

Ethics, Ethnicity and Legality: How NC's Eugenics Board Targeted African Americans in the American South

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Abstract

First coined in the Victorian Era, the term “eugenics” originally referred to the science of attempting to improve the human race through selective breeding practices. Though early champions of the concept saw eugenics as a way to eliminate disease and dysfunction from the human gene pool, by the 20th century Nazi Germany and select states within the Southern U.S. had become more interested in using the concept to enforce a form of population and race control. In the United States specifically, states like California and North Carolina used eugenics programs as a way to keep African Americans living in the American south and southwest from reproducing via coerced and forced sterilizations – enacting a method of race control disguised as a means to “improve all of humanity.” Because African Americans were selected to be sterilized at rates substantially higher than whites and because African Americans actively challenged these policies, it is clear that such programs were not used as a means to “improve humanity,” but rather to limit African Americans’ reproductive rights and maintain the white male majority that had already long existed within the American south by the start of the 20th century.

Keywords

Eugenics, ethnicity, sterilization, race, reproduction

1.1 Introduction

Eugenics, a term originally coined by psychologist Francis Galton, is a science that seeks to improve the genetic quality of human populations by ensuring that favorable traits and genetics are preserved from generation to generation. Since its founding in the early 20th century, the science has sparked controversy as differing interpretations of Galton's original proposals have been argued. While some view eugenics as merely a means of encouraging selective breeding habits in humans, some extremists believe it entails limiting the reproductive habits of "physically unfit" human beings and the subsequent implementation of forced sterilization or marriage prohibition programs in order to eliminate these "unfit" individuals from the human gene pool altogether. Though there are many advocates for the use of eugenics who do not believe in taking such drastic measures, the concepts of eugenics and forced sterilizations have had a widespread negative and even deadly impact on the lives of millions, including on the lives of European Jews in the 1940s and on the lives of African Americans, particularly those living in the southern United States, since the early 20th century.

To examine how the United States' eugenics programs have caused harm to African American populations living in the American south since the early 20th century, it is important to examine key arguments that have been made for and against the use of eugenics, as well as the social and political conditions of the eras in which these programs were utilized. Since Galton first coined the term, eugenics programs have largely been used as a tool of political and social gain all over

the world. This includes within the U.S. and, more specifically, in North Carolina, where programs encouraging voluntary and involuntary sterilizations for African Americans were used throughout the 20th century as a way to control African American populations and to prevent a “race suicide” of middle-class American whites. By analyzing the origins of eugenics programs in the U.S. alongside the social and political climate of the American south during the mid-to-late-20th century, I will seek to define eugenics programs in North Carolina as inherently racist methods of population and race control, before exploring acts of resistance by African Americans as well as aftereffects of these programs.

The “key arguments” made for and against eugenics programs in NC, the U.S., Nazi Germany and beyond will come from sources like Wendy Kline’s *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom*, which argues for the societal benefits of eugenics and selective breeding and Edwin Black’s *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race*, which offers a staunch argument against the use of eugenics programs in the United States, likening these programs to Adolf Hitler and the Nazis’ plans to create a “master Aryan race” in WWII-era Germany. My research method will involve collecting and analyzing these and similar sources, as well as compiling statistics revealing the sterilization rates of African Americans across the U.S. Further, I will examine North Carolina’s recent efforts to “right” the aftereffects of eugenics and forced sterilizations on African Americans. I will use these statistics and points to reaffirm my claim that eugenics programs in North Carolina were largely used as a means of population and race control in the American south.

2.1 “Positive” and “Negative” Eugenics

A Victorian Era psychologist, Sir Francis Galton first wrote about his interest in issues of human heredity in his 1869 book *Hereditary Genius* and later in 1874's *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture*. In these books, Galton argued that just as is the case with nonhuman offspring, human children are likely to resemble their parents, and that this resemblance between parents and their offspring applies to both physical and mental qualities. Galton's way of thinking would later lead him to coin the term “eugenics” in his 1883 book, *Inquiries into the Human Faculty and Its Development*, a term which he defined as “the science of improvement of the human race germ plasm through better breeding.” (Paul, 1998, pp. 9-10). Though Galton's ideas were already controversial at the time, the term “eugenics” has developed as a term with no definite meaning, leaving the phrase up to the interpretation of Galton's colleagues as well as hereditarians who have succeeded Galton.

