

If “Black Wall Street” existed today, how would it impact African Americans?

If Black Wall Street existed today, it would have made a difference in the African American community in many ways. First, there would be more colleges, foundations, charities, etc. founded by African Americans where their contributions would lead to more opportunities for other aspiring black youth. Education would be paramount and better jobs would bring wealth and lead to more assets. African Americans would have possessions that increase in value like homes, land, businesses, stocks, real estate, etc. Tangibles that give you money through the years and assets that you can pass down the generations from family to family. Also, there would be more African American representation like black doctors and lawyers. However, this is not the case as in 2018, where only 2.6% were black male physicians and 2.8% were black female physicians (Preidt).

Further, if Black Wall Street existed today, it would make the African American Community stronger and more unified. Today the community is disjointed and weakened. It is weakened because there is high black on black violence and incarceration; blacks are arrested five times the rate of whites. Disjointed because there is colorism, which is prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone. There is misogynoir, which is ingrained prejudice against black women even in African American culture. For example, when African American women go to the doctors, they are often ignored. In fact, black women are more than three times as likely to die giving birth than white women (University of Maryland et al). This occurs because the culture thinks black women have a higher pain tolerance than white women.

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Black women are seen as invincible forces. This idea is referred to as the strong black woman trope.

This ideology is toxic and draining and makes me physically nauseous as an African American young woman. Who is there to help us if everyone thinks we are so strong? It can feel like there is nobody. The abandonment of black women has aided in the Strong Black Woman Trope and created the baby mama culture. The term is historically derogatory and places a stigma around single black mothers. If African Americans were able to prosper throughout history, then forces would be in effect to make sure these dynamics would never exist in African American Culture.

If Black Wall Street Existed today, perhaps others would acknowledge how white privilege works. Take for example, Time magazine's newsfeed in 2015 that published a study, "Racism is Real," that showed a white man and a black man both going to apply for a job, buy a car, and buy a house. The black man doesn't get an interview while the white man does; he is charged more for his car; and he is not shown a house that a realtor happily shows the white man. These advantages are very real. And it's frustrating when those who benefit from these advantages deny this reality and actively keep it alive. But it's our reality whether it goes ignored. And each of these kinds of encounters wounds the soul (Perkins, 89).

In conclusion, Black Wall Street was torn down before it could ever reach its full potential and the lasting effects still haunt us today. The real question is what can we do to change lives and communities for the better considering racial inequality? This requires humility and humility causes people to listen.... And when I listen, I find more changes come through relationships (Perkins, 129). I think you must look at how African American trailblazers have transformed communities through forging relationships. In John Perkin's later book, *One Blood*, he describes how conversations need to take place to close the racial divide and heal the generational trauma caused by racism. There exist centers where people gather today in our

Sierra Saylor

nation that have begun this hard work. Workshops exist where black and white people come together and can agree on inoffensive vocabulary so talks can be sustained (Perkins, 95). Strategies have been implemented to allow participants to endure tough and emotional conversations. A common understanding pervades these meetings that as Americans we do whatever it takes to extend our hands and hearts to each other. No one is better off when another suffers. If Black Wall Street existed today, then it would have been because of people who decided to come together and do whatever it takes to stand in solidarity against the ethnic hatred and indifference in our country.

Works Cited

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