

The politics of difference in the United States

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Abstract

The setting for this presentation is the United States, where multiculturalism was never clearly defined. Instead of multiculturalism, the focus will be on what Iris Marion Young called the politics of difference or what is often called diversity, equity and inclusion, arguing that the cold war gave Americans a common enemy and a common bond. While multiculturalism and identity politics arose after the cold war, it took some time for that common bond to be forged and the cold war to dissipate. As that common bond faded, political divisions rose to the fore, and this has become the main division through which many Americans identify. With the common enemy receding, Americans began to see each other as the enemy. Perhaps ironically, the politics of diversity, equity and inclusion are now part of what divides the country.

Biography

Jeff Spinner-Halev is the Kenan Eminent Professor of Political Ethics in the department of Political Science, and is Interim Chair in the department of Art and Art History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Spinner-Halev's research focuses on the tensions that arise within contemporary liberal and democratic theory, and between theory and practice. Book he has authored includes: *The Boundaries of Citizenship: Race, Ethnicity and Nationality in the Liberal State* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); *Surviving Diversity: Religion and Democratic Citizenship* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); *Enduring Injustice* (Cambridge University Press, 2012); and he has co-edited *Minorities within Minorities: Equality, Right and Diversity* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).