



CENTER FOR  
GENETICS  
AND SOCIETY

# BioPolitical

## News&Views

March 27, 2025

### SPOTLIGHT



#### Stumbling Toward the End of an Era

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.25.2025

After almost 20 years of publicity stunts and dubious claims, we may have reached the end of 23andMe. The company's bankruptcy leaves the fate of its DNA database—and all its customers' data—uncertain.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Eggonomics** The Global Market in Human Eggs and the Donors Who Supply Them

A conversation with author Diane Tober moderated by Olaya Othman

**When:** Friday, April 18 at 12:30pm

**Where:** Berkeley Way West, Colquhoun Room 1104, 201 Berkeley Way, Berkeley CA

Free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. For access needs, please contact [christ@smith.edu](mailto:christ@smith.edu)

#### **Eggonomics: A conversation with author Diane Tober**

CGS and the Othering and Belonging Institute are co-sponsoring a conversation with Diane Tober on her new book, *Eggonomics: The Global Market in Human Eggs and the Donors Who Supply Them* on Friday, April 18 from 12-1:30 pm PT. Register [here](#).

The Smith College Project on Women & Social Change and the London Center present...

**—A THINK TANK ON—**

**REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE FUTURISMS**

**MARCH 10 10PM (PACIFIC EST) & 11PM (ATLANTA EST)**

Join our YouTube livestream to explore the intersections of the black feminist theory of reproductive justice, Afro-futurism and reproductive and genetic technologies in the 21st century.

WATCH LIVE ON [www.youtube.com/watch?v=...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

REGISTER HERE [www.youtube.com/watch?v=...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

#### **Reproductive Justice Futurisms Think Tank**

CGS Associate Director Katie Hasson and CGS Consultant Emily Galpern joined members of the CGS Advisory Board, ART Working Group, and colleagues for the Reproductive Justice Futurisms Think Tank convening at Smith College, organized by Loretta Ross and Jallicia Jolly. Participants discussed how reproductive justice frameworks can respond to new eugenic applications of reproductive and genetic technologies and how we can propose alternative reproductive futures.

### COMMENTARY

**Sociogenomics and polygenic scores**



**Peter Wehling, Tino Plümecke, and Isabelle Bartram**, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.26.2025

A start-up promises to use genomic tests to select the ‘most intelligent’ embryos. What might sound like pseudoscientific nonsense is only the tip of the iceberg of current research into the genetic prediction of social characteristics.

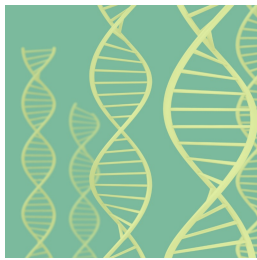


### **On Woolly Mice, Resurrecting Mammoths, and Tech Bros**

**Pete Shanks**, *Biopolitical Times* | 03.17.2025

De-extinction efforts and cloning claims continue to be overhyped in the headlines. The motivations behind these efforts, and those fueling related attempts to edit human embryos, deserve skepticism and further scrutiny.

## **CGS IN THE NEWS**



### **23andMe’s DNA database is up for sale. Who might want it, and what for?**

**Anumita Kaur**, *The Washington Post* | 03.25.2025

CGS’ Katie Hasson explains why 23andMe’s bankruptcy is a privacy risk for consumers: “Genetic information is permanent. It’s also sensitive. It reveals information about your health, your purported ancestry and relationships far beyond what you may be aware of yourself.”



### **Center for Genetics and Society, et al. vs. Rob Bonta, et al.**

*ACLU* | 03.20.2025

A California superior court rejected the state’s defense in this long-standing lawsuit challenging the state’s retention of genetic samples and profiles from people who were never convicted of a felony. The court asked the state to submit a plan for automatically destroying the DNA of the hundreds of thousands of people who are legally eligible, but California will appeal.

