

# Another Way to See 2050

## *U.S. becomes a majority-minority nation*

**Book Review by Leon F. Bouvier**

To regular readers of *The Social Contract*, I suspect that the title of this new book will prove intriguing. Much has been said and written about the changing racial composition of the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and perhaps this is yet another analysis of these projections. Again, to regular readers of this journal the author's name may be unfamiliar.

Let's set matters straight. While this book deals with the racial changes that are already transpiring in the nation, it is not a demographic treatise. Rather, it is an examination of the young people of America and how they are reacting to the massive changes going on in their own world.

As to the author, she is an African-American whose father is Zimbabwean and mother is an American Black. Ms. Chideya is an *ABC News* correspondent and is the author of *Don't Believe the Hype: Fighting Cultural Misinformation About African Americans*. If the reader is looking for a well-written "journalistic" publication dealing with the changing racial composition of the nation, then he or she may find this book both informative and challenging.

The author begins by summarizing the now-familiar Census Bureau projections for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Soon after the millennium the United States will become a majority-minority nation — i.e., no racial group will be in the majority. This is already the case in California, although Chideya is of the opinion that it has not already taken place there. Then the author develops an interesting approach to the issue.

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She concentrates on young Americans (i.e, high school and college age) for the simple reason that this group is already "majority-minority." As she states very succinctly:

*This generation — not just white but black, Latino, Asian, and Native American; not just native-born but immigrant — is both the inheritor and architect of American culture. Today's young adults are paying the price for being different, growing up in an era where the diversity they represent is feared. We can only hope that they will chart a better course for race relations than Americans have in the past, that they will help lead us away from our centuries-long battles. If they do forge a new American identity, it will be because they've learned to work within the multiethnic nation we inhabit, rather than denying or decrying its very existence. Will they learn to work together? Will they yield to or rebel against the wishes of the generations before them? And how will their visions of American life reshape our culture? No one can answer these questions but this generation itself (p.33).*

The author then proceeds to visit numerous areas throughout the country and interview, sometimes in depth, representatives of various racial groups of that age. She begins by discussing the problems the Census Bureau is having defining race, and especially multi-race individuals — or, as she puts it: "others," citing golfer Tiger Woods and his "Cablinasian" label.

Next she heads south to interview an interracial couple in Thomasville, Georgia. She crosses the country to discuss hip-hop and rap music and the culture it is defining. She spends time on a Crow Indian reservation in Wyoming. She, with the assistance of the Census Bureau, locates a city that

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### The Color of Our Future

by Farai Chideya  
New York: William  
Morrow and Co.  
272 pages, \$23.00

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almost exactly reflects the racial composition of the nation: Aurora, Illinois, (and later) Colorado Springs, Colorado. She visit Oakland, California where she examines the school system and spends considerable time with high school students.

In Chapter 8, the end of affirmative action is discussed, again through the eyes of high school and college students. Both perspectives, pro and con, are presented.

*Soon California will have no racial majority (sic). The battle over affirmative action, over what helps and hurts racial equality, is no dry academic matter here [in California] (p.179).*

Her next trip is to El Paso where she gets first-hand information on the legal as well as the illegal movements of people across the border. Again, she interviews young people and gets diverse views of the immigration issue. Some opinions are quite surprising.

In her last chapters the author looks at programs that have helped erase racial animosities, mostly in high schools in various parts of the country. Finally she speculates on the future and makes a few “predictions” of her own. Most important:

*As Americans continue to intermarry, the size and influence of the multiracial community will grow. Over time, the decisions they make about how to classify themselves will reshape the racial landscape (p.253).*

In the final chapter, Chidaye discusses ten ways to deal with diversity. All are worthy of further analysis by anyone interested in the dramatic change that will soon occur in the United States. Her last paragraph is worth repeating here:

*The changes the next millennium brings will at the very least surpass and quite possibly shatter our current understanding of race, ethnicity, culture, and community. The real test of our strength will be in how willing we are to go beyond the narrowness of our expectations, seek knowledge about the lives of those around us — and move forward with eagerness, not fear (p.261).*

