

Commentary

The Totality of Available Evidence Shows the Race IQ Gap Still Remains

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In a previous study (Rushton & Jensen, 2005), we examined 10 categories of technical research and concluded that the mean Black-White IQ difference in the United States is about 80% heritable. We reviewed evidence that (a) the distribution of IQ scores around the world shows averages of 106 for East Asians, 100 for Whites, 85 for U.S. Blacks, and 70 for sub-Saharan Africans; (b) race differences are most pronounced on the more *g*-loaded subtests (*g* being the general factor of mental ability); (c) race differences are most pronounced on the subtests whose scores show the most heritability; and (d) racial differences in brain size parallel the IQ differences. We also reviewed corroborating studies of (e) racial admixture, (f) trans-racial adoption, (g) regression to different racial means, (h) 60 related life-history traits, (i) human origins, and (j) the inadequacy of environmental explanations of the racial IQ difference. (In Africa, the 30-point difference is likely only 50% heritable because environmental factors such as malnutrition and disease have so much more impact than they do elsewhere in the world; Lynn, 2006.)

Dickens and Flynn (2006, this issue) challenge our hypothesis. They claim that “no one can really trace the Black-White IQ gap in the United States back to its origins” (p. 913) and that in the United States, Blacks have gained “4 to 7 IQ points on non-Hispanic Whites between 1972 and 2002” (p. 913). But to maintain that “no one can really trace the . . . gap back to its origins,” Dickens and Flynn had to sidestep our citation of Shuey’s (1966) review of the literature, which shows that Black-White IQ differences in the United States have remained at 15 to 18 points, or 1.1 standard deviations, for nearly a century. For example, she found 23,596 Black draftees in World War I (1917) had an IQ of 83 (vs. 100 for Whites), with a Black overlap of the White mean of 13%. For recent data, we cited the meta-analysis by Roth, Bevier, Bobko, Switzer, and Tyler (2001), which also

shows a mean difference of 1.1 standard deviations (range of 0.38 to 1.46 standard deviations, depending on the test’s *g* loading), based on 6,246,729 individuals from military, corporate, and higher-education samples. Roth et al. found any narrowing of the gap was “either small, potentially a function of sampling error . . . or nonexistent for highly *g* loaded instruments” (p. 323, italics added).

To claim a 4- to 7-point gain for Blacks, Dickens and Flynn chose three independent tests showing medium gains (the Wechsler, Stanford-Binet, and Armed Forces Qualification tests) and relegated to their Appendix B four or more tests showing lesser gains. They excluded the Wonderlic Personnel Test, which they acknowledge showed a gain of only 2.4 points for Blacks between 1970 and 2001. (Dickens and Flynn suggest that more “high quality” Whites than Blacks had taken the test.) They excluded the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC), which Murray (2005) described as showing a loss of 1 IQ point for Blacks between 1983 and 2004. (Dickens and Flynn say the data contained an inflated standard deviation.) They excluded the very *g*-loaded Woodcock-Johnson test, which Murray (2005; whom they cite) described as showing the conventional gap of 1.05 standard deviations for the third (2001) standardization sample. (Dickens and Flynn say the Blacks were an unrepresentative “subsample.”) They also excluded the Differential Ability Scale, which in Lynn’s (1996) analysis (which they cite) showed a maximum gain of 1.83 IQ points for Blacks between 1972 and 1986. (Dickens and Flynn say the sample lacked “quality.”) To be compelling, however, researchers must take the totality of available evidence into account (Gottfredson, 2005).

Even the tests Dickens and Flynn did analyze do not support their conclusion. The alleged gain of 4 to 7 points is from a “projected” trend line based on a small IQ rise per year multiplied by more years than are in the data using unclear procedures (see the additional appendix in the Web site they refer to). Simple arithmetic applied to the data in their Table A1 shows a mean gain for Blacks of only 3.44 IQ points, from 86.44 to 89.88

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(early points of 90.0, 86.4, 86.8, 87.0, and 82.0; later points of 92.1, 91.7, 89.1, 90.9, and 85.6). Lower figures than those they report are also found when Black gains are subtracted from White gains or calculated in other ways over 30 years.

Dickens and Flynn's claim of having chosen tests with "meticulous sampling" (p. 914) is inaccurate. It is widely known among test developers that although samples are carefully drawn to create a nationally representative sample for the entire population, they are not chosen to get an accurate estimate for subgroups such as Blacks. The most disadvantaged elements in poorer schools in inner cities are rarely, if ever, included.

Dickens and Flynn also sidestep theoretical issues. For example, Rushton (1999) showed in a factor analysis that the secular increases in IQ behave differently from the Black-White differences. Although secular increases on various tests cluster together, they do so independently of Black-White differences, which cluster with the *g* factor and genetic indices such as inbreeding depression and twin differences. The finding that the secular increases are not on the *g* factor and are qualitatively different from Black-White differences has been well replicated (e.g., Wicherts et al., 2004). Dickens and Flynn appear to confirm this observation, but do not provide context.

Dickens and Flynn covaried age to take the implicit position that no age differences are expected. Yet their increase was smallest for the oldest group, so it is unclear that gains made at younger ages will endure. Jensen (1998) demonstrated that Black-White IQ differences typically increase with age (because genetic influences become stronger over the life span). He used Shuey's (1966) compendium to document that the average Black-White difference was 0.70 standard deviations in early childhood, 1.00 standard deviations in middle childhood, and 1.20 standard deviations in early adulthood.

A more satisfactory method to test whether Black IQ is rising is to use a sibling control group, as Jensen (1977) did in rural Georgia to examine the cumulative-deficit hypothesis (also see Jensen, 1980). Examining differences between siblings on the same test when they reach the same age and the same grade in the same school holds constant factors such as family background and demographic changes in particular areas. Until the results of several such studies allow reassessment of the situation, the best estimate of Black-White convergence over the past 100 years is between 0 and 3.44 IQ points—a maximum

effect size of 0.23—well within the predictions of our estimated heritability of .80 for the Black-White *g* difference in the United States.

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