and consequences of the transgression from negative to positive [44], to restore damaged relationships, to reduce the negative influence between the offended and the offender, and to provide opportunity for the offended recipient to give up the role of victim and for the offender to make compensation [45]. Factors such as offender's repentance, excuses, the offender's suffering, moral commonality with the offender, and closeness of relationship with the offender facilitate forgiveness. On the other hand, factors like severity of the offense, lack of repentance, absence of suffering by the offender, moral distance, and lack of relationship are impeding factors for forgiveness [46].

B. Intergroup Forgiveness

Today, only limited studies focus on forgiveness in non-intimate relationships [47], [48]. Intergroup forgiveness was explored among various groups such as Protestants and Catholics in Ireland [49], [48]; Sunni Muslims, Catholics, Maronites, and Orthodox Christians in Lebanon [50]; Jews and contemporary Germans, and Native Canadians and contemporary White Canadians [51].

As the research interest in forgiveness in intergroup conflict increased, the term political forgiveness has emerged in social

psychology and political science literature [52]. Political forgiveness is a process in which the offended party relieves a debt [53]. In intergroup forgiveness acknowledgement of the pain of hurtful acts and the public acknowledgement of the wrongdoing, demonstration of remorse by the offender group were found to be aiding factors for forgiveness [48]. In addition, perceived degree of hurt but not the actual degree of hurt [54], collective guilt assignment [53], [51], having out-group friends, and attitudes about the other group [51], social similarity to the offender, and apologies from the offender, cancellation of consequences and the intent to harm [52] are also found to be the determinants of intergroup forgiveness. In addition, African American men who had more traditional masculinity ideology were found to be less willing to forgive racial offenses [47].

Decades of racism and oppression have created wounds for African and White Americans and resulted in unresolved relationship dynamics. Although the racial tension has been explained as a result of continued racist attitudes; unfinished business resulting from failure to seek forgiveness and offering forgiveness may be one explanation for the ongoing racial tension between African Americans and White Americans. It is important to explore the dynamic relationship between the oppressors and the oppressed. One way to understand this relationship is to examine, if the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor has the capacity to spawn forgiveness for the offenses. Forgiveness is one area that may ignite positive interrelations among the oppressed and the oppressor. Therefore, the intent of this study is to focus on the experiences of African Americans as one historically oppressed group in United States, as a means of understanding the potential role, capacity, and power of forgiveness among marginalized groups living the realities of oppression. Specifically, the aim of this study was to uncover correlates of forgiving historical racial offenses (i.e. slavery, segregation, Tuskegee Experiment, etc.). In addition the study seeks to investigate the relationship between daily experiences of racism and forgiving historical racial offenses.

METHOD

A. Participants

One hundred forty-seven (147) African American individuals have completed the surveys. The age of the participants ranged from 21 to 64 with the mean age of 34. Of the 147 participants, 105 were females and 42 were males.

B. Instruments

Forgiveness of Historical Offenses: Forgiveness for historical offenses survey was developed by the researcher specifically for this study (see appendix). The survey consists of questions that are designed to assess the required conditions for forgiveness. The survey consists of 10 items and respondents rate their attitudes on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)). Before

administering the questionnaire, it was sent to five African American doctoral students to get an expert opinion and to avoid possible offensive language. Individual forgiveness of past mistreatments is measured with one item question, "as an individual, to what extent have you forgiven White Americans for the past mistreatments?" The participants rated their responses on a three point scale as not at all, trying to forgive, or complete forgiveness.

Racism and Life Experiences Scales-Brief Version (RaLES-B): In order to assess participants' perceived experiences of racism; the Racism and Life Experiences Scale–Brief version (RaLES–B) [55] [56] was used. RaLES is a comprehensive set of scales designed to measure multiple dimensions of racism experiences (direct, vicarious, and collective) and associated constructs (reactions to racism, racism related coping styles). Internal consistency, split half and test-retest reliability coefficients of full scale ranged from .69 to .96 suggesting moderate to excellent reliability. The RaLES appears to be a promising instrument for assessing multiple dimensions of racism experiences. The brief version includes 9 items and is designed to be used as an overall indication of racism experience. Previous reliability and validity were not reported in the literature for the brief version. This is the first study to analyze the reliability of the RaLES–B. Cronbach Alpha reliability yielded as .80 in this study.

