



Authoritarianism and punitive eugenics: racial hygiene and national Catholicism during Francoism, 1936-1945

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Abstract

This paper examines some of the main elements that shaped eugenic discourse and practices during the first decades of the Franco regime. It primarily addresses the ideological basis of racial hygiene stemming from Francoist medicine and psychiatry, examining its relationship with the concept of Spanishness (*Hispanidad*). It shows that Francoist eugenics had punitive and coercive aspects and outlines the role it played in the brutal repression unleashed against the regime's political enemies, constructing its anti-Spanish identity. The paper also explores how the Catholic Church accepted eugenics as long as it was not linked to neo-Malthusianism and did not propagate sterilization, contraception, and abortion. In this respect, the paper examines the Catholic Church's position on the premarital certificate and counseling.

Keywords: eugenics; racial hygiene; premarital counseling; repression; Francoism.

The historiographical approach to eugenics in Spain, as in other countries of the Latin cultural sphere, is inevitably mediated by a more or less explicit debate centered around its characteristics. In general terms, it is commonplace in historiography to consider that eugenics in Spain took a soft-line approach, away from the conventional hard-line and strongly biological Anglo-Saxon eugenics based upon genetic inheritance. Spanish eugenics, particularly in the first third of the twentieth century, had been orientated towards social medicine and pediatrics and, somewhat later, in the 1920s and 1930s, also towards sex education. Rich in nuances due to its malleability (Miranda, 2014, p.83-84), the eugenic discourse came to permeate the whole ideological spectrum (from anarchists to Catholics), while sectors that were considered progressive, particularly socialists and republicans, welcomed eugenic ideas with greater enthusiasm, given their strong scientific leanings and the possibilities afforded to confront Catholic morality and pursue social reform (Álvarez, 2007, p.143-144). As for the most ultramontane segments of the Catholic Church, they identified eugenics with ideologies that they considered to be divorced from the moral values that underpinned society and with the Second Republic (1931-1939),¹ opposing its ideas head-on with patriotic and moral arguments. In fact, the first eugenics conferences, which should have been held in the first semester of 1928, were suspended by General Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923-1930)² due to pressure from the Catholic Church. The latter regarded the conferences as immoral and pornographic, claiming that they undermined the family and the foundations of society (Barrachina, 2004, p.1005-1010). One of the features of Spanish eugenics was the marginal nature of negative proposals, such as the sterilization of anyone who was deemed abnormal and criminals, supported by the psychiatrist Rodríguez Lafora, the lawyer Federico Castejón, and the theologian José Torrubiano, who defended sterilization for extreme cases such as dangerous lunatics and criminals (Huertas, 2012, p.240). In this respect, research has shown that cultural Catholicism exerted a certain influence by curbing the advance of the more hard-line version of eugenics, even among nonbelievers. In some ways, the Spanish approach to eugenics coincided with that of Latin American eugenicists in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, as outlined by Nancy Leys Stepan (2005); although, from our point of view, her thesis is not applicable to the study of eugenics during the Franco regime.

The Civil War (1936-1939) and the establishment of the Franco regime (1939-1975)³ represented a major shift with respect to the perception of eugenics and biopolitics. From the beginning, the construction of Franco's "new State," which involved a complex amalgam of right-wing groups (monarchists, traditionalists, fascists, and Catholics) under the tutelage of the army, bore the distinctive stamp of the Catholic Church, up to the point where, in the middle of the 1940s, it proclaimed itself National-Catholic (Álvarez Bolado, 1976; Botti, 2008; Gallego, 2014, p.483-842). Within this new context of the creation of a totalitarian and Catholic State, eugenics took on some distinctive characteristics. Despite similarities between Francoism and Italian and German fascism and the interest aroused by eugenics, the regime's strong Catholic identity prevented it from defending the eugenic politics adopted by Nazi Germany (Álvarez Peláez, 1998; Huertas, 1998; Campos, Huertas, 2012). However, Francoism developed its own unique eugenic discourse with a decidedly catholic tint, which pursued racial hygiene by other means. In this sense, Francoism grounded its *raison d'être* on a radical discourse about otherness that equated the political enemy with a pathogen

