

# THE GREAT SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY SCAM

## MULTICULTURALISM'S SCANDAL-RIDDEN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

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### SUMMARY

The unbridled multiculturalism and multiracialism promoted by contemporary political and cultural elites could hardly be more different from the cultural and racial values of the West of a century ago. Although a number of the West's non-white minorities continue to be vastly overrepresented in the figures for illiteracy, crime, and AIDS, for a public figure to question multiculturalism's costs to society is a career-ending ordeal — as former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) discovered when he fondly alluded to the days of the old segregated South while reminiscing about Strom Thurmond's insurgent 1948 Dixiecrat presidential candidacy. According to today's cultural and political zeitgeist, racial minorities must be embraced — or at least politely ignored, which therefore puts them above critical scrutiny. (Avoidance of racial identification is a standard practice of the BBC when people from minorities commit strikingly foul crimes — e.g. the black-on-black murder in London of ten-year-old Victoria Climbié by her aunt and boyfriend.)

That this huge change occurred was due largely to the influence of Franz Boas (1858-1942), who galvanized an elite cadre of former students into shaping the intellectual direction of social anthropology. This German-Jewish scholar, a professor at Columbia University, New York, steadily persuaded anthropologists to drop their nineteenth-century belief that there were largely insuperable differences between the major human races — differences that, it had been thought, could not even be decreased by interbreeding. Today, however, the key study of Boas's career, reporting that the head shapes of children born to immigrants after they arrived in the United States differed significantly from those of their siblings born abroad, is under a cloud; and some anthropologists entertain the possibility that Boas falsified his findings. Reanalysis of the available data on the 17,000 subjects Boas studied over ninety years ago finds *no* significant evidence for Boas's key idea that racial characteristics can easily be changed.

These recent problems for modern social anthropology come on the heels of vicious disputes within the "discipline" about whether other anthropological researchers, too, might have painted an unduly rosy picture of human nature in primitive peoples, and of the likelihood of change. These matters are of huge importance because social anthropology has provided a major plank of the environmentalist thinking that currently dominates teaching in the social science

faculties of universities. The universities – while ostensibly venerating “diversity” – have allowed their staffs to become 95 percent liberal-left and about 100 percent politically correct in outlook; but now it seems that the scholarship of the social anthropologists on race is based not merely on wishful thinking, but on fundamental research errors that these academics have long allowed to leave unreplicated and unexamined.

The old saying that “what goes around, comes around” was all too apropos as 2003 opened with the West transfixed by the idea that there is no deep-seated, genetic origin for racial differences – a belief that had been rampant in an earlier period, prior to the early twentieth century. Such was the wisdom of the twentieth century’s social anthropologists. According to what students call “social anthropology,” there is every reason to expect that the world’s different peoples can live in harmony, especially in the West’s many multicultural cities, where the value of “diversity” is proclaimed by politicians and media pundits to distract attention from the illiteracy, criminality, out-of-wedlock fertility, anti-white hostility, and AIDS rates of certain of the burgeoning imported ethnic minorities. Backed up by the speech codes and thought police of state-funded political correctness, state-funded multiculturalism is the main form of piety in today’s Western world. Contrived by the left after much of its beloved “working class” gladly succumbed to *embourgeoisement* around 1980, political correctness is designed to harvest “minority” votes rather as Prime Minister William Gladstone’s last government collected votes from the Catholic Irish. “PC” ensures that even illegal immigrants and asylum seekers whose cases have been rejected can only be publicly criticized at the cost of critics’ promotion prospects and even of their ability to be heard publicly at all, for they will be denounced as “racists,” a descriptor from which even case-hardened conservatives now shrink. Multiculturalism’s intellectual advance guard has even begun proving to itself that races do not actually exist aiming eventually to put *any* public talk of race off-limits. (For a defense of the existence of human races, see J. Philippe Rushton’s essay, “Is Race a Valid Taxonomic Construct?” in the Spring 2002 issue of *The Occidental Quarterly*, 17-28, <http://theoccidentalquarterly.com/vol2no1/jpr-taxonomic.html>.)

