International Birth Control Politics: The Evolution of a Catholic Contraceptive Debate in Latin America

KATHLEEN A. TOBIN

Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies
Purdue University Calumet
Hammond, IN

Official Catholic opposition to contraception has long been portrayed as a stand that is based in antiquated doctrine and "out of touch" with society and its problems. In fact, Catholic arguments often have been less devoted to doctrine and more reflective of concerns for social justice and human rights. This was certainly the case in Latin America, as international birth control programs evolved in the mid to late 20th century. Programs were targeted at developing nations like those in Latin America which were experiencing what was termed a "population explosion." This article describes how, in this primarily Catholic region, Catholic authorities responded to population policy, arguing that overpopulation should not be considered the primary cause of economic strife, nor should birth control be promoted as the solution.

More than three decades ago, Ivan Illich warned of the difficulty of implementing a policy of population control in Latin America, saying, "Only a strongman could afford simultaneously to dare traditional Catholics who speak about sin, communists who want to out-breed the United States imperialists, and nationalists who speak about colonizing vast unsettled expanses."[1] In an era in which the birth control movement centered much of its public arguments on the empowerment of women, Illich was keenly aware of the ways in which religion, communist ideology and nationalism complicated population policy.

This was particularly true in Latin America where the Catholic Church remained strong, communists demanded alternative solutions, and nationalist identity promoted strength in numbers. But while opposing sides of the debate appeared unwaveringly polarized in the 1960s, the dialectic contributed to a new perspective on international population policy present at the dawn of the new millennium. According to that new perspective, global population cannot be addressed without considering economic justice and human rights, both espoused by both Marxists and the Catholic Church in their opposition to population control.

The Catholic Church's position against birth control has long been regarded as antiquated, unchanging and steeped in medieval doctrine vilifying sexuality. However, modern Catholic teachings on human rights and economic justice have been significantly more influential in shaping Church arguments on birth control since the early decades of the 20th century. It was in that period that the religious debate over birth control placed the Church into the role of "enemy," as other denominations shifted their positions toward acceptance.[2] The debates took place primarily in the United States and Western Europe, where birth control activists sought to legalize contraceptives through a feminist initiative to lift the Victorian ban on contraceptives and contraceptive information. Ultimately, however, pro-birth control arguments appealed to eugenicists, race theorists and neo-Malthusians who saw social and economic ills worsening as a result of overpopulation particularly among the poor and inferior. The Church refused to shift its position for a variety of reasons—Catholic authorities often arguing that birth control was not a solution to economic problems and that no human life should be regarded as inferior. These arguments played important roles when the debate was taken to Latin America.

The birth control movement became almost immediately international in scope as Margaret Sanger and other activists organized international conferences to address issues of global poverty, migration, war, etc. and how they related to uncontrolled births. The era of World War I marked the rise of intensified global concerns, and in the post war period birth control activists appealed to the League of Nations to include a birth control platform in its plan for world peace. The Great Depression brought a new perspective to the birth control debate, shaping new economic arguments, but it was not until the post-World War II era that the International Planned Parenthood Federation and other organizations were successful in getting the world to acknowledge a need for global population policy. India and China gained significant attention from the beginning of the birth control movement, with nationalist politics and large populations challenging the roles of the United States and Western Europe in the geo-political/economic sphere. Attitudes toward birth control and population in Latin America evolved somewhat differently. First, the traditional relationship between Latin America and the United States resulted in the evolution of more specific U.S.

influence in population policy directed to the South. Second, the prevalence and nature of Catholicism in Latin America molded unique birth control questions that were not only theological, but political in character. And third, the strength of socialism introduced human rights and economic justice into birth control dialogue that both paralleled Catholic teaching and confronted the United States' political-economic philosophy and action.