Many advocates for the use of eugenics as a means to better the human race genetically believe that eugenics has benefits that range from DNA engineering to the eradication of specified diseases from future generations of humans. For example, in her book, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom*, author Wendy Kline explains that it was common for eugenics advocates in the late 1930s and early 1940s to claim that the use of eugenics and selective breeding habits would “reinforce family values” and that eugenics and likewise programs would “produce ‘wholesome family life’” (p. 132) for Americans, as these programs ensured that children being born in the U.S. were happy, healthy, and born without any underlying hereditary issues.

To further give support to her claim that the use of “positive” eugenics programs were a means to encourage and ensure the birth of healthy children, Kline also explains in her book that proponents of eugenics programs in the U.S. have argued that “the ‘passion for parenthood’ that is most commonly linked to Cold War culture had its roots in the positive-eugenics campaign that began in the 1930s,” and that “while postwar abundance supplied the means for achieving suburban bliss in the 1950s... the new emphasis on baby-boom family culture stemmed in part from the influential promotion of procreation by eugenicists” (p. 156). In the more than 100 years that eugenics programs have existed prominently in the United States, Kline has been just one of many authors and scientists to claim that eugenics are best used as a means to eradicate potential health issues in future generations of humans.

Another, much earlier adopter and proponent of eugenics was early 20th century physician Wilhelm Weinberg, who considered eugenics a means necessary to eliminate disease and ensure human survival, given that he believed that “genetic traits among infected people [could] one day become dominant” (Morabia, 2014, pp. 77-78). Unfortunately, Weinberg’s book, *e Children of the Tuberculous*, a case study which sought to answer the question of whether or not children of parents with tuberculosis live longer than children of healthy parents, contained racist rhetoric which exposed Weinberg as a racial hygienist with racially charged motives for invoking his study and defining himself as an advocate of eugenics and selective breeding.

Similarly, one of the most prominent and controversial interpretations of Galton’s ideology is a concept championed by the likes of psychologist Nicholas Pastore, who in his 1949 book, *The Nature-Nurture Controversy*, argued that “heredity is more important than environment,” and that

the issue of “differential fecundity” is one that “looms as a most significant one for society” (pp. 14-16).

2.2 The Eugenics Controversy

One of the earliest instances of Pastore and like-minded psychologists’ interpretations being put into action was the implementation of “defective delinquency laws directed at controlling the peril of the so-called ‘feeble-minded’ criminals”(Ghatak, 2011, pp. 1-2) in the U.S. and across Europe beginning in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Though Galton’s original theory of eugenics said nothing of criminals or the relationship between criminal behaviors and feeble-mindedness, authors like Daniel J. Kevles have explained that, “since Galton’s day, ‘eugenics’ has become a word of ugly connotations,” and that the premises of Galton’s original arguments have “continued to figure in social discourse—notably in the claims of those arguing for a racial basis of intelligence” (p. 1-2).

Taking Pastore’s conceptions of Galton’s ideals to an extreme, Nazi Germany was the first nation to deploy an overtlyracist interpretation of what Galton had originally deemed “the science of improvement of the human race.” Seeking the establishment of a “master race,” Nazis in the late 1930s and 1940s are often considered to be the pioneers of “racist eugenics,” a system of beliefs which suggested that “in order to avoid hereditary and cultural damage ‘incompatible races’ should not mix.” These “racist eugenics” existed as an effective rationale for pre-existing racial values within Nazi society as “most of the intellectual strands comprising the idea had already achieved mainstream status in German society” prior to the spread of the eugenics movement or the establishment of the Third Reich in the mid-20th century (Ehrenreich, 2007, p. 16). Having

just come off the end of the Civil War and the establishment of Jim Crow laws, the United States was in a similar situation come the spread of the eugenics movement in the early to mid-20th century. Though early eugenics movements in Europe simply promoted selective breeding habits, the movement in the U.S. immediately championed eliminating uneducated, criminalized, and minority populations from the breeding pool. The first-ever sterilization law was introduced in Indiana in 1907, with later laws being introduced in 29 other states by 1931. These laws, which first focused on removing the mentally and physically disabled from the gene pool, quickly turned their attention to discriminating against those who had committed crimes, even if the individual was only “guilty” of being poor (Stern, 2015, pp. 5, 28-32). Though later North Carolina would take the lead in enforcing racially charged eugenics and sterilization programs, California was the first to do so. Early on in the eugenics era, even when compared per capita to states with much smaller populations, California’s rates of sterilizations were always high, and for over 40 years the state of California did not allow for any legal way for any patient or inmate facing sterilization to reject or resist the procedure (Stern, 2011, pp. 101-102).