that had to be destroyed without mercy, since it endangered the essence of the “Spanish race,” which, as will be seen below, conceived itself as a spiritual community rather than a biological reality (Álvarez Peláez, 1998; Huertas, 1998). This eugenic discourse developed in parallel with harsh and cruel repression instigated against the individuals and groups defeated in the Civil War, who were considered enemies of Spain. This discourse was impregnated with Catholic doctrine, which was against sterilization and euthanasia, thus distancing itself from Nazism and the so-called negative eugenics. Nevertheless, it continued to be coercive and punitive, since it very much justified the repression, segregation and elimination of the regime’s political enemies (Cayuela Sánchez, 2014, p.91-127), contributing ideologically to the conversion of the country into a huge prison and the proliferation of concentration camps that detained over 400,000 people (Gómez Bravo, 2012, p.232-235). As Salvador Cayuela Sánchez (2014) asserts, national Catholicism created a new type of man, the *homo patiens*,⁴ characterized by impassivity, resignation, austerity, discipline, and love of country and of the Catholic faith.

In this paper I propose to examine some of the main elements that shaped eugenic discourse and practices during the first decades of the Franco regime. I will primarily address the ideological basis of racial hygiene stemming from Francoist medicine and psychiatry, examining its relationship with the concept of Spanishness (*Hispanidad*) and stressing its punitive and coercive aspects, both in terms of moral grounding and customs, as in the harsh repression of political enemies. I will also show how the Catholic Church accepted eugenics, provided that it was not linked to neo-Malthusianism and did not advocate sterilization, contraception, and abortion. In this respect, I will examine its position on the premarital certificate and counseling.

The Spanish race and Spanishness

One of the main concerns of the Franco regime, formally established on 1 April 1939, was to build a new strongly hierarchical and Catholic totalitarian State to erase any vestige of the republican period. Francoism spared neither discourse nor actions in its repressive drive against the defeated political enemy (Álvaro Dueñas, 2012). An important field in this respect was racial hygiene, a concept that had been used on a number of occasions to refer to eugenics, whose mention often resulted in uneasiness among the Catholic segments of the regime because it was identified with the reform of sexual morality advocated by the Second Republic (Polo Blanco, 2007, p.14). Although the term eugenics was used during the Civil War and the early years of the Franco regime, especially by Antonio Vallejo-Nágera, it is no less true that its postulates were often concealed behind other disciplines, such as pediatrics, maternology, teaching, career counseling, mental health, and anthropology (Sánchez Gómez, 1992, p.30-43), as well as in demographic and social policies (Polo Blanco, 2007, p.14-15; Cenarro, 2006, p.109-143; Campos, Huertas, 2012). This deeply Catholic approach to eugenics did not develop biology-based proposals such as sterilization or elimination of the weakest. Rather, it advocated “environmental eugenics,” whose uniqueness lay in the fact that it was directed at enhancing the Spanish race, extirpating the country’s political enemies from the social body and preventing the diffusion of their ideas through the moralization of customs

and segregation. To this end, it drew on a peculiar interpretation of Spanish history. For the regime's ideologists, since the seventeenth century, the country had succumbed to progressive decline, fruit of the abandonment of the traditional values represented by Catholicism and of the growing adoption of ideas foreign to "being Spanish," such as the enlightenment, liberalism, and Marxism. The culmination of this degeneration was seen to be the Second Republic, a corrupt and foreign-oriented regime that represented anti-Spanishness (Álvarez Peláez, 1998; Huertas, 1998). The uprising on 18 July 1936 against the Republic had opened the way to restore order and regenerate Spain through moralization and the revival of authentic Spanish cultural tradition. Within this context, eugenics overlapped with a strongly politicized racial discourse that identified the decline of the Spanish race with republican policies and the ideology behind them. However, this politically critical and sectarian discourse also reflected the State's plans to regenerate this race, which was once again called on to fulfill an historic mission.

