

Varieties of Scientific Racism (in Psychology)

By

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Overview

- Racism Defined
- Varieties of (Contemporary) Racism in Psychology
- Jensenism
 - Heritability
 - Chronometric Analysis
- Herrnstein & Murray
- J. Phillippe Rushton
- The Confluence Model

Racism Defined

- Racism is an ideology – a belief system – that asserts that some “races” are inherently “superior” to others; that some “races” are inherently “inferior.”
- Typically, the races are ordered along a color gradient, from “Black” (inferior) to “White” (superior)
- Racism can be individual, cultural, institutional, or scientific

Jensenism

- Arthur Jensen, professor of Education at UC Berkeley reinvigorated scientific racism in 1969 with a monograph length publication in the Harvard Education Review.
- Jensen alleged that Blacks were intellectually inferior to Whites, and not much could be done about this difference because it was genetically determined.

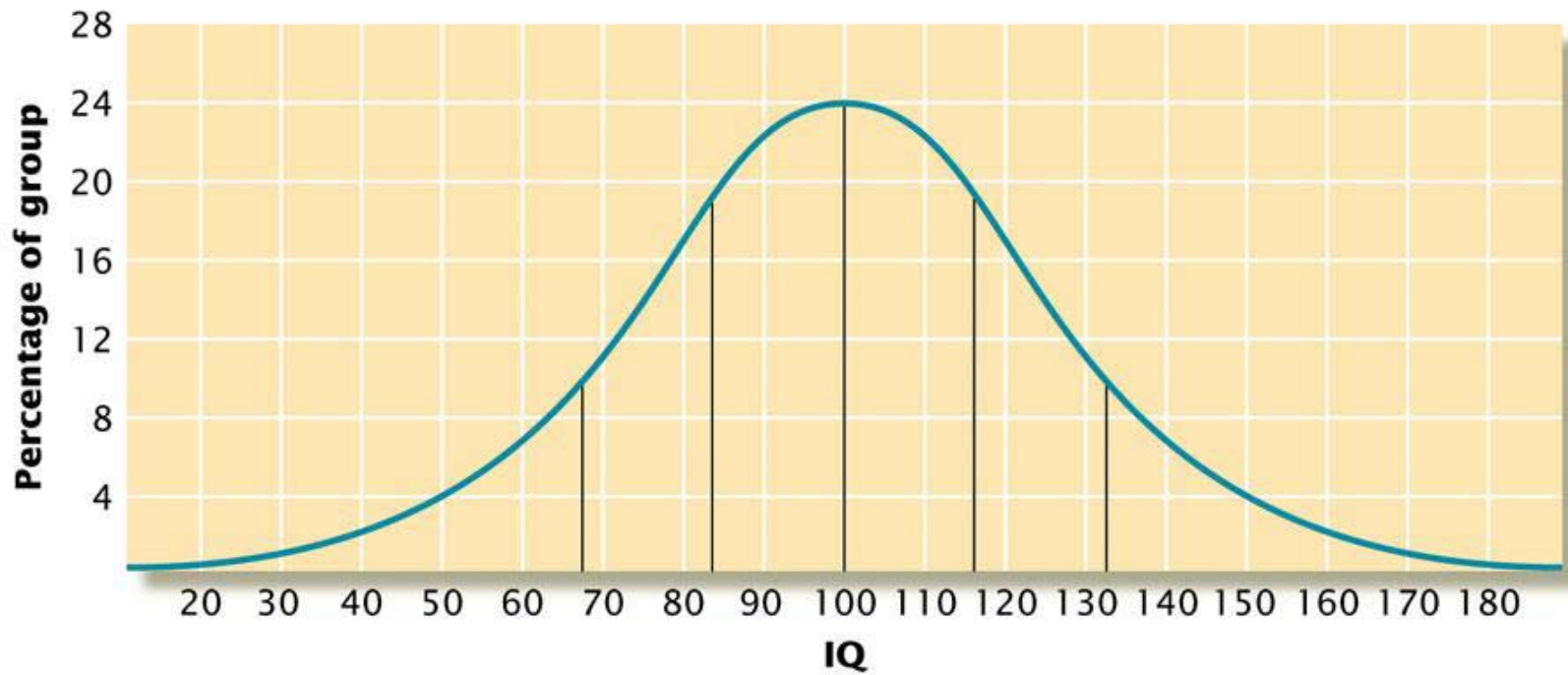
Jensen's Predecessors

- Plato (250 BC): Three sorts of people: Rulers, warriors, and peasants. These were governed by the head, heart and stomach, respectively
- Galton (1869): Hereditary Genius
 - Darwin's cousin, Galton suggested that genius runs in families. Regarding Africans: "These savages court slavery...You engage one of them as a servant, and you find that he considers himself as your property, so that you become the owner of a slave. They have no independence about them, generally speaking, but follow a master as a spaniel would" (1853).
