

# **Brown and Black in White: The Social Adjustment and Academic Performance of Chicano and Black Students in a Predominately White University**

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This article explores the academic and social experiences of Chicano and black students at UCLA. The analysis proceeds by examining differences in social backgrounds, high school and college experiences, and explores the relationship between these factors and college adjustment and achievement (GPA). Drawing upon recent theory on class reproduction and schooling we show particular concern with the role of social class in explaining differential outcomes. The findings indicate that blacks are more likely than Chicanos to feel alienated and perform poorly, and that social class makes no difference in these outcomes for blacks. However, middle class Chicanos perform better and are better adjusted than working class Chicanos. We discuss our findings in the light of theories of class reproduction, cultural capital, and racial signaling, suggesting that theories of reproduction must acknowledge the role of race in unequal school outcomes.

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A recent work by Astin and his associates (1982) makes much of the differences and similarities in various minority groups' experiences and outcomes in American institutions of higher education. But when all is said and done, the verdict is clear: disadvantaged minorities in American society are still disproportionately less represented in higher education and succeed at a substantially lesser rate than their white counterparts. These questions form the core of most educational research on minorities in higher education. The central questions asked are (1) what factors account for the disproportionately low numbers of minority students in higher education and (2) why, once they arrive in these institutions, do they do less well and graduate less often than majority students?

This paper addresses aspects of the latter question through an analysis of

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the factors that lead to the differential performance and adjustment of minorities in higher education by examining the backgrounds and experiences of a sample of Chicano and black students from the University of California, Los Angeles.

## THEORETICAL ISSUES

The empirical literature on minority students in higher education has usually addressed these issues by examining the social and economic background of these students (cf. Astin et al., 1982; Willie and Cunnigen, 1981). The search is for adequate predictors of why these students are underrepresented or why they perform at lower rates of achievement than white students. This leads to an examination of factors such as parental income, education and occupation, and racial composition of the high school (Astin and Cross, 1981; Ballesteros, 1979; Bayer, 1972; Boyd, 1974; Centra, 1970; Cross and Astin, 1981; Munoz and Garcia-Bahne, 1978; Willie and McCord, 1972). Certain personal characteristics of minority students have also been of interest to researchers: the quality of their previous education, scores on standardized tests, high school grades, and personality factors (Allen, 1981; ISEP, 1976; Peterson et al., 1978; Sedlacek and Webster, 1978; Thomas, 1981; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972, 1973, 1974). These studies have provided much disparate data indicating how these variables relate to minority achievement. However, these research results have yet to be integrated with any larger theoretical explanations to form a cogent and parsimonious account of minority underrepresentation and underachievement in higher education. Therefore, while highly descriptive and informative for policy purposes, this literature has limited implications for our understanding of the dynamics of schooling and racial stratification.

On the theoretical level there are several potentially satisfactory explanations for minority underrepresentation in higher education. Structural theories, particularly those that posit an intricate relationship between education and the economy, argue that educational institutions serve to reproduce the existing social hierarchy. Far from being agents of "upward mobility," schools are instead "gatekeepers" of the status-quo. For these theorists, the education that children receive "corresponds" to the work roles they will be assigned to perform as adults (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Working class children are taught different attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns than middle class children so as to prepare them for their different work roles. Minorities, being concentrated on the lower rungs of the social order, are not successful in higher education because their secondary school experiences were not those which instill the independence, autonomy, self-direction, abstract rewards, and tolerance of ambiguity taught in middle-class high schools that are necessary for successful functioning in the university. The actual process is rooted in the class based structure of American education, where differential curricula, school quality and milieu, teacher quality and experience, residential segregation, standardized testing, tracking, and teacher expectations are all seen as working in

conjunction with the hierarchical social relations of the classroom to insure that a stratified education is meted out (Collins, 1975, 1979; Howell and McBroom, 1982; Mickelson, 1980; Oakes, 1982). However, this broad theoretical framework, which we call the "correspondence theory," has yet to be used to integrate the findings of the empirical literature on minorities in higher education. While the correspondence theory seems to be a plausible explanation of minority underrepresentation and achievement, it has not been empirically examined in this context, and therefore not revised or sharpened subject to findings from theoretically informed research.

Part of the gulf between theory and research in this area is caused by the unexplicated mechanisms through which the presumed effect of social class reproduction is accomplished. While it is certainly not clearly spelled out by macro-theorists, they seem to be arguing that two sets of interrelated variables are important in this process. On one hand, there is the skill/preparation variable. Lower and working class youth (and minorities) are seen as being less prepared, in terms of skills and knowledge, to compete adequately in higher education. This deficiency is not inherent but is the result of ineffective preparation because of a stratified educational experience. The second set of variables refers to differential values/culture/socialization experiences which leave these youth ill-equipped socially and culturally for the campus and its demands. This is particularly implied by those theorists who emphasize the importance of the acquisition of the necessary "cultural capital" for successful matriculation in higher education (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; DiMaggio, 1982; Bernstein, 1975).<sup>1</sup> The relative weight of these two sets of variables is never suggested, nor is the way in which they *interact*. More importantly, this raises the question of just how the effects of prior achievement (skills, knowledge, etc.) and exposure to cultural values and orientations affect the achievement and adjustment of minorities in higher education in general, and of our sample of Chicano and black students in particular.

