



The Science and Politics of Racial Research

William H. Tucker

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Unlike other critiques of the scientific literature on racial difference, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research* argues that there has been no scientific purpose or value to the study of innate differences in ability between groups. William Tucker shows how, for more than a century, scientific investigations of supposedly innate differences in ability between races have been used to rationalize social and political inequality as the unavoidable consequence of natural differences. Tucker structures his work chronologically, with each chapter describing how research on genetic difference was used in a particular era to support a particular political agenda. He begins with the use of science to support slavery in the mid-nineteenth century and ends with the effects of Jensenism in the 1970s. Highlights include one chapter describing a little-known but concerted attempt by a group of scientists to overturn the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision on the basis of "expert testimony" about racial differences, and another that presents a review of the eugenics movement in the twentieth century. The author also considers how to balance the rights and responsibilities of scientists, concluding that one generally neglected method is to strengthen the rights of research subjects.

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