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A CHICAGO URBAN LEAGUE STAFF REPORT  
ON  
A SCIENTIST'S REPORT ON RACE  
DIFFERENCES  
by  
Frank C.J. McGurk, Ph.D.

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A  
Chicago Urban League Staff Report

On

"A SCIENTIST'S REPORT ON RACE DIFFERENCES"

By

Frank C. J. McGurk, Ph. D.

NOTE: This is a brochure including McGurk's article as printed in the September 21st, 1956, issue of U. S. News and World Report; and statements critical of it by social scientists in the Chicago Area.

Compiled by:

Chicago Urban League  
Research Department  
2410 South Michigan Avenue  
Chicago 16, Illinois

October 15, 1956

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### Acknowledgement

The Staff of the Chicago Urban League wishes to thank all of the contributors to this report. Without their help, this brochure would not have been possible. Dr. Leonard Z. Breen deserves special mention in that it is through his good offices that the Chicago Urban League was able to make effective contact with several of the contributors.

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 15, 1956

TO: Executive Director

FROM: Research

In compliance with your request the Research Department has completed the following brochure on "A Scientist Reports on Race Differences" by F. C. J. McGurk. This article appeared in the September 21st edition of U. S. News and World Report. It held the position that an analysis of intelligence test scores indicated that Negroes as a group do not possess as much (capacity for education) as whites as a group. This article was considered important and was singled out for the following reasons:

1. The position held by McGurk in the article cited is contrary to accepted scientific knowledge on the subject. This weight of authority maintains that psychological test results do not support the idea of inherent differences between the intelligence levels of various racial groups.
2. The article by McGurk in its attack on this body of accepted scientific knowledge fails to maintain either an internal logical consistence or an understanding of the nature of the data utilized. In other words, his conclusions are entirely unwarranted.
3. However, the article was prepared by a man wearing the trappings of a scientist.
4. The article was advertised as being a piece of science, and appeared in a magazine with a circulation national in scope.
5. It is an attack on the feasibility and acceptability of racial integration in our schools.
6. It is an attack on programs to raise the social and economic levels of Negroes as being ultimately ineffective.
7. It will be utilized again and again as a scientific prop in those programs promoting bigotry in the South, North, East and West.
8. While its initial target is integration of the public school system in the South it has a dangerous potential right here in Chicago.
9. Rabid opponents of integration have already carried their message North to the State of Vermont. James F. Byrnes, in a speech before the Vermont Bar Association used McGurk as a scientific prop in his arguments against Supreme Court decisions on integration in our schools. This was on October 5th when it was reprinted in U. S. News and World Report -- less than three weeks after McGurk's article was published.

MEMORANDUM

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It is, therefore, felt that this brochure can play a role in correcting the effects McGurk's brand of pseudo science, and add to the fund of knowledge useful in the achieving of the Urban League program for equality and integration among all groups of human beings.

Respectfully submitted,

KENNETH GREEN  
Research Specialist

## Part I

### Introductory Remarks

3

#### General

This file is offered in order to supply information refuting an article published by U. S. News and World Report which stated that Negroes as a group do not possess as much capacity for education as whites - as a group. The article is entitled "A Scientist's Report on Race Differences" and was authored by Dr. F.C.J. McGurk in the September 21st edition of the above magazine.

The article is important in that the author wears the trappings of a scientist and his article is advertised as being scientific. It is important also because it is part of the full dress attack on the Supreme Court decisions affecting integration in our schools. This importance was emphasized by the fact that its coming was previewed in the pages of the Chicago Tribune and then discussed in an editorial. Other local papers carried reports on the McGurk article with the Daily Defender criticizing it editorially. In the October 5th edition of the U. S. News and World Report, James F. Byrnes in a speech before the Vermont Bar Association used the McGurk article for support. He stated that if the counsels for the southern state governments had had this article they probably would have successfully rebutted the arguments put forth by professional psychologists in support of the present Supreme Court decision. Unfortunately, this will not be the last time that McGurk's brand of science fiction will be used in support of bigotry.

#### McGurk's Article

In summary, McGurk's article states that "Negroes as a group do not possess as much (capacity for education) as whites as a group." McGurk uses intelligence tests as his basic tool of analysis. It is further claimed in the article that increased "...improvements in the social and economic status of the Negro have not changed his relationship to the whites regarding capacity for education." Finally, McGurk claims, "There is something more important, more basic, to the race problem than differences in external (socio-economic) opportunity." This later statement is a clever method of saying that Negroes are in an inherent sense mentally inferior to whites.

#### Summaries of Criticisms of McGurk by Chicago Area Scientists<sup>1</sup>

1. The first criticism is by Willard Kerr, Ph. D., Assistant Professor in Applied Psychology at Illinois Institute of Technology. Dr. Kerr states

<sup>1</sup>Full statements appear in Part 3.

that:

"Dr. McGurk's theory rests upon a presentation which is riddled with false assumptions, on the one hand, and glaring omissions of relevant research on the other." Kerr further states that "...it is encouraging for the future that most psychologists, unlike Dr. McGurk, concede also that the psychological - social-economic status of the Negro, despite inherent mental equality, is still sufficiently less stimulating than the psychological social-economic status of the white citizen to produce a differing tendency in test scores."

2. The next criticism was by the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago which was based on an analysis directed by Dr. Charles T. O'Reilly, Director of Research at the Loyola School of Social Work. O'Reilly criticizes as follows:

"It would appear that Dr. McGurk has taken facts out of context, ignored the cautions of the researchers who made the studies that he quotes, arrived at conclusions entirely unwarranted by the data he has used. We feel that he has misused the work of reputable scholars."

3. Dietrich Reitzes, Ph. D., Assistant Professor in Sociology at Indiana University (Calumet Center) protests:

"...not against the voicing of an opinion in this matter, but rather against the misleading terminology which is used in the title as well as in the article itself." Later in the paragraph Reitzes states: "Upon close examination, however, it becomes apparent Dr. McGurk violates some of the basic tenets of scientific treatment of data in the following respects: 1) he has carefully selected data to fit his basic assumption and has ignored data which go against his basic assumption and 2) his generalizations go way beyond the data that he has." Reitzes concludes: "To present this material as a scientific study is, I believe, grossly misleading."

4. Dr. Leonard Breen, Assistant Professor in Sociology at the University of Chicago most decisively protests:

"As a person actively conducting research in the social sciences, I resent the description given by the Editor of Mr. McGurk's paper as 'scientific.' The methodological framework such as that employed in his paper would not even be acceptable as a term paper framework in an undergraduate course."

5. Peter Jacobsohn, Instructor in Sociology and Race Relations at Illinois Institute of Technology could have his criticism summed up in the following quote:

"In light of all the above (Jacobsohn's) objections, McGurk's article emerges at best, as a diatribe, haphazardly assembled and shoddily executed. A scientist's unscientific report."

#### In Conclusion

The criticisms of McGurk by the Chicago area scientists lead to the conclusion this his article in U. S. News and World Report is a distortion which serves the ends of bigotry. There is no evidence in the article that McGurk ever stopped to seriously consider the truth as he swept on to his conclusions. It is our hope that other individuals and groups will protest this article and future references to it that would promote racial discrimination. McGurk must not be allowed to become a road block to programs leading to the creation of living opportunities for achieving of racial equality and integration.

PART 2

A SCIENTIST'S REPORT  
ON  
RACE DIFFERENCES

By:

F. C. J. McGurk

NOTE: Article appeared in  
U.S. News and World  
Report, September 21,  
1956, pp 92-96



**WHAT YOU AS A BUSINESSMAN**

**✓ CAN and ✗ CANNOT DO**

*as a result of recent court and administrative decisions*

**✓ YOU CAN** sometimes raise the wages of your employes after **collective bargaining** with a union has broken down, without violating the Taft-Hartley law. The General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board finds that an employer was within his rights in raising wages where he had bargained in good faith until negotiations with the union reached an impasse.

\* \* \*

**✓ YOU CAN** get approval of an employes' **pension plan**, for tax-deduction purposes, even though you as employer, are the only one entitled to collect what employes owe you from their pension payments. Internal Revenue Service rules that such a debt provision does not disqualify an employes' pension, profit-sharing or stock-bonus plan.

\* \* \*

**✓ YOU CAN**, as a farmer, make an agreement with the Government up to October 5 to reduce your **winter-wheat** planting under the "soil bank" program. The Agriculture Department extends the deadline for these acreage-reserve contracts to that date to give all wheatgrowers a chance to participate, and thereby earn cash payments from the Government.

\* \* \*

**✓ YOU CAN** make a bid to buy controlling interest in the former German firm of Karl Lieberknecht, Inc. The Attorney General asks for sealed bids by October 10. The company has principal offices at Lauderdale, Pa., and makes certain types of machinery and metals. Details may be obtained from the Office of Alien Property, Washington 25, D. C.

\* \* \*

**✗ YOU CANNOT** refuse to give your employes **vacation pay** to which they are entitled even though they left their jobs in the face of a no-strike agreement containing an arbitration clause on grievances. A State court holds that such

employes did not become "new hires" for purposes of vacation pay when the strike ended.

\* \* \*

**✗ YOU CANNOT** prevent the Federal Trade Commission from compelling you to produce your business records in connection with proceedings involving charges of **price discrimination** under the Robinson-Patman Act. A federal district court decides that the Commission has power to subpoena a company's books and records in Robinson-Patman proceedings.

\* \* \*

**✗ YOU CANNOT**, as controlling stockholder in a company, avoid paying an income tax on **dividends** that you waive so as to increase dividends paid to relatives and key employes of the company. Internal Revenue Service holds that such dividends are taxable to the controlling stockholder.

\* \* \*

**✗ YOU CANNOT** collect interest on a **tax overpayment** during a period in which the delay in delivery of your refund check is not the fault of the Government. Internal Revenue Service says that interest will not be allowed.

