

2009

Historical Perspectives on Affirmative Action, Diversity and Multiculturalism in United States Higher Education

Kebba Darboe
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/greatplainssociologist>



Part of the [Regional Sociology Commons](#), and the [Rural Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Darboe, Kebba (2009) "Historical Perspectives on Affirmative Action, Diversity and Multiculturalism in United States Higher Education," *Great Plains Sociologist*: Vol. 20 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/greatplainssociologist/vol20/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Sociologist by an authorized editor of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact michael.biondo@sdstate.edu.



Historical Perspectives on Affirmative Action, Diversity and Multiculturalism in United States Higher Education

Kebba Darboe*

Abstract This paper examines the historical perspectives on affirmative action, diversity and multiculturalism in United States Higher Education. Affirmative action is a legal program that ensures that qualified and historically underrepresented groups, especially African Americans and women, are given preference in the hiring, promotion, and admission in colleges and universities. By contrast, diversity and multiculturalism are social constructions of reality. Diversity is an inclusion process designed to foster an environment where talents, uniqueness and differences of all people are respected and valued in schools or workplace situations. Multiculturalism is a movement that insists that American society has never been white, but always in fact multiracial and diverse. The changing demographics and the continuing potential for divisiveness will challenge our adaptability and ability to get along with each other. If we can, however, develop diversity and multicultural consciousness in ourselves, we will be much better prepared to meet these challenges and opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

“Effective participation by members of all racial and ethnic groups in the civic life of our Nation is essential if the dream of one Nation, indivisible, is to be realized” (Justice O’Connor, *Grutter v. Bollinger* 2003:1224). Five years later, Senator Barack Obama is elected as the first African American President of the United States. The preceding quotation spells out the purpose of this paper because it affirms the value of affirmative action, diversity, and multiculturalism in the United States of America. Topics such as affirmative action, diversity and multiculturalism are often flashpoints of social conflict. Affirmative action is a legal program that ensures that

* Kebba Darboe, Associate Professor and Interim Chair, Department of Ethnic Studies, Minnesota State University, 109 Morris Hall, Mankato, MN 56001; e-mail: kebba.darboe@mnsu.edu

qualified and historically underrepresented groups, especially African Americans and women are given preference in the hiring, promotion and admission in colleges and universities.

By contrast, diversity and multiculturalism are social constructions of reality with multiple elastic definitions. Diversity is an inclusion process designed to foster an environment where talents, uniqueness and differences of all people are respected and valued in schools or workplace situations. Multiculturalism is a movement that insists that American society has never been white, but always in fact multiracial and diverse.

A diversified workforce is built on three principles: affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, and diversity. Therefore, for higher education the most profound challenges are that of student admission to and retention in selective colleges and universities at undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs and achieving racial equality.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The United States of America has historically been a nation of immigrants. Since the 20th century, however, the population is becoming increasingly diverse not only in racial/ethnic composition but also in language, culture, and religion. From the establishment of the land grant colleges in the 1860s to the Serviceman's Readjustment Act or G.I. Bill of Rights in 1944 World War II to the Higher Education Act of 1965, United States public colleges and universities have embraced the idea that in educating college students for the world, it is necessary to bring people together from diverse backgrounds. It is also important for establishing a multicultural society in which new generations learn to overcome the prejudices they absorbed as children, while appreciating the unique talents that their peers bring to the classroom. By the year 2000, five out of six people in the job market will be people of color, female and immigrant (Johnson and Packer 1987). It is documented that by the year 2050, no racial or ethnic group will constitute a majority (American Psychological Association 1999). If

employers continue giving the most and best jobs for white males, the talents of a majority of the labor force will go untapped and our society will squander the vast human resources it possesses. As the world's most racially and ethnically diverse nation, and a nation founded on constitutional principles of freedom and equality, the United States is ideally positioned to advance if only it can overcome the scourge of discrimination. Affirmative action, diversity, and multiculturalists policies are indispensable in that effort.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

During much of U.S. history, a combination of slavery, segregation, and voting restrictions have been used to exclude racial minorities especially African Americans from access to equal economic, political and educational opportunities. Consequently, the conceptual recognition of the need to take affirmative or positive legal action to redress discrimination's impact has been around since the Civil War. Originally, civil rights programs were enacted during the Reconstruction period from 1865 to 1877 to help African Americans become full citizens of the United States. For instance, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1865, made slavery illegal; the Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1866, guarantees equal protection under the law and granted citizenship to African Americans; and the Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, forbids racial discrimination in access to voting (Sullivan 2005). The 1866 Civil Rights Act guarantees every citizen the same right as is enjoyed by white citizens.

