
Work Notes on Empirical Research in Black Psychology*

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Introduction

This chapter examines the extent and the nature of the current participation by Black psychologists in the empirical research enterprise. Prior to this decade, programs of empirical research implemented by Black psychologists were extremely rare. Only in the past six years have Black psychologists organized conferences exclusively devoted to the presentation and discussion of empirical research. In recent years the number of Black researchers has grown steadily but not dramatically. There is still nowhere near a critical mass. When we consider how recent is the influx of Black psychologists into the research field and how few their number, it becomes obvious that the contemporary relation of Black psychologists to empirical research cannot be understood without reference to the historical factors that have shaped the current situation and to the continuing demands and dilemmas that confront Black psychologists in their scholarly pursuits. Consequently, in this chapter it seems timely, appropriate, and significant to address several distinct but interlocking questions. What historical circumstances have shaped the professional participation of Black people in psychology? What is the historical context for the paucity of research by Black psychologists? What is portended by the advent of increased participation by Black psychologists in the research enterprise? For what reasons and toward what ends is Black psychological research conducted? What

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impediments continue to hamper the research endeavors of Black psychologists?

Obviously there are no definitive answers to these questions. Any careful social observer who has thought deeply about the issues can offer defensible hunches. This essay presents one set of such informed opinions, those of a group of Black psychologists who for several years have conducted race-relevant research. We realize that in formulating such a set of answers we are inevitably providing a "state of the art" commentary on empirical research by Black psychologists.

Some Historical Issues

The professional participation of Black people in psychology dates back to 1920 when Francis Sumner received his doctorate from Clark University. Through 1950 thirty-one other Black persons received doctorates in psychology (Guthrie 1976). In light of the circumstances of Black life in the United States at the time, it is hardly surprising that highly trained Black psychologists were so rare during this period. Nor is it hard to explain why so few of this small number were truly oriented toward empirical research. This is not the appropriate place for an exhaustive analysis of all the reasons for Black underrepresentation. Instead, we would like to focus on some of the most salient considerations.

For much of this century American psychology was dominated by the behaviorist school of thought. As a result much research and scholarship were devoted to proving, elaborating, or disproving models and postulates dealing with the allegedly fundamental learning and motivational processes involved in the strengthening of the neural bonds that intervene between impinging stimulation and the organism's response (Hull 1943). It was believed that since the psychological processes involved were so basic, it would be more economical to investigate them using infrahuman organisms (Allport 1955). Consequently, among the central problems for inquiry were (Harlow 1953): What determines the number of times a rat will press a bar for food when none is forthcoming? What factors dictate the speed with which a rat will run down a straight alley? How do we predict which direction a rat will turn in a T-maze?

The prevailing outlook was reflected in methodology as well. Of primary importance was the constructing of tightly controlled laboratory research in which the relevant variables were operationalized in the most non-mentalistic terms possible. This excessively positivistic orientation, along

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with its conceptual counterpart, was characteristic of psychology in general (Koch 1964, Mischel 1969), but in particular it precluded study of the most pressing concerns of Black Americans.

IQ testing and racial attitudes and stereotypes, two problem areas virtually untarnished by behaviorist dogma, were essentially the only areas in which psychological research on race was conducted (Jones 1973). Mainstream (that is, behaviorist) psychology was not amenable to investigating such issues as racism and oppression, the psychosocial reality of Black people, or the consequences of being an Afro-American. Thus, it is readily apparent why so few educated Black Americans saw psychology as an attractive occupation. It was seen generally as a narrow, stifling field and in particular as insensitive to the themes most directly pertinent to Black Americans.

Of course this is not to say that the number of Black professionals in other fields was large. Our aim, rather, is to explain why the paucity of Black professionals was even more pronounced in psychology than in other fields. Sociology, for example, was seen as a more appropriate vehicle for both Blacks and Whites interested in investigating the burning social issues of the day.