The international birth control movement was first introduced to Latin America during the era of the Mexican Revolution. Margaret Sanger had opened her first birth control clinic in the United States in 1916, and supported the opening of others throughout the United States. She and other activists saw themselves as liberating women everywhere from "incessant childbearing" and planned to open clinics wherever possible. Conditions in Mexico seemed favorable, not because of overpopulation, as Mexico was essentially sparsely populated and the population was actually declining due to high infant mortality, war casualties and migration. Rather, revolutionary ideology embracing human rights combined with political attacks on the Church opened the door for birth control. Constitutionalists were willing to address women's rights and Mexican feminists demanded access to contraceptives, particularly in the radical state of Yucatan. In the early 1920s anti-Catholicism had pervaded the birth control movement in the United States, and though virtually all denominations opposed the use of artificial contraceptives, the Catholic Church had been branded as the enemy. The strength of anti-clericalism in Mexico during the same period influenced the opening of three birth control clinics, and under the presidency of the anti-cleric Plutarco Calles, Sanger's booklet "Birth Regulation" was freely distributed.[3] But Mexican women did not embrace contraception in the 1920s. It is difficult to determine exactly the reasons behind the failure, though it is important to recognize a number of determining factors. Mayan culture and the adherence to Catholic teachings among the people of the Yucatan acted as obstacles to contraceptive use. In addition, the people of the Yucatan were largely poor and illiterate, and they lacked clean water, making it difficult to use the recommended diaphragms and spermicidal jellies. But although this was a comparatively brief episode in birth control history, it illustrates a division in cultural understanding that would pervade the evolution of international population policy in coming decades.

In the 1930s, reformers and women's reproductive rights activists were overshadowed by the power of the conservative eugenics movement and of economic arguments pointing to population pressures as contributing to the global depression. It was in this era that the Catholic Church cemented its stand against the use of artificial contraceptives as other denominations shifted toward acceptance. In Latin America a pro-natalist program began at the same time, urging births to strengthen nations and support economic development. The depression spurred im-

port-substitution industrialization in Latin America, as nations hoped to lessen dependency on foreign investment through internal economic development. Within this initiative, leaders saw population growth as fundamental to economic growth. This philosophy contradicted the claims of more developed nations that high birth rates caused economic problems, but mid-20th century Latin American development more clearly paralleled 19th century U.S. development, where population growth—through births and immigration—was encouraged. The political position of the Catholic Church was in question at the same time, as fascists (who supported traditional Church hierarchy) and socialists (who attacked Church authority) vied for control of nations. The Church's position on birth control seemed irrelevant as the population/economic arguments of the developed world did not seem to apply to the expansive Latin America before the 1960s, and Latin American pro-natalism upheld Church teaching. Policy makers saw human potential as the country's greatest asset, and in one study conducted during the1960s, half of the respondents saw Mexico's heavy population increase as leading to economic power.[4] Traditional clergy in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America embraced Church teachings that promoted large families as healthier and more prosperous.[5]

The exception lay in Puerto Rico. In the 1930s, U.S. eugenics and birth control movements inspired experimentation on Puerto Rican women. Claiming overpopulation contributed significantly to poverty there, the United States initiated a sterilization program in 1938, with an estimated one third of Puerto Rican women of childbearing age sterilized by the 1970s. During the 1950s, Puerto Rican women also served as subjects of research for early oral contraceptives, which contained dangerously high doses of hormones. The program was not reflective of any more general development supporting women's reproductive rights, as women were largely kept ignorant of other real contraceptive choices, and even of the consequences of tubal ligation itself. Rather, it was publicly promoted as an economic solution directly affecting women who would not lose precious time on the job due to childbearing. Women supplied the majority of labor in poorly-paid garment production, and corporations had a vested interest in keeping them working. In addition, authorities hoped that the Puerto Rican experiment could serve as a model for economic development through population control. Though the majority of Puerto Ricans were professed Catholics, they actively participated in the program, demonstrating one of many cases where Catholic behavior deviated widely from Vatican teaching. Politically there was little difficulty in introducing the program as Puerto Rico was a U.S. possession and thereby could not be termed a "Catholic nation." Very importantly, however, the episode served in later debates as a prime example of the imperialist nature of population control. Implementing principles of eugenics which were widely accepted in the United States before World War II, the program targeted

"undesirable and unbridled procreation, especially among the poor and less cultured strata of the population."[6] Anti-U.S. sentiment from Cuba, Nicaragua and elsewhere in Latin America, as well as the claims of organizations such as DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, founded in the 1980s) point to the Puerto Rican story to describe U.S. intentions and action.[7]

As the presence of socialism grew in Latin America, so did attacks on U.S. participation in population control. Socialists argued that the control of births among the poor was simply a capitalist response to economic disparity, where a more effective solution might lie in substantive economic restructuring. Ironically, participants in the Catholic social action movement took a similar position. Without attacking capitalism, and certainly without supporting socialism, the teachings of Catholic social action claimed that an address of economic justice should be encouraged before implementing birth control.[8] This position was outlined as early as 1916, when Monsignor John A. Ryan, director of the United States' National Catholic Welfare Conference, argued that if the working class were paid a living wage, talk of birth control would be unnecessary. Marxists argued along similar lines, maintaining that "excess population" was a by-product of capitalism, and that the solution lay not in birth control, but in economic reorganization. Centuries-old arguments that the poor contributed to their own poverty by having more children than they could afford resurfaced in the 20th century, and social Catholicism and socialism responded vigorously.

