

affirmative action sociology definition

Affirmative Action: A Sociological Definition and Critical Analysis

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What is the Affirmative Action Sociology Definition?

The affirmative action sociology definition goes beyond a simple legalistic description. It acknowledges affirmative action as a set of policies designed to address historical and systemic discrimination against marginalized groups, primarily based on race, ethnicity, gender, and disability. Sociologists examine affirmative action not only through the lens of its legal framework and stated goals but also through its social impact, effectiveness, and the broader social and political contexts within which it operates. The affirmative action sociology definition therefore incorporates a critical analysis of power dynamics, social inequalities, and the complex interplay between individual agency and structural constraints.

Perspectives on Affirmative Action: A Sociological Lens

Different sociological perspectives offer unique insights into the affirmative action sociology definition and its implications.

1. **Functionalist Perspective:** This perspective might view affirmative action as a mechanism to restore social equilibrium by correcting imbalances in representation across social institutions. It focuses on the functional role of affirmative action in promoting social integration and stability. However, critics might argue that this approach overlooks the complexities of power relations and the potential for unintended consequences.

1. **Conflict Perspective:** This perspective emphasizes the inherent inequalities embedded within social structures and views affirmative action as a tool to challenge dominant group power. It focuses on how affirmative action can redistribute resources and opportunities to marginalized groups, thereby addressing systemic inequalities. However, a conflict perspective also recognizes the potential for backlash and resistance from dominant groups who perceive affirmative action as unfair or threatening to their interests. The affirmative action sociology definition, from this view, is inseparable from ongoing struggles for social justice.

1. **Symbolic Interactionism:** This perspective analyzes how individuals interact and interpret affirmative action policies and their consequences. It examines how individuals' identities and self-perceptions are shaped by affirmative action, both for those who benefit from it and those who perceive it as unfair. The affirmative action sociology definition, through this lens, is viewed through the lived experiences of individuals, highlighting the diverse and sometimes conflicting interpretations of these policies.

1. **Critical Race Theory:** This perspective provides a crucial lens for understanding the affirmative action sociology definition by acknowledging the deeply embedded nature of racism in social institutions. It views affirmative action not simply as a remedy for past discrimination, but as an ongoing struggle to dismantle systemic racism and challenge the dominant narratives that uphold racial inequality. This perspective emphasizes the importance of centering the voices and experiences of people of color in the debate surrounding affirmative action.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Affirmative Action: A Sociological Challenge

Evaluating the effectiveness of affirmative action presents significant methodological challenges. While some studies show positive impacts on representation and educational attainment for marginalized groups, others raise concerns about potential unintended consequences, such as the perception of reverse discrimination or the lack of long-term systemic change. Sociologists use various methods, including statistical analysis, qualitative interviews, and ethnographic studies, to assess the multifaceted impact of affirmative action. The affirmative action sociology definition requires acknowledging these complexities and embracing a nuanced understanding of its effects.

Affirmative Action and Meritocracy: A Contested Terrain

A central debate surrounding affirmative action centers on its relationship to meritocracy – the belief that success should be based solely on individual merit and ability. Critics argue that affirmative action undermines meritocracy by prioritizing group identity over individual achievement. However, proponents counter that historical and ongoing discrimination creates systemic barriers that prevent individuals from marginalized groups from competing on a level playing field. Therefore, a fairer affirmative action sociology definition recognizes the need for affirmative action to level the playing field and create a truly meritocratic society. This necessitates addressing systemic inequality, not merely individual performance.

The Future of Affirmative Action: A Sociological Perspective

The future of affirmative action remains uncertain, subject to ongoing legal challenges and shifting social and political landscapes. Sociologists play a crucial role in providing evidence-based insights to inform policy debates and contribute to a more equitable and just society. The affirmative action sociology definition must constantly evolve to reflect the changing social context and the ongoing struggle for social justice.

Conclusion:

The affirmative action sociology definition moves beyond a simple legal framework to encompass a comprehensive understanding of its social, political, and historical contexts. Sociologists utilize diverse theoretical perspectives and methodologies to examine its impact, effectiveness, and ethical implications. While debates surrounding affirmative action continue,

a rigorous sociological understanding is vital for navigating these complexities and working toward a more equitable future.

