

Do genetics determine our political beliefs? Why twin studies may not be able to answer the question

In the late 1960s, researchers began to consider the interaction between genes and environment as a possible basis for all [social](#) behaviors. Social [scientists](#) also started agreeing that gene-culture co-evolution was more likely to be accurate rather than favoring either nature or nurture [alone](#). It is against this backdrop that researchers began addressing the role of genetics in forming our political beliefs, terming the field “genopolitics”. They relied on a unique research paradigm: twin studies.

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The underlying genetic analysis used with twin studies makes the assumption that if something has a genetic cause, it must be inherited from your parents in a manner that follows Mendel’s simple laws of inheritance. However, this is not always the case.

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This inevitably leaves us with a “chicken-and-egg” question. Do genes predispose us to ideological stances, causing us to prefer absorbing certain information and not others, or are social environments the main influencers? Or are they both inextricably linked?

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Ultimately, until analysis of twin studies can incorporate the complexities and nuances of genetic and environmental factors, it’s likely that twin studies are insufficient to impart any relevant insights on the social dimensions of a complex phenomenon like political beliefs.

Read full, original post: [How much does genetics affect political beliefs? Does it even matter?](#)