As a guide to organizing the analysis of our data to address both the empirical and theoretical concerns just outlined, we borrow heavily on the models of academic achievement and adjustment developed by Tinto (1975), Allen (1980; 1981), and Allen et al., (1982). Arguing that aspects of both the student and the school structure must be taken into account to understand why students succeed or fail in higher education, these models concentrate on the interaction between the individual and the environment. Using Durkheimian notions of social structure, these models argue that students are more likely to succeed in higher education when they are integrated well into the normative, social, and academic structure of the university. Conversely, when students are insufficiently integrated, they are more likely not to succeed. Each model argues that students arrive at an institution with a certain set of background characteristics (e.g., personality traits, academic aptitude and family characteristics) which, in part, determine how they will fit into the academic environment. However, once there, the student enters into a set of social relationships, the character and quality of which "... lead to varying levels of normative and structural

integration in these collegiate systems'' (Tinto, 1975, p. 103). The success or failure of the student is viewed as a function of the longitudinal process of relations between the student and the total university social system. Thus these models dispute the simple notion that students either succeed or fail in the university merely because of the presence or absence of strong academic skills, and instead argue that these factors may merely be as important as how the student is integrated in the university structure. This, the model would argue, allows for the development and expression of academic skills.

This model helps bridge the gap between the macrotheorists and conventional empirical work on minorities in higher education. The Tinto/Allen model emphasizes the importance of both skill/preparation and value/culture variables. However, more importantly, this model suggests a way in which these variables interact to produce differential achievement and adjustment in the university. Furthermore, an added dimension of this model is the emphasis on the interaction of the student's cultural background with the university structure. Indeed, it is argued that this interaction may be the most important determinant of student achievement and adjustment in the university.

This analysis will use the Tinto/Allen model as a guide in searching for the effects of skill/preparedness factors and culture/alienation factors on minority students' achievement and adjustment in a majority university. Moreover, our unique set of data allows us to determine whether these models apply equally well for Chicanos as for blacks. If theory is to be generalizable it must be able to explain class, ethnic, and racial differences as well. Our findings show that there are substantial differences between Chicanos and blacks at UCLA in their social backgrounds and university experiences. Furthermore, we discover that only for Chicanos is our evidence consistent with the prediction of the macrotheorists and the Tinto/Allen models. This suggests the need for more complex and intricate theories than those previously offered.

## PROBLEM AND METHODS

Recent research on Chicanos and blacks in predominately white universities has shown that these two groups have similar personal backgrounds and university experiences. This was based, however, not on direct comparisons, but on inferences drawn from several different studies. Therefore, our first concern in this paper is to systematically compare the experiences and outcomes of Chicano and black students at a major public university, UCLA.<sup>2</sup> Drawing on our previous theoretical discussion that identified the importance of skill/preparedness and culture/alienation variables we ask the following questions: (1) Do Chicano and black students at UCLA differ in terms of personal background, campus experiences and academic performance and adjustment at this university? (2) What is the relationship between personal background, campus experiences and academic performance and adjustment? Are these relationships similar for both Chicano and blacks? Our second major concern is to better understand the role that social

class plays in these students' adjustment and academic performance in the university. Therefore, we will use classic elaboration procedures to examine the unique effects of social class background. We want to specify to what degree relationships hold for lower and upper class groupings. Our discussion will relate these findings to the macrotheorists who stress the relationship of class to our educational system.

This study is exploratory for two reasons: (1) The unexplored character of the topic makes hypothesis testing premature, and (2) the study only examines one university and therefore does not adequately represent other campuses. However, it should be added that data of this type are uncommon and should provide us with a baseline for formulating more representative and comprehensive studies.

The data come from two separate studies conducted at UCLA in the Fall quarter of 1980 and the Winter quarter of 1981. The Chicano sample was drawn from all the identifiable Chicanos who graduated in June 1979; a total of 79 students (Rodriguez, 1982, pp. 46-7). These students were contacted personally by the principal investigator to gain rapport with them, to verify the list provided by the university, and to obtain the names of potential subjects who were not on the original list. A self-administered mail questionnaire was then used, combined with a series of follow-ups, including four mail follow-ups and two personal phone calls, which generated a phenomenal response rate of 83% ( $N = 63$ ); thus this dataset represents more nearly a population than a sample. The black sample is a subsample from the National Survey of Black Students in Predominately White Universities (Allen, 1980). Using an alphabetical list of black undergraduates provided by the university, the sample was drawn by selecting every second undergraduate after a random start using a table of random numbers. Each student was then mailed a self-administered questionnaire along with a business reply envelope in which to return the completed questionnaire. Follow-up procedures included mailing two follow-up letters to urge participation. The response rate was 29%. While low, certain extenuating circumstances still make this one of the best available samples of black students conducted on the UCLA campus or nationally.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this analysis we include in this paper only those UCLA black students who were either in their third or fourth year, providing us with a group comparable to the Chicano sample.<sup>4</sup>

In this analysis we only use those questions which were included on both the Chicano and black questionnaires (a small portion of each questionnaire). Although some questions differed slightly in wording, these studies provide an excellent opportunity to compare these two groups on relevant variables and relationships (See Appendix).<sup>5</sup>

## FINDINGS

The analysis will proceed first by examining whether there are differences between the two groups in terms of social backgrounds, high school experiences, and campus experiences. Second, it will examine the relation-

ship between these variables and university academic performance and adjustment, noting how the patterns diverge for each group. And finally, it will examine these bivariate relationships by introducing a third variable (social class) in order to better understand how class specific these findings are.

