

some in-class support during their initial year of teaching. They are expected to complete a specified set of courses in pedagogy as they teach. Because participants begin earning a teaching salary without having completed all traditional certification requirements, alternative certification programs are especially appealing to many individuals, especially career changers. According to a recent survey conducted by the National Center for Education Information, 30% of all alternatively certified teachers nationwide are of racial/ethnic minority backgrounds.

Programs such as the ones described above have helped reverse the downward trend in the participation of teachers of color that alarmed many educators and policymakers 2 decades ago. While much more work is needed to further expand the proportion of people of color in the teaching force, the infrastructure already in place can be used to advance this work.

Ana María Villegas

See also Demographic Divide in U.S. Schools; Diversity and Teacher Education Policy; Educational Benefits of Diversity; Ethnic Diversity in Teacher Education; Race and Education

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Perspectives in Education

Diversity: A Contested Concept

As manifested through differences in race, national origin, language, gender, sexuality, religion, and class, diversity is an intensely debated concept across the entire political spectrum. Diversity per se does not cause social conflicts but is a lens through which causes of conflicts are contested under narratives of assertion and denial of diversity claims. That the mention of the word *diversity* can be a source of widely varying attitudes and actions can be explained by examining diversity issues in relation to primary philosophical positions along a political economy spectrum of *social conservatism*, *liberal multiculturalism*, and *critical multiculturalism*. Before sampling how these three contested conceptualizations of diversity filter into education, this entry first describes the underlying beliefs that frame attitudes about diversity and difference. These key philosophical orientations are political frames prominent in modern liberal democracies and influence how people—in relation to diversity—understand the individual and the group, the private and public, and identity.

Spectrum of Philosophical Orientations

Social conservatism on the political right is the most dominant opponent of diversity and contains two elements, classical liberalism, which in contemporary terms is referred to as neoliberalism, and religious

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fundamentalism. The second dominant strand is the political centrism of liberal multiculturalism that contains elements of social conservatism but seeks to manage and accommodate diversity within existing structures of a liberal nation-state, a form of governing that is based on individual rights. Politically left of these positions is critical multiculturalism, which rejects certain underlying assumptions of liberalism and focuses on how power relations within a stratified society affect diversity. Although these three strands represent a typology, people in actual practice may shift their orientation among these categories, depending on their own material and cultural interests in relation to a particular diversity issue.

Social Conservatism

Social conservatism prioritizes the private sphere—be it capitalism's free market fundamentalism or exclusionary religious morality—and guards private interests and identities against encroachment from the public sphere. This orientation holds a belief in a homogenous common culture for a nation-state and argues that the specter of demographic and economic heterogeneity can undermine social cohesiveness and the foundation of Western civilization. Social conservatism stands in opposition to demands from diverse groups for public recognition and redistribution rights. Consequently, the symbolic and material discourse of cultural diversity is viewed as an antisocial nuisance that obstructs social progress.

Prioritization of the Private over the Public. This particular orientation is accounted for by how liberalism traditionally privileged both the individual and the private domain of life. Because classical liberalism focuses on the individual rather than the group as the primary social unit of relevance, conservatism considers attempts to publicly assert diverse group identities, perspectives, and claims as misguided and harmful. Differentials in standards of living or educational attainment, for example, can be explained by the logic of conservatism on the basis of individual merit since all individuals are assumed to have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Neoliberalism's form of liberty focuses on that which is private and supports public policies only when private interests are protected from infringement. Social conservatism incorporates tolerance of diversity when it gives individuals the liberty to privately define their own identities, but should be publicly neutralized when diverse group identities are asserted. Equity demands for an expansion of social services are opposed under the assumption that these can take financial resources from those who have accumulated their private wealth due to their individual merit, a basic premise of classical liberalism's construction of a common culture. Diversity for this position is located instead in the marketplace wherein individuals can assert their unhindered liberty to select, for example, schools of their choice for their children without unnecessary public intrusions. From this orientation parents are not subject to the arbitrary power of the state, but instead are free to act as private citizens in the interests of their children.