Race-based eugenics efforts were hastened at the turn of the century. By the early twentieth century, what psychologist Sigmund Freud had labeled as the “civilized morality” of the white middle class had begun to lose ground, and the “morality of American youth, particularly [in the case of] working-class girls who refused to abide by genteel standards of Victorian femininity,” was decaying. Wendy Kline’s *Building a Better Race* argues that, because young girls were unwilling to adhere to the traditional standards which had urged high rates of female fertility and childbearing for women in the American Victorian era, there was a fear that a “race suicide”

might occur should the birthrate of white, middle-class Americans drop below that of “immigrants and the working class” (pp. 1-4).

Laura Scott, author of a study entitled, “Wicked Science: The North Carolina Forced Sterilization Program and Bioethics,” argues that not only was there an apparent risk of a “race suicide” of middle-class whites, but the onset of the Great Depression in the early 1930s meant that the “undesirable population” had increased, now that “many more people were dependent on government assistance to survive.” Scott also explains that in response, in 1933, the North Carolina Eugenics Board was formed. The board, within a year of its founding, established several laws which expanded the target population for sterilizations, including to those unable to provide proof that they could adequately support potential children as well as those deemed ‘feeble-minded’ by the Board; individuals who Scott claims were often deemed so because of prior involvement in criminal activities rather than via the results of any proper IQ test (pp. 7-9).

Author Saran Ghatak’s book, *Threat Perceptions: The Policing of Dangers from Eugenics to the War on Terrorism* explains that “prevailing social conditions and political trends influence the production of risk perceptions” (p. 4). In the aftermath of a declining birthrate for middle-class white Americans and the Great Depression, it was clear that the U.S. was now perceiving a growing African American population in the American southwest as a threat.

2.3 Racism, Nazism and Eugenics

Though there were still many who argued for the use of eugenics for the sake of “building a better race” by the mid-to-late-forties, by the end of the Second World War, it had become increasingly obvious that eugenics and racial hygienists empowered by the movement had done great harm in

the United States, having promoted and established legislation across the nation that had been “motivated by crude theories of human heredity that posited the wholesale inheritance of traits associated with a panoply of feared conditions such as criminality, feeble-mindedness, and sexual deviance” (Stern, 2015, p. 20). As a result, Edwin Black, author of *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race*, argues that ultimately the “victims of eugenics” had included more than 60,000 “immigrants from across Europe, Blacks, Jews, Mexicans, Native Americans, epileptics, alcoholics, petty criminals, the mentally ill and anyone else who did not resemble the blond and blue-eyed Nordic ideal the eugenics movement glorified” (p. xvi).

Black also claims that by the mid-1940s, the romantic notion of America being a “melting pot” had disintegrated, with Nazi Germany’s Adolf Hitler having claimed, at the height of Nazi rule in Europe that, “there is today one state in which at least weak beginnings toward a better conception [of citizenship] are noticeable. Of course, it is not our model German Republic, but the United States” (Black, 2017, p. 34). In the aftermath of Germany’s defeat at the hands of the Allies in May of 1945, several notorious figures from within the Nazi regime were put on trial at Nuremberg and forced to answer for their crimes. Many of these men, charged with heinous crimes against humanity, chose to “cite the California [eugenics] statutes in their defense” as well as took to quoting U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who in 1927 wrote, “It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind . . . Three generations of imbeciles are enough” (Black, 2003, para. 23).

With the overtly racist nature of the U.S.' eugenics programs finally exposed around the end of the Second World War, many U.S. states, including California, had either reduced or altogether eliminated their sterilization programs in the aftermath of World War Two. However, North Carolina chose to increase their eugenics and sterilizations programs instead. In fact, more than 70% of the sterilizations performed in North Carolina since the turn of the century occurred after 1945. Additionally, two years later in 1947, the Human Betterment League was founded in North Carolina as well, an organization concerned with producing propaganda and campaigns promoting the benefits of forced sterilizations (Scott, pp. 10-11).

