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Book review: The Imperative of Integration
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What is This?

drawn from current VA models are unjustified. Third, Wainer argues that VA models need to assume that there is some static element of performance that can be measured across time. With many subjects, mathematics for instance, there is little relationship between one element of the subject and another (concept and manipulation of numbers is not the same thing as measurement, or algebra, or geometry). He argues, 'Just because you call what is being measured "math" in two different years does not mean that it is the same thing' (pp. 134–135). This makes claims about 'value' being 'added' in a static subject area highly questionable. In a precise and readable form, Wainer raises some central questions with respect to a hot policy trend. His recommendation is to 'be careful' in using VA assessments. The problems he points to, however, call the whole endeavor into serious question.

There is much more to the book. Wainer also addresses questions of examinee choice on exams, comparing tests to each other, aptitude verses achieve tests, college selection strategies, and more. Each time the story is familiar: Wainer says something valuable about the topic, while highlighting (sometimes explicitly, sometimes not) the moral and political considerations that also must be addressed for the evidence to have meaning and value. In the end, this processes produces a valuable book for students and policy makers, at least for those who take the time to read it carefully. The aim of the book is to show how statistics can be used to shine light on educational questions. It succeeds at this. It also succeeds at showing, we believe, the limitations of statistics in thinking about educational policy.

Reference

Jencks C (1988) Whom must we treat equally for educational opportunity to be equal? *Ethics* 98(3): 518–533.

Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2010. 264 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-13981-4. $32.50

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Few political ideals galvanize as much liberal support as integration, yet few have yielded such disappointing results. During the last half-century many barriers have been broken down and workplaces, schools, neighbourhoods and families are more mixed (on many levels) than ever, yet segregation indices in American society – like most societies – remain rather significantly high. Determined to demonstrate why integration still matters, Elizabeth Anderson has written *The Imperative of Integration* (2010), which attempts to combine insights from the social science literature with robust philosophical argument. Deviating from more typical approaches in political philosophy which endeavour to argue for social justice from abstract principles, Anderson tells us that she will take a decidedly non-ideal theoretical approach, one more sensitive to material and social inequalities. Indeed, she begins her book by saying that she will not advance principles and ideals for a perfectly just society, but rather 'ones that we need to cope with the injustice in our current world, and to move us to something better'.

While concepts like integration and equality are multifaceted and complex, Anderson focuses our attention on the racial/ethnic dimensions of social and economic inequality with a view to achieving the ideals of liberal democracy. To that end, she provides a broad historical account of discrimination, a discussion of the causes and effects of stigma, and a careful defence of affirmative action. The idea that segregation is a principal cause of group inequality is summarized as follows:

> [Segregation] isolates disadvantaged groups from access to public and private resources, from sources of human and cultural capital, and from the social networks that govern access to jobs, business connections, and political influence. It depresses their ability to accumulate wealth and gain access to credit. It reinforces stigmatizing stereotypes about the disadvantaged and thus causes discrimination. (p. 2)

But the argument that stands paramount in this book is that segregation undermines democracy, a political system of social cooperation where the elected officials of political institutions are both responsive and accountable to their citizens. Given the way segregation structures society, officeholders know too little about their poorer constituents and accordingly make decisions that disadvantage them. If segregation does these things, she opines, then integration is the remedy. Democratic society cannot attain its promise without racial integration in every facet of social, cultural and political relations. In particular the integration of political office – comprised of elites whose decision-making so profoundly affects the lives of their constituents – is essential to advancing the interests of society's least advantaged. I quote her at length to capture the main idea in her own words:

> In societies marked by group segregation, ensuring the competence and accountability of officeholders to serve the interests of the whole public, and not just segregated members of it, requires that offices be occupied by members of the different groups, who must work *together* to share their symmetrical knowledge, forge mutually respectful norms of intergroup communication and interaction, and fill out and implement the ends of office in ways that serve the interests of all . . . Under conditions of group segregation, democratic equality requires not just that offices be realistically open on fair terms to all groups (the fair opportunity principle), but that they actually be filled by members of all the relevant groups, such that offices are fully integrated, with members of different groups working together on terms of equality. (pp. 109–110)

Anderson's vision is both bold and provocative. She seeks nothing less than 'comprehensive racial integration'. Anderson's notion of total inclusion is a particularly republican one involving 'a common project of living together democratically' so that persons' identification moves away from identity politics and embraces *mutual identification.*

As Anderson sees it, integration consists of four stages: (1) formal desegregation, (2) spatial integration, (3) formal social integration and (4) informal social integration. To further these aims, Anderson sets her sights on exhaustive reforms within mainstream social and political institutions, in particular a forward-looking interpretation of affirmative action as an effective tool to get us there. She writes, 'just institutions must be designed to block, work around, or cancel out our motivational and cognitive deficiencies, to harness our non-moral motives to moral ends [and] to make up for each other's

limitations by pooling our knowledge and wills' (p. 4). Thus integration envisions a 'restructuring of intergroup relations, from alienation, anxiety, awkwardness, and hostility to relaxed, competent civil association and even intimacy; from domination and subordination to cooperation as equals' (p. 117). An increasingly integrated school and workplace, she argues, will lead to persons relaxing around each other, having fewer stereotypical views of others different from themselves, and sharing information and networking strategies that make power-sharing possible. What most urgently needs to change, she continues, 'are people's unconscious habits of interracial interaction and perception. Such *practical* learning can take place only in integrated settings' (p. 186). Indeed, it is primarily through 'practical experience' (p. 137) that opposition to integration will be overcome. In the final analysis integration will remove barriers to social mobility.

