

Why Do Some Succeed?

By Philip Carl Salzman

In Canada and widely in the West, our greatest values today are “social justice” and “diversity.” Social justice has nothing to do with individuals, but is about “collective rights”¹ of categories of people defined by race, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, etc. The argument is that social justice means that members of each category should have the same representation in all organizations of government, education, and industry as their percentage of the population. For example, Scots are 13% of the Canadian population, so they should be represented by 13% of the doctors, lawyers, professors, business executives, MLAs, MPs, and Ministers of the Government. If certain categories of people are underrepresented², it is assumed and understood that their underrepresentation is due to discrimination. So, if Scots are only 10% of doctors, someone, it is believed, is anti-Scot and blocking them from their full participation in medicine. The solution to the problem according to “social justice” theory is “diversity” and “inclusion,” which means admitting, hiring, or providing benefits to underrepresented races, genders, sexualities, and ethnicities.

For example, Indigenous Canadian First Nations individuals are underrepresented among students, professors, and administrators in universities, so there are now major programs to increase the numbers of First Nations individual in universities.³ So too, females are underrepresented in STEM fields, and there are major programs to recruit female students and hire female professors in STEM.⁴ These programs are mandated from the Canadian Government on down, with threats to cut off funds if university personnel are not sufficiently “diverse.”⁵

The general objection to such admission and hiring preferences that places and posts should be awarded on the basis of merit, and that the objective of our institutions should be excellence or at least competence, is dismissed as white male supremacy. Ideas of merit and excellence are, it is currently believed, covers for discrimination against females, people of colour, and gays, lesbians, etc. The argument that more competent candidates of unfavoured “overrepresented” categories are passed over in favour of less competent “underrepresented” candidates of preferred categories is allegedly justified because “social justice” is each category represented according to its percentage of the general population.

However, the question of overrepresented categories of people has not been addressed by “social justice” theorists or “equity and inclusion” officers. Although, as mentioned, there has been a hue and cry about the underrepresentation of females in STEM,⁶ no attention has been given to the fact that females are highly overrepresented in relation to their percentage of the population in university students and graduates: 60 percent female vs. 40 percent male across North America. The social sciences, humanities, education, social

¹ <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0198290918.001.0001/acprof-9780198290919-chapter-3>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4521729/>

³ <https://fcpp.org/2018/03/23/official-racism-in-our-universities/>

⁴ <https://fcpp.org/2018/07/11/toxic-feminism/>

⁵ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-to-pull-research-chair-funding-unless-diversity-issue-addressed-at-universities/article34905004/>

<http://www.chairs-chaire.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/index-eng.aspx>

⁶ <https://www.aauw.org/research/why-so-few/>

work, and administration are overwhelmingly dominated by females. Is this because, to invoke the “social justice” explanation, universities discriminate against male students and in favour of female students? I believe that universities generally admit male and female students on the basis of merit, although I do not have strong evidence that this is the case. But I do think that the dominance of females in universities throws into question the explanation of discrimination against others, in this case males, on behalf of those who are “overrepresented” in a particular field of activity.

My guess, and there should be much more investigation into this, is that feminist faculties of education have trained feminist school teachers who are biased in favour of girls and against boys, who support and encourage girls and who marginalize and punish boys, and so turn boys against education.⁷ As the feeders to universities, schools have discriminated against and educationally disabled boys, and this is what accounts for the decline of male university students. But feminist faculties of education have no interest in the fate of boys.

While undergraduate students are most likely to be admitted on the basis of academic merit, the situation in the professorate is entirely different. The government and the universities themselves prioritize “diversity” over merit, and in consequence discriminate in favour of females, people of colour, First Nations, and gays and lesbians, as many of their employment ads make explicit.⁸ Straight white males, whatever their qualifications, are not being hired, and not being appointed to administrative positions. In this way, “social justice” negates academic credentials and merit.

Feminist advocates are vehement about the need for more and more females in academic, government, and business elites. The vast overrepresentation of men in occupations that are dirty and dangerous is not of interest to feminists. Apparently “social justice” has no problem with men doing dirty and dangerous jobs. In occupational fatalities, the 2011 American rate for men is 5.7 out of 100,000 employees, and for women is 0.7 out of 100,000.⁹ No interest has been shown for advancing “gender parity” for dangerous jobs; “social justice” apparently does not require it.