Small wonder, then, that the few Black psychologists who acquired advanced training tended to gravitate toward applied psychology. Their inclinations were reinforced by a realistic assessment of the job market. Until very recently Black psychologists could not hope to gain employment at the more research-oriented White universities. What few opportunities there were for Black psychologists were either in applied settings or at the more teaching-oriented Black colleges. Even at the latter prospects were limited, for with few exceptions these colleges lagged behind their White counterparts in embracing the relatively new discipline of psychology. This also meant that Black students had fewer opportunities to study psychology than they did such subjects as biology or history.*

The preceding account helps set the historical context for the pattern of Black professional participation in psychology. From the information in Guthrie's book (1976), we have determined that of the initial thirty-two Black doctorates in psychology, all but one worked primarily on social or educational problems. Over 90 percent of the thirty-two were principally concerned, in their professional work, with the affairs of Black Americans. Nearly 75 percent could be classified as clinical or educational psychologists. Most of their dissertations are concerned with IQ or with racial attitudes. Only four actually established programs of empirical research.

* O. W. Eagleson 1977: personal communication. In 1935 Dr. Oran Wendle Eagleson became the eighth Black person to receive a doctorate in psychology in the United States. He is now the Callaway Professor of Psychology, Spellman College, Atlanta, Georgia.

As we entered the 1960s, several factors interacted to make psychology a more attractive alternative. There was a relaxing of the behaviorist dogma. The enactment of crucial social legislation lifted some of the more overt forms of racial oppression and discrimination. With the advent of the Black consciousness movement and helped along by government intervention, professional and educational opportunities for Blacks in psychology increased. The war on poverty stirred psychologists to more active involvement in solving extant social and educational problems. Millions of dollars were made available to psychologists pursuing relevant applied and basic research. Not surprisingly, the number of Blacks in psychology increased substantially. But we are describing a recent phenomenon. Relatively large numbers of Blacks did not begin entering graduate programs until the very late 1960s and early 1970s. Indeed, the National Association of Black Psychologists was not established until 1968.

In large measure, the major responsibilities and priorities of Black psychologists in the late 1960s and early 1970s were to eradicate and explode what were perceived as myths with regard to the psychological reality of Black people; to counter negative images and formulations; and to organize politically for reasons of professional survival and in an effort to foster the entry of enough Black people into the field to create a critical mass (King 1977, Williams 1974). In addition, many Black psychologists believed they should serve as watchdogs for the Black community, shielding it from exploitative research, protecting it from insensitive and counterproductive social action, and flushing out existing programs detrimental to the community's interests (Gordon 1973). Thus many Black psychologists assumed service and advisory responsibilities for the more vulnerable Black communities striving to solve practical problems and protect themselves. Community leaders such as clergymen and school administrators often sought the informal advice of Black psychologists on the desirability of permitting researchers to solicit subjects from their organizations. Black psychologists helped organize and participated in community research review committees. In addition, Black psychologists provided "technical" advice to Black community organizations such as schools and mental health centers.

In the academic arena during this period, Black psychologists directed their scholarship principally toward providing critiques of traditional research and theory that purported to deal with psychological aspects of the Black experience (e.g., White 1970). The logical inconsistencies and experiential insensitivities of traditional scholarship were amply documented. The call for de-emphasis of Anglocentric perspectives in regard to Afro-American psychological processes and behavior was highly compelling. The suggestions for alternative approaches were often liberating

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and inspirational (e.g., Jones 1972). Thus, the notion that the psychology of the Black experience could be studied in a much more satisfactory manner gained considerable credibility. However, there were few attempts at elaborating the alternative perspectives to the point of proposing specific directions for research, and even fewer instances in which research projects were actually carried out. Furthermore, other theories of Black psychological processes and behavior often were based on phenomenological and intuitive grounds, unsupported by systematically compiled data.

