

# No good substitute for race in college admissions

June 13 2013

---

As the U.S. Supreme Court decides in a case involving racial preferences in higher education admissions (Fisher v. Texas), new University of Maryland-led research finds that socioeconomic diversity is no replacement for a direct consideration of race, as some have suggested. Still the research finds that a mix of students from differing socioeconomic backgrounds has benefits.

The peer-reviewed study appears in the June issue of the *American Educational Research Journal*. It evaluates the use of "socio-economic status" as a racially blind way to build an effective diverse atmosphere on campus. Lead author Julie J. Park, an assistant professor of education at the University of Maryland (UMD), says socio-economic status is often suggested as a back-door way to achieve [diversity](#), but one that likely won't succeed on its own.

"You need both racial and socioeconomic diversity to achieve the rich engagement that educators are looking for," says UMD's Park. "A broader mix of students helps encourage more fluid interactions."

The research finds that socio-economic (class) diversity helps students cross [racial barriers](#) to interact and learn from each other. "In university settings, it helps put students of different racial and [ethnic backgrounds](#) on a more level playing field," Park explains. "But on its own, socioeconomic diversity does not produce a high level of interactions between students of different races; you still need [racial diversity](#) to reach a university's full potential."

The study is the latest in Park's research, which focuses on diversity in [higher education](#). She has a new book coming out later this month, "When Diversity Drops: Race, Religion, and Affirmative Action in Higher Education." It examines the impact in California of Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action statewide.

"Social class and race not only affect who goes to college, but what actually happens to [students](#) once they begin the journey of learning together," Park says. "Class matters, not only because we need to broaden access to universities, but because of how it makes universities better equipped to support racial diversity."

**More information:** [aer.sagepub.com/content/50/3/4...  
type=ref&siteid=spaer](http://aer.sagepub.com/content/50/3/4...type=ref&siteid=spaer)

Provided by University of Maryland

Citation: No good substitute for race in college admissions (2013, June 13) retrieved 17 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-06-good-substitute-college-admissions.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.