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North Carolina eugenics program sought to 'breed out' Black population - TheGrio

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5-6 minutes



Black Lives Matter protesters rally at Westlake Park before marching through the downtown area on June 14, 2020 in Seattle, United States. Black Lives Matter events continue daily in the Seattle area in the wake of the death of George Floyd. (Photo by David Ryder/Getty Images)

A North Carolina eugenics program sought to breed out the “Black population” in the 20th century and that may be the reason for the state’s disproportionate effect on its citizens, according to a new [study](#).

Duke University recently conducted a [study](#) that showed the **North Carolina Eugenics Board**, studying the reports from 1958 to 1968 which showed that Black people were specifically targeted. The goal was to “breed out” African Americans in the 20th century through sterilization.

The latest [data](#) from the U.S. Census has the current Black population in North Carolina at 22.2%. The white population is 70.6%.

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(Credit: Darity, Duke University)

Gregory N. Price, Rhonda V. Sharpe, and William A. Darity Jr. compiled the research and wrote the study which appears online in the American Review of Political Economy. The lead author is Price who is an economics professor at the University of New Orleans.

Sharpe is the founder and president of the Women’s Institute for Science, Equity, and Race. Darity is a professor of public policy, African and African American Studies and economics at Duke University.

Their findings examine the purpose of the program and the targeting of the Black community.

“This suggests that for Blacks, eugenic sterilizations were authorized and administered with the aim of reducing their numbers in the future population— genocide by any other name,” the authors state.

During this time period, there were more than 2,100 authorized sterilizations that took place in 100 counties in the state. The research discovered that the occurrence of these procedures was much higher with Black residents.

Economists would often refer citizens who are not part of the labor force and required government assistance as “surplus population.” The surpluses often occurred if the growing population was Black and is a pattern that other non-Black groups did not encounter.

It was suggested that the Black race was deemed inferior by the Eugenics program.

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“The United Nations’ official definition of genocide includes ‘imposing measures to prevent births within a (national, ethnically, racial or religious) group,’ ” says co-author Darity.

“North Carolina’s disproportionate use of eugenic sterilization on its Black citizens was an act of genocide.”



(Photo: Adobe Stock)

Prince and Darity [previously examined](#) the motives behind the eugenics program in 2010. This recent analysis delves further into mechanics and motives.

Sharpe contended that their research demonstrated that Black people have often had their [choices](#) taken from them.

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“Controlling Black bodies and their reproductive choices is nothing new,” says co-author Sharpe. “Our study shows that North Carolina restricted reproductive freedom, using eugenics to disenfranchise Black residents.”

In 2011, North Carolina [began](#) to make amends for their program and history. They created a task force and heard stories from victims to begin the process of compensation.

In 2013, lawmakers [set aside \\$10 million](#) for one-time payments to those who were part of the sterilization program. However, the payout was contingent on how many people came forward.

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