All in all, little empirical research was initiated, let alone propagated, during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Not only was there no historical precedent for research careers among Black psychologists, but empirical research was viewed as an instrument of exploitation by many Black social scientists along with the Black community at large (Thomas 1973). Thus, research was seen as irrelevant, when not downright detrimental, to the real needs of Black people. This response was in part a function of the general anti-intellectualism of the times and in part an adaptive, historically appropriate response by Black people.

By the mid-1970s the important tasks of political organizing and consciousness raising among Black psychologists had been reasonably accomplished. Many, if not most, educational and occupational barriers appeared to have been lifted. Moreover, the Black community had become more aware of the need to counter exploitative psychological research with alternative concepts. Greater numbers of Black psychologists were completing their training at research-oriented universities. Thus, the stage was set for increasing numbers of Black psychologists to launch empirical research programs—programs that would be methodologically sound yet sensitive to and supportive of the cultural and adaptive experiences of Black people.

The Significance of Black Psychological Research

Increased participation in scientific research by a particular ethnic group does not necessarily influence the course of psychological inquiry. Furthermore, it can be persuasively argued that, taken individually, the concerns of Black psychologists are not unique. However, we believe that the particular cluster of concerns and emphases of today's Black psychologists, coupled with the advantage of experience, puts them in a position to make a unique research contribution to psychology. Their concerns are the same as those of earlier Black psychologists. It is just recently, however, that it

has seemed feasible to articulate and act on these concerns through programs of empirical research.

Perhaps the cornerstone concern of Black psychological research is race. White people often express amazement at Black people's preoccupation with race: "Is that all you ever think about?" Such statements are in part reflections of an illusion, but they are on target in other ways. Whenever White people find themselves in the presence of large numbers of Black people, their thoughts, too, tend to be dominated by race. So apparently are their subsequent actions, given the persistence of discrimination and de facto segregation in schools, neighborhoods, and jobs. And these actions are what lead to the illusion. Since they so rarely come in contact with Black people, many (most?) White people are seldom in situations where they "have to" think about race. Black people do not enjoy that option. As a member of a racial minority that is discriminated against, the typical Black person is forced to be aware of race almost twenty-four hours a day. Thus, it is hardly surprising that so many Black psychologists think about psychology in racial terms, in terms of its implications for them not merely as people but as *Black* people.

Some additional special concerns appear to be inextricably interwoven with this racial awareness. First, Black people are especially sensitive to the significance of psychology-related research for social policy. The sensitivity derives from the enormous impact government actions—segregation and voting laws, social welfare programs, even such local services as schools and police forces—have had on the day-to-day lives of Black people. Those who make the laws and carry them out must somehow justify their actions. While consistency with common sense, the "general welfare," and the Constitution still govern, it has not been lost on Black people that the results of social research have also influenced government policy makers. Witness, for example, the testimony of Kenneth Clark in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, the legislative reaction to James Coleman's reports on the effects of school desegregation, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan's advice to Richard Nixon that a policy of benign neglect toward the Black community would serve the nation's interests.

The research orientations of Black psychologists are often characterized by explicit or implicit utilitarianism, which generally reflects Black psychologists' experience and understanding of Black problems. It does not follow that the research of Black psychologists is necessarily applied research. Rather, regardless of setting, paradigm, issue, or obviousness of the application, they endeavor to some degree to address a real need of Black people. To cite one example (a more detailed typology of Black psychologists' research is discussed later in this chapter), a seemingly esoteric laboratory study of selective attention might be engaged in by a

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Black researcher in part because he thinks it may eventually lead to improved teaching methods for Black children in city schools.

It takes little imagination to understand why Black psychological researchers are often concerned with the impact of racism and oppression. The life conditions of Black people will not be significantly improved unless the origins and the consequences of discrimination are effectively addressed. It is crucial to point out that this concern of Black researchers is not academic, not spawned by mere scientific curiosity—nor is it an outlet for guilty consciences. Instead, it is inspired by a very real desire for survival in a harsh and often hostile environment.

