The Race Concept

Part II

Galton’s Hereditary Genius

• System of racial ranking in his chapter “The Comparative Worth of Different Races”
  – The average intellectual standard of the Negro race is some two grades below [Englishmen]
  – The average ability of the Athenian race [Golden Age Greece] is, on the lowest possible estimate, very nearly two grades higher than [Englishmen]—that is, about as much as our race is above that of the African Negro
  – Native Australians are one class below the Negro, while a Lowland Scotsman or Northern Englishman is half a class above the average Englishman

Galton’s Eugenics

• Galton used his conclusions from Hereditary Genius to form the basis of Eugenics
  – He coined the term based on the ancient Greek for “good in birth” or “noble in heredity”
• Eugenics is defined as the science of improving the human stock by giving the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable
  – Many scientists followed Galton’s lead in taking up the call for selective breeding (positive eugenics) or selective elimination (negative eugenics) of parts of the population

Ernst Haeckel

• Ernst Haeckel was one of the driving forces behind the introduction of Darwinism in Germany, but he went on to make out of this a purportedly scientific framework in support of an openly nationalistic racism that was instrumental in paving the way for the Holocaust

Haeckel

• The “lowest savages” such as Australian aborigines were closer to apes or dogs in their reasoning faculties than to humans like Goethe or Darwin
  – For Haeckel, Jesus’ noble personality was not Semitic, but was “more characteristic of the higher Aryan race”
• Haeckel believed that the Germans were racially superior and “devoted furthest from the common primary form of ape-like men”
• He admired the Spartans because they practiced infanticide of abnormal infants, to improve the biological quality of their race
• He recommended that sickly adults should be eliminated to stop them spreading their genes

Francis Galton
(1822-1911)

• 1869 Hereditary Genius
  – Much taken by his cousin’s work on natural selection
  – Worshipped at the altar of quantification
    • A man’s natural abilities are derived by inheritance, under exactly the same limitations as are the form and physical features of the whole organic world
    • The men who achieve eminence, and those who are naturally capable are, to a large extent, identical
Charles Davenport

- 1911: Heredity in Relation to Eugenics
- Leading American exponent of eugenics
  - The general program of the eugenists is clear—it is to improve the race by inducing young people to make a more reasonable selection of marriage mates, to fall in love intelligently.
  - It also includes the control by the state of the propagation of the mentally incompetent. It does not imply the destruction of the unfit either before or after birth.

Franz Boas (1858 - 1942)

- German Physicist, who became a founding father of American anthropology, Boas was an emphatic environmentalist
  - Hence, naturally predisposed to adaptation as a powerful force shaping and modifying the influence of the genes
- Undertook studies of children of European migrants to the U.S.
- Summary publication in 1911—Differences between foreign- and American-born children documented: plasticity in growth and development including traits that had long been viewed as quireessential exchanging components of race: skull measurements

Updating Differential Worth

- 18th and 19th Century anthropologists attempted to rank groups of people on the basis of skull size and shape, brain volume, and other measures
- In the 20th Century we replaced these other measurements with “intelligence testing”
  - Conclusions about racial rankings based on measurements such as IQ scores

IQ Testing

- Alfred Binet commissioned to devise exams to identify children in primary school who needed some special education
  - Binet explicitly denied that his test was measuring an innate biological property of general intelligence
- Henry Goddard translated Binet’s test in the U.S.
- Lewis Terman took the translated test and actively marketed it as a test of innate, inherited intelligence for ALL students in the U.S.
- Robert Yerkes, Colonel in the U.S. Army administered IQ tests to 1.75 million recruits for World War I

Race and IQ

- Carl Brigham (1920s) of the College Entrance Examination Board analyzed IQ tests given to WW I recruits
  - He compared the IQ of different groups of immigrants to the U.S.
    - Found that the longer a group had been in the U.S., the better they scored
      - Irish, Germans, Swedes, Brits (early 20th century arrivals) scored higher than Eastern European Jews, Italians, Polish, Greek (1880 - 1920 arrivals in the U.S.)
      - Argued from the association of length of stay to IQ that the differences were genetic with the Western and Northern Europeans having greater intellects than Southern and Eastern Europeans

Race and IQ

- Brigham testified about his findings to congress
  - Helped pass the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924
    - Restricted immigration of any group to 2% of their number in the 1890 census, the last one with minimal numbers of Jews, Eastern and Southern Europeans
  - 1930 Brigham recanted
    - Argued that the testing system was flawed and that the tests were measuring familiarity with American culture and language, not intelligence
    - Immigration Restriction Act remained in effect
      - Prevented Jews in Eastern Europe from migrating to avoid the Holocaust
    - Approximately 6,000,000 Jews were denied permission to enter the U.S. between 1924 and WWII—the same approximate number killed by the Nazis
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Race and IQ