C. Procedure

This research was reviewed and approved by the University Institutional Review Board. The surveys were uploaded online and an e-mail invitation was sent to personal contacts at various universities, e-mail discussion groups and list-serves. After reading the consent, participants were asked to fill out an online survey. Only individuals who self-identified as African American were recruited. This racial self-identification was asked on the information sheet that those who identified as African Americans were asked to proceed to the surveys.

D. Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) data analysis system was used to analyze the data. In order to explore the relationship between forgiveness related variables, experiences of racism and forgiveness Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. In order to test the gender differences of forgiving historical racial offenses t-test analysis was employed.

II. RESULTS

A. Forgiving Historical Racial Offenses- Individual level

The association of forgiveness related variables (age, perception of remorse, guilt attribution, distrust, reparations, need of acknowledgement, use of religion, perception of seeking forgiveness, perception of apology, attribution of mistreatments as a human mistake) and group forgiveness was explored via Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Correlations among the variables studied are presented in Table 1. The Individuals' own forgiveness of historical racial offenses was significantly positively correlated with perception of group forgiveness ($r=0.258$, $p<0.01$) and use of religion ($r=0.280$, $p<0.01$). In addition significant negative correlation was found between individuals' forgiveness of past mistreatments and guilt attribution ($r=-0.210$, $p<0.05$), distrust ($r=-0.334$, $p<0.01$), reparations ($r=-0.183$, $p<0.05$) and perception of apology ($r=-0.332$, $p<0.01$).

B. Forgiving Historical Racial Offenses- Group Level

The relationship between forgiveness related variables (age, perception of remorse, guilt attribution, distrust reparations, need of acknowledgement, use of religion, perception of seeking forgiveness, perception of apology, attribution of mistreatments as a human mistake) and group forgiveness was explored with Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. To assess participants' perception of African Americans forgiveness, participants were asked to respond to the following statement, "African Americans have forgiven whites for the past mistreatments". The participants rated their responses on a Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Among eleven variables, seven of them found significantly related with forgiveness of historical racial offenses on the group level. A positive relationship was found with perception of remorse ($r=0.308$, $p<0.01$), need of acknowledgement ($r=0.170$, $p<0.05$), use of religion ($r=0.411$, $p<0.01$), perception of seeking forgiveness ($r=0.319$, $p<0.01$), and attribution of mistreatments as a human mistake ($r=0.308$, $p<0.01$). On the other hand, negative correlations were found with guilt attribution ($r=-0.223$, $p<0.01$), and perception of apology ($r=-0.195$, $p<0.05$). The negative relationship points out that the more individuals attribute guilt and the more they think an apology is owed, the less they think that African Americans in general forgive historical offenses.

TABLE I
CORRELATIONS AMONG FORGIVENESS OF HISTORICAL OFFENSES AND FORGIVENESS RELATED VARIABLES

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age											
2. Individual Forgiveness	0.045										
3. Group Forgiveness	-0.90	0.258**									
4. Perception of Remorse	-0.25**	0.063	0.308**								
5. Guilt Attribution	0.158	-0.210*	-0.22**	-0.190*							
6. Distrust	-0.194*	-0.33**	-0.133	-0.088	0.158						
7. Reparations	0.078	-0.183*	0.048	-0.205*	0.225**	0.290**					
8. Need of Acknowledgement	0.061	0.092	0.170*	0.082	0.009	0.075	0.486**				
9. Use of Religion	0.085	0.280**	0.270**	0.268**	-0.22**	-0.096	0.008	0.281**			
10. Perception of Seeking Forgiveness	-0.103	0.072	0.319**	0.192*	-0.25**	0.019	-0.161	-0.131	-0.18**		
11. Perception of apology	0.295**	-0.33**	-0.195*	-0.22**	0.322**	0.188*	0.465**	0.323**	-0.27**	-0.21**	
12. Attribution of mistreatments as a human mistake	0.124	0.063	0.308**	0.099	-0.088	-0.29**	-0.098	-0.129	0.171*	-0.77	-0.034

