corroborated predictions (Raup 1986). Moreover, most novel scientific explanations, especially those that contradict well-established paradigms, are probably wrong (Sagan 1995). Nevertheless, the scientific community must walk a fine line between harboring legitimate doubts toward controversial ideas, which is justified, and dismissing them out of hand, which rarely is (see Beyerstein's [1995] distinction between methodological and pathological skepticism).

Scholars who generate controversies in journals or classrooms can often expect to encounter resistance, and at times even stiff opposition, from colleagues. As a consequence, an undetermined number of academic scientists may shy away from unpopular stances, particularly in the early stages of their careers. In the long run, this suppression of controversy is likely to be detrimental to scientific progress. One suspects that if more academics were intimately familiar with the history of scientific controversies, they would be more willing to brook, and even actively embrace, their gadfly colleagues. In turn, more faculty members might feel free to pursue the controversial lines of inquiry that tenure ostensibly guarantees.

Tenure is a necessary – not a sufficient – condition for controversial research

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Abstract: The Ceci et al. article is consistent with tenure being a necessary condition for controversial research. In the absence of tenure, as in the United Kingdom, professors have been fired and suspended for politically controversial issues. There are a variety of reasons why tenure does not ensure that professors will engage in controversial research, including career interests and the desire to be liked.

I am not really surprised by the findings of the study, but I do question whether the results imply that tenure should be abolished. It seems obtuse to use the finding that assistant professors are often silenced by the fear of a negative tenure evaluation to come to the conclusion that tenure does not result in advertised benefits. On the face of it, there is the opposite implication: Tenure is a necessary condition for engaging in controversial research.

It is also obtuse to use the finding that associate professors are only marginally more likely to "ruffle feathers" as an argument against tenure. Obviously, promotion is also a resource that is dependent on an evaluation process, so it is not surprising that people without tenure and full professor status would be less likely to rock the boat. In order to make a convincing argument against tenure, one would have to show that full professors would be just as likely to engage in controversial research whether or not they had tenure – that tenure is a necessary condition for engaging in controversial research. This was not tested in the present study and it could not be tested in the United States. However, tenure in the United Kingdom has been abolished, and the authors note that, "after all, the United Kingdom abolished tenure for all appointments and promotions that came after November, 1987, yet it would seem that their professoriate remains strong and vibrant." However, Chris Brand was dismissed from his position at the University of Edinburgh,[1] and Frank Ellis has been suspended from the University of Leeds,[2] both for reasons related to the issue of race differences in intelligence. Such examples surely serve to intimidate professors engaged in research that touches on issues related to current political orthodoxy.

In fact, as the authors themselves note, professors in the United Kingdom are evaluated for their research, and it is easy to imagine that professors wanting positive evaluations would not want to offend their colleagues. The strength and vibrancy of the British professoriate is thus unlikely to extend to controversial issues that conflict with the ideologies of university administrators. The pitfalls of lack of tenure can also be seen in the case of Andrew Fraser of Macquarie University in Sydney.[3] Fraser, who was on a one-year pre-retirement contract, was suspended from teaching after making comments on race differences in intelligence and criminality.

The most parsimonious interpretation of the data is that professors will not engage in controversial research if it will impact negatively on evaluations, either for tenure or promotion. The findings of this study are consistent with supposing that tenure is a necessary condition for doing controversial research. They also show what we already know – that tenure is not a sufficient condition for doing research or teaching ideas that depart from current orthodoxy. The fact is that tenure is only one of many resources that academics value that may be endangered by displeasing the powers that be. The authors mention valuing harmony and avoiding criticism from respected colleagues, but engaging in controversial research may mean no more invitations to deliver papers at other universities or important conferences. In fact, controversial professors may not be able to publish their work at prestigious academic or commercial presses. (Indeed, Chris Brand's book, *The g Factor*, was "de-published" by John Wiley after it had been on sale for six weeks in the UK, and Deakin University refused to publish Andrew Fraser's peer-reviewed article on race differences.) Or they may even have difficulty getting their work published at all. They will not be invited to the good parties, or get nice summer fellowships, or get asked to serve as dean or in a future administration in Washington. Or maybe their sources of funding will dry up. As a professor commenting on the lack of academic debate over a recent paper by John Mearsheimer (University of Chicago) and Stephen Walt (Harvard), critical of the Israel Lobby, noted: "People might debate it if you gave everyone a get-out-of-jail-free card and promised that afterward everyone would be friends" (in Fairbanks 2006). Professors who engage in controversial research know they are "going to jail," but with tenure, at least it's not hard time.

NOTES

1. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Brand.
2. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4838498.stm.
3. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Fraser_(academic).

Tenure is justifiable

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Abstract: The target article by Ceci et al. provides some interesting results regarding how faculty might react to difficult social dilemmas, but it has little to say about tenure and its effect upon academic freedom. This comment discusses briefly what we know about tenure, and employment protection more generally, and why it may be in a university's best interest to hire tenured faculty. The comment concludes by pointing out that the results make a rather useful contribution regarding the difficulty of eliciting information on malfeasance in organizations, an area of enormous importance. For example, the results may help us understand why the government has introduced rewards for the reporting of fraud under the whistle-blowing provisions of the Federal Claims Act.

Ceci et al.'s Abstract for the target article concludes with the statement, "These findings challenge the assumption that

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