

The Unz Review • An Alternative Media Selection

A Collection of Interesting, Important, and Controversial Perspectives Largely Excluded from the American Mainstream Media

The Forbidden Topic: Race and IQ • 54m

Mike Whitney Interview with Ron Unz

RON UNZ AND MIKE WHITNEY • AUGUST 21, 2023 • 6,900 WORDS • [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

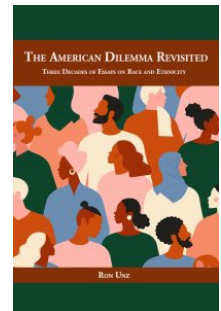
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Question 1: The Race and IQ Controversy

Let's talk about race, but let's focus on the thorniest issue of all: Race and IQ.

Can you summarize the issue so that readers understand what we're talking about and explain why it is such a prickly topic?



Epub Format 

Ron Unz—For various reasons, there are few topics more taboo in modern American society than the notion of racial differences. Meanwhile, intelligence testing—the use of IQ exams to measure mental ability—is also extremely taboo these days. Therefore, **the combination of race and IQ is a particularly dangerous subject, almost completely avoided by those unwilling to risk a firestorm of attacks on social media or the destruction of their careers.**

As a consequence, **the vast majority of Americans, including our educated elites, never get any serious or neutral exposure to Race/IQ issues**, even if the “forbidden fruit” aspect of the topic might occasionally draw some of them to the fringes of the Internet where the subject is still sometimes discussed.

The landmark Civil Rights Act was passed nearly six decades ago, and since then **the notion of racial equality in ability** has been enshrined as an absolutely fundamental assumption of our society. Rather than merely being a scientific conclusion based upon empirical research, it **has become a central ideological belief, more like a moral axiom or the basic tenet of a religious faith**, whose truth transcends any evidence. If particular racial or ethnic minority groups are under-represented in elite university admissions or over-represented in

crime and poverty, the only possible explanation is the failure or malice of the larger society rather than the intrinsic characteristics of the groups themselves.

More and more American institutions, including those responsible for education and law enforcement, now operate under this fundamental assumption of racial equality and the recent tidal wave of “wokeness” merely represents the latest manifestations. This situation may produce insurmountable difficulties if that assumption happens to be misaligned with reality. Back in 2013 I closed [a long article](#)[1] on some of these issues with the following paragraph:

During the Cold War, the enormous governmental investments of the Soviet regime in many fields produced nothing, since they were based on a model of reality that was both unquestionable and also false. The growing divergence between that ideological model and the real world eventually doomed the USSR, whose vast and permanent bulk blew away in a sudden gust of wind two decades ago. American leaders should take care that they do not stubbornly adhere to scientifically false doctrines that will lead our own country to risk a similar fate.

- [How Social Darwinism Made Modern China](#)[2]

A thousand years of meritocracy shaped the Middle Kingdom

Ron Unz • ***The American Conservative*** • March 11, 2013 • 8,300 Words

In today’s Western world, any individuals who suggest the existence of large and innate racial differences in IQ and other measures of intellectual ability are utterly marginalized, with their words confined to isolated corners of the Internet. Such theories are widely condemned as “hate speech,” with their adherents likely to see their careers destroyed, while facing serious risk of deplatforming from social media or even criminal prosecution in many Western countries.

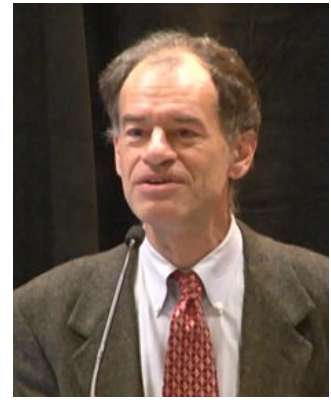
Given this climate of serious intellectual repression, it is hardly surprising that only a tiny sliver of our population would publicly espouse such heretical ideas, and even many of those hardy souls have gradually drifted away from explicitly proclaiming those views in recent years.

Question 2: Research Findings and Censorship

Has there been extensive research on this topic and do you think the research is reliable? Is there research that counters the findings that we are discussing?

*There has been a systematic purge of anyone who dares to research or write about this topic. And I can certainly understand why. Even so, while I may not agree with the racist perspective, I think that people should be free to think and write about anything they choose. We should never turn to censorship as a way to defend our ideals, but that, in fact, is what has happened. So, my question to you is this: **Who are these people whose ideas (and research) are so threatening that they have had to be censored?***

Ron Unz—Back in 2020 I published a very long and comprehensive historical survey[3] of American white racialism and it included extensive coverage of the Race/IQ debate[4]. I noted that **although promoting such ideas were forbidden and utter transgressive today, just a generation or two ago they had been treated quite respectfully in many of our most prestigious and influential media organs and academic institutions**, or even directly endorsed in those elite venues. The presentation of controversial theories about Race and IQ began appearing soon after the passage of the Civil Rights laws and the Great Society legislation, and the proponents were top academic scholars, some of them highly-regarded liberals. My account summarized the decades of this rancorous public debate.



