



Intellectuals and Race

After reading Dr. Thomas Sowell's latest book, *Intellectuals and Race*, one cannot emerge with much respect for the reasoning powers of intellectuals, particularly academics, on matters of race. There's so much faulty logic and downright dishonesty.

Many intellectuals attribute the behavior patterns of blacks to "a legacy of slavery" or contemporary racial discrimination. But when one observes similar behavior patterns among Britain's lower-class whites, which can't be attributed to "a legacy of slavery" or discrimination, it calls into question the explanations for black behavior.



It's lamented that blacks are "the last hired" and, during an economic downturn, "the first fired," because blacks are terminated before whites. That's seen as evidence of discrimination by white employers, but white employees are terminated before Asian-American employees. Is that employer discrimination against whites? Intellectuals accept statistical data as showing discrimination when it reinforces existing preconceptions and reject or ignore it when it doesn't.

It's the same story in the housing market. Newspapers, television commentators, civil rights leaders, academics and politicians see racial discrimination as the cause for black mortgage loan applicants being rejected more frequently than white applicants. In 2000, black applicants were turned down for prime mortgage loans twice as often as whites; however, white applicants were turned down nearly twice as often as Asian-Americans.

The racial discrimination explanation requires that we believe that white bankers racially discriminate not only against blacks but against whites, as well. It also requires that we believe that black-owned banks are in cahoots with white-owned banks, because they, too, turn down black mortgage applicants more often than white applicants. The true explanation is not rocket science. Lenders prefer to lend to people who will pay them back. Average credit scores are higher among whites than blacks and higher among Asian-Americans than whites.

During the early 20th century, there were mass migrations of blacks from the South. Both the black-owned Chicago Defender and the Urban League offered published advice to their less tutored brethren, such as: "Don't use vile language in public places." "Don't throw garbage in the backyard or alley or keep dirty front yards." "Do not carry on loud conversations in street cars and public places." Jews, Germans and Irish made similar appeals to acculturate their ill-mannered cousins. These efforts produced positive results over the years.

That has changed with today's multiculturalism vision. Efforts to get minority groups to acculturate to the linguistic, dress and other norms of the larger society are seen negatively by multiculturalists as a form of cultural imperialism. Intellectuals and academics call for celebrating diversity. That means wearing one's trousers low enough to see one's butt, men wearing a head full of pigtails, and using poor language that's sometimes vulgar are part of the liberal's vision of "celebrating diversity." Then there's



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the “acting white” charge, when black youngsters who conduct themselves according to the norms of the larger society are criticized and often assaulted by their presumably “acting black” peers.

Sowell concludes that our nation is painting itself into a corner when it comes to thinking about racial problems. Whole cities, of which Detroit is a classic example, have been devastated physically, socially and economically by racial problems — which cannot be discussed honestly by elected officials, people in the media or academics, who do not want to become pariahs or, even worse, lose their jobs. This moral paralysis is paid in blood — mostly the blood of black people preyed upon by criminals, though in recent years, there have been violent mob attacks on white people in shopping malls, on beaches, on public transportation vehicles and in other public places. These attacks often go unreported, are minimized or are reported without detail, even though the attackers shouted their hatred for white people. The use of sufficient force to stop these attacks would be called “excessive” in the media and by politicians or “community leaders.”

My own conclusion is that black people waged a successful civil rights struggle against gross discrimination. It's white and black liberals, intellectuals, academics and race hustlers who have created our greatest hurdle.

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