In response to public claims of racial and gender discrimination, social conservatism assumes that private tastes of a business or an individual should not be coercively challenged publicly by the state. Furthermore, evidence of discrimination is viewed as an anomaly from a neutral liberal democracy. Hence, cultural diversity and multiculturalism are perceived as elements to be managed or discouraged in work places and schools and are best understood in relation to cultural preferences and languages of consumer markets and trading partners.

Common Exclusionary Culture. Perceived as potential threats both domestically and externally, culturally diverse groups are often viewed suspiciously as potential traitors to a common culture. This is a result of conservatism's instrumental conceptualization of cultural diversity when expressed publicly. Representing this view, for example, a general in U.S.-occupied Afghanistan explained that knowledge of culturally different practices of an enemy necessitated the use of "culture as a weapon system."

Overall, however, diversity per se among groups is irrelevant under conservatism because group identities are considered a false construct that undermines the preeminence of autonomous individuals located within

a nationalistic common culture. Because individuals are expected to assimilate into a common culture, group assertions of marginalization are dismissed as divisive. Public education is supported to the extent that young people are socialized into a homogenous common culture.

The basic conservatism of neoliberalism and religious fundamentalism can bolster each other's economic and cultural orientations. Within liberal democracies, religious fundamentalism intersects with neoliberalism's market fundamentalism in support of a common, divinely inspired culture that must be protected from cultural differences. This worldview excludes the validity of other economic and moral systems as obstructions to the democratic development of a common culture that gave rise to capitalism and Protestantism, framed through a Judeo-Christian tradition.

Liberal Multiculturalism

By its acknowledgment of diverse group identities, the philosophy of liberal multiculturalism attempts to moderate social conservatism. With a recognition of cultural groups, this orientation brings diversity out of the private sphere and into the public to "celebrate diversity" with an additive conception of multiculturalism to an asserted homogenous nation-state common culture. This aspect of liberalism focuses on diversity as appreciating cultural differences among groups and sees cultural tolerance as foundational to a liberal democracy.

Moderation of the Private and Inequalities. Whereas individualism remains a primary value, autonomy is tempered by acknowledgment of a person's location in the public sphere. From this orientation liberty can necessitate public interventions for the freedom to lead a particular way of life. Rather than denying the legitimacy of diverse group identities, liberal multiculturalism accepts a need in selected cases for public policies that can allow groups to express their freedom not only to exist, but to participate publicly in a liberal society. Freedom, therefore, is not limited just to private cultural practices, but can be a safeguard for diverse public expressions.

Liberal multiculturalism varies from neoliberalism by asserting that to sustain individual liberty, moderation of group inequalities created by a state's political economy may be required for some diverse groups. Nevertheless, because inequality differences are generally regarded as exceptions to liberal democracy's creed of egalitarianism, equality of opportunity remains philosophically privileged over diversity. Hence, liberal multiculturalism expressed in practice grapples with the continuing quandary of whether to preserve an egalitarian ideal within an existing paradox of socioeconomic stratification that liberal democracies permit.

Common Inclusionary Culture. Liberal multiculturalism accepts tolerance for culturally diverse groups as fundamental to a common culture of a liberal nation-state. Empirical research indicates, however, that among majority groups in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States, multiculturalism is mildly supported at best. In response, for example, the liberal Council of Europe made calls for tolerance and dialogue in an attempt to calm conservative perceptions that diverse identities are threatening majority economic and moral interests.

Liberal multiculturalism generally recognizes group identities as fixed and considers diverse cultures as relatively equal. Multiculturalism becomes the recognition and respect of cultural diversity as a shared value of the larger society. Recognition of diversity is based on an assumption that, despite the public accommodation of differences, groups will assimilate into an existing common culture. Liberal multiculturalism endorses a civic identity in which diverse cultural groups can share in seeking the common good of a liberal democracy while also pursuing their own individual goals.