FAQs:

1. What are the main goals of affirmative action policies? The main goals are to increase representation of underrepresented groups in education and employment, redress historical and systemic discrimination, and promote diversity.
1. What are some criticisms of affirmative action? Common criticisms include the potential for reverse discrimination, the perception of lowering standards, and the lack of long-term systemic change.
1. How does affirmative action relate to the concept of meritocracy? This is a central point of contention. Critics argue it undermines meritocracy, while proponents claim it levels the playing field to allow true merit to be assessed.
1. What are the different sociological perspectives on affirmative action? Functionalist, conflict, symbolic interactionist, and critical race theory perspectives offer varied insights into its functions, impacts, and interpretations.
1. What are some of the methodological challenges in evaluating the effectiveness of affirmative action? Measuring its impact requires nuanced approaches, as effects are complex and intertwined with other social factors.
1. How does affirmative action intersect with other social justice issues? It's closely linked to issues of race, gender, class, and disability, all contributing to systemic inequalities.

1. What role do legal challenges play in shaping affirmative action policies? Court cases continually test the boundaries and legality of different affirmative action measures.
1. How has affirmative action evolved over time? Policies have adapted to changing social contexts and legal precedents, constantly evolving in their scope and approach.
1. What is the future of affirmative action in light of ongoing social and political changes? Its future remains uncertain, depending on ongoing legal battles, social movements, and political shifts.

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affirmative action sociology definition: Measuring Racial Discrimination National Research Council, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Committee on National Statistics, Panel on Methods for Assessing Discrimination, 2004-07-24 Many racial and ethnic groups in the United States, including blacks, Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, and others, have historically faced severe discrimination—pervasive and open denial of civil, social, political, educational, and economic opportunities. Today, large differences among racial and ethnic groups continue to exist in employment, income and wealth, housing, education, criminal justice, health, and other areas. While many factors may contribute to such differences, their size and extent suggest that various forms of discriminatory treatment persist in U.S. society and serve to undercut the achievement of equal opportunity. *Measuring Racial Discrimination* considers the definition of race and racial discrimination, reviews the existing techniques used to measure racial discrimination, and identifies new tools and areas for future research. The book conducts a thorough evaluation of current methodologies for a wide range of circumstances in which racial discrimination may occur, and makes recommendations on how to better assess the presence and effects of discrimination.

affirmative action sociology definition: Race and Ethnicity in the 21st Century Alice Bloch, John Solomos, 2017-09-16 In the 21st century, new ethnic groups are forming faster than ever before and the role of race and ethnicity studies has evolved in response to this. From policy issues around housing and crime, through to debates about asylum and media representations, sociologists must encounter and explore a vast range of issues in this ever changing field. This book gives an overview of the most important topics that affect the making of race and ethnic relations in contemporary societies. It goes beyond general definitions to explain exactly how and what these issues and debates can tell us about modern society. Using research and statistics to shed light on the most cutting-edge issues, the book takes each major topic in turn and helps readers to think through race and ethnicity on the basis of the most recent thinking in the field. Each chapter explains a range of theoretical and conceptual perspectives, whilst approaching complex ideas in an accessible and insightful way. Written and edited by recognized experts in the field, *Race and Ethnicity in the 21st Century* will be an essential point of reference for researchers and practitioners and key reading for all students of race and ethnicity.

affirmative action sociology definition: Making Sense of Affirmative Action Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, 2020-03-30 Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen here poses the question: Is affirmative action morally (un)justifiable? As a phrase that frequently surfaces in major headlines, affirmative action is a highly controversial and far-reaching issue, yet most of the recent scholarly literature surrounding the topic tends to focus on defending one side or another in a particular case of affirmative action. Lippert-Rasmussen instead takes a wide-angle view, addressing each of the prevailing contemporary arguments for and against affirmative action. In his introduction, he proposes an amended definition of affirmative action and considers what forms, from quotas to outreach strategies, may fall under this revised definition. He then analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of each position, relative to each other, and applies recent discussions in political philosophy to assess if and how each argument might justify different conclusions given different cases or philosophical frameworks. Each chapter investigates an argument for or against affirmative action. The six arguments for it consist of compensation, anti-discrimination, equality of opportunity, role model, diversity, and integration. The five arguments against it are reverse discrimination, stigma, mismatch, publicity, and merit. Lippert-Rasmussen also expands the discussion to include affirmative action for groups beyond the prototypical examples of African Americans and women, and to consider health and minority languages as possible criteria for inclusion in affirmative action initiatives. Based on the comparative strength of anti-discrimination and equality of opportunity arguments, *Making Sense of Affirmative Action* ultimately makes a case in favor of affirmative action; however, its originality lies in Lippert-Rasmussen's careful exploration of moral justifiability as a contextual evaluative measure and his insistence that complexity and a comparative focus are inherent to this important issue.

