June 2003


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showing that popular views on each of them are based on an astounding lack of scientific evidence. Despite their importance and prominence today, research findings into these issues is largely ignored. On the other hand, despite a huge volume of scientific research into these questions, much of the research is controversial and inconclusive. For example, Hacsi reports that a major GAO review of some 600 published research studies into Head Start found that only 22 could be considered reliable in terms of criteria that Hacsi describes as ' . . . not very strict.' Not surprisingly, the GAO concluded that the evidence for Head Start's effectiveness did not permit final conclusions to be drawn.

Hacsi's book is not only directed at politicians, the media and others who declaim on educational issues with apparent authority, but at the scientific community which has failed to agree criteria, standards and procedures for rigorous investigation. The ineffective way that findings are communicated, and the lack of routine replication designed to test research claims, also impede the development of policies based on scientific research. Hopefully Hacsi's excellent book will not only promote more rigorous research into educational issues but pave the way for the more systematic incorporation of research findings into the policy process.


Universities are widely regarded as centers where independent, rigorous research is undertaken free of bias and external influence. However, there has always been a tension between the pursuit of objective knowledge and the desire of external sponsors to fund research designed to promote their own agendas. In recent years, research funding by pharmaceutical and bio-technology firms has resulted in several well publicized cases in which concerns about autonomy and potential conflicts of interest involving university researchers have been expressed. These developments echo earlier concerns about the funding of research perceived to have military implications.

The issue is particular pertinent to social policy research where it is widely recognized that values and beliefs permeate
the field and where it is not always possible to pursue 'pure' investigation. Scholars have grappled with this issue for many years but it has not been fully resolved. Some believe that the problem can best be addressed by a declaration of values so that consumers of social policy research can have no doubt as to preferences and persuasions. Others believe that applied research with political implications should not be conducted at universities. Independent think tanks, they argue, is where this type of research rightly belongs.

These issues take on a dramatic character when viewed in the light of William Tucker’s interesting and important book. A professor of psychology at Rutgers, Tucker has previously published on the subject of ‘racial research’, which may be described as the use of scientific procedures to examine a variety of phenomena associated with ethnicity and race. Originating in theories of race superiority and fueled by the eugenics movement in the early decades of the last century, racial research lost popularity as its true purpose was better understood, and as its association with Nazism and other racist ideologies was exposed. But, as Tucker reveals, racial research is by no means a thing of the past. Indeed, the book opens with a striking reference to Herrnstein and Murray’s The Bell Curve which was published in 1994. Tucker shows how research of this kind has been supported by organizations with clear ideological agendas. One of these is the Pioneer Fund which was founded in the 1930s by Wicliffe Preston Draper, a wealthy businessman. The Pioneer Fund’s sponsorship of racial research continues today. Although Herrnstein and Murray were not supported by the Pioneer Fund, the Fund distributed their work and it has sponsored numerous studies by academics including William Schockley and Arthur Jensen whose accounts of the links between race and intelligence attracted widespread and controversial attention.

This is an extremely detailed and thoroughly researched book. Although some may view the topic as esoteric, it makes for fascinating reading. It should certainly be consulted by scholars working in the field of social welfare where race and ethnic issues are of perennial relevance. The increasing trend towards the biomedicalization of social problems and the growing impact of genetic research on the social and behavioral sciences requires
a better understanding of the issues. Tucker’s account of the Pioneer Fund, and the history of race research in the United States makes an important contribution and should be of interest to anyone engaged in social policy research today.


The introduction and subsequent expansion of professional social work education in the United States is undoubtedly a success story. When compared to many other professions, and to trends in other countries, American social work educators have been able to establish professional education for social work within many of the nation’s universities, including its most prestigious universities. Often, schools of social work at these universities are autonomous academic units represented by deans who are in a position to control budgets and represent the profession at the highest levels. Several other professions such as town planning, architecture, clinical psychology and vocational rehabilitation are not represented by deans. Student interest in social work is buoyant and enrollments have soared. In addition, the professional education of social workers in directed by a single, well recognized organization, the Council on Social Work Education which establishes educational policy and accredits professional social work programs. Accordingly, uniform curricula have been introduced and social work education is now highly standardized.

In her latest book, Katherine Kendall traces the history of social work education in the United States from the vantage point of the struggles and conflicts that attended the creation of the Council on Social Work Education in 1952. Kendall was the founder Executive Director of the Council and she has, for many years, continued to play a decisive leadership role in promoting social work education not only in the United States but internationally as well. Her experience, wisdom and commitment to the field give her unique insights into the historical evolution of social work education during the 20th century. Her personal knowledge of the events which led up to the creation of the Council, and her links with many of the professional leaders give this book a