Over the next 30 years, the North Carolina Eugenics Board, which was renamed the Eugenics Commission in 1973, approved more than 8,000 sterilizations, around 7,500 of which were actually carried out. By the late 1960s, 99% of individuals being sterilized in North Carolina were women and 60% of those being sterilized were African Americans, even though the state's population around the mid-to-late-60s was only about a quarter percent Black (Kaelber, 2014, para. 1). According to Johanna Schoen, author of *Choice and Coercion*, a study examining North Carolina's reproductive politics in the 20th century, women in North Carolina had lost reproductive autonomy in NC years earlier, when social workers first threatened poor pregnant women with forced sterilization. Therefore, Schoen claims that by the 1970s the idea of public health officials using eugenic rhetoric to promote population control was hardly a new concept (pp. 2-4).

Having neglected women's rights to reproductive autonomy almost six decades earlier and after expanding its eugenics program in the early stages of the 1960s, North Carolina lobbied more

aggressively for forced sterilizations up until the state's Eugenics Commission was officially abolished in 1977, with individuals like University of North Carolina professor George H. Lawrence having argued that sterilization had been "crucial to eliminating the state's health and social problems" (Schoen, pp. 3-4). By the time the program had been eliminated, North Carolina had established itself as one of the worst offenders in the history of the United States' eugenics movement, having coerced or forced more men and women into being sterilized than almost any other state in the country.

3.1 Eugenics and Resistance

One of the greatest evidences that North Carolina and the whole of the U.S.' Eugenics programs and policies targeted individuals on the basis of racist is the fact that African Americans actively opposed these programs' effects.

On March 28, 1924, 17-year-old Carrie Buck of Virginia gave birth to a daughter out of wedlock, having been raped by her nephew a year earlier. Now, by the summer of 1924, Buck, who also had only a sixth-grade education, perfectly fit the state of Virginia's qualifications for sterilization as she was poor, pregnant and uneducated. Having passed legislation legalizing involuntary sterilizations for any person that the state deemed "feebleminded" that same year, state officials were eager to sterilize Buck only shortly after the birth of her child, but first had a trial organized so that Buck could appeal the decision, per her right to do so.

However, Buck had no say in the trial and her lawyer Irving Whitehead did remarkably little on Buck's behalf, calling no witnesses to dispute any of the court's supposed 'experts' who favored sterilization. Unsurprisingly, a judge upheld the decision to sterilize Carrie Buck and months later

in November of 1925, an appeals court also ruled against Buck. Just three years after the birth of her child, Carrie Buck was sterilized in 1927, after her case had traveled all the way to the Supreme Court only for the court to rule 8-1 in favor of upholding Buck's sterilization (Holmes, 1926, para 7-11).

Carrie Buck had been chosen by anti-sterilization advocates to represent their efforts to improve the rights of African Americans and not only grant them the right to give proper consent in similar cases, but to strike down Virginia's involuntary sterilization statute as well. Unsurprisingly, the Supreme Court's ruling in *Buck v. Bell* came as a major blow to these efforts. Another landmark event in African Americans' fight against North Carolina and the whole of the United States' racist eugenics policies was the federal court case *Relf v. Weinberger*. This 1974 case involved the parties of Katie Relf, who represented her two younger sisters in the case, and American politician Casper Weinberger, the latter of which was found to have used federal funds to bring about the sterilization of Katie's two younger sisters, Mary Alice and Minnie Lee Relf, without either of the girls' consent. According to Gregory Michael Dorr, author of "Protection or Control? Women's Health, Sterilization Abuse, and *Relf v. Weinberger*," this case shed light on America's "concern that the nation faced a demographic explosion among the underclass, a 'population bomb' that threatened to destroy civilization in either a hail of welfare claims or violent social revolution"(p.162).

Dorr's study explains that this specific case highlighted the discriminatory nature of these programs because the Relf girls were chosen to be sterilized namely because they were Black. Dorr argues that though social workers had advised the girls' mother that they had seen boys

“hanging around” her daughters and doctors had declared the older of the two girls “mentally retarded” prior to the girls’ sterilization surgeries, these claims were made simply so that the girls’ sterilizations could be “validated.” Dorr explains that these sorts of claims were commonly made by social workers looking to sterilize young Black women in the south and that Mary Alice Relf’s diagnosis was only made because she was suffering from a “severe, untreated cleft palate that had made it nearly impossible for her to speak intelligibly” (p. 161).