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

C. Racism Related Daily Experiences and Forgiving Historical Racial Offenses-Group Level

A correlation coefficient was performed to see the relationship between racism related experiences and individuals' perception of African Americans forgiveness of historical racial offenses. The Correlations among the variables studied are presented in Table 2. The total score of racism related experiences was calculated by adding the item scores. No significant relationship was found between racism related life experiences total score and individuals' perception of African Americans' forgiveness of historical racial offenses ($r=-0.157, p>0.05$). On the other hand for individual items, the results indicate that some racism related life experiences are negatively correlated with the individuals' belief of African Americans' forgiveness of historical offenses. Specifically, racism experiences over the course of one's lifetime ($r = -0.210, p < 0.005$), the belief that overall racism effects African Americans ($r = -0.263, p < 0.001$), racism experiences of people who are close to the individual ($r = -0.239, p < 0.001$), how African Americans are regarded in USA ($r = 0.512, p < 0.001$), and thinking about racism ($r = 0-.330, p < 0.001$) were negatively correlated with general perception of African Americans' forgiveness of historical racial offenses.

D. Racism Related Daily Experiences and Forgiving Historical Racial Offenses-Individual Level

The results indicate that there is a significant negative relationship between the racism related life experiences total score and individuals' forgiveness of historical racial offenses ($r=-0.392, p < 0.001$). In addition, significant negative relationships were found between one's forgiveness of historical racial offenses and racism-related experiences during one's lifetime ($r = -0.370, p < 0.001$), racism-related

experiences during the past year ($r = -0.193, p < 0.005$), racism experiences of people who are close to the individual ($r = -0.261, p < 0.001$), the perception of how African Americans are regarded in the United States ($r = -0.182, p < 0.005$), hearing about a racist event ($r = -0.283, p < 0.001$), thinking about racism ($r = -0.370, p < 0.001$), stress racism caused during the individual's lifetime ($r = -0.376, p < 0.001$), and stress racism has caused over the past year ($r = -0.323, p < 0.001$). The negative relationship indicates that the more individuals report daily experiences of racism, the less likely they forgive the historical racial offenses.

The correlation between experiences of racism items and age has yielded interesting results. There is a positive relationship between age and experiences over the course of one's lifetime ($r = 0.280, p < 0.001$), overall effect of racism on African Americans ($r = 0.166, p < 0.005$), and thinking about racism ($r = 0.222, p < 0.001$). The only negative correlation was between age and how African Americans are regarded in the United States ($r = -0.221, p < 0.001$). The results indicate that as age increases experiences of racism experiences during one's lifetime, believing the overall effect of racism on African Americans and the amount of one thinks about racism increases. As individuals get older, they think African Americans in general are less regarded in USA. However, age did not yield any significant correlation with forgiveness of historical offenses.

E. Gender Differences on Perception of African Americans' Forgiveness and Individual's Forgiveness of Historical Mistreatments

In order to explore the gender differences on perception of African Americans' forgiveness and individual's forgiveness of historical mistreatments a t-test analysis was performed. The descriptive statistics and t-test results for the variables are

TABLE II
CORRELATIONS AMONG FORGIVENESS OF HISTORICAL OFFENSES AND RACISM RELATED DAILY EXPERIENCES VARIABLES

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Group forgiveness										
2. Individual forgiveness	.258**									
3. Racism during life time	-.210*	-.370**								
4. Racism during past year	-.041	-.193*	.662**							
5. Overall racism affects AA	-.263**	-.071	.212**	.199*						
6. Racism to close people	-.239**	-.261**	.539**	.514**	.317**					
7. How AA regarded in USA	-.512**	-.182*	.262**	.064	.353**	.089				
8. Hear about racism	.005	-.283**	.528**	.400**	.170*	.283**	-.244**			
9. Think about racism	-.330**	-.370**	.553**	.387**	.166*	.238**	-.414**	.551**		
10. Stress racism caused during lifetime	-.158	-.376**	.594**	.501**	.177*	.395**	-.217**	.450**	.676**	
11. Stress racism caused past year	-.097	-.323**	.596**	.622**	.086	.424**	-.031	.324**	.417**	.653**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

TABLE III
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND T-TEST OF MALES AND FEMALES ON FORGIVENESS VARIABLES

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test	Sig.
Belief AA have forgiven	Female	105	2.5429	1.05638	.10309	-1.324	.188
	Male	42	2.8095	1.21451	.18740		
Forgiving historical offenses	Female	105	2.2000	.62634	.06112	.495	.621
	Male	42	2.1429	.64662	.09978		
	Male	42	2.6190	.58236	.08986		

shown in Table 3. No gender difference was found for either perception of African Americans' forgiveness ($t=-1.324$, $p=0.188$) and individual's forgiveness of historical mistreatments ($t=0.495$, $p=0.621$).

