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# EPOCH TIMES

## Are Lockdowns Racist?

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America's respective political, health, educational, media, sports, and corporate establishments tell us black lives matter. Puzzlingly, for the past year they prescribed, enacted, enforced, and cheered on economic and educational [lockdowns](#) that devastated black America. Worse still, the lockdowns will wreak havoc upon black lives, especially, for decades to come.

The lockdowns were illogical and nonsensical when they were enacted a year ago. Their continuation in many states, and their rinse-and-repeat use in many other states, demonstrates the triumph, at best, of hope over experience.

Yet, the socioeconomic tsunami the lockdowns visited upon black Americans begs a far more sinister question. Are lockdowns an instrument of modern-day [racism](#)?

While the lockdowns cost the nation trillions of dollars, black America bore the human and financial brunt, as the costs inflicted upon black communities were especially grievous.

As Harvard Medical School's Martin Kulldorff recently [wrote](#), "Lockdowns protected the Zoom class while throwing low-income workers under the bus." As black Americans are overrepresented in the lowest-paying service and domestic jobs, they have been financially run over more frequently and sustained far worse injuries than white Americans.

Blacks were furloughed and laid off at higher rates than whites. Blacks have been, on average, slower to be rehired than whites. Hence, blacks are also much more likely to remain unemployed, and for much longer periods of time.

As the Associated Press [reports](#), a recent [poll](#) from the Associated Press–NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that, compared with whites, blacks are "more likely to have experienced job and other income losses during the pandemic, and those who have lost income are more likely to have found themselves in deep financial holes."

Overall, "54 percent of black Americans have lost some form of household income during the pandemic, including job losses, pay cuts, cuts in hours, and unpaid leave, compared with 45 percent of white Americans." And about 4 in 10 black Americans have been "unable to pay a bill in the last month, compared with just 2 in 10 white Americans."

An Economic Policy Institute [report](#) found "black workers are less able to weather such a storm because they have fewer earners in their families, lower incomes, and lower liquid wealth than white workers." Consider that for every \$1 of wealth that a white household has, a black household has a paltry 10 cents.

Consequently, black Americans face eviction from their homes and apartments at a much higher rate than whites. Ditto for car repossessions.

According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the lockdown devastated black-owned businesses. The study ([pdf](#)) found 41 percent of black-owned businesses have disappeared.

Population-wide declines in mental health tragically follow economic declines as reliably as the night follows day. New research published in January 2021 in the [Journal of Public Health](#) examined post-lockdown depression and anxiety in America during the pandemic.

The researchers found that the rate of serious mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, has more than doubled. Notably, anxiety- and depression-related deaths among black Americans spiked during the pandemic.

A year ago, economists Audrey Redford and Thomas Duncan's article, "[Drugs, suicide, and crime: Empirical estimates of the human toll of the shutdown](#)," published by the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER), cited the vast empirical literature on the human toll of economic devastation.

The article subsequently forecast [over 100,000](#) so-called "excess deaths" (that is, deaths at a rate above what is normally expected) due to drug overdoses, suicide, alcoholism, homicide, and untreated depression as a result of business and school closures, halted non-COVID medical services, mandatory human separation, and general depression, writes the AIER's Jeffrey A. Tucker in a follow-up article.

Late last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) further confirmed the prescience of the study, as the CDC documented the terrible toll that the lockdowns had taken on human life. The CDC found that these [excess deaths](#) disproportionately ravaged minority communities.

In other words, these deaths occurred as an indirect, unintended consequence of a myriad of political decisions and policy prescriptions related to the pandemic

that, for example, reduced utilization of health care resources, such as cancer screenings and routine checkups.

Educational lockdowns also have disproportionately harmed black parents and black students. School closures made it incredibly hard for black women to remain employed, as they are more than [three times](#) more likely to be single heads of households compared to white women.

While school closures hurt black parents, and did little to stem the pandemic, crucially they have stunted black students' intellectual development, retarded their socialization, reduced their future incomes, and lowered their life expectancy.

[World Bank](#) economists estimate such financial “learning loss” will reduce the average affected students' lifetime earnings by 5 percent, but the average black student will experience a [far greater](#) reduction in earnings.

Last Friday's open letter ([pdf](#)) from over 750 physicians to California Gov. Gavin Newsom described the humanitarian crisis among that state's student population:

“In our hospitals and clinics, we are bearing witness to devastating health impacts from prolonged school closures in children. Our centers have seen an increase in mental health visits .... These include increases in anxiety, depression, and suicidality. ... [W]e are seeing higher rates of obesity, hypertension, and fatty liver disease which will have long-term impacts on children's health.”

The physicians write that, “[T]he biggest negative impacts are on English language learners and children living in poverty.” More than one in four black children in California live in poverty compared with one in eight white children, according to [some measures](#).

Other [researchers estimate](#) the school closures will shorten American students' lives by around 6 months on average. The average black student, who will end up less educated, and subsequently poorer and less healthy, than his or her average white counterpart, will have an especially shorter lifespan.

It's hard to believe that the American establishment perpetuates such demonstrably failed, anti-black policies because its members are racists at heart. On the contrary, most socially and economically privileged whites, who constitute the lockdowns' chief proponents, adherents, and cheerleaders, are keen to signal publicly their devout anti-racism.

Instead, it's probable they betray a soft bigotry. Throughout 2020, elite white support for lockdowns was tacit acceptance of black Americans as collateral damage in what became a larger, and ultimately successful, effort to ensure a fearful, cowed populace sheepishly returned power to the nation's rightful leaders: the (bipartisan) political establishment.

Whatever the political establishment's failings, its opponents are wrong about at least one thing: The political establishment doesn't share an ideological affinity for socialism. Rather, its chosen "-ism" is statism, which is the belief in concentrating extensive, often decisive, economic, political, and social controls in government at the cost of individual liberty.

Statism permeates the political establishment's worldview despite its disastrous, globally documented unintended consequences. Whether the goal is wealth creation, educational advancement, environmental protection, national security, or military conquest, the political establishment's default position is that the state knows best.

In concert with private sector behemoths, this now-omnipotent band triumphantly marches to the beat of the very statist drum that perpetuates its

power. The lockdowns are Exhibit A in how the political establishment cements its power through statism.

Such policies are designed to expand the proportion of Americans directly and indirectly dependent upon a metastasizing state—as well as upon a murderers' row of state-approved private actors—for their education, health, news, livelihood, geographic mobility, and physical security.

The good news is that, in fact, black lives do matter to the political establishment, and to the American establishment writ large. The bad news is that, on the evidence of the past year of lockdowns, those same black lives simply don't matter enough.

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