

Citation metadata

Author: Evangelia Tastsoglou
Date: Feb. 2002
From: The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology(Vol. 39, Issue 1)
Publisher: Canadian Sociological Association
Document Type: Book review
Length: 2,526 words

Main content

Article Preview :

MARTIN LONEY, The Pursuit of Division. Race, Gender, and Preferential Hiring in Canada. McGill-Queen's University Press, 400 p.

The main thesis of this book is that "preferential hiring" (the author's term for employment equity) has led to a "pursuit of division" in Canada. Loney places "preferential hiring" in the context of a political supremacy of group over individual rights in Canada which has also led, according to him, to ill-conceived multicultural policies and identity politics. All of the above have necessitated the abandonment of the merit principle and of the equality of opportunity objective. The beneficiaries of such policies are the government, for which it is much easier to manage an ethnically divided population, and women and other 'disadvantaged' groups, at the expense of young, able-bodied, white males who have no one to lobby on their behalf (with this author's book presumably being an exception). The purpose of the book is to expose the "fraudulent claims" and "shoddy research" that have propelled the "politics of grievance." In the long run a new politics of inclusion is necessary, according to the author, but this is beyond his book's scope. The author has a clearly conservative political agenda, and the book, divided into twelve chapters, is a provocative though repetitive critique of government policies on race, gender and equity I had problems with some of the author's interpretations and sometimes with his logic. Nevertheless, the book deserves to be taken seriously because it is well researched, well argued and has some very valid, though not new, criticisms of employment equity.

The first "fraudulent claim" that Loney wants to expose is that there is systemic discrimination against visible minorities in the labour market. Surely, there are concentrations of ethnic groups in certain segments of the labour market, he admits, surely there are income differences as a result, yet such differences are not based on group visibility, since a) there are wide variations among visible minority groups, and b) some of the non-visible minorities fare much worse than the visible ones in terms of group disadvantage. Such differences, according to Loney, are more due to language ability, recentness of arrival and possibly other factors unrelated to systemic discrimination. If there is no statistical evidence for systemic discrimination in employment, no remedial measures (read employment equity and diversity training) are needed. Even if, however, discrimination existed, employment equity would not be a fair or effective way to redress it for the following reasons, according to Loney: 1) contemporary immigrants who are the primary beneficiaries of employment equity do not come from the groups that were historically excluded; 2) the removal of discriminatory measures should be sufficient; 3) contemporary able-bodied white males should not pay a penalty for the "advantages" of previous generations; 4) evidence from around the world shows that preferential hiring policies have contributed to ethnic violence; and 5) the term "visible minorities" is arbitrary and often recognized by guideline-following government officials only. The "diversity training" industry, another presumably remedial measure against...

[Access from your library](#)

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

Source Citation

Source Citation

Tastsoglou, Evangelia. "The Pursuit of Division. Race, Gender, and Preferential Hiring in Canada. (Book Reviews/Comptes Rendus)." *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2002, p. 97+. Accessed 14 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A83667861

Explore

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

[Access from your library](#)

Footer

- [About](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)

BOOK REVIEW. In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America CATHERINE L. FISKt. When my Princeton roommates and I graduated from. You may not approve of the merits selected for, but gender and race don't hinder those who have them."5 Thus, she claims, "women have broken through the glass ceiling." The truth, according to that reviewer, is that women can have it all, so long as they make a lot of money and know how to spend it to have 3. Id. An Uphill Battle. Gender inequalities persist in all areas of social and economic life and across countries. Young women in OECD countries generally obtain more years of schooling than young men, but women are less likely than men to engage in paid work. Gaps widen with age, as motherhood typically has marked negative effects on gender pay gaps and career advancement. He argues that preferential hiring policies and a muddled multiculturalism leads to the continual assertion of the primacy of race even as the government officially opposes racial thinking. Loney discusses many up-to-date and high profile examples, including Bob Rae's preoccupation with skin and gender politics, Brian Mulroney's... Loney takes issue with popular attitudes toward race and gender, whereby to be born a woman or a member of a visible minority is to enter life at a disadvantage and therefore be entitled to compensatory provision. Arguing that social class not group membership determines life chances, he refutes the claims of those who detect systemic prejudice and discrimination and reap considerable public subsidy in return. Book Description: Loney takes issue with popular attitudes toward race and gender, whereby to be born a woman or a member of a visible minority is to enter life at a disadvantage and therefore be entitled to compensatory provision. It has become commonplace to describe Canada as a country characterized by profound racial and gender divisions. The proponents of preferential hiring policies claim that discrimination against visible minorities in Canada is pervasive. A review of the federal government's contribution to the debate over employment equity reveals a consistent pattern: statistical data are misrepresented; evidence challenging the assumptions on which preferential hiring is based is ignored; exaggeration is endemic.