An important basis for the *Brown* decision had been the argument that desegregation would substantially reduce the wide educational achievement gap between black and white students, which was also a central goal of many of Lyndon Johnson's new Great Society programs, such as Head Start. But in February 1969, the prestigious *Harvard Educational Review* gave over its entire issue to a massive 123 page article by Prof. Arthur Jensen of Berkeley, a leading psychometrician, bearing the provocative title "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" Jensen argued that there was overwhelming scientific evidence that IQ scores and other measures of scholastic ability were determined by nature rather than nurture and that the wide black-white performance gap was mostly biological in origin. Jensen's scientific claims provoked a national firestorm of controversy, subjecting Jensen to massive vilification, including physical assaults and very serious threats against the lives of himself and his family.

Despite these ferocious attacks, Jensen never wavered in his scientific positions during the decades that followed, and in 1998 he published his magnum opus *The g Factor: The Science of Mental Ability*[5], reiterating his findings. By 2005, he was widely regarded as the Grand Old Man of psychometrics, and he published an article summarizing the previous thirty years of research on racial differences in intelligence, with his co-author being Prof. J. Philippe Rushton, an evolutionary theorist who held explicitly White Nationalist beliefs.

Jensen seems to have been largely apolitical, and although his original article had ignited the controversy, he hardly desired the resulting media spotlight, which soon shifted away, allowing him to spend the next four decades in his scholarly research prior to his death in 2012 at age 89. Instead, a much more eager lightning-rod appeared in the person of physicist William Shockley, who years earlier had won a Nobel Prize for inventing the transistor. Shockley seemed to relish public attention, which he

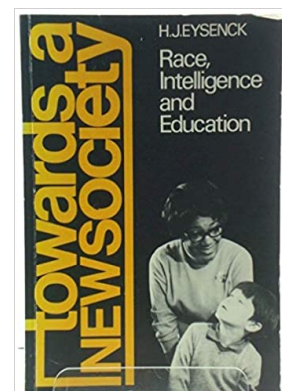


soon attracted by wholeheartedly endorsing Jensen's views and then spending years promoting them in the media and various public forums, along with other racially-charged policy proposals such as government-paid sterilization for low-IQ individuals and similar eugenic measures. The physicist soon became a household name, attracting massive public vilification up until his death in 1989 and even long afterward.

Shockley was a Palo Alto native, and in 1956 after inventing the transistor he had founded Shockley Semiconductor in neighboring Mountain View to commercialize his invention, choosing to relocate back from the East Coast in order to be closer to his aged and ailing mother. His difficult personality and poor management skills eventually produced an exodus of his early employees, who went on to spawn many of the most important technology companies in the region, arguably making Shockley the father of the modern Silicon Valley, which otherwise might never have come into existence. But although he is probably the most important Palo Alto in history, his controversial racist views have prevented any appropriate recognition. For years I have driven past his simple clapboard home on Waverley Ave., which is unmarked by any plaque or historic designation, and his name has never graced any building, monument, or award.

Lacking any such public honors and with his name now largely forgotten, Shockley presented no target for the recent Black Lives Matter protest movement to attack, and he was simply ignored. By contrast, a similar campaign a few years ago forced our local school district to rename Terman Middle School[6], which had honored famed Stanford Electrical Engineering Prof. Frederick Terman. In the 1930s, Terman had encouraged his students William Hewlett and David Packard to found their eponymous company, which also played a huge role in creating America's powerful technology industry. Terman's name was scraped from the school because he shared it with that of his father, Stanford Psychology Prof. Lewis Terman, who had pioneered American IQ testing a century ago, now considered a toxic figure despite almost no focus on race.

Jensen had done his own doctoral work at University College London under Hans Eysenck, a renowned professor of psychology and expert in psychometrics. A couple of years after the appearance of Jensen's controversial article on the heredity basis of IQ, Eysenck published *Race, Intelligence, and Education*[7], a short book taking much the same position. Once again, a massive wave of controversy and media vilification erupted, with Eysenck being physically attacked and having his life threatened. Although he never retracted his views, henceforth he focused almost entirely on other topics, and by the time of his death in 1997 was a figure of enormous eminence in the field of psychology, ranking first in the world in the number of his peer-reviewed academic citations. Despite such scholarly achievements, he had never been made a



member of the British Psychological Society, apparently because of the controversial nature of his writings on race and IQ three decades earlier.

The same year that Eysenck had released his controversial book, the parallel views of a much younger Harvard psychology professor named Richard Herrnstein attracted similar attention in our own country. Founded in 1857, *The Atlantic* had for more than a century been one of America's most prestigious national magazines, and Herrnstein's 20,000 word article on IQ[8] was one of the longest ever to run in that publication, providing a comprehensive account of the origins and accuracy of IQ tests as a measure of human intelligence, along with the enormous implications for the future of our society. Herrnstein strongly endorsed the arguments of Jensen and others that IQ was overwhelmingly determined by innate factors, but tread rather carefully on the related evidence of a large difference in intelligence between racial groups.

Given its venue, Herrnstein's massive article reached a large national audience, including many of America's intellectual elites, and soon provoked the usual wave of attacks and hostile criticism, though his caution on racial issues probably insulated him from the level of vitriol that Jensen and Eysenck had encountered. Rather than being expelled from respectable media circles, Herrnstein went on to publish additional major articles[9] on related IQ issues over the next couple of decades in *The Public Interest*, *National Review*, *Commentary*, and even socialistic *Dissent*.