\* \* \*

**✗ YOU CANNOT** expect to get NLRB to throw out a union's petition for a **representation election** because there is a jurisdictional conflict between AFL-CIO unions. The Labor Board rejects this argument by a company for dismissal of an election petition.

\* \* \*

**✗ YOU CANNOT** import any **sugar** from Cuba during the remainder of this year without obtaining a certificate from the Department of Agriculture. This requirement is established by the Department to make sure that sugar imports from Cuba will not exceed that country's quota for 1956.

*Conclusions expressed in these paragraphs are based upon decisions and rulings of courts and Government Bureaus. In making their decisions, courts and bureaus consider many facts which, for reasons of space, cannot be set forth in detail. U. S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, on written request, will refer interested readers to sources of this basic material.*



**"WHY NATIONAL CARBON  
CHOSE IOWA  
FOR ITS EVEREADY PLANT"**

*A. S. Johnson*

A. S. Johnson, President, National Carbon Company  
A Division of Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation

"After a thorough study of 21 cities in four states, National Carbon Co. chose Red Oak, Iowa, as the site of its new Eveready brand batteries plant.

"Among the factors that determined our choice was the availability of industrious, quick-to-learn people. Iowa employes demonstrated strong basic intelligence and an ability to understand quickly various manufacturing steps. Maximum production of 50 battery types was achieved in minimum time.

"A spirit of friendly cooperation between the city and the plant, and between employees in the plant has resulted in high productivity, excellent product quality and a fine safety record.

"The majority of supervisory and staff positions are now filled with locally hired people, and many Iowans have gone on to important positions at other National Carbon locations."

The high intelligence and mechanical ability Mr. Johnson mentions are accepted facts by Iowa industry. The state has a fine educational system including vocational training. And much of Iowa's labor supply comes from its farms and has worked with machinery from childhood. If you have a move in mind, just write the Iowa Development Commission for more information on Iowa's labor force and many available plant sites.

Address your inquiry to —



**IOWA  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

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7  
"Psychological Tests" —

# A SCIENTIST'S REPORT ON RACE DIFFERENCES

In the dispute about racial integration in schools, these questions keep coming up:

- Are Negroes really equal to whites in their capacity for education?
- Can they compete on even terms in mixed schools—or do they drag down educational levels?

Here is a psychologist's answer. It is based on tests given to thousands of people of both races and of similar backgrounds.

The psychologist's conclusion from these tests is that Negroes are below whites in capacity for education. He finds that improve-

ment of Negroes' social and economic status does not reduce this difference.

Dr. Frank C. J. McGurk, born and educated in Pennsylvania, has been doing research in racial psychology since 1939. He has just left the staff of the U. S. Military Academy, at West Point, N. Y., to become associate professor of psychology at Villanova University.

The paper by Dr. McGurk that follows is published here for the first time. It is one of the few scientific studies in the field of psychology that are available on a subject of great and growing importance.

by Frank C. J. McGurk, Ph. D.

Associate Professor of Psychology, Villanova University

I  
If we in America are going to make any sense out of the Supreme Court's desegregation decision, we will have to be more factual about race differences, and much less emotional. We can have our dreams, if we like to dream, but we should be willing to distinguish between dream and reality. Already, we have gone too far toward confusing these two things.

As far as psychological differences between Negroes and whites are concerned, we have wished—and dreamed—that there were no such differences. We have identified this wish with reality, and on it we have established a race-relations policy that was so clearly a failure that we had to appeal to distorting propaganda for its support. When that, too, failed, we appealed to the legal machinery to do what nature was not content to do.

As will be shown in the succeeding sections of this article, there is ample evidence that there are psychological differences between Negroes and whites. Moreover, these differences are, today, of about the same magnitude as they were two generations ago. These differences are not the result of differences in social and economic opportunities, and they will not disappear as the social and economic opportunities of Negroes and whites are equalized.

Because this is a controversial problem, the facts contained in this article are documented. This will give the critical reader a basis for seeking information for himself. It might be well to point out now that the ideas presented here are markedly at variance with those thoughts about race differences which are

held by Professor Klineberg, of Columbia University (see "Characteristics of the American Negro," New York: Harper, 1944), and by Professor Ashley-Montagu (see "Man's Most Dangerous Myth: the Fallacy of Race," New York: Columbia University Press, 1945).

II  
The most convenient place to begin the study of our problem is the World War I period. It was at this time that the first extensive psychological study was done; tests were administered to very large groups of Negro and white draftees who represented the entire country. The results of this study were carefully recorded and published by Prof. R. L. Yerkes in 1921 (*Memoirs of the Academy of Natural Sciences*, Vol. 15).

The World War I period was also a period of marked social and economic restriction for the Negro. He was limited to certain specified residential sections of most cities, and these were undesirable in terms of present-day standards. Generally, however, the Negro was a rural dweller, and the available schools were under-equipped, understaffed and often not accessible. He was limited in general social participation. He was limited economically, for there were only certain jobs open to him even when he dwelled in the city, and these were the most menial. His income was, as a consequence, markedly restricted. There is little question that the World War I period was, when compared with the present, one of unquestioned cultural deprivation for the Negro.

Under whatever level of cultural deprivation these conditions

## ... "Social and economic position of the Negro has improved"

represented, the psychological-test scores of the Negroes, during the World War I period, bore a clearly inferior relationship to the psychological-test scores of the whites, and many writers have pointed this out in the past. For the country as a whole, only about 27 per cent of the Negro recruits obtained psychological test scores that equaled or exceeded the average test score of the whites. This is called "overlapping," and we say that 27 per cent of the Negro recruits overlapped the average score of the whites.

When overlapping is 27 per cent, as it was for the Negroes in World War I, the average Negro score is markedly lower than the average white score. This concept of overlapping has nothing to do with range of scores—the difference between the highest and lowest scores. The range of scores is so notoriously unstable that it is almost meaningless. Overlapping, as used here, is concerned only with the relationship between the *bulk* of Negro scores and the *average* score of the whites.

The overlapping figure of 27 per cent for the Negroes seemed to be a constant figure which was found in many different comparisons of the World War I data. For example, two tests were used in the World War I study—the Army "Alpha" and the Army "Beta."

The Alpha was thought to be so sensitive to cultural background that it was considered unfair to those subjects whose schooling was limited, and whose general cultural background was poor. Thus, the Alpha was thought to discriminate adversely against the Negro recruit. The Beta was developed especially for those subjects for whom the Alpha was thought unsuited. Many writers have contended that, relative to white recruits, the Negro's performance on the Beta was better than his performance on the Alpha.

Professor Garrett, of Columbia University, has shown that the Negro recruits, in comparison with the white recruits, performed as well, or as poorly, on the Alpha as on the Beta; the Negro overlap was 27 per cent and 29 per cent respectively for these two tests ("A Note on the Intelligence Test Scores of Negroes and Whites in 1918," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 40).

Further evidence of the consistency of the Negro overlap of about 27 per cent was given by Professor Garrett for the State-by-State comparisons of Negroes and whites ("Comparison of Negro and White Recruits on the Army Tests Given in 1917-1918," *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 58). Considering as a single unit the four Northern States where Negro scores were the highest, Negro overlap of the whites in those four States—also taken as a single unit—was 28 per cent.

We have already described the social and economic disadvantages which prevailed for the Negroes during the World War I period. At the same time, their overlap of the average white score was about 27 per cent. If we should make Negro-white comparisons under conditions where social and economic disadvantages are not as great for the Negro as they previously were, what should we find?

Even though there was not true equality between the social and economic status of Negroes and whites, any approach to such equality should be reflected in a decrease in the difference

between their average test scores. If social and economic factors are the important thing in determining the test-score differences between these two racial groups, it would have to follow, as a matter of logic, that a decrease in the difference between the social and economic factors between Negroes and whites should be accompanied by a decrease in the difference between their average test scores.

On the other hand, if there is no decrease in the difference between the average test scores of Negroes and whites, and there have been readily demonstrable changes in the difference between the social and economic forces affecting these two racial groups, there can be no causal relationship between social and economic forces and average test score.

If we put this in terms of a school problem, we can say that if cultural opportunities—including the opportunity for equal schooling—are important in determining capacity for education (as measured by psychological-test scores), an improvement in the cultural opportunities should result in an improvement in the capacity for education. If cultural opportunities are not important in determining capacity for education, improving the cultural opportunities will have no effect on capacity for education.

A moment's reflection will surely tell us that, since World War I, the social and economic position of the Negro has improved. This improvement has not been sudden; it has been going on for what we can conveniently call the last two generations. The Negro has achieved more and more of the social and economic opportunities that were once reserved for the white man, and to say that the socio-economic status of the Negro has risen at a faster rate than the white's is not an exaggeration. If this is not so, all of the social reform of the last two generations has been wasted.

What has happened to the relationship between the psychological-test scores of Negroes and whites, while all of this social and economic improvement has taken place? Does the Negro now have more capacity for education, relative to the whites, than he had in 1918? There are researchers to help us reach an answer to this question.

### III

In the period between the inclusive dates of 1935 and 1950, about 140 articles were published in the scientific literature of psychology which dealt with the question of Negro-white test-score differences. Only 63 of the 140 articles presented data showing the differences between the test scores of Negroes and whites, but in all 63 articles, the average test score of the Negro subjects was lower than the average test score of the white subjects with whom they were compared. The other 76 articles were simply speculative comments about the problem, and generally lacking in facts.

Of the 63 articles which presented data, only six presented enough material to permit us to compare the World War I performance of Negroes and whites with latter-day performance. These six articles are important for us, since they covered a wide range of years, a variety of age groups, different grade groups and different psychological tests. Since they were spaced over a



DR. F. C. J. MCGURK

**... In Canadian test: "Negroes made a much poorer showing"**

range of years, they also covered a variety of different socio-economic opportunities.

The earliest of these six studies was done on a group of Canadian Negroes and whites in 1939 by H. A. Tanser ("Kent County Negroes," Chatham, Ontario; The Shepherd Publishing Company). Three standard psychological tests were administered to Negro and white school children enrolled in grades 1 through 8. All of the Negro children were described as descendants of slaves who had escaped from the South prior to, and during, the Civil War. According to the author, social and economic opportunities had always been equal for all Negroes and whites in this area, except for a few minor outbursts of oppression directed toward the Negroes.

