

Ban research into sex differences, into ethnic differences, and into racial differences

First conclusion: We are individually morally obligated not to conduct research into sex, ethnic, or racial differences.

Second conclusion: Universities (and other public institutions) should actively discourage research by their members into sex, ethnic, or racial differences.

Third conclusion: Governments should ban research into sex, ethnic, and racial difference.

The argument to the first conclusion

1. We all have a moral obligation to avoid harming people, particularly when harm would be long lasting.

Thus: 2. We all have a moral obligation to avoid doing whatever carries a high risk of long-lasting harm, even if there's a chance that good will come from doing it.

3. Research into sex, ethnic, or racial differences, no matter the outcome of such research, carries a high risk of long-lasting harm.

Therefore: 4. We are each individually obligated to refrain from conducting research into sex, ethnic, or racial difference.

But why should we accept that research into sex, ethnic, or racial difference carries a high risk of long-lasting harm?

5. Many people today believe that social inequalities among the sexes or among different ethnic or racial groups are the natural results of innate or biological differences in temperament, intelligence, conscientiousness, aggression, or other affective, conative, or cognitive qualities that track people's sex, ethnic, or racial characteristics.

7. Research into sex, ethnic, or racial differences will either expose the belief that social inequalities are based in innate differences that track sex, ethnicity, or race as false or will confirm that belief as true.

8. If such research exposes the belief as false, it won't move people to change their minds.

9. If such research confirms the belief as true, it will strengthen that belief in people's minds.

Thus: 10. Research into sex, ethnic, or racial differences will likely only strengthen the belief that social inequalities are based on innate differences that track sex, ethnicity, or race.

11. The belief that social inequalities are rooted in innate differences tend to perpetuate those social inequalities.

Thus: 12. Such research has little or no chance of removing social inequalities but a significant chance of perpetuating them.

13: Research that likely will perpetuate social inequalities carries a high risk of causing long-lasting harm.

Therefore: 3. Research into sex, ethnic, or racial differences, no matter the outcome of such research, carries a high risk of long-lasting harm.

But why should we accept that if such research exposes the belief as false, it won't move people to change their minds?

14. People tend to ignore or explain away evidence against what they believe when having that belief serves their material or psychological interests unless they recognize that the evidence as conclusive.

15. The belief that social inequalities are rooted in biological differences that track sex, ethnicity, or race serves the interests of people with the power to keep others down.

16. People who believe that inequalities are rooted in biological differences do not believe the evidence against their view is conclusive.

Therefore: 8. Even if such research exposes the belief that social inequalities are rooted in innate differences as false, it won't move people to change their minds.

But why should we accept that people who believe that inequalities are rooted in innate differences won't recognize conclusive contrary evidence as conclusive?

17. People who believe something will not find contrary evidence conclusive so long as they think either that there's a live debate among the experts or that (because of vested interests or political correctness) their own side is not getting fair access to resources or not getting a fair hearing.

18. People who believe that social inequalities are based on innate differences that track sex, ethnicity, or race tend to think either that there's a live debate among the experts or that (because of vested interests or political correctness) their own side is not getting fair access to resources or not getting a fair hearing.

Therefore: 16. People who believe that inequalities are rooted in biological differences are unlikely to come to recognize that the evidence against their view is conclusive.

Objections to the argument to the first conclusion:

- 1) The argument entirely neglects the intrinsic worth to a researcher of engaging in their preferred line of research.
- 2) The argument exaggerates the resistance people have to changing their beliefs when confronted by contrary evidence. (People are often inclined to change even those beliefs they think support their material or psychological interests).
- 3) Refraining from researching human types for reasons of ethics will perpetuate the harmful view that people are to be treated as members of classes rather than as individuals.
- 4) That researchers are avoiding an area on moral grounds will signal that the truths in that area are unpleasant, and that signal will likely perpetuate social inequalities.
- 5) If it is true that social inequalities stem from affective, conative, or cognitive differences that track sex, ethnicity, or race, then we would do better as a society to understand the facts.

The argument to the second conclusion

19. A researcher who holds themselves morally obligated not to conduct research into sex, ethnic, or racial differences has one reason not to conduct such research.

20. That researcher might well have one or more reasons to conduct such research that, for that researcher, outweighs their moral reason not to conduct such research.

Thus: 21. Researchers might well conduct research likely to lead to harm even though they recognize a moral obligation to avoid conducting research likely to lead to harm.

22. Universities can actively discourage research on affective, conative, and cognitive differences that track sex, ethnicity, or race by making it tough for such research to pass research ethics boards or to gain funding or other resources controlled by the university.

23. University people can actively discourage such research by showing disdain for it and by rejecting job candidates who engage in such research.

24. Universities have a responsibility to the public to support only research that will not lead to harm.

Therefore: 25. Universities and university people should actively discourage research by their members into sex, ethnic, or racial differences.

Objections to the argument to the second conclusion:

1) Universities and university people serve university and public interests best when they support the research projects of each of their professors and students, whatever those projects are.

2) Universities that do not support freedom of inquiry will become managerial, stagnant, and ideological.

3) The public will not trust research coming from an institution that discourages research into certain topics.

The argument to the third conclusion

26. The objections to universities actively discouraging research into sex, ethnic, and racial differences apply only to universities that off their own bat would impose constraints on research.

27. Should the government direct universities to ban research into certain topics, the universities would not do it on their own but be imposing constraints on research.

28. A central legitimate purpose of government is the welfare of the least powerful citizens.

Thus: 29. Governments should direct universities to ban research into sex, ethnic, and racial differences.

30. Universities are not only place at which such research can occur.

31. If universities are banned from researching a topic, other institutions will take up the slack.

Therefore: 32. Governments should ban research into sex, ethnic, and racial differences generally.

Objections: