

# What We Get Wrong About Pursuing Equal Outcomes

What happens when you suggest that someone's failure to get something they believe they deserve is due to widespread – even systemic – maliciousness?

Social malfunction.

African American economist [Thomas Sowell](#), in [Discrimination and Disparities](#), puts it this way:

*Those who seem to be promising an end to existing group disparities, as a result of whatever policies they advocate, may be promising what cannot be delivered, regardless of those policies. Moreover, the clash between numerical goals, fervently pursued, and the repeated frustrated attempts to reach those goals is not without social consequences. [Emphasis added]*

Sowell believes that political parties which offer a vision of society without group disparities are offering egalitarian utopia. It's unattainable.

Furthermore, equating justice with certain numerical outcomes for distinct groups has serious consequences. Those Sowell lists are familiar aspects of current culture:

*Among the dire consequences for society as a whole are widespread resentment, bitterness, disorder and violence on the part of those who have been told incessantly that they are 'entitled' to a demographically defined 'fair share' of what is produced, and that this 'fair share' is being denied to them by others who are guilty of maliciously keeping them and their loved ones down. [Emphasis added]*

Fruits of believing that individuals are entitled to “demographically defined fair shares” are everywhere. One of these is increased anxiety in the younger generation, who, like Greta Thunberg, are [demanding their fair share of the world in order to resolve their anxiety](#). Another fruit of this mindset is [distrust between the races](#). A third is evidenced in the collectivist ideologues producing [written manifestos](#) or [tweeted motives](#) before they shoot up a church or a school or a mall.

Sowell continues,

*Adam Smith declared ‘the good temper and moderation of contending factions’ to be ‘the most essential circumstance in the public morals of a free person.’ But **what good temper or moderation can be expected when a major segment of the population becomes convinced that ‘the system is rigged’ against them and morality is just a giant fraud?** That is when a society can fragment into mutually hostile groups and isolated individuals—something like Hobbes’ war of each. [Emphasis added]*

When “good temper” and “moderation” disappear, public courtesy goes with them. Cynicism of this rigged system then sets in, abolishing a common national allegiance and replacing it with [the threat of civil warfare](#) between tired groups.

In light of this, perhaps the best way to overcome widespread cynicism and promote national order begins with looking in the mirror. Do we decry appeals to systemic racism or the Deep State with similar nuance, or are we partial? Do we consider the elimination of private healthcare sustainable because of careful research, or the party line? Do we disagree with ideas, or do we dehumanize people?

How might we truly love our neighbor, and not merely the idea of our neighbor, as ourselves?