The average test scores of the Negro children were markedly below the white average at every age and every grade. For the total groups—all children of all ages—only 13 per cent to 20 per cent of the Negroes overlapped the white average, depending on which psychological test was considered. But in no case did the overlap exceed 20 per cent. In this study, Negroes made a much poorer showing, relative to whites, than they did in the World War I study. The social and economic advantages of Canadian life did not increase the relative standing of the Negro children to white children.

The second of the six studies appeared in 1940 when M. Bruce published her doctoral dissertation ("Factors Affecting Intelligence Test Performance of Whites and Negroes in the Rural South," *Archives of Psychology*, N. Y., No. 252). Also, in this study, three psychological tests were administered to 9 and 10-year-old Negro and white children, all of whom lived in an impoverished rural area in Virginia. The children attended segregated rural schools. In order to make social and economic opportunities equivalent for both racial groups, the author administered a test of socio-economic status, and then paired off her subjects so that each member of a pair, one Negro child and one white child, had the same socio-economic score. By and large, the socio-economic scores of all the children were very low.

The amount of Negro overlapping varied with the test under consideration, but in no case did it fall below 15 per cent, and it never exceeded 20 per cent. Even in these deprived but equivalent social and economic conditions, the psychological-test performance of Negroes bears the same relationship to the test performance of whites as shown by Tanser—in spite of the vast differences in socio-economic opportunities between Bruce's subjects and Tanser's subjects. Bruce's findings also indicate that equal socio-economic opportunity, even as low as it was, did not improve the psychological-test-score relationship between Negroes and whites which was shown in World War I.

**Special Test for College Students**

A. M. Shuey reported the third study in 1942 ("A Comparison of Negro and White College Students by Means of the ACE," *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 14). As implied in the title, one psychological test, especially designed for college subjects, was administered to a very highly selected group of Negro and white college freshmen who were enrolled in a large New York college. The subjects ranged in age from 15 to 35 years, and came from various sections of the country. The author paired a Negro and white subject when she considered that each of them had identical social and economic backgrounds. In doing this, the author made use of a great many socio-economic factors which she thought were important in determining psychological-test scores. Thus, she obtained two groups of subjects—

one Negro and one white—which were of the same average age, of the same educational background and the same general cultural status.

The results of the study showed that approximately 18 per cent of the Negro subjects obtained psychological-test scores that overlapped the average white test score. Considering that this was a highly selected group of college students, such low overlapping is surprising. It does not lend credence to the belief that socio-economic factors are responsible for the Negro-white differences in psychological-test performance.

The findings in Shuey's study do not differ noticeably from those previously described—in spite of the socio-economic differences in the subjects of the three different studies. Shuey's findings are markedly lower than the World War I findings, and are also no indication whatsoever that equal socio-economic opportunities will equalize or improve the Negro's test performance in comparison with the white's.

**Studying Small Children**

In 1944, F. Brown published the fourth of the six studies ("An Experimental and Critical Study of the Intelligence of Negro and White Kindergarten Children," *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, Vol. 65). One individually administered test was given to Negro and white kindergarten children attending the unsegregated schools in Minneapolis. The average age of each racial group of children was identical, and since they were kindergarten children, we can think of them as 5-year-olds.

Unfortunately, the author did not attempt to equate the Negro and white children regarding socio-economic factors. However, all children attended nonsegregated schools in a large Northern city, which certainly differs from the type of schooling received by Negroes in the World War I period. All the children were very young, which is supposed to equate socio-economic differences, but it should be noted that the author made no deliberate attempt to equate these differences otherwise.

Brown's findings showed that 31 per cent of the Negro kindergarten children overlapped the average test score of the white kindergarten children. Although this is better Negro performance than was reported in the preceding articles, it represents no improvement over the World War I standing of the Negro. Whatever socio-economic benefits accrued to the Negro children in Minneapolis in 1944 were not sufficient to change their standing, relative to the white children with whom they were compared, when the World War I data are the basis for comparison.

The fifth study was an interesting and complex study published in 1945 by T. F. Rhoads and his associates ("Studies on the Growth and Development of Male Children Receiving Evaporated Milk. II-Physical Growth, Dentition, and Intelligence of White and Negro Children Through the First Four Years as Influenced by Vitamin Supplements," *Journal of Pediatrics*, Vol. 26). The primary object of the study was to investigate physical and physiological changes, but some interesting psychological evidence was obtained by an analysis of the published data.

The subjects of this study were all males, under the age of 4 and residents of Philadelphia. At the time that an individually administered psychological test was given, each child was 3 years old. No child was accepted for study whose birth weight was under five pounds, and each child was examined in a hospital clinic once a month until 1 year of age, and then every two months until the end of the study. The children of un-co-operative parents were dropped before the child was 2 years old.

## . . . In Philadelphia, "scores of the Negro children were lower"

In addition to the clinic examinations, home visits were made every two weeks by a nurse or social worker in order to keep the experimental conditions as operative as possible. Socio-economic factors were reported to be generally equal for the entire group of subjects; all were economically and socially deprived and, therefore, responsive to the supplementary milk and vitamin diet provided without charge.

The psychological-test scores of the Negro children were significantly lower than the test scores of the white children, and only 30 per cent of the Negro children overlapped the average white test score. These findings are identical with those given above for Brown's study, and the same comments could be repeated. It is also interesting that these findings are almost identical with the World War I results, and indicate that whatever socio-economic differences there were between these Philadelphia children and the World War I groups did not change the Negro-white test-score relationship.

The sixth, and final, study was published by the present writer in 1951 ("Comparison of the Performance of Negro and White High School Seniors on Cultural and Noncultural Psychological Test Questions," Washington, D. C.; The Catholic University of America Press).

A special test was constructed so that half of it was composed of questions that drew heavily on the cultural background of the subjects, called "cultural questions." In the other half, the test was composed of questions that required a minimum amount of cultural experience for their answers, called the "noncultural questions." A total score could be obtained by counting the total number of questions answered correctly—the cultural plus the noncultural questions. These questions were administered to Negro and white high-school seniors in various areas of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The average age was 18 years for each of the racial groups. All, of course, were twelfth-grade public-school boys and girls. Negroes and whites were matched for social and economic status by pairing a white subject with each Negro subject so that both members of a pair were identical or equivalent for 14 different socio-economic factors.

In spite of the equivalence of socio-economic factors, only 29 per cent of the Negro subjects overlapped the average total score of the white subjects. This is almost identical with the overlapping reported in World War I. There is hardly any question about the socio-economic superiority of this 1951 group of Negroes when compared with the Negroes in World War I. Yet, relative to white subjects, the intervening improvements in social and economic opportunities of the Negroes had not improved their psychological-test performance at all.

Thus, in the 16 years between 1935 and 1950, a period in which the social and economic status of the Negro had certainly improved over the World War I period, there can be found no factual evidence that this improvement had increased the Negro's relative ability to perform on psychological tests. There is, of course, a great deal of opinion about this matter, but let it be said again that the factual evidence completely denies the theory that improving the social and economic status of the Negro improves his capacity for education, as we have defined the latter term.

### IV

These findings seemed so clear, and yet so much at variance with the usual speculative statements about the potency of social and economic change, that the present writer decided to analyze further the data of the 1951 study.

Specifically, the writer was interested in answering three questions: If the social and economic opportunities were such

important factors in causing racial test-score differences, what would be found if we compared Negroes and whites whose socio-economic status was very high?

And the second question: What would be found if we compared Negroes and whites whose socio-economic status was extremely poor?

Finally, would the difference between Negroes and whites of very high socio-economic status be less than the difference between Negroes and whites of very low socio-economic status?

### What "Pairing" Shows

In 1953, the present writer published the findings that resulted from this reanalysis ("On White and Negro Test Performance and Socio-economic Factors," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 48). The subjects of the 1951 study were arranged into an extremely high socio-economic group and an extremely low socio-economic group.

To understand the results of this study, it is absolutely necessary to understand the composition of these two socio-economic groups. Recall that, in the 1951 study, a white subject was paired with a Negro subject when the white subject was identical or equivalent to the Negro subject in terms of 14 social and economic factors thought to be important. This means that, in terms of socio-economic status, there were no white subjects higher than the highest Negro subject. Also in terms of socio-economic status, there were no Negro subjects lower than the lowest white subject. Each Negro subject was permanently paired with a white subject so that both subjects were equal or equivalent in terms of each of the 14 socio-economic factors.

The extremely high socio-economic group was selected by picking out of the entire group of Negroes that 25 per cent of Negro subjects whose socio-economic factors were the highest. This became the High Negro Group. In picking these Negro subjects, the white subjects who had been permanently paired with them had to be picked also. The latter group became the High White Group.

The extremely low socio-economic groups were selected in the same way; out of the entire Negro group, the 25 per cent of Negro subjects whose socio-economic factors were lowest became the Low Negro Group, and the whites who had been permanently paired with them became the Low White Group.

There were, then, four socio-economic groups to consider and compare. The High Negro Group was identical with the High White Group in terms of 14 socio-economic factors. In relation to these socio-economic factors, the two High Groups were decidedly superior to the two Low Groups. The Low Negro Group and the Low White Group, like the two High Groups, were identical also—in terms of the 14 socio-economic factors.

What do we find when we compare Negroes and whites whose socio-economic status is high? Do we find that the socio-economic factors have made them equally proficient on psychological tests? We do not. The average score of the High Negro Group was very much lower than the average score of the whites of equivalent socio-economic status. In terms of Negro overlap, only 18 per cent of these Negro children of excellent socio-economic background obtained test scores that equaled or exceeded the average white score.

This is even poorer Negro performance than that which was reported in 1918, and this is all the more significant when we consider that, in the 1953 reanalysis, we were deal-

## ... "We are approaching race problem from the wrong direction"

ing with Negro children of fine social and economic backgrounds.

