

World history the eugenics debate



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To What Degree Do You Think That Dr Miller's Ideas Are Politically Feasible In A Democratic Society Introduction. In his essay "Eugenics: Economics For the Long Run", Dr Edward Miller proposes a system of eugenics for those members of the population that are living on welfare, or who have committed crimes such as rape or other violent crimes. Dr Miller notes that there are ethical questions involved in this issue, but believes that economic considerations will force governments to reduce the population, and that preventing childbirth among the poorer members of society. However, with eugenics' past history as a tool of repressive governments and its image as a coercive tool, is there any way in which a democratic government would be able to utilise eugenics. However, due to flaws within Dr Miller's theory of genetics, and his proposals for eugenics are impractical, it should be argued that Dr Miller's ideas are not politically feasible. This brief essay will attempt to examine: Miller's description of genetic inheritance in criminality, poverty and intelligence, considering if this is good reasoning; consider whether his strategies for limiting undesirable births is practical; look at the position of eugenics in economics and democracy; and calculate whether these elements combined make eugenics practical in a modern society.

Considering the role of genes in criminality, poverty and intelligence in Miller's essay. Any policy which argues for the reintroduction of eugenics must base its arguments upon the genetic factors which influence behaviour. In his essay, Dr Miller argues that there is 'a strong genetic component' in both criminality and those who live below the poverty line. However, while he makes a small amount of room for the theory that environmental influences may also have a strong impact upon behaviour and intelligence. He chooses to point at adoption and twin studies to demonstrate that there

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is a strong link between genes and criminality, poverty and intelligence.

Other studies have demonstrated that, while genes have their place, they are not determinants: i. e., it is not enough to simply inherit such a gene from a parent. Genes alone cannot predict how a child may develop: it is only necessary to look at the families of successful people to find that many of them came from underprivileged and criminal environments, and that criminals such as rapists and murderers are not limited to the poor.

Dr Miller's strategies for limiting births have flaws. While Dr Miller is putting forward an argument for economic eugenics, he has concentrated his theory upon coerced birth prevention, or mandatory eugenics. This, however, is not the only method of controlling the population, and in fact, may be the most uneconomic, since people are bound to resist these measures. As Dr Miller's strategies are all compulsory, this raises many challenges to implementation in a society based on democracy.

Economics, democracy and their role in considering eugenics. The question of whether it is possible to bring eugenics into a democratic society. In democracy, citizens that have committed no crime should not be coerced into receiving surgery or other severe measures. The economic factors surrounding eugenics also do not consider whether the long-term implications of birth control could mean that workers fall dramatically. Capitalism depends, sadly, on there being an excess of workers at the bottom, driving down wages. Dr Miller believes that eugenics will mean higher wages for workers, though he does not consider whether this is economically viable, or whether it will mean that the normal worker overprices themselves, and companies turn to illegal immigrants (who will not be under the eugenics program) in order to keep costs down. This seems

a more likely outcome of limited worker stock, rather than simply paying the few more.

Is eugenic practice really feasible in a democracy Although Dr Miller believes that eugenics is economically necessary, he does not consider promotional voluntary eugenics, where birth control is promoted to the people, but not forced upon them. With concerns about population growth and sustainability, this may prove popular in future decades, and the government would not have to bear the brunt of forcing their voters to be sterilized. Forced programs of eugenics are likely to be seen as breach of a person's human rights, but voluntary programmes offer voters the choice, and therefore cannot be criticised as inhumane. This solution would lead to a population reduction, while still keeping enough of the population to supply businesses with labour.