

Comment

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Why Not Drop Race as a Term?

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After they reviewed the recent literature regarding race, most of it published since 1970, Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, and Wyatt (November 1993) called for a blue-ribbon interdisciplinary commission to develop a frame of reference. As an undergraduate more than half a century ago, I encountered considerable confusion, disagreement, and contradiction about race in introductory courses in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and biology. Even among prominent psychologists there was little uniformity. For example, Henry Garrett (1945), the Columbia statistician, had close ties with the eugenics movement. Robert Yerkes (1921), the specialist on primate behavior and a father of the Army Alpha, presented evidence about differences in intelligence by race. On the other hand, the research of experimental social psychologists like Otto Klineberg (1935), who showed that the test scores of African American children were associated with educational opportunities, helped to justify school integration. In defining race in 1958, English and English remarked, "many authorities would abandon the term as suggesting meanings contrary to fact" (p. 435). I concluded then that

race as a scientific term was seriously flawed. Yee et al. have reinforced that conclusion.

I propose, therefore, that applied and scientific psychologists drop race because it is a hopelessly ambiguous and politicized descriptor of alleged human subspecies. Psychologists should retain race only in relation to attributed group membership or studies of attitudes. Thus racism is certainly of interest when it refers to a popular *belief* that some group is superior, inferior, or different on some characteristic.

What are the practical consequences if psychologists abandon race? For a serious inquiry that addresses, for example, individual differences on a particular variable (intelligence, athletic ability, personality, etc.) in relation to group membership, I recommend that investigators collect data about a number of separate characteristics—gender, age, occupation, education, religion, parent education, parent occupation, income, generation in the United States, country of ancestral origin, and so on. However, in designing categories for human populations they should avoid skin color (black, red, yellow, white), continental origin (African, Asian), anthropological designation (Caucasian), or colonial history (Latino). In current practice (e.g., U.S. census) these characteristics are often combined in a multiple-choice format; but they lack logical consistency, and they are loose and leaky categories. Applied to a single individual in a clinical situation, a racial term reveals little or nothing. If a racial category is reported as a group mean, variability may be overlooked and overgeneralization encouraged. An intensive family history is far more productive. After more than 70 years of confusion, a blue-ribbon commission is hardly necessary to advise psychologists to avoid popular racial categories in their research or practice.

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Construct Validity, Censorship, and the Genetics of Race

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In their critique of my work on the biological differences among human races, Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, and Wyatt (November 1993) hold that the usual principles of classification and construct validity in science—based on a network of predictive relationships, including item, subject, and sample aggregations—do not apply because anthropologists and geneticists have not defined the term "race" to their own satisfaction. It follows, they imply, that my work is at best unreliable and at worst unethical, and they call for the American Psychological Association to institute guidelines for editors who have to deal with "Rushton-type submissions" (p. 1134).

A race, it should be clear, is what zoologists term a geographic variety or subdivision of a species characterized by a more or less distinct combination of traits (morphological, behavioral, physiological) that are heritable. Zoologists have identified two or more races in many mammalian species. In humans, the three major races of Mongoloid, Caucasoid, and Negroid can be distinguished on the basis of obvious differences in skeletal morphology, hair and facial features, and molecular genetic information. Forensic anthropologists regularly classify the skeletons of decomposed victims by race.

For example, narrow nasal passages and a short distance between eye sockets mark a Caucasoid, distinct cheekbones identify a Mongoloid, and nasal openings shaped like an upside down heart typify a Negroid (Ubelaker & Scammel, 1992). The race of a perpetrator is increasingly identifiable from blood, semen, and hair samples. To deny the predictive validity of race at this level is absurd, as was Yee et al.'s (1993) suggestion that "obviousness" (p. 1134) in geographic variation in morphology is not indicative of racial variation.

Biologists use molecular information to work out genetic distances among populations and even to relate these to the times that languages split (Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi, & Piazza, 1993). On the assumption that mutation rates are constant across time and locale, current estimates are that modern humans evolved in Africa sometime after 200,000 years ago, with an African/non-African split occurring approximately 110,000 years ago and a Mongoloid/Caucasoid split approximately 41,000 years ago. Evolutionary selection pressures are far different in the hot African savanna, where Negroids evolved, from those in the cold Arctic environment, where Mongoloids evolved. Hence, it was predictable that these geographic races would show genetic differences in numerous traits.

