



## **BlackEconomics.org**

### **“More on Reparations: Recognizing Reality | Reassessing Requirements”**

Someone said: “It is all about context.” Indeed! If we struggle with our reality, then we will not have the bearings to establish proper future targets.

For example, several years ago, we asked four top Black American economists, “What is the most pressing problem facing Black America over the next 20 years?” Three out of the four said that “education” was the variable that should be focused on most. Did they not know that Black Americans already exceeded White Americans in annual increases in the “average years of schooling?” Is it that we need to increase our acquisition of education, or is it that we need to modify the type of education that we receive? We think more so the latter than the former.

Similarly, it is common knowledge in Black areas of influence, as highlighted by my colleague Prof. Patrick Mason, that we must work twice as hard and be twice as good as White Americans just to keep from falling further behind on almost all important fronts. The question that you should ask is, “Why should we only motivate ourselves to work twice as hard and/or to be twice as good?”

Given that Black Americans lag White Americans on most socio-economic indicators, and given our interest in improving our outcomes on these indicators, then shouldn’t we desire to overshoot so that we not only measure up to, but exceed, White American outcomes.

Today among Black economists, the most important data point that is cited over and over again is the Black-White Wealth Gap. The magnitude of the gap cited varies from 9-to-12 times; i.e., the median White household has 9-to-12 times more wealth than the median Black household. Now if we want to overcome this gap, and if we know that we are at a comparative disadvantage going into the effort (needing to work twice as hard and be twice as good), then we should plan on quadrupling or more our efforts. Given that America is a racist society, shouldn’t Black Americans accelerate our wealth building until we are furlongs ahead of White wealth—knowing that Whites will do everything within their power to recreate the wealth gap if it is ever eliminated?

Which brings us to an important point. The preceding paragraph might seem logical, but it presents some impossible and flawed conclusions. A quadrupling of our efforts may lead to a quadrupling of our wealth, but that will not be sufficient to overtake White wealth. How can our wealth ever exceed White wealth by furlongs? White Americans are not going to stand by idly on wealth creation and permit Black Americans to catch up and exceed their wealth. What will be required to overtake this ever forward-moving target?

Have you recognized reality? Did the foregoing lead you to reassess Black America's requirements? We hope so.

Accordingly, we hope that you can now formulate a clearer vision of what your actions should be in response to your reality.

You should recognize that it really is not possible in the current American context for Black America to catch up, let alone exceed, White America on most socio-economic fronts—unless the world turns upside down.

Therefore, our logical choice is to plan on exiting the American game and initiating our own game where we define the rules and establish the indicators. This is especially warranted knowing that we can all be better off in a new Black American game than in the current American game.

Reparations could be a tool that assists us in achieving this outcome. But to use that tool wisely and effectively, we must recognize our reality and reassess our requirements.

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