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## **Convergent Trends in Black-White Verbal Test-Score Differentials in the U.S.: Period and Cohort Perspectives\***

**Min-Hsiung Huang**

Institute of European and American Studies  
Academia Sinica

**Robert M. Hauser**

Center for Demography and Ecology  
Department of Sociology, The University of Wisconsin-Madison

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### **Abstract**

We extend and modify our earlier intercohort analysis of General Social Survey (GSS) data through 1998 and confirm our previous finding of a very significant, long-term Black-White convergence, which is attributable to improvements in socioeconomic background and schooling among African-Americans. We maintain that cohort analysis is essential for an accurate understanding of temporal changes in the Black-White test score gap. Survey year analysis, on the other hand, is likely to obscure changes over time in Black-White test score differences because change occurs primarily through cohort replacement. However, even in an analysis of aggregate changes in the Black-White test score gap across survey years, when conducted properly, we find that the Black-White test score gap narrowed significantly over the period from 1974 to 1998.

**Key Words:** Black-White test score gap, cohort analysis, period analysis, verbal ability, WORDSUM.