In 1982, *The Atlantic* carried another one of his long articles[10] describing the overwhelming consensus of academic researchers on IQ issues and the severe distortions of the scientific facts regularly promoted by leading mainstream media organs such as *The New York Times* and *CBS News*. So although the positions of Herrnstein and his allies were largely excluded from outlets with the largest national audiences, they continually reached smaller but more intellectually elite circles. In 1985 he co-authored *Crime and Human Nature*[11] with eminent political scientist James Q. Wilson, an influential and well-received text arguing for a strong innate component to criminal behavior, including discussion of the very wide differences in crime rates between racial and ethnic groups.

CRIME & HUMAN NATURE

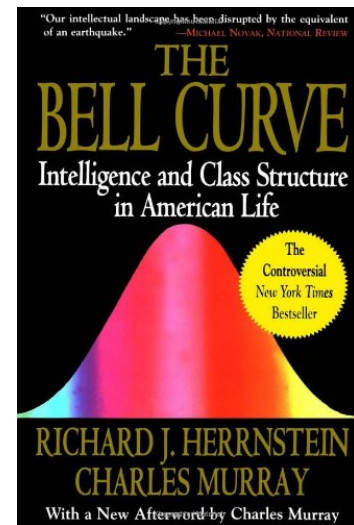
THE DEFINITIVE STUDY OF THE
CAUSES OF CRIME

JAMES Q. WILSON
Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Government, Harvard University
RICHARD J. HERRNSTEIN
Edgar Pierce Professor of Psychology, Harvard University

Herrnstein died of lung cancer at the age of 64 in September 1994, having devoted the final years of his life to a project that directly addressed the large racial differences in intelligence which most of his previous writings had usually sidestepped. Teaming up with prominent social scientist Charles Murray, he

produced *The Bell Curve*[12], a massive volume that weighed in at 845 pages and over 400,000 words.

The book was released just weeks after his death and immediately became a national sensation, probably attracting more controversy and media coverage than anything published in decades. Almost three generations had passed since a major American press had published a book heavily arguing for the mostly innate nature of human intelligence and the wide racial differences in such traits, and although the latter issue constituted only small portion of the text, those incendiary claims attracted nearly all the attention.



At that time, *The New Republic* was America's most influential liberal opinion magazine, and both owner Martin Peretz and editor Andrew Sullivan together gave their strong support to the launch of *The Bell Curve*, allocating much of an issue to a 10,000 word cover-story entitled "Race, Genes, and IQ: An Apologia[13]," which largely consisted of extended extracts from the book. But that decision sparked a huge revolt by most of the magazine's outraged staff and regular contributors, who demanded space for rebuttal, so that the same issue also carried some 19 separate attacks[14] on the book and its theories, many of them extremely harsh, with epithets such as "neo-Nazi" tossed around. According to Sullivan, the incident marked a turning point in his relationships with his *TNR* colleagues, which never recovered, and he eventually left the magazine.

From the distance of a quarter century, I had mostly forgotten the overwhelming media coverage at the time, but spending a couple of days reading fifty or sixty of the contemporaneous reviews, many of them quite lengthy, refreshed my memory, and also underscored the tremendously disparate reactions by usual ideological soulmates.

For example, just within the pages of the *New York Times*, the *Sunday Book Review* allocated *The Bell Curve* and two other books on similar racial issues an almost unprecedented three pages of discussion[15], with Malcolm Browne, the paper's Pulitzer Prize-winning science journalist taking 4,200 words to portray the works in a substantially favorable light, emphasizing the need to confront long-suppressed taboos. But a week later the same newspaper ran a very long editorial[16] denouncing "The Bell Curve Agenda" in the harshest possible terms, and an 8,300 word cover-story[17] in the *Sunday Magazine* had vilified Murray as "The Most Dangerous Conservative in America."

National Review, the leading conservative magazine, had already run a long and favorable review, but soon devoted most of an entire issue to a remarkable symposium by 14 separate contributors[18], many of them prominent journalists or academics, who provided a very wide range of both positive and negative perspectives. Although *TNR* was then my favorite magazine and I didn't hold *NR* in

high regard, the flood of attacks in the former seemed absolutely hysterical, while I thought that the latter had provided the best and most balanced discussion.

The coincidental timing of larger political events probably helped explain this enormous media coverage. Just a couple of weeks after the book's release, Newt Gingrich and the Republicans had unexpectedly swept to power in Congressional elections, ending nearly a half-century of unbroken Democratic control by seizing majorities in both the House and the Senate, an event just as traumatic to the liberals of that day as Donald Trump's upset victory was to prove in 2016. Racial controversies had been a significant contributing factor to the Republican landslide, and appalled liberals now saw their familiar political and ideological world crumbling about them, with the frightening possibility that the "white racism" of the buried past would suddenly regain control of American society.

The result was an exceptionally bitter wave of liberal media attacks on the book, which was demonized to an unprecedented extent. As mentioned, much of the early media discussion of *The Bell Curve* and its ideas had been favorable or at least respectful, but an enormous public campaign of vilification was now unleashed, with many timorous Republicans and conservatives soon wilting under the attacks and abandoning any support. A couple of years earlier, I had been invited to a private meeting in DC at which Murray had confidentially circulated portions of his work-in-progress and the neoconservative organizers strategized with him about the best approach for successfully launching the book; but now I heard word that Bill Kristol was seeking conservatives to sign a public statement condemning the "racist" tract.

