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POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND POPULATION

POLICY IN PUERTO RICO

BY

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Paper prepared for the Symposium TOPIAS AND UTOPIAS
IN HEALTH at the Ninth International Congress of
Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Chicago,
September 1-8, 1973

Introduction

It is a fact well-known to anthropologists and others that human populations have long found means to control their reproduction.¹ The issue is thus not that of birth control per se, but of its conscious use by the state to control population growth concomitant with explicit national goals. During the past three decades Puerto Rico has attempted to achieve rapid economic growth through industrialization. This effort has led policy makers and planners to give attention to the population variable in relation to economic development. During the same period, public and private agencies have been involved in providing birth control facilities and services for Puerto Ricans. Vehement and vocal opposition to these programs has been voiced through the years by the island's pro-independence or independentista groups. The ideological basis of this opposition has shifted over time from its earlier predominantly Catholic-nationalist orientation to its present socialist manifestations. The prevailing majority position accepts contraception as an individual need, but strong criticism continues to be voiced of birth control programs as a policy of a colonial government.

In this paper we are interested in analyzing the major trends in opposition to population control and family planning

in Puerto Rico, and in particular the independentista position based on a socialist ideology. In the context of Puerto Rico's present political status (a Commonwealth within the United States federal system), the socialist approach to birth control must be viewed as a statement of policy for a future society, rather than as a program which is potentially realizable under existing political conditions. Therefore, this paper is concerned with an analysis of changing ideologies with respect to population control, rather than with an ongoing health care program. We believe that the independentista position is important both because it presents a radical alternative for future family planning services and because it has had significant influence on the formulation of present birth control policies in Puerto Rico.

We will first review briefly the evolution of population theories and policies in the socialist countries. This will provide a comparative framework within which to locate the Puerto Rican experience. The second section of the paper provides a historical summary of the birth control movement in Puerto Rico in order to elaborate the objective conditions which gave rise to the socialist critique by the island's independentista groups. We will then analyze in some detail the disparate trends in population ideology which may be seen to provide continuity with what we discern to be the basis of

present independentista theories on the subject. In conclusion we attempt to evaluate the similarities and differences of the Puerto Rican case vis á vis current population theories and policies in the socialist countries.

While our emphasis here is on the evolution of socialist ideologies of population control, we want to stress the point that we do not view ideologies as "evolving" except in interaction with the objective conditions which generate them and which they reflect. Unfortunately space does not permit detailed attention to these conditions except in the Puerto Rican case with which we are primarily concerned. The Puerto Rican data are drawn from historical and documentary sources, supplemented by interviews with leading members of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP). Confidentiality prevents us from identifying by name the individuals who have provided us with our data. The analysis therefore represents our own distillation of the views expressed.

The Evolution of Socialist Theories of Population and Birth Control Policies

The marxist rebuttal of the well-known proposition of Malthus that human populations grow in geometric ratio while food supply can only grow in arithmetical ratio is directed at both its theoretical and practical policy implications. From a theoretical standpoint, the basis of Marx and Engels' criticism was Malthus' attribution of poverty to natural causes which are thus irreversible, rather than to concrete man-made structures which are capable of transformation. As Marx clearly realized, if population is subject to natural laws, then socialism can not abolish poverty but can only redistribute it. The issue is thus whether the apparent excess of people in industrialized society is a "population problem" or a problem of economic organization. Engels' statement that "only one-third of the earth can be described as cultivated, and ... the productivity of this third could be increased sixfold and more merely by applying the improvements which are already known"² finds its echo in the assertions of current Latin American writers that in relation to actual and potential resources Latin America is underpopulated.³ The question posed, then, is whether an absolute scarcity of resources ever exists such that a country may be termed overpopulated, or whether the so-called excess of people may not be attributed to a specific socio-economic formation, namely capitalism.

In response to the malthusian thesis, Marx attempted to formulate his own law of population growth under capitalism. Its crux lies in the distinction he makes between the "means of employment" and the "means of subsistence". Malthus, he said, clearly confused the two. Under capitalism, the key to population growth lies in the dynamics of an economic system which places primacy on the accumulation of capital. With the advance of technology, the investment of capital in the means of production (constant capital) inevitably increases at the expense of capital outlays in wages and salaries to the producer (variable capital). Thus, by simply selling his labor, the worker inevitably produces the means for his own displacement. Over a period of time, capitalism thus generates a surplus labor force of increasing size, an industrial reserve army which can be called upon in time of capital scarcity, but which is dispensable in times of technological acceleration and plenty. The increasing concentration of this army of unemployed and underemployed in the urban areas, and its marginality to the economic system, is the principal contradiction of the capitalist system for it represents unlimited revolutionary potential. From this standpoint, then, population growth is a necessary prerequisite to the social and economic transformation, without which labor productivity and the general standard of living

can not be raised. This line of argument clearly provides a pronatalist rationale.

Marx and Engels did not articulate a principle of population growth under socialism and communism. However, Engels, at least, believed that Communist social organization would be naturally conducive to lower fertility, although he indicated that even under communism some form of birth control might have to be introduced. Lenin, while condemning neo-malthusianism as "the hypocrisy of the ruling classes", believed in the principle that families have the right to decide on the number of children they will have, and even favored the legalization of abortion.⁴ In 1920, abortions were legalized in the Soviet Union and were performed free of charge in State hospitals. However, in 1936 the law was reversed, and throughout the stalinist era a generally hard line against any attempt to limit births was taken as being "incompatible with the Marxist approach to these questions".⁵ Since 1955 abortion has again been legal in the Soviet Union on request by the woman, and some effort has been made to promote contraception.⁶ However, the fact that Russia is not a densely populated country has made the formulation of a national population policy aimed at a reduction in fertility a matter of lesser urgency than in other areas of the world.

In fact, there is some evidence that Soviet demographers fear a depopulation of Russia's Slavic areas in relation to population increases in the Central Asian region. As a consequence, differential (e.g. regional and ethnic) population policies have been proposed as a solution.⁷

The real shift in socialist ideology with respect to population control has centered around the theoretical problem of population growth and economic development in the Third World. The logic of the marxist analysis of the capitalist system, as we have seen, favors a pronatalist, anti-birth control stance. In the case of marxist-oriented writers in the underdeveloped world this is reinforced by nationalist, anti-imperialist and in some cases Catholic sentiment. José Consuegra's El Control de la Natalidad Como Arma del Imperialismo is devoted in its entirety to a refutation of neo-malthusian propaganda in Latin America, stressing the importance of the "human factor as motor force and reason for economic development".⁸ From this perspective the "population explosion" is the major impulse to structural and institutional change, and attempts to control it by the imperialist powers, in particular the United States, can only be interpreted as antipathetic to the autonomous economic development of Latin America. Such efforts are seen as prompted by racism and fear of popular movements leading to socialism and communism. The theme is further developed that

the "overpopulation", such as it exists at the present stage of historical development, is not an overpopulation with respect to natural resources, but rather with respect to the organization of present productive institutions and technology.⁹

Some Soviet analysts, however, have recognized the contradiction between long-term revolutionary strategy and short-term economic development. In the face of growing evidence that birth rates do not automatically decline with increased urbanization and industrialization, they have begun to talk in terms of optimum rates of population increase concomitant with desired rates of economic growth. While always stressing the primacy of the need for economic re-organization towards a more rational and equitable use and distribution of resources, the question as to the inhibitory effect of large numbers on growth rates has been faced by demographers and others in the socialist countries. It has been recognized that to talk in terms of population density in absolute relation to potential resources evades the central problem of the effects on future economic growth of high rates of population increase. Two factors have been emphasized in the debate, investment and the burden of dependency.¹⁰ With respect to the former, it is argued that high rates of population increase divert resources from productive investment

into the consumption and service sectors. In other words, there is an inverse relationship between a high rate of population increase and the rate of investment. The second factor concerns the proportion of the population engaged in production as compared to the proportion in the dependent age groups. A large dependent sector likewise limits the rate of investment.

Given the above considerations, a Soviet economist has concluded:

"These countries of the 'Third World' must follow a policy of spreading family planning and of the transition to a small family system. Underdevelopment for a considerable part of people in these countries means that generations of people throughout their lives consume more than they produce, and this lessens the possibility of improving the economy of these countries and raising the standard of living of their populations ..." 11

Thus, although the demographic variable is never viewed as "causing" poverty and underdevelopment, population growth is now recognized by analysts in the Soviet Union as an important factor in slowing the rate of economic development. Some form of artificial control of fertility therefore seems desirable in order to facilitate the short-term goals of economic development, rather than waiting for a "natural"

decline in birth rates such as has been seen to accompany the rise in the standard of living in the industrialized nations. The Soviet position on this matter has been summarized as follows:

"On the Soviet side, then, it would appear that the main recent changes in attitude involve a recognition that 'population problems' do exist, in the sense of being attributable at least in part to high fertility levels. Furthermore, there is a recognition that while, in the long run, fertility levels are determined by broad socio-economic forces, in the short run they can also be influenced by the activities of family planning programs (making contraceptives available and engaging in propaganda for their use)..." 12

The Chinese have gone even further in their evolution from a traditional marxist pronatalist position. Since the mid-fifties, they have sponsored several national birth control campaigns, including promotion of contraceptives, abortion and sterilization. The Chinese Government's rationale for these policies is made explicit in the following article appearing in a San Juan newspaper:

"Communist China's birth control efforts have resulted in a decline in the birth rate, a Peking broadcast said Monday, but it gave no figures on the subject. The official Hsinhua news agency said women, now enjoying equal political and economic rights with men, want to lighten their family rearing chores so 'they can do more in building socialism'. Other purposes of the birth control program, Hsinhua said, are to 'protect the health of mothers and children and regulate population increase so that it corresponds with the development of the Socialist planned economy'. Men are encouraged not to marry before age 25 and women before age 23, the agency said." 13

The Chinese position on birth control indicated above appears to be a synthesis of the various trends which have led to a modification of socialist ideologies of population control: first, the recognition that rapid population increase may impede the realization economic planning goals; second, the transformation of the family and changing roles of women in the development of socialist society; and third, the emphasis in socialist society on comprehensive health care which takes into account the social and economic as well as the purely symptomatic and physical aspects of health.

In Cuba, however, there is no official policy of population control. This may be attributed in part to the demographic impact of massive out-migration following the 1959 Revolution, which is perceived to have caused a labor shortage.¹⁴ This policy vacuum must also be viewed in the context of Cuba's struggle against U.S. imperialism and its interest in promoting the revolutionary aspirations of other Latin American nations. Fidel Castro, himself, while recognizing the problem of population in some countries, foresees a revolutionary solution in the abolition of archaic and repressive socio-economic institutions, and in the development of natural and human resources. Regulating numbers is not the solution.¹⁵ In one speech he put it this way:

"The population is going to keep on growing. And revolution is the inevitable result as in an elementary mathematical equation." 16

In practice, contraceptive services are widely available in Cuba through its free health system, although these services are not being actively publicized. Cuba justifies family planning services on grounds of maternal health and the emancipation of women for productive work in society. The logic of its past and present political status, however, inhibits any explicit linking of fertility "regulation" with national goals of economic development. At the same time it should be noted that a recent analyst of the Cuban scene has observed a growing concern in Castro's speeches for the problem of numbers versus availability of social services, as well as a decline in overt attacks on U.S. - sponsored population control programs. This commentator has suggested the possibility of an endorsement of population control by Cuba in the near future.¹⁷

From the foregoing, we discern a pattern of development in socialist ideologies of population control and policy. In response to analyses of the workings of capitalism in its early stage, there was first an outright rejection of birth control as national policy. However, at a later stage in the historical development of capitalism (imperialism), there is a growing

tendency among socialist analysts to recognize the existence of a "population problem" at least insofar as the underdeveloped countries are concerned. While there is a continued rejection of the implications of neo-malthusianism as a weapon of imperialism, the re-evaluated position places short-term economic development ahead of a revolutionary solution. Furthermore, in the development of socialist society at home, the changing role of the woman and the concept of health as socially and environmentally determined provide additional rationales for the modification of earlier pronatalist policies. The synthesis of these trends is found in the Chinese case where both rapid population growth and socialist development dictate the formulation of a national policy of birth control. The Soviet Union, while endorsing family planning services, has stopped short of a national policy of population control due to disparate demographic conditions. Its writers have indicated, however, great interest in the problem of numbers in relation to economic development in the Third World. In general, these writers have espoused a non-revolutionary approach to these questions, and in many respects their analyses and solutions approximate those of U.S. advocates of population control in the underdeveloped world.