The conclusion to be drawn from this finding, in relation to the World War I data, is that, when the Negro is given better social and economic opportunity, the differences between Negroes and whites actually *increase*. No one would argue that the socio-economic background of these Negro subjects in 1951 was not superior to that of the Negro recruits in 1918, and it would be a futile and contradictory argument to say that there were greater socio-economic differences between these Negroes and whites in 1951 than there were between Negroes and whites in 1918. The improvement in the social and economic factors actually worked to the Negro's disadvantage; in relation to the 1918 data, it did not reduce the Negro-white test-score difference. It increased it.

What do we find if we compare Negroes and whites of equally low socio-economic backgrounds? Do we have test-score equality here, or what? Actually, the average test scores of the Low Negro Group and the Low White Group were almost identical. About 41 per cent of the Negroes overlapped the average score of the whites, and this is enough overlapping to allow us to say that the performance of the Low Negro Group is identical with the performance of the Low White Group.

What we have found is, again, a strange kind of reversal of what most writers say about the efficacy of socio-economic factors. If social and economic forces were so important, there should have been no differences between Negroes and whites in any of these comparisons. As it actually turned out, the difference between Negroes and whites is much greater when both groups are of high socio-economic status than when the racial groups are of deprived socio-economic status.

### When Differences Increase

This confirms an earlier notion that, when Negroes are given the same social and economic opportunities as whites, and when these socio-economic factors are good, the test-score differences between Negroes and whites actually increase. The only time equality was found between these two racial groups was when both were deprived of social and economic stimulation—if any.

From these findings, we have obtained the answer to our third question. An improvement in the socio-economic position of the Negro made him less able to compete with whites on psychological tests. Such a reversal of popular opinion demanded still further analysis. The test that was used in 1951 contained an equal number of culturally weighted and non-culturally weighted questions. A cultural question was paired with a noncultural question so that each question in a pair was of equal difficulty. Could it be that the cultural questions were unduly holding the Negro back in his performance on the tests? This has often been claimed by writers on Negro-white differences, but never demonstrated, so a test was made for it.

Suppose that we compare the High Negro Group and the High White Group in their performance on the cultural questions. The average cultural score of the High White Group was much higher than the average cultural score of the High Negro Group. Only 24 per cent of the High Negro Group overlapped the average cultural score of the High White Group.

What do we find when we compare these two groups on their noncultural performance? Again, the High White Group is much higher, in average noncultural score, than the High

Negro Group, but, this time, only 19 per cent of the High Negro Group overlapped the average noncultural score of the High White Group.

There is, however, no true difference between the cultural-question performance and the noncultural-question performance of these two groups. Thus, we can say that Negroes of high socio-economic status are neither poorer nor better than whites of similar socio-economic status on either the cultural or the noncultural questions. For Negroes and whites of high socio-economic status, the kind of question was not responsible for the difference in score.

When we consider the differences between the two Low Groups, the same general findings appear. For the cultural questions, however, the Low Negro Group actually made a *higher* average score than the Low White Group, but the difference is very small, and is not real. About 55 per cent of the Low Negro Group overlapped the average cultural score of the Low White Group, and this is expected in view of the differences in the averages of these two groups.

However, on the noncultural questions, the average of the Low White Group was greater than that of the Low Negro Group, and represented a real difference. About 29 per cent of the Low Negro Group overlapped the average of the Low White Group on the noncultural questions. Once again, it was not the cultural question on which the Negro did poorly—it was on the noncultural question. In fact, the Negroes of low socio-economic status outperformed the whites of similar status on the cultural question.

### V

Regardless of our emotional attachment to the school-segregation problem, certain facts must be faced. First, as far as psychological-test performance is a measure of capacity for education, Negroes as a group do not possess as much of it as whites as a group. This has been demonstrated over and over.

Next, we must realize that, since 1918, the vast improvements in the social and economic status of the Negro have not changed his relationship to the whites regarding capacity for education. This is not to say that this relationship cannot be changed; it says merely that it has *not* been changed. It implies strongly that we are approaching the race-difference problem from the wrong direction.

Thirdly, as far as our knowledge of the problem goes, the improvements in the social and economic opportunities have only increased the differences between Negroes and whites. This is because such improvements have been given to both racial groups—not only to the Negro—and the whites have profited the more from them. This serves to emphasize the former statement that a fruitful approach to racial equality cannot follow the lines of social and economic manipulation. There is something more important, more basic, to the race problem than differences in external opportunity.

Lastly, it should be remembered that the studies described in this article are not a selection of studies intended to emphasize a point of view. They are the *only* existing studies that relate to the problem. That there is need for more information about this problem is more than clear, but with our emotions what they are, it is becoming less and less likely that anything better than speculations and distortions will appear.

A Texas city tests Negro and white students, page 98.  
a survey of mixed-school problems, page 53.

PART 3

Statements Critical of McGurk

By

Social Scientists

In the

Chicago Area

NOTE: These are in the form of letters to the editor, press releases, and statements.

Statement  
On

"A Scientist's Report on Race Differences"

By  
Frank C. J. McGurk, Ph. D.

As Printed in The  
September 21st issue of U. S. News and World Report

By  
Willard A. Kerr, Ph. D.

NOTE:

This statement was prepared by Doctor Willard A. Kerr. Doctor Kerr received his Bachelors from Southern Illinois University in the fields of history, political science, psychology and education. He received his Masters and Doctorate from Purdue in Applied Psychology. His "AMERICAN HOME SCALE" derived while he was getting his Doctorate, is still quoted in subsequent theses on the subject of the cultural status of the American home. He was in psychological research including testing in both Navy and RCA Victor. He has the rank of Assistant Professor in Applied Psychology and Associate Professor in Social and Industrial Psychology at Illinois Institute of Technology. Doctor Kerr is also an officer in the Chicago Psychological Club which has 200 professional psychologists as members.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST RESULTS DO NOT  
SUPPORT THE IDEA OF INHERENT DIFFERENCES  
BETWEEN THE INTELLIGENCE LEVELS OF  
VARIOUS RACIAL GROUPS.

14

by  
Dr. Willard A. Kerr, Ph.D.

When Dr. McGurk concludes that test evidence shows the Negro to be mentally inferior to the Caucasian, he does not speak for American psychologists. American psychologists do not in general make any such interpretation; in fact, the majority apparently conclude that races are inherently identical in mental potentiality. Their conclusion, too, it must be noted, is not a sentimental one, but one which is based on the solid evidence of decades of research in psychology and the other social sciences.

Dr. McGurk's theory rests upon a presentation which is riddled with false assumptions, on the one hand, and glaring omissions of relevant research evidence on the other.

1. He assumes that because in many studies Negroes have a lower average intelligence test score than do whites, they therefore are inherently inferior in intelligence. He does not add, significantly, that southern whites have a lower average intelligence score in many studies than do northern whites. Why doesn't he? Would he not then have to conclude, also, that southern whites are inherently inferior mentally to northern whites? He makes an untenable assumption and follows it opportunely rather than logically. Psychologists in general reject it as untenable on both counts.

2. He assumes that the years since the World War I period have seen a much greater rise, relatively, for the Negro than for the white child. This is a uniquely materialistic assumption - and he writes exactly like a Marxist rather than a psychologist: it is true that the material standard of living of all American social groups has risen markedly since 1918, but had he bothered to consult the facts of Negro migration since 1918 he would have found that it may be argued that the Negro much more than the typical white citizen has experienced an almost traumatic transition from a barely literate field worker or share-cropper to an industrial worker living in the most congested and least nurturing sections of the great cities. Seen through the eyes of the Negro child, the improvement, if any, is very mild. What happened to McGurk's parallel group in the same period - the poor whites of the south? They received tremendously better schools while the Negro schools in the south barely changed at all. The basic weakness here in McGurk's thinking is that he overlooks the effect of excessive family frustrations upon the aspiration level of the Negro child. It is probable that these frustrations have increased far more for Negroes since 1918 than they have for whites of parallel socioeconomic status.

3. He apparently concludes that scientific evidence which largely eviscerates his own theory of white superiority is not worthy of either describing or answering. The psychologist who has done easily ten times more careful quantitative research on racial differences than any other

living scientist - Dr. Otto Klineberg - is dismissed with five casual lines giving the titles of a few of his works. But Klineberg and his graduate students in a series of researches showed that the IQ's of Negro children move significantly upward as they move into areas of better schools. Does Dr. McGurk contend that their inherent mentality was changing; to be consistent he would be compelled to so contend, but such would be absurd.

4. Dr. McGurk apparently assumes that Negroes as a group are racially homogeneous, and that whites, too, are racially homogeneous - and that Negroes score lower on tests because their brains and central nervous systems are different and inferior. Brain anatomy and neurology do not support any such assumption. Such naivete must shock any geneticist who reads his theory. As a matter of fact, through the ages, white and Negro genes have intermixed substantially - and visibly - through almost all of the geographical areas of North Africa and southern Europe, in fact, all around the Mediterranean area. Genetically, what is a Negro? There is more here than a strong suspicion that Dr. McGurk does not know. The geneticist is a scientist too and scientifically he can define a race only in the relative frequency of genes of certain kinds within each racial or sub-racial group. Take hair for example. What is Negro hair? It is black (like that of many people who call themselves white); it sometimes is kinky (like that of a substantial minority of even blond whites), but often it is wavy or straight. The geneticist can go on ad infinitum. The point of this? Simply that to carry McGurk's theory to its logical conclusions, we must also hypothesize that brunettes are more stupid than blondes, that kinky-haired people are more stupid than straight-haired people, etc. Is McGurk ready to stand by his theory through all its genetic inferences?

If he really is ready to stand by his theory, he need only read the classic research already done on racial differences in European racial sub-groups. Klineberg tested random samples of Italian Mediterraneans, Italian Alpines, French Mediterraneans, French Nordics, and German Nordics. He found that the groups did not differ significantly in intelligence, although they did differ significantly in racial "whiteness". Why did not McGurk mention or answer these distinguished researches????

