

Eugenics

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Eugenics

The term *eugenics* as a practice and field of study was invented by Francis Galton in 1883, in his book *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (F. Galton 1883) based on the recent work of his cousin, Charles Darwin, the Mendelian genetics and August Weismann's theory of germ plasma, that says that hereditary information is transmitted only by germ cells from the gonads (ovaries and testicles), not somatic cells. (Blom 2008) Galton defined eugenics as "the study of all agencies under human control which can improve or impair the racial quality of future generations." Eugenics was later described as a social movement to improve the human species by using technology. (Harding 2012) The term has a strong negative valence due to its historical connotations about selective reproductive programs, concentration camps, and medical

experiments and mass extermination promoted by the German Nazi regime in the Second World War. (Sara 2014)

The main concern of the first eugenicists, such as Karl Pearson and Walter Weldon of University College London, (Randall 2005) were the perceived intelligence factors considered to be correlated with the social class. In his speech "Darwinism, Medical Progress and Eugenics", (Salgirli 2011) Karl Pearson equates eugenics with a field of medicine. Some areas of medicine that are not commonly recognized as eugenic affect the human genes background. These include sterilization and surgical techniques that allow the functioning of reproductive organs. Even medicines that do not directly involve reproductive organs can alter the gene pool. (Harding 2012) Genetic abnormalities in such individuals are thus duplicated, modifying the genetic background. (Fletcher 1974) On this basis, such practices are widely accepted as more radical eugenic processes. (Harding 2012)

From the point of view of eugenics practice over time, it can be classified as positive and negative eugenics, (van Loon 1980) voluntary, compulsory or persuasive practice and promotion, or state (eg, laws prohibiting incest and ask couples to be tested for disease and other disorders before marriage (Pizzulli 1974)) and private practice.

Positive eugenics encourages reproduction among those genetically favored: intelligent, healthy and successful. Negative eugenics aimed at slowing or stopping the reproduction, or even physically eliminating those physically, mentally or morally "unwanted". (Glad 2006)

Richard Lynn (Lynn 2001) makes a classification of eugenics based on historical criteria and the ways in which eugenic methods can be applied. Thus classical eugenics include negative eugenics by providing information and services, ie reducing unplanned pregnancies and births (promoting sexual abstinence, sex education in schools, school clinics, promoting contraceptive

use, emergency contraception, better contraceptive research, voluntary sterilization , discontinuation of pregnancy), negative eugenics through incentives, constraints and forcing (incentives for sterilization, teenage mothers pay for no pregnancy, incentives for women to use contraception, sterilization payments in developing countries, reduction of benefits for social assistance, compulsory sterilization of "mental retardation", compulsory sterilization of female offenders, compulsory sterilization of male offenders) and parental licenses, and positive classical eugenics include financial incentives to children, selective childcare incentives, taxing those without children, ethical obligations of the elite, and eugenic immigration. The new eugenics, also called liberal eugenics, include artificial insemination by the donor, egg donation, prenatal diagnosis of genetic disorders and termination of pregnancy fetal defects, embryo selection, genetic engineering, gene therapy, and cloning.

Thomas Hunt Morgan, in 1915, demonstrates that the idea of genetic mutation eugenics is not scientifically correct, stating that major genetic changes can occur outside the genetic heritage. (Blom 2008)

A long-term eugenism plan may also lead to the risk of genetic diversity being lost that can lead to a cultural "improvement" of the genetic background, as can be seen in many cases in isolated populations, the removal of characteristics considered undesirable by reducing by definition genetic diversity. (D. J. Galton 2002)

However, the debate on this issue has remained to this day: through a moral obligation to ensure the well-being of our future children, can contemporary practices be justified in their possible objectives, forms, justifications, and consequences from eugenic programs?

Contemporary philosophers distinguish between traditional "authoritarian" (coercive) and "liberal" eugenics currently promoted, (Agar 2004) based on free individual choice and pluralistic values.

Critics of eugenics argue through the susceptibility of abusing these policies to certain groups, the violation of human rights in the case of negative eugenics, and the loss of genetic diversity, leading to endogamy depression due to lower genetic variations.

Charles Darwin acknowledged the issue of dysgenic trends (the proliferation of people with traits that harm human well-being) of reproduction and the dangers of possible solutions. (Anomaly 2017) Darwin argued that social assistance programs for the poor and the sick are moral but also a threat to future populations by encouraging people with severe congenital illnesses and hereditary features such as low levels of impulse control, intelligence or empathy to reproduce at rates higher than other people in the population. This aspect was originally explored by Hermann Mueller and discussed by evolutionary biologist John Tooby. (Tooby 2016) Darwin was afraid that in developed nations "members of society make mistakes, and those who are degraded and often vicarious tend to reproduce at a faster rate than providential and generally virtuous members". (Darwin 1882, 138) Researchers in the field of intelligence recognize the so-called Flynn effect, which relates to increasing IQ across the world, but argue that in developed countries it is decreasing: people with more education and income (correlated with superior intelligence) tend not only to have fewer children, but also delay reproduction in pursuing other goals. (Anomaly 2017) (Becke 1981)

As eugenics is defined, it is very difficult to make a clear distinction between science (medicine, genetic engineering) and eugenics. And to set a line over which genetic engineering should not go, according to moral, legal, and religious norms. As long as we accept the help of

genetics in finding ways to fight cancer, diabetes, or HIV, we also accept positively eugenics as it is now. And if we accept genetic screening, and interventions on the unborn baby, or abortion, we also implicitly accept negative eugenics. In addition, at government level, although eugenics is officially denied, it has been legalized in many countries until recently, and is still accepted and legalized, albeit in subtle forms, and today.

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