Cuba also permits birth control services, but rejects a national population control policy primarily on grounds of its

role in the anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggle of the Latin American nations. We suggest that past or present colonial status is a determining factor inhibiting an explicit policy of fertility control. We would therefore expect to find a parallel between the Cuban position on birth control and that of Puerto Rico's socialist groups. We will turn now to an analysis of the evolution of birth control policy and practice in Puerto Rico, and of the ideological critiques and alternatives which have been articulated by these groups.

Brief History of Birth Control in Puerto Rico

As early as 1925, a group of young middle-class professionals, headed by Dr. Lanauze of Ponce, established the island's first birth control organization, the Puerto Rican Birth Control League. The League was not a service-oriented organization but rather an educational one. The League's members were interested in arousing public opinion regarding overpopulation and its adverse socio-economic effects on Puerto Rican society. More importantly, they stressed the right of parents freely to determine the number of children desired in light of the families' economic situation. In the absence of free choice and resources to insure the proper rearing of children, the League argued that all women should have the right and freedom to control their reproductive capacity.¹⁸

The League and its organizers were the subject of a series of rather hostile attacks from the combined forces of Catholic and independentista groups on the island. The basic arguments presented against the League was that their work was offensive to God's law and to the morality of a Christian nation.¹⁹ Given Roman Catholic opposition, lack of adequate financial resources and public indifference, these initial attempts by private groups to organize a birth control movement were rendered ineffective.

In the early 1930's, Puerto Rico received substantial U.S. government funding to alleviate the effects of economic depression on the island. The federal programs included birth control as a primary objective. Thus in 1934 with the aid of the local federal relief agency (the Puerto Rican Emergency Relief Administration -- PRERA), the School of Tropical Medicine established a clinic in San Juan as a pilot project. With the termination of the PRERA program in 1936, a new federal agency (the Puerto Rican Reconstruction Agency -- PRRA) was created to continue its functions. Under the auspices of the new agency, birth control services were expanded resulting in a network of fifty-three clinics that serviced 10,000 couples over a two-year period.

Unable to effectively curtail the birth control activities of the PRRA at the local level, the island's Catholic hierarchy enlisted the support of various Catholic groups on the mainland. This political pressure at the continental level during a presidential election year was successful in terminating the PRRA's birth control programs.²⁰

Shortly thereafter, members of the defunct Puerto Rico Birth Control League organized the Maternal and Child Health Association. The Association had a two-fold purpose: to re-establish a birth control program and to wage a campaign to abolish legislation impeding the birth control movement. The Association achieved its aims through an intensive campaign among Puerto Rican legislators (majority pro-statehood) and the vigorous support of Blanton Winship, the island's federally-appointed Governor, and of James Beverly, a former governor and vice-president of the Association.²¹

As a result of these efforts, in 1937 the Puerto Rican Legislature passed Laws #116, #133 and #136. These established a Eugenics Board, legalized the entrance and distribution of contraceptive information and devices on the island, and empowered the Puerto Rican Department of Health to provide

contraceptive services to married and consensually-united couples. From 1940-44 the insular government effectively assumed and vigorously expanded the operations of the privately-organized Maternal and Child Health Association's clinics.²²

During the latter part of the decade of the forties and the fifties, Puerto Rico's public birth control programs were effectively neutralized. The overwhelming victory of the Popular Democratic Party in 1944 ushered in a policy of benevolent neglect as regards the island's public birth control program. This policy can be explained by various factors: the reformist nature of the Popular ideology and continued Church and independentista opposition. The Popular Party and its leader, Luis Muñoz Marín, set the tone for the future of Puerto Rico's birth control program. In the tradition of Latin American reformist movements, overpopulation was not seen as an obstacle to economic development, but rather its main incentive.²³ The goal of the Muñoz government was not to limit the number of persons on the island, but to increase production. Given this attitude, industrialization was given top priority, while birth control was seen as a complementary device for achieving economic development. The mass migration of Puerto Ricans to the mainland during the 1950's enabled the Populares to sustain their faith

in industrialization. The reduction in the population growth rate, resulting from massive out-migration, had the effect of virtually eliminating official support for the existing birth control programs on the island.