  - Biological determinist view of intelligence
  - He argued against funding Head Start-type programs
    - Intelligence is a unitary quantity, easily measured by the g or general intelligence derived from the IQ score
    - Reviewed large body of work to support the contention that IQ was genetically determined
    - Therefore, argued that environmental enrichment could not have much impact
      - The genetic determination argument relied heavily upon the work of Sir Cyril Burt

Sir Cyril Burt

- Social Class and Intelligence
  - Intelligence tracks within British social classes
- Monozygotic (identical) twins reared apart
  - Experiments allegedly show very high heritability for IQ scores (up to 80% of variability due to genes)
- Scientific fraud
  - Can’t tell what parts of his research are true, but he greatly increased his sample size without changing any of his correlations—a statistical impossibility

Problems with IQ

Problems with IQ

- Stanley Garn: If the Aborigine drafted an IQ test, all of Western civilization would presumably flunk it
- Koko the gorilla
  - Pick two things good to eat
    - Apple, Flower, Pencil, Ice Cream Sundae
      - Koko chose apple and flower

The Fallacy of Heritability

- Heritability is a measure of the degree of genetic determination of a characteristic within a given population
  - Heritability gives NO indication of the genetic basis of differences between populations
  - E.g., Black versus White differences on IQ scores could be due entirely to environment, in spite of studies (like Burt’s) indicating a high heritability of IQ scores within populations
The Bell Curve

- 1994 The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray
  - Revived biological determinism and racial ideology to explain Black/White IQ score differences
  - Argue for social policy to reflect their racial ideology
  - One review: “Not since the eugenics craze of the 1920s has this line of thought occupied a serious place on the national agenda”

J. Philippe Rushton

- 1995 Race, Evolution, and Behavior
  - Rushton argues that intelligence is conditioned by cranial capacity which is greatest in Asians, lowest in Africans
  - He associates cranial capacity with intelligence, maturation rate, personality, social organization, and reproduction
A Critique of Rushton

- How is it possible for Rushton to support the Mongoloid > Caucasoid > Negroid ordering while using the data of several anthropologists who have rejected racial hierarchies on empirical grounds?
- Some of the problems:
  - Rushton’s use of the race concept
  - Aggregation of diverse populations into three traditional races
  - Explanation of differences in “cultural achievements” on the basis of variation in brain size

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<th>Agreement/Disagreement of Cultural and Physical Anthropologists with the statement that “There ARE biological races in the species Homo sapiens”: 1985-1999</th>
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Failure of the Race Concept

- The classification [of humans] into races has proved to be a futile exercise for reasons that were already clear to Darwin [remember that Darwin noted the disagreement about the number of human races as evidence for unitary status of the human species in 1871] (Cavalli-Sforza et al., 1994)
  - While it is clear that there is only one human species, there are no objective reasons for splitting or lumping at any lower taxonomic level (i.e., subspecies, races, varieties)

Alternatives to the Race Concept

- Clines: gradual change in frequency of genotypes and phenotypes over geographical space (Jurmain et al.)
  - The more genes or traits considered simultaneously, the more likely the cline is to reflect the genetic history of the group
- Cavalli-Sforza et al. (1994) have analyzed genetic distance based on 120 allele frequencies in 42 populations
Ethnicity

- The emphasis of culture over biology
- Ethnic groups are formed by virtue of community of language, religion, social institutions, etc., which have the power of uniting human beings of one or several species, races, or varieties and are by no means zoological species (Deniker 1900)

Ethnic Group

- When one uses the term ‘ethnic group,’ the question is immediately raised, “What does it mean? What does the user have in mind?” And this at once affords an opportunity to discuss the facts and explore the meaning and falsities enshrined in the word ‘race’ and to explain the problems involved and the facts of the genetic situation as we know them. (Montagu 1962)

Recent Events

- 2000 census revived racial politics
  - Racial categories: big policy debate over the choice between multiracial category and multiple categories
    - AAA supports choosing more than one
    - Also supports ethnicity (cultural) over race (biological) categories
  - Implications of people’s choices determine where the money goes
  - More people choosing multiracial or multiple categories means less money for specific minority projects
  - Sampling versus actual count
    - Most difficult people to count are poor, minorities, who, if they vote, are likely to vote Democratic
    - Congress controlled by Republicans prefers actual count which will under count these groups
    - Sampling is being used by many states for official allocation of funds but the federal government is refusing to accept this approach