The book continued to sell very well, but the tide of elite public opinion soon turned sharply against it, and Herrnstein's death just a month before publication was surely a contributing factor. Until just a few years earlier, Murray had been totally unaware of these scientific issues involving race and IQ, and indeed had regularly dismissed the possible role of racial differences as a factor in black social problems in his previous writings denouncing the welfare state. By contrast, Herrnstein had spent more than two decades researching the topic as a leading Harvard professor, and was also partially immunized against attacks because of his strong liberal credentials. Thus, the disappearance of the senior liberal co-author removed a crucial defender of the contents, leaving the conservative Murray much more vulnerable and exposed, and forcing him to publicly defend psychometric issues that were outside his primary area of expertise. I remember thinking at the time that when faced with sharp technical questioning by hostile journalists some of his media responses were not as effective as they might have been.

America's leading psychometricians, whose professional expertise on race and IQ had long been ignored or mischaracterized in the public arena, quickly mobilized in support, using the media firestorm as an opportunity to get their longstanding opinions into print. In December, the *Wall Street Journal* gave over most of a full

editorial page to a public declaration[19] that *The Bell Curve* represented the scholarly consensus of the “mainstream science on intelligence,”[20] a statement organized by Prof. Linda Gottfredson and signed by 52 academic experts, including such eminent scholars as Eysenck and Jensen.

Despite these counter-attacks, the intellectual tide continued to turn against the work, and within less than a year, the ideological status quo had reasserted itself, with the remaining defenders finding themselves severely beleaguered in the mainstream media. When the firestorm had originally erupted, famed paleolibertarian Murray Rothbard had been gleeful[21] that the long-suppressed truths about racial matters had finally broken through, suggesting that powerful political elements had apparently decided to reverse their decades of scientific suppression. But at the ten year anniversary, longtime writers on race and IQ such as Steve Sailer[22] and Chris Brand[23] delivered lengthy and despairing verdicts, concluding that the ideas in the book had been successfully suppressed, and any favorable mention of it in respectable circles would render someone an immediate outcast. Sailer even suggested that the “Bell Curve Wars” represented a crucial turning point for both the neoconservative and neoliberal intellectual movements, which soon abandoned any lingering candor on racially-charged issues. Indeed, other frequent writers on racial matters such as John Derbyshire and Peter Brimelow have sometimes described[24] the period 1995-2005 as a brief “interglacial” during which controversial racial topics could sometimes be discussed in the mainstream media, but that the subsequent clamp-down had been even more severe than anything before.

Many journalists and academics became extremely fearful of broaching the subject of race and IQ, with even the most eminent figures sometimes suffering severe consequences when they did so. For half a century, James Watson had reigned as one of the world’s greatest scientific figures, having shared a Nobel Prize for discovering DNA in 1953 and then spending decades leading Cold Spring Harbor laboratory, which he built up into a major center of scientific research. But in 2007 while on a book-tour at the age of 79, he raised questions about the average intelligence of black Africans and was immediately subjected[25] to a firestorm of public criticism and media vituperation, soon being stripped of many of his honors, and he later endured a second wave of vilification[26] when similar remarks came to light in a 2018 documentary. This was a shocking fate for a scientist in his 90s who had spent his entire career at the peak of world renown and achievement.

At the time of the initial Watson firestorm, *Slate* was our leading online publication, generally neoliberal and well-respected, and William Saletan, one of its senior editors, began publishing a lengthy five-part series entitled “Liberal Creationism,”[27] in which he explained the solid scientific basis of Watson’s casual remarks. But Saletan immediately encountered such a ferocious wave of denunciations that he soon apologized for having used “disreputable sources” amid widespread doubts that he would be able to keep his job.

Although Saletan managed to survive, other media figures naturally became very discreet on the subject of race and IQ, either mouthing platitudes or avoiding the topic entirely lest they be mobbed and their careers destroyed. Scientists themselves also recognized that if a figure of Watson's towering stature could be so easily destroyed, they needed to watch their words very carefully if they wished to retain their positions.

- [White Racism in America, Then and Now](#)[28]

IQ Researchers and Racial Differences

Ron Unz • ***The Unz Review*** • October 5, 2020 • 24,700 Words

In exploring the half-century history of the Race/IQ controversy, including the massive and bitter battles following the 1994 publication of *The Bell Curve*, I encountered few if any strong and substantive arguments against the IQ research presented. Instead, nearly all the attacks relied upon insults, moral arguments, and guilt-by-association character assassination, all of which suggested a complete lack of scientific evidence in that camp.

Instead of winning the argument through the free exchange of ideas, the overwhelming success of the anti-IQ advocates was achieved through administrative means, using media censorship and boycotts to gradually eliminate their opposing pro-IQ voices from the public debate. This same situation has continued down to the present day, but only become more extreme.

As an example, researcher Charles Murray had for decades been celebrated as one of the leading conservative intellectuals, and in 1995 his book *The Bell Curve* had prompted *National Review*, the flagship conservative magazine, to publish a symposium of 14 separate responses, both supportive and critical. But when he released [Facing Reality](#)[29] last year, arguing that the obvious existence of racial differences could not be permanently ignored, neither *NR* nor any other significant conservative outlet was even willing to review it.

These days much of the mainstream conservative media has apparently become “assimilated” into this culture of an ideological censorship of controversial racial ideas.

FACING REALITY

TWO TRUTHS
ABOUT RACE
IN AMERICA

CHARLES
MURRAY

COAUTHOR OF *THE BELL CURVE*

Question 3: Legal Equality

Why does any of this matter, after all, all men are still equal under the law and deserving of equal access to housing, employment and education?