### Descriptive Differences

In Tables 1 through 3 we examine descriptive data on the Chicano and black students in this study in three respects: social background, high school background and campus experiences. First we note the social class background of the students. We have measured this through the Duncan Socio-economic Index (SEI). This measure ranks the relative prestige of occupations, and thus locates the family in the social class system. We identify the family's social class through the occupation of the father if he is present in the family, or the mother's occupation if no father is present or information on his occupation is unavailable. For descriptive purposes we have divided the SEI into three categories representing the Middle Class (500-966), the Working Class (210-499) and the Poverty Class (0-209). Thus, Table 1 shows significant differences between the social class backgrounds of the Chicano and black students in our study. Black students come from middle class backgrounds more often (48%) than Chicano students (31%), and more dramatically, Chicano students are twice as likely (54%) as black students (27%) to be from the poverty class. This reflects the social

**TABLE 1. Percent Student Background Characteristics by Ethnicity<sup>a</sup>**

	Blacks (n = 75)	Chicanos (n = 63)
<i>Class background<sup>b*</sup></i>		
Middle class	48	31
Working class	25	16
Poverty	27	54
	100	100
<i>Mother's education**</i>		
Less than high school	19	40
High school graduate	55	26
College graduate	26	34
	100	100
<i>Father's education</i>		
Less than high school	20	48
High school graduate	42	16
College graduate	38	36
	100	100
<i>College graduate role model in the family</i>		
Yes	36	49
No	64	51
	100	100

<sup>a</sup>Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding

<sup>b</sup>Chi-Square is used to test for differences.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

structure of opportunities that Chicanos have in Southern California; Chicanos are overrepresented in low status, menial jobs concentrated in services and agricultural-related industries.

In Table 1 we also note that black mothers have distinctively different educational backgrounds than Chicano mothers. Black mothers appear more highly educated than Chicano mothers; this difference is most dramatically noted when we compare mothers who have less than a high school education; Chicano mothers are twice as likely (40%) as black mothers (19%) to have only earned this level of education. For fathers, the educational differences are not as striking, although black fathers (20%) are also less likely than Chicano fathers (48%) to report low levels of education. But Chicano fathers are equally as likely (36%) as black fathers (38%) to have a college degree. This underscores a pattern generally observed throughout the black and Chicano social structure where unequally educated partners marry; for blacks, women are more highly educated, while for Chicanos the men are usually more highly educated.

An important aspect of parental education is the amount of anticipatory socialization for the college experience that the family can provide. Families with parents and siblings who have attended college are said to provide role models and encouragement and are able to anticipate problems that help ease the student's adjustment to the university. Minority students are more likely than white students to come from families in which there are no role models. In Table 2 we note that Chicano students are more likely (49%) than black students (36%) to come from families which lack role models, although this difference appears to not be significant ( $\chi^2 = 2.172, p > .05$ ).<sup>6</sup>

Table 2 provides a picture of the academic performance of these two groups in the high school and university setting. Some interesting differences emerge. Black students had a significantly higher high school GPA (3.25) than Chicano students (3.11), but this advantage did not carry through to university academic performance. In the university, Chicano students overtook the black students academically (2.87 vs. 2.73). What are the source of these differences? To learn more about what goes on in the university we turn to the students' perceptions of their experiences in this setting.

Table 3 shows the black and Chicano students' perceptions of and participation in the university milieu. As can be noted, on three of the five items there are distinctive differences between the two groups. Chicano students report less alienation than blacks. More than two-thirds (66%) of the blacks did not "feel a part of general campus life," while less than one half (47%) of the Chicanos felt "UCLA was a more foreign environment" for them than for their Anglo peers. No differences emerged when we compared their experiences of discrimination or the extent to which they had poor relations with faculty. But, unexpectedly, differences did emerge in their participation in university activities. Chicanos were less involved in general university organization (33%) and ethnically specific activities (51%) than black students (60% and 69% respectively).

**TABLE 2. Means and Standard Deviation of Grade point Averages by Ethnicity<sup>a</sup>**

	Blacks	Chicanos
<i>High School GPA</i>		
$\bar{X}$	3.25	3.11
<i>SD</i>	0.517	0.60
<i>University GPA</i>		
$\bar{X}$	2.73	2.87
<i>SD</i>	0.392	0.40

<sup>a</sup>T-test for difference between black-Chicano mean high school GPA,  $t = 2.64$ ,  $p < .05$ .  
T-test for difference between black-Chicano mean university GPA,  $t = 5.33$ ,  $p < .005$ .

**TABLE 3. College Experiences: Percent Agreement by Ethnicity**

	Chicanos ( $n = 63$ )	Blacks ( $n = 84$ )
<i>Perceived alienation<sup>a**</sup></i>	Felt UCLA was a foreign environment 47	Did not feel a part of campus life 66
<i>Perceived discrimination</i>	Encountered ethnic discrimination at UCLA 45	Experienced discrimination at this university 60
<i>Poor relations with faculty</i>	Difficulty relating to most professors at UCLA 23	Poor relations with white faculty 23
<i>Participation in university social networks*</i>	Participation in UCLA activities 33	Belong to a club 60
<i>Participation in ethnic social networks**</i>	Participation in UCLA ethnic organizations 51	Participation in black sponsored activity 69

<sup>a</sup>Chi-Square is used to test for differences.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

To summarize, we have found that black students come from decisively higher status backgrounds than Chicano students. Black parents are more likely to be highly educated, particularly mothers, and to come from higher social class backgrounds. The high school grade point averages of the black students are also decidedly higher than those of Chicanos. While Chicano students are lagging significantly behind blacks in high school academic performance, once in the university they do somewhat better. This raises several questions. Do these higher grade point averages reflect better high school preparation and suggest that Chicanos completed tougher courses compared to blacks? Furthermore, does this suggest that the quality of the schools that blacks attended were substantially weaker academically than those attended by Chicanos? Or, is there something in the experience of blacks in the university which deflates their academic achievement? Further



analysis will attempt to unravel this puzzle. In terms of university experiences blacks appear to be more alienated than Chicanos, while at the same time more tied to university and ethnic networks.

