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Soc 102

Research Paper: Newspaper Article

1.Summary of Article:

Each child has the equal chance to excel to its highest potential, no matter what the obstacle. The same should be applied when it comes to attending a college. In the New York Times article titled “The New Affirmative Action”, from 2007, the author writes about the tight position colleges in California are in. Since the 1960’s, when affirmative action was placed in the administrative office of colleges, the goal was to ensure diversity in schools. Application readers were supposed to take into great consideration the ethnicity of the applicant. This gave the advantage to high or middle class minorities. They had the necessary cultural background and more elaborate resumes than those who are poor. Students were equal in race, but not economically.

In 1996, this problem led to the creation of the California Civil Rights Initiative, also known as Proposition 209. The point of this law did not let public institutions to consider race, sex, or ethnicity. When it came to colleges, race was the major issue. The government wanted to create an economically diverse atmosphere on a college campus. Trying to make college more economically stable and overlooking race caused another negative pattern. Fewer minority groups were being accepted into college, especially blacks. The cause of this was the fact that the colleges were no longer giving the different races the benefit of the doubt. If you did not have the sufficient academics needed, you were in trouble. No longer was race an influence into having a higher opportunity in being accepted. Another factor was that blacks seemed to be falling behind academically.

That is why a man named Peter Taylor wanted to reverse this pattern. He, alumni and students encouraged more blacks to apply, of all social classes. This turned out to be a success because the application leaders had to take into notice race, since that is what many of their essays were about. A few lower income students were also accepted. As stated in the article: “Its not against the law to take into consideration the disadvantages one has because of their race.”

1. Summary of one theoretical perspective

One sociological perspective that reflects the article is structural functionalism. This perspective defines the relationship between parts of society and how they adapt with one another.

3. How does structural functionalism account for the events in the article?

In this case, the parts of society discussed in this issue are the race and economical standpoint of a student applicant and how those factors now affect their chance at being admitted into college. It goes more in depth in explaining that a rich black girl has the same chance as a poor black girl when regarding color; but of course the rich one with the better resume wins the acceptance of a college. That is why the relationship between race and economics is unstable, they can never be equal because on factor greatly affects the other.

Documentation:

LEONHARDT, DAVID. "The New Affirmative Action." *New York Times*. The New York Times Companay, 09/30/07. Web. 26 Oct 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/30/magazine/30affirmative-t.html?pagewanted=all>.