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# Role of Social Institutions In a Multicultural Society

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*With the rapid change in the demographic structure of the American society, the United States is becoming a mosaic of multiculturalism. Such changes have dramatic implications for social institutions. To understand such changes an overview of the evolution of multiculturalism from a historical perspective is provided. The concept of cultural pluralism is discussed for delineating the role of social institutions. Also examined is the issue of affirmative action, and the role of social welfare institution.*

In the present socio-political and economic international climate nations are multi-cultural and multi-ethnic. In the course of the relationships between the diverse people who settle in a country, a number of multicultural issues arise. These include conflict between those groups who want to maintain their cultural heritage and related practices, and those forces that push them into adopting dominant group norms and customs. Conflict between these two perspectives has long standing historical roots. Also important are issues of equity and equality, and the role of various social institutions in fostering harmonious relationships between different people.

For a systematic and rational examination of these matters it is essential to consider them within their historical context. It is necessary to ask how a particular society evolves into a multi-ethnic and multicultural society?

This paper asks these kinds of questions about the United States, and examines three important conceptual and political approaches that have traditionally been brought to bear on these issues—namely the concepts commonly referred to as “anglo-conformity”, the “melting pot”, and “cultural pluralism.” Because the United States has adopted a policy of affirmative action intended to ensure equity and equality for members of minority groups in regard to education and employment we also examine this issue and offer some suggestions and consider social work’s role.

### *Anglo-Conformity*

The ambitious desire to create a one of a kind unique nation on earth prompted the early colonial leaders and the founding fathers to forge a sense of homogeneity among people who came to America. This took many forms. The history of race relations in America may be characterized as a process of “conquest, slavery and exploitation of foreign labor.” (Steinberg, 1989, p. 5). Native Americans were conquered and ostracized from all social and political aspects of the society. Much of the same was true of Mexicans in the Southwest. The history of the enslavement of millions of black Africans is well known and quite clear. Examples of the exploitation of foreign labor are legion. Among the exploited were the Chinese and millions of immigrants who were initially imported to build the industrial and economic infrastructure of the early American society. “It occurred to damned few white Americans in these years that Americans of color were also entitled to the rights and liberties promised by the constitution.” (Schlesinger, Jr., 1991, p. 15).

Viewed as a basic perspective on the relationships between diverse groups who come to the United States, anglo conformity is a broad term used to cover a variety of view points about assimilation and immigration. It assumes the desirability of maintaining English institutions (as modified by the American Revolution), the English language, and English oriented cultural patterns as dominant standards in American life (Gordon, 1978). The early colonialists who referred to themselves as “emigrants” and not as “immigrants” (Steinberg, 1989) came to

create a new England. The American Revolution was more than a Declaration of Independence. "The Revolutionary society had to make war against both the tyranny of England and profligacy of the American people themselves". (R. Takaki, 1990, p. 3). By 1790 the population was predominantly white, English, 75 percent from the British Island, and 99 percent Protestant (Steinberg, 1989, Pp. 7–8). Thus the American society was remarkably homogeneous both ethnically and religiously. The values and norms of the White Anglo Saxon Protestant completely dominated the social, political, and cultural institutions of the new nation. The conquered Native Americans, considered savages by the early settlers, were systematically removed to reservation wastelands, initially through force and later on through deceit and deception. For the Native Americans, acculturation has really been a euphemism for cultural genocide (Green, 1982). The enslaved African Americans, reduced to chattel slavery, were forced into perpetual servitude. Takaki (1990, pp. 3–15) captures the whites' views of African Americans and Native Americans as Calibans, savage, deformed slaves, dark devil, moral degenerates. Racial imagery of African American inferiority, their being ugly, libidinous savages predated slavery in English colonies (Jordan, 1987).

While many writers describe the exclusionary tendencies of whites towards all other ethnic and racial groups, Nathan Glazer (1978) sees a tendency of greater inclusiveness of all races and ethnic groups in the United States. Glazer delineates the American immigration pattern on three historical developments or "decisions" as he refers to them.

"First, the entire world would be allowed to enter the United States. The claim that some nations or races were to be favored in entry over others was, for a while, accepted, but it was eventually rejected. And once having entered into the United States—and whether that entry was by means of forced enslavement, free immigration or conquest—all citizens would have equal rights. No group would be considered subordinate to another. Second, no separate ethnic group was to be allowed to establish an independent polity in the United States. This was to be a union of states and a nation of free individuals, not a nation of politically defined ethnic groups. Third, no group, however, would be required to

give up character and distinctiveness as the price of full entry in the American society and polity." (Glazer, 1978, p. 5).

Glazer acknowledges the existence of cruelties to minorities. Nevertheless for Glazer such cruelties do not represent the "large direction," which is a tendency toward a greater inclusiveness in American history.

Some cast doubt on Glazer's contention concerning the first "decision." Was the entire world permitted to enter the United States and extended equal rights to all citizens regardless of their means of entry? Even though Glazer was referring to "decisions" made from time to time after the Revolutionary war such a decision never really existed in writing before or even much after the Declaration of Independence. There is much to suggest that these decisions were never really implemented.

Assimilation of "Anglo conformity" has been the most prevalent ideology throughout much of American history. Assimilation is a process whereby subordinate individuals or groups give up their way of life and take on the characteristics of the dominant group and are accepted as a part of that culture. Assimilation could occur at four distinct though related levels (Marger, 1994, pp. 116–121). 1. Cultural assimilation involves adoption of cultural traits such as languages, religion, diet and so on. 2. Structural assimilation which occurs firstly through primary relationship with small and intimate family and neighborhood groups, and secondly through interaction and involvement within society's major social institutions like the economic, political and educational institutions. 3. Biological assimilation occurs through intermarriage whereby the groups are indistinguishable culturally, structurally and physically. 4. Psychological assimilation occurs when members of the outgroup not only feel they are a part of the dominant culture but such self-identification is accepted by others as well.

In the United States the establishment of the English language as the lingua franca, English laws, Puritan moral codes were all steps towards cultural preeminence of the White Anglo Saxon Protestants who dominated the society economically, politically, and religiously. Non-English "aliens" were obliged to adapt to this new culture. A high value was placed on the

homogeneity of the society. Highly influential and significant leaders like Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and others expressed fear of foreigners, disdained their uncouth ways, and were concerned that they would contaminate the homogeneity of the American society (Steinberg, 1989, Takaki, 1987, Schlesinger Jr., 1991, Milton Gordon, 1978). The Naturalization Law of 1790 provided for citizenship for whites only. It took 162 years before the Walter-McCarran Act of 1952 permitted non-white immigrants to become naturalized citizens (Takaki, 1987, pp. 26–37).

Clearly the early laws, which reflected the norms and values of the powerful elites during the founding of the nation and events thereafter reinforced Anglo conformity. The Germans, the Swedes, and others of the “old immigration” all came in for discrimination by the early English settlers but eventually became accepted because they were considered as a superior race of tall, blond, blue-eyed “Nordics” or Aryans. However, the people of Eastern and Southern Europe who began immigrating in the 1880’s were not so lucky. The Italians, Slavs, and Jews were depicted as uncivilized, unruly and dangerous and were subjected to lynchings, shootings and killings (John Higham, 1987). Nevertheless, for these and other groups, assimilation in ways envisaged by the perspectives of Anglo conformity was relatively easy because of their European ancestry and white skin. The “Americanization” movement during World War I is also evidence of white American’s insistence on assimilation well into the 20th century.

“Governmental agencies at all levels, together with many private organizations, acted to implement more immediately foreigners’ adoption of American practices: citizenship, reverence of American institutions, and use of English language. Because this policy required all minority groups divest themselves of their distinctive ethnic characteristics and adopt those of the dominant group, George R. Stewart suggested that it be called the ‘transmuting pot’ theory.” (Parrillo, 1994, p. 56).

Not all seek assimilation, and not all who seek it obtain it. The physically or culturally distinct groups such as blacks, Asians, Indians, Indo-Chinese, and Moslems have either not sought

assimilation or have not obtained it. Such groups have also encountered insurmountable barriers to assimilation.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries most of the immigrants coming into the United States were from European countries. Today most of the new immigrants are from Latin America and Asia. Between 1960 and 1990, 15 million people were allowed entry into the United States or granted permanent residence (Marger, 1994, pp. 374–375). There appears to be a greater tolerance of ethnic minorities in the United States today than in the past (Marger, 1994, p. 388–389). However, we have a long way to go in fully acknowledging, accepting, and respecting the expression of ethnic differences. Following the Vietnam War, the Indo-Chinese refugees were located in training or “Americanization” camps before being released into the American society. Today, the racial and ethnic minority citizens have to often justify staying in this country. What country are you from? When are you going back? are questions the hyphenated Americans are often asked. Japanese “bashing,” “dot busting” of Asian Indians, and attacks on Asian businesses are telling reminders of a nation that is still divided on racial and ethnic lines.