These gains, however, were stripped away by the Jim Crow era, epitomized by the Plessy v. Ferguson case to reinforce segregation laws. In the 1896 Plessy case, the Supreme Court upheld a "separate but equal" doctrine that proved to be anything but equal for African Americans. The decision marked the end of the post-Civil War reconstruction era as Jim Crow laws characterized by racial segregation spread across the South. In the 1950 case, Sweatt v.

Painter, the "separate but equal" doctrine of racial segregation established by the 1896 Plessy case was successfully challenged. Heman Sweatt, a black man, was denied admission to the University of Texas, School of Law on the grounds that the Texas State Constitution outlawed integrated education. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed the lower court's decision, arguing that separate schools failed to measure up because of quantitative differences in facilities between white and black law schools. The justices contended that access to legal education and profession must be inclusive of talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity so that they can succeed in America (Grutter v. Bollinger 2003). It was, however, the 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education that finally overturned Plessy v. Ferguson. The victory in the Brown case contributed immensely to the civil rights movement because it ended legal segregation and motivated African Americans to fight for justice from the courts (Dierenfield 2008).

The concept of affirmative action was reborn on June 25, 1941, when President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, which outlawed segregationist hiring policies by defense-related industries that held federal contracts. Roosevelt's signing of this order was a direct result of efforts by black trade union leader, A. Philip Randolph. During 1953 President Harry S. Truman's Committee on Government Contract Compliance urged the Bureau of Employment Security to affirmatively implement the policy of nondiscrimination.

Successive Presidents, under pressure from the African American community and civil rights advocates, continued the effort to increase minority employment opportunities and end job discrimination. President Kennedy used the term "affirmative action" in a 1961 civil rights speech, and issued Executive Order 10925, requiring not only that federal contractors pledge non-discrimination but that they "take affirmative action to ensure" equal opportunity (Schaefer 2008). The actual phrase "affirmative action" was first used in President Lyndon Johnson's 1965

Executive Order 11246, which requires federal contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." In 1967, Johnson expanded the Executive Order to include women. Other equal protection laws passed to make discrimination illegal were the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title II and VII of which forbid racial discrimination in "public accommodations" and race and sex discrimination in employment, respectively; and the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed by U.S. Congress, and it outlawed literacy tests and intimidation of blacks at the polls and enforced the Fifteen Amendment (Dierenfield 2008). Additionally, the Selma to Montgomery (Alabama) march in 1965 led by Martin Luther King Jr. pressured U.S. Congress to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and employment, was the first modern legislation to address these barriers. A section of the act known as Title VII, which specifically banned discrimination in employment, laid the groundwork for the subsequent development of affirmative action. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance became important enforcement agencies for affirmative action. In 1962, James Farmer, founder of the Congress of Racial Equality, held a meeting with then vice president Lyndon B. Johnson. Farmer proposed "a policy of 'compensatory preferential treatment' similar to that used with veterans," this should be put in place in order to advance the equality of the black race (Farmer 1985:222). In 1965, Johnson (now president) renamed 'compensatory preferential treatment' "affirmative action" in a famous speech at Howard University. In a 1965 commencement address at Howard University, President Lyndon Johnson articulated the general philosophy of affirmative action: "Freedom is not enough. You do not take a person, who for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate

him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say 'you are free to compete with all the others' and still...believe that you are being completely fair" (Eisaguirre 1999:7).

President Richard Nixon was the first to implement federal policies designed to guarantee minority hiring. Responding to continuing racial inequalities in the workforce, in 1969 the Nixon administration developed the Philadelphia Plan, requiring that contractors on federally assisted projects set specific goals for hiring minorities. Federal courts upheld this plan in 1970 and 1971.

Affirmative Action: Legal Challenges

The moral case for affirmative action rests on the bitter legacy of African slavery, and the violent dispossession of Native Americans. Yet the descendants of slaves and Native Americans constitute a shrinking share of affirmative action's beneficiaries. Today, educated white women are the major beneficiaries.