One of its main promoters was the psychiatrist Antonio Vallejo-Nágera, who, since 1931, had been part of a group of far-right intellectuals linked to the magazine *Acción Spanish* (Morodo, 1985; González Cuevas, 1998). Grounded in the political universe of the far-right, counterrevolutionism, and Catholic and monarchical integralism, Vallejo-Nágera developed a "scientific" discourse that combined eugenics, psychiatry and psychopathology, and contributed to an ideological realignment against the Republic and to shaping the ideology of national Catholicism that characterized the Franco regime. Through his militancy, he did not hesitate to use scientific concepts to justify his political principles and also apply them in his field studies, which, as seen below, used republican prisoners of war (Álvarez Peláez, 1998). Some of his works published during the Civil War, including *Eugenésia de la hispanidad y regeneración de la raza* (The eugenics of Spanishness and the regeneration of the race, Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a), *Política racial del Nuevo Estado* (The racial policy of the new State, Vallejo-Nágera, 1938a), and *Eugamia: selección de novios* (Eugamy: choosing a spouse, Vallejo-Nágera, 1938b), were part of an attempt to develop a discourse and eugenic and sexual practices in which medicine and Catholic morality coexisted unashamedly.

Particularly notable is *Eugenésia de la hispanidad y regeneración de la raza*, written shortly before fighting broke out, yet published in 1937. The aim of the book seems to be nested within the traditions of scientific literature on degenerationism. However, both its ideological framework and the context of civil unrest within which it was written provoked a shift in thinking on the topic of the racial degeneration of the Spanish people up until that point among the fields of medicine, psychiatry, and numerous social reformers. Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, degenerationism had offered an explanation in sociopathological terms for the changes and social problems, providing scientific answers to the fears and anguish of the national elite and creating an endless number of metaphors based on biological and medical terms to explain the country's decline and propose solutions to remedy the situation (Campos Marín, Martínez Pérez, Huertas, 2000, p.197-235). Vallejo-Nágera's work transformed this discourse into an openly partisan political program that served the cause of the coup mongers.

Its point of departure was the fear of the possible disappearance of the Spanish race after three centuries of decline. The sociopathological interpretation of Spanish history proposed

by Vallejo-Nágera explicitly impugned modernity, industrialization, liberalism and democracy, and consisted of a plan to revive sixteenth century values in line with *Acción Spanish* ideology. However, although he proposed to wage “a bold health campaign against the morbid germs that eat away at the Hispanic race” targeting democracy and Marxism, his proposal was meant not only to revive “the human values of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,” but also “reincorporate them into the thinking, habits, and behavior of the people, with the purpose of morally cleansing the environment to psychologically strengthen the phenotype so as not to degenerate the genotype” (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.109-110).

Vallejo-Nágera’s eugenic vision distanced him from that defended by the majority of his contemporaries, since it rejected what he called conventional eugenics based upon genetic inheritance and advocated behaviorism, which emphasized the role of environmental factors. According to Vallejo-Nágera, conventional eugenics was centered on genetic issues and attempts to select the biologically fittest, while behaviorism, to which he adhered to, considered that environmental factors had a greater influence on the individual than biological inheritance. Clearly a behaviorist, he refuted the idea that biological inheritance played a determining role, since the laws of inheritance were not infallible, showing himself to be very critical of “negative” eugenics and attempts to achieve the perfect type (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.40-43). From this standpoint, instead of biological factors, his explanations concerning the degeneration of the Spanish race were based on environmental factors with a strong underlying moral and political element intimately related to his impugnement of modernity, industrialization, and democracy, where the latter had liberated the “lower passions,” with their egalitarian ideas, thus contributing towards the demoralization of the masses, predominantly characterized necessarily by “mental retardation and psychopathology,” threatening the continuity of the Spanish race (p.129). Given that the main enemy of the fatherland was democracy, his racial hygiene measures involved its extinction and the creation of a society governed by an aristocratic elite made up of what he called *los selectos* (the selected ones). Having said that, when our psychiatrist referred to the Spanish race and racial hygiene, he did so not from a biological point of view, but rather from a moral and spiritual perspective. Entirely in line with Ramiro de Maeztu, he used his concept of Spanishness and introduced it into his scientific discourse:

When we talk about race, we are referring to the Hispanic race, to the Iberian genotype, which at the chronologically present time has experienced a most varied mixture due to contact and relations with other peoples. From our racial point of view, we are more concerned with the spiritual values of the race, which enabled us to civilize immense areas and intellectually influence the world. Thus, our concept of race may be understood as that of ‘Spanishness’ (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.108).

