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Sloan School), blacks and whites are not treated equally.

Some may argue that the differences between the economic resources and social position of blacks and whites hinges solely on gains which will be made in education, i.e. that social inequality will inevitably decline after minorities are given "equal" access to education. However, the statistics seem to refute this notion.

For example, in 1976, blacks who were high school dropouts had an unemployment rate of 37.3 percent as opposed to whites in the same category who were unemployed at the rate of 22.3 percent; blacks who had one to three years of college suffered from an unemployment rate of 27.2 percent and whites in this same category were unemployed at the rate of 8.2 percent.

Since the educational levels across categories were similar, one should conclude that the differences in unemployment rates were caused by discrimination, i.e. society is not "color blind." Similarly, statistics reveal that minorities in the United States do not have equal representation per capita in the educational system. Other data compiled by the economist Samuel Bowles reveals that access to a college education is highly unequal, even for children of the same measured "academic ability."

If we accept that society is and has been discriminatory against blacks (and women for that matter), we must ask ourselves the pressing moral question: What can we do about this problem? In breaking the cycle of discrimination against blacks by society we must start somewhere. Universities have traditionally held themselves up as representing high ideals of justice and social equality. Our social institutions should act responsibly on these ideals. Thus, MIT can help break the cycle of discrimination by making efforts to recruit minority students and developing programs which meet their special needs. Such an effort may not erase discrimination (such as the racism prevalent in high schools) but it will be a step towards distributing social resources equally between whites, blacks and other minority groups.

Blacks are treated differently than whites in our society and so they require alternative educational resources. Since there is an imbalance between the resources available to blacks and whites, universities such as MIT have done some things to address this imbalance. One of the ways the Institute has attempted to do this is through the Office of Minority Education. Whether this office has done a good job in helping minority students is one question which some may argue about. But the need for such an office seems clear given the problems faced by minorities e.g. discrimination, financial aid difficulties, etc.

Social reality is a bit more complex than this. The textbooks, the faculty, and the classrooms which examine history, politics, and economics are all subject to the vagaries of interpretation and subjectivity. That whites are over-represented as the interpretative actors of this reality at MIT should prove that the Institute is not "color blind" but is based on a system which presently works in favor of whites as opposed to minority viewpoints. This problem has been examined by the cuts in black and women studies programs across the country, by cuts in financial aid which hurt the poor and working class and by the decline in social movements which attempt to fight for minority interests and the cultivation of educational programs which serve to represent minority interests. The Neo-conservative idealogy has flourished by the decline in progressive student activism during an era of economic scarcity. Economic competition between blacks and whites traditionally increases in times of economic depression. With less money to go around for competing civic groups (both from the government and from employers), the neo-conservatives argue for maintaining the status quo. Equality becomes a euphemism for leaving things as they are and preventing remedial actions which attempt to redress the inequalities of the past.

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