[Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef" \o "Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [thumb|280px|Logo from the](/wiki/File:Eugenics_congress_logo.png) [Second International Eugenics Conference](/wiki/Second_International_Eugenics_Conference), 1921, depicting eugenics as a tree which unites a variety of different fields.[[1]](#cite_note-1)

**Eugenics** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); from [Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek) εὐγενής *eugenes* "well-born" from εὖ *eu*, "good, well" and γένος *genos*, "race, stock, kin")[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) is a set of beliefs and practices that aims at improving the [genetic](/wiki/Genetics) quality of the [human population](/wiki/Human_population).[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5) It is a [social philosophy](/wiki/Social_philosophy) advocating the improvement of [human genetic](/wiki/Human_genetic) traits through the promotion of higher rates of [sexual reproduction](/wiki/Sexual_reproduction) for people with desired traits (positive eugenics), or reduced rates of sexual reproduction and [sterilization](/wiki/Sterilization_(medicine)) of people with less-desired or undesired traits (negative eugenics), or both.[[6]](#cite_note-6) Alternatively, gene selection rather than "people selection" has recently been made possible through advances in gene editing (e.g. [CRISPR](/wiki/CRISPR)).[[7]](#cite_note-7) The exact definition of *eugenics* has been a matter of debate since the term was coined. The definition of it as a "social philosophy"—that is, a philosophy with implications for social order—is not universally accepted, and was taken from [Frederick Osborn's](/wiki/Frederick_Osborn) 1937 journal article "Development of a Eugenic Philosophy".[[6]](#cite_note-6) While eugenic principles have been practiced as far back in world history as [Ancient Greece](/wiki/Ancient_Greece), the modern [history of eugenics](/wiki/History_of_eugenics) began in the early 20th century when a popular eugenics movement emerged in the [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom)[[8]](#cite_note-8) and spread to many countries, including the [United States](/wiki/Eugenics_in_the_United_States) and most European countries. In this period, eugenic ideas were espoused across the political spectrum. Consequently, many countries adopted eugenic policies meant to improve the genetic stock of their countries. Such programs often included both "positive" measures, such as encouraging individuals deemed particularly "fit" to reproduce, and "negative" measures such as marriage prohibitions and forced sterilization of people deemed unfit for reproduction. People deemed unfit to reproduce often included people with mental or physical disabilities, people who scored in the low ranges of different [IQ](/wiki/IQ) tests, criminals and deviants, and members of disfavored minority groups. The eugenics movement became negatively associated with [Nazi Germany](/wiki/Nazi_Germany) and the [Holocaust](/wiki/Holocaust) when many of the [defendants](/wiki/Defendants) at the [Nuremberg trials](/wiki/Nuremberg_trials) attempted to justify their human rights abuses by claiming there was little difference between the [Nazi eugenics](/wiki/Nazi_eugenics) programs and the [US eugenics](/wiki/Eugenics_in_the_United_States) programs.[[9]](#cite_note-9)In the decades following [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), with the institution of [human rights](/wiki/Human_rights), many countries gradually abandoned eugenics policies, although some Western countries, among them the United States, continued to carry out forced sterilizations.

Since the 1980s and 1990s when new [assisted reproductive technology](/wiki/Assisted_reproductive_technology) procedures became available, such as [gestational surrogacy](/wiki/Gestational_surrogacy) (available since 1985), [preimplantation genetic diagnosis](/wiki/Preimplantation_genetic_diagnosis) (available since 1989) and [cytoplasmic transfer](/wiki/Cytoplasmic_transfer) (first performed in 1996), fear about a possible future revival of eugenics and a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor has emerged.

A major criticism of eugenics policies is that, regardless of whether "negative" or "positive" policies are used, they are vulnerable to abuse because the criteria of selection are determined by whichever group is in political power. Furthermore, negative eugenics in particular is considered by many to be a violation of basic human rights, which include the right to reproduction. Another criticism is that eugenic policies eventually lead to a loss of [genetic diversity](/wiki/Genetic_diversity), resulting in [inbreeding depression](/wiki/Inbreeding_depression) instead due to a low genetic variation.

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[thumb|200px|left|](/wiki/File:Francis_Galton_1850s.jpg)[Francis Galton](/wiki/Francis_Galton) was an early eugenicist, coining the term itself and popularizing the collocation of the words "[nature and nurture](/wiki/Nature_and_nurture)".[[10]](#cite_note-10) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The idea of eugenics to produce better human beings has existed at least since [Plato](/wiki/Plato) suggested [selective mating](/wiki/Selective_breeding) to produce a guardian class.[[11]](#cite_note-11) The idea of eugenics to decrease the birth of inferior human beings has existed at least since [William Goodell](/wiki/William_Goodell_(gynecologist)) (1829-1894) advocated the castration and spaying of the insane.[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13) However, the term "eugenics" to describe the modern concept of improving the quality of human beings born into the world was originally developed by [Francis Galton](/wiki/Francis_Galton). Galton had read his half-cousin [Charles Darwin's](/wiki/Charles_Darwin) theory of [evolution](/wiki/Evolution), which sought to explain the development of plant and animal species, and desired to apply it to humans. Galton believed that desirable traits were hereditary based on biographical studies; Darwin strongly disagreed with his interpretation of the book.[[14]](#cite_note-14) In 1883, one year after Darwin's death, Galton gave his research a name: *eugenics*.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Throughout its recent history, eugenics has remained a controversial concept.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Eugenics became an academic discipline at many colleges and universities and received funding from many sources.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Organisations formed to win public support, and modify opinion towards responsible eugenic values in parenthood, included the British [Eugenics Education Society](/wiki/Galton_Institute) of 1907, and the [American Eugenics Society](/wiki/Society_for_Biodemography_and_Social_Biology) of 1921. Both sought support from leading clergymen, and modified their message to meet religious ideals.[[17]](#cite_note-17) Three [International Eugenics Conferences](/wiki/International_Eugenics_Conference) presented a global venue for eugenists with meetings in 1912 in London, and in 1921 and 1932 in New York City. Eugenic policies were first implemented in the early 1900s [in the United States](/wiki/Eugenics_in_the_United_States).[[18]](#cite_note-18) It has roots in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States.[[19]](#cite_note-19) Later, in the 1920s and 30s, the eugenic policy of [sterilizing](/wiki/Compulsory_sterilization) certain mental patients was implemented in other countries, including [Belgium](/wiki/Belgium),[[20]](#cite_note-20) [Brazil](/wiki/Brazil),[[21]](#cite_note-21) [Canada](/wiki/Compulsory_sterilization_in_Canada),[[22]](#cite_note-22) [Japan](/wiki/Eugenics_in_Japan) and [Sweden](/wiki/Compulsory_sterilisation_in_Sweden).