The difficulty in defending the existence of a biologically pure Spanish “racial genotype” allowed our psychiatrist to broaden the concept of race to the point of suggesting that there was racial unity of a spiritual nature between Spain and America constituted around language, Catholicism, customs, and culture. In line with Maeztu, he would come to state that “all the peoples that were Spanish are continuing the work of Spain” (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.112). Along these spiritualist lines, he would highlight the indissoluble bond between fatherland and race to the point that one could not exist without the other. Patriotism comprised “the

land, race, cultural values, such as literature, traditions, historical feats, religion, customs etc.” (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.108), while each individual appreciated some aspects more than others. The essence of this discourse represented the defence of Spain’s glorious past, which generated a deeply Catholic spiritual culture that should be revived undertake the task of racial regeneration.

Meanwhile, Juan José López Ibor, another of the main figures of Francoist psychiatry, also introduced cultural and psychological elements to explain the existence of the Spanish race. In his book, *Neurosis de guerra* (The neurosis of war), published in 1942, he mentions the existence of racial psychology, noting that “men living in different geographic areas possess psychological characteristics that are analogous to the national temperament” (López Ibor, 1942, p.83). In the case of Spain, he noted that there were enormous difficulties in addressing “any racial problem whatsoever” since “there are various ingredients in the composition of the Spanish man and many are indecipherable,” while he believed that “Nordic and Mediterranean elements” were “undeniable” (p.86). Some years later in 1951, in his book, *El español y su complejo de inferioridad* (The Spaniard and his inferiority complex), he insisted on the idea that in “Spain ... you cannot talk of a Spanish race; the biological traits of the Spanish are very far from pure,” which does not mean a lack “of national temperament” (López Ibor, 1961, p.219).⁵ This national temperament included a series of traits and values that defined the Spanish man as stoic, sober, a seeker of military and literary glory, contemptuous of science and technology, and impassive in the face of death. However, there was an essence of Spain that López Ibor, like Vallejo-Nágera, considered as Spanishness. He noted that “Spanishness is that by which Spanish is Spanish,” since it forged “the religiosity of the Spanish soul” with patriotism (López Ibor, 1961).

However, not all the conceptions of eugenics or racial hygiene were along the same lines as Francoism. A certain entity added nuances that stemmed from far-right thinking, particularly during the Civil War. Between 1936 and 1938, the professor of pathology, Misael Bañuelos, published an extensive work in six volumes, entitled *Problemas de mi tiempo y mi patria* (Problems of my time and my fatherland), in which he outlined an openly racist, muddled, and complex sociobiological thesis.⁶ He considered racism to be “the most fruitful and revolutionary biological conception of all time,” to the point of constituting the “biggest advancement in the field of political science in recent times” (Bañuelos, 1936, p.69). In his work, Bañuelos attempted to characterize the races that existed in Spain in biological terms, dedicating numerous pages to describing their anthropological features, psychological concomitants, and geographical distribution. His interest in these issues led him to publish *Antropología actual de los españoles* (A current anthropology of the Spanish) in 1941 (Bañuelos, 2007), which was dedicated exclusively to this matter. For Bañuelos (1938, p.25), the Spanish people were defined based on “a concept of race, blood, and *casta*,” while, despite his meticulous descriptions and racial characterizations, he judged that a Spanish race as such did not exist; rather, there was a Spanish people that were “all mestizo” (Bañuelos, 2007, p.112). However, the existence of miscegenation did not lead him to recognize the existence of a spiritual community like Spanishness; quite to the contrary, he was particularly critical of this concept. Thus, contrary to the defence of a spiritual and racial community including Hispanic America that was implicit in Spanishness, Bañuelos (1938, p.51) believed that the

miscegenation between the Spanish and indigenous peoples had supposedly sown the seed of the Empire's decline:

Regardless of where they might have gone at the time of the conquests, if the Spanish had kept their blood clean and had not mixed with the Indians, it is almost certain that Spain would still have all its colonial empire today, and considerably more, because the pure Spanish, wherever they might be, are Spanish, but the bastard, mestizo or mulatto, is no longer Spanish, even if he lives in Spain.

