

and perhaps other background variables (e.g., the command of the English language), it is difficult to assess the possible independent effect of ethnicity or race on psychological indices.

The psychological assessment of ethnic or racial minorities is a politically sensitive topic. Attempts to demonstrate ethnic or racial differences in intelligence or moral development should be done in a sensitive and thoughtful manner. Moreover, the researcher ought to be extraordinarily sure of the data before suggesting that there are meaningful ethnic or racial differences on such highly evaluative measures as intelligence or moral development. Clearly, such assessments hold potentially explosive consequences. The consequences of making a Type I error, of accepting differences as real when none exists, could be, at the very least, quite harmful to the esteem of ethnic minorities. Obviously, it is salient to conduct research in psychological areas as carefully as possible, and to be temperate in one's conclusions.

NOTES

¹E.A. DeAvila, B. Harassy, and J. Pascual-Leone. *Mexican-American Schoolchildren: A Neo-Piagetian Analysis*. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1976).

²A.R. Jensen. "Do Schools Cheat Minority Children?" *Educational Research*. 14 (1971) 3-28.

Critique

Educational institutions are representative microcosms of the society. If the society segregates, exploits, and excludes racial groups, then it can be expected that educational institutions will follow suit. The intelligence testing of the 1920s and 1930s was an academic response to eugenics theories and to contemporary political-economic policies related to immigration, miscegenation, and segregation. As Gonzalez concludes, the creation of intelligence tests and their application were not only an apologia but also a means to maintain the *status quo* in the society.

Since the 1960s most academicians have consciously avoided overt racist theories. However, the current political conservatism has established an atmosphere which encourages the retrenchment of social priorities by using "basic American" values as a means to correct economic inflation and recession. This re-cycling of basic values

includes the negation of civil rights for minorities under the guise of “equality” for the dominant Anglo sectors of the society, i.e., the retrenchment on the voting rights legislation, the granting of tax exempt status to segregated white institutions, and the indulgence of high unemployment. Examples of this type of conservative activity can also be identified in public institutions as well; consider the California Community College (CCC) system and the current efforts to clarify or re-define its mission. The efforts to arrive at a definition of mission come from the state legislature, the state Department of Finance, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the state Faculty Senate, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, and the local community college districts. The focal issues are limited financial resources, the types of programs and courses offered, and who should be allowed to benefit from the institutions, i.e., the composition of the student body.

Some critics assert that the CCC have tried to be all things to all people; and since resources are limited, more focus should be given to areas such as transfer education and the reduction or elimination of programs which have lower priority. Other critics will agree with the statement, adding that the “open door” policy must not continue. On the surface, these budget minded critiques seem logical. However, which programs will be eliminated and which students will face a closed door? Will these proposals have a greater negative impact on racial minorities than on Anglo students?

During the past fifteen years, the California Community Colleges have assumed the responsibility to accommodate their institutions to the needs of the community; this has included minorities. Twenty-five percent of the California Community Colleges’ enrollment is comprised of minority students. This is proportionately more equitable than that of other systems of postsecondary education in California. However, it is not at parity with the state’s minority population of thirty-four percent. In addition, Chicanos/Latinos comprise nineteen percent of California’s population but only ten percent of the community college enrollments. They are the single most under-represented minority group and are enrolled at roughly forty-seven percent below their parity level.¹ In 1970, approximately seventy percent of Chicano/Latino students in institutions of higher education (IHE) in California attended community colleges.² This high rate of attendance is probably due to the role given to the community colleges by the *Master Plan for Higher Education* as that of screening students to see which are capable of academic work at the University of California (UC) or the California State University systems.³ A consequence of this role is the tendency to segregate higher education along class and racial lines: “There is already a tendency for junior colleges to enroll the student

whose father is a skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled worker, and the four year colleges to enroll the student whose father is in a professional or managerial position.”⁴

The increase in minority enrollments at the community colleges is in itself a step towards equity; however, these enrollments have not had the desired impact of establishing a professional ladder into the four year institutions and graduate programs. Now even these minimal gains are in jeopardy as state-wide proposals for tuition, increased fees, limitation of basic skills/developmental courses, admissions competency criteria, and many others could have a greater negative impact on services which are targeted for minorities or effectively prevent them from entry into the institution or diminish their opportunity or success after matriculation. Many will argue that these intended cost-effective proposals are not directed against minorities, and are not racist, but egalitarian in nature.

It is vital that minority educators examine the long-term effects of the various proposals affecting not only the California Community Colleges but all levels of education. If scholars can determine the educational detriment and the social impact of intelligence testing in the 1920s and 1930s, then it is also possible to analyze the potential impact of the return to basic values movement. Gonzalez identifies a twelve-year period in which one hundred intelligence studies of minorities were published. Can these studies, as means to maintenance of societal institutions, be compared to the return to basic values movement? Will this new movement serve the same purposes? What action will minority educators take?

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¹Office of the Chancellor, California Community Colleges. “Guidelines for Bilingual Cross-Cultural Curricula Options.” Unpublished Ms., 1982.

²Ronald W. Lopez and Darryl O. Enos. *Chicanos and Public Higher Education in California*. (Sacramento: California Legislature, 1972) 17.

³*Report of the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education in California*. (Sacramento: California Legislature, 1973) 60.

⁴Ford Foundation Task Force. *Report on Higher Education*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971) 59.