The scientific reputation of eugenics started to decline in the 1930s, a time when [Ernst Rüdin](/wiki/Ernst_Rüdin) used eugenics as a justification for the [racial policies of Nazi Germany](/wiki/Racial_policy_of_Nazi_Germany). In addition to being practised in a number of countries, eugenics was internationally organized through the [International Federation of Eugenics Organizations](/wiki/International_Federation_of_Eugenics_Organizations).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Its scientific aspects were carried on through research bodies such as the [Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics](/wiki/Kaiser_Wilhelm_Institute_of_Anthropology,_Human_Heredity,_and_Eugenics),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) the Cold Spring Harbour Carnegie Institution for [Experimental Evolution](/wiki/Experimental_Evolution),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and the [Eugenics Record Office](/wiki/Eugenics_Record_Office).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Its political aspects involved advocating laws allowing the pursuit of eugenic objectives, such as sterilization laws.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Its moral aspects included rejection of the doctrine that all human beings are born equal, and redefining morality purely in terms of genetic fitness.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Its racist elements included pursuit of a pure "[Nordic race](/wiki/Nordic_race)" or "[Aryan](/wiki/Aryan)" genetic pool and the eventual elimination of "less fit" races.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Alkoven_Schloss_Hartheim_2005-08-18_3589.jpg)[Hartheim Euthanasia Centre](/wiki/Hartheim_Euthanasia_Centre) in 2005 [220px|thumb|upright|A](/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_146-1973-010-11,_Schwester_in_einem_Lebensbornheim.jpg) [*Lebensborn*](/wiki/Lebensborn) birth house in Nazi Germany. Created with intention of raising the birth rate of "[Aryan](/wiki/Aryan_race)" children from extramarital relations of "racially pure and healthy" parents. As a social movement, eugenics reached its greatest popularity in the early decades of the 20th century. At this point in time, eugenics was practiced around the world and was promoted by governments and influential individuals and institutions. Many countries enacted[[23]](#cite_note-23) various eugenics policies and programmes, including: genetic screening, [birth control](/wiki/Birth_control), promoting differential birth rates, [marriage restrictions](/wiki/Marriage_law#Marriage_restrictions), segregation (both [racial segregation](/wiki/Racial_segregation) and segregation of the mentally ill from the rest of the population), [compulsory sterilization](/wiki/Compulsory_sterilization), [forced abortions](/wiki/Forced_abortion) or [forced pregnancies](/wiki/Forced_pregnancies), and [genocide](/wiki/Genocide). Most of these policies were later regarded as coercive or restrictive, and now few jurisdictions implement policies that are explicitly labelled as eugenic or unequivocally eugenic in substance. The methods of implementing eugenics varied by country; however, some early 20th century methods involved identifying and classifying individuals and their families, including the poor, mentally ill, blind, deaf, developmentally disabled, [promiscuous women](/wiki/Promiscuous_women), homosexuals, and [racial groups](/wiki/Race_(classification_of_human_beings)) (such as the [Roma](/wiki/Romani_people) and [Jews in Nazi Germany](/wiki/Jews_in_Nazi_Germany)) as "degenerate" or "unfit", the segregation or institutionalization of such individuals and groups, their sterilization, [euthanasia](/wiki/Euthanasia), and their [mass murder](/wiki/Mass_murder).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The practice of euthanasia was carried out on hospital patients in the [Aktion T4](/wiki/Aktion_T4) centers such as [Hartheim Castle](/wiki/Hartheim_Castle).

By the end of [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), many of the discriminatory eugenics laws were largely abandoned, having become associated with Nazi Germany.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[24]](#cite_note-24) After World War II, the practice of "imposing measures intended to prevent births within [a population] group" fell within the definition of the new international crime of genocide, set out in the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](/wiki/Convention_on_the_Prevention_and_Punishment_of_the_Crime_of_Genocide).[[25]](#cite_note-25) The [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](/wiki/Charter_of_Fundamental_Rights_of_the_European_Union) also proclaims "the prohibition of eugenic practices, in particular those aiming at selection of persons".[[26]](#cite_note-26) In spite of the decline in discriminatory eugenics laws, government practices of compulsive sterilization continued into the 21st century. During the ten years President [Alberto Fujimori](/wiki/Alberto_Fujimori) led Peru from 1990 to 2000, allegedly 2,000 persons were involuntarily sterilized.[[27]](#cite_note-27)