Finally, the most serious indictment that may be made of Dr. McGurk's position is one already lightly mentioned: its brash materialism. He denies the importance of psychological climate in shaping human personality, and assumes, for example, that white and Negro babies which each weigh the same at birth are environmentally equal. He ignores differential levels of free-thinking and mental stimulation in differing social groups, in favor of a broad assumption of social environmental equality imposed by "improved cultural opportunity". Yet, psychologists are familiar with the tendency even among white groups alone for individuals of rural background to score significantly lower on the average on mental tests than do individuals of urban background. Would Dr. McGurk argue that urban dwellers are inherently more intelligent than rural dwellers? To be consistent in his line of thinking, he would be compelled to so argue. Yet, psychologists in general would disagree with him, pointing out to him the systematic difference in habit-speed patterns of reacting to and manipulating symbols and ideas which typically differentiate the urban and rural environment.

Dr. McGurk perhaps has the charity to concede that the rural environment is less stimulating than the urban, and it is encouraging for the future that most psychologists, unlike Dr. McGurk, concede also that the psychological-social-economic status of the Negro, despite inherent mental equality, is still sufficiently less stimulating than the psychological-social-economic status of the white citizen to produce a differing tendency in test scores.

Statements  
On

"A Scientist's Report on Race Differences"

By  
Frank C. J. McGurk, Ph. D.

As Printed in The  
September 21st issue of U. S. News and World Report

By  
Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago

NOTE:

These statements were prepared for the use of the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago. The technical aspects of the statements were the product of a group of social scientists led by Doctor Charles T. O'Reilly. Doctor O'Reilly received his training at Notre Dame and Loyola Universities. He is now Director of Research at the Loyola University School of Social Work. This group actually went to pertinent sources cited by McGurk in order to set up a valid basis for their evaluation.

NEWS RELEASETHE CATHOLIC INTERRACIAL COUNCIL of Chicago

21 West Superior Street  
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Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr.  
President

Lloyd Davis  
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Mrs. Robert C. McNamara  
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Committee

September 24, 1956

A group of social scientists, consultants to the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago, today issued a sharp rebuke to Dr. Frank C.J. McGurk who said in a recent article that "Negroes as a group do not possess as much (capacity for education) as Whites as a group." Dr. McGurk, Associate Professor of Psychology at Villanova University, Pennsylvania, writing an article for "U.S. News and World Report" claimed that the recent social and economic opportunities afforded Negroes only tended to increase the differences between Negroes and Whites.

The Chicago scientists, headed by Dr. Charles T. O'Reilly, Director of Research at the Loyola University School of Social Work, pointed out that "the only inference to be drawn from Dr. McGurk's article is that Negroes are mentally inferior to whites. Social scientists generally have pointed out for many years now that there are no facts to maintain such a position. There certainly is no generally recognized social scientist in the world today who maintains such a position."

"Dr. McGurk's basic argument is that despite an increase in socio-economic opportunities, the Negro's capacity for education has not improved. He rests his argument on six studies in which, he claims, Negroes of equal socio-economic status as that of the whites included in the tests consistently averaged lower scores on the psychological tests than the whites.

"In examining these studies we find," the Chicago group said, "that Dr. McGurk's alleged social and economic equivalence does not stand up. As a matter of fact he does not use these studies with the caution suggested by the authors themselves. In a study by M. Bruce which McGurk claimed there were "equivalent social and economic conditions" for Negro and white children, the author found that Negro children made lower test scores than white children, but pointed out, "This, however, cannot be considered proof of the innate inferiority of the Negro sample. One obvious difficulty is that the equation of the two groups was not entirely valid."

In another study by A. Shuey of students from what McGurk called "identical social and economic backgrounds" he failed to mention that the author said, "It obviously cannot be inferred that all environmental factors which conceivably might influence the mental test scores of college students have been equated in this study."

"It would appear that Dr. McGurk has taken facts out of context, ignored the cautions of the researchers who made the studies that he quotes, arrived at conclusions entirely unwarranted by the data he has used. We feel that he has misused the work of reputable scholars."

"Finally, we do not understand what bearing Dr. McGurk's article has on the Supreme Court decision ruling out segregation of Negroes and whites in the public school system. The basis for the Supreme Court decision was the equality which each American enjoys because he is a citizen and not because he has passed a certain I.Q. test, Dr. McGurk's or anyone else's."

Catholic Interracial Council of  
Chicago  
21 West Superior Street  
Chicago 10, Illinois

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An Analysis of an article by Dr. Frank C.J. McGurk

In a recent issue of a national magazine ("A Scientist Reports on Race Differences", U.S. News and World Report, September 21, 1956, pp. 92-96), Dr. Frank C.J. McGurk, a Villanova University professor, stated that, "Negroes as a group do not possess as much (capacity for education) as whites as a group." (p. 96) Dr. McGurk's article claims that increased social and economic opportunities for Negroes have increased the psychological differences between Negroes and whites, and he reaches the conclusion that, "There is something more important, more basic, to the race problem than differences in external opportunity." (p. 96) His clear implication is that there is something in the Negro as a person which makes him unable to benefit from educational opportunity. This is a neat way of saying that Negroes are mentally inferior to whites. In his article, Dr. McGurk says that his ideas are at variance with those of two other professors. He might better have said that they are at variance with the vast majority of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and other scholars who are interested in the problem discussed by Dr. McGurk.

Dr. McGurk relies on six articles to support his theory about the Negro's, he says, inability to profit from education. These six were selected, he says, because they permitted a comparison between the World War I performance of Negroes on psychological tests and latter day performance. In limiting himself to these articles, Dr. McGurk has ruled out many other articles and reports of research that shed light on the problem. Such tactics raise serious questions about the adequacy and objectivity of his research efforts.

Dr. McGurk says that if cultural (social and economic) opportunities are important in determining capacity for education, an improvement in cultural opportunities should result in an improvement in capacity for education. He then says that the social and economic condition of the Negro has improved since World War I and at a faster rate than for whites. Altho possibly true, such a statement needs qualification. One should not forget that even an enormous rapid improvement would leave the average Negro still far behind the average white and more importantly, still subject to limitations in the form of discrimination and closed doors to advancement. Such things minimize the effect of socio-economic advances. Dr. McGurk has not made this clear.

To answer his question whether Negroes now have more capacity for education due to "all of this social and economic improvement," Dr. McGurk turns to certain articles in the literature of psychology. He considered that six articles had enough information to permit a comparison of the Negro's World War I test performance with latter day performance.

Several of these articles have been examined to evaluate Dr. McGurk's claims.

Study I (H.A. Tanser - The Settlement of Negroes in Kent County, Ontario, 1939). According to Dr. McGurk, Tanser's study showed that "The social and economic advantages of Canadian life did not increase the relative standing of the Negro children to white children." McGurk apparently accepted Tanser's statement that social and economic opportunities had always been equal for all Negroes and whites in the area, "...except for a few minor outbreaks of oppression directed toward the Negroes." Since so much depends upon this alleged equality, it is interesting to note that Bruce, in an article also quoted by McGurk, said of Tanser's study, "...although the schools are identical for Tanser's white and Negro groups, the environmental factor of the home has not yet been adequately controlled." (Bruce, p. 94) Other psychologists also claimed that there were "significant differences in socio-economic level between the two groups". (A. Anastasi and J.P. Foley, Differential Psychology, 1949, p. 759). These comments make cultural opportunities less equal than McGurk's statement would lead one to believe.

Study II. (M. Bruce, "Factors Affecting Intelligence Test Performance of Whites and Negroes in the Rural South", Archives of Psychology, N. 292, 1940, pp. 5-99). This was a study of rural white and Negro children from an impoverished area in Virginia. McGurk says that Bruce's findings indicated that equivalent socio-economic opportunity, although low, did not improve the psychological test score relationship between Negroes and whites.

Bruce found that Negro children made lower test scores than white children but also said, "This, however, cannot be considered proof of the innate inferiority of the Negro sample. One obvious difficulty is that the equation of the two groups was not entirely valid..." (p. 95). Bruce was "inclined to believe that there is an innate difference between particular white and Negro groups studied. However, the fact that all the Negro IQ distributions...are positively skewed with the highest score...suggests "selective migration" and possible social equality. In any event the positive skewness of the Negro IQ distribution prevents this study from being used as evidence of the superiority of the white race to the Negro race." (p. 97)

Although Dr. McGurk claims that the children in Bruce's study lived in "equivalent social and economic conditions", Bruce herself states that the equation of the two groups was not entirely valid. Dr. McGurk also did not mention that the education of the Negro and white children had been equated only by choosing Negro and white schools which had the same teacher-pupil ratio, thus leaving uncontrolled a host of other important educational factors.

Study III. (A. Shuey, "A Comparison of Negro and White College Students by Means of the ACE", Journal of Psychology, 14, 1942, pp. 35-52). Shuey reportedly tested a "very highly selected" group of Negro and white college freshmen, that Dr. McGurk means by "highly selected" is not clear. Shuey's article says that they were students entering a New York College and apparently no special effort was made to select any of them.

Shuey found that the whites averaged higher test scores than Negroes. Dr. McGurk uses her findings to support his conclusion that equal socio-economic opportunities do not improve Negro test performance.

Shuey matched 43 Negro and 43 white students. The 43 Negroes were all the Negroes in the freshman class at New York University's Washington Square College. They were matched with 43 whites chosen from 3,608 white freshmen. Although Dr. McGurk

felt that the students had the same "general cultural status" and "identical social and economic backgrounds", Shuey said: "It obviously cannot be inferred that all environmental factors which conceivably might influence the mental test scores of college students have been equated in this study."