Although the Muñoz administration during this period made no concerted effort to vigorously implement existing birth control legislation, it also made no effort to abolish the birth control laws or programs. The Church's opposition to the Muñoz Government is partially explained by the government's continued tolerance of public and private birth control activities. To this must be added the legislation enacted under Muñoz legalizing divorce, and the government's refusal to financially aid religious schools or to permit religious education in the public schools. All of these actions were interpreted by the island's Church hierarchy as immoral acts by an immoral government and against the interests of a Christian society. This reasoning finally led in 1960 to the formation by the Catholic Church of the Christian Action Party (PAC) which was intended to challenge the moral neutrality of the Popular Party.

The formation of the PAC generated a political alliance between the Catholic Church and certain Catholic independentista leaders. Several of the latter became members and/or candidates of the

PAC. On the other hand, the majority of the more progressive elements among the independentistas refused to associate themselves with the PAC. Some construed the party's platform and intent as Church interference in national politics. Moreover, the Cuban revolution of 1959 had attracted growing numbers of young independentistas who had begun to view the Church in marxian terms as an arm of colonial oppression. Furthermore, the leading spokesman for the PAC at this time was Bishop James Macmanus, who had on numerous occasions expressed his political preference for eventual statehood for the island and his vehement opposition to socialism. This position was diametrically opposed to the avowed political objectives of the independence movement.

The outcome of the 1960 election, which pitted the Muñoz administration against the PAC, was rather adverse for the latter. Muñoz obtained the largest plurality of his political career and was re-elected to his fourth term of office. The PAC received only 6% of the total vote, which entitled only two of its candidates to seats in the Puerto Rican legislature. However, the legislature refused to seat the PAC representatives because of alleged electoral fraud. The price paid by the Church to achieve a reconciliation with Muñoz was the replacement of the island's North American bishops by native Puerto Rican clergy.²⁴ This satisfied the demands of independentista groups for native control of Church affairs. On the other hand,

in the interest of its future relations with the Church, the reuling Popular Democratic Party under Muñoz Marin (1960-64) and Sanchez Villella (1964-68) did not push a strong birth control program during the sixties. This was explained to the writers by a former Popular governor as attributable to a reluctance on the part of the Government to implement an island-wide program which could be construed as an act of vengeance against the Church.

Under the Sanchez Villella administration, however, the Health Department with the aid of federal funds embarked on a pilot maternal and infant care program in its northeastern area. The program had a comprehensive health orientation which included family planning. The success of this pilot project, a further infusion of federal funds specifically for family planning, and close personal ties between the New Progressive Party and the Catholic Church, contributed to the establishment by the Ferre administration (1968-72) of an island-wide family planning program. This was the first official government-sponsored island-wide program in the island's history. It stresses the voluntary nature of birth control services, but is quite specific in indicating that these services are intended to reduce population growth in the interest of economic development:

"The objective of family planning is to help better the socio-economic conditions of the country through the planning of the number and frequency of children. Towards these ends, medical services are provided towards the reduction of fertility on a voluntary basis." 25

In the 1972 election, the Ferre pro-statehood party was defeated and the Populares were returned to office under the governorship of Rafael Hernandez Colon. In a recent press conference, Governor Hernandez indicated his continued support for a governmental family planning program. He announced plans for re-organizing present services in order to achieve maximum effectiveness.²⁶

The Evolution of Independentista Ideologies of Population Control and Family Planning

As has been indicated, the Roman Catholic Church and independentista groups were vigorously opposed to private and public birth control programs. Their opposition must be understood in terms of the nature of the arguments being put forward by early pro-birth control forces. These rest upon two basic lines of reasoning, health and eugenics, as is illustrated in the following passage:

"It is known that the restriction of fertility among the select classes ... aggravates the problem. Every time that these groups reduce their births, they condone the uncontrolled genetic instinct of the hordes. Thus we will end up by eliminating our select classes and creating a nation of morons, irresponsible individuals, and inferior beings, who lack direction and are at the mercy of any adventurer who wishes to submit them to his servitude ... In addition, the eugenic laws ... promote the health of the offspring and responsible motherhood, which would enable the human family to purge itself of the bondage of misery and contribute to the purification of the race." 27

The health and eugenics arguments for birth control were further reinforced by those which took the position that "overpopulation" was impeding the island's economic development. This explicit linking of demography and economic growth is characteristic of the opinion of United States federal officials,²⁸ as well as of those sectors of Puerto Rican opinion which favored the continued development of Puerto Rico within the United States economic framework. Thus, an anti-birth control position was equated with an anti-United States stance, and those who opposed it were accused of being subversive to the true interests of Puerto Rico.