Socialist arguments against birth control gained new significance by the early 1960s, as the Cold War intensified in Latin America. The CIA-led invasion of Guatemala in 1954 and the CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 illustrated the extent of U.S. fears of socialism in the western hemisphere, demonstrating to Latin American socialists that the U.S. might certainly be capable of supporting the control of population there. In the first United Nations World Population Conference held in Rome in 1954, capitalists and Marxists clashed over the role of population and development, while Third World nations (ultimately the primary target of population policy) looked on. But the 1960s also marked the greatest rate of population growth in the world—implying the doubling of population in some developing countries within 25 years or less, fueling capitalist fears that underfed, ill-housed, and generally poverty-stricken masses might turn to socialism. The tremendous growth stemmed from the success of pro-natalist programs, but more significantly from effective modernization programs that decreased infant mortality and increased life expectancy.

During the 1950s, Catholic statements on population and family size appearing throughout Latin America mirrored Pope Pius XII's conservative teachings on family planning. In 1951, the Church officially sanctioned the rhythm method, or periodic abstinence, as a method of limiting births as long as it was

not used "habitually" for less than "grave" reasons. Though to some the move appeared to be a response to growing population pressures,[9] Catholic teaching continued to promote large family size. International political conditions promoted large family size as well. Population growth was encouraged in both the United States and the Soviet Union as a measure of potential strength and as a protection in the case of military attack. In developing countries also, population growth was viewed as a sign of strength. Where nationalistic sentiments reigned, pronatalism was sustained by patriotism and was viewed as a protection against enemies.

In 1959, the Draper Report recommended that the United States offer birth control information in connection with foreign aid. A four-star general, William Draper served as Under-secretary of the Army during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, and later as chairman of the Export-Import Bank during the Reagan administration. In 1959, he began to report the benefits of population control in foreign development. The recommendation ignited a debate, with U.S. bishops attacking the use of the term "population explosion" to instill fears among the American public, and claiming that American Catholics would not support public assistance to promote artificial contraception abroad. When Catholic Senator John Kennedy, an aspiring candidate for the presidency was forced to take a position on the matter, he commented "I would not think it wise for the United States to refuse to grant assistance to a country which is pursuing a policy it feels to be in its own best interest."[10]

After 1960, U.S. support of birth control programs in Latin America grew rapidly. In May of 1963, Foreign Aid Director David E. Bell supported international assistance for birth control, arguing that population increases in underdeveloped countries were diminishing the effect of the foreign aid program.[11] In January of 1964, the United States Agency for International Development (US AID) developed a special population unit on Latin America, the agency's first special unit on population. US AID subsequently recommended that all AID missions in Latin America establish family planning programs within the structure of existing health care institutions. It also recommended that each mission appoint a "high official" to oversee population programs and explore attitudes of host government officials.[12] Government officials throughout Latin America were pressured by foreign agencies to implement birth control but resisted developing state-led programs.[13]

New Catholic arguments continued to unfold in the 1960s as

international assistance programs increasingly embraced birth control. The Second Vatican Council inspired alternative perspectives and approaches to addressing the needs of the world's poor. The Vatican called for thousands of priests and nuns to be sent to Latin America to help meet those needs. Faced with seemingly overwhelming challenges, clergy found themselves competing with socialists and birth control

activists, both of whom had been condemned by the Vatican. In their common argument against birth control, Catholic clergy and socialists found themselves on the same side, and increasingly, fundamental teachings on social justice contributed to a melding of the two in the creation of liberation theology. In Latin America during the 1960s, pervasive oppression of the poor combined with the presence of socialism and Catholicism set the stage for this unique address of poverty. Though individual clergy sometimes became involved in the discreet distribution of contraceptives and contraceptive information in Latin America, liberation theology sought alternative economic solutions to poverty.