affirmative action sociology definition: Unequal City Carla Shedd, 2015-10-20 Chicago has long struggled with racial residential segregation, high rates of poverty, and deepening class stratification, and it can be a challenging place for adolescents to grow up. *Unequal City* examines the ways in which Chicago's most vulnerable residents navigate their neighborhoods, life opportunities, and encounters with the law. In this pioneering analysis of the intersection of race, place, and opportunity, sociologist and criminal justice expert Carla Shedd illuminates how schools either reinforce or ameliorate the social inequalities that shape the worlds of these adolescents. Shedd draws from an array of data and in-depth interviews with Chicago youth to offer new insight into this understudied group. Focusing on four public high schools with differing student bodies, Shedd reveals how the predominantly low-income African American students at one school encounter obstacles their more affluent, white counterparts on the other side of the city do not face. Teens often travel long distances to attend school which, due to Chicago's segregated and highly unequal neighborhoods, can involve crossing class, race, and gang lines. As Shedd explains, the disadvantaged teens who traverse these boundaries daily develop a keen "perception of injustice," or the recognition that their economic and educational opportunities are restricted by their place in

the social hierarchy. Adolescents' worldviews are also influenced by encounters with law enforcement while traveling to school and during school hours. Shedd tracks the rise of metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and pat-downs at certain Chicago schools. Along with police procedures like stop-and-frisk, these prison-like practices lead to distrust of authority and feelings of powerlessness among the adolescents who experience mistreatment either firsthand or vicariously. Shedd finds that the racial composition of the student body profoundly shapes students' perceptions of injustice. The more diverse a school is, the more likely its students of color will recognize whether they are subject to discriminatory treatment. By contrast, African American and Hispanic youth whose schools and neighborhoods are both highly segregated and highly policed are less likely to understand their individual and group disadvantage due to their lack of exposure to youth of differing backgrounds.

affirmative action sociology definition: Mismatch Richard Sander, Stuart Taylor Jr, 2012-10-09 The debate over affirmative action has raged for over four decades, with little give on either side. Most agree that it began as noble effort to jump-start racial integration; many believe it devolved into a patently unfair system of quotas and concealment. Now, with the Supreme Court set to rule on a case that could sharply curtail the use of racial preferences in American universities, law professor Richard Sander and legal journalist Stuart Taylor offer a definitive account of what affirmative action has become, showing that while the objective is laudable, the effects have been anything but. Sander and Taylor have long admired affirmative action's original goals, but after many years of studying racial preferences, they have reached a controversial but undeniable conclusion: that preferences hurt underrepresented minorities far more than they help them. At the heart of affirmative action's failure is a simple phenomenon called mismatch. Using dramatic new data and numerous interviews with affected former students and university officials of color, the authors show how racial preferences often put students in competition with far better-prepared classmates, dooming many to fall so far behind that they can never catch up. Mismatch largely explains why, even though black applicants are more likely to enter college than whites with similar backgrounds, they are far less likely to finish; why there are so few black and Hispanic professionals with science and engineering degrees and doctorates; why black law graduates fail bar exams at four times the rate of whites; and why universities accept relatively affluent minorities over working class and poor people of all races. Sander and Taylor believe it is possible to achieve the goal of racial equality in higher education, but they argue that alternative policies -- such as full public disclosure of all preferential admission policies, a focused commitment to improving socioeconomic diversity on campuses, outreach to minority communities, and a renewed focus on K-12 schooling -- will go farther in achieving that goal than preferences, while also allowing applicants to make informed decisions. Bold, controversial, and deeply researched, Mismatch calls for a renewed examination of this most divisive of social programs -- and for reforms that will help realize the ultimate goal of racial equality.