In recent years there has been an upsurge of Black interest in distinctive Black psychological characteristics, a shift in emphasis ushered in by a refocusing of the collective Black sense of self. The desire for psychological self-determination and self-definition is a natural extension of collective Black pride or Black consciousness. Such an orientation clearly conflicts with the prevailing pejorative views of Black behavior. Thus Black research psychologists are often concerned with rejecting the widespread inferiority models and giving systematic attention to the cultural predilections, adaptive strategies, and coping styles that set Black people apart from others in a positive way. Yet the desire to establish distinctiveness is secondary to the desire to portray Black people in a more positive light. In large measure, the infusion of a collective Black sense of self sets the concerns of present-day Black psychologists apart from their predecessors (see Canady 1943). Most of the race-relevant research between the 1930s and the 1950s seems to have been predicated on the assumption that if conditions were to improve substantially for Black people, it would be through the changing of White attitudes. Moreover, "improvement" came to mean integration. The recent work of Black psychologists has neither emphasized mass White attitude change nor concentrated on the psychological issues implicit in an integrationist approach to social change.

Given this constellation of concerns, it seems appropriate to posit a common theme that winds through the research offerings of most Black psychologists. This theme is that each *psychological investigation of Black people should emanate directly from the experiences and perspectives of Black people. The explicit ultimate aim of the scholarship is to have implications for, or to be applied to, the psychological, social, economic, and political well-being of Black communities. These implications and applications can be direct or indirect, short-run or long-run.*

We offer this theme as a viable alternative to traditional themes involving the study of Black people; we believe it constitutes a working, research-oriented definition of what is commonly referred to as "Black psychology." Even in positing a unifying theme, however, we do not want to obscure

important differences of opinion as to appropriate methods, problem areas, philosophical underpinnings, and conceptual and metaconceptual emphases. Moreover, we do not want to imply that all Black research psychologists work from the same point of view. Unanimity of opinion or identical life experience is not essential. We recognize that Black psychology is an embryonic field and thus represents only the budding interests of psychologists who are Black and who have the welfare of Black people as their primary professional commitment. Thus when we talk about Black psychology, Black psychologists, or Black psychological research, we are presenting the special interests of Blacks trained in psychology who, out of knowledge and experience, are seeking to interpret the behavioral consequences of the life conditions of Black people.

We do not wish to imply that research by non-Black social scientists cannot relate to the Black psychological theme we have outlined. In fact, important contributions have been made by non-Blacks and will, we hope, continue to be made. We acknowledge such important and sensitive contributions (see, among others, Cole and Scribner 1975; Rappaport 1977; Ginsburg 1972; Labov 1970). While there are certainly sincere and intellectually committed non-Black researchers, it seems naive to expect that significant numbers can fully appreciate the conditions of Black life. Simply put, Black psychologists are more likely to share the Black public's particular interests within psychology. And, indeed, the non-Black researchers who share our thematic orientation are relatively rare.

Will this orientation have any significant social value? This question is in part empirical, but surely also sociopolitical: the vantage point of Black psychologists is a unique combination of ethnographic base and overt advocacy. Since their orientation is ethnographic rather than ethnocentric, there is reason to hope it will result in a deeper understanding of Black people as we define our psychological reality. In being advocates—that is, in taking the interests of Black people as a given—Black psychologists should at least produce research less likely than previous endeavors to precipitate blatantly detrimental social action. Moreover, as Boykin has said,

the research of folks who are perpetually conscious of its impact on Black people, is more apt to be conducted in light of the larger social-political realities. Research which is conducted in light of the larger social-political realities is more apt to give at least as much investigative emphasis to systemic-institutional-centered variables as it does to person-centered variables. A more balanced blend of emphases would tend also to mitigate against a proclivity for what Ryan [1971] calls "exceptionalistic explanations for universalistic problems." A social issue that is clearly systemic in nature but treated as though it were a unique aberration, will not only be explained inadequately but the ensuing social action implications will be woefully insufficient. Moreover, re-