Ron Unz—The problem is that over the decades our entire social and legal structure has increasingly become based upon a foundational belief in the complete racial equality of ability,

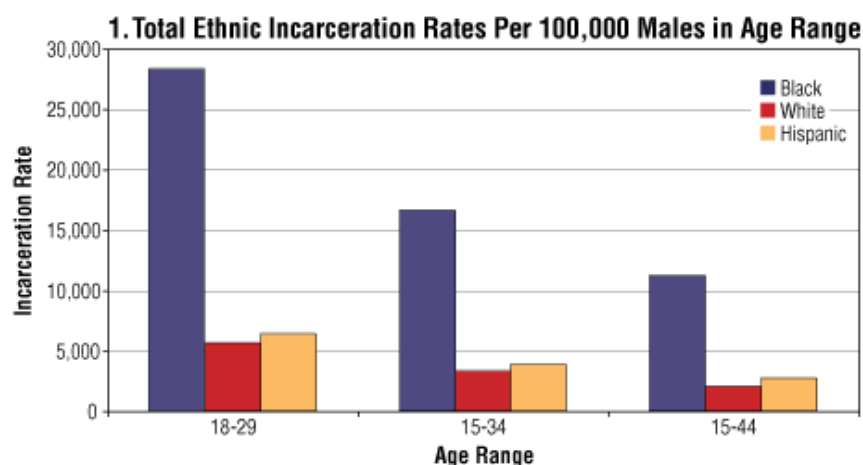
a belief that does not seem to be factually correct. Under this ideological framework, any deviation from the outcomes theoretically predicted by that principle of equality is typically ascribed to malevolent forces that must be countered by administrative means.

For example, Caltech is generally regarded as having one of the most race-blind and objectively meritocratic admissions systems and although blacks are 13% of the American population, during the last forty years[30] they have consistently been only 1% or 2% of Caltech students.

California Institute of Technology

Year	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics	Asians	Unknown	Non-Residents	Male	Female
1980	74.4	1.9	3.6	12.0	---	8.0	85.2	13.9
1984	67.8	1.5	3.4	18.7	---	8.1	84.0	16.0
1986	64.6	1.6	2.9	21.4	---	9.4	86.7	13.3
1988	63.8	0.9	2.8	22.4	---	9.8	84.9	15.1
1990	62.1	1.7	3.3	22.1	0.5	10.2	79.1	20.9
1991	59.6	2.2	4.6	22.7	0.3	10.3	74.8	25.2
2013	30.4	1.7	10.0	42.5	0.2	8.9	63.4	36.6
2014	27.9	1.5	12.2	43.8	---	8.7	63.6	36.4
2015	27.4	1.5	11.9	45.4	0.2	8.3	60.9	39.1
2016	28.6	1.4	11.8	42.7	---	9.1	59.1	40.9
2017	27.8	1.4	12.0	43.3	---	8.5	55.4	44.6
2018	27.1	1.5	13.8	40.4	---	8.8	54.6	45.4
2019	27.0	1.7	17.2	36.7	0.1	8.4	54.7	45.3
2020	23.4	1.9	18.1	39.8	0.4	7.5	54.4	45.6
2021	22.7	2.5	22.3	34.7	0.4	7.9	55.3	44.7

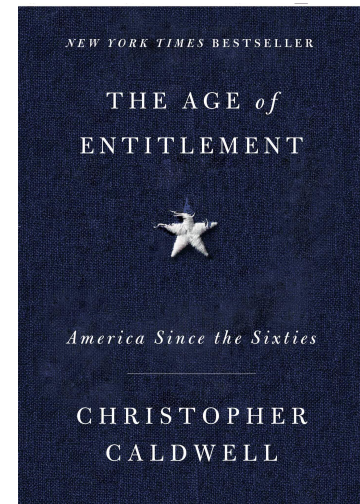
Similarly, on an age-adjusted basis, the per capita incarceration rate of blacks is far higher than that of other groups, as indicated in this chart from one of my old articles[31].



In his excellent 2020 book *The Age of Entitlement*[32], journalist Christopher Caldwell emphasized that over the last few decades, we have gradually replaced our official constitution with a new ideology fundamentally based upon the Civil Rights framework, under which any such racial differences in important outcomes are unacceptable and must be eliminated. But if

such differences are actually rooted in innate characteristics, achieving such a goal may require increasingly totalitarian means and will still ultimately fail regardless.

Consider, for example, the biological differences between men and women. In America and across almost all other human societies, males are slightly larger than females, generally averaging several inches taller in height. But suppose that we were governed under an ideological framework that proclaimed men and women had exactly the same average height, while demonizing and purging all naysayers as “Height Equality Deniers.” Just consider the immense difficulties and dishonesty such a bizarre belief system would inflict upon our scientists and medical professionals.



On the day that Alexander Solzhenitsyn was arrested by the Soviet authorities, he released the text of his essay “Live Not by Lies,”[33] and the failure of the USSR to follow that principle ultimately played a central role in bringing down its regime.

Question 4: Your Own Conclusions

Your own conclusions on these matters are considerably different than the people you write about. What is it that you discovered about “race and IQ” that others failed to see?

Ron Unz—As I’d mentioned above, my comprehensive review of the decades of the Race/IQ debate found very little indication that the supporters of our totally dominant anti-IQ side had any good scientific arguments in favor of their position, given that they relied so heavily upon media censorship and academic persecution to maintain control.