In his breakthrough article "From Affirmative Action to Affirming Diversity," Roosevelt Thomas (1990) argued that affirmative action gets the new fuel into the tank, the new people through the front door, but something else will have to get them into the driver's seat. Affirmative action involves voluntary and mandatory efforts by federal, state and local governments, private employers and schools to fight institutional discrimination and foster fair hiring and advancement of qualified individuals. The plan does not mandate "preferences" or "quotas." Much of the opposition, however, to affirmative action is framed on the grounds of so-called "reverse" discrimination, preferences and quotas, which reduce public support. According to Orfield (2001) the only legal way to have quotas today is to prove a constitutional violation. Conversely, when the public is provided with fair and accurate definition and benefits then support increases. However, in 1995, a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll discovered that "two out of three Americans oppose affirmative action" (Guernsey 1997:13).

Meritocratic ideals are deeply embedded in the minds of Americans. A meritocracy is a social system in which individual talent and achievement, rather than ascribed characteristics, determine an individual's position in the social hierarchy. Therefore, for equality of opportunity to exist competition must be fair and free of bias. In essence, the affirmative action debate is laced in the contradiction between the ideals of capitalism and democracy, which represent the tension between liberty and equity (Marger 2008). Liberty is the freedom to pursue one's self-interests as one wish; and equity is the distribution of society's scarce resources in a just manner.

By the late 1970s, however, flaws in the policy began to show up amid its good intention of racial equality. Reverse discrimination became an issue, epitomized by the famous Bakke case in 1978. Allan Bakke, a white male, had been rejected two years in a row by a medical school that had accepted less qualified minority applicants. "Preferential treatment" and "quotas," which create reverse discrimination, became expressions of contempt. Liberals countered that "the land of opportunity" was a very different place for the European immigrants who landed on its shores than it was for those who arrived in the chains of slavery (Brunner 2009).

Subsequently, a number of hotly debated cases on affirmative action have reached the lower courts and the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1978, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* was the first case to challenge affirmative action on the grounds of reverse discrimination. In the Bakke case, the Court confronted a racial quota employed by the University of California Davis Medical School. Under the plan, 16 out of 100 seats in each entering class at the school were reserved exclusively for certain minority groups. A central purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment to further the national goal of equal opportunity for all our citizens was violated. In a 5-4 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court found the University of

California Davis Medical School's specific admissions policy unlawful. Justice Powell, however, held that a properly devised policy could constitutionally consider race as one of many factors in admissions. His reasoning has since become widely known as the "diversity rationale." In addition to explaining the theoretical legal basis for diversity as a compelling state interest, he also expanded on the compelling educational interest by stating that the First Amendment allows a university the freedom to make its own judgments as to education, which includes the selection of its student body. He argued that the attainment of a diverse student body broadens the range of viewpoints collectively held by those students. The Bakke case became the doctrine of judicial precedence (*stare decisis*). Justice Powell concluded that for the governmental interest in remedying past discrimination to be triggered "judicial, legislative, or administrative findings of constitutional or statutory violations" must be made. Only then does the government have a compelling interest in favoring one race over another.

In the 1980s and 1990s, conservative justices appointed to the Supreme Court by Republican Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. Bush attempted to limit the scope of affirmative action. Similarly, President Bill Clinton argued that a shift toward the center is necessary for a progressive vision to politically survive in this global economy (Stiglitz 2002). Consequently, the new liberalism in the 1990s that attempted to mend affirmative action is similar to the old conservatism. In this connection, in the 1989 case, *City of Richmond v. Croson Company*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a thirty percent set-aside program for minority contractors was unconstitutional because it violated the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause. The Court for the first time adopted strict scrutiny, the purpose of which is to "smoke out" illegitimate uses of race. In judicial parlance, applying strict scrutiny means that, in order to uphold a race-based government decision, a court must answer yes to two questions: First, does the challenged policy serve a "compelling" interest? Second, is the policy strictly