### *Melting Pot*

With so many people from so many different countries coming into the United States it is conceivable to consider American society not as a modified England but a totally new blend culturally. Eighteenth century writer and agriculturalist, J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur, after years of living in America, described America as a great crucible where people from different nations come and are “melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. (Gordon, 1978, pp. 190–191). The melting pot concept found expression and acceptance among late 19th and early 20th century writers. In 1908, Israel Zangwill’s drama, “The Melting Pot,” produced in the United States became a popular success. Thus, around the turn of the century the melting pot idea became embedded in the ideals of the age as one response to the immigrant receiving experience of the nation.

This concept of melting pot was largely confined to a few academics, historians, poets, and playwrights. The seeds of "melting pot" never came to fruition, though it still remains a dream for many Americans. The notion of Anglo-conformity was so strong that many ethnic groups especially those who were ethnically and racially different, such as, the Chinese, Japanese, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans, were hardly allowed much of a chance to melt in the great American crucible.

The subjugation of the Native Americans, the conquest of Mexicans and the enslavement of African Americans have all been explained using a conflict perspective. In the subjugation and exploitation of people those in power had a distinct economic and political advantage. De facto and de jure discrimination enabled the dominant white majority to continue to enjoy the advantage well into the late nineteenth century. Given the nature of Anglo conformity it is interesting to note why non-Britishers were allowed into this country. Steinberg makes a persuasive case of "economic necessity rather than a principled commitment to the idea of America as an asylum that the United States imposed no nationally restrictions on immigration, either before or after independence," (Steinberg, 1989, pp. 11).

### Cultural Pluralism

Despite the fact that it was easier for white Europeans to blend with other white groups in the early stages of their immigration the non-English immigrants nevertheless created ethnic enclaves. For example, the formation of the Irish, the German, the Scottish societies, and others indicate the struggle of the different ethnic groups for preserving their cultural heritage. The Settlement House Movement, on the one hand appreciated and respected the culture of the new immigrants, but on the other hand inadvertently directed its activities towards the "Americanization" of these new arrivals. American society was receptive to culturally different people if they were motivated to become acculturated and abandon their cultural distinctiveness (Epps, 1974). Jane Addams did much to further the appreciative



view of the immigrants' cultural heritage and its usefulness to the society. By the early 20th century the theme of cultural pluralism was becoming slowly recognized. Arguments were being offered that "immigrants had ancient and honorable cultures that had much to offer an America whose character and destiny were still in the process of formation, and America which must serve as an example of harmonious cooperation of various heritages to a world inflamed by nationalism and war." (Gordon, 1978, pp. 199).

According to Milton Gordon, "The presumed goal of the cultural pluralist is to maintain enough subsocietal separation to guarantee the continuance of the ethnic cultural tradition and the existence of the group, without at the same time interfering with the carrying out of standard responsibilities to the general American civic life . . . within this context the sense of ethnic peoplehood will remain as one important layer of group identity while, hopefully, prejudice and discrimination will disappear or become so slight in scope as to be barely noticeable," (Gordon, 1964, p. 158).

Although the above definition fairly accurately fits the European immigrant groups, "it does not account for the maintenance of gross inequalities in the pluralistic system, particularly as it works for racial-ethnic groups." (Marger, 1994, p. 132). Cultural pluralism implies, ". . . mutual respect between the various groups in a society for one another's cultures, a respect that allows minorities to express their own culture without suffering prejudice or hostility." (Schaefer, 1990, p. 47).

### Immigrants In Pursuit of a Dream

Immigrants came to America believing it promised freedom, and opportunity for success and prosperity. The same promise continues to attract millions of people from around the world to the United States especially the new immigrants from Latin America and Asia. America currently is "a more ethnically diverse society today than any time in American history. And this diversity will, in all likelihood, continue to expand" (Marger 1994, p. 384). Can America deliver these people what it promises? The riots in Los Angeles during May 1992 following the acquittal of four white policemen charged with the beating

of Rodney King, an African American motorist, brought home the stark reality of divisiveness and insecurity in the United States. Such expressions of hostility have raised the question "What is America?" Who is an American? Although, these questions have been asked since the founding of the nation, at the present time there are as many bewildering answers as there are groups of people answering them. Some have lamented over what America was and what it was meant to be. Others resent and react, sometimes quite angrily, over what America has become.

