

# HUMAN VARIATION, RACE AND INTELLIGENCE

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التنوع البشري، العنصر ومستوى الذكاء

المدرس الدكتور

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**Abstract:-**

For centuries, the studies of human diversity by Darwin and later by evolutionists such as Lewis Henry Morgan, Edward Tyler and James Fraser and the ambiguity of human diversity has caused a long term debate between authors, researchers, anthropologists, biologists, and writers. The racial debates have continued between two groups of theorists: the first are the proponents of racist theory and the second are the anti-racists. The controversy has taken a long time to obtain effective answers to many questions, for example: Do people differ in their mental abilities? Do individuals inherit their mental abilities from their parents? Are some people smarter than others? If yes, why are some people smarter than others? These types of questions have been around since the idea of race was first articulated, and these questions have caused a long-running debate about differences between people such as their skin color, eye color, and mental ability. This study investigates many of the literature that has examined human diversity, especially with regard to mental capacity. The purpose of this investigation is to respond to the racial theory and to prove that all human beings belong to one human race with some natural diversity between them and that race in the biological sense is a false concept, while in the cultural sense it shows human diversity.

**Key words:** HUMAN VARIATION, RACE, INTELLIGENCE.

**المخلص:**

منذ بداية دراسات التنوع البشري على يد دارون ومن بعده من انصار النظرية التطورية أمثال لويس هنري مورغان وأدورد تايلر و جيمس فريزر، تسبب غموض تنوع البشر في إنفاق الكثير من الحبر من قبل المؤلفين والباحثين وعلماء الأثرولوجيا وعلماء الأحياء والكتاب. لقد استمرت النقاشات العرقية بين فريقين من المنظرين: الأول هم انصار النظرية العنصرية والثاني هم مناهضي العنصرية. وقد طال الجدل من الحصول على إجابات ناجعة للعديد من الأسئلة على سبيل المثال: هل يختلف الناس في قدراتهم العقلية؟ هل يرث الأفراد قدراتهم العقلية من والديهم؟ هل بعض الناس أذكى من غيرهم؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم فما السبب الذي يجعل بعض الناس أذكى من الآخرين؟ ظهرت هذه الأنواع من الأسئلة منذ أن أوضحت فكرة العرق، وقد تسببت هذه الأسئلة في نقاش طويل الأمد حول الاختلافات بين الناس مثل لون بشرتهم ولون عيونهم وقدرتهم العقلية. تعمل هذه الدراسة بالبحث في العديد من الأدبيات التي درست التنوع البشري خاصة فيما يتعلق بالقدرة العقلية. الغرض من هذا التحقيق هو رد النظرية العنصرية وإثبات أن جميع البشر يرجعون إلى جنس بشري واحد مع بعض التنوع الطبيعي بينهم وأن العرق بالمعنى البيولوجي هو مفهوم زائف، بينما بالمعنى الثقافي يوضح التنوع البشري.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التنوع البشري، العنصرية،

معدل الذكاء

## Introduction

The mystery of humans' variation has caused spending a lot of ink by the authors, researchers, anthropologists, biologists and journalists. According to biological anthropology, there were three reasons have created human variation mutation, genetic drift and Natural selection. In addition, the genetic studies have showed that all humans have involved genetically in one species. However, the racial debates continue between the two sides the racial formalism advocators and anti-racism. So, there are many questions need to get answers about this debate. Are people different in their mental capacities?

Do individuals inherit their mental abilities from their parents? Are some peoples smarter than others? If yes, what is the reason that make some peoples smarter than the others? These kinds of questions have been appearing since the idea of race has shown, these questions caused a long term of debate about the differences between peoples like in their skin color, eyes color and their mental ability, which was the most dangerous one because concerning race in that sense suggests that humans' diversity includes different levels of intelligence. In this study, I am going to investigate several literatures that have studied human variation especially in the sense of mental capacity. The purpose of this investigation is to reject the racial formalism and to prove that all people are from the same spices with some normal diversity among them. The hypothesis of this study is that there are no differences between peoples in the mental capacity. Race in the biological sense is fake concept, while in the cultural sense illustrates to human diversity. The importance of this paper comes from the of that human variation still requires more investigations, according to Robert Jurmain & others as they stated that "until today we still have a lot of misunderstanding to the principles of human variation that caused to classify people to unlimited number of races" Robert Jurmain & others (2013-2014),P. 389.

