

Atheist IQ Scam: Bad Science and Racist Assumptions: Kanazawa, Nyborg, Lynn, Hamilton



Nyborg

The major figures in the new round of atheist IQ scam are: Helmuth Nyborg, Richard Lynn and Satoshi Kanazawa (from *psychology today*). There have been several articles critical of both their not so hidden assumptions about race as well as their alleged scientific methodologies. Kanazawa and others (Templer, Arikawa) claim to link estimates of national IQ with estimates of reproductive strategies, temperature, and geographic distance from Africa. This approach is criticized by Jelte M. Wicherts, Denny Borseboom, and Connor V. Dolan (Blog: [Sciiverse](#)--"why National IQ's Do Not Support Evolutionary Theories of Intelligence"), of Department of Psychology U. Amsterdam.

Assumptions: No Flynn Effect

The major Scientific assumption made by Kanazawa et al, that misses the boat, is the failure to take the Flynn effect seriously. The Flynn effect finds that IQ's are rising over time, which ultimately means that what is being tested is not intelligence but cultural literacy. This is because our grandfathers were running the world with IQ equivalent to retarded yet obviously they were not retarded. So what was happening was they had not yet developed the same level of cultural contribute around concepts of scientific-cultural ideology. Thus by our standards they appear stupid because they didn't have the same kinds of answers we had. National IQ's have actually, according to Wicherts, been subject to and correlate with all the variables that make for the Fly-

nn effect.

The Flynn effect directly challenges the validity of IQ tests as a valid measurement of intelligence. It basically says they are not measuring intelligence but cultural constructs such a scientifically ideological truth regime. These Brave New World Atheists make assumptions that write the effect off even though its' been scientifically established and is accepted by psychologist the world over. They also make assumptions about migration and reproduction that don't account for modern developments.

The Savanna theory.

This is a racist theory, developed by Raymond Dart (1925) which assumes percent and insurmountable brain shrinkage by tribes (African) who moved to the savanna. It seems to have been an attempt to explain racial differences:

[Belayneh Abate \(PDF\)](#)

November 10, 2006.

[4, 5] What this theory in simple terms, asserts is that early homids (perhaps Lucy and her neighbors), were faced with lack of forest. To overcome this problem our ancestors went to the Savanna (grass land) and adapted themselves to that environment. However, as it was mentioned in Kanazawa's paper [1] for a man to learn this adaptation measures, the exposure (for example, shrinkage of the forest) has to occur at the early developmental stage of the brain. One can derive from this assertion that Africans who are deprived of any kind of modern technology during their early brain developmental stage will remain stupid or idiots no matter what! Recommending "googling" the critics of Savanna Theory, I will leave the judgment about the plausibility of this theory to the readers.

Kanazawa uses the term "savanna principle" for the idea that the brain evolved on the savanna the extremely differnt enviroment form our urban one created "difficul-

ties." (^ Kanazawa, Satoshi (2004) The Savanna principle. *Managerial and decision economics*, 25 (1). pp. 41–54. ISSN 0143-6570) **I documented Kanazawa's adherence to the Savanna theory when I first discussed his articles on the Psychology Today Blog on this blog in "Atheism's Psychology Today Scam."**

Flawed Data Collection:

Still dealing with Kanazawa, as I have pointed out before, he barrows his data second hand from different places. These guys make different assumptions.

ibid

Data Collection Problem: Kanazawa admits borrowing secondary data from different places. He borrowed the IQ data from Lynn (Northern Ireland) and Vanhanen (Finland) Table-1. According to him, IQ was directly measured only

in eleven Sub-Saharan African Countries and the rest was predicted using prediction methods Kawakawa tried to show that the IQ measurement was valid by analyzing the directly and indirectly measured data separately. It is true that no method of measurement is perfectly accurate or precise. However, one has to ask how the samples were drawn, and how the results of the sample IQ's were translated in to national average. Whether IQ measures general intelligence

or not is another story. For the moment, let's assume it does. Most IQ tests include both verbal and written tests. How valid will be the IQ test in Sub-Saharan countries where almost all sense organs of the people are turned dysfunctional

by dictator rulers who are supported by major powers of the world? In addition to that, IQ measurement is not entirely objective. Our daily life proves how people are prejudiced towards one another irrespective of educational status.

Therefore, to what extent should we believe the validity of the IQ measurements of Lynn and Vanhanen? What about the possibility of differential misclassification errors in the IQ measurement?

more:

Intentional insult or lack of common sense? We understand Kanazawa borrowed the data from others. However, he failed to relate the computer generated data (table-I) to the objective reality on the ground. Whether it valid or not, here is one way of classifying mental retardation based on IQ. Table-2.