**Correlates of University Achievement and Adjustment**

Our next task is to examine how these variables relate to two central outcomes: academic performance and adjustment. We have used university GPA as our measure of academic performance and perceptions of alienation as our indicator of adjustment. All the variables have been dichotomized to simplify the analysis and to avoid cells too small for interpretation.<sup>6</sup> In Table 4 we find the correlates for Chicanos and blacks separately.

Turning to Chicanos first, we find several significant predictors of their academic performance. Among social background variables, father's education and family social class background are both related to academic performance. Students with highly educated fathers and from upper status backgrounds are more likely to earn high grades than students with fathers who have little education and lower status occupations. This is certainly supportive of the thesis that social class is an important determinant of success in higher education. Similarly, high school background variables

**TABLE 4. Correlates of Minority Student Achievement and Adjustment<sup>a</sup>**

	Chicanos		Blacks	
	GPA	Alienation	GPA	Alienation
<i>Social background</i>				
Mother's education	-.13	-.18	.26*	.10
Father's education	.27**	-.44**	.01	.11
Role Models	-.18	-.16	.02	.21*
Social class	.27**	-.29**	.07	.01
<i>High school background</i>				
High school GPA	.41***	.19	.21*	.12
Racial composition	.24*	-.24*	-.09	.15
<i>University experiences</i>				
Alienation	-.26*		.00	
Discrimination	.17	.63***	.03	.14
Faculty relations	.07	-.19	.05	-.21
Participation in university networks	-.07	.24*	-.12	.40***
Participation in ethnic networks	-.05	-.10	.12	.06
Source of financial aid	-.37**	.49***	-.01	.04
Adequacy of financial aid	-.19	-.02	-.01	.14

<sup>a</sup>The correlation is measured by Pearson product moment correlations.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ;  $p < .001$ .

are also significant. High school grade point average is the strongest predictor of grades uncovered in our analysis ( $r = .41$ ). Once again this is supportive of the macrotheorists' assignment of the importance of skill-preparedness factors. Also, Chicanos who attended integrated (including white dominated) schools were more likely than those who attended segregated minority schools to earn high grades. A familiar picture of the correlates of academic performance in higher education emerges. Students from the most highly educated, upper status families do the best. In part, the argument follows, it is because they attend better schools that better prepare them for the rigors of higher education.

When we turn to the relationship of university experiences to academic performance only two important variables, alienation and the source of financial aid, have noteworthy effects on academic performance. The least alienated Chicano students, along with those who receive grants and aid from the university, achieve higher grades than those who are highly alienated and whose major source of support comes from other areas. This is an interesting set of findings. Support from the university may be an important way in which Chicanos come to feel tied into the university structure, providing them with a sense of security and well-being that allows the positive expression of their scholarly abilities. Alternatively, this may just reflect the fact that students with grants and aid from the university work less and have more time to do their school work.

In examining the correlates of black students' academic performance, a totally different picture emerges. Black social background is very weakly related to university academic performance, with only mother's education and high school grades having significant effects. No university experiences are important predictors of academic performance. Even high school GPA, the strongest predictor for Chicanos (.41), is only half as strongly related to academic performance for blacks (.21). This is not consistent with either the traditional patterns nor the predictions of the macrotheorists: social class background shows no relationship.

Next we examine the correlates of adjustment. First, for Chicanos, we find a pattern similar to that for academic performance. Social background variables show themselves to be important. Chicano students with better educated fathers and students from upper status social class backgrounds are the least alienated. Students who attended integrated high schools are less alienated than students who attended segregated high schools. University experiences are also strongly related to perceptions of alienation. Chicano students who feel discriminated against are more alienated than those who don't feel discriminated against, with this being the strongest relationship in the table ( $r = .63$ ). Participation in university networks and receiving aid from the university are also significant predictors of adjustment. Those who participate and those who receive aid from the university are among those most likely to say they are satisfied with the university environment.

Once again, the pattern of correlates among blacks is distinctly different. Only one social background variable is a significant predictor of successful

adjustment for blacks. Black students who have access to a role model in the family are generally less alienated than those who do not. Social class, high school background and parental education were in no way significant to perceptions of alienation, and only one university experience variable was important: like Chicano students, blacks who were involved in university networks felt less alienated than those who were not.

These findings reveal sharp differences in the way in which social background and university experience variables relate to black and Chicano academic performance and adjustment in a predominately majority university. Chicano students show a very traditional pattern that is consistent with both the previously discussed macrotheorist models and the Tinto-Allen model of academic performance and adjustment in higher education. In particular, unlike for blacks, social class appears to be directly related to these outcomes, as macrotheorists expect. To better specify how social class affects these relationships, we now turn to an elaboration of these same relationships specified for two levels of social class.