I. DISCUSSION

A. General Discussion

Clearly, the problem of race relations in United States involves many dimensions such as intergroup contact, close and intimate relations, prolonged history of oppression, and discrimination and inequity in many arenas of life. It appears as if past mistreatments keep affecting the relationships

between these groups. Perceived lack of remorse shown by the oppressor, perceived lack of apology and distrust may provide an understanding of explanations for racial tension in today's society. The results of this study revealed that related factors for perception of the group act and individual act of forgiveness are different. In other words, when participants rated their belief on African American communities forgiving the past in general, in other words when the group identity was salient, guilt attribution, distrust, reparations, use of religion and perception of apology were found to be significantly related. On the other hand when participants rated their own forgiveness of historical offenses different variables were found to be significant (remorse, guilt

attribution, acknowledgement, religion, seeking forgiveness and perception of apology). These results show the complexity of in-group identification, and inter-group forgiveness. Different conditions are asked or needed for forgiveness when people perceive themselves as part of the group or individuals for the same offense. Interestingly in either of the case age was not found to be significantly related to forgiveness. Contrary to this finding, literature suggests that older people tend to forgive more [57], [58], [59], [60]. It might be thought that younger individuals might be more willing to forgive historical offenses because they are less likely to have experienced historical adversities. However, the results show that whether the participants experienced segregation or not is not a significant factor for forgiving historical offenses. This finding indicates that historical mistreatments are unforgotten, and an indication of transgenerational transmission of group traumas [55].

Generally, these findings for forgiving historical racial offenses are supported in the forgiveness literature. Studies have shown that forgiveness is greater when the offender offers an apology or shows remorse [51], [61]. It is suggested that the reason that remorse has a positive effect on the victim is that it provides anticipation of positive future behavior [62]. Remorse can lead to acceptance of the grievance and of the offender's need to be forgiven [51]. Similarly, seeking forgiveness can be considered as an indicator of the admission of the wrongs done and can be perceived as an attempt for a new start. Results suggest that acknowledgement of wrongdoing by the historical offender will increase the likelihood of forgiveness of historical offenses. Similar with remorse and seeking forgiveness acknowledgement of past mistreatments can be considered as a sign of the future positive behavior, therefore increases the likelihood of forgiveness. Literature shows that apology facilitates forgiveness [63], [64], [65], [66]. Apology is defined as offender's external expression of remorse that he or she has wounded the victim; however, remorse is an internal experience of regret [67]. This study shows that for an individual to forgive the historical offenses external expression of remorse is needed. Results also indicate that the more participants think that African Americans in general have difficulty for trusting Whites; the less likely they have forgiven them for the past mistreatments. Similar with this finding, it is reported that without trust built to the other group, full forgiveness was not possible for conflicts in Northern Ireland [68].

Results also indicate that, if reparations were made, the participants believe that it is more possible that they would forgive whites for the historical offenses. Reparations are a controversial issue today in the African American community. There is limited literature that investigates how African Americans feel about slavery reparations, proposed forms of compensation, and what they think about reparations already awarded to other groups like Japanese Americans [69]. Generally, slavery reparation proponents claim that the debt is owed to African Americans for two reasons, the value of

uncompensated labor of slaves and violation of civil rights through segregation [70], [71]. Reparations are not much about money but about the truth being told; reparations changes the way Americans think and feel about slavery, segregation and discrimination against African Americans [72]. This finding shows that, reparations are needed as an evidence for acknowledging the wrongdoings. African Americans are in need of an acknowledgment of the historical mistreatments, by either paying back or making systemic changes.

