



## **BlackEconomics.org**

“There is no Precedent”

Black Americans often speak of Black-White economic (income and wealth) equality in the US in a very matter-of-fact tone. The reality is that there is no precedent for this laudable goal; it has never been achieved.

Specifically, in recorded human history, a Black racial minority group has never risen to economic equality with a White racial majority group within a leading world power. Here we are not referring to the rise and recognition of a selected few of the racial minority group, but to the wholesale rise of the group.

Clearly, at this point, Black Americans are in no position to effect a rise by leveraging economic or military means.

Of course there is the Declaration of Independence, which states that “all men are created equal.” The problem is that, to be effective, laws must be enforced. Unfortunately, the nation is not now, and may never be, in a position to extend the volume of resources required to enforce laws and ensure that Blacks are afforded every opportunity to rise to economic parity with Whites.

Then there is the power of prayer. In a religious context, Blacks often equate their condition to that of the Biblical Hebrews in Egypt, and mention how God aided the Children of Israel. However, that narrative has the Hebrews exiting Egypt—not achieving economic parity with the Egyptians.

In a 2006 scholarly article entitled “The Economics of Identity,” three Black economists, William Darity, Patrick Mason, and James Stewart, argue that it is not anomalous that Whites operate as racialists and prefer affiliates who are similar in every respect. Interestingly, Yale University researchers Karen Wynn and Paul Bloom told “60 Minutes” late last year that this appears to be an inborn characteristic. We all like, and will support, those who look, act, talk, and think as we do. This evidence buttresses the idea that Whites are likely to continue to provide economic support to other Whites over Blacks going forward.

Consequently, we are perplexed concerning why Black Americans expect White Americans to facilitate our rise.

Moreover, taking the over 40 million Black Americans as a nation within the US nation, developmental economists must argue as they do in a North and South nations context that there are many reasons why Black America may never achieve economic convergence with White America.

Therefore, it is time that we ask a fundamental question: If Black-White economic equality is outside of the realm of possibility, to what should Black America aspire?

This is not to say that Black-White economic equality is absolutely unachievable. However, given history, culture, and economic reality, it does not appear to be a reasonable and realizable goal.

If we wish to remain adamant about demanding Black-White economic equality, then we should be able to present plausible assumptions and describe realistic scenarios within which this equality can be achieved. Such a description is not now in the public domain.

Otherwise, when considered seriously, Black-White economic equality appears as a pipe dream—with little prospect for establishing a precedent for this laudable goal.

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