### The Role of Social Class

We proceed by controlling each relationship for social class to examine if the relationship remains constant for both the upper and the lower social class group. We have chosen as our summary measure of association  $\text{Tau-}B$  (over partial correlations) because it allows us to examine the pattern of conditional relationships. As Loether and McTavish point out; “. . . partial correlation coefficients do not provide information about any pattern of differences between separate conditional tables over which they are computed” (1976, p. 301). Measures of association allow this to be done, and Tau family measures are the best suited for this analysis because they do not, like Gammas, overly respond to cells with no observations.<sup>7</sup>

In Table 5 we show only those relationships which show significantly different partials for each class category when we control for social class. Thus, for example, for Chicanos we note that only one relationship for achievement was further specified by class. When we control for class we find that the relationship between high school GPA and university academic performance is stronger among lower class (.44) than higher class students (.22).

However, when we examine the correlates of adjustment (alienation), we find that controlling for social class leads to different relationships for lower and higher status students in four cases. We find that only among lower class fathers is the relationship between father's education and alienation significant ( $-.39$ ). In the case of discrimination, while both classes are affected by discrimination in an adverse way, high status background Chicanos are more likely to be affected than low status Chicanos. One could easily argue that lower class Chicanos may have had prior experience with discrimination than upper class Chicanos and therefore have developed defenses against it. And finally, lower class Chicanos are less alienated

TABLE 5. Tau-B Associations Controlling for Social Class<sup>a</sup>

Bivariate Relationship	Controlling for Social Class			Z-Score for Difference Between Partial
	Tau-B	Lower	Higher	
<i>Chicanos</i>				
High School GPA and achievement	.41**	.44**	.22*	2.88 sig < .002
Father's education and alienation	-.44***	-.39**	-.09	-2.49 sig < .006
Discrimination and alienation	.63***	.53***	.83***	3.07 sig < .001
Source of financial aid and alienation	.49***	.49***	.24	3.06 sig < .001
Participation in university networks and alienation	.24*	.26*	.07	1.66 sig < .05
<i>Blacks</i>				
Father's education and achievement	.01	.18	-.26	-1.54 sig < .06
Father's education and alienation	.11	.47**	-.18	2.91 sig < .001
Role models in the family and alienation	.21*	.33*	.00	1.99 sig < .02
Faculty relations and alienation	.22*	.32*	.26	1.79 sig < .03
Participation in campus networks and alienation	.40***	.57***	.27*	3.35 sig < .004

<sup>a</sup>Shown in this table are only those relationships that when one controls for social class, show a significant difference between the partials.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .000$

when they get funds from the university and when they participate in university networks. For upper status Chicanos, these are not important determinants of their adjustment.

Elaborating these same relationships for black students does not yield any new information for us about the relationship of these variables to achievement. However, new information is discovered when we specify the relationship of these variables to adjustment in the university for class level. For example, when we control for social class, father's education becomes a significant predictor of alienation for lower class blacks (.47). More importantly, though, we find that the significant relationship between role models and alienation is actually statistically significant only for lower class black youth. Also we find that lower class black youth who perceive faculty in a positive manner are more likely to say than their upper class counterparts that they are less alienated. And finally, we find that the relationship between participation in university networks and adjustment is stronger for the lower class student.

This final set of analyses has attempted to trace the impact of class background. Once again we have uncovered differences between the Chicano and black students. Only among Chicanos have we found any evidence of class being an important determinant of academic performance. Class has an indirect affect on the relationship between high school GPA and university academic performance which only holds for lower class Chicano students. However, class is an important determinant of social adjustment for both groups. Among both Chicanos and blacks the relationships between father's education, participation in campus networks, and alienation are stronger for lower class students. Some differences do emerge however. Among Chicanos adjustment to the university is strongly related to obtaining one's major source of financial aid from the university. Lower class black students on the other hand, are better adjusted when they have role models who have gone to college in the family and when they perceive their relations with faculty to be positive.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis of Chicano and black students at UCLA has uncovered several findings of interest. Clearly, each group arrives at the university with different family backgrounds and high school experiences. Furthermore, differentials continue to occur in the university in terms of academic performance, experiences, and adjustment. We have tried to understand the source of these students' differential academic performance and adjustment by examining the relationship of personal background and high school and university experiences to these outcomes. The results are relatively clear. Chicano students appear to achieve good grades and adjust better in the university when they come from upper status backgrounds, have gone to integrated schools, earned good high school grades, and when they experience little discrimination, are active in university social networks, and receive financial aid from the university. Black outcomes are not similarly

patterned. Black academic performance and adjustment are not consistently related to their social background; only mother's education is related to academic performance and only having a role model in the family contributes to social adjustment in the university. University academic performance, however, is related to high school grades. But university experiences are weakly related to these outcomes. Participation in university networks effect on adjustment is the only university experience related to these two outcomes. These differentials are theoretically unexpected. Their both being subjugated minorities, we would expect similar types of outcomes and experiences for Chicanos and blacks. We further explored these findings by following the suggestion of macrotheorists who argue that class is the central variable distinguishing student academic performance and adjustment in the academy. Our findings in this regard are complicated and have been summarized in the previous section. However, their implications are far-reaching and important.

These findings help us to understand the ways in which social class, race, and educational institutions dynamically interact to reproduce differentials in academic performance and adjustment between Chicanos and blacks. There are two key aspects of these processes that we will discuss that will illuminate our research findings. The first aspect is the way the student reacts to the university, while the second is the way the university reacts to the student.<sup>8</sup> In both cases, class and race mediate the interaction between the university and the student.

