



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on February 23, 2016

## Paranoid Politics

Amid all the media analyses of the prospects of each of the candidates in both political parties, there is remarkably little discussion of the validity — or lack of validity — of the arguments these candidates are using.

It is as if what matters this election year is the fate of a relative handful of people — currently seven — running for their respective parties' nominations. Meanwhile, the fate of the 320 million Americans who are going to be affected by the outcome of this year's election fades into the background.



The fact that Hillary Clinton's election prospects, for example, depend on her ability to get the black vote has been talked about in the media numerous times. But what about the fate of millions of black people, and how that will be affected by the way Hillary Clinton is trying to get their votes?

Her basic pitch to black voters is that they have all sorts of enemies, and that blacks need her to protect them, which she is ready to do if they vote for her. In short, Hillary's political fate depends on spreading fear and, if possible, paranoia.

Similar attempts to get the votes of women are based on conjuring up enemies who are waging a "war on women," with Hillary again cast in the role of someone ready to come to their rescue, if they will give her their votes.

In both cases, rhetoric and repetition take the place of hard evidence. The closest thing to evidence being offered is that the average income of blacks is not the same as the average income of whites, and the average income of women is not the same as the average income of men.

But the average incomes of people in their twenties is usually lower than the average income of people in their forties — and by a greater amount than the income difference between women and men, or the income difference between blacks and whites. Does that mean that middle-aged people are enemies of young adults?

In countries around the world, and for centuries of recorded history, people living up in the mountains have usually been poorer than people living on the land below. Does this mean that people in the lowlands have somehow been robbing mountain people? Or does it mean that the circumstances of people living in mountains have usually been less promising than the circumstances of others?

If poverty among blacks is due to whites, why has the poverty rate among black married couples been in single digits every year since 1994, despite far higher poverty rates among other blacks? Do most white employers even know — or care — which blacks are married?

When the imprisonment rate of blacks with a college education is a fraction of the imprisonment rate of other blacks, does that mean that white cops check out the education of blacks before they decide to arrest them?



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Or does it mean that blacks who have chosen one way of life have very different prospects than those who have chosen a very different way of life — as is true among whites, Asians, Hispanics and others?

Economic differences between women and men are not wholly due to personal choices, since only women have babies, and it is usually mothers who take time out from the job market to raise them.

When women work fewer hours per year than men, and do not work continuously for as many years as men, how surprised should we be that the sexes have different incomes on average?

Anyone who is being serious — as distinguished from being political — would have to take many factors into account before saying that male-female income differences, or black-white differences, are due to people with identical qualifications and experience being paid differently.

Any number of studies, including studies by female scholars, have shot down the oft-repeated claim that women are paid less than men with identical work qualifications. But that will not stop that same bogus claim from being made repeatedly this election year.

What about blacks, women or others who believe the political hype? Will that help them improve their lives, or will it be another counterproductive distraction for them and another polarization of society that helps nobody, except those who seeking votes? As for the media, they are covering the political contests, not the effects of the lies generated in these contests.

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