## Historical overview

### The history of humans' classification

The archeological studies of the ancient Egypt's civilization show that the ancient Egyptians were the first racial formalism because in 1350 B.C.E, they had classified people based on their skin color.

They distinguished the red people as the Egyptian, the yellow as the color of people from East, the people from north as the white and people from sub-Saharan Africans as the black people. (Rodert Jurmain, Lynn Kilgor, Wenda Trevathan, Russell L.Ciochon 2013-2014, p. 390) At that time the problematic word “Race” wasn’t appeared yet. The concept of race showed up in 1600s as a result of the earliest studies to the primitive societies at that time that have been made to serve the Western colonialism in the occupied peoples and control on them. The problem doesn’t come from using the concept race to express the type of culture that a group of human have because anthropologists agree that every group of people has its special kind of culture and it is very normal when some cultures share some characteristics while some cultures seem very different from each other. Likewise, the utilization of the concept race to distinguish the ethnic or the religious identity of group of people is fine. On contrary, using this word to classified between humans physically and to put people in different classes of intelligence according to genetic traits is very abandoned by the physical anthropologists. (Rodert Jurmain, Lynn Kilgor, Wenda Trevathan, Russell L.Ciochon 2013- 2014, p.396)

In the colonialism period, the most anthropological data had been gathered by travelers and adventurers who were unable to make a scientific observation to these stranger societies, which led them to deliver inaccurate and distorted information about the nature of those communities. One of the worst these misunderstanding was the idea of race, which showed up by were many studies that tried to investigate the concept of race. The most of these studies focused on the physical differences between the humans’ skulls to figure out if there are any differences between human brains size, because at that time ideas about differences between western people and the others were very common. Moreover, a number of them believed that the others such as Caucasian and Negroes may not be humans. These kind of studies called racial formalism studies because the advocators of racial formalism referred to formalize humans to different races. In fact, the scientific concepts of race at that time was “a group of individuals who share certain characteristics by virtue of their common ancestry.” (Stocking 1968)

The goal of this type of racial classification of human was not scientific. It used as a justification for Western control over entire continents. Unfortunately, the consequences of this ideology were the worst picture that led to the tendencies of fascism and Nazism in the first half of the twentieth century.

### **The history of Race and intelligence controversy**

The first anthropologist stand against the racial thoughts was Franz Boas (1858-1942) the scholar who is considered the founder of the American anthropology. Boas rejected these ideas strongly when he recognized that the racial theories were based on biased assumptions without clear evidence, which is inaccurate from several aspects: fundamentally, empirically, methodologically and theoretically. Moreover, Boas noted the racial theorists who claimed they found significant differences between the populations of people selected their samples very carefully, which led them to inaccurate results. He stated that "It is impossible to develop any general model of human cultures that codified in a scientific way." Boas refuted the idea of the impact of physical feature that can affect the mental because he believed that the cultural environment has the most important impact. According to (Boas. 1940), in 1912 Boas studied the immigrant that arrived to United States between 1908-1910. (Boas 1940) He found that individuals from the second generation were taller than their parents. So, he concluded that these differences were by the influence of the new environment (Boas 1912). Boas suggested the notion of race-as- population to undercut the idea of racial purity. Boas was the first anthropologist who demonstrated statistically that the diversity within one humans' population more than the diversity between several humans' populations. Moreover, in his book, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, Boas critiqued racism and eugenics, which was one of his significant early theoretical works on biology, environment, culture and mind (Boas 1965).

Furthermore, Boas interested in clarifying the futility of the idea that has been dominant in that period, which is the idea of a relationship between mental features and physical features such as skin color, the hairstyle, nose shape, etc. This idea was behind the concept of "race". Indeed, Boas believed that race is the poor explanation of the human diversity, especially in the biological sense.

