

*Student Movements for Multiculturalism: Challenging the Curricular Color Line in Higher Education*, by **David Yamane**. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. 193 pp. \$36.50 cloth. ISBN: 0-8018-6588-3.

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Using accessible and jargon-free prose, *Student Movements for Multiculturalism* focuses on collegiate political mobilizations and curriculum change. In exploring the protest dynamics at Madison and Berkeley, much of the work has an exposé feeling. When encountering comments from informants, readers get to eavesdrop on behind-the-scenes conversations at student demonstrations, faculty senates, and presidential power-meetings.

The work is jammed with interesting details. One learns when the first multicultural general education requirement appeared (1979), and how fast this requirement spread (48% of colleges had a multicultural requirement by 1991). Later, readers see how student activists presented their demands, how faculty manipulated voting procedures, and how recalcitrant administrators stacked committees to their advantage. In these sections, the book is at its best when its dialogue conveys the energy and tension of politically contested exchanges.

Yamane excels in plotting the sequence of debates and demonstrations. The work is not as nuanced in theoretical terms. Early on, Yamane relies on a descriptive account of academic innovation. Supposedly change follows four steps: (1) recognize the need for change; (2) formulate a means of satisfying the needs; (3) initiate and implement the plan for change; (4) institutionalize the new operating plan (p. 18). While these steps seem important, the linearity is too mechanical. In effect, without exploring the dynamics behind such changes, the text seems deterministic since it fails to capture the specifics as to why some universities go through these steps and others do not.

When the book strives for causality, much of the analysis approaches reductionism. For example, the book states that "student

activism leads to change," since 82 percent of the colleges with Black or Women's Studies had New Left or Civil Rights demonstrations in the 1960s. Fair enough—most universities maintain the status quo until protests materialize. On the other hand, this association, like many others in the book, seems oblivious to crucial mitigating factors. A cursory reading of the movement literature would suggest that instrumental success is contingent on many factors (i.e., political opportunities structures, mobilizing mechanisms, or tactical repertoires).

While every study excludes some variables, these grave omissions could have been easily avoided. In discarding an eclectic approach to theory, Yamane limits himself to the "collective behavior" framework. Thus, page after page begs for the application of other conceptual models. Each chapter presents evidence that invites a discussion of political opportunities (i.e., multicultural curriculums were passed after universities changed chancellors or different professors seized faculty senates). Other statements could have called on research on political networks and movement centers (i.e., Berkeley's multicultural campaigns "block recruited" from the earlier anti-apartheid protests). Likewise, many bits of data would have benefited from an application of collective identity and framing postulates.

While much of the book undertheorizes its evidence, other assertions are short on empirical justifications. In the weakest passages, references to public opinion go without systematic or anecdotal evidence. For instance, the work claims "the bill was vehemently opposed by higher education faculty" (p. 37) and activists forced others to "recognize the need for organizational change" (p. 50). While the assertions may be accurate, these populations are imprecisely treated as a single monolith with an absolute consensus (I cannot see professors or students totally agreeing on anything). Moreover, these claims and many others were never matched to relevant cross-sectional data (not to mention the use of longitudinal evidence to gauge attitudinal change).

The choice of the University of California-Berkeley and University of Wisconsin-Madison is another drawback. Both universities typify massive research institutions with "activist traditions," thus it is

unclear how representative these findings are to other college settings. The study also lacks a comparison group of schools that never experienced multicultural curriculum changes. Without any variance in the dependent variable, readers learn nothing about what blocks social change (i.e., the scenarios in which student protests receive no concessions, or when multicultural improvements are purely initiated by university faculty).

In the end, this book excels at introducing key players and providing movement timelines. Additionally, it debunks false polemics about the "politically correct professorate" or that administrators really care about "shared governance." Moreover, the importance placed on student agitation seems reasonable; universities generally perpetuate white privilege until political resistance emerges. On the other hand, the book has noticeable shortcomings. While sticking to the "collective behavior" paradigm, the work ignores vital qualities that impact social movement outcomes (i.e., elite sponsors, indigenous resources, coalitional dynamics, or framing schemata). Likewise, the research design has limitations. When only sampling schools with multicultural change, the study cannot explain the lack of such change. Additionally, one wonders about the ability to generalize from findings to other sorts of colleges and whether issues of recall and social desirability undermine the accuracy of informant reports.

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*Transitions in American Education: A Social History of Teaching*, by **Donald H. Parkerson** and **Jo Ann Parkerson**. New York: RoutledgeFalmer Press, 2001. 274 pp. \$85.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-8153-3824-4. \$27.95 paper. ISBN: 0-8153-3825-2.

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If you ask most parents what they like about their child's school, they will probably mention something about the teachers. Many of us remember one or two special teachers who changed our lives, and for many people, teachers and the relationships they form with their students are at the heart of what school is all about. The current shortage of qualified

teachers is a major problem facing American education. In their rich historical account of teaching, *Transitions in American Education*, the Parkersons explain that the profession has been the target of educational reform efforts for centuries. Just as we are experiencing today, the state of teaching often has been viewed as in crisis. The authors argue that these movements have been triggered by larger social, political, and economic revolutions, occurring approximately at the turn of each century, that have placed new demands on the educational system. At each stage, the teaching profession has been forced to revamp.

The book traces three such revolutions; we are still in the midst of the third. This last educational transition is fueled by changes in the demographic composition in our society, the communications revolution, and the stronger role of the federal government in all aspects of our lives. The authors end the book on an upbeat note: As a consequence of the current transformations, we will have more highly skilled teachers who will be in the position to maintain more control over their schools relative to the local control, and to serve our nations' children better. If one spends time in schools today, one is sure to hear complaints about the heavy-handed assessment and accountability policies that have become a part of teachers' daily lives. Teachers are overwhelmed by the mishmash of curricular reform packages they are expected to adopt. Teachers, school administrators, and parents may not easily accept the Parkersons' idea that what seems like a chaotic and bureaucratic set of policies is really a trend toward increasing control on the part of our school professionals.

The authors' historical perspective gives insight to this view. Compared to the days when the teacher of the one room schoolhouse stayed with a family and paid a substantial portion of her salary for room and board, our teaching profession has kept up with the rest of society. Around the time of the American Revolution, and accompanied by a market revolution, the very nature of who taught and what was taught in the classroom changed. Society had a need for the common school in which children learned religion and obedience. The next revolution, fueled by urbanization, corporatization, and a valuing of science and technology, precipitated changes in the profession leading to a