It seemed that the Church's opposition to contraception might soften, but it was in fact crystallized in 1968 with the papal encyclical Humanae Vitae. The encyclical in part evolved in response to debates over a new and fundamentally revolutionary method of preventing conception: the birth control pill. Offered to the public in 1960, the pill initially appeared to sidestep Catholic teaching that opposed the use of artificial barriers between a man and a woman during intercourse, forcing the Church to re-examine its teaching. Three separate commissions appointed by the Vatican advised that the Church liberalize its position on contraception. However, Pope Paul VI ignored their advice, choosing to restate opposition in Humanae Vitae.

Reaction against the encyclical ranged from anger to bewilderment, with U.S. Catholics wondering why, in this atmosphere of Church concern for world hunger, global poverty and human dignity, did the pope disregard such strong sentiment favoring a shift? Studies showed that Catholics in Europe and North America had long ignored official teaching on contraception, with sociologist Andrew Greeley noting that the encyclical initiated even more deliberate disobedience among devout Catholics.[14] Humanae Vitae held little significance in Africa and Asia, where the Catholic population was minimal. Latin America is the region where it could have played the most significant role. On an individual level, Latin Americans appeared unaffected by the encyclical. There was no immediate increase in the overall birth rate, and women who professed to be practicing Catholics continued to request contraceptive services.[15] On the national level, however, the impact was clear. Latin American governments which were traditionally tied to the ecclesiastical hierarchy feared reproach, publicly condemning birth control and creating obstacles to contraceptive services.[16]

Latin American clergy reaffirmed the official position outlined in Humanae Vitae in the Second General Conference which met in Medellin, Colombia in 1968. Bishops recognized tremendous need among Latin Americans but maintained that the rapid population growth in Latin America should not be considered the cause of all ills. They added that the Pope's teaching in the encyclical clearly opposed all use of artificial contraceptives.[17] Critics questioned whether pronouncements on individual conscience originating in

the Second Vatican Council might be considered by couples who were attempting to make moral decisions regarding preventing conception. Before and after Humanae Vitae, Catholics from Europe and the Americas appealed to the Church to recognize that the practice of contraception was an act of conscience and deserved the sanction of the Church, one appeal in 1966 noting that "a very large number of Catholic couples decide in conscience and for objective reasons that mere physiological integrity does not constitute an essential prerequisite governing the truly human character of each conjugal act," suggesting that mechanical and chemical means were used widely and with "conscientious convictions."[18]

But although the appeals were often made with Catholics and Catholic doctrine in mind, the majority highlighted concerns of politics and global society. John A. O'Brien, University of Notre Dame professor of theology who had written for more than 30 years on the subject of birth control argued that no one denomination should have the political power to force its will on those of other faiths. He noted:

Nations with abundant resources should help the underprivileged, sharing with them scientific knowledge and technical skills and thus enable them to achieve a thriving economy of their own. These are noble ideals and, if they could be achieved, their realization would help mightily in closing the gap between the 'have' and 'have-not' nations. It would enable the peoples of the underdeveloped countries to achieve their 'revolution of mounting expectations' without violence and without surrendering their aspirations for freedom and a democratic form of government. In short, the implementation of these ideas would promote stability of governments, halt the spread of Communism, and safeguard the peace of the world.

But, he added:

The failure to help the underdeveloped countries solve their population problems not only largely nullifies our foreign aid program but renders more distant the day when these people will be able to stand on their own financial feet—the goal of every self-respecting people. It also raises the question as to how much longer our own economy can stand the strain of pouring out billions of the taxpayers' money, when millions of our own people are unemployed and the burden of defense armament mounts steeply and steadily.[19]

In response to the traditional papal argument that artificial methods of contraception violated natural law, critics argued that advances in technological science such as immunizations also interfered with natural law, and that their success in keeping children alive had contributed to the population explosion as much as anything.

