

Viewpoint: New book 'Blueprint' revisits the dangerous theory of genetic determinism

It's never a good time for another bout of genetic determinism, but it's hard to imagine a worse one than this. Social inequality gapes, exacerbated by climate change, driving hostility towards immigrants and flares of militant racism. At such a juncture, yet another expression of the discredited, simplistic idea that genes alone control human nature seems particularly insidious.

And yet, here we are again with *Blueprint*, by educational psychologist Robert Plomin. Although Plomin frequently uses more civil, progressive language than did his predecessors, the book's message is vintage genetic determinism: "DNA isn't all that matters but it matters more than everything else put together".

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Plomin likes to say that various components of nurture "matter, but they don't make a difference". But the benefits of good teaching, of school lunches and breakfasts, of having textbooks and air-conditioning and heating and plumbing have been established irrefutably

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Plomin's argument provides live ammunition for those who would abandon proven methods of improving academic achievement among socio-economically deprived children. His utopia is a forensic world, dictated by polygenic algorithms and the whims of those who know how to use them. People would be defined at birth by their DNA. Expectations would be set, and opportunities, resources and experiences would be doled out — and withheld — a priori, before anyone has had a chance to show their mettle.

Read full, original post: [Genetic determinism rides again](#)