- Terman (1916): The Stanford – Binet
 - Declared Blacks, Asians, Indians and Jews to be feeble minded.

Jensen's Thesis

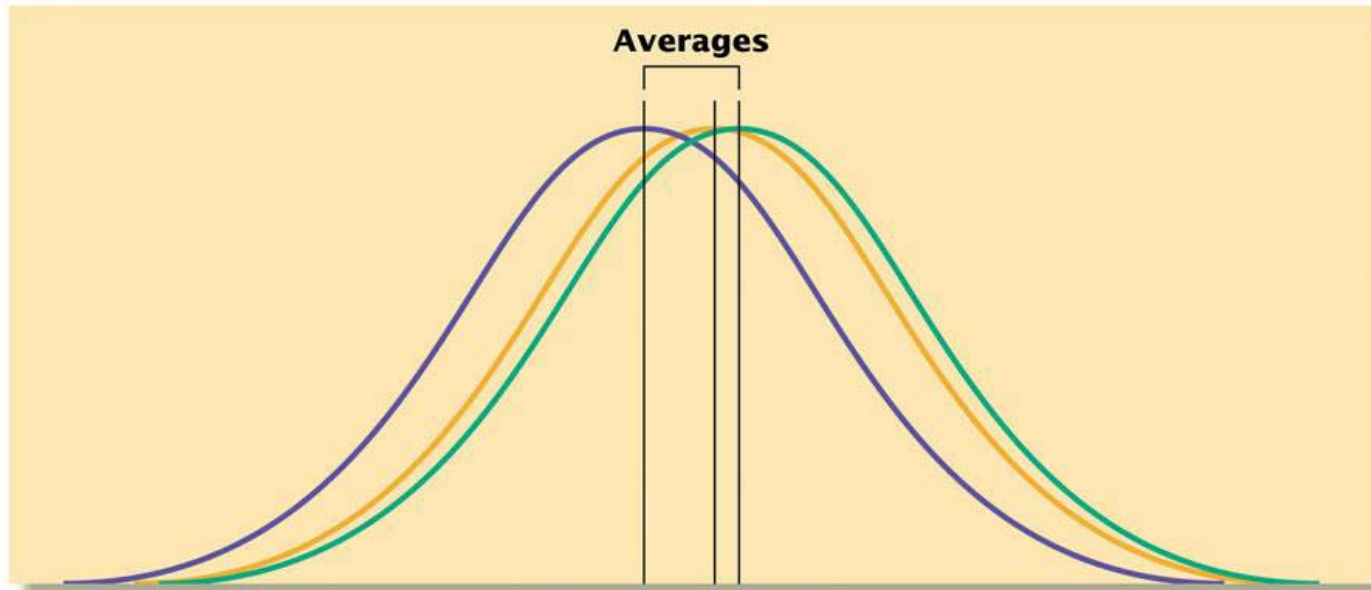
- Distributional differences, between races, are inherited.

The distribution of IQ



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Racial Differences in IQ



- African Americans and Hispanic Americans
- European Americans
- Asian Americans

Evidence for Jensen's Thesis

- Twin Studies
 - Higher correspondence (or correlation) between the IQs of Identical vs. Fraternal twins vs. siblings.
 - Still higher even when the Identical twins were separated at birth, and reared apart.

Critiques of Jensenism

- Intelligence is operationally defined as IQ test scores
- IQ test scores are subject to cultural (language, class, content) bias.
- IQ treated as if it is a fixed quantity, yet it develops with age.
- Twin data problematic
 - Nature/nurture confounds
 - Sir Cyril Burt's fraud

Jensen's Chronometric Analysis

- More recently, Jensen suggested that Intelligence can be fairly assessed with a measure of “raw physiological efficiency.”
- Such a measure would be reaction time experiments; and “choice” reaction time experiments.
- He has shown that Blacks have a slower reaction time, and are therefore intellectually inferior.