Beginning in 1968, following Humanae Vitae and its criticism, a wealth of literature on the subject appeared in Latin America. But the analyses approached the subject far more often from a socio-po-

litical ethic than from a theological or doctrinal position.[20] This dialogue unfolded in Mexico in 1973, as the government instituted a national birth control policy. The relationship between church and state in Mexico remained tense, with Mexican leaders—both civil and clerical—promoting modernization while answering to a Catholic populace. Mexican bishops ultimately supported President Luis Echeverria's program to legalize contraceptives, which emphasized the preference for natural family planning but opened the door to acceptance of other methods. Some argued that the bishops' motive responded to a potential weakening of the Church, as there were too few priests to minister to the growing population. However, it is more likely that they were responding to a growth that was truly phenomenal—Mexico's population was doubling every twenty-one years—and to a significant number of illegal abortions. Clergy often promoted family planning with the hope that it would curb the abortion rate.[21]

For those who warned of the dangers of a population explosion in Latin America, it was common to blame the Catholic Church. The prevalence of Catholicism combined with the Church's prohibition on contraceptive use suggest that it has been adherence to Catholic teaching that has contributed to rapid population growth. However, numerous studies have shown that contraceptive use among professed practicing Catholics has been common. And even to researchers who recognize demographic changes significant enough to warrant study, there is no evidence to justify a causal relationship between Catholicism and population growth.[22]

In 1974, the United Nations intensified its efforts to address population pressures and policy, sponsoring a World Population Conference in Bucharest. In preceding weeks, Conference Secretary-General Antonio Carrillo-Flores assured anxious observers that the divisiveness that had prevailed in previous population dialogue had in fact subsided, with various players reaching common ground:

In the General Assembly, in the Economic and Social Council, in the Population Commission, and in other agencies and organizations concerned with population problems or their effects, old adversaries [have been] moving closer together. Representatives of Western Europe and the United States began to agree publicly with the socialist position that economic development brings with it the resolution of many population problems. Representatives of socialist countries agreed that in certain instances, it might be profitable to attack population problems directly without waiting for economic advance to mediate them.

He went on to write:

The Roman Catholic Church reaffirmed its traditional support of responsible parenthood, so that the debate between the Church and the family planning advocates turned away form basic principles to a dispute over methods. On their side, the family planners

conceded to the Church their obligation to respect the dignity of the individual under all circumstances. These were not so much shifts in old positions as the kinds of public statement that are meant to generate harmony, the sort of things that are said when those holding various points of view have decided to reach areas of agreement instead of persisting in fruitless debate.[23]

In fact, major players clashed deeply at that conference. Catholic representatives attacked what they considered the widespread use of abortion in countries where population programs had been implemented. Early birth control activists, including Sanger, had fought to legalize contraceptives in part to reduce the rate of abortion, but by the 1970s, abortion and contraception had seemingly become inseparable in the feminist movement for reproductive rights. The Vatican still condemned both, but many Catholics, including the Mexican bishops, were considering them separately. At the time of the 1974 Budapest conference, the Catholic anti-abortion movement was clearly gaining momentum. Furthermore, divisions between developing countries which were targeted for birth control and the countries that funded and directed international programs appeared deeper than ever. The Indian delegation led the call of developing nations that "donor countries"—primarily the United States—recognize that "development is the best contraceptive."[24] This argument appealed to Latin American nations that sought effective and sustainable development as a means to combat poverty and overall economic inequity.

Through the 1970s, Catholic critics of birth control found themselves on the same side as Marxists who argued that poor distribution of wealth was the cause of poverty in Latin America, not demographic problems.[25] But the similarities in arguments extend even further. The Latin American Episcopal Council (Consejo Espiscopal Latinoamericano or CELAM) argued in 1977 in Church, Family and Responsible Parenthood in Latin America that there were numerous agents of the "demographic apocalypse" who happened to represent concentrated capital and transnational corporations. The Population Council was in fact funded primarily by the Rockefeller and Ford foundations, while others heavily involved in developing international population policy included Mobil Oil, American Telephone and Telegraph, the Carnegie Foundation and the universities of Harvard, Berkeley, Princeton, Chicago, and Colorado.[26] According to CELAM representatives from Colombia, the Population Council worked to carry out its own agenda in limiting births throughout the Third World, and was currently active in Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Trinadad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela, Jamaica, Bolivia and Bermuda.[27] Maria Eugenia Carvajal de Guerrero, a Colombian social worker, argued that from the very beginning that Malthusian theory

warned not only of quantity of population but of "quality." Birth control activists often cited Malthus' 1798 treatise which warned of unchecked population growth and the demands on limited resources. But Carvajal pointed out that Malthusians blame the numbers of the poor for poverty and calls birth control campaigns "instruments of social discrimination." In the case of Latin America, she notes, where the minority owns 80% of the wealth, policy makers are suggesting that the solution to poverty is to rid the country of excess population.[28] Marxists generally saw birth control as a tool of capitalism, and some considered it necessary if serious economic structuring did not take place. According to Mexican Marxist Antonio Vargas MacDonald, "if the policy of our government does not aim at a radical transformation of the economic system, but only institutes limited reforms, then it must necessarily adopt a position on the explosive growth of population, that is, a demographic policy."[29]