Examples of the new intellectual tyranny? A book by a British psychologist and a Finnish economist that appeared early in 2002 reported empirical estimates of IQ for most nations of the world, showing a strong correlation between national intelligence and national prosperity. Arrestingly, the data showed that not one of the world’s ten countries that recorded substantial and steady economic improvement over the previous twenty years was African. This contrasted markedly with sub-Saharan Africa, which provided *all* of the ten countries that had actually been becoming steadily *poorer*. Yet this important book, *IQ and the Wealth of Nations* (Lynn & Vanhanen, 2002), had to be brought out by a mail order publisher and has not been reviewed in a single

prestigious newspaper or magazine (though the academic journal *Heredity* and *The Occidental Quarterly* [see Edward M. Miller's review in the Winter 2002/2003 *TOQ*, 79-83] are rare exceptions).

Even after the horror of 9/11 and clear statements by the Saudi Arabian ambassador to Britain that many Muslims hate the West, even when a police officer was knifed to death in Birmingham, U.K., by a North African rejected asylum seeker, and even when the U.S. and U.K. went to war with Muslim-backed terror, politicians and media pundits insisted on maintaining multicultural piety by not asking for racial profiling at ports or for the detention of unemployed immigrants from such fanatically Muslim countries as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Algeria. Not even the bloody and conspicuous collapse of multicultural Rwanda/Burundi and Yugoslavia has served among intellectuals to cast doubt on their devotion to multicultural idealism. Not even the segregated lives of most whites and blacks in the U.S. made a mark about what people really wanted; nor did the reluctance of blacks and whites to intermarry (whereas whites, Asians, and Hispanics do so fairly readily). There was not a flicker even when a black Harvard sociologist, Orlando Patterson (1998), wrote that whites would need to be legally compelled to live near blacks so as to intermarry and expand the blacks' "social networks" and employment opportunities. Even the U.K.-U.S. coalition against Saddam Hussein kept its discourse entirely "PC" (apart from one slip of the tongue when President Bush called the action a "crusade"). Whatever happened in the real world, evidently, the multiculti illusion had to be maintained: All the races, er... minorities, could be expected to get along just fine.

Times have definitely changed. For example, during the European Enlightenment, great philosophers such as Germany's Immanuel Kant and Scotland's David Hume were quite sure there were major and deep-seated racial differences. In fact, Kant wrote (1764):

The Negroes of Africa have received from nature no intelligence that rises above the foolish. Hume invites anyone to quote a single example of a Negro who has exhibited talents. He asserts that among the hundred thousands of blacks who have been seduced away from their own countries, although very many of them have been set free, yet not a single one has ever been found that has performed anything great whether in art or science or in any other laudable subject; but among the whites, people constantly rise up from the lowest rabble and acquire esteem through their superior gifts.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the top anatomy professor at the (by then enlightened and experimental) University of Edinburgh declared (Knox, 1850) "Race is everything. Literature, science, art—in a word, civilization, depends on it." But the early twentieth century witnessed the advance of what would become the new religion; and the discovery of the Nazi death camps was enough to convince elite Westerners that their only moral recourse was embracing the doctrine of multiculturalism.

Yet what exactly was the West being asked to accept, and on what grounds? Astonishingly, it turns out that there is a simple and flawed story at the heart of social anthropology—the principal academic route by which multiculturalism made its advance. In particular, the advent of multiculturalism was largely the work of one man who undertook just one major study, between 1908 and 1910 in New York. Surprisingly, this key study was not at all concerned with the intelligence or moral qualities of the different migrant groups flooding into America at that time—a concern that created enough anxiety to yield a U.S. government report that ran to forty volumes. Nor was the study concerned even with brain size (“cranial volume”)—already thought to distinguish the different main races of man and to have a significant link to intelligence. No, the factual claims that would culminate some forty years later in serious victories for multiculturalism concerned simply the relative width and length (from front to back) of the human head. Remarkably, this “cephalic index” (CI)—which no one ever showed to be linked to any important human qualities at all—was to provide the way of turning the tide for a century against the scientific racism that had been dominant in anthropology since Darwin’s (1859) discoveries.