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search which attempts to emanate from the perceptions and experiences of those under study is more apt to illuminate the fact that psychological and behavioral processes are inextricably linked to their social, cultural and situational contexts. (Boykin 1977, p. 50)

At the very least, this represents a fresh slant on race-related issues. Although we realize no promises can be made, we gain considerable satisfaction just from offering a potentially viable alternative, and we feel confident that it would be virtually impossible for this orientation to be any less fruitful than its more traditional contemporaries and predecessors.

Motives for the Research of Black Psychologists

The motives underlying particular research choices by Black psychologists are as varied as the psychologists themselves. Nonetheless, discussions with colleagues have elicited a major underlying theme: namely, the desire to elucidate empirically the consequences of being Black in a racist society. What constitutes a contribution toward that end cannot be narrowly defined, but one way to begin is to classify research efforts and their implicit rationales. In doing so, we hope to facilitate the focusing of research goals and the establishment of priorities.

Traditionally, research endeavors are classified as either basic or applied. The former refers to what many feel is the "pure" scientific approach of exploring theoretical and methodological questions, whereas the latter is more concerned with finding solutions to practical problems. However, research endeavors may also be classified by the way data from both these avenues are interpreted and used—that is, by their implications for social policy. It is in recognition of the duality of this process—the collection of information on the one hand, its use on the other—which prompts us to form a typology that considers these inherent complexities. Since Black psychologists always tend to view their research within a context of social realities, the delineation of types of research must reflect the implications of our empirical endeavors, and there is often confusion among us about the precise ultimate purpose of our work. Moreover, there is the classic debate whether our research adequately focuses on the problems at hand. Therefore, we conceived of our typology as a way to clarify and assess the legitimacy of the many means to accomplish the collective end of improving the life conditions of Black people.

Figure 1.1 summarizes the dimensions along which distinctions among Black research programs can be made. The first dimension, application, contrasts protectionist and growth research. Protectionist research focuses on correcting or inhibiting social attitudes detrimental to the welfare of Black people. In many cases, such attitudes are fed by misdirected White research—for example, the Jensen (1969) and Shockley (1971) "findings"

on race and intelligence. Because of the social and public policy ramifications of such racist attitudes, research supporting such attitudes must be refuted by data supporting alternative explanations. Growth research, on the other hand, concerns the development of approaches, formulations, and programs that would positively enhance Black well-being in this country.

FIGURE 1.1
Research Type Dimensions

Dimension	Strata
Application	Protectionist vs. Growth
Level of explanation sought	Fundamental vs. Generalization vs. Program assessment
Mode	Data generation vs. Integrative

Examples include the application of psychological principles to community organization efforts or the effective teaching of Black children, given their particular cultural or adaptive background.

The second dimension distinguishing research types contrasts, for fundamental, generalization, and program assessment research, the level of explanation sought. By fundamental research we mean inquiry into the foundations of psychological phenomena and processes. Such inquiry requires the tight controls usually associated with the laboratory. Generalization research examines the vicissitudes of psychological phenomena and processes not as functions of isolated factors, but rather in their natural states, subject to the myriad effects of natural influences. The difference between fundamental and generalization research is illustrated by the comparison between a study of selective attention conducted in a reaction time laboratory and an analogous study of distraction during work performance under normal classroom conditions. Program assessment research examines whether a specific technique for accomplishing an objective does indeed accomplish that objective. There is usually also some coexisting interest in why the technique works, but it is not overriding. For instance, one might simply want to know whether a day care center fosters cooperative attitudes among the participating children, and not how and why it does so.