necessary to achieving that interest? Further, Justice O'Connor stated that strict scrutiny must be applied to all governmental classification by race. Even though the Croson case is not related to higher education the decision affects all affirmative action cases. In another case in 1996, *Texas v. Hopwood*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision that race could not be used in college admission. The Fifth Circuit had dismissed Justice Powell's opinion in *Bakke*, ruling that a university's interest in a diverse student body was never compelling, and that race could no longer be used as one among several factors in admissions decisions in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Twenty-five years after *Bakke*, in a closely watched decision on affirmative action, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that universities may take race into consideration as one factor among many when selecting incoming students. Since 2000, the lower courts and the U.S. Supreme Court brought mixed results in affirmative action cases. In order to achieve student body diversity, the University of Michigan used a point system and race as one factor in admitting students. Two 2003 lawsuits challenged the use of race and ethnicity at the university: *Gratz v. Bollinger*, and *Grutter v. Bollinger*. The petitioners, both white, female students, felt that their rejections violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Applying the logic of *Regents of University of California v. Bakke* (1978), the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision in the *Grutter v. Bollinger* case, upheld that the University of Michigan's Law School's affirmative action program was constitutional because its promotion of "student diversity" was sufficiently "compelling," and its case-by-case admissions process was "narrowly tailored" enough, to withstand strict scrutiny. However, in the second case, *Gratz v. Bollinger*, the Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision written by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, ruled that the University of Michigan's undergraduate admissions program was unconstitutional because it

violated the Equal Protection Clause by automatically awarding twenty points based on an applicant's race. Justice O'Connor expected that twenty-five years from date of the Grutter decision, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the interest approved today, because social progress will render race conscious plans obsolete (Grutter v. Bollinger 2003). The preceding statement regarding timeline is the most controversial aspect of the Grutter case. For instance, Justice Scalia's dissenting opinion stated that only legislatures, not courts, can generally impose time limits on governmental programs because these decisions allocate societal resources therefore, the two cases will only exacerbate the legal challenges to affirmative action. Similarly, in a dissenting opinion, Justice Thomas noted that the Constitution will outlaw race preferences in twenty-five years because it does so today. Additionally, he repeated Frederick Douglass's words that blacks can achieve in every avenue of American life without the interference of university administrators. However, the 25-year time line is consistent with Justice Stevens's observation that affirmative action should be temporary and not become an entitlement (Bakke 1978). Together, Gratz and Grutter affirmed and refined the Supreme Court's position on affirmative action a quarter century after its initial decision in Regents of University of California v. Bakke (1978). The Court made clear that affirmative action programs are only constitutional if they consider race as one factor in an individualized evaluation, and only to achieve the goal of "class diversity."

Anderson (2002) argued that an integration rationale is superior to the diversity rationale in justifying what is the "compelling state interest." Current affirmative action debates have lost sight of the ideal of integration as a compelling moral and political goal. Unless disadvantaged racial groups are integrated into mainstream social institutions, they will continue to suffer from segregation and discrimination. Therefore, the "integration" rationale

seems much more aligned with the actual practice of university affirmative action than the diversity rationale.

State Initiatives Challenge Affirmative Action

Ward Connerly (2002) of the American Civil Rights Institute is one of the notable opponents of affirmative action. He has promoted and won a series of ballot initiatives in the states of California, Washington and Michigan. In 1996, Proposition 209 amended the California Constitution by banning affirmative action in higher education admissions, as well as public employment and contracting. In 1998, Washington State passed Initiative-200, which also banned the use of affirmative action policies in higher education admissions, public employment, and contracting. The Michigan Civil Rights Initiative or Proposal 2 passed in 2006, and bans all affirmative action programs in the operation of public employment, education, or contracting.

In addition to propositions, some states introduced new options to replace affirmative action that President George W. Bush favors. For example, California adopted a plan that promises a state-university spot for the "top 4 percent" of students from every high school including the most disadvantaged. Texas uses a plan that admits to state universities high-school students in the "top 10 percent" of their graduating class. In Florida, since 2000, Gov. Jeb Bush implemented an executive order eliminating the use of race and gender in government employment, contracting, and higher education admissions decisions. Florida adopted a plan that admits to state universities high-school graduates in the "top 20 percent" of their class (Fineman and Lipper 2003:35).

Arguably, affirmative action has diversified U.S. higher education. Many colleges and universities began implementing it in the late 1960s and early 1970s with dramatic results. In the period from 1976 to 1993, the number of African Americans attending college rose by 37

percent, Hispanics by 160 percent, Asian Americans by 274 percent, and American Indians by 62 percent (American Psychological Association 1999:2). Therefore, the recent challenges, such as legal and state initiatives in California, Washington State, Texas and other parts of the country, threaten to reverse these gains.