affirmative action sociology definition: Racing for Innocence Jennifer Pierce, 2012-09-05 How is it that recipients of white privilege deny the role they play in reproducing racial inequality? Racing for Innocence addresses this question by examining the backlash against affirmative action in the late 1980s and early 1990s—just as courts, universities, and other institutions began to end affirmative action programs. This book recounts the stories of elite legal professionals at a large corporation with a federally mandated affirmative action program, as well as the cultural narratives about race, gender, and power in the news media and Hollywood films. Though most white men denied accountability for any racism in the workplace, they recounted ways in which they resisted—whether wittingly or not— incorporating people of color or white women into their workplace lives. Drawing on three different approaches—ethnography, narrative analysis, and fiction—to conceptualize the complexities and ambiguities of race and gender in contemporary America, this book makes an innovative pedagogical tool.

affirmative action sociology definition: The Imperative of Integration Elizabeth Anderson, 2013-04-21 A powerful new argument for reviving the ideal of racial integration 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.

affirmative action sociology definition: *The Future of Affirmative Action* Richard D. Kahlenberg, 2014 As the United States experiences dramatic demographic change--and as our society's income inequality continues to rise--promoting racial, ethnic, and economic inclusion at selective colleges has become more important than ever. At the same time, however, many Americans--including several members of the U.S. Supreme Court--are uneasy with explicitly using race as a factor in college admissions. The Court's decision in *Fisher v. University of Texas* emphasized that universities can use race in admissions only when necessary, and that universities bear the ultimate burden of demonstrating, before turning to racial classifications, that available, workable race-neutral alternatives do not suffice. With race-based admission programs increasingly curtailed, *The Future of Affirmative Action* explores race-neutral approaches as a method of promoting college diversity after *Fisher* decision. The volume suggests that *Fisher* might on the one hand be a further challenge to the use of racial criteria in admissions, but on the other presents a new opportunity to tackle, at long last, the burgeoning economic divisions in our system of higher education, and in society as a whole. Contributions from: Danielle Allen (Princeton); John Brittain (University of the District of Columbia) and Benjamin Landy (MSNBC.com); Nancy Cantor and Peter Englot (Rutgers-Newark); Anthony P. Carnevale, Stephen J. Rose, and Jeff Strohl (Georgetown University); Dalton Conley (New York University); Arthur L. Coleman and Teresa E. Taylor (EducationCounsel LLC); Matthew N. Gaertner (Pearson); Sara Goldrick-Rab (University of Wisconsin-Madison); Scott Greytak (Campinha Bacote LLC); Catharine Hill (Vassar); Richard D. Kahlenberg (The Century Foundation); Richard L. McCormick (Rutgers); Nancy G. McDuff (University of Georgia); Halley Potter (The Century Foundation); Alexandria Walton Radford (RTI International) and Jessica Howell (College Board); Richard Sander (UCLA School of Law); and Marta Tienda (Princeton).

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affirmative action sociology definition: Diversity in American Higher Education Lisa M. Stulberg, Sharon Lawner Weinberg, 2012-05-23 Diversity has been a focus of higher education policy, law, and scholarship for decades, continually expanding to include not only race, ethnicity and gender, but also socioeconomic status, sexual and political orientation, and more. However, existing collections still tend to focus on a narrow definition of diversity in education, or in relation to singular topics like access to higher education, financial aid, and affirmative action. By contrast, *Diversity in American Higher Education* captures in one volume the wide range of critical issues that comprise the current discourse on diversity on the college campus in its broadest sense. This edited collection explores: legal perspectives on diversity and affirmative action higher education's relationship to the deeper roots of K-12 equity and access policy, politics, and practice's effects on students, faculty, and staff. Bringing together the leading experts on diversity in higher education scholarship, *Diversity in American Higher Education* redefines the agenda for diversity as we know it today.

