



Evanston's Reparation Program: Local Opinions

Andres Fernandez, Stephanie Adebaworin and Taylor Darks
Florida State University, Department of Sociology



Abstract

The following details the findings of a research project on Evanston's reparation program. Evanston is a suburb near Chicago which proudly identifies itself as a "Progressive City." Recently, the city council made national news by being one of the first cities in the country to pass a race-based reparations program. The innovative program utilizes the revenue made from cannabis sales to provide descendants of slaves or generational Black Evanstonians with funds to help them pay for housing.

This project will provide statistics and a summary on the opinions, concerns, and comments that the citizens of Evanston have regarding the passing of the reparations program, its shortcomings, and its positive attributes. All these clusters of information seek to build a robust and nuanced report on the reparation program in Evanston in order to better understand it and provide avenue for improvement amongst similar future projects.



Background

- Evanston, Illinois recently started disbursing the payments for their reparations program initiative.
- Multiple Evanstonian Citizens were interviewed on their opinions of the program and whether it is sufficient in addressing the historical racial injustices in the city.
- The following are case studies that illustrate some of the most common local opinions regarding the reparations program
- The poster will go over research regarding whitelash and its correlation to some of the concerns voiced by Evanstonians while they were being interviewed on the program.

Methods

- For the purposes of this project, we will be researching Evanstonians' opinions on the race-based reparations programs that is currently taking place in their city.
- Although the interviewees are mostly African-American, the interview process was open to any citizens of Evanston that were willing to give their opinion on the success or failure of this program.
- Interviews were held in zoom and recorded via Otter.AI, a service that makes computer generated scripts of recorded conversations.
- From there, scripts were polished & coded in Nvivo to collect qualitative data on Evanstonians' opinions
- From this database, we were able to draw simplified conclusions about the public opinion on this program.



Results

- After doing a qualitative data analysis on 4 interviewees through Nvivo, we were able to compile common themes from the interviews to get a better idea of where Evanstonians stand on the reparations program
- Some of the most common themes we got from our interviews is that the reparations program is either not enough or too bureaucratic.
- The interviews also included sentiments against the use of cannabis sales taxes to fund the program as some older black residents saw it as feeding into black stereotypes.
- Overall, the interviewees had reserved views of the program with a positive undertone. The clear overarching sentiment was that the program was a moral obligation and a good start. However, most felt it was too little or too inefficient at abridging the systemic racial gap.
- Although our Research mentor's dissertation is not complete, she hopes to make a more robust qualitative data compilation from ALL the interviewees

Further Discussion

- Although the qualitative data on this program is very limited, listening to the concerns of Evanstonians can help policy-makers craft better reparation programs in the future.
- It is also important to point out that a lot of the negative opinions on this program were based on its funding source or the fact that it was too limited.
- In the future, it could be necessary to study whitelash or moral opposition to a reparation program in order to more effectively craft policy that enjoys broad public support.



Acknowledgements

A special thanks to **Taylor Darks** for being such a great mentor throughout this process and guiding us to be better researchers.
We also want to extend a special thanks to our UROP Leaders for making sure we delivered the best poster possible during this Symposium.

References