Whereas religious fundamentalism assumes that the origin of the modern nation-state is based on Christian values that should not be publicly opposed, the liberal multiculturalism position sees such advocacy as a breach of the concept of separation of church and state and, therefore, contends that truth can exist in other

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religions and other, diverse cultural systems. Although liberal multiculturalism tends to privilege Judeo-Christian moral beliefs over those of other religions, this position advocates inclusion in order to fold diverse beliefs into an existing common culture. Thus, a liberal multiculturalism orientation can support public policies for diverse religious groups as long as they are not perceived as harming the material interests and maintenance of a common culture.

Critical Multiculturalism

Critical multiculturalism stands in general opposition to the combined hegemony of social conservatism and liberal multiculturalism and brings to the forefront such concepts as ideology, resistance, power, knowledge construction, class, cultural politics, and emancipatory actions. Critical multiculturalism assumes, for example, that wealth and economic achievement gaps among social class groups are inherently unequal. Therefore, critical multiculturalism speaks against the naturalizing of hierarchical differences. This position supports a multiethnic and gender-fair society in which the tensions of differences are central to what makes a society's culture common. Diverse cultural practices and identities are explained as fluid rather than as fixed and reducible to a market commodity. Diversity issues of class, race, ethnicity, and gender are investigated for intersections in relation to power and privilege.

Critical multiculturalism emphasizes historical perspectives as necessary to understand contemporary debates about diversity. Hence, this orientation rejects conservative proclamations of an end-of-history where a governing narrative claims that there are no alternatives to neoliberalism's project of privatization of public services in the name of progress. Diverse group histories of discrimination serve for critical multiculturalism as a major basis for contemporary claims for recognition and redistribution rights, including indigenous sovereignty within liberal nation-states.

Equity Over Equality. Critical multiculturalism attends to contestations over diversity in relation to how recognition, power, and wealth are exercised and distributed among groups in a social hierarchy of inequality. Because individuals and groups begin their quest for equality from unequal starting points, the perspective of equity as fairness of outcomes is emphasized more than equality of opportunity. Critical multiculturalism turns its focus away from liberalism's individualist ideology of meritocracy and equal opportunity and instead looks to claims for justice, equity, and community by historically marginalized groups. This view accepts diversity conflicts as a necessary part of political struggles over power and allows democratic equivalences among various group demands without attempting to eliminate differences.

Critical multiculturalism counters liberal debates about civil society when cultural diversity is presented by dominant forces as a distraction from significant material and cultural inequalities and marginalization. James A. Banks observes that when a homogenous application of citizenship is applied by a society divided hierarchically by status categories of differences but that operates under a liberal ideology of equal opportunity, individuals identified with some diverse groups are limited in exercising their full citizenship rights. To resist this second-class treatment where the legitimacy of diverse identities becomes contested, critical multiculturalism posits that differentiated rights can be a basis for the elimination of historical inequalities and injustices.

A Common Multiculture of Differences. To some extent critical multiculturalism overlaps with liberal multiculturalism in that they both imagine a unified culture in which diversity flourishes. Critical multiculturalism, however, assumes that individuals are inseparable from society and can find liberty through the social union of a multicultural society that is based on equitable redistribution of rights and privileges. Furthermore, this position contends that the economic policies of conservatism result in the exploitation of diverse subordinate groups for material gain and that liberalism provides insufficient freedom from discrimination under purported equality before the law.

Critical multiculturalism envisions a society that incorporates differences found within and between diverse cultures. This orientation opposes conservative and liberal constructions of identities ultimately

conceived in accordance with a nation-state's dominant definition of a common culture. Critical multiculturalism contends that cultural systems are an extension of belief systems and that no one group can make an a priori claim that one cultural orientation should be dominant over others. Global cultural hybridity is highlighted over neoliberal versions of a global homogeneity that mirrors market fundamentalism. The goal here is to reimagine a common culture where hierarchies of recognition and privilege are reduced and eventually eradicated so that multiple cultures can thrive together.

