

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-15005-8 - Does Your Family Make You Smarter?: Nature, Nurture, and Human Autonomy

James R. Flynn

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Praise for *Does Your Family Make You Smarter?*

“Another superb piece of work by the best mind in the business. The analysis of data is penetrating, the elaboration of its meaning highly illuminating, and the discourse on theories of intelligence is a feast for the mind.”

Thomas J. Bouchard, Jr., Winner of the Dobzhansky Memorial Award for a Lifetime of Outstanding Scholarship in Behavior Genetics

“Another amazing analysis of IQ data by James Flynn! As author of the Stanford-Binet 5, I have admired Flynn’s work for many years. I highly recommend his new book that shines new light on the life-course of intelligence.”

Gale H. Roid, Author of *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Fifth Edition*

“James Flynn takes up one of the most important questions in the social sciences – What is left of human autonomy in the genomic age? – and lays out the optimistic case with full acknowledgment of the technical difficulties his argument must surmount. This is the way that we are going to make progress: by engaging an evolving state of knowledge with logic and data, transparently clear prose, and unfailing civility.”

Charles Murray, Co-author of *The Bell Curve*

“Few intellectuals have grappled honestly with the problems surrounding the causes and effects of intelligence, and fewer still have done so with as much incisiveness and originality as James Flynn.”

Steven Pinker, Psychology, Harvard University

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“Professor Flynn has a remarkable ability to explain complex concepts in a way so rational and logical that it seems, after the event, we should be kicking ourselves for overlooking the obvious. His chapter on the Raven’s Progressive Matrices is brilliant.”

John Rust, Director of the Psychometrics
Centre at Cambridge and co-author of *Raven’s
Progressive Matrices*

“James Flynn, as much as anyone, can take credit for ushering in the age of enlightenment in our understanding of the nature of human intelligence. In this latest chapter, we learn how our families can either advantage or disadvantage us, and how our choices can either foster or impede our intellectual performance.”

Joshua Aronson, Applied Psychology,
New York University

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Praise for *What Is Intelligence?*

“Flynn is a cautious and careful writer. Unlike many others in IQ debates, he resists grand philosophizing . . . The evidence in support of Flynn’s original observation is now so overwhelming that the Flynn effect has moved from theory to fact.”

Malcolm Gladwell, *The New Yorker*

“This book is full of insightful ideas about our measuring rods and the ways in which they tap the thing that matters: the brain’s relative capacity to use memory and learning to adapt to the world as we have made it.”

The Times Higher Education Supplement

“Flynn paints a dynamic picture of what intelligence is and has produced an impressively multidimensional and often wise look at the elusive topic of human intelligence.”

Publisher’s Weekly

“A masterful book that will influence thinking about intelligence for many years to come.”

Robert J. Sternberg, *PsycCRITIQUES*

“Mainstream IQ researchers, who are used to being demonized when they are not being ignored, admire Flynn, who is politically a man of the left, for his fairness, geniality, insight, and devotion to advancing knowledge.”

Steve Sailer, *vdare.com*

“In *What Is Intelligence?* James R. Flynn ... suggests that we should not facilely equate IQ gains with intelligence gains. He says that it’s necessary to ‘dissect intelligence’ into its component parts: ‘solving mathematical problems, interpreting the great works of literature, finding on the spot solutions, assimilating the scientific worldview, critical

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acumen and wisdom.' When this dissection is carried out, several paradoxes emerge, which Flynn in this engaging book attempts to reconcile."

Richard Restak, *American Scholar*

"In a brilliant interweaving of data and argument, Flynn calls into question fundamental assumptions about the nature of intelligence that have driven the field for the past century. There is something here for everyone to lose sleep over. His solution to the perplexing issues revolving around IQ gains over time will give the IQ Ayatollahs fits!"

S. J. Ceci, Cornell University

"This highly engaging, and very readable, book takes forward the Dickens/Flynn model of intelligence in the form of asking yet more provocative questions ... A most unusual book, one that holds the reader's attention and leaves behind concepts and ideas that force us to rethink all sorts of issues."

Sir Michael Rutter, King's College London

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Praise for *Are We Getting Smarter?*

“... one of the most extraordinary science books I have ever read ... Flynn can confidently look forward to immortality. His name will forever be attached to one of the most contentious, baffling and, for me, exhilarating scientific discoveries of our age.”

Bryan Appleyard, *The Sunday Times*

“Flynn has made this field his own ... This book’s strengths are the authority of the author, the engaging writing style, the importance of the topics dealt with, and the up-to-date nature of the content.”

Ian J. Deary, University of Edinburgh

“No one but James Flynn could have written this book. It contains his most recent ideas about the causes and implications of the massive rise in IQ test scores that has been termed the ‘Flynn Effect’, and is thus essential reading for anyone wishing to keep up to date with the latest thinking about the nature of IQ.”

Nicholas Mackintosh, University of Cambridge

“The scholarship of this book is detailed and exhaustive. The originality of thinking is sprinkled throughout the beginning chapters, and reaches a peak in the final two. With his unique perspective, Flynn literally is ‘opening new windows.’”

Jonathan Wai, Duke University

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Does Your Family Make You Smarter?

Does your family make you smarter? James R. Flynn presents an exciting new method for estimating the effects of family on a range of cognitive abilities. Rather than using twin and adoption studies, he analyzes IQ tables that have been hidden in manuals over the last 65 years, and shows that family environment can confer a significant advantage or disadvantage to your level of intelligence. Wading into the nature vs. nurture debate, Flynn banishes the pessimistic notion that by the age of 17, people's cognitive abilities are solely determined by their genes. He argues that intelligence is also influenced by human autonomy – genetics and family notwithstanding, we all have the capacity to choose to enhance our cognitive performance. He concludes by reconciling this new understanding of individual differences with his earlier research on intergenerational trends (the “Flynn Effect”) culminating in a general theory of intelligence.

JAMES R. FLYNN is Professor Emeritus at the University of Otago, New Zealand, and a recipient of the University's Gold Medal for Distinguished Career Research. He is renowned for the “Flynn Effect”, the documentation of massive IQ gains from one generation to another. Professor Flynn is the author of 14 books including *Are We Getting Smarter?* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Where Have All the Liberals Gone?* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), and *What Is Intelligence?* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), which have caused many to rethink the prevailing theory of intelligence.

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In memory of Nicholas Mackintosh (1935–2015)

Good friend–great critic

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It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.
("Invictus", William Ernest Henley)

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