Among her concrete proposals to advance racial justice we find the following:

- Section 8 housing vouchers for entry into non-black middle-class neighbourhoods;
- an abolition of class-segregative zoning regulations;
- an extension and enforcement of Title VII legislation to curb discrimination;
- an abolition of legal obstacles to voluntary integration programs;
- an assiduous adoption of integrative programs by school districts;
- drawing boundaries to create integrated voting districts;
- selection for racially integrated juries;
- an extension of affirmative action programs.

Most of these proposals of course have long existed as policy, and their effects have been modestly positive, but whether an extension and more consistent implementation will do the work she believes they will remains to be seen. Hypotheses must be tested against experience, and, she writes, 'we could discover, through reflection on the consequences of following the ideal, that we misconceived the problem, that our proposed solution was confused or incoherent' (p. 7). For example, integrated voting districts *might* produce broader coalitions and power-sharing, as she suggests, or they might not. Much hangs not only on the way voting districts are drawn, but also on the political system in place, the availability of reliable information about candidates and relevant issues, and the political will to reform or overhaul familiar institutional structures. In any case, whether an integrated elite – given the way that elites of *any* group generally function – will desist from being 'insular, clubby, ignorant, unaccountable, and irresponsible' is also not a foregone conclusion.

Anderson's book details many of the harms of de jure and de facto segregation. This literature is well-covered ground for many sociologists, historians, urban geographers and educational policy scholars. Any serious reader of American history will certainly know about racial covenants, redlining, police profiling, labour market exclusion, disproportionately high incarceration rates of black men, epidemic narcotic use, and general despair in pockets of the inner city. Further, any student of urban schooling will have read about – if not personally experienced – high teacher turnover, low expectations, high student mobility, astronomical dropout rates, and the bleak employment prospects awaiting inner-city youth (none of which are unique to the American context). And there

can be no doubt that many of the legacies of institutional racism live on long after the dismantling of Jim Crow and the implementation of Civil Rights legislation. There is no question that blacks have suffered centuries of social disadvantage and exclusion, and, despite massive social and economic progress and a dramatic decrease in overt racial hatred and violence, blacks *as a group* continue to experience discrimination and prejudice and, in many contexts, continue to be underrepresented in positions of leadership and power. Anderson is therefore quite right to criticize those who would deny the persistence of racism, prejudice and stigma or who insist that we abandon all talk of race in favour of 'colour-blindness'.

Yet surprisingly absent in her survey of the literature is any substantive discussion of social class. (And of course class distinctions are not the only relevant ones. We can mention cultural differences, immigrant status, political affiliation, mixed-race identities, etc.) The book is replete with references to black disadvantage but it is the bottom 25% – those whom Eugene Robinson has called 'the abandoned' – who appear to comprise the black community in Anderson's account. Indeed, affluent and middle-class blacks are mentioned only in passing. In the main 'blacks' are homogenously portrayed as disenfranchised and helpless victims, while 'whites' curiously are described as an undifferentiated group controlling routes to opportunity. Anderson tells us that her book concerns *group* inequality, but is blackness – more than whiteness – a reliable proxy for poverty in the United States? Well, that depends on where you are looking. To be sure, *urban* poverty has a colour. Further, stigma and discrimination attach more frequently to blacks, but they do not attach equally. To be fair, Anderson's focus is not on stigma and poverty per se, but only on their black varieties. She argues, 'blacks may need experience in integrated settings to acquire the skills needed to manage and lead racially-integrated, majority-white institutions' (p. 186). Now of course *some* blacks may need that, just as some whites, Latinos and Asians might. But she is remiss to say that the socioeconomic spread in black America is every bit as wide as the 'white community' even if wealth accumulations are notably smaller.

Also notably absent in *The Imperative of Integration* is any positive assessment of black spatial concentration. Anderson argues that black neighbourhoods exist *primarily* because of white racism. On this view, blacks retreat to their own space either in response to discrimination or to escape prejudice and stigma. Now of course there very often is a correlation between the degree of stigmatization a group feels and its propensity to remain separate. But stigma is only one variable. Anderson does acknowledge that 'many blacks express pride in controlling their own communities and feel more at home in black majority neighbourhoods' (p. 70) but proceeds to explain this largely in terms of white antipathy towards blacks. Except perhaps as temporary relief from the pressures of integrated environments, nowhere are black neighbourhoods, churches and community associations described as *voluntary* resources of membership and political and economic mobilization. She is right that some of what she calls 'black self-segregation' is a 'response to perceived white hostility' (p. 87) but this hardly explains all or arguably even most of the reasons why spatial concentrations exist. Would that more attention had been given to what sociologists call the homophily principle, namely, that most people prefer to associate

with others like themselves (which may or may not coincide with race and ethnicity). Anderson is right that innocently ethnocentric preferences alone can't explain segregation. But for an argument purported to have normative force, racism is only one factor that might explain the widespread existence of ethnic enclaves throughout the United States and around the world.