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affirmative action sociology definition: Confronting Affirmative Action in Brazil Vânia Penha-Lopes, 2017-06-06 Using affirmative action to decrease racial inequality is the latest chapter of a long tradition of comparing Brazil and the United States with regard to race. *Confronting Affirmative Action in Brazil: University Quota Students and the Quest for Racial Justice* is timely for both countries as they struggle with racial justice in higher education. This book responds to the United States' dismantling of affirmative action programs and a belief that they have run their course. Data show that, while affirmative action policies have contributed to a significant increase in the representation of non-Whites in the U.S. middle class, other segments of the population have yet to take full advantage of such policies. In Brazil, this book engaged with the need to understand the first results of a public policy expected to promote major social change, as it represents the first time that country admitted the existence of racial inequality in its core and took measures toward combating it despite any subsequent controversy or dissent.

affirmative action sociology definition: A Black and White Case Greg Stohr, 2006-04-01 In the late 1990s, two lawsuits by white applicants who had been rejected by the University of Michigan began working their way through the federal court system, aimed at the abolition of racial preferences in college admissions. The stakes were high, the constitutional questions profound, the politics and emotions explosive. It was soon evident that the matter was headed for the highest court

in the land, but there all clarity ended. To the plaintiffs and the feisty public-interest law firm that backed them, the suits were a long overdue assault on reverse discrimination. The Constitution, strictly construed, was color-blind. Discrimination under any guise was not only illegal, it was the wrong way to set history right in a nation that had been troubled and divided by the uses and misuses of race for more than two hundred years. To the University of Michigan, and to other top institutions striving to expand opportunity and create diverse, representative student bodies, it looked as if most of what had been put in place since the 1978 *Bakke v. University of California* decision was about to be undone. Black and Hispanic students were in danger of being once again largely shut out of the most important avenue of advancement in America, an elite education. To some, it appeared likely that racial integration was about to suffer their worst setback since the start of the civil rights movement. In *A Black and White Case*, veteran Supreme Court reporter Greg Stohr portrays the individual dramas and exposes the human passions that colored and propelled this momentous legal struggle. His fascinating account takes us deep inside America's court system, where logic collides with emotion, and common sense must contend with the majesty and sometimes the seeming perversity of the law. He follows the trail from Michigan to Washington, DC, revealing how lawyers argued and strategized, how lower-court judges fought behind the scenes for control of the cases, and why the White House filed a brief in support of the white students, in opposition to a chorus of retired generals and admirals worried that the military academies would no longer reflect the face of America. Finally, Stohr details the fallout from the Supreme Court's controversial 2003 ruling that both upheld affirmative action and upended some of the methods that had been used to effect it. And he shows how colleges and universities are reshaping their affirmative action policies—an evolution closely watched by lower courts, employers, civil rights lawyers, legislators, regulators, and the public. *A Black and White Case* brings alive and brilliantly explains one of the most important Supreme Court decisions on the fundamental and divisive subject of race relations in America.

affirmative action sociology definition: The Diversity Bargain Natasha K. Warikoo, 2016-11-15 We've heard plenty from politicians and experts on affirmative action and higher education, about how universities should intervene—if at all—to ensure a diverse but deserving student population. But what about those for whom these issues matter the most? In this book, Natasha K. Warikoo deeply explores how students themselves think about merit and race at a uniquely pivotal moment: after they have just won the most competitive game of their lives and gained admittance to one of the world's top universities. What Warikoo uncovers—talking with both white students and students of color at Harvard, Brown, and Oxford—is absolutely illuminating; and some of it is positively shocking. As she shows, many elite white students understand the value of diversity abstractly, but they ignore the real problems that racial inequality causes and that diversity programs are meant to solve. They stand in fear of being labeled a racist, but they are quick to call foul should a diversity program appear at all to hamper their own chances for advancement. The most troubling result of this ambivalence is what she calls the “diversity bargain,” in which white students reluctantly agree with affirmative action as long as it benefits them by providing a diverse learning environment—racial diversity, in this way, is a commodity, a selling point on a brochure. And as Warikoo shows, universities play a big part in creating these situations. The way they talk about race on campus and the kinds of diversity programs they offer have a huge impact on student attitudes, shaping them either toward ambivalence or, in better cases, toward more productive and considerate understandings of racial difference. Ultimately, this book demonstrates just how slippery the notions of race, merit, and privilege can be. In doing so, it asks important questions not just about college admissions but what the elite students who have succeeded at it—who will be the world's future leaders—will do with the social inequalities of the wider world.

affirmative action sociology definition: Affirmative Action Carl Leon Bankston, 2017 Affirmative action is one of the most controversial policies of our time. This book provides a succinct but comprehensive account of the historical background of affirmative action, including the complicated racial history that gave rise to it and the changing meaning of affirmative action in

government and law, giving special attention to the role of the civil rights movement. The book traces the major court decisions that have defined how affirmative action policies in education and employment may be used and that have defined the limitations of these policies. It gives particular attention to the emergence of the diversity rationale and to how this became the central legal justification for affirmative action. The book describes how the Supreme Court has been as divided as American society in general on the question of affirmative action. It discusses the relevance of the changing composition of the American population for affirmative action, giving special attention to the Latino and Asian groups that have been the greatest part of demographic change in the United States. It considers the ways in which diversity has become a complicated concept in this changing society. These pages also devote attention to arguments that racial and ethnic affirmative action should be replaced by efforts of socioeconomic affirmative action that would be more relevant to contemporary American society. Following this discussion of social and economic change, this brief volume examines the different ways in which affirmative action is a problematic approach to social inequality. The book suggests that inequality is deeply rooted in social networks and cultural patterns, and that inequality therefore does not lend itself to redesign through planning. It suggests, further, that affirmative action is based on the idea that upward mobility can be selectively encouraged across groups, without recognizing that universal upward movement is not possible. It provides an even-handed consideration of the mismatch, qualification and stigma arguments. Finally, the book looks at the possible future of affirmative action, considering pressures working against preferential policies in employment, education and the substantial support that these policies will continue to have.

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affirmative action sociology definition: The Meritocracy Myth Stephen J. McNamee, 2009-08-16 The Meritocracy Myth challenges the widely held American belief in meritocracy. That people get out of the system what they put into it based on individual merit. Fully revised and updated throughout, the second edition includes compelling new case studies, such as the impact of social and cultural capital in the cases of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, and new material on current topics such as the impact of the financial and credit crisis, intergenerational mobility, and the impact of racism and sexism. The Meritocracy Myth examines talent, attitude, work ethic, and character as elements of merit and evaluates the effect of non-merit factors such as social status, race, heritage, and wealth on meritocracy. A compelling book on an often-overlooked topic, first edition was highly regarded and proved a useful examination of this classic American ideal.

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DIVThe first major book to argue in favor of affirmative action in higher education since Bowen and Bok's *The Shape of the River* /div

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affirmative action sociology definition: Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? Beverly Daniel Tatum, 2017-09-05 The classic, New York Times-bestselling book on the psychology of racism that shows us how to talk about race in America. Walk into any racially mixed high school and you will see Black, White, and Latino youth clustered in their own groups. Is this self-segregation a problem to address or a coping strategy? How can we get past our reluctance to discuss racial issues? Beverly Daniel Tatum, a renowned authority on the psychology of racism, argues that straight talk about our racial identities is essential if we are serious about communicating across racial and ethnic divides and pursuing antiracism. These topics have only become more urgent as the national conversation about race is increasingly acrimonious. This fully

revised edition is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand dynamics of race and racial inequality in America.

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affirmative action sociology definition: *The Tyranny of Merit* Michael J. Sandel, 2020-09-15 A Times Literary Supplement's Book of the Year 2020 A New Statesman's Best Book of 2020 A Bloomberg's Best Book of 2020 A Guardian Best Book About Ideas of 2020 The world-renowned philosopher and author of the bestselling *Justice* explores the central question of our time: What has become of the common good? These are dangerous times for democracy. We live in an age of winners and losers, where the odds are stacked in favor of the already fortunate. Stalled social mobility and entrenched inequality give the lie to the American credo that you can make it if you try. The consequence is a brew of anger and frustration that has fueled populist protest and extreme polarization, and led to deep distrust of both government and our fellow citizens--leaving us morally unprepared to face the profound challenges of our time. World-renowned philosopher Michael J. Sandel argues that to overcome the crises that are upending our world, we must rethink the attitudes toward success and failure that have accompanied globalization and rising inequality. Sandel shows the hubris a meritocracy generates among the winners and the harsh judgement it imposes on those left behind, and traces the dire consequences across a wide swath of American life. He offers an alternative way of thinking about success--more attentive to the role of luck in human affairs, more conducive to an ethic of humility and solidarity, and more affirming of the dignity of work. *The Tyranny of Merit* points us toward a hopeful vision of a new politics of the common good.

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