"Those that oppose birth control are none other than those always interested in using the population ... for their political purposes, which are full of violence, hate, fratricide and anarchy." 29

It is as a response to this kind of polemic that the Catholic-Nationalist views on birth control must be interpreted. The basis of the Catholic-Nationalist opposition, of course, was the natural law argument against contraception. This doctrinally-based argument, on moral and religious grounds, was reinforced by nationalist sentiment. This viewed the independence struggle as a means of reaffirming a Hispanic cultural tradition threatened by the imposition of "Anglo-Saxon" values and institutions. The positive need and value of a large population in combating this threat is the rationale for a pro-natalist nationalist position. Furthermore, high fertility is seen as necessary in counteracting the effects of large-scale migration promoted by both United States and Puerto Rican officials. Birth control and encouragement of migration are thus interpreted as cultural genocide. A very early statement of this point of view is expressed in the following passage:

"Why are there so many? In these naive words it is affirmed that Puerto Ricans are a nuisance in Puerto Rico: that our population density which is the wall that resists the destruction of our personality and race should be destroyed." 30

A modern version of the same analysis is contained in the recent abortion statement issued by Antulio Parrilla Bonilla, a Catholic bishop and independentista:

"Abortion on demand, and then sterilization, euthanasia and suicide would precipitate moral deterioration which in turn would contribute to a process of disintegration of our nationality through the decrease and displacement of Puerto Ricans. All of these presuppose the gradual destruction of all of our remaining national values." 31

With the initiation of "Operation Bootstrap", Puerto Rico's attempt at transforming its economy through industrialization, the issue of economic development becomes more central in the evolution of independentista ideology. The principle architect of "Operation Bootstrap", Teodoro Moscoso, was himself an advocate of family planning as a necessary means of achieving a balance between fertility rates and a rise in the standard of living. While migration tended to take priority over birth control as the chief instrument of official population policy at the time (coupled with the "battle of production"), family planning services were available in public and private clinics. These were offered at the discretion of the medical directors on the basis of a philosophy of maternal and child health. A more explicitly economic and demographic rationale underlies the philosophy of the private Puerto Rican Family Planning Association, which was actively promoting birth control with heavy reliance on sterilization. Between the years 1947-48 and 1953-54, the percentage of sterilized women in the reproductive age groups increased from 6.6%³² to 16.5%³³. In 1965 the figure was put at 33%³⁴ and in 1968 at 34%³⁵.

Additionally, experiments with contraceptive foams and jellies and the oral contraceptive were carried out on Puerto Rican women.

The attempt to aid Puerto Rico's economic development through birth control programs was interpreted by Catholic-Nationalist groups as immoral, racially suicidal and irrelevant to the true causes of underdevelopment. As early as 1926, these groups had argued that the problem of poverty in Puerto Rico was primarily determined by the maldistribution of socio-economic resources.³⁶ This line of reasoning has persisted in independentista thought, and its clearest statement is to be found in a series of articles written by Bishop Parrilla, a portion of which we extract here:

"Among the fallacies propagated by the neo-malthusians when they particularly consider economically underdeveloped countries is the one that affirms that the high birth rates that exist in these nations is the cause of underdevelopment ... it is also true that careful analysis has not been given to the degree to which population growth stimulates economic growth. 37.

Some independentista analysts, however, incline towards acceptance of the thesis of overpopulation in relation to available resources. These advocate population control in

conjunction with a more rational distribution of resources, although they argue that overpopulation must be viewed as a symptom rather than the cause of underdevelopment.³⁸

To summarize, the position of independentista groups in Puerto Rico as regards birth control programs has been one of rejection and opposition. Throughout the history of the birth control movement this opposition has been on moral, religious and nationalist grounds. There has also been a tendency to emphasize the positive aspects of population growth for economic development, while some have conceded a need for some form of fertility control in view of the island's scarcity of natural resources.

