



## **BlackEconomics.org**

### **“Fear May Cause Discrimination”**

Consider the following concept. If you fear someone, then you probably don't trust them. The Nobel Prize winning economist Kenneth Arrow goes further: He concluded that, if you don't trust someone, then you will not transact with them. Consequently, you may very well engage in discriminatory practices against them.

In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and with expansive wealth and income gaps vis-à-vis Black Americans, White Americans continue to show their fear of Black Americans.

Under these circumstances, why should Whites fear Blacks? Mainly because of current and past history. American History is filled with violent actions by Whites to oppress Blacks. That history is also filled with violent actions by Blacks to extricate themselves from oppressive situations.

The fact that Whites continue to hold the upper economic hand in America equates to economic oppression of Blacks. Therefore, it is reasonable that Whites fear that Blacks will ultimately respond to that economic oppression with violent actions to reduce the oppressive inequality.

This sounds interesting, but what is the evidence that this is all true?

The truth can be found in many places, but we limit our case to two statistics in this analysis.

What are the two most important functional aspects of the American system?

First of all, humans cannot survive long without water. Second, given the nature of the modern American system, electric power is essential. Take these two resources away, and the entire system goes caput.

What does this have to do with Whites fearing Blacks?

The proof is in the extent to which Blacks are allowed to participate in the occupations that are responsible for providing water and power in the US.

As you know, Blacks comprise just over 13% of the US population. However, according to the American Community Survey, which is conducted by the Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce, Black males comprise just 8.7% and 6.1% of the “Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators” and the “Power plant operators, distributors, and dispatchers” occupations, respectively. Black females comprise less than 1% of the two occupations,

respectively. It stands to reason that Blacks' severe underrepresentation in these occupations may be due to fear that causes job discrimination.

What the data don't allow us to determine is how many Blacks are directly involved in the provision of water and power to the American public. In other words, although Blacks are accounted for in the aforementioned occupations, we may be even more limited in our inclusion in the core aspect of these occupations: Water system and power plant operators.

Given the importance of water and power systems in the US, and given the history of oppression and violence in the nation, doesn't it make sense for Whites to limit the number of Blacks working in occupations that supply these critical resources? Access to the systems that provide these critical resources is a direct path to turning the society topsy turvy.

What does this all mean?

It means that the well-founded fear that Whites harbor may ultimately be realized because of the continued economic oppression of Blacks and because Blacks are not excluded completely from the occupations just discussed. At the same time, it means that Blacks should work harder to become members of these occupations so that we can benefit from the above average compensation that these occupations provide, and to protect our community should Whites seek to impose pain on our community through water and power systems.

Above all, what it means is that oppression, especially economic oppression, should be fully dismantled. Otherwise, fear will govern the lives of Blacks and Whites alike far into the future.

B.B. Robinson  
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