America has become a multicultural society at a time of shrinking resources, economic downturn, and rising insecurity. "Is the rising cult of ethnicity a symptom of decreasing confidence in the American future? asks Schlesinger, Jr. (1991, pp 16–17). Latest in the long tradition of protectionism, prejudice and discrimination is the surfacing of economic and social issues concerning the newest immigrants that "has provoked negative reactions from both native whites and nonwhites who perceive the new groups as a threat to either their jobs or their language or as an increasing pool of welfare recipients." (Marger, 1994, pp. 383–384). The looting by African Americans and Hispanics of Korean and other businesses in Los Angeles may be a resurgence of xenophobia and the reality of a heterogeneous society. America has to recognize that it is a multicultural society. The different ethnic and racial groups' desire to preserve their cultural heritage does not make them less American, nor should they be seen as second class citizens. One can be a Chinese, German, Hispanic, Hindu, Moslem, Japanese, Jewish, Korean, etc., and still be an American. Furthermore, most developed countries in the world are now becoming multicultural and this trend is bound to increase. For these societies to thrive within the competitive global economy they have to awaken to the reality that their citizens come from diverse ethnic and racial background and are determined in preserving their cultural heritage.

### Affirmative Action to Reduce Inequality

How did America get from a culture trying to build around a central national identity to one in which it is possible to wear buttons "celebrating differences." The effort to answer this

question is a challenging task. One has to be willing to examine the issue from both spectrums of the metaphor "a glass of water is half full or half empty." America has come a long way in its quest to preserve national identity, and is still struggling to understand, respect, and accept its cultural and ethnic diversity. In this context a wide range of strategies have been developed to reduce racial inequality and overt discrimination in this country through enactment of Civil Rights Legislation. Although, sporadically enforced in the beginning, the enactment of new laws or the enforcement of these existing laws gained momentum after the Civil Rights Movement (see Marlow and Rowland, 1989, for a brief history of affirmative action in the United States). Through various approaches such as the politics of confrontation the Civil Rights Movement secured greater national and international attention, especially during the 1960s. The United States government took a number of legal and administrative steps to reduce inequality and increase equality between ethnic and racially different groups of people.

One such step to reduce inequality and eliminate discrimination in education and the workplace was the affirmative action program. Affirmative action refers to positive efforts needed to eliminate racial and gender discrimination in education and employment. Affirmative action has come under severe criticism due to preferential hiring policies and quota systems which has caused, some say, reverse discrimination. One of the criticisms offered by Glazer (1978) is that by giving special preferences to groups the law undermines the interest of individuals. Glazer believes that the state should outlaw racial discrimination and that racial minorities should follow the example of European immigrants to advance themselves. Sowell (1983, 1987, 1990) makes a strong case for the failure of preferential policies of various governments, including the United States. Sowell further advocates that blacks shun reliance on government "hand-outs." Sowell (1981) suggests that neither politics nor education were key to ethnic mobility and success in the United States but rather their middle class orientation and values of discipline, hard work, thrift, diligence and self-reliance. Shelby Steel (1990) argues that affirmative action programs create a kind of implied inferiority among African Americans and other minori-

ties who are made to feel that they have acquired their positions not because of their knowledge and competence but because of preferential treatment.

Takaki (1987) faults Glazer for "twisting" history to serve his ideology and questions Sowell's interpretation of data. For Takaki the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was only a beginning step towards equality of conditions. He doubts that poverty, poor education, occupational stratification, and inner city ghetto problems could be solved without government acting affirmatively and promoting opportunities for racial minorities based on group rights. According to Takaki, criticism of affirmative action overlooks the fact that "there has always been affirmative action for white men." (Takaki, 1987, pp. 231–232). Furthermore, "preferential treatment is already given certain groups, such as veterans or athletes, in employment or education" (Marger, 1994, p. 371).

Admission to educational programs and securing better jobs are crucial elements in working towards integration. For this reason elimination of economic discrimination has been considered as a prerequisite for achieving equality and harmonious intergroup relations (Wilson, W.J. 1987, Featherman and Hauser, 1976). Achieving educational equality between different people is also crucial. Lower educational attainments lead to poorer jobs, lower incomes, and lower living standards. Poor education accentuates the perpetuation of inequality from generation to generation as well as ignorance and prejudice against members of outgroups in the society. Affirmative Action programs raise complex questions about achieving equality. Enactment of the law is only a first step towards changing prejudiced attitudes and practices. It is only one of the steps towards creating intergroup harmony.