But ironically enough, the one major exception to this pattern came in my own work just over a decade ago, which focused upon some very serious difficulties in the Race/IQ framework.

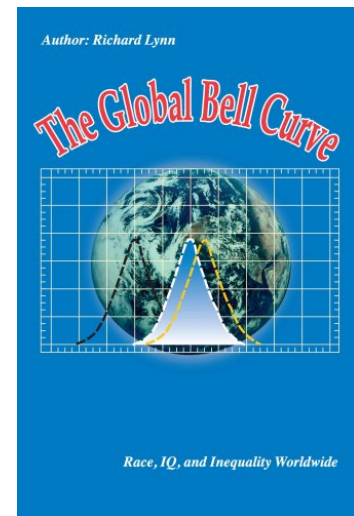
In the aftermath of the suppression of the *Bell Curve* debate during the late 1990s, any discussion of possible racial differences in IQ was almost entirely driven out of the public arena. But as I explained in my long 2020 intellectual survey[34], it still continued elsewhere:

Meanwhile, IQ researchers and racist elements followed the topic more eagerly than ever, but remained on the ideological margins, with few of their books or articles gaining any wider exposure. And this severe bifurcation between the two camps—one enormously large but silent and fearful and the other small and fiercely committed to IQ doctrine—had serious negative consequences.

In 2002, Richard Lynn and a co-author had published *IQ and the Wealth of Nations*[35], which was entirely ignored by mainstream media but became a sensation in IQ and racist circles. Some of its striking findings began to circulate

widely on the Internet, together with those presented in several follow-up volumes, such as *The Global Bell Curve*[36].

For decades, Lynn had been a leading figure in international IQ research, with many of his important results cited in the Herrnstein/Murray book, and his new work proposed a sweeping global hypothesis. Based upon his collection of hundreds of international IQ samples, he demonstrated a strong correlation between national IQs and per capita incomes, claiming this proved that a nation's IQ was a central factor in determining its economic success, with obvious implications for government policies on foreign aid and immigration. In addition, the extremely low IQs in so many African countries, often running 30 points or more below the white American average, obviously explained Africa's dismal economic failures.



Despite his lack of any mainstream coverage, Lynn soon became a near cult-figure within the racist community and the statistics in his book an object of veneration. Moreover, such explosive information may have been widely discussed in private conversations, gradually leaking into establishment circles, and perhaps even ultimately playing a role in prompting Watson's controversial public statements. I suspect that numerous mainstream academics or journalists even regarded the international IQ data as a sort of intellectual pornography[37], becoming the "forbidden knowledge" that often attracts keen interest.

At the time, I was totally immersed in my own software work, but about a decade later I finally looked into Lynn's material, and came to radically different conclusions. Focusing primarily upon the dozens of white European IQ samples he had presented, I noticed an extremely striking variance in those results over fairly short periods of time and between genetically-indistinguishable groups, raising strong doubts about Lynn's strict hereditarian explanation.

Just as Lynn claimed, national wealth was closely linked to IQ, but his own evidence actually suggested that the causal arrow pointed in the direction opposite to his hypothesis, with IQs seeming to rise very rapidly as national wealth increased. For example, Lynn showed that East Germans had IQs as much as 17 points lower than their West German neighbors, while in the early 1970s Ireland Irish were some 13 points below their Irish-American cousins, but both these huge gaps quickly closed as the poorer societies became less poor. A large number of such extreme anomalies seemed to refute the "Strong IQ Hypothesis" long embraced by Lynn, most of his fellow IQ researchers, and their numerous racist admirers.

Drawing extensively upon the Race/IQ data Lynn had provided in his own influential book, I published a lengthy article in *The American Conservative* demonstrating the severe flaws in the deterministic Race/IQ conclusions he had promoted. My provocative analysis soon unleashed a torrent of heated debate on the Internet, drawing an enormous number of hostile reactions although the mainstream media still continued to maintain a fearful silence.



- [Race, IQ, and Wealth](#)[38]

What the facts tell us about a taboo subject

Ron Unz • ***The American Conservative*** • July 18, 2012 • 7,500 Words

Lynn himself [soon attempted to rebut my critique](#)[39] and [I quickly responded to his arguments](#)[40] and those of his close allies, also eventually publishing [a long series of follow-up columns](#)[41], fortifying my analysis with additional data and also extending it in other directions. I think that the case I made was so overwhelmingly strong that as time passed my conclusions were quietly accepted by most of the less dogmatic elements within both the IQ and racist communities.

- [The East Asian Exception to Socio-Economic IQ Influences](#)[42]
- [Race/IQ: Rejecting the Ostrich Response](#)[43]
- [Race/IQ: The Rural/Urban Divide](#)[44]
- [Race/IQ: The Boston Globe Takes Notice](#)[45]
- [Race/IQ: Incorporating the Racist Perspective](#)[46]
- [Race/IQ: Response to Lynn and Nyborg](#)[47]
- [Race/IQ: Is It “Game Over”?](#)[48]
- [Race/IQ: Irish IQ & Chinese IQ](#)[49]
- [Race/IQ: A Coda on Mexican-American IQ](#)[50]
- [Race/IQ: Super-Flynn Effects in Germans, Jews, and Hispanics](#)[51]
- [Race/IQ: The Entire Series and Debate](#)[52]
- [How Social Darwinism Made Modern China](#)[2]
- [Race/IQ Revisited](#)[53]
- [Race/IQ: The Jason Richwine Affair](#)[54]
- [Race/IQ Revised](#)[55]
- [Does Race Exist? Do Hills Exist?](#)[56]
- [Race/IQ: Should Scientists Bother Reading the Books They Denounce?](#)[57]