In the twentieth century, racial advocators have become using the modern sciences as alternative to the religious texts and their interpretations to confirm these tendencies, which leads to extended the controversy of race and intelligence until today. One of these writers was Arthur Johnson that sparked the public debate about racial differences in intelligence by publishing his scientific essay in Harvard which titled "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" the article of Jensen Raised questions about the benefit of compensatory education for children of African-American and suggested that the reason behind their weak educational performance is not a lack of stimulation at home, but is genetic and inherited features. The next public debate has returned again after the appearance of "Bell Curve" in 1994, a book by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray who strongly emphasized the societal effects of low IQ, which will be discussed in the next pages as part of my literature review.

## 1. Literature Review

There are many studies have discussed differences between people and demonstrated that differences are related to cultural features. Since starting the controversy about human diversity and the mental capacity, there two groups each one has different explanations to the nature of this diversity. The first group is the racial formalism advocators, who claims that human have divided to many races and each race has different traits and the most important difference is the level of intelligence. In contrast, the anti-racial formalism, the researchers who find that all humans are from one spices (homo sapiens) and they are all similar to each others in the significant traits such as intelligence. This study is going to provide some literatures as representatives of this stream of thought:

### Racial believes:

A- (The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life,1994) in this book, Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray tried to prove the correlation between IQ and races. They claimed that there are genetic features that led to differences in intelligence between white people and black people in the United States. They believed that there some inherited genes resulted the differences in their life paths

which amounts to their highest levels in inequality in American society between the two ethnic groups alleged. (Richard J. Herrnstein 1994).

Moreover, they classified American people to two classes. In the first class, the white people who have high intelligence that can be the passkey to the best schools and jobs. The authors believe that the inherited intelligence from parents and grandparents is only one reason for these kind of people to succeed. In the second the black people at the bottom, the common denominator of the underclass is increasingly low intelligence rather than racial or social disadvantage. Actually, bell curve has stimulated many researchers to conduct critical studies to criticize its contents. (Richard J. Herrnstein 1994) This book motived a lot of researchers to reposed, which caused a number of scientific studies about the relationship between race and IQ. The book also led to the publication of the 1995 report from the American Psychological Association, that defined the concept "Intelligence' as: known and unknown" acknowledges the difference in average IQ scores between whites and blacks, as well as the absence of any adequate explanation for it, whether environmentally or genetically.

B- Race, Evolution, and Behavior" by J. Philippe Rushton, 2002, in this book, the authors believed that racial differences between black people and white people in intelligence do exist in certain pattern and they believed these may explain adequately from an evolutionary perspective. (Rushton 2002).

Moreover, they claimed that people of East Asian ancestry and people of African ancestry are at opposite ends of a continuum, with people of European ancestry intermediate, albeit with much variability within each broad grouping." (Rushton 2002).

Rushton and Jensen also stated that the IQ gap between black and whites is more than 15 and there is no way to reduce this gap even with intervention programs (Rushton 2002).

C- The book titled A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History that published in 2015, by Nicholas Wade. In this book, Wade claimed that human beings are divided into continental races can be detected genetically. In addition, he provided variety of forms to those races. (Wade 2014) He

stated that they are either three or five or seven. Wade side that we can find the significant differences in the types of social behavior, which is based on the genetic causes of these races as a result of human evolution over the past fifty-thousand years old or 15 thousand years (Wade 2014).

#### IV. Argumentation:

In this part of the paper, I am going to provide some scientific papers that have been written by the anti-racial formalism as argumentations with the literatures above that have been written by racial formalism advocators to refute their claims and to proof my hypothesis that suggests that there are no differences between peoples in the mental capacity.

