# American political memo

## Summary

Alford, Funk & Hibbing (2005) argues that genetics plays a vital role in shaping political ideologies and attitudes and has a role in party identification. The authors advise political scientists to include genetic influences and the interaction between social environment and genetic heritability into political attitude formation models. On the other hand, Charney and English (2012) challenge the idea of relating political behavior to a candidate’s gene, which was founded by Fowler and Dawes (2008). The researchers doubt whether some candidate genes could offer an essential key to understanding changes in voting behavior, attitudes towards abortion and political ideology. In their other research on geopolitics and the science of genetics, Charney and English reveal that the issue of relating genetics to politics is driven by omitted variable bias and population stratification. The authors cast aspersions on the relationship between genetics and geopolitics and considers geopolitics a misguided idea which relies on human brain that balances its knowledge of genes and the genome

According to Fowler and Dawes (2008), people with MAOA gene may have voted in the presidential election held on 2004 and that religious attendance determine the relationship between the gene 5HTT polymorphism and turnout during voting. The article is in defense of geopolitics following a critique of their research published in 2008. In their report, the authors disapprove those criticizing their finding and invites them to work together to develop an empirical and theoretical understanding of the role of biology in politics. Lastly, Weinschenk and Dawes (2017) clarify that psychological factors and biology play a critical role in the formation of political orientation. They support the idea that political interest is heritable and that personality trait which are mostly inherited are associated with political interest. The authors argue that political opinions and human behaviors may be controlled by certain genes.

## Analysis of “Two genes predicts voter turnout”

In their article, Fowler and Dawes made new claims that voter turnout is determined by two genes, MAOA and 5HTT. However, their research fails to clarify how a common gene variant can define a different process or behavior such as voting. Previous studies where these genes were used have corrected, and therefore the validity of their article is questionable. Besides, the previous researcher who has done studies on human behavior about genetics have used the same genes as those used in Fowler and Dawer’s study. The findings are that similar genomes may determine traits such as turn out during voting process which may not be the case.

Consequently, the assumption of studies related to gene association differs with the current understanding of the relationship between complex human behaviors such as politics and the genes associated with it. There is a growing concern that transformations influence heritable traits in hundreds of genetical interactions with each other and the epigenome. Scholars should incorporate different human characteristics such as attitude and political opinion as well as various use subjects in trying to understand the relationship between genes and politics. The questions that the two authors fail to answer is how one or two genes could determine human behaviors such as voting. The idea violates all the knowledge we possess on the complex relationships between such practices and relevant genes. Therefore, I recommend the researchers do more research on the evolution of political behavior concerning genetics.

## Reference

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