In the decade of the sixties, the independence movement in Puerto Rico adopted a more explicitly socialist ideology. This was formalized in the electoral platform statement of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) in May 1971, and in earlier declarations of the Movimiento Pro Independencia (MPI) which became the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) in 1971.³⁹ It is important to note that this was a gradual transition, and that many of the Catholic-Nationalist positions,

noted earlier, can readily be adapted to a marxist framework. A class analysis is implicit in the rejection of birth control as a menace to national identity and an effort aimed at cultural assimilation. These are easily equated with the neo-marxist tenet that imperialist-sponsored birth control programs are racially inspired and aimed at the poor. The pro-natalist thesis that numbers are wealth approximates the marxist position that population pressure is a precondition to transformation of capitalist social and economic structures. The fusion of these two ideological streams is clearly stated in the following article published in an independentista journal:

"The United States public birth control policy is very clear. It is predominantly racial and cultural on a purely national level (against unassimilated ethnic minorities) and imperialist and defensive (against third world countries) for reasons of economy and security at the international level." 40

The adoption of explicitly socialist platforms by the two major independence parties can be attributed to internal developments within Puerto Rico as well as to external influences. In the first place, the persistence of social and economic inequality despite rapid economic growth required explanation, and this is provided by the marxian concept of structured inequality within a capitalist colonial situation.⁴¹ Disillusionment with the promises and outcomes of "Operation

Bootstrap" necessitated a theoretical reformulation which would take into account the island's structural position vis á vis the United States and other countries, as well as its purely "national" problems of loss of cultural identity. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 and its aftermath also had considerable influence on independentista ideology and strategy. There were historical links between the independence movements of Cuba and Puerto Rico,⁴² and Cuba's success acted as a catalyst to the re-evaluation of the ideological direction of the Puerto Rican independence movement. Additionally, the exposure of independentista party members to international currents of thought through travel and study opportunities abroad has had the effect of broadening the scope of analysis of Puerto Rico's problems. More specifically, with respect to the issue of population and family planning programs, the articulation of the concept of the "colonial experience" of third world nations⁴³ has tended to reinforce the rejection of "imperialist" birth control programs. On the other hand, information has also been disseminated to Puerto Rico of the more recent population theories and policies which, as we have seen, have been implemented in many of the socialist countries including Cuba, the Soviet Union and China. Finally, the growing influence of the movement for the liberation of women can not be discounted even in this Latin culture where 'machismo' is acknowledged as a way of life.

Socialist Family Planning Utopias in Puerto Rico

The policy statement of the PIP with respect to population control and family planning is contained in its 1972 party platform.⁴⁴ This argues that:

1. Puerto Rico has an "apparent" population problem due to the misuse and irrational distribution of its existing resources, rather than to a real disequilibrium between resources and population.
2. The maldistribution of resources is an inherent aspect of a political and economic system based on structured inequality.
3. A contributing factor to the apparent overpopulation problem is the lack of control over foreign immigration.
4. Puerto Rico lacks a coherent plan of economic development which truly corresponds to the needs of the Puerto Rican people, and as a result suffers from geographical maldistribution of its population.
5. The Puerto Rican woman's free choice in controlling her reproduction has been inhibited by her unequal status in the society. Her freedom to make decisions affecting her own life has been limited further by lack of adequate information and education concerning the "population problem".

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, the PIP platform concludes that Puerto Rico does not presently have a real

population problem. However, it will be necessary in the future to "stabilize" population growth rates in order to strike a balance between the number of inhabitants and economic development. The measures proposed by PIP relevant to population control are:

1. A universal comprehensive health system, emphasizing preventive care, and abolishing the elitist and profit-making concepts of the medical profession.
2. Within this comprehensive health system a voluntary family planning service and intensive educational campaigns. The platform specifically rejects coercive mass programs, particularly those involving sterilization and abortion.
3. Recognizing the fact that no voluntary family planning program will be successful without a fundamental restructuring of family relations, various programs and services are proposed (e.g. child care centers, divorce laws on a consensual basis, etc.) to aid in the redefinition of the role of women in future socialist society.