Prejudices and biases based on racial and ethnic differences frequently manifest on individual as well as on institutional levels. A society committed to the principle of cultural pluralism has to convince its members that every one has to be treated equally and with dignity, respect and justice. Bringing about such attitudinal transformation is an arduous task. This task becomes more difficult if institutional policies and procedures are not in place to complement treatment of everyone equally.

It is in the market place where minorities end up getting the "short end of the deal." It is not sufficient for an establishment to say that it is an equal opportunity employment place. It has to ensure that its personnel practices at all levels are fair and equal irrespective of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, and national origin. It is in this context that affirmative action officers are appointed to ensure that fair personnel practices are in place.

Affirmative action, in many cases, has become a middle class, bourgeois procedure rather than addressing the issue of equality and equity across the board in the spirit of cultural pluralism. Current policies have done little to bring about structural changes or an end to institutional inequities. The emphasis on economic values has led some powerful members of the dominant group, often time, to placate or coopt individual members of minority groups who are not necessarily the best. Such tokenism is a half-hearted piecemeal attempt at providing equal opportunity to minorities of color and gender to advance themselves. Some members of minority groups who advanced to managerial and administrative positions, for fear of unwarranted charges of favoritism or self-interest, do little to enhance the positions of other minorities. It has been suggested that some "African Americans have seized control of the city halls, but their rise has done little to ease the plight of their most downtrodden constituents," writes Jack E. White in *TIME* (May 11, 1992, pp. 38-40). Supreme court judge Clarence Thomas, who is an African American, is another example. None of his rulings or actions up to now suggest any move on his part to advance the cause of African Americans or improve intergroup relations. In a recent interview, 'Justice Thomas said that, "discrimination or special treatment on the basis of race" was wrong. "I'm trying to uphold that standard, and I disagree with the prevailing point of view of some black leaders that special treatment for blacks is acceptable," he added.' (*New York Times*, 1994, YP. 7)

Cultural pluralism is by no means the definitive solution for dealing with prejudices, hatred and conflicts stemming from ethnic and racial differences. But it does provide a viable option for multicultural societies to operate without bigotry and

racism. In emphasizing the importance of cultural pluralism, William Greenbaum (1974) makes four points. They are:

1) support for positive bi-cultural and multi-cultural identities may encourage not only renewed respect for this country but also encourage the development of true universalism in which the merits and faults of different belief systems can be more intelligently assessed because the individual and the group deeply understand more than one culture their own. 2) There is a human need for self consciousness and self-awareness, and by taking responsibility for one's own institutions and communities, the different ethnic groups can preserve their heritage and culture and use them for the benefit of its members. 3) Recognition of past and present Anglo-American practices to significantly reduce great societal inequities fits the spirit of cultural pluralism. 4) Pluralism can offset the poverty of cosmopolitanism and antagonistic individualism. Supporters of pluralistic groups emphasize the interdependence between individuals, families, co-workers, groups, and communities. These groups seek to alter the roles of the economy, science, technology, and government to service people rather than dominate them, and pluralism must be accepted because for many Americans irrevocable cultural and linguistic diversity already exists and provides firm foundations for strong institutions, human service delivery systems, and respectable communities in which to live (Greenbaum, 1974).

America has come a long way in respecting cultural diversity, but not far enough. We are becoming more tolerant more often of cultural diversity, but many have not accepted it as a reality and a necessity. We respect and strive to protect the civil rights of all citizens. However, when a large proportion of our minorities, subjected to discrimination, suffer due to poverty, ghetto living, inferior education, low-paying dead-end jobs, and ill health, we inadvertently negate the basic human rights of all citizens.

"The extravagant overrepresentation of African-Americans among the unemployed, the poor, the sick and prison inmates in this country is not accepted even by the minimum standards of the so-called 'first' world. There is no way of understanding and changing the dehumanizing conditions in the ghettos of our inner cities

without confronting and challenging the racist attitudes and policies that help foster them," according to Arno J. Meyer, a Princeton University, Dayton-Stockton Professor of European History (1992).

The problems of a multicultural society are as complex and diverse as its population. America will need to develop solutions within a democratic value system. In the management of a diverse multicultural society, social institutions, the educational, economic, political, religious and social welfare—have significant roles to fulfill. Social institutions are structures that develop over time in societies to organize important activities in ways that uphold cultural values.

The institution of education has the responsibility of not only setting straight the distorted history written by the Eurocentric writers of the past but also make sure that current writers, do not get carried away in debunking European legacy and distorting history to serve a new purpose. A need for critical self-evaluation of one's own history and culture is of importance in understanding and appreciating one's own and other cultures. Debunking myths and eradicating prejudices through education will help create respect and dignity for all people.