Critical multiculturalism takes the position that a fair society can be attained only when material inequalities inherent to capitalism are reined in or eliminated, not voluntarily through decisions based on private actions, but by forceful public policies committed to equity. Opposed to an oligarchy of privatized capitalism that can determine the material fate of diverse populations, critical multiculturalism advocates public regulation of an economy's resources for use in the interests of all of a nation's citizens. This orientation assumes that such actions can in turn serve the common good for the vast majority of all people, including those from diverse groups who have not experienced equity in the material benefits found in most liberal democracies.

From the perspective of these three major philosophical orientations, the following sections provide an overview of examples of contested issues of diversity in education.

Race and Ethnicity

The most contentious diversity debates generally originate from interpretations of the social, political, and economic impact of racial and ethnic identifications in the modern liberal nation-state. Liberals such as Benet Davetian, director of the Canadian-based Civility Institute, express alarm that the diversity from increased global migration patterns has led to a degeneracy from the claimed unity of liberal nation-states and created conditions where diverse interests in recognition and redistribution overpower the good of a common culture. The dominant response to this perceived pathology is color blindness.

Color Blindness

Advancement of color blindness strives to create an invisibility of skin-color identification. This conservative perspective contends that people are best judged equally on their individual merit, and that racial and ethnic group identification are irrelevant and distract from this vision. Color blindness further assumes that racial and ethnic discrimination is an aberrant problem of the past.

A discourse of color blindness received renewed visibility after Barack Obama was elected the first person of color to the U.S. presidency. Some liberals used his 2008 election to declare the arrival of a "post-racial" society as a realization of the most cited speech of Martin Luther King, Jr., in which he imagined a world where skin color does not determine social status but one's personal qualities do. In turn, conservatives used this excerpt from King's 1963 speech to justify a pursuit of color-blind policies. Critical multiculturalists contend that King's quote has been appropriated by conservatives in the name of White-victimization. The claim is that conservatives have ignored King's analyses of the intersection of domestic and foreign policies when wars are initiated against diverse populations of color, fought disproportionately by the poor and people of color, and channel public monies away from job creation and underfunded schools. Hence, an ideology of color blindness rather than overt White supremacy, critical multiculturalists argue, is voiced in opposition to affirmative action for diverse groups.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action or positive discrimination is a liberal reform that has sought to redress decades of racial and gender discrimination. Whereas liberal multiculturalists typically embraced this approach, conservatives often charged "reverse discrimination" against Whites and called for color-blind approaches on the basis of individual merit in college admissions and hiring practices. Based on evidence of a significant relationship

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between wealth and academic achievement, critical multiculturalists question both conservatives and liberals on the structural effectiveness of affirmative action. Critical multiculturalists take this position because they believe that, after more than 40 years, affirmative action practices have only moderately addressed issues of material redistribution that continue to leave vast numbers of people of color and the poor living and participating on the margins of mainstream society.

In 2007, when an urban school district sought to take affirmative action to racially diversify its secondary school population through pupil assignment in an effort to fend off the resegregation of its schools, the U.S. Supreme Court took a color-blind position against the district. The conservative chief justice expressed the majority opinion on color blindness when he concluded that the best means to eliminate racial discrimination was to cease identifying individuals on the basis of race. Rather than ending racial discrimination—critical multiculturalists argue—color-blind discourse is circular and works to mask and eliminate consideration of profiling indicators of race and racism that many people of color face in their daily lives. Critical race legal scholars Devon Carbado and Cheryl Harris explain how color blindness in college admission processes, for example, is possible only when applicants' personal statements suppress how their own racial and ethnic identities have affected their development. In effect this process gives preference to those who choose to suppress their racial and ethnic identities, especially when Whiteness is normalized as part of a common culture.