Therefore, Dorr claims that by the time the decade and the *Relf v. Weinberger* case – at the conclusion of which the Relf girls were awarded no financial compensation – had come to an end, it had become clear that “doctors and overzealous social workers had been targeting poor women, and especially poor women of color, in a nationwide epidemic of sterilization” (p. 161-162).

3.2 Righting Eugenics’ Wrongs

Despite there not being any damages awarded to the Relf family in the aftermath of *Relf v. Weinberger*, the case’s conclusion was a start for victims of forced or coerced sterilization programs who were seeking justice. As Dorr claims, despite the Relfs not being given sort of financial compensation, the ruling in *Relf v. Weinberger* did see the young Mary Alice Relf “evaluated and placed in an appropriate educational program” as well as cleft repair surgery scheduled for the older of the two Relf girls (p. 162).

In the years following *Relf v. Weinberger*, several states across the U.S., including North Carolina, introduced several new statutes and regulations, including two new “administrations manuals,” the first of which specified which state officials were “qualified” to approve and perform sterilizations as well as explaining that anyone who petitioned for the sterilization of

another person would be required to provide information regarding the “likelihood of the person to procreate a child or children who would have a tendency to serious physical, mental, or nervous disease or deficiency” in order to justify their request (pp. 54-56). The latter of these statutes was particularly important, as North Carolina had long been the only state to allow social workers to petition for the sterilization of individuals that they considered unfit to reproduce (Scott, p. 10).

The second of these administrative manuals worked to define “consent” in cases in which the option of sterilization was involved, explaining that the permission of “a spouse, parent, next of kin, or guardian” would be required in cases where the individual facing sterilization could not give proper, coherent consent, and in those cases where consent had or could not been obtained, the Eugenics Board was required to hold a hearing “in which reasons for and against the operation [were] heard” (p. 55). Because there was no legal backing to the statutes as laid out by these “administrative manuals,” it would still be several more years before anything would change for African Americans and those unable to defend themselves against state officials trying to steal away their reproductive rights.

Regardless, though North Carolina’s earliest attempts to right the wrongs of its early to mid-20th century sterilization and eugenics programs were meager at best, as of 2012 North Carolina had been the only state to even attempt to provide financial reparations to victims of these programs. Specifically, according to Laura Scott’s “Wicked Science,” the NC State House of Representatives approved \$50,000 in reparations per victim in 2012, and though the bill was initially shot down by the NC state senate, one year later in 2013, a bill was passed requiring that

these victims receive proper compensation for having been forcibly sterilized. This time around, Scott explains, rather than “individual payments of a certain amount, the legislature appropriated \$10 million to compensate qualifying sterilization victims” (p. 11-12).

Despite the U.S.’ slow, steady progress made toward reconciliation, many states as recently as 2002 were still allowing for mentally-retarded individuals to be sterilized without their consent, finding it appropriate to only seek consent from these individuals’ guardians. Also, as recently as 2002, according to an article written by Lisa Powell and published in volume 20 of the *Yale Law & Policy Review*, states across the nation had also still maintained the practice of counseling women with the sickle cell trait – a trait which is only seen in African Americans and within “a substantial portion of the black population” – in attempts to coerce them into being sterilized, even though this practice was not “medically recommended.” Powell’s article also highlights a ruling by the Wisconsin Supreme Court which ordered a man “not to have children as a condition of probation for not paying child support, unless he could show that he would be able to support that child as well as his current children” (p. 500), demonstrating that even in times as recent as the 21st century eugenics policies were being used discriminately and as a means of population control.

3.3 Resolving North Carolina’s Issue of Eugenics and the Forced Sterilization of African Americans

In 2003, North Carolina’s governor Mike Easley formally apologized to those who had been victimized by North Carolina’s Eugenics board. Aside from admitting blame for causing such harm, there is no obvious way for NC’s government to properly “right” the wrongs done by the

state's infamous Eugenics board or the state officials who oversaw the forced sterilization of more than 7,000 African Americans living in NC throughout the mid-to-late 20th century. Of course, one of the reasons why this issue is so difficult to "solve" is because the effects of these sterilizations are impossible to reverse and thus, entire generations of families have been negatively affected by the state's Eugenics board and its sterilization programs.