#### THE DESTRUCTIVE LEGACY OF FRANZ BOAS

An immigrant to the U.S., Franz Uri Boas (1858-1942), and his students at Columbia University collected physical measurements of some 17,000 adults and children, concentrating especially on immigrants to the U.S. Some 6,000 were of Jewish origin, but Bohemians, Sicilians, and Neapolitans were especially well represented, each group providing about 3,000 testees. Boas had been interested in refuting the suggestion that the brain development of Negroes (as Boas and others then called blacks) became arrested at some unduly early age. However, the finding that Boas eventually produced had nothing to do with that idea. Instead, what Boas claimed to have discovered in his voluminous data was that parent-child similarity in CI was greater for pairs where the child had been born *before* immigration to America took place. By contrast, when a child of immigrants was born in the U.S.—and, more particularly, after ten or so years of the parent being in the U.S.—there was more difference between parent and child. Thus arose what was long to be by far the most important “anti-racist” empirical claim of American anthropologists: apparently the CI index, beloved of physical anthropologists as a possible brain indicator readily taken from live subjects, and certainly showing reliable racial differences, had turned out to be a far from permanent feature—presumably because circumstances like climate or diet or gynecological or swaddling practices made a difference. Hey presto! Here was the first apparent refutation of the claims of Darwin’s cousin, Sir Francis Galton, that race mattered. Boas’s legacy as “the man who did more than any other to lay the ghost of racism in scientific disciplines” (Gossett, 1997) is due in large part to this landmark work. Whatever the CI starting points of America’s gathering

ances, the American “melting pot” could be expected to produce change—just as liberal-left optimists about immigration then liked to believe. (Today, no doubt, the very idea of hoping immigrants might change would be denounced as “racist.”)

Importantly, Boas was in a good position to carry conviction about his claim. A physicist by training in Germany, Boas, the son of liberal Jewish parents, had turned to anthropology after failing to land an academic job in Berlin (perhaps because of the rising anti-Semitism in Germany, which may have helped give him his facial dueling scars). Boas’s notable human, linguistic, and musical gifts and mastery of photography ensured success for his detailed recording work among the Eskimos and “Americans” (today called Native Americans in government circles) and he climbed the greasy pole of academia to land a job at Columbia University in 1899. Though he always had a kindly attitude to people of non-European races, he realistically allowed that there were, in particular, substantial differences in development between the “Americans,” Europeans, and Mongoloids (East Asians) on the one hand and the Negroes, “Australians” (i.e. Australian aborigines), and Melanesians on the other. It was only for the “races” of Europe itself (said in those days to be principally Nordic, Alpine, or Mediterranean) that Boas repeatedly asserted general equality—obviously including the Jews.

In both cases, Boas’s views were borne out by subsequent twentieth-century psychological research (indeed, Ashkenazi Jews turned out to be positively superior to Europeans on IQ-type tests). Similarly, Boas believed that brain volume was most likely linked to intelligence, as it clearly was to race (with Mongoloids having the largest brains)—a position that became well established by the 1990s as accurate measures of brain volume in live subjects (by magnetic resonance imaging) came on stream. Boas knew there was a delicate problem in linking brain volume to intelligence, since female brains are smaller; but he imagined this sex difference was due to factors other than general intelligence. He was thus entirely vindicated when, in 1998, it became clear that the bigger male brain is indeed due not to the brain’s central gray matter that is responsible for general intelligence, but to the white matter which probably underpins spatial orientation abilities (once so necessary for the male hunter). Boas was also right that interbreeding between races did no conspicuous harm to basic human requirements like health or intelligence—countering claims made too enthusiastically by scientific racists of those days (though, of course, interbreeding has never yet yielded a Bach, Handel, Beethoven, or Mozart). Boas was in all these ways a successful scientific speculator—even if his followers in social anthropology would largely renounce science altogether. Boas’s major anti-racist thesis was that most race differences are probably caused substantially by oppressive race prejudice. This was invalidated when the West’s black colonies failed to make much economic progress after being granted independence; but even so it was a plausible and testable idea, one which is still entrancing today to many social scientists in the West’s “universities.”

Thus it was that two whole generations of academics became increasingly inclined to accept Franz Boas's anti-racist message, coupled as it was with an assurance that African countries had sometimes reached high levels of civilization (for which Boas—no Africanist — actually had very little evidence). Yet at the center of this attractive-seeming message there turns out to be an enormous and omnivorous black hole.