Here are excerpts presenting some of the most notable points I made in my Race/IQ analysis, drawn from both my original article and the follow-up columns:

- [Implications for the American Immigration Debate](#)[58]

For example, sharp critics of our heavy recent immigration from Mexico sometimes claim—or at least hint—that the intellectual weakness of these millions of newcomers may constitute a disastrous long-term burden to American society. On anonymous Internet forums such voices are often more explicit and directly cite Lynn and Vanhanen in placing the Mexican IQ at just 87, far below the white American average, and a worrisome indicator given that as much as one-quarter of all Americans may be of Mexican ancestry by around the middle of this century.

The IQ figure of 87 that they quote from Lynn/Vanhanen is correct, though admittedly based on a single 1961 study of Mexican schoolchildren in the most impoverished southern part of that country. But such critics always fail to notice that a much larger and more recent study of Irish schoolchildren revealed precisely the same mean IQ of 87. So the most accurate representation of the facts presented in *IQ and the Wealth of Nations* is that Mexicans and Irish seem to have approximately the same intellectual ability, and since Irish have generally done well in American society, there seems no particular reason to assume that Mexicans will not.

- Apparent East Asian Immunity to Socio-Economic Influences on IQ[59]

However, this strong relationship between wealth and nominal IQ seems to disappear when we examine East Asian populations. A few decades ago, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and even Japan had extremely low per capita GDPs relative to those of America or Europe, yet almost all their tested IQs were around 100 or higher, comparable to those of the wealthiest and most advanced European-derived nations. In many cases, their incomes and standards of living were far below those of the impoverished nations of Southern and Eastern Europe, yet they showed no signs of the substantially depressed performance generally found in these latter countries, whose IQs were usually in the 88–94 range...

This clear pattern of East Asian IQs remaining almost unaffected by depressed socio-economic conditions had also occurred when such ethnic populations lived as small minority groups in America. Whereas in the early decades of the 20th century schoolchildren whose families had immigrated from Southern and Eastern Europe tended to have very low tested IQs, often in the 80–85 range, most studies of that era showed that children from Chinese-American and Japanese-American immigrant backgrounds had IQs similar or even superior to the white mainstream population, despite their much lower socio-economic backgrounds.

- A Sharp Urban vs. Rural IQ Divide Across European Populations[60]

As I noted, one very intriguing pattern is that according to Lynn's IQ data certain European populations such as the South Italians, Irish, Greeks, and South Slavs tended to have IQs much lower than other European populations such as the German and the Dutch. However, according to the Wordsum-IQ data, this pattern is exactly reversed in the United States, with the descendents of immigrants from Southern Italy, Ireland, Greece, and Yugoslavia having much higher IQs than Americans of German or Dutch ancestry. If IQ were largely genetic, this would seem almost inexplicable, but patterns of urbanization might be the obvious explanation: Southern Italy, Ireland, Greece, and Yugoslavia were traditionally far more rural than Germany or the Netherlands, but in America the pattern of ethnic settlement is exactly reversed, with Dutch-Americans and British-Americans being far more rural than those other groups.

Next, consider the aggregate IQs of rural and urban/suburban whites. During the 1970s according to Wordsum-IQ data, the intelligence gap between whites raised on farms and those who grew up in an urban/suburban background was enormous, almost exactly equal to the white/black gap. The data would indicate that a non-trivial slice of the white farmboys of the 1970s suffered from clinical mental retardation, which seems quite implausible.

Furthermore, if IQ were genetic, we might tend to expect rural white IQs to slightly drop over time, as many of the most intelligent and ambitious whites moved away to the Big City each generation, leaving their dimmer relatives behind. Instead, we discover the exact opposite effect. The Wordsum-IQ of urban/suburban whites remained almost exactly constant between the 1970s and the 2000s, while the scores for whites from a farming background increased rapidly, thereby eliminating one-third of the overall gap. In effect, urban/suburban whites showed no Flynn Effect, while whites on farms showed a very sizable one. One very plausible explanation would be that the increasing presence of TV and other modern technologies in rural areas greatly improved the "cognitive development environment" for rural whites, thereby raising their IQ scores, while urban/suburban whites had already possessed such an environment and gained little.

- Dramatic Rises in IQ for East Germans and 20th Century American Jews in a Super-Flynn Effect[61]

INTELLIGENCE, a leading academic journal, has just now published an article establishing that exact result. The study examined the IQ scores of hundreds of thousands of German army conscripts from the eastern and western portions of the newly unified country, as well as the regional scores on the international PISA academic exam. Over a period of just a few years, the eastern Germans showed

dramatic IQ gains, bringing them into complete convergence with their western German cousins, far too rapidly for any biological or genetic factors to have operated...

On pp. 273-279, Lynn performed an exhaustive literature search for all Jewish IQ studies in America, and presented the 32 examples he found, ranging in date from 1920 to the present day. He then noted the intriguing fact that Jewish IQs had substantially risen relative to white gentile scores during the course of the 20th century. Jewish IQ had averaged 101.5 in the first 14 studies from 1920-1937, then 107 in the nine studies from 1944-1960, and finally 111 in the last nine studies from 1970-2008. All these results had been separately normed against a fixed IQ of 100 for the average white population.