Touching upon issues that bear directly on education, Anderson cites empirical studies that confirm her thesis. She writes:

> Studies consistently confirm the integrationist hypothesis. Students who attend more racially integrated schools lead more racially integrated lives after graduation: they have more racially diverse co-workers, neighbours, and friends than do students who attend less diverse schools. (p. 183)

This view is buoyed by the optimistic idea that 'public schools play an important role in promoting norms of respectful discourse and undermining prejudice' (p. 20). But of course integrated public schools *as such* are not loci of enlightened tolerance, equity and power-sharing; they are also sites of bullying, inter-ethnic tension and differential treatment. Anderson would presumably argue that this is all the more reason to improve the conditions of integrated schools. I agree. But we should not forget the non-ideal conditions of this contact. As Anderson knows, much hangs on the conditions of the interaction as well as on the non-shared experiences of the participants. Integrated settings may be just as likely to *confirm* stereotypes of others as to remove them. Even when prejudice-reduction may result from integrated workplaces, neighbourhoods and classrooms, this often does not generalize beyond those one knows on a personal basis.

Elsewhere Anderson observes: 'the black–white achievement test score gap is largest in states with the most highly segregated schools, and smallest in states with the most integrated schools' (p. 120). But this insinuates a causal relationship that is extremely difficult to determine. We will want to know more about other features in these school systems than can possibly be derived from the black–white student ratio. In contrast to her compelling evidence on the benefits of mixed juries, police forces and the military (pp. 130–131), her hypotheses about mixed schools rely upon heavily contested data. Integrated schools *might* remove prejudice and barriers to social mobility, but when market forces, scarcity of resources, high student and staff turnover rates and weak teacher training programs define our social and political reality, that outcome is far from obvious. More rides on effective democracy than simply integrating voting districts or schools. To her credit, she later concedes that the modest gains in achievement reported by some integrated schools are not well understood and in any case it is 'difficult to estimate the size of the effects of integration on black academic achievement' (p. 122).

Anderson admits that integration, too, may exact a very high price. There has been, and continues to be, much collateral damage borne by those whose presence in a corporation or college serve to meet well-intentioned hiring quotas, to celebrate 'diversity', or to instruct others about minority experiences. Even so, she explains, nowadays 'it is time to strike a new balance between moments of self-segregation and of integration, [one] decidedly in favour of the racially inclusive "us"' (p. 189). She asserts that effectively

implemented integrationist policies will inevitably lead to some kind of 'common super-ordinate identity'. Anderson insists that her ideal is not assimilationist, one in which differences are downplayed and slowly expunged for the purposes of pursuing a set of common goals determined by dominant groups. But throughout the book integration appears to trump the importance of black-only concentration and mobilization of *any* type and in *any* sphere, not to mention any positive constructions of black political, cultural and community concerns on terms decided by blacks.

While Anderson claims that individuals are entitled to freedom of association (p. 73) she clearly worries about potential abuses of this freedom by whites, and thus social justice on her account overrides those freedoms when they appear to be in conflict. But the fact that some groups may abuse this freedom is no reason to deny it to others whose well-being may crucially depend on it. Take residence: should citizens be told where they can live and which schools their children must attend? It is difficult to see that happening in societies where there are protected constitutional freedoms, incidentally enjoyed to varying degrees by minorities as well, say to establish schools and community centres. If equality can only be achieved through integration, other liberal democratic values will have to be severely constrained.

Anderson is correct that integration pursued for the right reasons and accompanied by the right institutional features and legitimacy can certainly advance social justice. Integration can – and should – remain an important goal of social justice to the extent that it entails real equality and power-sharing. *But integration in itself is not a proxy for justice.* Minorities of all stripes – Chinese, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Koreans, Sikhs, and yes, even 'blacks' – often find more justice in their *own communities*: equal recognition, fair treatment, social cooperation, power-sharing and meaningful and remunerative economic opportunities. Anderson must surely realize this but she nonetheless insists upon integration *all the way down.*

Political philosophers strive to take a long-term view of things. Moral and political progress is not achieved overnight. To the extent that Anderson dreams of a society without prejudice and stigma and market forces, or where resource hoarding by one group will cease to exist when 'integration' arrives, her argument remains an important contribution to both ideal and non-ideal theory. But it is equally important to remember that under less-than-ideal conditions, namely, the world we live in, it is not unreasonable that citizens will pursue justice and empowerment in all sorts of ways, including those that do not depend upon integration. Even when striving for more just institutional and structural background conditions, we cannot afford to forget the far less-than-ideal circumstances in which everyday decisions are made, in which priorities conflict, and in which liberal freedoms of association lead to outcomes some of us may lament.