First to vanish into the hole are Boas's (1910) "findings" on head shape. Last autumn, anthropologists Corey S. Sparks of Pennsylvania State University and Dr. Richard L. Jantz of the University of Tennessee reanalyzed Boas's 1910 data on CI and concluded that the figures simply did not show *any* significant impact of the American environment on immigrant parents and their U.S.-born children (Sparks & Jantz, 2002). Apparently, 99 percent of CI variation occurred within families, and there was at most a 1 percent effect of the new American environment. This might not have mattered too much to a hardcore idealist who could just say that *one day* assimilation would be complete. But that was not how Boas and colleagues had written of matters. Rather, the social anthropologists had claimed there were "enormous" and "quick" effects from immigration. Even Boas's 1 percent effect is of no certain import, for some immigrant groups produced thinner heads in America and others produced children with heads that were broader. Most likely, the 1 percent figure was just chance variation.

Worse, Boas's own graphs clearly show that children born after their parents had lived in the U.S. for *twenty* years did not show greater dissimilarity than the children born after *ten* years. Indeed, contrary to the Boasian thesis, they actually showed *less* difference. Further discussion of Boas's errors is supposed to be forthcoming at the American Anthropological Association, and Boas will doubtless have some defenders; but none will be able to justify how so much was ever made of so little. (In March, the AAA published an article by Gravlee et al. (2003) defending Boas's claims; but this article did not discuss the analysis by Sparks and Jantz and its own defense used data published by Boas in 1928, by which time—as was acknowledged—some 4,000 of the original subjects had mysteriously gone missing. Gravlee et al. say, in what is surely no overstatement: "It would be a worthwhile project for future researchers to explain this discrepancy and locate the missing data." They also report *no* general influence on child CI of time elapsed since parental immigration into the U.S. Defense like this serves only to underline the likelihood that no confidence should ever have been placed by twentieth-century anthropologists and "anti-racists" in Boas's vast but inadequate data set.)

Second into the hole go the reputations of anthropologists for scholarship and critical faculty. How could Boas have got away with what may have been fraud and with what was certainly an egregious departure from all reasonable standards of data analysis? Boas himself certainly had the excuse that he had no training in statistics—he probably never calculated a correlation coefficient

in his life. Yet even so, his use of his data was at least both capricious and reckless, if not actually distortingly selective. Worse, Boas's followers had no excuse for failing to recognize those problems as they talked up their master's ideologically convenient achievement. Any open-minded reader of Boas's many admirers will today conclude that none of them have actually shown the slightest interest in reading their master's empirical work. They loved their master's conclusions but cared little about establishing empirical facts.

Of course, modern science does not depend on scholastic arguments and counterarguments. In science, the blunt way is replication, replication, replication. Yet, in this vital matter, the black hole once again whisks social anthropology away. Boas's claims about head shape malleability had attracted much critical attention from horrified scientific racists, and these critics typically won their arguments in journals of the 1920s—for example, pointing out that immigrants may have been genetically different from their originating populations (as voluntary migrants certainly are in IQ, being typically 10 points higher than the population they leave). Yet by that time the American immigration issue had been settled, with the 1924 law restricting U.S. immigration from non-Nordic populations. Thus there was no ready state money available for replicating Boas's claims about head shape; and the Boasians did not appreciate the importance of using their (many) sources of private funding to repeat the key work on which they relied.

In short, the 52-year-old Boas had frankly found his copious 1910 data contained a few unexpected fluke effects that could be used to suggest possible malleability of "basic" racial features. With his unhelpfully reported data buried nicely away in a gargantuan government tome, Boas could rely on systematic inattention—whether from his own enthusiastic supporters or from his critics (who understandably thought that their own repeated demonstrations—from 1915—of the low IQs of Negroes were of far greater importance than Boas's readily disputed claims about malleability of head shape). Yet this is no proper way to conduct a science, even a social science. By contrast, when, in 1912, the British psychologist Cyril Burt overturned Victorian wisdom by finding males to have the same average general intelligence as females (using the new Binet tests from France), this finding was replicated in countless investigations (and qualified by the observations that males have a wider range of IQs—thus producing more geniuses and more mental defectives—and that adolescent boys only temporarily lag behind adolescent girls in mental development). By contrast, social anthropology steamed ahead campaigning for relativism and multiculturalism (against "essentialism" and "racism") without even the slight empirical commitment that their own master had shown. "Antiracist" piety of today is literally the creation of these sorry non-findings of a century ago.