Patterson (1998) contends that African Americans have made social gains in education, income, and middle class status and dominate popular culture. Much of racism's cruel legacy affects older blacks who have low education and income levels and grew up during the Jim Crow era. Their economic disadvantages pull down the averages, obscuring the gains of their far better-educated children and grandchildren. The social problem in America is poverty not race. Consistent with Patterson's observation, President Obama has indicated his support for affirmative action policies that take account of economic circumstances, but he has never stated that race-conscious equal opportunity programs be discontinued. In this connection, Obama's position is consistent with that of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Shuford 2009).

Bowen and Bok's (1998) study provided compelling data of 45, 000 students who entered 28 selective colleges in fall 1976 or 1989, regarding the importance of affirmative action programs and diversity. Their findings revealed that race-sensitive admissions policies have achieved institutional goals of providing promising careers for African American students and promoting positive interactions among races on campus. To date, it is the most comprehensive study that supports affirmative action programs.

DIVERSITY

Beginning in the 1960s, diversity was used to describe students from historically underrepresented ethnic groups, most of whom were the first in their families to attend college. Subsequently, diversity was applied not only to the student body of an institution, but also to the faculty, administration and board of trustees. The impact and meaning of diversity,

however, were still focused upon numerical ethnic profiles and had not reached issues of student life, curriculum or pedagogy. In many ways, the historical vestiges of segregated schools and colleges continue to affect the climate for racial/ethnic diversity on college campuses. The best examples are resistance to desegregation in specific campus settings and the maintenance of old campus policies at predominantly White institutions such as University of Mississippi that best serve a homogeneous population. Attitudes and behaviors embedded in the culture of a historically segregated environment prevent interaction across race and ethnicity (Duster 1992).

In higher education, there are three main types of diversity:

1. Structural diversity of an institution refers primarily to the racial and ethnic composition of the student body. Increasing the numerical representation of various racial/ethnic and gender groups is the first essential step in the process of creating a diverse learning environment (Hurtado et al. 1998).
2. Classroom diversity is the incorporation of knowledge about diverse groups into the curriculum that colleges and universities present to this more diverse array of students. This has largely been the result of the recruitment of more faculties who include content and research on different groups in college coursework (Chang 2000). Other examples of curricular change are the development of ethnic studies and women's studies programs, co-curricular academic support programs, and multicultural programming.
3. Equally important is informal interactional diversity, the opportunity to interact with students from diverse backgrounds in the broad, campus environment. College often provides the first opportunity for students to get to know others from varied racial and ethnic backgrounds. It is interaction with a student's peer group that becomes one of

the most influential aspects of the college experience (Astin 1993), and most college alumni agree that their affiliations with peers made their education memorable.

Classroom and informal diversity are part of an interconnected diversity experience that structural diversity fosters, and both are critical to the impact of college diversity on enhanced learning and preparing to participate in a democratic society (Hurtado et al. 1998).

Gurin (1999) analyzed national longitudinal data, compiled by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program and the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute on 9,316 students attending nearly 200 colleges and universities. This is one of the most comprehensive databases on college students. She also studied a sample of more than 1,300 students at the University of Michigan to understand the effects of diversity on learning outcomes.

Further, Milem, Chang, and Antonio (2005) argued that the controversy and confusion about diversity are fueled by incomplete reasoning. They identified several major shortcomings with the court-driven interpretation about the benefits of diversity. For instance, in describing diversity's benefits, Powell's rationale leans heavily on what we call "magical thinking," an unrealistic explanation of cause and effect. For diversity's benefits to accrue, it's essential that campuses focus effort on remedying the present effects of past discrimination. In a synthesis for the Association of American Colleges and Universities, they found also that research on diversity consistently shows that educational benefits do not automatically accrue to students who attend institutions that are, in terms of student or faculty composition, racially and ethnically diverse (Milem et al. 2005). Rather, if the benefits of diversity in higher education are to be realized, close attention must be paid to the institutional context. In other words, it is not enough to simply bring together a diverse group of students. Although this is an important first step, it cannot be the only one. Besides bringing diverse students together, campuses must provide stimulating courses covering historical, cultural, and social bases of diversity and

community, and they must create additional opportunities and expectations for students to interact across racial and other social differences. Such intentional institutional efforts are critical because it is much easier and less risky for students to gravitate to people of the same racial or ethnic background. When students withdraw from the rich and complex social and learning opportunities offered by a diverse campus and settle into institutional spaces that are more homogenous, they are likely to miss out on the important benefits derived from diversity. Strengthening a college-going culture in the high schools, developing outreach, and recruitment programs are all critical in this endeavor.