Zero Tolerance

Social conservatives often argue that school administrators, local police, and the courts are protecting the social cohesiveness of a common culture against lawless individuals under color-blind "zero tolerance" disciplinary practices. Claims of equal protection under color-blind justice is undermined by public school disciplinary statistics that both liberal and critical multiculturalists point out document disproportional punitive actions against students of color, especially Black and Latino males. Furthermore, no evidence apparently exists that students of color are more disruptive in schools than Whites even though students of color are more severely punished, even for lesser rule infractions. Evidence is also lacking that schools were made safer after punished young people were moved out of public schools and into the criminal justice system.

Critical multiculturalists insist that diversity in race and national origins continues to be a salient characteristic for public discrimination by White dominated institutions and, therefore, a demonstrable example of the failure of a liberal democracy to provide all of its citizens equal protection under the law. An example of this failure that is cited is data behind a school-to-prison pipeline thesis that points to the resegregating of U.S. public schools and the historical criminalizing of people of color, especially those who live in low-income, de facto segregated neighborhoods. Both social conservatives and liberal multiculturalists, however, tend to default to "culture" to explain why a disproportionate percentage of people of color and the poor are subject to higher arrest and imprisonment rates than middle-class Whites. High profile African American liberals, including President Obama, joined conservatives in citing diverse community cultures as a source for criminality and inadequate school performance.

Culture of Poverty

In the 2010s a "culture of poverty" construct was revived in an attempt to justify why disproportionate percentages of diverse people of color who are poor are not successful educationally and economically. Similar to critical multiculturalists, liberal poverty scholars acknowledge the importance of structural conditions that create significant wealth differentials, racial and economic segregation, and inherent tensions between labor and capital. Nevertheless, this liberal orientation maintains that the variables of culture should be the primary lens through which to understand how poverty and inequalities are produced and maintained, rather than the political and economic structural explanations that critical multiculturalists prioritize.

Conservatives can support this type of poverty research because it affirms their conviction that a common culture has been diluted by the culture of the poor with its visible social marker of a disproportionate concentration of people of color. The culture of poverty construct ultimately blames racially and ethnically diverse poor people for their own poverty and inadequate public schooling conditions. Critical multiculturalists Peter McLaren and Ramin Farahmandpur respond that culture as a source of poverty mutes critiques of how inequality among classes under a capitalist economy is structurally formed and stratified. This process, it is further argued, negatively affects the academic achievement of low-income students and can disempower them from acquiring the knowledge and discourse necessary for active citizenship.

Language

Because social conservatives envision a homogenous common culture, they are strong advocates of the exclusive use of a politically dominant language in public schools. Masahiko Minami and Carlos Ovando observe that conservatives characterize nondominant language acquisition as a disability that poses a danger to an assimilationist concept of a common culture. While liberals see advantages in a diversity of languages, they have generally been reluctant to financially support policies that would allow instruction in an immigrant's or indigenous person's native language. Even in a liberal democracy such as New Zealand where the indigenous Māori language coexists with English as an official national language, actual instruction in Māori language and culture remains sporadic. Critical multiculturalists see resistance to language diversity as a continuing extension of a colonial monolingual ideology.

Contestations over efforts to recognize and incorporate diverse languages of immigrant and indigenous populations into a school curriculum can be reflective of broader societal opposition to the legitimacy of diverse immigrant and indigenous cultures sharing space within a curriculum conceived around a nationalistic common culture. In this political environment, ethnic studies programs and calls for transformative multicultural education have faced considerable backlash from social conservatives and tepid support from liberals.