In certain professional sports, African Americans are vastly overrepresented. Although making up only 14% of the American population, African Americans make up 68% of the National Football League and 74.4% of the National Basketball Association.¹⁰ Over 100 African-Americans have played quarterback in the Canadian football league, a fact that we Canadians like to congratulate ourselves about.¹¹ Some lament about the lack of black head coaches, although black head coaches (8 out of 32 teams) are 25% of the coaches, almost double the percentage of blacks in the general population.¹² No one seems to think that the massive “overrepresentation” of African Americans in highly lucrative professional sports is a problem.

Are African Americans overrepresented in professional sports because whites and Asians are discriminated against? Whatever the reason that whites and Asians are “underrepresented,” professional sports does not discriminate against whites and Asians because of their race. Professional sports teams, although their audiences are majority white, are run on the basis of merit, because they want the best players and coaches so that they will win. Winning and losing is very evident in sports, unlike in university academics, where the consequences of choices are very slow to materialize, with decades needed to show the improvement or decline of departments and disciplines in academia. In professional sports, the choosers pay for their choices; in academia, they do not.

In 1975, with less than 1% of the general population, Asian American students at University of California

⁷ https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/11/16/boys-left-fail-school-attempts-help-earn-wrath-feminists-says/?fbclid=IwAR1Fp4bBuLhUtuHvpiBCI8H89EfZnNr0hchQoWLJh7vrkn_R1Fa7tBc876Y

⁸ <https://fcpp.org/2018/03/23/official-racism-in-our-universities/>

⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/2013/038.pdf>

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_players_in_professional_American_football
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_and_ethnicity_in_the_NBA

¹¹ <https://theundefeated.com/features/canadian-football-league-is-way-ahead-of-nfl-on-diversity-issues/>

¹² <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-18/nfl-diversity-report-shows-small-gains-for-black-coaches-gms>

Berkeley made up 16.1% of the freshman class. In 1983, Asian American students were 26.9 percent of the freshman class.¹³ In recent years, Berkeley has been around 45 percent Asian American.¹⁴ Ivy league universities have around 20 percent Asian American students.¹⁵ In 1970, Asian Americans made up less than one percent of the American population: .75 percent, but were 3.5 percent of the physicians.¹⁶ By 2013, Asian Americans, consisting of 4.8 percent of the general population, made up 7.5 percent of the family and general practice physicians, 15.3 of the general internists, 11.3 percent of the pediatricians, and 11.2 percent of primary care physicians.¹⁷

Has the statistical overrepresentation of Asian Americans been due to discrimination against whites, African Americans, and others? Clearly not; Asian Americans have succeeded because they have been academically competitive. If anything, Asian Americans today are discriminated against, as they have been more severely in the past, by Ivy League and other elite universities that require Asian American students to have much higher grades and scores than whites, Hispanics, and African Americans. This is why Ivy League universities, Harvard¹⁸ and Yale¹⁹ are currently being investigated for racial discrimination by the U.S. Government.²⁰

Jews make up one percent of the Canadian population.²¹ They have been highly overrepresented in professional and financial occupations, in the 1960s holding 7 percent of the positions, tied with Scots, followed by English at 6.4 percent, and Irish at 5.8 percent.²² Underrepresented were French, Dutch, German, Scandinavian, Italian, Asian, and First Nations. So too in the United States, with “achievement quotients” showing the multiples over the expected rate by population:

“There is a large overrepresentation of Jews in the professions, with an achievement quotient of 5.8 for psychiatrists, 4.0 for dentists, 3.8 for mathematicians, 3.7 for doctors, 3.4 for writers, 3.3 for lawyers, and 1.7 for architects. There is a disproportionate number of Jews on elite university faculties with an achievement quotient of 13.3 for law, 12.6 for sociology, 10.4 for economics, 9.6 for physics, 8.9 for political science, 8.1 for history, 7.4 for philosophy, and 7.4 for mathematics.