As a descriptive, journalistic approach to this great challenge facing our nation in the new century,

one hardly finds fault with the book. It is a fascinating way to look at the issues — interviewing young Americans of all races. The author clearly has a point of view, and as a fellow liberal I share many of these — especially on affirmative action. However, the book is weak on its demographic side. It states the

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Census Bureau projections but never explains how we got that way. The 1965 immigration legislation that caused this incredible shift in racial proportions is never mentioned. For the reader unfamiliar with the historic precedents, it could lead to the obvious question: “How in the world did this ever happen?” Unfortunately, the author never addresses that question. Nor does she comment on the level of immigration that has contributed so heavily to this shift. An introductory chapter in which to summarize these matters would have been most helpful and made a well-written book even more authoritative.

Other minor distractions should be noted, but some of these are better attributed to the editor than to the author. Statements are repeated on occasion. The quotes from young adults become a little tiresome after a while. The teenage use of the word “like” is repeated over and over again, like! [Some may chalk this up to the age of this reviewer and his unwillingness to accept remodelings of the English language.] Finally, a real index would have been useful.

All in all, this is a book worth reading if only to get a better idea of what our young adults are thinking about as we approach the year 2000 and get ready to live in a much more heterogenous society. **TSC**

# Population As Destiny

**Book Review by Michael W. Masters**

*[I]t is the growth [of population] that causes poverty, and the affluent West can lose its affluence by packing more people in. Poverty is growing in inner cities already.*

— Paul Colinvaux

It is depressing to note just how much political correctness colors perceptions and distorts otherwise sensible thought processes. In the realm of population, perhaps no recent event more vividly illustrates this than the vote of the conservation-minded Sierra Club to take no position as an organization on America's record levels of immigration. Members allowed themselves to be intimidated into conformity by ideologically-motivated shrieks of "racism" and "xenophobia."

As a result, one of the nation's premiere environmental organizations has paradoxically chosen to bury its head in the sand with respect to a major factor that undermines environmental ideals, i.e. burgeoning human numbers. The consequences of this myopia will not go away just because members temporarily ducked the smear campaign. Worse, their fear of name-calling is unfounded. Admittedly some make the case that massive immigration of culturally and ethnically alien peoples brings its own impact on quality of life. But for those too squeamish to face that reality, it is also true that numbers alone will wreak havoc.

Indeed, as the title of biologist Paul Colinvaux's 1980 book, *The Fates of Nations*, implies, the destiny of entire peoples can be wrecked by wrong decisions concerning population numbers. Colinvaux's work is particularly helpful because he thrives on taking

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*Michael W. Masters writes on issues of politics, history, moral philosophy and sociobiology.*

beliefs that everybody knows to be true and standing them on their heads, showing that not only are they not true, but that the consequences of continuing to believe them can be counter to long term survival. Among Colinvaux's bon mots:

- Civilizations arise from the technical competence of their founders; rising numbers are merely the consequence of that competence as the civilization is able to feed more and more people.
- Crowding impacts the well-off, who invest heavily in child-rearing, more than the poor, who have little to spend on children.
- Trade, often seen as necessary to cope with growth, is not a solution at all; in reality it is a primary cause of growth, robbing nations and people of self-reliance.
- Repression is the elites' means of preventing the middle class from sharing in the benefits of prosperity — benefits largely created by that middle class.
- Revolutions arise from disaffected middle classes determined to seize their rightful due. (This will no doubt be gratifying news to Dr. Samuel Francis, author of *Revolution from the Middle*.)

Colinvaux bases his case on the theory of ecological niches — territory, food supply and habitability factors. "Niche sets the size of populations of all animal species." Moreover:

*People, like other animals, have niches in life. Much of the more violent sort of history comes about as individual people struggle for what they perceive to be their proper ecological niche.*

The concept of animal populations fixed by available resources is well accepted. The same, says Colinvaux, was true for our hunter-gatherer ancestors — but not modern humans.

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**The Fates of Nations: A Biological Theory of History**

by Paul Colinvaux  
New York: Simon & Schuster  
383 pages, \$12.95

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