Each student arrives in the university with a unique social background, repertoire of skills and "stock of knowledge" (Schutz, 1970). The student's reaction to the university is predicated on whether this package of attributes matches those of the university. From the analysis of the Chicano data we argue that middle class background and attendance at integrated schools provide these students with the necessary stock of knowledge to negotiate the university successfully. These students match the university's expectation of what a good student should be. Their exposure to middle-class Anglo cultural capital works for university success: those students who have an early opportunity to learn the types of social and cultural skills and attitudes are more likely to do well in the university and adjust better. This pattern is not as well matched for black students, although the finding that those black students with role models in the family adjust better is weakly supportive of this view. In line with this notion, one could argue that this is because the role model has shared with the student "the finer points" of making it in the university thus contributing to the student's stock of knowledge and cultural capital that pays off in this setting. Furthermore, the role model serves the social psychological function of providing a "success" in this sphere, showing the student that someone like him or herself can succeed in an alien environment.

But what is so disturbing in our findings is that exposure to middle class culture does not lead to the same payoffs for blacks as it does for Chicano students in the university setting. The clearest indicator of this is the correlation between social class and academic performance and adjustment

for Chicanos and blacks. For Chicanos, being from a middle class background is related to academic performance and adjustment in the University; a similar relationship does not hold for blacks. If being exposed to the cultural capital derived from middle class activities is the key to success in the university, then why is it that our middle class blacks do not achieve as well as the middle class Chicanos? This is the unanswered question that macrotheorists have failed to address. Their emphasis on class has led them away from explanations in which race is a central explanatory factor. In our analysis, race/class interactions are clearly present. Race is the critical variable, because it affects both the student and the university as it interacts with and toward the student.

One explanation of why race is important is derived from using the work of Spence (1973a, 1973b) which was initially employed to understand the dynamics of employers' hiring practices. We argue that race is crucial because it signals to the observer certain characteristics about the individual which may or may not be true. As economists use the theory of "signaling" (Spence, 1973a), race and gender become proxies for worker reliability, job stability, job experience, proper demeanor, and attitudes which employers use to evaluate prospective employees. Detailed work histories and trial employment periods are expensive and cumbersome, so employers use the applicant's race and gender as signals of their probable acceptability for the job. The same type of process may well be present at the university. With 30,000 students, professors, bureaucrats, and service personnel do not have the time (nor necessarily the inclination) to investigate each student's potentials and abilities. Instead, the students' race and class are interpreted by the university as proxies for student ability and aptitude for college success.

This is best illustrated by reference to a widely used process of "signaling" which also combines race: the case of the black college athlete (cf. Edwards, 1973). It is common that professors and other university personnel generalize to all student athletes from the few who are poor academically. Many student athletes are excellent in both spheres, but the current stereotype is that if it weren't for their athletic ability they would not have been admitted to the university. Similarly, we argue that often the university sees the non-Anglo student, responds to the race signal, and invokes a stereotype: this person is weak academically, has poor study skills, does not care about learning, and is at the school only because of affirmative action or special admissions.

University personnel and academics may not be consciously racist or discriminatory, but given the bureaucratic nature of the university, the large classes, and the impersonal way students are processed, minority students are likely to be treated and evaluated by the university, at least initially, on the basis of their racial signal. It is not that the university has adopted racially biased modes of evaluation, but rather the "norm of efficiency" causes each person to use their own "relevancies" derived from their own stock of knowledge as a basis for their everyday interaction. Given the central importance of race and race-related explanations in the culture at

large (Prager, 1982), interaction based on signaling becomes an efficient and rational basis of evaluation. This then sets up a chain of negative, self-fulfilling interactions which "set-in-motion" experiences that lead some minority students to actually achieve poorly and to feel quite alienated for reasons that are now concrete.

But why is it that the Chicano middle class student does so well compared with the black middle class student? It is because, we hypothesize, Chicanos do not necessarily signal their non-Anglo status. Middle class Chicanos, in fact, often speak, dress, and physically appear to be Anglo.<sup>9</sup> However, working class Chicanos are more likely to speak, dress, and otherwise signal their minority ethnic status to the university. Blacks, regardless of class, signal to the university their status as Afro-Americans. We hypothesize that this is why blacks, regardless of social class background, report such depressed levels of academic performance and alienation compared to Chicanos. However, class interactions can occur, if black behavior visibly outweighs skin color; speech, dress patterns, and associations.<sup>10</sup>

These findings and interpretations have particular import to the macro-theorists who hypothesize such a strong connection between schooling and class. While we do not deny that social class is important, our findings do suggest that there are very distinct differences between different ethnic and racial groups in how class interacts with schooling outcomes. What this suggests is that these theories must be more attuned to the complexity of different racial and ethnic group experiences in the sphere of schooling and must be revised to reflect this complexity. There are differences among majority and minority students in the American system of schooling, but there are also differences among minorities as well, and these also have their impact.

We could not conclude this paper without also indicating some of the policy implications which the data suggest. School integration at the secondary level is clearly important. We argue this not only because it may help prepare students better in traditional skills, but because it will allow exposure to cultural capital that will help the student achieve in the university. But in order for this to lead to payoffs for lower class Chicano students and black students, the university must investigate how to capture this knowledge in a useable and transmittable way. One probable solution is to structure closer relationships between these students and faculty. On many large campuses this role seems to be played by minority faculty (Keith, 1972). However, this usually involves extra duties for these faculty, which causes role strain and/or insufficient productivity among these scholars, leading to bitterness and/or failure to achieve academic advancement. By structuring this type of involvement as part of regular faculty duties, successful minority faculty can transmit their experiences and advice to minority students on how to better translate their cultural capital into payoffs without transforming their unique cultural values and background. A similar role could be played by student mentors, and indeed minority student associations on some large campuses provide this type of service. However, if our results are any indication, it is not successful.