A relative rise of 10 IQ points over just eighty-odd years in America seems unlikely to have any biological or genetic explanation, so it must be cultural or socio-economic in origin, hence an example of what I call the “Super-Flynn Effect.” Presumably, the underlying factors are somewhat similar to those which produced Ireland’s rise of 13 IQ points in the three decades after 1972, or the 15-20 point relative rise in the very low 1920s IQs of Greek, Italian, and Slav immigrants to America, or the recent rise in Mexican-American IQs.

Since most of my own findings were so clearly implied by Lynn’s own data, my 2012 article had suggested that the larger surprise was why these obvious conclusions had not been previously noticed during the years of bitter battles over IQ:

We are now faced with a mystery arguably greater than that of IQ itself. Given the powerful ammunition that Lynn and Vanhanen have provided to those opposing their own “Strong IQ Hypothesis,” we must wonder why this has never attracted the attention of either of the warring camps in the endless, bitter IQ dispute, despite their alleged familiarity with the work of these two prominent scholars. In effect, I would suggest that the heralded 300-page work by Lynn and Vanhanen constituted a game-ending own-goal against their IQ-determinist side, but that neither of the competing ideological teams ever noticed.

Presumably, human psychology is the underlying explanation for this mysterious and even amusing silence. Given that Lynn and Vanhanen rank as titans of the racial-difference camp, perhaps their ideological opponents, who often come from less quantitative backgrounds, are reluctant even to open the pages of their books, fearful lest the vast quantity of data within prove that the racist analysis is factually correct after all. Meanwhile, the pro-racist elements may simply skim over the hundreds of pages of dry and detailed quantitative evidence and skip to

the summary text, which claims that the data demonstrate IQ is genetically fixed and determines which nations will be rich and which will be poor.

This seemed a perfect example of why efforts to suppress public discussion of a contentious topic may ultimately be self-defeating, preventing the warring camps from objectively analyzing the underlying evidence and coming to realistic conclusions.

Given this recent climate of extreme censorship, there are even some intriguing indications that much of the mainstream academic community quietly believes that innate racial differences in ability are “politically incorrect” but “scientifically correct.”

For example, just over a decade ago a political firestorm erupted when it was revealed that Dr. Jason Richwine, a leading anti-immigration policy analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation, had earned his Harvard University doctorate with a dissertation entitled “IQ and Immigration Policy,”[62] arguing for the innate mental inferiority of most present-day immigrants. Richwine was quickly purged and the three very respectable Harvard professors who had approved his research findings and awarded him his 2009 degree quickly distanced themselves, but they had obviously regarded his arguments as quite reasonable or even persuasive, and during the controversy some mainstream journalists seemed to assume the same thing.

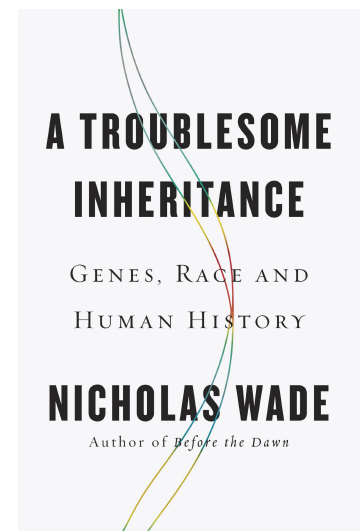
- Race/IQ: The Jason Richwine Affair[54]

Amid the fury over the ex-Heritage staffer's work the question to ask is: was he right?

Ron Unz • ***The American Conservative*** • May 13, 2013 • 2,400 Words

The following year an even more striking example occurred surrounding Nicholas Wade, who had spent four decades as a leading science journalist, including serving as Science Editor at the *New York Times*. After retiring in 2014, Wade published *A Troublesome Inheritance*[63], an excellent and important book[64] on the genetic basis of racial differences. But a few months after its release, he was attacked and denounced in a public statement signed by 139 prominent genetic scientists[65].

One of their central charges against Wade was that he had claimed that worldwide differences in IQ test results were due to recent natural selection and largely caused by genetic differences. Yet as the author quickly pointed out[66], he had actually taken exactly the opposite position, noting on pp. 192-3 of his book **the strong evidence that large differences in worldwide IQ may be caused by environmental factors such as wealth and education, with changes in those conditions sometimes causing relative IQ rises of 10 or 15 points within just a single generation or so. Indeed, his source had been my own 2012 article analyzing Lynn's IQ data.**



This controversy obviously demonstrated[67] that none of the scientists signing their names to that public condemnation had bothered reading the book they were fiercely denouncing. Instead, their misguided attack suggested that the organizers had automatically assumed that Wade had revealed some of the “forbidden truths” regarding Race and IQ that must be kept hidden. However, although such beliefs that were certainly forbidden, Wade’s book had actually argued that they were not necessarily truths. But with censorship being the main argument employed on the other side, all those scientists would have naturally assumed otherwise.

Related Reading:

- White Racism in America, Then and Now[68]
- Race, IQ, and Wealth[38]
- How Social Darwinism Made Modern China[2]
- Race/IQ: The Jason Richwine Affair[54]
- The East Asian Exception to Socio-Economic IQ Influences[42]

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