



Objectivity, Scholarship, and Advocacy: The Chicano/Latino Scholar in America

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the biases in academe concerning what is and is not “legitimate” and “rigorous” scholarship. It examines how these biases interact with decision-making power in placing relative newcomers into a traditional ascribed secondary role. The author uses data from the 1984 and 1987 National Latino faculty Survey. Hispanic scholars believe in the role of the scientific and scholarly enterprise at levels as high as or higher than non-minority professors do. Latinos also tend to believe at a much higher rate that personal values play a central role in one’s research. Two out of five Chicano and Puerto Rican professors believe that their research is seen as academically inferior and illegitimate. This perception is stronger in higher prestige universities compared to those with lesser prestige. Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, and probably other minority group scholars, are more involved in ethnic group-based research and are more likely to teach courses on or related to their own racial/ethnic group. Disparities in the number of racial/ethnic minority and dominant group scholars on U.S. campuses may be one of the central, if not the central, factors for the “channeling” and “segmenting” of certain racial/ethnic academics within universities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Garza is president of Sierra Research and Technical Services in Fresno, Calif. He was previously a professor in the Chicano and Latin American Studies Department at California State University, Fresno. He received his BA with highest honors in sociology from UC Santa Cruz, and his MA and Ph.D. from the UC Berkeley. He has been a consultant with state and national institutions and for research efforts, including the State of California, the American Educational Research Association, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), and the U.S. Department of Justice. He was one of the founders of the National Association for Chicano Studies and, in 1987, Dr. Garza conducted the first national survey of its kind on Chicano/Latino professors and their scholarship.