## **WHAT WE’RE READING**

GENE EDITING | GENOMICS | EUGENICS  
ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | SURROGACY360 | VARIOUS

### **GENE EDITING**

#### **Chinese Scientist Ostracized Over Gene-Edited Babies Seeks Comeback**

**Liyan Qi and Jonathan Cheng**, *The Wall Street Journal* | 03.26.2025

Despite gaining a criminal record and losing the trust of the scientific community (and his passport), He Jiankui is trying to stage a comeback with another risky, controversial gene editing project—this time on Alzheimer’s disease.

#### **We Need to Talk About CRISPR**

*The Medicine Maker* | 03.21.2025

In a new book edited by Neal Baer, *The Promise and Peril of CRISPR*, researchers, philosophers, bioethicists, and geneticists (including CGS’ Katie Hasson and Marcy Darnovsky) explore the ethical implications of possible uses of gene editing techniques.

## Teen's death following Sarepta DMD gene therapy underscores a risk seen for decades

Michael Gibney, *PharmaVoice* | 03.20.2025

The death this week of a teenager receiving Sarepta Therapeutics' gene therapy Elevidys for Duchenne muscular dystrophy reflects concerns that experts raised before its accelerated FDA approval.

## Scientist Jailed for Gene Hacking Babies Says Ethics Are Holding Back Progress

Luis Prada, *Vice* | 03.14.2025

Out of prison after serving three years for his rogue and reckless gene editing experiment, He Jiankui is now complaining that "ethics is holding back scientific innovation and progress."

## Fifty years after 'Asilomar,' scientists meet again to debate biotech's modern-day threats

Jon Cohen, *Science* | 03.05.2025

Although a dance troupe performed a "choreography of CRISPR" at last month's Asilomar meeting, the talks largely sidestepped ethical questions about heritable genome editing, which is currently banned in many countries.

## GENOMICS

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### With 23andMe in 'financial distress,' California official issues alert to customers

Jason Green, *The Mercury News* | 03.24.2025

23andMe's bankruptcy signals an increasingly uncertain future—not only for the company, but also for its genetic database. California Attorney General Rob Bonta reminded 23andMe customers that they have the right to tell the firm to permanently delete their data.

### A New Scientific Field Is Recasting Who We Are and How We Got That Way

Dalton Conley, *The New York Times* | 03.13.2025

Polygenic indexes are sometimes seen as a kind of genetic FICO score, or simple blueprints we could tweak like an app setting. But genes and environment aren't separate forces; they impact each other in a feedback loop. This should call into question attempts to predict outcomes from either genetics or environment alone.

### To Identify Suspect in Idaho Killings, F.B.I. Used Restricted Consumer DNA Data

Mike Baker, *The New York Times* | 02.25.2025

FBI investigators compared DNA from a high-profile murder case to two DNA databases that were off-limits, and found a suspect who was later charged. Critics raise concerns that law enforcement action may make genomics companies' privacy assurances meaningless.

## EUGENICS

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### Opinion: Trump and MAGA want to make eugenics great again

Loren Johnston, *Portland Press Herald* | 03.15.2025

Between Elon Musk's tech pronatalism, Trump's comments that immigrants' "bad genes" are "poisoning" the U.S., and JD Vance's support of Germany's far-right party, eugenics has become the MAGA mainstream.

### The rise of pronatalism: why Musk, Vance and the right want women to have more babies

Carter Sherman, *The Guardian* | 03.11.2025

The rise of tech pronatalism on the right, including embryo selection to have "better" babies, is resurfacing historical links between pronatalism and eugenics. Traditional conservatives have their own vision of pronatalism.

## US natalist conference to host race-science promoters and eugenicists

[Jason Wilson](#), *The Guardian* | 03.03.2025

A “natalist” conference will bring together self-described eugenicists and peddlers of race science to promote natalism and techniques including IQ screening in the IVF process. It will be held at a venue operated by the public University of Texas, Austin.