Catholics for a Free Choice, with membership from various Latin American countries under the name Catolicas por el Derecho a Decidir, oppose the Church's ban on contraceptives and promote what they consider a more compassionate approach to population concerns through Catholic social teaching. Supporting change in economic and social structures that create and sustain poverty, CFFC maintains that poverty cannot be blamed on population growth, rather "poverty arises from injustice, and slowing fertility rates is not a single or simple solution to poverty."[30] But the organization recognizes reproductive rights as grounded in human rights—as first asserted at the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights in Teheran, Iran: "Parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and the spacing of their children." (United Nations International Conference on Human Rights, Proclamation of Teheran –Teheran, Iran—May 13, 1968).[31] And it notes that the Vatican does approve of family planning, but that the only accepted method—natural family planning—provides no protection from the spread of AIDS. CFFC condones the use of other methods, as their use does not contradict fundamental theological treatments that allow for the prevention of conception "naturally" and publicly supports the use of condoms as a public health measure.[32] The issue of AIDS introduced a new Catholic argument in the international debate over population policy by the 1990s, as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) implemented the distribution of condoms, particularly in Africa, to stem the spread of the disease. Catholics argued that they supported public health programs, but questioned the intentions of UNFPA in distributing condoms widely, claiming population control was being implemented under the guise of public health.[33]

The Vatican responded to reports originating from the United Nation's international conference on population held in Mexico City in 1984, as it had to the 1974 Bucharest conference, objecting clearly to warnings of a population explosion and claims that

birth control should be a primary focus. But the nature of population programs had changed by the time of the conference in Cairo in 1994. In reports preceding the Cairo conference, there was evidence that a shift was at hand. In her 1992 report, Maria Helena Henrique-Mueller of the Pan American Health Organization-World Health Organization noted that earlier population conferences "stated the need to overcome misery and poverty and made population goals and programme priorities explicit"—goals which included the reduction of the average number of children born to women and the increase of "contraceptive prevalence." However, she observed that the relationship between economics and population were far more complex than previously recognized. Henrique-Miller recognized that the 1980s brought increased poverty and economic disparity to Latin America, even though population control programs had been widely implemented. She wrote, "Given the nature of the changes that took place in Latin America during the 1980s, as well as the experiences of below-replacement fertility and foreign migration policies in other regions, it is clear that population policy cannot be based on a simplistic concentration on fertility control."[34]

Though the Vatican criticized significant portions of the conference's recommendations, the Cairo conference embraced new notions of poverty eradication, sustainability and the empowerment of women as they relate to population, and the Vatican adopted the Programme of Action as a whole. The Vatican placed reservations on the following phrases: contraception, couples and individuals, family planning, reproductive health, reproductive rights, sexual health, sexual rights, widest range of family-planning services, and women's ability to control their own fertility.[35] There is no question that the nature of the objection coincided with previous statements made by the Church, but the Vatican did not act as the only opposition in this case. Seven nations, including four Latin American nations (Argentina, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua), also objected to the language. In March of 1995, Pope John Paul II issued his encyclical Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life) once again condemning contraception. He also claimed that through contraceptive campaigns, international institutions are involved in a "conspiracy against life.[36] In subsequent developments, bishops of Peru and Brazil officially reiterated papal opposition to contraception, particularly the distribution of condoms and surgical sterilization. Latin American nations joined in Vatican objections to the promotion of sexual and reproductive health outlined in the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women in Bejing.

The opposition to contraceptives comes in a variety of forms from numerous Latin American nations. Bishops officially object to the use of condoms, recommending abstinence for preventing the spread of AIDS, and to the creation of sex education programs for adolescents. But bishops in Nicaragua continue to be particularly critical of international birth control programs as imperialistic, claiming the country was suffering under a campaign of "antireproductive colo-

nialism."[37] This sentiment is especially prevalent where liberation theology evolved and where U.S. intervention is most vehemently condemned, in Central America and Cuba in particular.