Table 2. Welchler Adult Intelligence Scale Class IQ

Profound Below 20

Sever 20-34

Moderate 35-49

Mild 50-69

Borderline 70-79

Kanazawa provided only the mean IQ. I did not find any of the other measures of dispersion. If you look at the average IQ of most Sub-Saharan Counties most of them lie below 72. Table-1 That means majority of the Sub-Saharan

Country people are suffering from profound, sever, moderate, mild and borderline mental retardation. Is that so? I wonder how Africans' build up the Pyramids of Egypt, the Castle of Aksume and Fasiledus, the monasteries of Lalibela

and Lake Tana in Ethiopia. I wonder how this mentally retarded brain developed the Ethiopian alphabet and the Ethiopian Calendar! It looks Kanazawa is excited just because the computer provided him with profoundly flawed thicker effect estimates and smaller p-values. It is obvious that these statistical measures are just a bit part of causalassociation. The Confounding Problem: For those of you who are not familiar with confounding variable, in simple terms, it is a factor the affects the outcome of interest. For a variable to be a confounder, it hast to be related to both the independent variable (in this case IQ) and the dependent variable (in this case life expectancy). It looks that Kanazawa is obsessed

only with GDP, IQ and economic inequality. What about other factors, which are related to both IQ (whatever it may

be) and life expectancy? All sorts of disease conditions, cultures, traditions, not to mention, lack of freedom of speech, the scars of colonialism, slavery and other inhuman atrocities that Africans experienced for centuries? Flaws in the Discussion: Kanazawa stated in his discussion "... there appears little that education can do significantly with the general intelligence of the population." Even if we assume we have clear definition of general intelligence, can any one buy this argument? When they test for IQ, don't they ask for words? Don't they ask to write something or play certain kinds of games? Are not these things something we acquire through learning? In fact IQ directly measures (if it measures any thing at all) what we have already learned not what you are going to learn in the future.

Conclusion: Kanazawa immersed himself in the ocean of shaky psychological theories. He started from unsettled definitions. He asked a eugenic question. Then he borrowed invalid measurements and tried to answer his question. He ignored confounding factors in the design and analysis stage. Therefore, the results of his study can be explained only with one word: bias!

Other criticisms along these same lines, that data is all second hand and some is not really the finds made from actual IQ tests. The book is based upon a limited number of studies. Other sources gathering data first hand have made mistakes. There are not very many such studies and some of the data is not really from IQ tests but from estimates based upon surrounding nations. Since Kanazawa doesn't use first hand data, it's important to know that the major sources of such data are also criticized. One such source is a book *[IQ and the Wealth of Nations](#)*. This is a work by Richard Lynn, whose data Kanazawa uses and who co-author with Nyborg and Hamilton in their IQ scam. [Tatu Vanhanen](#), at University of Finland is Lynn's co-author.

Book Review in *[Heredity](#)*
(2004) **92**, 359–360.

This book starts with the 'hypothesis' that differences in IQ are (partly) responsible for differences in national wealth around the world. It ends with

the claim that the gap between rich and poor 'will be impossible to eradicate' (p 195). In between is a remarkable creation and moulding of data to show the statistical correlation the hypothesis requires. But there is circularity in the whole exercise.

As the authors acknowledge, national wealth reflects industrial development, which requires an ever-expanding middle class, and IQ scores simply reflect middle class membership. It is a widespread error to treat IQs as values on a simple biometric trait, as these authors do. There is no scientific basis for it. The Parisian Alfred Binet originally devised the IQ test to screen children for educational difficulties, and made clear its conceptual foundations: 'Psychologists do not measure...we classify', he said (quoted by [Zenderland, 1998](#), p 96). This is because IQ tests are not constructed on the basis of any scientific model of intelligence: they are simply created (by statistical manipulation of item content) to identify individuals who have already been deemed to be 'intelligent' by other, more subjective, criteria. Test items are devised impressionistically by middle class psychologists and simply mimic psycholinguistic structures of schooling and middle class (eg clerical/administrative) occupations. This cultural embedding is as much true of the (superficially concealed) structures in nonverbal tests like Raven's Matrices, as of those requiring little more than simple factual knowledge (see [Richardson \(2002\)](#) for review). Test performance also requires certain class-related affective dispositions such as self-confidence and self-efficacy beliefs, and even status consciousness ([Lovaglia et al, 2002](#)). Of course, test preparation is much assisted by the more active encouragement for school learning found in middle class homes.

Good IQ scores thus simply reflect the educational aspirations and the cognitive, linguistic, and affective dispositions that go with middle class background. They have been shown to be quite unrelated to the truly complex cognition demanded in everyday social and practical tasks. Perhaps, the best evidence for this is the so-called 'Flynn effect'. This refers to the huge secular increases in average IQ test performances over many decades in all countries where records are available. Scarcely mentioned in this book, because fatal to its basic thesis (see below), and baffling psychologists who still think of the IQ as a biometric test, it simply reflects the rapid expansion of the middle classes, and their associated psycho-linguistic/affective dis-

positions. It is not a reflection of increased mental ability as such, as Flynn agrees.