One of the most important critical response to The Bell Curve is the argumentative of Richard E. Nisbett. In his article, Heredity, Environment, and Race Differences in IQ a Commentary on Rushton and Jensen (2005), Richard E. Nisbett critiqued Rushton and Jensen by saying that:

“it is characterized by failure to cite, in any but the most cursory way, strong evidence against their position. Their lengthy presentation of indirectly relevant evidence which, in light of the direct evidence against the hereditarian view they prefer, has little probative value, and their “scorecard” tallies of evidence on various points cannot be sustained by the evidence.” (Nisbett 2005). Nisbett also provided a review for new findings and new scientific developments in the intelligence that can strongly refute racial claims such as: heritability of IQ varies significantly by social class. For example, Rushton and Jensen claimed that the differences between white people and black people in IQ or what is known as IQ gap is more than 15. Whoever, Nisbett stated that the current studies have showed that the IQ gap scores are highly correlated with IQ—some as high as .8 to .9. In addition, there are many studies have showed that the IQ gap is going to completely remove in the future in a period between 20 and 60 years. (Nisbett 2005). According to Nisbett there are no genetic polymorphisms have been discovered that are associated with variation in intelligence.

Moreover, Nisbett stated that the importance of the environment for IQ is established by the 12-point to 18-point increase in IQ when

children are adopted from working-class to middle-class homes and more finding that can emphasize the unity of humans (Nisbett 2005). Furthermore, Nisbett illustrated to the importance of the intervention programs that resulted a lot of significant developments in the levels of the African American students' knowledge. (Nisbett 2005) That means the lack in their IQ scores wasn't inherited or related to their genetic nature, but it was the influence of their cultural, social, and economic environment.

(Linda S. Gottfredson, 2005) strongly attacked the claims of The Bell Curve by saying that :

This commentary evaluates the relevance of their evidence, the overall strength of their case, the implications they draw for public policy, and the suggestion by some scholars that the nation is best served by telling benevolent lies about race and intelligence. (Gottfredson 2005)

Moreover, Stephen Jay Gould also refuted the racial thoughts of The Bell Curve when he said that the reason behind the high people wanting this book and the large number of sales, is not the scientific method nor the new significant discovery. It is actually, the nature of the mood of the people in this period, which tends to accept such ideas (Gould 1994). In addition, Gould suggested that the thoughts of ball curve have built on four assumptions that stand on each others, which means if any one of these assumptions inaccurate the all thoughts will breakdown (Gould 1994, p.12).

The A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History, 2015, by Nicholas Wade has also gotten many reviews some of them tried to support his claims, but some others rejected them and criticized the racial claims that had mentioned by Wade. One of this book criticisms was the paper of Charles C. Roseman that titled "Troublesome Refl ection: Racism as the Blind Spot in the Scientifi c Critique of Race" Roseman sees that wade's book has represented the scientific racism that misleading people and tried to convince them that humans are genetically different (Roseman 2014). A lot of critiques for this book states that this book wasn't scientifically leading but it built on political view. Especially, when we take in our consideration that the author isn't anthropologist. He is a journalist. Further, in one of his claims about the differences between humans

as racial classification, Wade claimed that the nature of trip society of Iraqi people prevented them from understanding modernization and democracy, which is very ridiculous and racial idea. Because the history of Iraqi people shows that Iraqi people have already understood and lived what so called modernization and democracy during the period of the monarchy and before the Iraqi people fell under the dictatorial authority of the Baath Party.

### **Conclusion:-**

Humans variation is obviously true even in their IQ measurement, but that doesn't mean they are unequaled in their mental capacities. To explain, the differences between humans' groups in IQ are related to the differences between their circumstances and socialization method.

1. there are no significant differences between people in IQ tests and the differences between people related to cultural features.
2. All racial literatures have based on political or religious agendas, which have nothing to do with scientific research.
3. Race: this concept has been taken a lot of concern in our social and political life so we need to clarify the nature of it from two perspectives.
4. Intelligence: actually, the definition of intelligence still debatable and there many different ways to understand it, but we need to the most common definitions to provide them for the readers. The Webster dictionary definition that the ability to learn or understand things or to deal with new or difficult situations.
5. All the studies that claim that there are differences between people in their mental capacity are wrong and not scientific.
6. This great number of responds to the racial literatures show that the majority of scholars agree that there are no significant differences between humans in intelligence.
7. Racists try packaging their odious racist tendencies by various casings and marketing them. So, they mislead people by providing incorrect evidence and using non-scientific methods

to mislead people that they have reached the results to prove racial divisions in which they believe.

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