



## **BlackEconomics.org**

### **“The Economics of Fear”**

During Black History Month 2014, we prepared a commentary entitled, [“Fear May Cause Discrimination.”](#) While that commentary is meaningful, it does not reflect the fullness of the relationship between discrimination motivated by anti-Black racism—the latter being rooted in fear. Sometimes, the second time is the charm, and we try to reach the core of this topic with added insight this second time around.

Lay persons and academicians alike examine anti-Black racism and the discrimination that it motivates and perpetuates. Since the latest onset of police lynching of Black males and females (e.g., Michael, Tamir, and Sandra) several years back, racism and discrimination have been front and center in the media. There is no dearth of discussions concerning “what” has transpired historically. And we must admit that analysis of this topic has included explanations of “why” anti-Black racism and discrimination persist. The whys have included the White Supremacy mindset, Whites’ desire to maintain an economic advantage over Blacks, and implicit bias (i.e., psychological triggers that cause Whites to dislike/hate Blacks and to respond, nearly unconsciously, with adverse actions against Blacks).

These whys explain some aspects of anti-Black racism and the related discrimination, but they are incomplete. One’s mindset can change. One who has amassed a comfortable and nearly insurmountable economic wealth advantage is likely to remove his knee from his opponent’s economic neck after some time. And one can take precautions to prevent psychological triggers from generating reflex adverse action against another. Therefore, all of the whys that have been offered do not explain fully why anti-Black racism and the related discrimination persist, are reinvented continuously, and show no sign of relenting.

Which why is missing? Which why can complete the explanation? There may be others, but the why that we arrive at for a second time is fear. As we indicated in 2014, White Americans fear Black Americans because of the prospect of retribution for the dastardly deeds that Whites have wrought against Blacks historically. Would you not fear retribution if you had done to a people what Whites have done to Black Americans? Efforts are ongoing to cloud the history and to persuade Blacks to forget about the past. Also, efforts are ongoing to make Blacks fear Whites so that Blacks will not even entertain a thought of retribution against Whites (e.g., police brutality; media portrayals that are essentially devoid of images of Blacks exacting justice from Whites; and educational systems that do not teach Blacks to seek retribution for the harm that has been, and is being, done by Whites). It is this fear that drives Whites to exhibit anti-Black racism and

discrimination with ceaseless vigilance. Again, if you had done to Black Americans what Whites have done, then would you not exhibit similar behavior?

The foregoing explanation of why anti-Black racism and discrimination exist and persist should cause Black Americans to conclude that prospects are bleak for a complete, amicable, and permanent resolution of Black-White tensions in America. In other words, Blacks are not likely to be accepted fully by Whites and vice-versa. Because of fear, White Supremacy will not disappear; Black-White economic equality will not be achieved; and implicit bias will not be overcome. Therefore, the best option for the nation is to permit Blacks and Whites to go their separate ways.

Now that a clear solution for the anti-Black racism and discrimination problem has been identified, it seems reasonable that future Black History Months should reflect wisdom of the ages. That is, a people with wisdom write their history in advance and then take action to achieve it. In this case, our history should show a new and thriving Black nation that is free, once and for all, from anti-Black racism and discrimination caused by White fear.

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