Study IV. (Fred Brown, "An Experimental and Critical Study of the Intelligence of Negro and White Kindergarten Children", Journal of General Psychology, 1944, 65, pp. 161-175). Brown's study was made with Minneapolis kindergarten children, and found that Negro children made lower average scores than the white children. Dr. McGurk said that "whatever socio-economic benefits accrued to the Negro children in Minneapolis in 1944 were not sufficient to change their standing, relative to the white children with whom they were compared, when the World War I data are the basis for comparison." 22

When Brown found that the Negro children made lower scores he looked for an explanation and after examining his data, said, "Negro children at the kindergarten level in the Minneapolis Public Schools are not inferior to white children of nominally similar socio-economic status, in general intellectual capacity..." (p. 168). He went on to discuss why the Negroes scored lower, although they lived in the same socio-economic environment. Brown suggested that Negroes are hemmed-in in terms of opportunity, that their aspirations are reduced, their spontaneity in verbal behavior limited and general intellectual development constricted.

These are things that impose real barriers between the Negro and genuine equality, regardless of certain socio-economic advances. They were over-looked by Dr. McGurk.

(Page three above corrected)

Statement  
On

"A Scientist's Report on Race Differences"

By  
Frank C. J. McGurk, Ph. D.

As Printed in The  
September 21st issue of U. S. News and World Report

By  
Dietrich C. Reitzes, Ph. D.

NOTE:

This statement was issued by Doctor Dietrich C. Reitzes. Doctor Reitzes received his Masters and Doctorate at the University of Chicago. He is now involved in doing important research on the Negro in America. He holds the rank of Research Associate with the University of Chicago, and the rank of Assistant Professor at Indiana University, Calumet Center.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
Division of Adult Education and Public Services  
Calumet Center

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September 21, 1956

Mr. David Lawrence, Editor  
U.S. News and World Report  
24th and N Streets,  
Washington 7, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lawrence:

I would like to indicate my strong protest to the publication of an article entitled "A Scientist Reports on Race Differences" by Frank C.J. McGurk in your September 21, 1956, issue. I am protesting not against the voicing of an opinion in this matter but rather against a misleading terminology which is used in the title as well as in the article itself. Emphasis is put all along on the fact that this is a scientific piece of research reported by a scientist. Upon close examination, however, it becomes apparent Dr. McGurk violates some of the basic tenets of scientific treatment of data in the following respects: 1) he has carefully selected data to fit his basic assumption and has ignored data which go against his basic assumption and 2) his generalizations go way beyond the data that he has.

Let me cite just a few illustrations of the above. 1) Dr. McGurk cites the intelligence tests given by the army during World War I. He does not mention, however, and consequently does not explain, that scores of northern Negroes were higher than scores of southern Negroes; that scores of northern whites were higher than scores of southern whites, and most important of all, that scores of northern Negroes were higher than scores of southern whites. This distribution of scores makes it difficult to argue for an innate difference between the races, but it is easily explainable on the basis of the difference in environmental factors, particularly education.

2) In the book by Simpson and Yinger, Racial and Cultural Minorities, on page 12 is the following statement: "Virtually all psychologists today insist that comparisons are meaningless except within a group that has very similar background, experience and status". I am sure that this statement could be verified and documented from innumerable sources. Dr. McGurk bases his whole conclusions on the assumption that by standardizing certain objective factors in the socio-economic status of individuals he has completely eliminated all environmental differences between Negroes and whites. Only little reflection on this matter would indicate that given an existing prejudice and discrimination against Negroes this is a completely fallacious argument. For example, if we take two school teachers, one white and one Negro, with equal educational background and income, one could not say that, therefore, all environmental factors would be equal and that any difference in test scores of these two individuals have to be explained by inherent biological differences. Furthermore, Dr. McGurk never indicates the criteria used for standardizing the socio-economic status of Negroes and whites in the tests used. Data cited by Dr. McGurk indicate that the higher the status of the individuals the greater the difference between their scores. I would like to suggest that this is so because the social environments of Negro and white sharecroppers is probably more similar to each other than the social environment of white and Negro school teachers.

3) All comparisons which Dr. McGurk uses are based on white-Negro comparisons. Nowhere is any attempt made to test the impact of environmental differences by comparing Negroes with Negroes under different environmental conditions, or, what would be even more significant, the differences between test scores of the same individuals as their environmental factors change. In the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students Southern Project Report 1953-55, published by the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, 6 East 82nd Street, New York 28, New York, the following statement appears:

Perhaps the most significant information gleaned from the first year's follow-up study was that students of the lower socio-economic status, who generally have low SAT scores and who ordinarily would be expected to receive lower grades in college, do not. In fact, the study results indicate that these students tend to receive college grades which are higher, on the average, than the college grades of students of higher socio-economic status. The higher college grades of students of lower socio-economic status is not primarily determined by the fact that more of them attend the non-prestige colleges with presumably lower academic standards.

These data would suggest that perhaps scholastic aptitude tests measure what students of low socio-economic status families have learned rather than what they can learn. This was suspected after the first year of the southern project and was commented upon on page 4 of the INTERIM REPORT for that year in the following words: "This wide a range of scores within so similar a group would indicate that very strong motivational and cultural differences were operating. It would also indicate that, within a fairly narrow range of scores, students from this kind of group are likely to do better in college than the predictions indicate, when these motivational and cultural factors are affected by such a radically different environment as the college campus."

It seems to me that this indicates both the inherent limits of what intelligence tests actually measure and the ability of Negroes to benefit by improved environmental conditions.

In summary, then, it seems to me that all Dr. McGurk has demonstrated is that Negroes and whites scored differently as a group on certain tests even though they are matched according to certain criteria (which Dr. McGurk does not specify). I do not deny that this is so, nor do I offer an explanation why this is so, but on the other hand, everything that Dr. McGurk says beyond this is pure speculation not supported by any facts which he presents, and contradicted by other readily available facts. To present this material as a scientific study is, I believe, grossly misleading.

Dietrich C. Reitzes, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Sociology

DCR:ew

Statement  
On

"A Scientist's Report on Race Differences"

By  
Frank C. J. McGurk, Ph. D.

As Printed in The  
September 21st issue of U. S. News and World Report

By  
Leonard Z. Breen, Ph. D.

NOTE:

This statement was issued by Doctor Leonard Z. Breen. Doctor Breen received his B. S. degree from Illinois Institute of Technology in Engineering and Economics. His Masters and Doctorate were received in the field of Sociology. He is an Assistant Professor at both Illinois Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago. Doctor Breen also holds the additional rank of Research Associate at the University of Chicago.

September 20, 1956

Mr. David Lawrence, Editor  
U. S. News and World Report  
24th and N. Streets, N.W.  
Washington, D. C.

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Dear Mr. Lawrence:

I have just finished reading the article called "A Scientist's Report on Race Differences," by Frank C.J. McGurk, in your September 21 issue. I am surprised that a journal with a reputation such as yours should have presented such an article as a "scientist's report". In the last paragraph of his article Mr. McGurk says that the six studies on which he reports are the "only existing studies" on this matter. I am certain that you will be deluged with letters reporting a large number of studies of a similar sort, showing a wide variety of results. These I will leave to the researchers themselves. My main comment has to do with the very nature of the tests cited by Mr. McGurk. In several places in the article Mr. McGurk refers to "capacity for education". While I have not read all the literature on this subject, I do know that older and wiser researchers and teachers have for many years pointed out that we do not now have and have never had any test which can measure one's innate capacity for education. I take the trouble to use the word innate, since Mr. McGurk's implication obviously is precisely that. Researchers have for many years attempted to separate the cultural aspects of intelligence from the innate aspects of intelligence. While many persons feel they know something about the differences, nobody has as yet devised a test to measure the innate aspects.

Even if it were possible to accept the psychological test scores as measuring something like capacity, a further question, basic to Mr. McGurk's argument, must be raised. Mr. McGurk raises this issue by proposing that "an improvement in the cultural opportunities should result in an improvement in the capacity for education;" he then goes on to argue that there has been no change made in the differences between the races in terms of capacity for education. The six studies that he reports on, however, are each done in one point of time. He does not cite a single longitudinal study using either the same group of persons or even the same test. In other words, he compares different studies at different times without any indication as to whether these tests are testing the same things. When he cites an "overlap" of 30% for a given test, as he does in the fifth test reported on, how can we know that the "overlap" for the same test used with a similar group of children twenty years previously would not have been 40%, or 60%, or any other percentage different from 30%? Simply because it coincidentally is similar to the 29% for World War I data does not mean that he is measuring the same thing or even that his tests are the same kind of tests.

To cite a study of this general kind correctly using a different body of data, I refer you to the study of Life Expectancy by Dr. Albert J. Mayer in 1950 at the University of Chicago. In this study, Mayer demonstrates that when Negro and white persons are equated, for socio-economic status, the Negro life expectancy,

while lower than the white at any point in time for which he had data, increased a constantly more rapid rate than did the white life expectancy. In other words, although white persons could expect to live longer in 1950 than Negro persons, the difference was proportionately smaller than it was in 1910. Thus, as the socio-economic lot of Negroes has generally increased so that it has come closer to that of white persons, so has their life expectancy. This statistic, I might add, is one which summarizes many of the important differences between persons, namely, their ability to procure information, medical facilities, healthful residences, safe employment, etc. It can be easily argued that if such a vital statistic as life expectancy has been growing more and more alike for whites and Negroes, surely other biological manifestations would do likewise. If Mr. McGurk proposes capacity for education as being biological in origin, then his findings are immediately brought into question.

Two further small matters: First, on page 96 of your magazine, Mr. McGurk reports that, while high socio-economic groups of Negroes and whites exhibit a large difference in psychological test scores, the low socio-economic groups do not. But if socio-economic status does not affect test scores, as Mr. McGurk argues, should not the Negro group have significantly lower scores than white groups at any socio-economic level. Secondly, on page 95, Mr. McGurk describes a study of pairs of persons matched by "fourteen social and economic factors thought to be important." One wonders who thinks these factors are the important ones and, further, whether pairs of persons, no matter how matched on social and economic factors, could ever be really similar. There are all the environmental, emotional, and cultural differences which militate against this notion of similarity.

