

STEVEN PINKER

Johnstone Family Professor
Harvard College Professor



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

December 9, 2009

Dr. Lauritz B. Holm-Nielsen
Rector, Aarhus University
Aarhus, Denmark

Dear Dr. Holm-Nielsen,

I am writing to protest the shocking and disgraceful treatment of Dr. Helmuth Nyborg following publication of his report on possible gender differences in average IQ scores. Dr. Nyborg may be mistaken, but the issue he is addressing is a factual one, and can only be evaluated by an open examination of the evidence. To “investigate” him, shut down his research, or otherwise harass him because his findings are politically incorrect is unworthy of an institution dedicated to the understanding of reality. It is reminiscent of the persecution of Galileo, the crippling of Soviet science and agriculture under Lysenko, and the attempt of the American religious right wing to inhibit the teaching of evolution in the schools.

No one has the right to legislate the truth. It can only be discovered by free inquiry, and that includes investigations that may make people uncomfortable. This is the foundation of liberal society, and it is threatened by attempts to interfere with Dr. Nyborg and his research. If he is incorrect, that will be established by a community of scholars who examine his evidence and arguments and criticize them in open forums of debate, not by the exercise of force to prevent him from pursuing his research. These are the tactics of a police state, and bring shame on any institution that uses them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Steven Pinker'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William James Hall 970 | 33 Kirkland Street | Cambridge | Massachusetts 02138
P 617-495-0831 | f 617-495-8279 | pinker@wjh.harvard.edu