Faced with possible criticism of his views by materialists and segments of the Catholic Church, Bañuelos (1938, p.52) defended that the "racist doctrine, when well understood, is the doctrine of the moral elevation of humanity," while "unabashed racial promiscuity" was "a materialistic outrage" (p.52). It is worth considering that his diatribe was targeted against the ideas of Vallejo-Nágera, since he noted that it was incomprehensible that someone could accept "the theory and science of inheritance as regards plants and animals ... but refuses ... to apply it to man" (p.52).

In light of these postulates, the state saw the need to develop a biological policy aimed at the improvement of the Spanish race. Its proposal was deeply antidemocratic since it considered that, despite its virtues, democracy, because of its underlying egalitarianism, favored a "backward" natural selection in which less fit groups reproduced more than the fittest groups.

Eugenics and racial hygiene during the early years of the Franco regime: sociobiological proposals

As we have shown, Francoist eugenic discourse was directed against the political enemy and the values it represented. The purification of the Spanish race involved a definition of the true essence of being Spanish that was wholly against the "anti-Spain." In this respect, the eugenic discourse became interwoven with that of the dictatorship, playing a key role in the violent production of otherness, both upon moral-symbolic terrain and through punitive criminal practices. In both cases, the nature of Francoist eugenics was explicitly coercive and sought "redemption" for the other through repentance, reeducation and adaptation to reality.

In this vein, it was Vallejo-Nágera's proposal that stood out most. As he had already noted, the key to understanding his racial regeneration plan was the open rejection of the idea that laws of biological inheritance play a determining role, since, in his view, they were not "true biological laws that are fatefully and consistently fulfilled" (Vallejo-Nágera, 1934, p.50); as shown, according to the psychiatrist, by the fact that "deeply retarded, immoral, imbecile parents" could "procreate... true geniuses, surprising talents, and brilliantly gifted individuals in all aspects of the psyche" (p.51). His plan to regenerate the Spanish race involved the eugenic cleansing of the people, which should extend to "all individuals" and not be limited to "the selection of segregated parents." It aimed to develop a program to "awaken, in individuals of all classes, a desire to ascend to the select, aristocratic hierarchies in body and spirit" (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.108).

The difficulty in achieving this resided in the creation of the select hierarchies, since, in his view, democracy had leveled out social classes, benefitting the lower classes to the detriment of the select groups and providing “livelihoods to the crowds of mediocre people” (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.119). To reverse this situation, he counted on self-improvement among the select groups in power through the individual modification of the mode of existence, “imposing a mental discipline, austerity, morality, and altruistic activity that makes us masters of ourselves” (p.108). In this way, social groups would be created according to affinities “where the desire for self-improvement ferments” (p.119) and whose ideological frame of reference would be Spanishness, represented by the “the super select few of the race” and “eminent figures from the sciences, literature, and armed forces who have bequeathed us the spirit of the Hispanic race,” turning his back on the models produced by mass society, such as bullfighting and boxing. One way of achieving this rapprochement was the dissemination of “heroic lives that may be other models of the ‘ideal self’” among the people and youth. In this sense, he believed that, by imitating the select few and brilliantly gifted, the plan would succeed in “endowing the race with a spiritual aristocracy that favors the growth and development of racial potential of the highest class” (p.119).

Despite all this, the above would have to be complemented by individual hygienic education marked by an emphasis on “moral discipline” and aimed at “escaping the influence of a deleterious environment” and thus achieving the desired education of the will. Vallejo-Nágera (1937a, p.121) noted:

We are in favor of very severe social discipline that envisages the salvation of the race by imposing on the masses the ideas of the ruling classes. Discipline educates the masses by instilling respect for hierarchy, which is self-respect. Furthermore, it contributes towards the self-perfection of those who are preselected by learning by and being an example of subordination.

In short, his eugenic plan was based on respect for authority, hierarchy, and the aristocratic elites, since it admitted that the upper classes or those with a higher cultural level were the seedbed of the select groups. Based on these assumptions, he defended social inequality and the hierarchization of society, impugning modernity, which had destroyed the values of the *Ancien Régime* (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.123). The main consequence of this modernizing process had been the proletarianization and “massification” of culture and its conversion into a commodity. On the other hand, he believed that the leveling of general culture was a “fanciful illusion,” since “there will always be those who are brilliantly gifted and imbecils,” concluding that those who are mediocre and intellectually inferior have clearly defined their social position, within which they can prosper better themselves, but never among the intellectual classes. His hierarchized conception of social groups was therefore supposedly based on intellectual ability rather than economic factors. Thus, the intellectuals, among which he placed himself, would be at the top of the social pyramid, which gradually descended according to an individual’s cultural level and level of understanding. However, he believed in the fundamental need to raise the cultural level of the average Spanish person so that he/she could understand the language of the select few and because the acquired culture would ultimately have an influence “on the genotype” (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937a, p.126).