Another study on diversity was conducted by sociologists at the University of Minnesota (Bell and Hartman 2007). They collected data from a telephone survey of more than 2,000 households across the country and nearly 150 hour-long interviews with adults from a wide range of backgrounds living in Atlanta, Boston, Los Angeles and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The study found a majority of Americans use "Diversity" to cover-up their true views about "race." Political philosopher Stephen Macedo (2000:3) sums it up well: "At its best, talk of diversity ... reminds us of the extent to which the promise of freedom and equality for all remains a work in progress: only partially realized, only partially understood."

HISTORY OF MULTICULTURALISM

The valuing of multiculturalism is ethically driven. The concern to create a more "culturally diverse" curriculum had roots in the intellectual and social movements. For example, the 1960s Civil Rights revolution was advanced by Black Power, La Raza, the American Indian Movement, and the women's liberation movement, each of which challenged the norms and effects of educational policy. The Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that "separate but equal" is unconstitutional in education. This decision led to the admission of large numbers of non-white students to public and some private schools. Teachers and school

administrators then faced a student body with very different faces. Glazer (1998) pointed out that multiculturalism arose from the failure of mainstream society to assimilate African Americans but willingly or not, "we are all multiculturalists now."

Multiculturalism can be understood from both an historical and a conceptual perspective. The historical perspective came into wide public use during the early 1980s in the context of public school curriculum reform. Specifically, the argument was made that the content of classes in history, literature, social studies, and other areas reflected what came to be called a "Eurocentric" bias reinforcing racist attitudes. Few if any women or people of color appeared prominently in the curriculums of schools in the United States. Conceptual perspective becomes a popular term as "race" lost much of its former credibility as a concept. "Culture" began to replace "race" as a term for distinguishing among distinct human groups (Jay 2002).

Challenges to Multiculturalism

The Latin phrase "e pluribus unum" (Out of many one) the American motto is challenged by multiculturalists, who want to glorify pluribus and belittle unum (union). Nativists are people who favor native-born citizens over immigrants, contend that today's immigrants cannot assimilate and multiculturalists say that they should not (Glazer 1998). Some multiculturalists consider the "melting pot" metaphor a cover for oppressive assimilation (Jay 2002). Therefore, the contemporary ideal is not assimilation but ethnicity. The multiculturalism movement seeks to preserve distinctly different ethnic, racial, or cultural communities without melting them into a common culture. Consistent with this is Horace Kallen's (1914) cultural pluralism, which states that members of every American ethnic group should be free to participate in all of the society's major institutions while simultaneously retaining or elaborating their own ethnic heritage (McLemore et al. 2004).

Critics of multicultural education contend that identities based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, and other categorizations are antagonistic to the unity needed for democracy. Thorns of multiculturalism include immigration, language, culture and race (Parrillo 2005). For instance, continuing immigration fuels the debate about multiculturalism not just preserving ethnic heritage but also power struggle among groups. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, immigration from Arab and Muslim countries is adversely affected due to terrorism concerns. Immigrants speaking a language other than English, especially Spanish, have been a thorn in the side of Americans for more than 200 years. In 1750, Benjamin Franklin complained about the use of the German language. In 1798, George Washington wrote to John Adams opposing immigration, pointing out that new immigrants retain their languages (Parrillo 2005). Such concerns have reverberated down through the generations to the present day. Ethnic resiliency in culture, language, and religion is enhanced by the increasing size of each new immigrant group.

CONCLUSION

To further validate the veracity of claims made by those who support or oppose affirmative action, diversity, and multiculturalism, additional empirical study is needed. The changing demographics and the continuing potential for divisiveness will challenge our adaptability and ability to get along with each other. If we can, however, develop diversity and multicultural consciousness in ourselves, we will be much better prepared to meet these challenges and open our minds to many more people and opportunities. According to Takaki (2008), whatever happens, we can be certain that much of our society's future will be influenced by which "mirror" we choose to see ourselves in, for America does not belong to one race or one group.

REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. 1999. *How Affirmative Action Benefits America*. Retrieved October 2009 (<http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/HowAffirmActBenAmerica.pdf>).
- Anderson, Elizabeth S. 2002. "Integration, Affirmative Action, and Strict Scrutiny." *New York University Law Review* 77:1195-1271.
- Astin, Alexander W. 1993. *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bell, Joyce M. and Douglas Hartman. 2007. "Diversity in Everyday Discourse: The Ambiguities and Consequences of 'Happy Talk.'" *American Sociological Review* 72(6):895-914.
- Bowen, William G. and Derek Bok. 1998. *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Brunner, Borgna. 2009. "Bakke and Beyond: A History and Timeline of Affirmative Action." Retrieved September 4, 2009 (<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/affirmative1.html>)
- Chang, Mitchell J. 2000. "Improving Campus Racial Dynamics: A Balancing Act among Competing Interests." *Review of Higher Education* 23:133-173.
- City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co., 488 U.S. 469. 1989.
- Connerly, Ward. 2002. *Creating Equal: My Fight against Race Preferences*. Encounter Books.
- Dierenfield, Bruce J. 2008. *The Civil Rights Movement: Revised Edition*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Duster, Troy. 1992. *The Diversity Project: Final Report*. Institute for the Study of Social Change. Berkeley: University of California.
- Eisaguirre, Lynne. 1999. *Affirmative Action: A Reference Handbook*. ABC-CLIO, Inc.
- Farmer, James. 1985. *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement*.

- New York: New American Library.
- Fineman, Howard and Tamara Lipper. 2003. "Spinning Race: Affirmative Action 25 Years Later." *Newsweek*, January 27, pp. 26-37.
- Glazer, Nathan. 1998. *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Grutter v. Bollinger 123 S. CT. 2325. 2003.
- Guernsey, Jo Ann Bren. 1997. *Affirmative Action: A Problem or a Remedy?* Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co.
- Gurin, Patricia. 1999. "The Compelling Need for Diversity in Higher Education, Expert Testimony in Gratz et al. v. Bollinger et al." *Michigan Journal of Race and Law* 5:363-425.
- Hurtado, Sylvia, Jeffrey F. Milem, Alma R. Clayton-Pedersen, and Walter R. Allen. 1998. "Enhancing Campus Climates for Racial/Ethnic Diversity through Educational Policy and Practice." *Review of Higher Education* 21(3):279-302.
- Jay, Gregory. 2002. "What is Multiculturalism?" Retrieved September 8, 2009 (http://boe.ming.k12.wv.us/teachers/pdonline/multicultural/module_3.pdf)
- Johnston, William B. and Arnold H. Packer. 1987. *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hudson Institute.
- Farmer, James. 1985. *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement*. New York: New American Library.
- Macedo, Stephen. 2000. *Diversity and Distrust: Civic Education in a Multicultural Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Marger, Martin. 2008. *Social Inequality: Patterns and Processes*, 4th ed. McGraw-Hill.
- McLemore, Dale S., Harriet D. Romo, and Susan Gonzalez Baker. 2004. *Racial and Ethnic Relations in America*. 7th ed. New York: Allyn and Bacon.

- Milem, Jeffrey F., Mitchell J. Chang, and Anthony Lising Antonio. 2005. "Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective." *Association of American Colleges and Universities*, Retrieved October 2009 (http://siher.stanford.edu/AntonioMilemChang_makingdiversitywork.pdf).
- Orfield, Gary. 2001. *Diversity Challenged: Evidence on the Impact of Affirmative Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Publishing Group.
- Parrillo, Vincent N. 2005. *Diversity in America*. 2nd Ed. Pine Forge Press.
- Patterson, Orlando. 1998. *The Ordeal of Integration Progress and Resentment in America's "Racial" Crisis*. Basic Civitas Books.
- Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 438 U.S. 265. 1978.
- Schaefer, Richard T. 2008. *Racial and Ethnic Groups*. 11th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc..
- Shuford, Reginald T. 2009. "Why Affirmative Action Remains Essential in the Age of Obama." *Campbell Law Review* 31:503-533.
- Stefkovich, Jacqueline A and Terrance Leas. 1994. "A Legal History of Desegregation in Higher Education." *Journal of Negro Higher Education* 63:406-420.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. 2002. *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Sullivan, Harold J. 2005. *Civil Rights and Liberties: Provocative Questions and Evolving Answers*. 2nd. Ed. Prentice Hall.
- Takaki, Ronald. 2008. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. Little Brown and Co.
- Thomas, R. Roosevelt. 1990. "From Affirmative Action to Affirming Diversity." *Harvard Business Review* 90:107-117.