In other words all they are really measuring is the size of the middle class, the rapidity of industrial development, and some sort of collective aspiration. One might be suspicious merely by considering the difference between testing an individual for intelligence (mental maturity) and trying to translate that into a national average. What they are not doing is averaging IQ tests of every person in that country in a standardized set of data that reflect the same assumptions about intelligence. It's a creative construct that lends itself all too well to ideology and manipulation.



Kanazawa

Kanazawa's career Plagued by Radical Ideas

Kanazawa is a reader in management at the London School of Economics, he has set himself about the task of doing battle with what he calls "political correctness." He bases his theoretical orientation in evolutionary psychology. Meaning, behind his assumptions lurk the dragon of sociology biology, so we should suspect a link to the "Bell Curve" sort of thinking. LSE has forbidden him to publish in non peer reviewed sources for a year as a result of the controversy surrounding his work. ([BBC News London](#), 16 September 2011 Last updated at 06:41 ET "LSE Lecturer Dr. Satoshi Kanazawa Tells of Race Blog Regret"). He was fired Psychology Today for the Blog (which I criticized on Atheistwatch) "psychology today," it was Savanna principle primarily that got

him the sack (Colorofchagne.org, changing the color of Democracy June 1, 211).

Nyborg Racist Connection

Andrew Brown in the American Guardian (Andrew Brown's Blog) demonstrates the racist background of the atheist assumptions.

So I did a little digging around. I [downloaded the paper](#), which costs, alas, \$37.50 with VAT, and read it carefully through. It turns out that Nyborg is an enthusiast for scientific racism. It's not just believers who are more stupid, in his world: it's black people and women, too. In a collaboration with Richard Lynn of the University of Ulster, he measured religiosity against IQ in 137 countries, and concluded that low IQ countries always had higher rates of religion. [It's not religion that makes you stupid, he told a Christian paper at the time: but if you live in a very religious country, you are very likely to be stupid.](#) And of course the correlation of religion and poverty is in global terms very clear, while the most religious continent of all is Africa.

In [the paper under review](#), he writes,

The ultimate causal level presumes that geographically separated peoples were subjected to different evolutionary pressures over extended time-periods. **Those living under the hardest of evolutionary pressures, in cold or arctic areas**, were gradually and over many generations selected for enhanced g (for details of the Climate Theory, see Lynn, 2006; Rushton, 2000). **They had to replace ancient pre-rational supernatural beliefs with more effective rational approaches** in order to survive under the harsh conditions given. **People living in warm or tropical areas enjoyed in general more relaxed selective conditions, and low g individuals were not severely punished, as their survival was not seriously compromised by uncritical reference to ancient supernatural thinking, irrational beliefs in souls, invisible worlds, Gods, forces, angels, devils, hell, or holy spirits.** A contemporary belief that supernatural forces control behavior, feelings and thinking is accordingly seen as a reminiscence of pre-historic ani-

mism and magical thinking.

Oops!

(In case anyone is tempted to take this seriously, it's worth pointing out that one of the most demographically successful populations in human history were the New England puritans, many of them descendants of Vikings, who managed to combine life in a very cold climate with fervent religiosity.)

But Nyborg is entirely serious. He argues – in the spirit of Murray and Herrnstein's Bell Curve – that intelligence is IQ; IQ is biological, and biology is destiny:

(Brown quoting Nyborg)

High g individuals will gravitate towards atheism or science, will discard supernatural phenomena, and will learn fast and prosper. Average g individuals will find one of several moderate liberal denominations more to their taste, will display average learning, and will accordingly assume an intermediate socio-economic standing. Low g individuals will submit to one of the many dogmatic denominations, will be slow learners, and will attain a low socio-economic status that accord with their limited cognitive complexity and closed mind. Variations in disbelief, denominational complexity, educability and income are accordingly expected to follow from essentially heritable g differences, and to manifest themselves as today's mainly biologically brain based religious class differences.

By now I imagine that you are recoiling from these ideas. The belief that religion can simply be explained by stupidity suddenly looks a lot less attractive when it is presented scientifically by an intelligent man who also believes that poverty, too, can be explained by stupidity, and stupidity in its turn by race.

Abate ends her pdf file with to all humanitarian scholars:

Einstein did not develop $E = mc^2$ formula to create weapons of mass destruction. Neither the French Alfred Binet developed IQ measurements for the purpose of Eugenics in the early 20th century. However, as we misuse the legacy of Einstein to produce weapons that kill innocent people in the world, we are manipulating the works of Binet to discriminate [6, 7], and to facilitate atresia of certain segments of the world population. History teaches us that the Nazis misused the Idea of IQ and suggested to destroy “inferior” humans, retarded people, and any one with genetic defects. [3] More than half a century later, Kanazawa emerged with another idea. He claims that in certain parts of the world people die early because they are mentally retarded. Further, he asserted that education couldn't significantly alter the general intelligence. Should he remain unchallenged? Is the 21st Century the revival time of Eugenics?

I've commented on Kanazawa's racism in the psychology today article trying to imply that atheists are superior genetically. That's what he's really building toward.