A rebuttal to Jensen's Chronometric Analysis

- Fairchild, in an unpublished paper (“A Micro-Analysis of the Alley Oop With Notes on the Race and IQ Controversy”), argued that Blacks display fast reaction times in the real world of sport.

Herrnstein & Murray (1994)

- Their book, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, became a national best seller.
- It made a “Social Darwinism” argument (“Survival of the Fittest”) that class was a product (consequence) of intelligence.
- The low socio-economic class of Blacks and Latinos “proves” their genetic inferiority.

Implications of The Bell Curve

- Low intelligence explains
 - Poverty
 - Criminality
 - Delinquency
 - Teen pregnancy

Criticisms of The Bell Curve - I

- Bait & Switch – Instead of using IQ scores, they used scores on the Armed Forces Qualification Test:
“Because the raw scores on the AFQT mean nothing to the average reader, we express them in the IQ metric (with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15) or in centiles. Also we will subsequently refer to them as ‘IQ scores,’ in keeping with our policy of using IQ as a generic term for intelligence test scores” (p. 120).
- The AFQT is an achievement test.

Criticisms of The Bell Curve – II

- Correlational data and cause and effect.
- From p. 127: “...low intelligence is a stronger precursor of poverty than low socioeconomic background.”
- It is a canon of statistical methods that one must not infer causation from correlation.

Criticisms of The Bell Curve – III

- Effect sizes: Only 1-10% of variance is explained (out of 100%), yet Herrnstein and Murray suggested, “...there is no major domestic issue for which the news we bring is irrelevant” (p. 387).
- Other problems: (a) defining the key terms: intelligence, race; (b) cultural bias in tests; (c) nature/nurture confounds (reliance on twin data); (d) policy implications (affirmative action, job training, education, teen pregnancy & welfare, three strikes & the death penalty).

J. Philippe Rushton's r/K theory

- Species may be ranked according to their reproductive strategies
- Clams have thousands of offspring, and provide no care for them.
- The Great Apes have one offspring, and provide a great deal of care.
- Therefore, Apes > Clams with respect to their intelligence.

Rushton's Racism

- Asians and Whites have few offspring, Blacks and Latinos have many.
- Therefore, “Mongoloids > Caucasoids > Negroids.”
- Rushton's use of the greater than symbol (>) represents his racist thinking.
- In the text of his articles, he claims that Mongoloids more or less equal Caucasoids, and he treats Blacks and Latinos similarly.

Rushton's "Evidence"

- Family size
- Brain size
- Family stability, law abidingness
- Sexual restraint
- Size of genitalia

Debunking Rushton's Sociobiology I

- Sociobiology is teleological – everything is 'evolved,' (through a Darwinian, survival of the fittest process), otherwise it wouldn't be in existence. The theory is not testable.
- “Teleology is the supposition that there is purpose or directive principle in the works and processes of nature.” (Wikipedia)
- Nature/nurture confounds

Debunking Rushton's Sociobiology II

- Flawed Concepts
 - Race
 - Intelligence
 - Life expectancy vs. life span

Rushton's Fraud: I

- Rushton quotes Tobias (1970) in supporting the idea that the races differ in brain sizes. But, according to Tobias, "...no comparisons between the mean brain-size of different populations or races permit valid statements to be made on interracial differences.... On this basis alone, all comparisons between Negro and White brain-sizes to date are invalid" (Tobias, 1970, p. 9)

Rushton's Fraud: II

- Rushton quotes Ho, Roessman, Hause and Monroe (1981) in this manner:

“In a study of newborns, Ho, Roessmann, Hause and Monroe (1981) collated brain weights from 782 autopsy records and found white infants had heavier brains than black infants” (Rushton, 1988a, p. 1011).

But Ho *et al.* actually wrote:

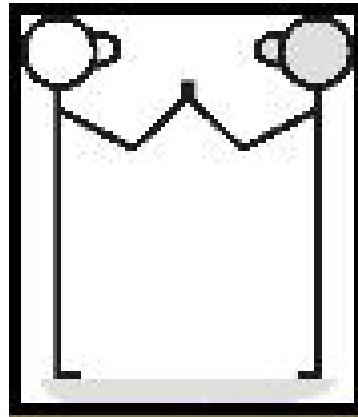
“Since no difference in the brain weight of mature babies was noted between white and black or between male and female infants, our studies indicate that, given a chance for full intrauterine development, the brain will attain the same mass regardless of sex or race” (Ho *et al.*, 1981, p. 245).