Religious institutions can strive harder to create an environment of tolerance and respect for people of all faiths. Its leadership, rather than feeling threatened by other religious faiths, must create a climate whereby people of different religious denominations can respect and appreciate other religious beliefs.

Economic institutions need to accelerate creation of conditions of equality of employment opportunity and job freedom not solely based on economic interest but also based on the values of dignity and accompanied by respect of fellow humans. A prosperous workforce is a sign of not only a health economy but of a more hail, hearty and harmonious society.

Political institutions while recognizing the primacy of the individual must continue to be involved in the implementation of Civil Rights laws, enforcement of affirmative action programs and other programs that leads to equality of opportunity, freedom and equality of conditions for all the citizens.

### Role of Social Welfare Institutions

The institution of Social Welfare has an important role to play in the preservation of our multi-cultural society. Social Welfare institutions have many functions. One is to fill the gap in services that the other need—meeting institutions fail to provide. The function of social welfare institution includes maintenance, development and change activities which are geared towards the improvement of intra-societal human relations and the overall quality of life of all people. Social welfare institutions because they interface and inter-connect with the other social institutions and because of their emphasis on the primacy of the individual, stand in a unique position to create a better understanding between and among people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the society. However, the social work profession is in a predicament. Its professional values, code of ethics, and mission are often challenged by the values of the other social institutions. In this context social workers need to keep in mind the following factors:

1. In virtually all societies dependence on any social welfare assistance is not looked upon favorably, and in some instances it even carries considerable stigma.

2. In most societies social welfare professionals are seen as do gooders, and when they champion the case of vulnerable and oppressed groups they become the recipients of stigma—the scapegoat.

3. In most societies ethnic, racial, and cultural minority groups often experience overt as well as covert prejudice, discrimination, and oppression.

4. Because of the economic crunch prevailing provision of social services has become a low priority item in many countries. Privatization of social services is emphasized. Sentiments of “no more free lunch” are often heard.

5. The financial factor and the sentiments expressed towards the social work profession is eroding the zeal and enthusiasm established by the pioneers in the profession. Some of the new breed of professionals would prefer to be autonomous clinical practitioners rather than be involved in racial and ethnic cultural warfare.



Many new immigrants who come to this country come with the kinds of perspectives on social work and social welfare discussed above. Social workers working with members of these groups need to be aware of such factors as they approach their task. The social work profession has begun to make great strides in helping social workers to develop these kinds of understanding as in the work of Devore and Schlesinger (1991), Green (1982) and the development of new journals. (*Journal of Multicultural Social Work*). The fact that the Council on Social Work Education mandates the inclusion of content on racial and ethnic minorities, oppression and advocacy in schools' curricula is also an indication of the social work profession's move in the right direction.

### Recognition of Diversity

Even though de jure discrimination seems to have been reduced in our society de facto discrimination continues to exist. Institutionalized racism, which is usually built into the nature of social institutions and where business goes on as usual, is difficult to prove and eradicate in a society where diversity dominates. In the management of change diversity will need to be recognized and seen as a strength and not as deviance. Diversity will grow to be seen as a reality and not just an ideal. Diversity will be desired at all levels along with an end put to institutional racism and sexism.

As social and behavioral scientists, if we truly believe that every human being needs to be seen as worthy and having dignity, then we need to take a proactive stand in advocating for and championing the needs of all ethnic groups in their efforts to preserve and practice their cultural heritage. For a society to be truly multicultural it is imperative that its policies at all levels reflect this sentiments. The social work profession needs to ensure that the policies go beyond rhetoric. There are numerous regions of the globe where ethnic violence and bloodshed are an everyday occurrence. Some minority persons, in order to protect themselves, lash out. In a recent interview United Nation Secretary-General Boutros Ghali warned that by the end of the century the world may splinter into 400 economically-crippled

mini-states unless the rights of minorities receive top priority (The Straits Time, 1992).

While ethnic strife and communal tension have torn apart Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and other nations and unions, the United States, which prevented the legal recognition of ethnic groups as polities, stands in, what some view as, an unenviable position of creating a multi-cultural "Salad Bowl" society where every ingredient retains its flavor and identity. Yet blended together with a variety of spices, a new taste can be added to the whole. Commitment and a conviction from the leadership of social institutions may be the necessary social glue, may be the "dressing," that will provide the sum and substance of a new United States of America.

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