

selected for an experimental program of interracial adoption in Minnesota are not likely to be representative of all black children in Minnesota.

Flynn has made a significant contribution to psychology by bringing together and carefully analyzing the diverse evidence concerning changes in intelligence test scores over time.¹ Indeed, large changes in the test score distribution do seem to have occurred over the past fifty years. It is difficult to think of a genetic explanation that is consistent with current knowledge for such large changes over such a short period of time. As Flynn has acknowledged, it is also difficult to think of an environmental explanation that is consistent with current knowledge. Flynn has resurrected a scientific conundrum that has been around for a long time. Cattell in 1936 and Anastasi in 1956,² for example, wondered why test scores seemed to be increasing when the negative correlation between intelligence and family size indicated a dysgenic reproductive pattern that should lead to an IQ decline. The question is equally important, and not much nearer to an answer today.

By a strange twist of logic Flynn has transformed the genuine mystery concerning test score changes over time into positive evidence that solves the alleged mystery of racial differences. The faulty syllogism seems something like the following:

- 1 We do not know what causes the test score changes over time.
- 2 We do not know what causes racial differences in intelligence.
- 3 Since both causes are unknown, they must, therefore, be the same.
- 4 Since the unknown cause of changes over time cannot be shown to be genetic, it must be environmental.
- 5 Therefore, racial differences in intelligence are environmental in origin.

NOTES

- 1 Flynn, J.R. (1984) 'The mean IQ of Americans: Massive gains 1932 to 1978', *Psychological Bulletin*, 95, pp. 29–51.
- 2 Anastasi, A. (1956) 'Intelligence and family size,' *Psychological Bulletin*, 53, pp. 187–209; Cattell, R.B. (1936) 'Is national intelligence declining?' *Eugenics Review*, 28, pp. 181–303; Cattell, R.B. (1950) 'The fate of national intelligence: A test of a thirteen-year prediction', *Eugenics Review*, 42, pp. 136–48.

FLYNN REPLIES TO NICHOLS

Nichols asserts that compensatory programs have failed to reduce the IQ gap, then details how unfavorably blacks compare with whites in income, occupational status, symptoms of family demoralization, and crime statistics. When he asks what can be done about these social differences, he feels compelled to answer, however reluctantly, 'nothing'. This extracts one theme from a detailed argument and if it does an injustice, apologies. However, the

notion that the IQ gap does much to dictate the status of blacks in America, with the implication that they really are just about where equal treatment would leave a group below-average in intelligence, is so pervasive as to call for an answer.

The bottom 38.1 per cent of white Americans have a mean IQ one standard deviation (fifteen points) below all white Americans, thanks to the mathematics of a normal curve. Jensen puts the correlation between IQ and income at .30, the correlation between IQ and SES at .60 (between .50 and .70).¹ Since the correlations are a measure of the failure to regress, this subgroup of white Americans would be about .30 *SDs* below average in income and .60 in SES. Despite an identical mean IQ, black Americans are .80 *SDs* below all whites in income and 1.17 in SES.² If we take into account that Jensen himself allocates about one-third (between one-fourth and one-half) of the racial IQ gap to black environmental disadvantages, which means that only ten points would be fixed by genes, the contrast is greater still. The bottom 58.4 per cent of white Americans have a mean IQ ten points below all whites, and for them the correlations generate estimates of .20 *SDs* below average in income and .40 in SES. In sum, even if we accept Jensen's conclusions about genes and IQ, and even if we accept a genetic gap as irreducible, 75 per cent of the black deficit in income and 66 per cent of the black deficit in SES cannot be attributed in any simple way to below-average genes for intelligence. Race, race, race is the primary factor in America's racial problem. Genes for intelligence make a secondary contribution no matter whether Jensen is right or wrong.

I have tested the contention made by both Nichols and Jensen that the racial IQ gap has remained immutable throughout the history of testing. I hypothesized that if IQ is sensitive to the environment, and if the environmental gap between black and white has altered since 1940, then the IQ gap should have altered. From the early years of World War II Davenport has given us military mental test data broken down by years of schooling, and other sources provide the failure rates of those who had less than four years of formal education. I projected these on the appropriate age groups from the 1940 census, knowing that Karpinos had done a similar exercise for 1960 and that the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defence had tested a representative sample for 1980.³ The results show that among young adults the black-white IQ gap fell from twenty-one points to about eighteen points between 1940 and 1960 and has remained relatively stable ever since. Jensen's analysis of twelfth-grade subjects from the Coleman Report confirms the fact that the IQ gap for older age groups is larger than the fifteen points for school children.⁴ The irony is that blacks gained on whites before 1960, while they were being neglected, and did not gain while the compensatory programs of the 1960s were in place.

The environment knows how to affect the racial IQ gap even though we do not, which however suggests that we may be able to learn. Finally, we know a great deal more about how to alleviate social distress than we do about how to raise IQ: programs such as full employment, state housing, state medical care, and so forth have never been seriously attempted in America as they have in

Scandinavia and New Zealand. It would be tragic if the IQ debate fostered an attitude that blacks in America suffer primarily because of their lack of intelligence and that nothing can be done.

NOTES

- 1 Jensen, A.R. (1980) *Bias in Mental Testing*, London, Methuen, pp. 341 and 347.
- 2 Jensen, A.R. (1973) *Educability and Group Differences*, New York, Harper and Row, pp. 168–9.
- 3 Davenport, R.K. (1946) ‘Implications of military selection and classification in relation to Universal Military Training’, *Journal of Negro Education*, **15**, pp. 585 and 591; Lee, U. (1966) *The Employment of Negro Troops*, Office of the Chief of Military History, US Army, p. 240; Shuey, A.M. (1966) *The Testing of Negro Intelligence*, 2nd ed., New York, Social Science Press, p. 329; US Bureau of the Census (1950) *Seventeenth Census*, Vol. II, Part 1, pp. 1–228, 1–229 and 1–239; Karpinos, B.D. (1966) *Proceedings of the 126th Annual Meeting of the American Statistical Association, Social Statistics Section*, p. 106; Korb, L.J. (1982) *Profile of American Youth*, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, p. 71.
- 4 *Bias in Mental Testing, op. cit.*, p. 479.