A start, however, would be to ensure that victims and their families are granted proper compensation for the harm that NC's eugenics programs have inflicted on them. Though in the mid-2010s efforts were finally made to award these victims with compensation, many of these programs contained overly specific clauses and brief application deadlines which worked to prevent African Americans victimized by eugenics to rightfully claim their compensations. Broadening the scope of these compensation programs to allow more than just specific groups access to due compensation – such as allowing more than just those living within certain jurisdictions or those who had been sterilized within a certain period of time – would be an excellent step in the right direction.

Though there is no way to reverse the damage done to African American families in North Carolina and across the U.S., key to their recovery is never to neglect their struggles or to never forget about those that have been victimized by states' eugenics policies. Crucial to these victims' recovery is to continually acknowledge the wrongs committed by North Carolina and other states' eugenics boards, continually apologize for these wrongs having been committed, and ensure that victims are granted proper compensation for events of the past while making sure similar atrocities are never allowed to occur again.

4.1 Conclusion

There exist several excellently supported arguments on both sides of the eugenics debate. While authors like Wendy Kline have made it clear that eugenics may have positive effects, such as improving the birth rates of healthy children and the eradication of hereditary diseases from future generations of human beings, there have been several equally strong arguments made against the use of eugenics, including those featured in studies like Laura Scott's "Wicked Silence: The North Carolina Forced Sterilization Program and Bioethics" or in Edwin Black's books, *Nazi Nexus* and *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race*. In their arguments, Scott and Black argue that eugenics programs in Nazi Germany and other European superpowers were historically used to target minorities and persecute groups on the basis of religion, race and ethnicity, rather than on the basis of intelligence or any sort of "physical fitness." Scott and Black also argue that eugenics programs in the United States have similarly preyed on minorities, specifically African Americans, a group that states like North Carolina have sought to limit the reproductive rights of for the sake of preserving their predominantly white populations.

By considering claims by authors like Black and Scott as well as statistics on sterilization rates in North Carolina as compiled by the University of Vermont's Lutz Kaelber and author David J. Kevles, I concluded that North Carolina's Eugenics Board, like other states' programs had throughout the 20th century, unfairly targeted African Americans as the recipients of these programs' sterilization efforts. By also considering resistance efforts launched by African Americans, including the cases of *Buck v. Bell* and *Relf v. Weinberger*, it becomes even more

evident that these programs mainly targeted defenseless Black men and women living in the American south and southwest, given that no other race of human beings in the United States was or has ever been forced to be as resistant to such programs as African Americans were. When taking the entire history of eugenics into consideration, including its origins, use as a means of population control and the forms of resistance lodged against its effects, it becomes clear that the United States' – and particularly North Carolina's – eugenics programs were inherently racist and were largely used as a means of achieving population and race control in the American south.

My conclusions contribute to discussions headed by the likes of Morrison (1985), Valdez and Deomampo (2019), as well as by Price, Darity Jr. and Sharpe (2020). My conclusions are distinctive, however, in that they take into consideration the history of eugenics, the implementation of eugenics programs in European nations like Nazi Germany and the subsequent use of eugenics programs as methods of race and population control in the United States and in North Carolina, specifically. Appealing to the worldlier angle of Black as well as to the more centralized examinations of North Carolina's eugenics programs as conducted by Brophy, Price, Darity Jr. and Sharpe, I have also contributed to discussions by uniquely outlining how the lingering aftereffects of these programs as well as North Carolina's attempts to right historical wrongs by paying reparations to the victims and families of victims of forced sterilizations indicate explicit guilt on behalf of the state. Finally, moving forward, I have argued for the widespread acknowledgement of eugenics' harm as a baseline for achieving conciliation and offering recompense for African Americans affected by North Carolina's eugenics and subsequent forced sterilization or marriage prohibition programs. Ultimately, I advocate, like

Price, Darity Jr. and Sharpe, that the end goal of recompense efforts should be an improved visibility, publicity and awareness of eugenics' harmful history and that funds appropriated for the purpose of "reparations" be allocated to improving accessibility of educational, vocational and psychological resources for victims of America's historical persecution of African Americans as a means to achieve a dissolution of social and economic disparities between Black and white Americans.

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