The third distinction between research types contrasts data generation and integrative research. The investigator seeking to generate data makes direct observations that will be taken as evidence supporting or refuting a claim or as a basis for arriving at a judgment about a phenomenon. In a sense, the alternative mode, integrative research, occurs on a higher plane.

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Integrative research involves constructing general models of psychological phenomena that can integrate the pertinent data already gathered about the phenomena. Integrative research also often leads to prediction of related phenomena and to suggestions of specific data-generating or hypothesis-testing studies and ways of carrying them out. It should be apparent that data generation and integrative research go hand in hand, at least ideally. Attempts at integration are vacuous if there are neither reliable observations to integrate nor data to confirm or contest a proposed integrative model. Similarly, data collected without reference to an integrative framework are typically wasted. Few serious scholars pay attention to them.

The question of where Black psychological research is headed is largely one of objectives. To pose the question is to ask what Black psychologists and their self-defined constituencies consider the optimal mix of the research types just described.

Personal and Professional Demands

The Black psychologist in this country is the new professional. As we have said, only in recent years have a significant number of us gained access to training and certification. A survey by the American Psychological Association reported that Black psychologists constitute about 2 percent of the faculty in psychology programs as of 1976 (Suber 1977). As we pursue our chosen profession, many of us are acutely aware of the complexities inherent in the use of our skills. One aspect is the realization that by virtue of our position, we bear a certain responsibility to our community. That over three-quarters of the Black people in this country have not completed a secondary education, are unemployed, or are in low-skill jobs with below-average incomes is a fact too distasteful to ignore. Those of us who partially escape from the bondage implicit in such statistics through educational achievement must decide either to ignore social realities or to struggle to change conditions. In many cases we represent the first generation of professionals in our families (hardly ever more than the second). Many of our relatives still live in the throes of social and economic hardship. Our own families, in consequence, will become the direct beneficiaries of any contributions we make, or they will be victims of our neglect.

In general, these are the circumstances bearing upon the life course of any Black professional, even those who elect to deny them. Racism remains a social fact; only self-deception permits any other conclusion. Therefore, as a Black professional, each of us must come to grips with his or her

identity as a Black person within a racist, predominantly White society. The significance of that resolution as a basic first step cannot be over-emphasized; clarity of resolve is central to the realistic setting of goals and priorities.

Secondly, we are psychologists, members of a profession that is concerned principally with human behavior. This concern itself generates expectations—expectations on our part and on that of our own community.

Finally, there is the need to survive professionally, which brings with it expectations from our colleagues. Hence, each of us as a Black psychologist must come to terms with his identity as a Black person, with his professional role, and with the expectations of his indigenous and professional communities. The demands all this puts on us can be overwhelming, particularly when exacerbated by the actuality of racism. Somehow, we must achieve an amalgamated identity subsumed under the label “Black psychologist.” This achievement is fraught with many personal struggles. Here we will focus on three major concerns of the Black psychologist who pursues a career in scholarly research: Black identity, academic demands, and payoffs from research.

The Issue of Black Identity

Identity is a protean but indispensable concept. The question of Black identity or self-concept has been thoroughly and widely debated. Here we wish merely to point out that the Black person who chooses psychology as a profession and chooses further to direct his expertise toward issues of interest to the Black community should have a strong sense of self if his efforts are to bear fruit. By this we mean that the Black psychologist must have self-assurance, professional competence, compassion for humanity, and, most certainly, a genuine desire to improve the life conditions of Black people.

He must consciously accept the need to reinvest his skills in his community so that its resources (political, economic, social) can be mobilized and made to work *for us*. Through his work he must be a staunch advocate for the betterment of the Black community in the face of racism. The pressures on such an advocate are burdensome. Self-doubt and constant redefinition are by-products of the stress inherent in the role (Staples 1972). This is why the more consolidated one's identity and goals are, the greater is the probability of making a contribution.