Ethnic and Multicultural Studies

Following a series of anti-immigrant laws, the U.S. state of Arizona, which borders Mexico, passed legislation in an attempt to end ethnic studies programs in public schools. Acting on a philosophy of color-blind individualism, that state's conservative governor explained that her opposition to ethnic studies was because school children should learn the values of individualism so that they will not express hostility toward other races or socioeconomic classes. This particular anti-Latino-recognition strand of conservatism echoes positions expressed by public intellectuals Nathan Glazer, Sandra Stotsky, and Samuel Huntington who have contended that multiculturalism is a hateful threat against the moral values embedded in dominant common culture narratives.

To public expressions of diversity that counter dominant narratives about a homogenous common culture, a segment of conservatives have reacted with populist cries that they need "to take their country back" to traditional values. Tim Wise argues that Whites-as-victims is a familiar strategy for a dominant group that resists acknowledging that accrued economic advantages are normalized in the experiences and perspectives of Whites, including the mainstream school curriculum. Nevertheless, by the end of the 2000s the conservative position became U.S. federal policy through an act that privileged antidiversity grants for academic programs that promote mainstream U.S. history with an emphasis on traditional Western values of classical liberalism.

Common Culture Curriculum. The anxiety of social conservatives over ethnic studies and multiculturalism spills over more broadly into interpretations of what should be included and excluded in the public school curriculum. Representative of this trend is how the state of Texas reworded its curriculum standards to reassert common culture privileging of Christianity along with more favorable impressions of patriarchy, the

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Confederacy, capitalism, and the military. Representing a backlash against Islam and immigrants of color, these curriculum standards—critical multiculturalists contend—overtly mute a history inclusive of slavery, political gains of women, racial discrimination, labor unions, indigenous histories, and excesses of capitalism.

E. D. Hirsch represents mainstream conservative and liberal anguishing over a curriculum that incorporates diversity. Hirsch couches his position on an assumption that since the United States' founding era, schools have played a valuable role in peacefully assimilating diverse groups socially into a common culture while enabling different ethnicities to retain their private identities. Critical multiculturalists note that liberal claims of American exceptionalism like Hirsch's continue to misread the history of schooling that has been replete with conflict and public denunciations of diverse identities.

According to Hirsch, only a common curriculum can rescue culturally diverse students in their struggle to close racially stratified achievement gaps. Absent from his discourse are the actual structural barriers and oppression that critical multiculturalists point out have disadvantaged diverse student populations in relation to academic and economic privileges of children from advantaged families. Nevertheless, Hirsch contends that contestations over diversity in education have been solved in other multicultural liberal democracies through a common curriculum, highlighting the experience of Finland. Linda Darling-Hammond observes, however, that Finland's educational focus is no longer highly centralized around external testing demands that emanate from a common curriculum. Instead, well-prepared teachers develop their own curricula in light of a limited number of national standards, which in practice is a policy opposite to the universalistic foundation of Hirsch's advocacy.

Religion and Sexuality

With increased global migration, liberal nation-states have experienced a significant rise in diverse religions that are viewed by conservatives as an internal threat to a common culture built on Christian moral values. Parents who are members of minoritized religious groups, many of them of color, have reported insensitivity and harassment that their children have received in public school settings from other students and through the curricular experiences teachers have provided. Critical investigative journalist Chris Hedges notes how Christian fundamentalists use their wealthy conservative supporters to politically censor differences in public spaces such as schools while simultaneously fuelling anti-Muslim sentiments.

In addition, as meanings of masculinity and femininity become more fluid, religious fundamentalists openly abhor the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity in the school curriculum, especially in depictions that counter the normalcy of patriarchy and heterosexuality. Conservative parents have opposed laws intended to protect school children from bullying, especially those who do not fit gendered norms. Using religious texts, conservatives assert that homosexuality is a lifestyle choice and not a biological reality. Liberal multiculturalists point to empirical data that counter the lifestyle argument and have responded to the recognition of diverse identities of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth by instituting "safe school" programs that are more inclusive of diverse sexualities and that counter bullying. Critical educators Lisa Loutzenheiser and Shannon Moore contend, however, that these inclusive programs are limited by their focus on individual behaviors of perpetrators and victims rather than systemically on a public institutional problem that school officials need to address.