Results also indicate that religion helped individuals' to forgive whites for the historical racial offenses. Forgiveness literature indicates that religiosity contributes forgiveness [40], [73], [74], [75], [76]. Besides, religion has always been an important coping mechanism for African Americans [77], [78], [79], [80] African Americans tend to have higher levels of religious participation than other groups in the United States [81], [82], [83]. In the unique history of African Americans, slavery and other forms of oppression has resulted in distinctive religiosity [83]. African Americans use formal religious involvement to cope with social adversities such as race, class, and gender oppression [84], [85], family and parenting stress, psychological distress, and daily hassles [86]. It also has been documented that religion plays a role in shaping African Americans' cognitive outcomes [i.e., interpretations and appraisals of events], including a role in framing such events in times of adversity [87]. Therefore, from the findings of this study, it can be suggested that religion helps African Americans to cope with historical adversities. Contrary to this finding, in their inter-group forgiveness study in Ireland [69], it was found that religious beliefs were not highly correlated with inter-group forgiveness; however, it is important to note that they studied forgiveness in cross-confessional conflicts.

B. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The results of the study should be interpreted with caution due to some methodological limitations. Although the study provides some valuable insight into minority experiences, the participants does not reflect the experiences of all racially and ethnically oppressed groups. The sample of the study consists mainly of African Americans who have internet access; generalizability of the results is limited. The results are also limited in terms of explanation of forgiveness; other related factors such as racial identity development, religious orientation, and racial contact should be investigated in future studies. This study is correlational in nature; in some cases, it is difficult to predict the direction of the relationship. More controlled, experimental research is needed in the future. It should also be kept in mind that this study is a cross-sectional study that examines a segment of time in participants' life, which is not reflective of more longitudinal process of forgiveness. Future research is needed to explore how people grant forgiveness for historical offenses. Studies are also needed to explore the forgiveness of current racial offenses. Another limitation of the study is that forgiveness was

assessed with a single item; further research needed to explore forgiveness with a more multidimensional focus. Further research is also needed to explore more deeply African Americans' perceptions of forgiveness related factors. Some examples of these factors can be public apology, collective guilt assignment, and reparations. Generally, studies focused on intergroup forgiveness either develops questions specific to the study or adopts interpersonal forgiveness scales in inter-group context. Future research is needed to develop a specific scale to assess inter-group or sociopolitical forgiveness across different groups.

C. Conclusion

This study demonstrated the complicated nature of attitudes towards historical racial offenses, daily experiences of racism and complicated nature of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a complicated phenomenon, putting forgiveness in a sociopolitical context even makes it more complicated. The

findings of this research have the potential to provide an insight for social scientists to develop an understanding of the experiences of marginalized groups in general and African Americans in particular. The findings will present an arena for better understanding of the effects of racism and oppression on generations. It is important to note that, although possible age differences in responses were examined, the data did not reveal any differences in responses based on age. This is an indication that historical mistreatments are unforgotten. Trust is necessary to develop long term positive relations, however for trust and positive racial relations to build up demonstration of remorse by acknowledging the wrongdoings and more importantly social transformations are needed.

APPENDIX

FORGIVENESS OF HISTORICAL OFFENSES SURVEY

The following questions are designed to identify your thoughts and feelings regarding the mistreatment of African Americans such as slavery, Tuskegee experiment, segregation, voting rights etc. Please read each question carefully and mark one answer that best fits your agreement or disagreement. There are no right or wrong answers. State your opinions as accurately as possible by placing your mark on the most appropriate box.

Variable	Item	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree
Perception of remorse	I think white people show/have shown remorse about historical mistreatments about African Americans					
Guilt attribution	All Whites should feel guilty about the past treatments of African Americans					
Distrust	Given all the mistreatments of African Americans in the past, I have difficulty in trusting whites					
Reparations	I believe whites ought to acknowledge the past mistreatments by making reparations					
Need of acknowledgement	I believe whites need to acknowledge the past mistreatments of African Americans					
Use of religion	My religious beliefs have helped me forgive Whites.					
Perception of seeking forgiveness	Whites have difficulty seeking forgiveness from African Americans					
Perception of apology	Whites owe African Americans an apology					
Attribution of mistreatments as a human mistake	I find it easier to forgive whites when I think that mistreatment of minorities existed throughout the world history					
Group forgiveness	African Americans have forgiven whites for the past mistreatments					

Individual Forgiveness As an individual to what extent you have forgiven White Americans for the past mistreatments

Not at all trying to forgive complete forgiveness

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B. Ergüner-Tekinalp was born in Ankara, Turkey in 1977. She received her BS and Masters degrees from Middle East Technical University, Turkey and PhD from Auburn University, USA. She is an assistant professor in the Counselor Education Program at Drake University. Her research interests include multicultural counseling and social justice counseling, intergroup conflict and positive psychology.