As a person actively conducting research in the social sciences, I resent the description given by the Editor of Mr. McGurk's paper as "scientific". The methodological framework such as that employed in his paper would not even be acceptable as a term-paper framework in an undergraduate course. If one is to be really "factual about race differences," I suggest to you that there are obviously more competently presented papers in the many journals of the social sciences being published every year. The wide body of such knowledge could keep your staff busy for many days simply reviewing the work.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonard Z. Breen, Ph. D.  
Assistant Professor and Research  
Associate

LZB:dpd

Statement

on

"A Scientist's Report on Race Differences"

by

Frank C. J. McGurk, Ph. D.

As Printed in The

September 21st issue of U. S. News and World Report

by

Peter Jacobsohn

NOTE:

This statement was issued by Peter Jacobsohn. Mr. Jacobsohn is an instructor in Sociology and Race Relations at Illinois Institute of Technology. Mr. Jacobsohn is at present working on his doctorate at Northwestern University.

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER  
Chicago 16

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Department of Political and Social Science

October 5, 1956

Mr. David Lawrence, Editor,  
U. S. News and World Report,  
24th and North Streets, N.W.  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lawrence:

I would like to take the opportunity to express my amazement at the appearance of "A Scientist's Report on Race Differences" in a publication of your stature.

Even a cursory examination of the piece reveals enough fallacies to move even a non-specialist to suspect the validity of the conclusions reached by your author.

In fact, Dr. McGurk's effort is so transparently misleading that I have assigned it as required reading to my classes in Race Relations and Introductory Sociology, together with an analysis of its more obvious shortcomings. I am enclosing a copy of the latter.

My analysis of Dr. McGurk's article is not concerned with the fact that the author has resorted to card-stacking in the selection of his studies in order, apparently, to support an a priori viewpoint, nor does it deal with certain misrepresentations in his exposition of the studies he did select.

Rather, it was my intention to demonstrate that, whatever the factual basis for McGurk's conclusions, they do not arise from his evidence, his logic or his method of analysis. In short, his entire argument rests on a succession of non-sequiturs, unwarranted inferences and ambiguities, and is thus inadmissible on its own merits.

I realize that neither you nor anyone else can be blamed for placing reliance on scientific integrity. In view of the untenable absurdities contained in the article, therefore, and barring the possibility of a deliberate hoax, I am forced to question Dr. McGurk's competence as a psychologist and a scientist.

I trust that you will see your way to ask one of the many reputable men in the fields of race relations and intelligence testing to present the facts objectively and scientifically.

Yours very truly,

PETER JACOBSON  
Instructor.

PJ:lav

Department of Political and Social Science

A SCIENTIST'S UNSCIENTIFIC REPORT

by  
Peter Jacobsohn

On September 21, 1956, Dr. F. C.J. McGurk, associate professor of psychology at Villanova University, set out to cast the light of science upon a question that had moved into the foreground of public interest with the recent desegregation decision of the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>1</sup>

The question: Do Negroes have the same potentialities for education as whites, i.e. is it at all possible for them to benefit from integration of the schools?

McGurk's reasoning was seemingly objective and based on sound logic.<sup>2</sup> If capacity for educational attainment is a function of socio-economic factors, as claimed by the proponents of desegregation in the schools, then any improvement in socio-economic circumstances should be reflected in higher scores on tests measuring educational capacity. If not, we must assume that certain innate variables are operative which prevent Negroes from ever, as a group, achieving intellectual equality with whites, no matter how favorable the environmental conditions.

To test this hypothesis, McGurk compared six studies published between 1935 and 1950 with the psychological test scores of Negroes and whites on the Army "Alpha" and "Beta" intelligence tests of World War I. He concluded that:

"...there are psychological differences between Negroes and whites. Moreover, these differences are, today, of about the same magnitude as they were two generations ago. These differences are not the result of differences in social and economic opportunities, and they will not disappear as the social and economic opportunities of Negroes and whites are equalized."<sup>3</sup>

He then proceeded to compare the results of his six more recent tests with each other and found that:

"...when the Negro is given better social and economic opportunity, the differences between Negroes and whites actually increase."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Supreme Court, The Public School Segregation Cases, October 1954

<sup>2</sup>C.J. McGurk, "A Scientist's Report on Race Differences", U.S. News and World Report, September 21, 1956, pp. 92-96

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p. 94

<sup>4</sup>ibid., p. 96

And further:-

"An improvement in the socio-economic position of the Negro made him less able to compete with whites on psychological tests... as far as psychological-test performance is a measure of capacity for education, Negroes, as a group do not possess as much of it as whites as a group."<sup>5</sup>

Ergo:-

"...we are approaching the race-difference problem from the wrong direction...a fruitful approach to racial equality cannot follow the lines of social and economic manipulation. There is something more important, more basic, to the race problem than differences in external opportunity."<sup>6</sup>

So much for McGurk's recommendations. It is perhaps significant that a paper this far-reaching in its import, attempting as it does to challenge the views of the major authorities in the fields of race-relations and intelligence testing,<sup>7</sup> should appear, not in a scientific journal, but in a weekly news magazine whose readers, on the whole, cannot be expected to be overly familiar with the methods, procedures and standards of the social sciences. Clearly, McGurk's message is addressed to an audience insufficiently equipped to evaluate it.

The following analysis of McGurk's article was undertaken with the intention of bringing to bear upon it certain rudimentary criteria of logic and scientific method which serve as standards for the acceptability of any work purporting to present the results of "scientific" inquiry. It will be seen that, in the light of such analysis, McGurk's piece simply doesn't stand up.

I am here not primarily concerned with the objective truth or falsity of McGurk's claims. Neither do I propose to raise the question of card-stacking in the selection of his studies in order, so it seems, to support an a priori viewpoint. Finally, I shall disregard certain misrepresentations in his exposition of those studies he did select.

Rather, I shall attempt to show that even when considered on its merits alone, McGurk's argument collapses under careful scrutiny. In other words, assuming that McGurk's conclusions are indeed factually correct, they are nevertheless invalid on the basis of the kind of evidence he presents, nor can they be derived from his premises. They arise neither from his method of analysis, his logic or his evidence, and are founded upon a succession of non-sequiturs, ambiguities and unwarranted inferences. Thus, even without access to the immense literature on the subject,<sup>8</sup> or even to the paltry six studies invoked by the author, it is a relatively easy task to assess the true value of his work.

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<sup>5</sup>ibid., p. 96

<sup>6</sup>ibid., p. 96

<sup>7</sup>cf. for example Otto Klineberg (ed.) Characteristics of the American Negro, New York: Harper & Bros., 1944, and George Laton Simpson and Milton Yinger, Racial and Cultural Minorities, New York: Harper & Bros., 1953, pp. 55-59.

<sup>8</sup>Contrast here McGurk's assertion that "...of the 63 articles which presented data, only six presented enough material to permit us to compare the World War I performance of Negroes and whites with latter-day performance." (p.93) The author here closes the door to all other means of testing his hypothesis, a wise move in view of the fact that they might lead to different conclusions.

The following are some of the more serious flaws in McGurk's article:-

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1) Comparability of Variables.

- a) The Samples. There is no indication that the samples tested during WVI are comparable to those utilized in the six studies cited by McGurk, nor are the samples of his six studies comparable to each other.
- b) The Tests. While it is true that all good I.Q. Tests tend to correlate highly with each other, there is no indication that those employed in the various studies are equivalent measuring instruments, or that their scores have been standardized so as to permit a comparison of "overlaps", averages and percentages. Nor is it at all certain that each of them measures precisely the same factors.
- c) The Socio-Economic Variables. Even if the tests were equivalent in every respect, the socio-economic variables against which the subjects were matched are not the same in the different studies. This becomes evident from a careful perusal of McGurk's piece itself, and even more so from a cursory check of his sources.
- d) The Matching of Samples. Central, of course, to the validity of the inferences to be drawn on the basis of McGurk's six studies is the question of matching Negroes and whites on those variables which are to be held constant. Even disregarding the weaknesses of the "matched group design,"<sup>9</sup> the possibility of matching Negroes and whites on all relevant socio-economic factors is doubtful. Whatever similarities exist between the races, the American Negro is always held inferior in some respects to even the lowliest American white. The awareness of this "social inferiority" itself is a factor to be taken into account. To the extent that the ever present reality of discrimination influences attitudes, values, behavior patterns and aspirations, a valid matching of the races is impossible, no matter how much the material circumstances of their members may resemble each other.

The degree to which McGurk is willing to overlook salient information becomes nowhere more apparent as in his description of the study by Tanser:

"According to the author, social and economic opportunities had always been equal for all Negroes and whites in this area, except for a few minor outbursts of oppression directed toward the Negroes." (italics mine)<sup>10</sup>

Assuming the author of the study was quoted correctly, McGurk, as an experienced psychologist, should have challenged the matching techniques used in this study on the strength of that subordinate clause alone. Every other scientist would. It follows that McGurk's generalizations are suspect on this basis alone.

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<sup>9</sup>For a discussion of the weaknesses of the "matched-group design", see below, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup>McGurk, op.cit., p. 94.

2) Statistical Ambiguities.

- a) Measures of Central Tendency. In spite of ostentatious utilization of statistical (i.e. "scientific") data, McGurk's presentation is so murky as to be virtually useless. There are three measures of central tendency: the mean, the median and the mode. Each might be called an "average" and each has its uses and limitations. Inferences drawn from them are valid only if they are correctly identified and presented in conjunction with such supplementary measures as the "standard error of the mean". In any event, it is extremely difficult to guess which average McGurk is talking about at any one time. Thus the suspicion arises that he may be comparing one type of "average" with another one. This suspicion is enhanced by statements like this:

"Overlapping...is concerned only with the relationship between the bulk of the Negro scores and the average score of the whites."<sup>11</sup>

This may or may not indicate that McGurk here compares the mode of the Negroes with the arithmetic mean of the whites. On the other hand, it might well be that he refers to one of the three possible averages in the case of the whites and then states the percentage of Negroes overlapping it. But even this would be misleading barring additional information. If the "average" in this case is the arithmetic mean, for example, the reader ought to know that it is so notoriously affected by a few extreme values that it cannot, by itself, convey an accurate picture of the distribution of scores.

