

A multicultural society

Multicultural societies do not function well if their governing bodies don't value ethnicity. In the story, "Barbara Smith is German?" Barbara's teacher talked about the time in America when people in power wanted ethnic groups to disappear into a melting pot. During those times, ethnic coalitions and neighborhoods were often disrupted by government policies. But by the end of the twentieth century, most American policy makers had realized the error of their ways and began to recognize the value of ethnicity in contributing to the larger community.

In a multicultural society, ethnic groups must work together for the larger society to flourish. At any time in history one can find territories where the ethnic groups were in constant conflict. During that time, people in these territories did not develop the social, economic, or political stability to develop goods and services like higher education, the arts, fine architecture, healthcare, safe streets, thriving commerce, or secure jobs. The same is true for neighborhoods. Members of different ethnic groups must learn to cooperate and support each other to raise the quality of life for all residents. They must recognize the goals they have in common.

In the story, "Snow falls in Bronzeville: A story of a lost central city neighborhood," by cultural anthropologist Dr. Sienna Jacks, you'll find an example of a close-knit neighborhood where African Americans

and Jews cooperated for the good of the residents. What have you learned so far about ethnicity that might explain at least one of the reasons why the government decided to raze this neighborhood?

In the story, “The Braves take the World Series: A Polish and Mexican story” by cultural anthropologist, Dr. Jill Florence Lackey, you’ll read about two ethnic groups that found their common ground. You will notice examples of the melting pot influence in this 1950s account.