



The Imperative of Integration

Elizabeth Anderson

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More than forty years have passed since Congress, in response to the Civil Rights Movement, enacted sweeping antidiscrimination laws in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. As a signal achievement of that legacy, in 2008, Americans elected their first African American president. Some would argue that we have finally arrived at a postracial America, but *The Imperative of Integration* indicates otherwise. Elizabeth Anderson demonstrates that, despite progress toward racial equality, African Americans remain disadvantaged on virtually all measures of well-being. Segregation remains a key cause of these problems, and Anderson skillfully shows why racial integration is needed to address these issues. Weaving together extensive social science findings--in economics, sociology, and psychology--with political theory, this book provides a compelling argument for reviving the ideal of racial integration to overcome injustice and inequality, and to build a better democracy.

Considering the effects of segregation and integration across multiple social arenas, Anderson exposes the deficiencies of racial views on both the right and the left. She reveals the limitations of conservative explanations for black disadvantage in terms of cultural pathology within the black community and explains why color blindness is morally misguided. Multicultural celebrations of group differences are also not enough to solve our racial problems. Anderson provides a distinctive rationale for affirmative action as a tool for promoting integration, and explores how integration can be practiced beyond affirmative action.

Offering an expansive model for practicing political philosophy in close collaboration with the social sciences, this book is a trenchant examination of how racial integration can lead to a more robust and responsive democracy.

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