

## Viewpoint: Inequality rooted in social conditions not biology

*[Editor's note: Michael White is a professor of genetics at Washington University in St. Louis.]*

America, we've had a long history of people in positions of privilege and power who argue that innate biological differences between races or sexes explain why our society is unequal.

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[I]t turns out that most of the genetic differences among races are really only skin deep. One of the most important scientific findings in recent decades is that the vast majority of genetic diversity among humans is shared by all races. In other words, there are very few genetic variants — distinct versions of a gene — that are present in one race while completely absent from another.

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When it comes to differences between the sexes, genetics has little bearing. The only genetic difference between men and women is the male-specific portion of the Y chromosome. The vast majority of the millions of distinct DNA variants among humans aren't on the Y chromosome, and are thus shared among men and women.

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It makes little sense to speculate about innate biological causes of racial and gender inequality, backed by little or no evidence, while downplaying the much more firmly grounded social explanations.

Our biology is, without question, an important part of who we are. But biology can't explain or excuse why women and non-whites are treated unequally in our society.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Four good reasons you should be skeptical of the claim that biology explains inequality](#)**