



CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

December 10, 2005

Concerned Parties  
University of Aarhus  
Aarhus, Denmark

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I am the Editor of the journal *Intelligence* and am director of the conference held yearly by the International Society for Intelligence Research. I am writing concerning the reports I have recently heard concerning Helmuth Nyborg. It has been reported to me that he has been "investigated" by university authorities concerning the work he has been doing on sex differences and that his data have been seized and have been held for nearly a year now. While I hope these reports are untrue, I wanted to give you my view of the situation in case they are.

We know quite a bit about sex differences. We have known for decades that men are superior to women by about one standard deviation in spatial ability particularly in tasks involving visual rotation. We have also known for some time that men are more variable than women in general intellectual ability. There are more men than women with very high IQs and very low IQs. More recently, research suggests that the mean level of men's IQ is about 4 to 6 points higher than women's after both groups reach maturity. While this is not yet an established fact, a good deal of evidence currently supports this position. These findings are of particular interest to evolutionary psychologists because they give us hint about how the human species evolved and may be useful in developing theories about how general intellectual ability, itself, evolved.

I know that any discussion of differences in general intellectual ability is likely to arouse passions. However, people should be aware that the average expected difference between siblings is approximately 10 IQ points. Most of the group differences in IQ that we know about are smaller than this. Placed in this context, the group differences between sexes are relatively small. This is not to say that these differences don't have practical implications because they do. But the practical implications are at the group level and nearly everyone in my field agrees that individuals should each be treated fairly.

With respect to the seizure and holding of data, I can only say I was disappointed. I have a view of Scandinavia and particularly Denmark as a bastion of academic freedom. You have had that reputation at least since the Reformation. Perhaps I am guilty of thinking in stereotypes. Nevertheless, it was a particular shock to me to find that Nyborg's academic freedom had been so grossly and obviously violated. In my opinion, this kind of action does more damage to the reputation of your University than it will ever do to Nyborg.

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It seems to me that it is in the best interest of your University to resolve this issue as quickly and equitably as possible. Prof. Nyborg was carrying out research valuable to the field despite the misunderstanding in the popular press. If I were in your position, I would return Prof. Nyborg's data, apologize for the inconvenience, and put the matter behind you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Detterman', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Douglas K. Detterman  
Editor, Intelligence  
Director, ISIR  
Louis D. Beaumont University Professor  
of Psychology