The consolidation of one's identity as a Black person is important for the establishment of an identity as a credible professional psychologist. We experience an immediate need to handle the unique demands of this role—that of a Black psychologist—in contrast to a psychologist who considers his Blackness incidental to his life and career. In fact, such a psychologist

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may find much of this article largely irrelevant. But for our purposes we are assuming that the Black psychologist's role is an internalized amalgam of a commitment to improving the welfare of Black people and an interest in continuous refinement of professional skills. This role often involves being a maverick: that is, because there have been so few professionally trained Black psychologists in the past (Guthrie 1976), we who assume this role today are pioneers. Our Black predecessors are rarely mentioned to us in our training. The community at large, both Black and White, has not yet come to accept our worth despite our sense of professional legitimacy. Consequently, we, as professional Black psychologists, are still on the proving ground and must navigate its uncertainties. To do so requires a strong sense of self and purpose in life.

Demands of Academia

The work setting context for those of us who choose teaching and research as a career is principally the research university. For reasons given earlier, opportunities at Black colleges are limited, and the constraints have been tightened further by the extremely serious financial predicament in which Black colleges today find themselves. They cannot compete with the larger and wealthier White universities in supporting research programs. Consequently many graduating Black psychologists are drawn to White universities. Once there, however, their feelings are not unmixed.

Often Blacks are offered university positions, not because they have professional competence in an area the department needs to cover, but to satisfy affirmative action requirements. The result is that many Blacks, at least initially, have basic insecurities about their scholarly worth owing to the implicit or explicit standards espoused by the rest of the faculty. This insecurity is compounded by doubts about the way other faculty members view the academic legitimacy of Black psychologists' teaching and the scientific credibility of their research. This is all the more true when issues of race are taught or investigated. Anxieties are heightened by dwindling job openings and opportunities for promotion through tenure, a situation that has grim implications for our hopes of developing a senior-level cadre of Black psychologists. Periods of no growth or retrenchment bode ill for Black professionals, for during them the innovative takes a backseat to the known and the orthodox.

Black professors in White universities therefore have essentially three options, each with its own risks and limitations. Some opt for an accommodative posture, allowing the standards of scholarly excellence to be almost entirely dictated by their White colleagues' frame of reference. The probability of continuing traditional scholarship is, of course, quite high. Others opt to forge out on their own toward new frontiers of scholarship

on the Black experience. Here the risk of academic alienation is high. Their White colleagues may view their work as discordant, incomprehensible, even threatening or describe it as misdirected, unscientific, or generally of low quality. Still other professors opt for combining new themes and perspectives with traditional methodology. Problems arise here as well. Often the scope of the research issue or the novelty of the research method does not lend itself, at least initially, to the conventions of psychological research. To get around this obstacle, some Black psychologists have pursued a bifurcated research program: part traditional experimentation, part Black-oriented research. The rationale for this is fairly straightforward. Even if those who sit in evaluative positions deprecate the methodology and formulations of the Black perspective, traditional experiments will demonstrate that a particular psychologist is capable of doing "competent" work. Moreover, the evaluators may by association ascribe legitimacy to the Black-oriented scholarship, concluding that they do not understand it completely, rather than dismissing it as poor scholarship. But dual research programs mean twice the work.

Another dimension of research is finding funds. Given the present economic situation, the amount of money available for research is dwindling. It is under conditions of intensifying competition for shrinking funds that the emerging cadre of Black research psychologists must launch their work. In addition, we suffer from general naivete about the "grantsmanship game." Like most graduate students, we had no training in proposal writing or grant solicitation. Most researchers acquire such information on the job or through advice from interested colleagues. Both instances, however, presume exposure and mentorship that often are not available to us. Furthermore, less than 30 percent of all research proposals are funded. If a proposal is controversial or unorthodox, its probability of acceptance is lowered accordingly. The review panels of many funding agencies overlap in membership, creating what is commonly described as an "old boy network" where orientation often determines who gets grants. These are some of the factors that can affect our success at securing money for research.