## ‘The basis of eugenics’: Elon Musk and the menacing return of the R-word

[Justin Kirkland](#), *The Guardian* | 03.03.2025

A faction of right-wing conservatives, including Elon Musk, are embracing the “R” word as a slur to insult opponents. Historically used in efforts to eliminate people with intellectual disabilities, its use now is one of several ways the far-right is bringing back eugenic ideas.

## Forced Sterilization of Disabled People Isn’t a Relic of the Past

[Julia Métraux](#), *Mother Jones* | 02.28.2025

30 states allow disabled people to be sterilized against their will, even as many of them, including Massachusetts and Oregon, affirm reproductive rights generally. Legacies of eugenics contribute to the discounting of disabled people’s reproductive autonomy.

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

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### What Do We Owe This Cluster of Cells?

[Anna Louie Sussman](#), *The New York Times* | 03.25.2025

Some researchers are advocating that rules limiting embryo research to the first 14 days be changed in order to better understand miscarriage and embryo development, but others raise ethical concerns about removing guardrails on the development of embryo models.

### Tennessee Senate passes bill to protect access to IVF

[Natalie Richardson](#), *PET* | 03.24.2025

A bill to protect IVF in Tennessee, which was proposed by two Republican state legislators, unanimously passed in the Senate and now goes to the House Health Committee. The bill clarifies that existing state abortion laws do not prohibit access to IVF and contraception in the state.

### U.N. Accuses Israel of Targeting Reproductive Health Facilities in Gaza

[Nick Cummings-Bruce](#), *The New York Times* | 03.13.2025

A UN report found that Israel has targeted hospitals and other health facilities in Gaza that provide reproductive services, including an IVF clinic where thousands of embryos were destroyed, in what it called an effort to prevent Palestinian births.

### IVF Patients Say a Test Caused Them to Discard Embryos. Now They’re Suing

[Jamie Ducharme](#), *Time* | 03.06.2025

Almost 700 IVF users are bringing lawsuits against clinics and companies that convinced them to use preimplantation genetic testing for aneuploidy to select embryos in the IVF process – despite lack of evidence that it is clinically useful or accurate.

## SURROGACY 360

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**Ending US birthright citizenship could have consequences for LGBTQ+ couples, lower-income parents and the surrogacy market**

[Ashley Mantha-Hollands and Jelena Džankić](#), *The Conversation* | 03.05.2025

Trump’s (blocked) order to end US birthright citizenship would jeopardize

legal recognition of LGBTQ+ parents and leave some children born through assisted reproduction stateless.



## Wombs for Hire: Inside Europe’s Underground Surrogacy Networks

Seda Karatabanoğlu and Zeynep Yüncüler, *Ms. Magazine* | 03.02.2025

Inconsistent laws and regulations governing surrogacy in different countries have led to underground operations that enable unethical practices and exploitation—including in Turkey, Georgia, and Northern Cyprus.

## VARIOUS

### Ethically sourced “spare” human bodies could revolutionize medicine

Carsten T. Charlesworth, Henry T. Greely, and Hiromitsu Nakauchi, *MIT Technology Review* | 03.25.2025

Some researchers envision a future in which pluripotent stem cell techniques are used to create human “bodyoids” that could be used for research and as a supply of organs without harming existing people or animals, but ethical issues with the idea—if it is even possible—are plenty.

### Majority of AI Researchers Say Tech Industry Is Pouring Billions Into a Dead End

Frank Landymore, *Futurism* | 03.18.2025

A survey of close to 500 AI researchers found that 76% thought it was unlikely or very unlikely that tech efforts to “scale up” AI to create artificial general intelligence would succeed.

### China’s Autonomous Agent, Manus, Changes Everything

Craig S. Smith, *Forbes* | 03.08.2025

China’s AI agent “Manus” goes beyond ChatGPT by initiating its own instructions and following them. The move to make AI an independent actor raises many additional ethical and regulatory questions.

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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