It should be clear that the PIP policy statement views family planning as part of a total comprehensive health system within the framework of a restructured economy, and not as an isolated program aimed at fertility control. A reduction in fertility becomes a consequence or by-product of a healthier and better educated population. The stress is on voluntarism

within the context of a society dedicated to the creation of "the new (wo)man". In this scheme, the woman is assigned an active role in constructing socialist society, and thus she comes to perceive her own potential contribution as something broader than the homemaker/child-bearer function. Through the resocialization process, the individual's desire and need to limit the number of children born becomes coincident with the needs and goals of the state. Thus a philosophy of voluntarism is not in contradiction with collective national goals.

The PSP, newly reorganized from the MPI in 1971, has not yet participated in an election, nor has it published a platform.⁴⁵ Statements by the party to date avoid the subject of contraceptive services and reiterate the nationalist anti-imperialist position described earlier. However, the party recognizes the right of women and men to control their reproduction, as may be seen in the following declaration:

"The PSP-MPI denounces and combats the official policy of the colonial government of Puerto Rico and its programs of birth control, because under the present conditions they constitute an aggressive form of genocide and grave danger to the physical and mental health of the Puerto Rican woman. On the other hand, let it be noted that the PSP-MPI defends the right of all women to equality in all respects. Therefore it defends the right of women as well as men to know and control the integrity of their body. For this reason the PSP promotes a scientific program of sexual education and orientation in every respect so that every person can responsibly exercise their reproductive faculties. 46

This PSP statement is less specific in its approach to family planning services. In fact no detailed blueprint for the future has yet been issued by the party, which is still in the initial stage of structural organization. However, given its socialist ideology (based on marxist-leninist principles), we predict that a comprehensive health system will be included in their program. We can conclude, further, that family planning services would be available given their explicit reference to "sexual orientation and education". They appear to be in basic agreement with the PIP on the question of the role of women and in their rejection of present efforts at birth control within the context of United States colonialism.

Conclusions

We perceive a certain ambivalence in the positions taken by the independence parties on the issue of the relationship between a population control policy and the provision of family planning services. Where the former implies conscious control by the state of the various factors affecting the demographic structure of the population in the interest of planned economic goals, the latter may exist in a society without any specific linkage with national goals. In our opinion, when the PIP refer to "population control" they in fact mean voluntary family

planning, although in their reference to population "stabilization" they implicitly suggest that in the future such a linkage will have to be made.

We suggest that this ambivalence is an aspect of the tension arising from a rejection on ideological (marxist-nationalist) grounds of family planning programs as these are presently administered in (colonial) Puerto Rico, and yet the tacit acceptance in principle of a need for birth control on an individual basis. The latter can be explained in terms of the independentistas' perception of present socio-economic needs and their ideological acceptance of female equality. It is also a pragmatic response to political reality, in that the Puerto Rican electorate clearly accepts and demands contraceptive services.

The resolution of the above contradictions in the independentista approach to population control and family planning represents, in fact, a compromise between ^{the} Catholic-Nationalist ideological position which has persisted within the movement and its new socialist orientation. In deference to the nationalist position it takes an anti-imperialist stance and avoids the issue of overpopulation by labelling it "apparent". It follows the lead of the socialist countries, by adopting new rationales for birth control (individual rights, comprehensive health services) while postponing an explicit linkage of

family planning programs with national economic goals.

This solution to the tension created by divergent ideological trends within the movement and pragmatic considerations of present reality in Puerto Rico is closely akin to Cuba's policy, outlined previously. It appears to us that as long as the colonial experience informs the development of ideology, this is the only viable population policy that can be adopted by those of socialist persuasion in the Third World. The perspective of the Soviet Union approximates too closely that of the United States in proposing one solution for the underdeveloped countries based on short-range fertility control in the interest of economic development, and another for themselves. The Chinese posture which explicitly relates birth control programs to national economic goals is inappropriate in colonial and neo-colonial contexts where such programs have been viewed as an "arm of imperialism" with strong racial and class bias, and aimed at thwarting goals of national liberation. In the absence of political self-determination in Puerto Rico, the independentista "population control" program must continue to be a blueprint for the socialist Utopia rather than a realizable alternative under the present system. It seems probable that even in a Puerto Rican socialist republic,

population policy would continue to be influenced by anti-imperialist sentiment, as has been the case in Cuba.

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