Nor is even this academic dereliction of duty the whole of the story. Twenty years ago came the first allegations of slipshod work by a top social anthropologist, along with allegations of a preference for ideology over

empiricism. The case actually involved Franz Boas's own star student, Margaret Mead, who had written about Samoa in the 1930s as a happy, model society practising sexual permissiveness. A New Zealand professor, Derek Freeman (1983), put the record straight: Mead's account had depended on just two young girls who subsequently, as ladies in their sixties, told Freeman that their stories of sexual licentiousness before marriage had been merrily made up because that was what the trendy lesbian Margaret Mead had seemed to want to hear. Another blow to social anthropology came in the 1990s, when left-wing anthropologists set out to challenge the evidence of researcher Napoleon Chagnon that some South American tribes were highly aggressive, and probably natively so. A string of accusations that Chagnon had stirred up his tribes' aggression by bringing them weapons and that he had infected them with Western diseases turned out to be wholly false, as adjudicated by the American Anthropology Association; so once more the trade was left facing ideologically unpalatable thoughts.

Today, with the mighty Boas himself under challenge, social anthropology is in a bad way. By providing a home for people who—whether as Jews or lesbians or socialists—had little liking for the West, it had taken a risk that might have been reasonable if scientific methods had been scrupulously employed. Yet, instead of proving anything much at all by any certain method, social anthropology has been left with no major finding and now has little to do but furiously attack its favorite straw man—the idea that there can be any talk of races since some people are, after all, of mixed race. In fact, all modern research shows important differences on scores of variables between the world's three main racial groups, as Boas himself claimed before he moved into radicalized denial in his old age. (He died of a heart attack while giving an anti-Nazi after-dinner speech.) To say there are no races because of occasional overlaps is like saying there are no birds or fish because of the existence of penguins. Anyhow, the world's top classifier of human genetic variation, Luigi Cavalli-Sforza, acknowledges the same main racial groups as do such race-realist psychologists as Arthur Jensen, Philippe Rushton, and myself—though Cavalli-Sforza is careful to avoid the actual term “race,” presumably so as to keep research monies flowing his way.

In 1989, sociologists had to face up to the ending of many of their dreams when the supposedly class-abolishing socialist countries of Eastern Europe fell apart (having left their class systems largely intact despite millions of murders of educated and land-owning people). In the main, sociologists then fled from science into existentialism and its empirically uncommitted “postmodern” transmogrification of “constructivism.” Likewise, the feminists who had taken over psychology (75 percent of the students are female) had to acknowledge by 2000 that the West was not their oppressor but—by contrast with the rest of the world—their *protector*. Now it is the turn of anthropologists to own up that the West-hating doctrine of multiculturalism, which they nurtured and which

fuelled mass colored immigration, never actually had the academic basis they claimed. Certainly social anthropology's problems have been made perfectly clear in the worldwide failure of multicultural experiments. It is not just that Europe's great empires all came to grief, followed by multicultural Yugoslavia, Rwanda-Burundi, and then Zimbabwe. In 1999, the Council of Europe (a once-liberal outfit that lately strains to lock up anyone talking realistically about race) published figures—though not commenting on them—that showed much lower crime rates for the smaller, monocultural countries of Europe (such as Denmark, Norway, and partitioned Cyprus) than for such multicultural conglomerates as the U.K., the U.S., and the USSR. Before another dollar is spent supporting multicultural ambitions, it is time for anthropologists to apologize and make a fresh start—helped by historians, psychologists, and the statisticians whom social anthropology has always so especially spurned. Failing such reform, the anthropologists' university lecture halls will first ring with tinkling laughter, and next lose altogether their charming complements of rich young Western girls gawping at the sexual tackle of savages while imbibing social anthropology's multicultural piety.

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