The university can also support minority students through increased financial aid. One of our most interesting findings was that Chicano students do better academically and adjust better socially when they receive grants and aid from the university. Whether this is because it releases more time for the student to study or because it ties the student into the university is unknown. But these efforts should be continued and strengthened.

Finally, this study shows clearly that the university must be responsive to the different needs and experiences of both Chicanos and blacks. If there is one message in this paper it is that differences among minorities can be as important as similarities among them, a message that needs to be heard by both scholars and policymakers.

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## NOTES

1. The notion of "cultural capital" should not be confused with the earlier emphasis on "cultural deprivation." It differs in the sense that it does not specify a "deficiency" in the individual (Valentine, 1971), but emphasizes the impact that exposure to and familiarity with a certain amount of "cultural" information has on the relative success or failure of individuals to achieve and adjust in school. This is probably best articulated in DiMaggio's (1982) recent piece. In utilizing Bourdieu's (1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) notion that schools reward children "on the basis of their *cultural capital*, defined as 'instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed' " (Bourdieu, 1977), he argues that teachers "... communicate more easily with students who participate in elite status culture, give them more attention and special assistance, and perceive them as more intelligent or gifted than students who lack cultural capital" (DiMaggio, 1982, p. 190). Thus, the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital is but yet another mechanism that generates class inequality, as class differences are considered the prime determinants of access to cultural capital.
2. The University of California at Los Angeles is a large campus (about 30,000 students) of the University of California System (UC). California higher education is a tiered system with three levels: community colleges, the state colleges and state universities, and the University of California. The University system is the elite, research-oriented and most heavily financed tier in the system. Likewise, admission to each tier is different, with the university possessing the highest standards. In order for students to be admitted to UC they must meet the following criteria: (1) Graduation from an accredited high school in the state; (2) meet a formula based on high school GPA and combined scores on the SAT. For example a high school GPA of 2.76 and a score of 1,600 on the SAT is the lowest combination of high school GPA and SAT that is admitted. A high school GPA of 3.00 must be combined with a SAT score of 1,090 while a 3.30 GPA only needs a combined score of 400. (3) Finally, students must have taken and earned a C or better in a core of high school courses. Likewise, transfer to UC from community colleges and other four

year schools requires that students either meet the above requirements and earn at least a 2.00 GPA in their first two years of study (which includes a specified set of courses), or if they were not initially eligible for UC upon graduation from high school, then they must make up those core courses in which they received less than a C and have a 2.40 GPA in their junior or transfer college credits (standards for nonresident students are even tougher, although special admits based on athletic ability, and special talents are granted). The stringency of these standards means that even though California has a substantial pool of Chicano and black high school graduates, their proportion in UC is drastically underrepresented. Only about 15% of the high school graduates in the state are eligible for UC but among minorities it is much lower. For Chicanos, for example, only 4.7% are eligible (for more on this see Rodriguez, 1982, pp. 2-20). During the years in which these studies were undertaken, Chicanos represented about 4.1% of the undergraduate student body at UCLA, while blacks constituted 4.9%. This was the case despite the fact that the Los Angeles area secondary schools, the schools from which most of UCLA's students graduated (about two-thirds), contained large numbers of minority students—45% Chicano and 23% blacks in the total student population. Clearly students in this study reflect the cream of the crop of minority students from California.

3. Questionnaires were mailed to 500 students identified as black by the technique described in the text; 29% of those, about 145 students responded. While optimal conditions in mail surveys should yield response rates from 40-50% (Lansing and Morgan, 1971, pp. 159-61; Warwick and Lininger, 1975, pp. 131-32), the conditions for this study were far from optimal. Contributing to this low response rate were the following factors: Black college students and the young have generally lower response rates on surveys (Hawkins, 1977) and each of these categories were overrepresented in this survey. Also a significant amount of misclassification by race occurred in the self-reports of race supplied by the official university list of black students. Often white students and nonnative-born black students were incorrectly classified as black and later showed up as nonresponses. Attempts to deal with this problem through statistical manipulation was also hampered by our lack of knowledge of how many misclassifications were made. While the low response rate is troubling, even more important is the question of how representative is this sample of black students? Our only benchmark for representativeness is the university's report of the percentage of black students at each class level. The responses received were in direct proportion to the number of black students known to be in each class level—i.e., 27% of the first year students were reported by the university to be black, and 27% of the questionnaires returned were from first year students. This does provide some support for our belief that the sample is representative. Other than that, we can only guess what factors differentiate those who did return questionnaires from those who did not. We would hypothesize that those doing the poorest in terms of GPA would be least likely to return questionnaires, as would men, who are least likely to cooperate in surveys. Furthermore, we would expect those who are least integrated and most likely alienated as well to also be among those not returning their questionnaires. Given these caveats it is thus surprising, but valuable evidence that our responses are representative, that the black students who did return questionnaires showed a wide range of achievement and adjustment. There is a disproportionate number of women, as in other surveys of this sort (65% to 35%). But there is no evidence that the sample is not representative and therefore we have used it with confidence in these exploratory efforts. Thus we concur with Allen et al. (1982, p. 8) who note that "low response rates notwithstanding . . . the present dataset is one of the most comprehensive and representative currently available on black students attending predominantly white, state-supported universities."
4. In the black sample we chose only our juniors and seniors to compare to the graduated Chicano precisely because we wanted to minimize the bias of comparing those in school with those who have graduated. Thus, we have not compounded possible biases by including first year students, for example. The groups are comparable in that they have had at least two years of experience in the university. We do not know in any significant

way what sort of biases this may cause. However, it is not inconceivable that the Chicano's past memories of school experiences may have softened over time, contributing in part, but not totally, to the rather low percentage of Chicanos who indicate that UCLA was an alienating environment. Nevertheless, these biases do not seem significant enough to deter these exploratory efforts.