Other similar proposals did not match Vallejo-Nágera's biocratic plan. Misael Bañuelos (1936), despite his biological leanings, fell short of formulating such an elaborate plan. His lengthy disquisition on the races that inhabited Spain and their decline, brought on by democracy, favoring the government of the less fit, did not result in a comprehensive eugenic plan. His major biology-based effort was limited to calling for "a law that protects the fittest to enable them to begin to procreate ... between the age of 25 and 28 years" and that limited the "evidently unfit" to having no more than two or three children (p.152). The measure was justified by the conviction, very much in vogue in eugenic thinking, that the upper classes and the most cultured strata of society tended to reproduce less and at a later age, while the popular classes and least fit were particularly promiscuous. In this respect, Bañuelos distanced himself from the doctrine of the Catholic Church, which showed itself to be against creating impediments to human reproduction. These measures, according to Bañuelos, should be complemented with racial policies that address environmental factors, such as the cultural elevation of the people and improvements in diet, which would prevent miscegenation with inferior races. Indeed, his plan centered on the need to introduce racial hygiene to eliminate the signs of decline that democracy had brought to the country extolling the government to "the mediocre."

Despite the harshness of many of his comments, his open racism and disdain for miscegenation and the concept of Spanishness, and professing open admiration for Hitler and national socialism, Bañuelos never managed to turn his thoughts into a set of concrete proposals to achieve regeneration. Conversely, Vallejo-Nágera's ideas were more concrete; and not only on the theoretical terrain. After being named head of the Psychiatric Services of the Francoist army in 1937 during the Civil War, in 1938 he received Franco's authorization to create the Cabinet for Psychological Research that should undertake the study of prisoners of war detained in concentration camps and prisons (Huertas García-Alejo, 1996; Bandrés, Llavona, 1997). Within this cabinet, he developed a research project whose object of study were prisoners from the republican faction. The original project planned to study of Basque nationalists, Catalan Marxists, male political prisoners, international combatants, and political prisoners. The findings of the research were published between 1938 and 1939 in a series of six articles under the common title of "Psiquismo del fanatismo marxista" (The psyche of Marxist fanaticism, Vallejo-Nágera, Martínez, 1939; Vallejo-Martínez, 1938d) and were limited to the prisoners from the International Brigades and *milicianas* (militiawomen). In relation to eugenics, based on a very unique interpretation of Krestschmer's system of biotypology, this research aimed to demonstrate that Marxism was a mental illness and that the militants who adhered to this ideology were abnormal beings who could be combated using harsh, behaviorist, moralistic and punitive policies.

The use of Krestschmer, to who Vallejo-Nágera made constant references throughout his work, allowed the psychiatric unit to maintain a scientific facade. In Vallejo-Nágera's opinion, "the German psychiatrist's research" had confirmed "the idea launched by Plato regarding correlations between psychological traits and anatomophysiological traits," reaffirming "the importance of psychiatry in the teachings of Hippocrates on constitution" (Vallejo-Nágera, 1937b, p.32). The peculiar utilization of Krestschmer's system of biotypology served to confirm the direct link between the physical constitution of revolutionaries and Marxists