Latin American critics continue to point to the most public of programs—U.S. implementation of its massive birth control program in Puerto Rico. Birth control policy in Puerto Rico was considered a pure example of anti-natal colonialism, but to Nicaraguans and others, virtual colonialism in the rest of Latin America was driving U.S. funded international population programs. This characterization largely originated from the Left, as the Left saw capitalism as responsible for colonialism. Such critics point data showing that in 1990 the United States contributed $280 million to population programs, France $143 million, Norway $26 million, Germany $16 million, the United Kingdom $15 million, Sweden $14 million and other nations $64 million. In addition, UNFPA contributed $180 million, the World Bank $124 million, and the World Health Organization (WHO) $28 million, while a number of foundations and non-governmental organizations (including the William and Flora Hewlet Foundation, the IPPF, MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and Population Council) contributed a combined total of $46 million.[38]

Such episodes in Latin American birth control history have aided in the evolution of anti-U.S. sentiment, as well as anti-international population program sentiment. Furthermore, the strength of Catholicism in any one Catholic Latin American country has supported resistance to birth control efforts. But contemporary policy, shaped in the 1990s as a response to globalization and articulated in Cairo in 1994 reflects demands made by the Church, Marxists and others to recognize human rights and economic justice as essential to any serious examination of the world's population. And the most current research and reports presented by the Population Council and related organizations approach birth control as a matter of reproductive health, women's rights, and one related to the demands for economic reform.[39]

Notes:

[1] Ivan Illich, "Sexual Power and Political Potency," in David Chaplin, ed., *Population Policies and Growth in Latin America* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath, 1971), p. 177, in Frederick C. Turner, *Responsible Parenthood: The Politics of Mexico's New Population Policies* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1974), p. 1.

[2] See Kathleen A. Tobin, *The American Religious Debate Over Birth Control, 1907-1937* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2001).

[3] Anna Macias, *Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico to 1940* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 13-15; Anna Macias, " Felipe Carrillo Puerto and Women's Liberation in Mexico," in *Latin American Women" Historical Perspectives*, ed. By Asuncion Lavrin (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 291; G. Cabrera, "Fertility Change in Mexico As Related to Population Policies," paper presented at the Symposium of Induced Fertility Change, Bellagio, Italy, Februry, 1990.

[4] Frederick C. Turner, *Responsible Parenthood: The Politics of Mexico's New Population Policies* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1974), pp. 7-8.

[5] Balogh, Alejandro, "Vamos a sobrevivir," Revista *Javeriana*, Tomo 39 (1953), 256; Valtierra, Angel, S.J. "Razones y sin Razones del Birth-Control," Revista *Javeriana*, 1953; *Pastoral acerca de la familia cristiana del Episcopado Chileno* (Abril de 1955); in Luis Lenero Otero, ed., *Poblacion, Iglesia y Cultura: sistemas en conflicto* (Mexico, D.F.: GALVE – for Federacion Internacional de Institutos de Investigaciones Sociales y Socio-Religiosas, FERES, A.L., 1970), pp. 142-144.

[6] Annette B. Ramirez de Arellano and Conrad Seipp, *Colonialism, Catholicism, and Contraception: A History of Birth Control in Puerto Rico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), p. 51. Sonia Correa, *Reproductive Rights: Feminist Perspectives From the South* (London: Zed Books, 1994), pp. 30-31. Also see William J. Kelly, *A Cost-Effectiveness Study of Clinical Methods of Birth Control: With Special Reference to Puerto Rico* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971.)

[7] Correa, pp. 10-30; E. Berquo, "Confrontacion Sur-Norte," *Mujeres y Politicas de Poblacion*, (Mexico: Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe/Isis Internacional, 1993); Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population control and Contraceptive Choice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987).

[8] Mary Shivanandan, *Crossing the Threshold of Love: A New Vision of Marriage in the Light of John Paul II's Anthropology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999), pp. 180-186.

[9] "Catholics and Contraception: A Struggle for Control," *Catholic Voices At One With the Cairo Consensus* (Washington, D.C.: Catholics for a Free Choice, 1999), p. 3.

[10] *San Francisco Sunday Chronicle*, November 27, 1959; John Leo, "Church, Public Policy and Birth Control," in William Birmingham, ed., *What Modern Catholics Think About Birth Control* (New York: Signet Books, 1964), p. 143.

[11] Leo, p. 143.