“Of the 200 American Nobel Prize winners, 62 (31%) were Jewish. Since Jews constitute about 2 percent of the American population, they have an achievement quotient of 10.”²³

So too in mathematics, music, literature, and various other fields.²⁴

Is this overrepresentation of Jews in prestigious posts a result of discrimination against Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.? Were Jews favoured? In fact, Jews have never been popular in North America, although they have been tolerated more than in most other places and times. Still, Jews were subject to discrimination. Indicative is the remark by the Canadian public servant in charge of immigration, in response to the plea to admit European Jews destined for the death camps: How many Jews should Canada admit? “None

¹³ <https://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1144&context=aalj>

¹⁴ https://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2008/04/admits_archival.shtml

¹⁵ <https://www.ivycollegeadmit.com/competitive-nature-college-admissions-asian-americans/>

¹⁶ <https://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1144&context=aalj>

¹⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5871929/>

¹⁸ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-30/doj-backs-asian-americans-in-harvard-discrimination-lawsuit>

¹⁹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-26/yale-says-it-too-is-under-doj-scrutiny-for-asian-american-bias>

²⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/us/affirmative-action-battle-has-a-new-focus-asian-americans.html>

²¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-003-x/2014001/section03/33-eng.htm>

²² https://www.amazon.ca/Vertical-Mosaic-Analysis-Social-Anniversary-ebook/dp/B00XCTWXJC/ref=sr_1_1?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1542998982&sr=1-1&keywords=the+vertical+mosaic

²³ https://www.amazon.ca/Chosen-People-Jewish-Intelligence-Achievement-ebook/dp/B0071Q8DDM/ref=sr_1_1?twi_kin_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1542998352&sr=8-1&keywords=The+chosen+people%3A+A+study+of+Jewish+intelligence+and+achievement

²⁴ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.2466/17.49.CP.3.8>

is too many.”²⁵ Nor were the Americans more welcoming of Jews during WWII. As well, in both the U.S. and Canada, Jews were barred from some employment, some neighbourhoods, and some private clubs. In certain periods, there was a restriction on the number of Jews allowed in Canadian Universities. With 25 percent of McGill enrolments being Jewish in 1924, McGill restricted Jewish enrolment to a 10% level between the late 1920s and the 1960s.²⁶ Whatever the reason for Jewish “overrepresentation” in the professions, sciences, and arts, it was not Jewish “privilege” or discrimination against non-Jews.

Is it really just, in aid of statistical “social justice,” to once again put restrictive quotas on Asian and Jews, so that members of “underrepresentative” categories can take their places? This is what in effect is happening when priority is given to gender and racial admissions and hiring. Those other than the preferred genders and races cannot compete for the places distributed according to gender and race rather than merit and achievement. Should all benefits be distributed according to percentages in the population? Should the Swedish Nobel Committee in the future distribute Nobel Prizes according to the representation of categories of people in the general population?

If the overrepresentation of females in universities, of African Americans in professional sports, of Asian Americans in universities and medicine, and of Jews in the professions and arts are not due to “privilege” and discrimination against others, can we continue to take for granted the “social justice” assertion that the overrepresentation of men and of whites in certain fields is due to male and white “privilege,” and the underrepresentation of other groups due to discrimination? I would suggest that without direct evidence and proof, the assumption that male or white overrepresentation is based on “privilege” and discrimination against others, is no more than anti-male and anti-white bigotry.

Let us leave aside the anti-democratic condemnation of the white majority, and ignore the fashionable anti-white racism that seems inherent in the “social justice” movement. The insistence that statistical overrepresentation is a result of oppression is the fevered expression of neo-marxist extremism. Consequently, the “social justice” injunctions that men should “step aside” in favour of women, and that whites should “mark their privilege” and remain silent, are no more than partisan attacks that favour some categories of people at the expense of others. And that is neither democratic nor egalitarian. If female university students, black football players, Jewish professionals, and Asian doctors are overrepresented because they have earned their positions, it seems likely, contrary to “social justice” theory, that whites—i.e. Scottish Canadians, English Canadians, German, Scandinavian, Ukrainian, Irish, and Italian Canadians et al—are overrepresented in some prestigious fields because they have earned their positions.

²⁵ https://www.amazon.ca/None-Too-Many-1933-1948-Collection-ebook/dp/B0735YHPT4/ref=sr_1_1?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1543002473&sr=1-1&keywords=none+is+too+many

²⁶ <http://imjm.ca/location/1565>

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