

Dean Svend Hylleberg
University of Aarhus
DENMARK

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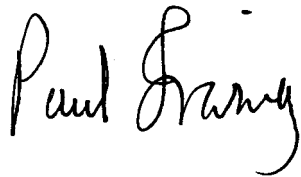
Dear Dean Svend Hylleberg

I wish to register my concern, for the second time, at the suspension from duties of Professor Helmuth Nyborg, since 7th July, 2006. I have even greater concerns over the report by "sagkyndigt udvalg til bedømmelse af Helmuth Nyborgs forskningsprojekt vedrørende kønsforskell i intelligens". Professor Nyborg's work is of great importance, in this instance to public policy, neuroscience and evolutionary psychology. I fear that some proportion of this work has been lost due to the handling of events dating back to 2001, and I also worry that the resultant strain may affect his health, though I fervently hope not. I have read the report in some detail, and find it a curious affair, when put in the context of potentially impugning Professor Nyborg's academic reputation. The various faults found in Professor Nyborg's work, even if we assent to their validity, scarcely justify suspension or whatever other action is envisaged. If all academics were treated in this way, lecture halls would be empty, peopled by ghosts from a more liberal era.

As it happens, I have published on the issue of sex differences in *Personality and Individual Differences*, the *British Journal of Psychology*, *Intelligence* and *Nature* (for Chris Brand's information, the latter article was primarily authored by me). Turning to the report, Appendix D would make a useful contribution to the refutation of a method of studying sex differences, which was state of the art, but has now been superseded. As the report itself notes, using a method of analysis considered appropriate at the time of use, but which subsequently becomes outdated is just part of the normal scientific process. This is also the first time I have seen it implied (section 6) that use of principal components represents a serious offence. Many extremely able statisticians would deem its use appropriate in the context in which it was used. As it happens, I don't agree, but I can understand their reasons. The attempt to reconstruct Professor Nyborg's analysis is bizarre. Firstly, the results clearly show that his results are well within the expected range. Secondly, I simply fail to see why such able statisticians are surprised that they cannot precisely duplicate someone else's results. The number of possible permutations which be can used in factor analysis is infinite, so the whole process seems misconceived. The points made concerning the original conference paper, and its subsequent publication in *Personality and Individual Differences* are totally specious. It is standard practice all over the world to communicate conference papers to the press. I don't see that the University of Aarhus is in a position to reverse this practice, but if it wishes to do so, the proper course of action is to do so through expressing its views to professional associations and conference committees, not by victimizing a single individual. As for the matter of adequately reporting methodology, everyone in the field knows that there is a strict word limit operated by *Personality and Individual Differences* at 5000 words. Regrettably, I cannot follow the allegation concerning Professor Nyborg's use of an incorrect formula in order to calculate a correlation coefficient, since in the copy of the report I have; both the putatively incorrect formula and the correct formula are identical. However, I don't think this would greatly alter my conclusion, which is that the alleged errors are largely if not totally non-existent.

Many letters, which I wholeheartedly endorse, have hinted at the motivation for this action by some members of the University of Aarhus. Ultimately, of course, outsiders will never know precisely what occurred. What I can say from a personal point of view is that, in the past, had I considered a career move, the University of Aarhus would have been a very serious possibility, based on my view of its reputation. That is no longer the case. Some will find it merely ironic that repression is used in the name of liberalism. Personally, I am reminded of the Grand Parents I will never know who died in Auschwitz in 1943. There is of course no moral equivalence between those events and the current case, just a sinister resonance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Irwing". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul Irwing

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