and personality pathology. He thus noted that “some people who have a repulsive body shape always conduct themselves in an ignoble manner. We mention Marat, so as not to allude to sadly current figures” (p.59). Along the same lines, in *El factor emoción en la Nueva España* (The emotional factor in new Spain, Vallejo-Nágera, 1938c), he had described the essential biopsychic differences between the republicans and the rebel faction, whereby the republicans, or *rojos* (reds), were describes as socially dangerous and psychologically and morally inferior, notably affected by “psychoaffective complexes” against religiosity, patriotism, moral responsibility, and the inclination towards ethical and aesthetic values and the ideal self represented by the spirit of the National Movement. These psychoaffective complexes were matched with resentment, rancor, envy, social climbing, ambition, and revenge, which impoverished the spirit of the fatherland. He went further than this however by making use of his unique conception of biotypology, establishing a correlation between psychological traits and the body, even claiming that ugliness was linked to resentment and rancor, while a balanced body corresponded to intelligence and nobility of soul. To illustrate his claims, he compared the physical features of president Azaña with those of Franco, concluding that Azaña’s ugliness attracted the forces of evil, while the “balanced smile of El Caudillo” encouraged the defenders of goodness, leading him to conclude:

It is noteworthy the fact that the masses identified with each of the aforementioned personalities exhibit psychic reactions that appear to be fruit of latent complexes in the consciousness of both figures. Those belonging to them, reactions motivated by complexes of rancor and resentment; ours react to the complexes of religiosity, patriotism, and moral responsibility (Vallejo-Nágera, 1938c, p.30).

These arguments fueled his work in the Cabinet for Psychological Research and in the first of a series of articles about the “*psiquismo del fanatismo marxista*” Vallejo-Nágera (1938d, p.174) affirmed that the underlying postulate of his works was the examination of the “relations between a given biopsychic personality” and a “constitutional predisposition to Marxism,” noting that:

Aprioristically we presume that the Marxist fanatics who have taken up arms present a schizothymic temperament or degenerative variations of this group of temperaments, while the Marxist propagandists and opportunists we assume belong to the cyclothymic temperament group and degenerative types of this same group.

This muddled scientific filter made up of various jumbled-together theories constituted a crusade to portray the message that enemies of the fatherland were pathological criminals and inferior in order to rise against them with a segregationist and therapeutic political plan in pursuit of a cleansed and regenerated society without any anti-Spanish elements. Moreover, the fact that the envoy was a scientist who enjoyed certain prestige and that the message was being conveyed by the field of psychiatry conferred Vallejo-Nágera’s discourse an aura of scientific credibility, which gained him considerable respect and at the same time conferred him the role of “professional purifier” (Sosa-Velasco, 2010, p.178).

As I have pointed out, according to Vallejo-Nágera, rancor and resentment played a role in the revolutionary mobilization and in the fact that the large majority of the people

embraced the Marxist cause. In his research on war prisoners, he would place special emphasis on this topic, taking failure and resentment as elements of study of the personality of the war prisoners. Hence, in the section where he outlines the methodological framework and objectives of his investigation, he underlines:

the denomination 'natural-born revolutionary' is applied to subjects who, when induced by their biopsychic and constitutional characteristics and instinctive tendencies, motivated by complexes of rancor and resentment or by failure to reach their aspirations, tend ... congenitally, to disrupt existing social order ... The subject's professional, social, and sexual failures always result in a disproportion between their aptitude and ability and their aspirations and ambitions; but in any case they evoke complexes of rancor and resentment that translate into antisocial behavior, which has been explored in detail (Vallejo-Nágera, 1938d, p.176).

When it came to the *milicianas*, Vallejo-Nágera gave vent to his misogyny. Proof of this was the fact that he waived an anthropological and anthropometric study of these women, as had been performed with the brigadiers, alleging that "in the female sex it lacks purpose due to the impurity of their contours" (Vallejo-Nágera, Martínez, 1939, p.398). Based on this vision and using a wealth of data, he established the relationship between their political militancy, sexuality, and criminal behavior, demonstrating their low level of morality. Unlike the brigadiers, the *milicianas* were not considered war prisoners, but rather especially bloodthirsty criminals (p.400).

