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News&Views

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SPOTLIGHT



Do Genes Shape Our Politics?

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 06.09.22

Long-time *NY Times* contributor Thomas Edsall has written several columns about studies purporting to show that political ideology is to a significant extent heritable. His aim is to understand political polarization, but the effect is to reinforce the idea that genes are destiny.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Welcome, Daisy!

Daisy Boyd is CGS' new summer intern through the **Collective Rising** program. Daisy is interested in improving awareness surrounding how assisted reproductive technologies impact not only individuals, but communities as well. She is currently studying Anthropology and Sociology at Mount Holyoke College, while pursuing The Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice Certificate through the Five College Consortium. Through her work at CGS, she hopes to contribute to the current work being done in biopolitics and explore how this relates to her interests in reproductive justice.



"We don't understand this system as well as we thought we did."

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 06.09.2022

High-profile debates over gene editing mostly focus on its use for humans even as experiments on animals continue apace. Some of the results are certainly both unexpected and unlikely to prove popular.

WHAT WE'RE READING

GENOME EDITING | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION
EUGENICS | GENOMICS | VARIOUS

GENOME EDITING

Better than CRISPR? Another way to fix gene problems may be safer and more versatile

[Jocelyn Kaiser](#), *Science* | 06.01.2022

Studies in mice suggest that epigenome editing is a potentially safer, more flexible way to turn genes on or off than editing DNA. Epigenomic edits might be less likely to cause harmful off-target effects and, unlike CRISPR edits, can be reversed.

The Pandora's Box of Embryo Testing Is Officially Open

[Carey Goldberg](#), *Bloomberg* | 05.26.2022

By overselling the links between genes and disease risk, polygenic embryo testing companies promise parents more control over their future children's risk of developing diseases. Critics argue that the scores are inaccurate and that the practice brings society closer to a eugenic future.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

If Roe is overturned, the ripples could affect IVF and genetic testing of embryos, experts warn

[Andrew Joseph](#), *STAT* | 06.06.2022

If the Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, some states could impose restrictions on the use of embryo screening with IVF. The impact hinges on whether states define life as beginning at fertilization or implantation in the womb.

An IVF Embryo Test Aims to Prevent Miscarriages: Is It Worth It?

[Laura Hercher](#), *Scientific American* | 06.01.2022

Pervasive use of preimplantation genetic testing for aneuploidy has generated controversy: some researchers contend that discarding embryos based on PGT-A ignores mounting evidence that some can yield a viable pregnancy.

Employer fertility benefits have a dramatic and startling expansion amid the Great Resignation, experts say

[Michelle Fox](#), *CNBC* | 05.27.2022

As employers try to entice new workers and keep the ones they have, more are expanding their fertility benefits to include IVF, IUI, and egg freezing.

As DNA Donors' Secrets Emerge, What Should the Children Know?

[Amy Dockser Marcus](#), *The Wall Street Journal* | 05.27.2022

DNA tests and online searches allow people to more easily track down donors, raising legal questions about what the offspring of anonymous donors have the right to know.

EUGENICS

The Long Shadow of Eugenics in America

[Linda Villarosa](#), *The New York Times Magazine* | 06.08.2022

In 1973, the Relf sisters were sterilized against their will and without their parents' consent by a physician working in a federally funded clinic. What does the government owe them and the thousands of other survivors of eugenic sterilization?

Science must overcome its racist legacy: Nature's guest editors speak

[Melissa Nobles](#), [Chad Womack](#), [Ambroise Wonkam](#), and [Elizabeth Wathuti](#), *Nature* | 06.08.2022

The authors are currently working with *Nature* as guest editors to guide the creation of several special issues of the journal dedicated to examining racism in science. The goals are to raise awareness, encourage debate, and seek solutions-based approaches.

It's Not Just Great Replacement Theory That Influenced the Buffalo Shooter

[Kyle Barr](#), *Gizmodo* | 05.31.2022

Media coverage emphasizing "replacement theory" as a motive for the Buffalo shooter fails to recognize how scientific racism, a legacy of the eugenics movement, permeates some genetics research and makes it ripe for misuse by extremists.

Japan to undergo first U.N. disabilities committee review in August

Japan Times | 05.30.2022

The U.N. committee is likely to address the forced sterilizations of thousands of people with disabilities between 1948 and 1996 under Japan's eugenics protection law. In 2019, parliament approved state compensation for survivors, but as of March, only 990 people had received compensation.

Science Must Not Be Used to Foster White Supremacy

[Janet D. Stemwedel](#), *Scientific American* | 05.24.2022

Scientists must consider how their findings can be weaponized by white supremacists. They need to take an active role in fighting both violence and white supremacy, and to consider: what is the point of conducting studies on differences among racial groups?

GENOMICS

Genetic paparazzi are right around the corner, and courts aren't ready to confront the legal quagmire of DNA theft

[Liza Vertinsky](#) and [Yaniv Heled](#), *The Conversation* | 06.03.2022

Advances in genetic sequencing pave the way for "genetic paparazzi" to collect and analyze discarded genetic materials from celebrities, raising legal questions about genetic theft and privacy.

Mutant Gene Stops At-Risk People From Getting Alzheimer's: Could It Lead to Treatment?

Dennis Thompson, *HealthDay* | 06.01.2022

Many who carry a gene that puts them at high risk for developing Alzheimer's also carry a mutation that cuts that risk, leading researchers to wonder if new treatments can be developed that mimic the mutation in high-risk patients who lack its protection.

Is your child at higher risk of rare disease? Why more couples are going for genetic tests

Mohana Basu, *The Print* | 05.31.2022

Couples in India are opting for screening for genetic mutations to avoid passing on rare genetic disorders. Expansion of such tests and projects raises ethical questions around selective abortions and eugenics.

Australia Wields a New DNA Tool to Crack Missing-Person Mysteries

Oscar Schwartz, *The New York Times* | 05.28.2022

DNA phenotyping attempts to predict a person's ancestry and physical traits, which could provide clues to identity even without a match with an existing sample in a database. The technique has raised serious concerns about racial profiling of suspects in criminal investigations, but using it to identify human remains may avoid some of these issues.

VARIOUS

It seems digital children are the future. But if it's that convenient, it isn't really a child

The Indian Express | 06.03.2022

With more and more people deciding not to have children, will digital children designed to resemble their "parents" become increasingly acceptable?

If you've read this far, you clearly care about the fight to reclaim human biotechnologies for the common good. Thank you!

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