[12] *Population Program Assistance* (Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, Bureau for Technical Assistance, Office of Population, 1969), pp. 11-12. For more on U.S. support of Latin American birth control programs, see Bonnie Mass, *Population Target: The Political Economy of Population Control in Latin America* (Brampton, Ontario, Canada: Charters Publishing Company, 1976), p. 51.

[13] Correa, pp. 30-31.

[14] Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Myth: The Behavior and Beliefs of American Catholics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), p. 91; *Catholics and Reproduction: A World View* (Washington, D. C.: Catholics For a Free Choice, 1997), p. 2.

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[16] Viel, p. 177.

[17] CELAM, Segunda Conferencia General de Episcopado Latino Americano, Imesco, Medillin 1968, pp. 66-67.

[18] John A. O'Brien, *Family Planning in an Exploding Population* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1968), pp. 172-173. Also see Thomas Shannon, "Ethical Dilemmas in Population Policy," *Conscience*, vol. VII, no. 2 (March/April 1986): 1-6, p. 4.

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[22] Luis Lenero Otero, p. 11.

[23] Antonio Carrillo-Flores, "The United Nations and the World Population Conference, 1974," Occasional Paper no. 5, The Stanley Foundation, 1974, pp. 8-9.

[24] United Nations Secretariat, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Information Policy Analysis, "Evolution of Population Policy Since 1984: A Global Perspective," *Population Policies and Programmes* (New York: United Nations, 1993), pp. 27-41.

[25] Viel, p. 175; Consejo Episcopal LatinoAmericano—CELAM, *Iglesia, Familia y Paternidad Responsible en America Latina* (Bogota: Secretariado General del CELAM, 1977), p. 19.

[26] CELAM, 1977, p. 23.

[27] CELAM, 1977, pp. 23-24.

[28] CELAM, 1977, p. 92.

[29] Antonio Vargas MacDonald, "Ser mexicano es ser macho, es tener muchos hijos; Muertos de hambre? Alla Dios y ellos parenle!" *Siempre!*, no. 986 (May 17, 1972), pp. 22-23.

[30] "Catholic Voices: Reflections from the Paseo de la Reforma—Mexico City, December, 1998," *Catholic Voices At One With the Cairo Consensus*, p. 2.

[31] Ibid, pp. 2-4.

[32] Ibid., p. 4. Also see Peter Hebblethwaite, "What the French are not saying about condoms," *National Catholic Reporter*, Feb. 3, 1989 and *Origins* 18:446.

[33] See www.unfpa.org and www.c-fam.org for both sides of the argument.

[34] Maria Helena Henrique-Mueller, "Population Policy Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean," in *Population Policies and Programmes, Proceedings of the United Nations Expert Group Meeting On Population Policies and Programmes, Cairo, Egypt, 12-16 April 1992* (New York: United Nations, 1992), p. 83.

[35] "Catholics and Cairo: A Common Language," …. p. 6.

[36] Pope John Paul II, TheGospel of Life *Evangelium Vitae* (New York: Random House, 1995), pp. 23-30; "Acting Against the Grain: A Chronology of Church Action to Block Cairo's Implementation," *Catholic Voices At One*… p. 2.

[37] Obispos Catolicos condenan 'Colonialismo anticonceptivo'," *La Tribuna*, August 15, 1996; "Acting Against the Grain," p. 3. For other anti-contraceptive action in Latin America see "Al Servicio del *Evangelio de la Vida*," comunicado de los Obispos de Peru, 4 de agosto de 1995; Carta de los Obispos de Peru a los fieles creyentes, "Construyamos una Cultura de Fe," 2 de febrero de 1996; *The Catholic World Report*, March, 1996; "Honduran Church Blasted For Halting Condom Giveaway," Reuter wire service, November, 1996; "El condon no es totalmente seguro, dice el arzobispo Rivera Carrera," *Cronica*, 25 de agosto de 1997; "Cardenal Vargas Alzamora crtica contenido de educacion sexual," *El Comercio*, 10 de abril de 1998; "Cardenal pide a los feligreses boicotear metodos artificiales para control natal," *Expreso*, 12 de mayo de 1998.

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[39] Figueroa and Stern. Also see Claudio Stern y Carlos Javier Echarri, comp., *Salud Reproductiva y Sociedad: Resultados de Investigacion* (Mexico, D.F.: El Colegio de Mexico, 2000).