

Black Lives Matter: The Wellbeing Cost of Racial Shootings in the United States

This paper discusses the impact of racial shootings on Black well-being in the United States between 2008 and 2015. Using data from the Gallup Daily Polls, we first reveal a sudden and persistent drop in life satisfaction recorded by Blacks compared to similar Whites from early 2013. There is no similar effect for Hispanic individuals, and results are robust to the inclusion of state, time effects and household characteristics. To explain this finding, we exploit within-state variation in public and media awareness of police-race interactions, following the Trayvon Martin case in 2012. Contrary to other groups, internet searches and reported cases of arrest-related deaths have a strong negative well-being effect within the Black community that can explain up to half the Black-White decline after 2013.

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Abstract

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Keywords: subjective well-being, racial discrimination, social identity, police violence

JEL Classification: A13, J7, I3

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