The evolutionary sequence explains the how and why of the clustering found on race differences around the world. As I clearly show in my book *Race, Evolution and Behavior: A Life History Perspective* (1995), on more than 60 variables, Mongoloids and Negroids are most dissimilar to each other, with Caucasoids intermediate, albeit with great variability within each broad grouping. This racial matrix includes measures of speed of physical maturation, personality, family stability, law-abidingness, reproductive behavior, sex hormones, twinning rate, brain size, intelligence, and social organization.

I propose that gene-culture coevolution explains these differences better than do 100% environmental or 100% genetic alternatives. No known environmental variable can explain why Mongoloids average larger cranial capacities but produce fewer gametes than do Negroids. Only evolutionary theories based on life-history analyses predict such a trade-off (Rushton, 1991, 1995).

In order to increase scientific understanding of human diversity, it is necessary to rise above both "racist" and "antiracist" ideology and to broaden the focus beyond that of Yee et al. (1993). Their article was limited to the United States, except for passing mention of European imperialism, South

Africa, and World War II genocide. But most Black and Asian people do not live in European-run nations, and the Caucasoid race includes Arabs and East Indians.

With data from around the world, it has been repeatedly found that the races differ not only in cognitive ability (Lynn, 1991) but also in brain size, even after corrections are made for body size. In a stratified random sample of 6,325 U.S. Army personnel measured in 1988 for the fitting of helmets, I found that after adjusting for the effects of body size, sex, and military rank, self-defined Asians, Whites, and Blacks averaged cranial capacities, respectively, of 1,416, 1,380, and 1,359 cubic centimeters (Rushton, 1992). With data from tens of thousands of people from around the world, collated by the International Labour Office in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1990, I found that after adjusting for effects of body size and sex, samples from the Pacific Rim, from Europe, and from Africa averaged cranial capacities, respectively, of 1,308, 1,297, and 1,241 cubic centimeters (Rushton, 1994). Converging modern (post-1980) evidence for this pattern comes from independent methodologies based on wet brain weight from autopsies and endocranial volume from skulls (Rushton, 1995). Even head perimeter measured at birth reveals race differences; and in 19,000 Black and 17,000 White children, head perimeter at birth correlated with IQ at age seven from 0.10 to 0.20 (Broman, Nichols, Shaughnessy, & Kennedy, 1987).

The racial differences, however, should not be overgeneralized, as some of them are quite small. In the U.S. Army data, for example, only a 4% difference separated Asian Americans from African Americans, and Black officers averaged a larger cranial capacity than did White enlisted personnel (Rushton, 1992). It is problematic to generalize from a group average to an individual. Yee et al. (1993) seriously misrepresented my position when they stated that I "interpreted this variation as error" (p. 1134). Rather, it represents natural variation, likely genetically based, that is common to all studied animal populations.

Yee et al.'s (1993) call for official regulation of the scientific concept of race, if taken seriously, constitutes a threat to free inquiry. For too many, work on the genetics of intelligence, and racial differences therein, is a challenge to the enlightenment assumption that knowledge is always better than ignorance. But scholars have accepted that the earth is not the center of the universe and that man's closest living relatives are the chimpanzees. We can yet affirm our common heritage by accepting our differences.

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Psychological Research on Race Differences

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Because Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, and Wyatt (November 1993) devoted a third of their article to a section concerning me and my research on racial differences in abilities, I feel obliged to comment. Although they made no pointed or valid criticism of my work, they did not seem to approve it. They urged the American Psychological Association (APA) officially to pronounce "guidelines" for research and publication on this topic. Evaluations by a panel of appropriately selected journal referees, judging each study individually on its scientific merits, was apparently considered inadequate to ensure "disciplinewide consensus and monitoring" of psychological research involving race. Rather than writing a point-by-point critique of Yee et al.'s hodgepodge of muddled complaints, which would be otiose, I will use this limited space to comment on more substantive issues.

My research, like virtually all other psychological (and medical) research on race, is based on samples comprising persons who are self-identified (or parent-identified) as being of a particular racial ances-