Robert Zajonc's Confluence Model

- Intelligence is nurtured and developed within families.
- Different family configurations produce different “intellectual environments”
- Based on Data from the Netherlands – birth order, family size, and “intelligence.”

The Confluence Model: I

- Imagine you have a man and a woman



Understanding the Confluence Model

- The man and woman have reached their intellectual maturity, and this can be represented with a score of “30.”
- Man and Woman: $30 + 30$ (30 average)
- Man and Woman plus baby: $30 + 30 + 0$ (20 average)
- Man and Woman plus twins: $30 + 30 + 0 + 0$ (15 average)
- Man and Woman plus older child and baby: $30 + 30 + 4 + 0$ (16 average)

Implications of the Confluence Model

- Sibling order and intersibling intervals
- Racial differences (Blacks and Latinos have larger families, on average)
- Gender differences (Females are followed by a shorter inter-sibling interval)
- Single parents

Criticisms of the Confluence Model

- Zajonc develops a causal model from correlational data.
- Intelligence “measured” with the NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualification Test)
- Weak relationships (103.5 for males, 101.3 for females)
- Small families $-.3$ SD; large families $-.35$ SD, for a difference of $.05$ SD.

More criticisms

- Lack of controlled observation (school quality, social class)
- Action implications
 - Blames the victims – females and minorities
 - Exculpates test bias and inequality in educational opportunities.

Solutions

- We should be examining differences in achievement, not differences in “intelligence.”
- Therefore, we should study features of schools that affect achievement, and how this may be different for different “races.”

School Resources and Achievement

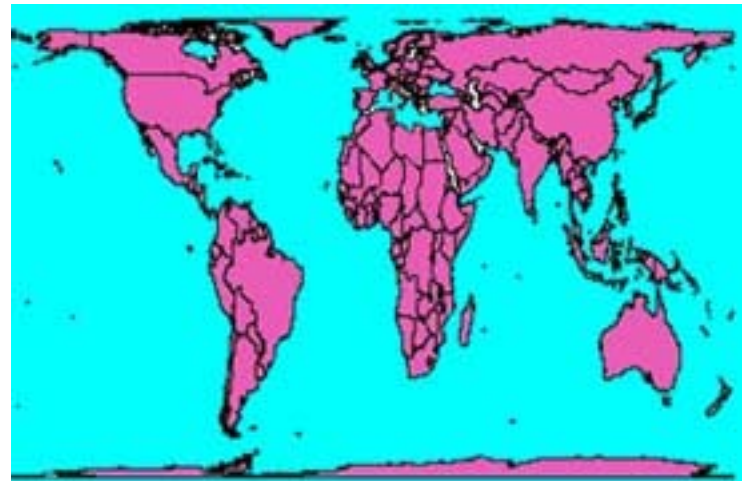
- Fairchild, H.H. (1984). School size, per-pupil expenditures, and academic achievement. *Review of Public Data Use*, 12, 221-229.
 - Schools differ in resources (size and expenditures)
 - These resources affect achievement
 - Resources are systematically related to racial composition (minority schools are under-funded and over-size).

World Map – Curriculum Content is biased

- Mercator Projection



- Peters Projection



World Map - Inverted

Take the quiz! Compare country sizes. Which of the images on both sides of this statement are "more accurate"? Here is the Mercator projection (taken different from the one on the reverse side) Antarctica and details about all the images are at www.edft.org/edu. To the right:

- (1) Ken Bath's Geocentrics
- (2) Goethe's Torus-centered projection
- (3) the Dufour Globe, and
- (4) Goode's Homocentrics



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Other curricular biases

- Who discovered America?
- Who invented civilization?
- Who is “savage”?
- Where are the cannibals?

Selected References

- Fairchild, H.H. (1991). Scientific racism: The cloak of objectivity. *Journal of Social Issues*, 47(3), 101-115.
- Jensen, A.R. (1969). How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement? *Harvard Educational Review*, 39, 1-123.
- Rushton, J.P. (1988a). Race differences in behaviour: A review and evolutionary analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 9, 1009-1024.
- See PsychInfo for the prevalence of scientific racism in contemporary psychology.