

Elizabeth Anderson

The Imperative of Integration.

Princeton: Princeton University Press 2010.

238 pages

US\$29.95 (cloth ISBN 978-0-6911-3981-4)

In this timely book, Elizabeth Anderson argues that comprehensive racial integration—in schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, legislative bodies, and virtually all other spheres of our everyday lives—is an imperative of justice and a critical feature of a functioning democratic society. Such a discussion is especially important today when, in spite of the persistence of extreme race-based inequality, injustice, and oppression (which Anderson carefully documents through a wealth of empirical data) many (whites, especially) believe that racial discrimination, injustice, and oppression is a thing of the past. The thorough refutation of such a presumption is one of the key contributions of the book.

Yet Anderson's goal is to show not only that extreme racial injustice still exists, but that its primary cause is racial *segregation*. She thus argues, in roughly the first half of the book, that racial segregation is to blame not only for the vast material inequalities in income, wealth, and access to opportunities for education and employment, but also in creating and furthering harmful stigmatization of racial groups. The discussion of stigmatization draws extensively on current social psychological research to demonstrate the myriad ways that conscious and unconscious cognitive biases function to perpetuate racial stigmatization, stereotyping, and defend the status quo of race relations, as well as to show how segregation contributes to and/or strengthens such biases. One could align these two dimensions of racial injustice—material inequality and stigmatization—with the parallel concepts of 'redistribution' and 'recognition', much discussed in recent social theory, but unlike many on both sides of that debate, Anderson does an admirable job of showing how these two dimensions of injustice are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing, at least as they apply to racial identity in the United States.

If segregation is the problem, then integration must be the solution, and Anderson lays out a vision of integration that begins with formal desegregation (the dismantling of forms of segregation embodied in law) and 'spatial' integration (encompassing at least residential, educational, workplace, and associational segregation), which set the groundwork for formal and informal *social* integration, in which different racial groups not only live, work, and learn side-by-side, but also see and interact with one another as equals. Integration, for Anderson, is therefore not just an important end of justice, but also an effective means for achieving that end, insofar as expanded racial interaction at each stage of integration has the potential to undermine stereotypes and other cognitive biases, ease strained race relations, and facilitate more meaningful (and less legally enforceable) levels of integration. As above, Anderson defends this claim by reference to the best available empirical data, and taking care not to conflate the various areas of social life for which integration is supposed to be necessary. (She does not presume, for example, that evidence linking increased interracial experiences in education to more racially tolerant attitudes is automatically to be found when it comes to similar

experiences in the workplace and in other areas, but instead she gathers available data from each domain.)

As mentioned above, Anderson not only argues that segregation is unjust in itself (and integration the appropriate means of combating such an injustice), but also provides a related but nonetheless independent argument that segregation undermines democratic decision making. Democracy thus demands and requires racial integration. The essence of this argument is that the more integrated a society is at all levels, the more epistemic diversity it can draw from in its collective decision-making, and the more representative its decisions will be. By contrast, a racially segregated society produces individuals who are unfamiliar with the problems and experiences of other groups and are therefore epistemically disabled in their ability to make decisions that benefit society as a whole rather than their own narrower interests. This discussion thus builds upon the familiar idea of democratic societies as societies of equals, but is unusually lucid in its explanations of why that must be the case and of how American democracy in particular falls far short of this goal. And as with the rest of the book, it is appropriately supported with empirical data, including a particularly interesting discussion of how racial diversity has been shown to improve the quality of jury deliberation (129-30). Further, Anderson's conception of democracy as a 'culture' and not just a mode of government is interesting in its own right, and represents an important contribution to democratic theory in general.

The last few chapters apply Anderson's insights to some of the most pressing practical questions surrounding race today. In particular, she addresses the debate over affirmative action, and the idea (which she shows to be mostly incoherent) that persons, institutions, and/or policies ought to be 'color blind'. Her discussion of affirmative action is especially illuminating, distinguishing between four justifications—compensatory, diversity-based, discrimination-blocking, and integrative—and ultimately defending an integrative approach as the only one that can meet all of the relevant objections to affirmative action policies (objections which she also presents in a clear and charitable manner). The chapter thus furthers the general aim of the book, but could also be useful independently as a supplement to classroom discussions of affirmative action.

In all, then, this book is an impressive addition to the growing literature in so-called 'non-ideal' political theory, which as Anderson herself notes, begins 'from a diagnosis of injustices in our actual world, rather than from a picture of an ideal world' (3). Yet Anderson shows that non-ideal theory is much more than just a supplement to or application of the conclusions of ideal theory. Rather, it represents a radically different way of thinking about theory in general, one that one hopes will have a more direct practical effect in bringing about a fairer, more equal, democratic, and just society.

Andrew Peirce
Loyola University Chicago