- b) The Range. Dr. McGurk conveniently chooses to dismiss the range as "...so notoriously unstable that it is almost meaningless."<sup>12</sup> To start with, the range is by no means "notoriously unstable", provided a large enough number of subjects is involved. In fact, the range is one of the very measures permitting a meaningful evaluation of "averages". Thus, a study by Klineberg<sup>13</sup> utilizing 18 studies of white Americans and 27 of Negroes, established a median I.Q. of 102 for the former as contrasted to a median I.Q. of 86 for the latter. This indicates that the majority of Negroes tested scored below the majority of whites on I.Q. tests. By itself, this comparison certainly provides more grist for McGurk's mill.

An inspection of the ranges, however, reveals that the upper limits of both races are substantially identical. The omission of the range or other so-called measures of dispersion therefore seriously affect the interpretation of the data presented.

- c) Overlap. The concept of overlap if used alone, tends to obscure the potentialities of individual Negroes. It simply indicates the percentage of Negroes falling above a certain I.Q. score on the white distributions. It says nothing of the distribution or the extreme values of the Negro samples as contrasted with those of the whites.

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<sup>11</sup> ibid., p. 93

<sup>12</sup> ibid., p. 93

<sup>13</sup> Klineberg, op.cit., p. 35

Even so, a recent study revealed that:

"...approximately 40 per cent of American Negroes exceed the native-white American median. An individual Negro, in other words, has a probability of possessing superior intelligence almost equal to that of an individual white."<sup>14</sup>

3) Relevance of Variables.

a) The Concept of Race. The term "race" refers to a classification of homo-sapiens according to highly visible, if superficial biological characteristics that breed true. There is nothing in the concept of "race" which necessarily relates it to such psychological characteristics as intelligence, temperament, aptitude or personality. Studies like McGurk's proceed from the assumption that essentially superficial differences, between groups of human beings may be related to more basic differences, must be more than skin deep. Hypotheses of this kind are, of course, entirely acceptable.

However, the only way to test such a hypothesis would be to establish criteria for racial purity, draw a sample from a population of racially pure subjects and compare it with a sample of pure, "full-blooded" members of another race. Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to find racially pure types, especially among American Negroes, three quarters of whom are of mixed ancestry. Therefore, in order to determine the relationship of racial factors to performance on intelligence tests, the next best thing would be to compare homogeneous groups of varying degrees of whiteness with pure Negroes, holding all other factors constant.

This has never been done, nor do I think it can be done.<sup>15</sup> But even if it were possible to thus determine the beneficial effect of white genes, the question arises: at what stage of "whiteness" is intelligence sufficiently improved to make the difference? - Relating race to intelligence, then, involves the fiction of "race" as a constant, discontinuous variable.

b) Intelligence Tests. McGurk's entire argument rests, of course, on his belief that innate capacity for education can be measured by means of intelligence tests. This is incorrect. So far, it has been impossible to devise any test eliciting innate capacity to the exclusion of any other factor. Nor is it feasible to devise or administer any intelligence test whose results are free from contamination by cultural background factors. When McGurk states that he has devised a test "containing an equal number of culturally weighted and non-culturally weighted questions,"<sup>16</sup> he disregards, through ignorance or by

<sup>14</sup>Martin D. Jenkins, "The Upper Limit of Ability among American Negroes", The Scientific Monthly, 66: 399-401, cited in Arnold W. Green, Sociology, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956, p. 229

<sup>15</sup>A number of studies approaching this model have been conducted by Ferguson, Herskovits, Peterson, and Lanier and Klineberg, with inconclusive results. In no case were such crucial factors as schooling, motivation, rapport, speed, socio-economic background, the language factor and the degree of race-mixture sufficiently controlled to permit valid conclusions. (cf. Simson and Yinger,) op.cit., p. 59.

<sup>16</sup>McGurk, op.cit., p. 96.

design, some of the more fundamental principles relating to the administration and interpretation of psychological tests.

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It has been abundantly demonstrated that language facility, rapport, attitudes toward testing, and culturally determined habits and modes of thinking will affect performance on intelligence tests of any sort. Psychologists, therefore, have been forced to conclude that such tests measure primarily, not what can be learned, but what has been learned. This is the main reason why I.Q.-test scores tend to fluctuate with changes in environmental conditions. Their predictive value rests on the assumption that a normal person in a given cultural setting will have learned enough prior to taking an I.Q. test, to obtain an average score. Similarly, scores significantly above or below the average are taken to indicate higher or lower than average intelligence simply because the subject was able to learn more or less than the bulk of the population. This rationale is entirely satisfactory if a test is used on the same type of population for which it was standardized, i.e., if the individuals tested have had the opportunity, by and large, to acquire the same kind and amount of knowledge.

But "opportunity" involves more than the objective accessibility of the material to be learned. It also presupposes certain skills, attitudes and behavior patterns conducive to taking advantage of opportunities. To the extent, for example, that verbal facility is culturally determined, groups with a tradition of verbliness may well outscore groups whose means of communication and expression emphasize other avenues of self-realization.

- c) Socio-Economic Factors. The problem of socio-economic factors is one of both precision and relevance. As for precision, McGurk at no time identifies the specific socio-economic factors on which the various samples were matched. We have no way of telling who was compared with whom on what variables.

But even assuming that the socio-economic factors were identical and comparable for all the studies mentioned it does not follow that they were either necessary or sufficient to affect test performance. Traditionally, socio-economic background tends to be established by such criteria as income, housing, rental, education and occupation. However, it is doubtful that these are the only factors relevant to performance on I.Q. tests. In fact, there is considerable evidence that such factors as emotional deprivation, consciousness of restricted opportunity, differential treatment by teachers and peers, and differential "family culture" influence test performance and achievement potentials. By "family culture" I refer to those personality-shaping experiences that occur during the early, most impressionable years of life. They form the basis for the adult personality by conditioning the pre-school child in certain habits of thinking, perceiving, and reacting to the world around him.

Traditions of verbal facility, of the value of "book-learning" as contrasted to more immediately practical skills, an outgoing, trusting approach to authority figures, the habit and expectation of success, are not acquired in one or two generations. Yet, these may well turn out to be the crucial factors in the capacity to take advantage of improved socio-economic circumstances.

In his headlong pursuit of a preconceived notion, McGurk has thus shown a deplorable lack of scientific sophistication.

4) The Experimental Design

In comparing six recent studies with the results of W.W.I tests, McGurk uses a "vertical" design whose chief weakness lies in the dubious comparability of the samples, measures and tests involved.

His other approach is called the "matched groups" design, i.e., the comparison of the performance of various groups on a given test after they have been matched on factors thought to influence test-performance. This technique has one serious drawback: results arising from it are never conclusive since they may have been affected by variables which were not controlled, or could not be controlled. For this reason, hypotheses of the type advanced by McGurk are usually tested by a combination of the horizontal "matched groups" design and the vertical "test-retest" design. Here, the same groups, carefully matched, are tested and re-tested at various intervals under changed but controlled conditions.

An example of the test-retest design is a study by Klineberg in which he tested Negro school-children before and after moving from the South into areas of better schools. He found significant improvement in test-performance with improvement in educational opportunity. Further studies revealed that the degree of improvement varied directly with the length of time the children had been in New York.<sup>17</sup>

5) Logic and Inference

Space does not permit a point by point refutation of the numerous logical fallacies, unwarranted inferences and hasty conclusions in which McGurk's paper abounds. One example may suffice: According to McGurk,

"...an improvement in the socio-economic position of the Negro made him less able to compete with the whites on psychological tests."<sup>18</sup>

Hence, he seems to conclude, it must be innate rather than socio-economic factors which determine test-performance. Nothing of the sort follows by necessity. For one, we might hypothesize that the set of socio-economic factors referred to was not relevant to psychological-test performance, or only partially so, and that therefore a different set of environmental factors should be controlled in further tests.

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<sup>17</sup>Klineberg, op.cit., Part II, chaps. 1-3. Cf. also Simpson and Yinger, op.cit. for additional relevant data: "In the Army study of nearly 15,000 southern Negroes and 8,000 northern Negroes in 1918, the northern Negroes were clearly superior to the southern Negroes. This study also revealed the interesting fact that although northern Negroes ranked below northern whites, the median I.Q.'s for Negroes from Ohio, Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania were higher than the median I.Q.'s for whites from Mississippi, Kentucky, Arkansas and Georgia." (p.56) These, then, are data from the W.W.I. studies which McGurk conveniently overlooks, since they endanger his conclusions.

<sup>18</sup>McGurk, op.cit., p. 93

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Nevertheless, it appears that, whatever the factors influencing test performance, they seem to acquire added significance as requirements increase. We might posit here an increased discrepancy between aspirations and opportunities as the material conditions of Negro life improve. For whites, aspirations and opportunities are in relative balance. Not so for Negroes. The classified advertisements of any daily paper with their discriminatory employment-offers bear that out. Furthermore, as Negroes acquire skills which render them increasingly competitive with whites, friction develops, tension increases and performance may suffer.

In short, a few material gains cannot undo centuries of deprivation, nor can they neutralize the inequities of the present. It doesn't take innate characteristics to explain why Negroes tend to fall behind as requirements increase.

In the light of all the above objections, McGurk's article emerges at best, as a diatribe, haphazardly assembled and shoddily executed. A scientist's unscientific report. Had it appeared in a scientific journal (assuming that it would have been accepted for publication), it's fate would have been one of massive oblivion. Instead, the author has succeeded in dazzling his public with the majesty of his academic rank and the glitter of his Ph.D. degree. But science eschews authority: it is the evidence, not the degree that counts.

As it is, McGurk has given aid and comfort to those whose prejudices crave the props of scientific terminology, if not of scientific method.