Conclusion: Contestation Over Diversity in Teacher Preparation

Because schools are a key historical site for nation-states to socialize young people into a common dominant culture, the preparation of teachers in regard to diversity remains a contested concept. Social conservatives and liberals—not critical multiculturalists—control the discourse of teacher education and subsequently the diversity orientations to which children and youth are exposed. Despite the extensive literature on diversity and multiculturalism, most beginning teachers leave their higher education with an ahistorical additive notion

of diversity. Furthermore, teacher educators and accreditation standards, critical multiculturalists argue, generally take an unexamined neoliberal approach when they abstract diverse cultures from social justice, avoid issues of socioeconomic class, and silence through color blindness examinations of how values of the modern nation-state are built on a racial stratification of skin-color domination. Public school officials tend to suppress diversity issues that are considered publicly controversial topics in tacit support of a unified image of a common culture in which diverse perspectives can be assimilated. Nevertheless, contested diversity issues will continue to surface within public schools, with critical diversity forces outside the school challenging internal status quo forces.

Michael Vavrus

See also Color-Blind Perspective; Critical Multiculturalism and Education; Critical Race Theory, Teacher Education, and Diversity; Diversity: Concepts and Terminology; Diversity as a Class and Caste Issue; Ethnocentrism in Education; Globalization, Diversity, and Education; School-to-Prison Pipeline; Social Hierarchy; Socioeconomic Integration and Segregation

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DIVERSITY: CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

Language mirrors the social, cultural, economic, and political environment in which it occurs. As a result, it is dynamic and always changing. Likewise, the terms used to describe people are also always changing to reflect the varying contexts. Terminology is especially important in our increasingly diverse global world because it reflects, consciously or not, the status and value of different groups of people in society. In the effort to be both sensitive and precise in the use of language, some words or terms are more appropriate than others. Thus, culturally responsive individuals as well as institutions need to be mindful of the language used to describe groups of people.

Overview

Most societies are inappropriate or insensitive in the terminology they use to describe some people. In its most blatant form this insensitivity is apparent in racial, ethnic, gender, religious, and other epithets. It is also evident in more subtle examples, such as observations made by Gordon Allport many years ago, that the refusal of U.S. southern newspapers to capitalize *Negro* was meant to diminish the stature of Blacks. In addition, certain words develop stereotypical ethnic connotations. Some groups are labeled with supposedly positive stereotypes. For example, in the United States, Asians are often described as a “model minority,” while African Americans are thought to always have rhythm. Although words may not be

negative in and of themselves, they can become code words for limiting the experience of an entire group of people and, hence, are disparaging even if they seem to be positive.

Although race does not exist in a biological sense, it is socially constructed and is quite significant in terms of people’s response to what they perceive as members of particular racial groups. Consequently, race is quite significant socially. Differences that do exist are primarily social, that is, they are based on one’s experiences within a particular cultural group. As a result, it is now generally accepted that the very concept of race is a social construction, that is, a racial group is socially and not biologically determined. There is only one “race,” the human race. However, scholars such as Nieto, and Mukhopadhyay, Henze, and Moses believe racism exists—illogical as it may seem—and that it needs to be acknowledged in schools and other educational settings if it is to be addressed.

Changes in terminology often reflect deliberate attempts by a group to name or rename itself. This decision is political as well as linguistic, and it responds to the need for group self-determination and autonomy. In the United States, a good example is the shift in terminology throughout the years from *Negro* to *Black* to *Afro-American* and more recently to *African American*. However, the problem with using terms that emphasize only culture, as is the case with *African American*, is that the very significant differences among people of the same race are obscured because race alone does not define people. For example, African Americans and Haitians are both Black. They share some basic cultural values and are both subjected to racist attitudes and behaviors in the United States. But