In developing a viable research program, Black faculty members are hampered by a plethora of responsibilities unknown to our White colleagues. As "affirmative action appointees" many of us are expected to fill numerous roles that exceed those of White faculty. They entail providing the "minority input" on committees, maintaining vigilance over discriminatory institutional practices, counseling Black students, and so forth. Each of us juggles these numerous and varied demands as best we can. Whether we accept or reject these responsibilities, the pressures are serious demands on our time and allegiance. Committee work within the university can be extremely important in effecting change for Black faculty and students. Other

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important committee assignments deal with the university's programmatic involvement in the Black community. Since the university is a reflection of our society, Black faculty are invariably confronted with issues of alleged racial discrimination on campus. The pressures in this regard are no different from those on minority residents of any community. Requests for assistance from Black students are numerous if one is even slightly receptive to such approaches. There are also the inevitable requests from the community and from service agencies for "the Black professional point of view." This is by no means an exhaustive list of the ways in which we are asked to contribute. Frequently the demands are competing. There are those based on duty and those based on personal need. Managing these demands is exhausting and frequently frustrating. Most of us have had no preparation for our unique roles (for example, as the only Black in the department). Consequently, on assuming the professional mantle, we are confronted not only with the responsibilities of all faculty but with those additional burdens of our racial minority status.

Payoffs from Research

While Black students and professionals may now regard research as inherently praiseworthy, too often they dismiss it as a career because the financial rewards seem inadequate. As many young people are frank to say, the years of sacrifice for a professional degree must result in commensurate payoffs—which in most cases means money and job security. Over half of all Black psychology students still enter clinical or counseling psychology, which offer lucrative consulting options. If one elects basic research in the university tradition, such options are comparatively few and the rewards are frequently delayed. Furthermore, research demands technical skills (for example, experimental design and statistics) from which Black students too often shy away. We feel this is due primarily to improper professional nurturance and apprehension about competence. But the need for such skills discourages many. Furthermore, the payoff from research is often purely subjective—the satisfaction of nudging knowledge ahead by empirical discoveries and theoretical formulations. For those bent on material rewards, applied research has more allure. The skills involved are central to marketing the results of research (for example, market research, test development, program evaluation). For Black psychologists, however, opportunities for developing skills and clientele in the lucrative domains of applied research are limited. The professional payoffs in the clinical, human service areas are still the most easily attainable.

Hence the research that is essential for the advancement of any group is still attracting insufficient numbers of young Black psychologists because it conflicts with their professional goals. We must find ways to enhance the

appeal of research for Black students. It is significantly through systematic investigation of factors impinging on our life conditions that we as a people will purposefully advance. A cadre of researchers is an integral part of any professional field. This is the heart of our advocacy. If we as Black psychologists are to comprehend and ameliorate the life conditions of Black people, we must have a contingent of Black researchers making a contribution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, before research goals embracing the themes and orientation of Black psychology can be realized, many obstacles, both professional and personal in nature, must be overcome. A central need is time—time to conceptualize theoretical and methodological directions, time to sort out professional and personal identity. Initiatives have been taken on many fronts. Still needed, however, are support structures (for example, funds, colleagues, atmosphere, community and institutional resources) that will nourish the seeds of our interests. Support structures are essential to establish the relevance of our work for committed Black students, for training that nurtures an ideology, and for the development of professional settings that allow skills to mature unencumbered. Without these basic ingredients, efforts to solidify the perspectives of Black psychologists will meander and dissipate in the quest for sheer survival. This exposition, therefore, is in part meant as an admonition that the potential contribution of Black psychologists to scientific knowledge and human service can, if unsupported, be lost to the ravages of racism and elitism. Regardless of the demands on our lives as Black professionals, we must never abandon the role of advocate. Toward this end we must deal with the inequities not only in our chosen field of psychology but also in our daily lives as Black people.

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