5. As the Appendix shows, there was some variance in the way questions were asked for each group. One item is particularly disturbing. Our measure of adjustment for blacks and Chicanos differs more than any other measure. Chicano students are asked if "UCLA was a more foreign environment for me than my Anglo peers" while black students are not given a comparison group but are asked whether they "feel a part of campus life insofar as student activities and government are concerned." One would expect that given a comparison group, especially one which differs greatly in culture and background, that Chicanos would express more dissatisfaction or alienation from the campus community. However, they do not. Thus, while we are not entirely certain of the reliability across datasets for these items, at least for this one, the confounding influence of an invidious comparison does not appear to lead to an overly pessimistic view of Chicano adjustment at UCLA, while the conservative question given black students generated a stronger feeling of alienation.
6. In dichotomizing the variables, the following represent their new values: University GPA, High School GPA: 1 = below 3.00; 2 = 3.00 or above. Alienation: 1 = low; 2 = high. Mother's Education, Father's Education: 1 = high school degree and below; 2 = some college and above. Role Models: 1 = role models in the family; 2 = no role models in the family. Social Class: 1 = poverty and working class; 2 = middle class and upper middle class. Racial Composition: 1 = segregated; 2 = integrated. Discrimination: 1 = did not experience discrimination; 2 = experienced discrimination. Participation in University Networks, Participation in Ethnic Networks: 1 = No; 2 = Yes. Source of Financial Aid: 1 = university loans and grants; 2 = Other. Adequacy of Financial Aid: 1 = Inadequate; 2 = Adequate. We have standardized responses for both surveys to simplify the discussion; the differences in response categories are noted in the Appendix on Measurement. We have also added racial composition of the high school and items on financial aid to this part of the analysis. They were excluded from the descriptive comparisons as no differences between blacks and Chicanos were noted.
7. The formula for determining the significance of tau-B is found in Loether and McTavish (1976, pp. 556-61). To test whether the difference between two partials were significant we used the following formula.

$$z = \frac{z_{\text{tau-b1}} - z_{\text{tau-b2}}}{s_{\text{tau-b1}} - s_{\text{tau-b2}}}$$

$z_{\text{tau-b1}}$  =  $z$  - score of the significance of tau-b1

$z_{\text{tau-b2}}$  =  $z$  - score of the significance of tau-b2

$s_{\text{tau-b1}}$  = Standard Error of estimate for tau-b1

$s_{\text{tau-b2}}$  = Standard Error of estimate for tau-b2

A one-tailed test was made to determine if the difference was significant at the .05 level.

8. When we use the term "university," we refer to the people who work in the bureaucracies, the clerical staffs in departments, services students use, and academic personnel on all levels.
9. It does not necessarily follow from this that middle class Chicanos are more "assimilated" than their lower class counterparts. This is still an empirical question to be decided by the evidence. However, we would rather conceptualize their use of "cultural capital" as evidence of their bicultural repertoire of behaviors (Valentine, 1971). Therefore, the policy implication from these findings is not to strip racial and cultural minorities of their cultural backgrounds, but to enlarge their repertoire of behavior and their knowledge of how and where to use it to make them more successful in the sphere of school and work. On the larger front, demands must be made to include unique attributes of minority groups' background into the organization and structure of institutions as well.

10. The differential treatment that black West Indians receive in the American university is an example of how class and culture can interact to produce a deemphasis on race.

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## APPENDIX: Measurement

	Chicano Item	Black Item
Alienation	"I felt UCLA was a more foreign environment for me than my anglo peers." (4-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") <sup>a</sup>	"How much do you, as a black student, feel part of general campus life, insofar as student activities are concerned?" (4-point scale from "not at all" to "considerable")
Discrimination	"I encountered ethnic discrimination at UCLA."	"Have you ever encountered discrimination in the form of gestures, words or behavior, from anyone on campus?" ("yes/no")
Relations with faculty	"I had difficulty relating to most professors at UCLA."	"How would you characterize your relations with faculty at this university?" (4-point scale from "very poor" to "excellent")
University social networks	"Aside from ethnic organizations and related activities, I felt it was important to participate in UCLA student activities."	"Do you currently belong to any clubs or organizations or engage in any other organized activities?" ("yes/no")
Ethnic social networks	"While at UCLA I was involved in ethnic organizations on campus."	"To what extent do you participate in the extracurricular activities sponsored by black student organizations?" (4-point scale from "hardly ever" to "very often")
Adequacy of financial aid	"I had difficulty meeting the costs of my education."	"How adequate has financial aid services been to your needs?" (4-point scale from "inadequate" to "very inadequate")

<sup>a</sup>All the Chicano items were measured with this scale.