

## Beauty vs. brains: Why certain assets deemed more valuable than others?

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Five years ago, sociologist Catherine Hakim startled the world. She said that in addition to the three recognized personal assets (economic, cultural and social capital), individuals have a fourth asset — she called it erotic capital — that should be leveraged.

Her exhortation was particularly to women. A shallow assessment may declare that this tacitly endorses sleeping-your-way-to-the-top. But it's actually a provocative questioning of why the attribute of beauty should not be viewed in the same dispassionate way that the attribute of a college degree is.

Human endeavour is propelled by unfair edges.

How many white people do you see in the finals of the running events in any Olympics? Jon Entine, author of *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We're Afraid to Talk About It*, has highlighted that over the last seven Olympic men's 100m races, all 56 finalists have been not just of African, but of West African descent. East Africans have fared outstandingly in distance running, but poorly in sprints. Only two non-African runners have cracked the Top 500 among the best 100m times in history.

Should we petition the International Court of Justice at the Hague against Jamaican (who are of West African descent) sprinters?

The truth is that every single form of human endeavour relies on unfair edges, not just physical attributes like beauty or athletic ability. Each of us benefits from a few, but we still look down our noses upon some.

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