

NECOCHEA, Raúl, 2016, *La planificación familiar en el Perú del siglo XX*, Lima, IEP and UNFPA. 351 pp.

This research is inspired by the need to provide a historical explanation of the meaning of a disturbing event that took place recently: the campaign of forced surgical sterilizations as a birth control method, which was promoted by the government of Fujimori, and its orientation as a government policy targeted on poor and indigenous women in rural areas, who were often operated on without their consent. The study also attempts to understand the reaction of some of the people who made their voices heard through the media, the political sphere, the Catholic church, and the medical community.

Necochea analyzes the era that extends from the Aristocratic Republic to the 1970s, the rapid changes that took place in public and professional opinion regarding the regulation of women's fertility and access to methods of family planning. In order to explain the social complexity of the issue, the author researched public and private documents, interviewed key social actors, and reviewed an extensive specialized bibliography. At the same time, she skillfully researched the position and actions of various administrations regarding family planning, but above all, of a large variety of actors and organizations that had a great interest in the issue of regulation of feminine fertility. These include doctors, the eugenics movement, social activists, transnational organizations, users of contraceptives, women who supported abortion, pharmaceutical companies, military leaders, and the Catholic church. She also notes the type of intervention that U.S. experts and the U.S. government practiced in Latin America during the Cold War along with their allies in different Peruvian governments, but she puts local agents who institutionalized family planning at the forefront.

Chapter 1 deals with the intervention of doctors at the beginning of the 20th century in the regulation of sexual and reproductive behavior to promote demographic growth and increases in the type of inhabitants that were "correct" in eugenic terms, so as to promote the economic growth of the country. The fear of "racial degeneration" led doctors in government and academic institutions to propose regulation of the selection of couples through a prenuptial medical certificate. At the same time, their ideas about gender were expressed, on the one hand, through the promotion of the role of the mother in raising children and a program of social workers in the field who worked to have women give birth to many children within formalized unions, such as, for example, the creation of the National League for Hygiene and Social Prophylaxis (Liga Nacional de Higiene y Profilaxia Social). This group sought to inhibit the sexual lives of men - valuing their role in procreating healthy children within marriage - and developed campaigns against alcohol and venereal diseases and for the regulation of prostitution.

Chapter 2 demonstrates how, in contrast to the battle of feminists and leftists to open up social spaces for women, the concept of the natural domesticity of women had a great

impact on the state and the population. For example, the writer and senator, Irene Silva de Santolalla was able to institutionalize family education so that youth could learn how to create "well constituted families." Necochea assumes the task of reevaluating her work and ideas, since this project was long-lasting and transcended Peru's borders and because the liberal maternalistic discourse co-existed with a liberal medical discourse in family planning clinics in the 1960s and 1970s.

Using criminal cases and medical theses as sources, Necochea examines the social complexity of abortion in Chapter 3. Her discussion has the merit of associating this practice with daily life, analyzing the secretiveness, the problems caused by abortion, and the factors that molded its meaning as a terrible crime. In the 1940s, doctors participated in national debates about the ending of pregnancy and understood the relationship between illegal abortions and maternal mortality.

Necochea analyzes the meaning assigned to illegal abortion by women who turned to it, such as the fear of not being able to work or of being stigmatized because they were single, the repugnance when the pregnancy was the result of violence or bad partners, and their shame and anger at taking a decision that they did not consider to be moral. She also identifies the networks of social support that protected women and the difficult relationships women had with their partners, neighbors, doctors, police, and legislators. She explains why, despite the sharp criticisms of the quacks who performed illegal abortions, rarely were these suspicions documented nor were they reported to the police. Necochea stresses that accusations against women for their unwanted abortions had the goal of stopping the gender violence that lay behind them, and these accusations coupled with the fact that judges did not penalize such violence were elements that contributed to normalizing it.

Chapter 4 demonstrates how, in a context of so much concern regarding the arrival of rural migrants with not very hygienic habits and high levels of fertility as well as concern about the harm done by abortion used at the same time as birth control, between 1930 and 1960 healthcare workers started to value the small family and with this, family planning. At the end of the 1940s, the Ministry of Health did the first statistical survey of maternal mortality, promoted the rhythm method of contraception and the training of experts and research, including some tests of hormonal contraceptives in poor women. This made it possible for healthcare workers in the 1960s and 1970s to become providers of family planning services for poor women, using methods such as the intrauterine device (IUD) and, in some cases, surgical sterilization under an authoritarian model.

Chapter 5 deals with how family planning became part of national policy during the governments of Belaunde and Velasco. Interactions took place between development-oriented governments – influenced by the ideas of the Economic Commission for Latin

America (ECLAC) – and the United States, which decided to finance forms of limiting population growth in developing countries through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as pressuring the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organización Panamericana de Salud (OPS) to accept contraception. The author goes on to describe the convergence between the approaches of the Belaunde government and the Ford Foundation in the sense that changes in the population were related to complex social phenomena. This made possible the creation of the first government agency for population, the Center for the Study of Population and Development (Centro de Estudios de Población y Desarrollo, CEPD), with its pilot clinics. After the 1968 military coup, the anti-U.S. nationalism of Velasco together with his confidence in the agrarian reform as a mechanism of development led to the elimination of family planning initiatives and the substitution of a focus on maternal and infant health.

Finally, Chapter 6 describes the Catholic church as a provider of family planning services to the most needy and the terms under which this was carried out. In the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the Church adopted a new position that differed from the rejection of birth control methods outlined in the *Humanae Vitae* encyclical. The changes in its social perspectives were shaped by the complexities of the Cold War in Latin America, the liberating spirit of the Vatican II Council, the preferential option for the poor promoted by the Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, and the theology of liberation. In the face of social injustice, the Peruvian Church made a commitment to social work in poor neighborhoods which, along with a certain dose of “theological creativity” inspired by the social doctrine of the Church led it promote, through the Family Christian Movement (Movimiento Familiar Cristiano), a family planning program on its own terms. This program was focused on Catholic couples, not on individuals, and combined responsible parenthood with the distribution of pills to women during breastfeeding.

Necochea concludes her study by noting that the Guidelines for Population Policy (Lineamientos de Política de Población, LPP) prepared during the military government of Morales Bermúdez provided legitimacy to family planning as part of the government’s development policies. In addition, they advocated the right of the couple, not the individual, to learn responsible parenthood along with sexual education, and they also provided access to all contraceptive methods with the exception of abortion and sterilization. Necochea highlights that the LPP reflected the aspirations of the population and included the issue of demography within a vision of integral growth.

Margarita Zegarra Flórez\*

*Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola, Lima*

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\* Email: [mzegarraf@yahoo.es](mailto:mzegarraf@yahoo.es)  
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