

21 Aug. 06

FROM:

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TO:

Dean Svend Hylleberg  
University of Aarhus  
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*I have read the university's report on Prof. Helmuth Nyborg, and I reiterate my support for his right to do research, as indicated below in my original letter.*

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It is my understanding that the administration of your university has publicly criticized Prof. Helmuth Nyborg for carrying on research, and publishing the data, on the topic of sex differences in intelligence; and that his research protocols have been seized.

If these are the facts, I express my astonishment and disapproval in the strongest terms. These would be acts in complete violation of every principle of academic freedom and it is almost inconceivable that a university would be guilty of them.

Prof. Nyborg has studied the biological mechanisms of individual differences for many years. The idea that there might be a significant difference between the sexes in intelligence favouring men is not new; nor is it incompatible with many findings showing other sex differences in cognition, some favouring women. I myself have done research for many years on some of these differences.

Nevertheless, had this been an entirely new and radical idea, and even if it were ultimately found to be wrong, it would still be inappropriate to harass anyone for researching this topic. Academic freedom explicitly includes the right to do research on, publish, and defend ideas that clash with prevailing wisdom and ideology. "Academic freedom" is meaningless if one defends only ideas that people are comfortable with.

The university has the important role of promoting balanced discussion of any idea, however unpalatable. The University of Aarhus should be publicly proclaiming its unequivocal support for Prof. Nyborg's right to do research on the topic of his choosing.

I look forward to such a declaration from you.

Sincerely,

Doreen Kimura, PhD, FRSC, LLD (Hon)  
Visiting Professor