The Mismeasure of Minds: Debating Race and Intelligence between Brown and The Bell Curve by Michael E. Staub (review)

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Orleans Jazz franchise never had a chance of succeeding financially given the debt it incurred as an expansion team.

While one finishes this short study wishing for a bit more, Aiello should be commended for *Dixieball.* The book explains how professional basketball rose in the Deep South, and how race and money complicated that rise.

University of New Mexico RYAN SWANSON

The Mismeasure of Minds: Debating Race and Intelligence between Brown *and* The Bell Curve. By Michael E. Staub. Studies in Social Medicine. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. Pp. [x], 219. $29.95, ISBN 978-1-4696-4359-5.)

This book traces a series of psychological studies between the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and the publication, just over forty years later, of Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles A. Murray's controversial but influential work *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York, 1996). *The Mismeasure of Minds: Debating Race and Intelligence between* Brown *and* The Bell Curve illustrates the attempts of many psychologists "to quell the (always again resurgent) hypothesis that there existed race-based intelligence differentials" (p. 8). Michael E. Staub shows how the reception of psychological studies shaped and was shaped by the context of constant tension between the call for government action to alter social environments and the rejection of federal intervention on the basis "that biological inheritance will inevitably trump most ameliorative efforts" (p. 7).

The Mismeasure of Minds tells the story of the growing significance of and respect for psychological studies, effectively intertwining this history with the familiar narrative of federal programs, social activism, and conservative retrenchment during the post–World War II era. Staub's work illustrates the commonalities to be found in the rise of ostensibly race-neutral language in psychology, just as in political, public, and policy discourse, and how that language masked attempts to reform education or promote federal spending on social programs. For example, Staub begins by tracing the shift in the uses of psychological studies as a justification for federal antipoverty and enrichment efforts to the use of studies—or even unproven terminology, such as learned helplessness—as a means to defund programs just five years later. Staub goes on to uncover the "tangled and troubled history" of "minimal brain dysfunction" and its treatment with Ritalin and the racial status and class background of children since the 1960s (pp. 77, 40). Perhaps most interesting, Staub recounts the "complicated and historically heavy political baggage" of emotional intelligence and impulse control, which he demonstrates had been a "profoundly racialized" and "class-tied concept" (p. 137).

In this richly researched and wide-ranging work, the author does an excellent job of describing the developments in the study of psychology and neuroscience in a comprehensible manner that does not detract from his narrative drive. At times the prose becomes somewhat involved, which sometimes obfuscates meaning. However, the structure of each chapter is highly accessible, providing the reader with a clear outline of the issue and its historical and historiographical contexts, with subheadings to aid navigation of the detail-rich content. Amid this wealth of research, a little of the bigger picture is missing. It would have

been interesting to hear the author's views on the broader changes in the ways scientific studies and expert knowledge were used, abused, and overlooked in policy making and political rhetoric.

The Mismeasure of Minds is a comprehensive study in which Staub most effectively "demonstrate[s] . . . how extraordinarily influential and relevant psychological experimentation and theorizing has been for both government policy and popular opinion" (p. 9). It offers a new and fascinating perspective on a familiar story of race in the decades after *Brown*, illustrating how scientific research on topics from learned helplessness and minimal brain dysfunction to split brain theory and emotional intelligence are integral to understanding the social, political, and policy developments of these decades.

Newman University EMMA FOLWELL

Just Trying to Have School: The Struggle for Desegregation in Mississippi. By Natalie G. Adams and James H. Adams. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2018. Pp. xiv, 299. Paper, $30.00, ISBN 978-1-4968-1954-3; cloth, $90.00, ISBN 978-1-4968-1953-6.)

Just Trying to Have School: The Struggle for Desegregation in Mississippi is an intriguing new book about the history of racial desegregation in Mississippi public schools during the late 1960s and early 1970s. School desegregation in Mississippi was (and continues to be) a prolonged struggle that provoked extraordinary resistance. As the authors note, "No state fought more fiercely to preserve segregated public schools than Mississippi" (p. 5). Natalie G. Adams and James H. Adams, both academics and former teachers, attended southern public schools during the era of desegregation. Their intellectual backgrounds provide insights that allow them to deliver a fascinating overview of the painstaking process of school desegregation in the Magnolia State.

As most readers know, school desegregation in Mississippi did not begin with *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. In fact, no black and white students attended public schools together in Mississippi until 1964. As the authors note, it was not actually until after *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education* in 1969 that most Mississippi school districts were forced to generate bona fide plans for immediate desegregation.

The strength of *Just Trying to Have School* lies in the sections that describe the process of desegregation in the wake of *Alexander v. Holmes County*. Attorneys and politicians were the most visible combatants in the battle over school desegregation, but the actual process of school desegregation was facilitated by mostly uncelebrated groups of students, parents, superintendents, teachers, and coaches. These actors, as Adams and Adams appropriately note, were "[p]ioneers yet quite ordinary individuals" (p. 35). Drawing our attention to these important, yet understudied, individuals is a welcome approach in a field dominated by the literature of massive resistance and the civil rights activism of the 1950s and 1960s.

After two chapters describing the path toward *Alexander*, Adams and Adams offer several thematic chapters that examine public school desegregation through a variety of lenses. The first lens focuses on the roles of school employees—teachers, principals, and superintendents—in desegregation. The next set of themes explores school desegregation through extracurricular activities such as