These studies, by which biotypological arguments were used to show a constitutional predisposition to Marxism and the importance of environmental factors for the formation of character and personality, resulted in punitive eugenic policies that had a significant impact on political prisoners and their children. Vallejo-Nágera's studies opened the way for the separation of children from their mothers in order to tear them away from bad maternal influences and prevent Marxism. In 1941, he reiterated the damage that a "democratic environment" could do to "boys and girls," insisting on the need to segregate those who had been raised in "republican environments" in "suitable centers" (Vinyes Ribas, 2001, p.238) that encouraged "the exaltation of biopsychic racial qualities and the elimination of environmental factors that, over the course of generations, had led to the degeneration of the biotype" (Vallejo-Nágera, 1941, p.7). Francoist legislation opened the way to the disappearance of children from republican mothers. The order of 30 March 1940, given by the Ministry of Justice, dictated that children could be breastfed and stay with their mothers up to the age of 3 years, after which they could be separated and delivered to the social services or given up for adoption. This procedure was formalized by the law of 4 December 1941, which provided that children who could not remember their names and whose parents could not be located could be registered with other names. This law would permit the opening of "a space that facilitated the modification of the names of children of prisoners who had been shot and exiled and evidently opened the way for irregular adoptions due to the punitive policy of the dictatorship" (Vinyes, Armengou, Belis, 2002, p.65-66).

The premarital medical certificate and the Catholic Church

Despite the racial rhetoric and muddled regeneration and selection plans, the Franco regime did not articulate explicitly eugenic racial protection laws like Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy. Eugenics permeated various discourse and practices, such as maternology, career counseling, and demographic policy. In this sense, the dictatorship defended population growth as the core strategy of its populationist demographic policy that aspired to the magic figure of 40 million inhabitants. Concerned about population decline as a direct or indirect consequence of armed conflict and the post-war period, estimated at 500,000 people, and the exodus of 200,000 refugees, the Francoist authorities, with a certain degree of imperialist rhetoric, put in place natalist policies that were embodied in laws such as the *Ley de Sanidad Infantil y Maternal* (Child and maternal health law) of 12 July 1941 (Cayuela Sánchez, 2014, p.107-108).

A debate emerged within this context whose theme was linked to eugenics: whether it was necessary to enhance the quality of the Spanish population or promote population growth. The question was touched upon by a large part of works relating to racial hygiene and eugenics and straddled by a certain degree of intellectual tension generated by an admiration for Nazi Germany and submission to the Catholic doctrine. Undoubtedly, the majority thought that quality should take priority over quantity, without rejecting the latter and arguing that “to achieve qualitative improvement, an increase in quantity is necessary” (López Ibor, 1943, p.43). This standpoint served to overcome tensions and openly bring the discussion in line with views of the Catholic Church. Hence, in an article published in *SER*, a social medicine journal produced by the Falange Española, López Ibor (1943, p.43) noted that “the salvation of the fittest concerns more than the sterilization of those who are biologically undesirable, ... in which man can once again lives in conjugal union in the good old fashion way, fecundity as a blessing from God.”

In this respect, it is worth highlighting that this discourse developed into a debate, strongly marked by the Catholic doctrine, on the need to issue a premarital medical certificate. *Casti Connubii*, the encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian marriage proclaimed at the end of the 1930s, had a notable impact on the field of medicine during the Franco regime, especially in relation to defining the position on eugenics, guiding marriage hygiene, and rejecting contraception, sterilization, and abortion. However, despite being against these practices, the encyclical was apparently not opposed to the practice of “upright” eugenics when it stated that “what is asserted in favor of the social and eugenic ‘indication’ may and must be accepted, provided lawful and upright methods are employed within the proper limits” (Pío XI, 31 dic. 1930). Upright eugenics, as Pío XI called it, seemed to uphold premarital counseling and discard any state intervention that prohibited marriage:

For there are some who over solicitous for the cause of eugenics, not only give salutary counsel for more certainly procuring the strength and health of the future child – which, indeed, is not contrary to right reason – but put eugenics before aims of a higher order, and by public authority wish to prevent from marrying all those whom, even though naturally fit for marriage, they consider, according to the norms and conjectures of their investigations, would, through hereditary transmission, bring forth defective offspring (Pío XI, 31 dic. 1930).

Therefore, the encyclical did not disapprove of eugenics, provided that it was upright and honest, but decried abortion, contraception and sterilization. Along similar lines, in 1931, cardinal Gomá published *El matrimonio: explicación dialogada de la encíclica Casti Connubii* (Marriage: dialogued explanation of the encyclical *Casti Connubii*) in which he stated that “all that involves improving the nature of man, both in its physical and bodily aspects and its spiritual and moral elements, can only merit the approval of the Holy Church,” showing that he was in favor of “the procreation of physically and morally healthy children and the transmission of life in the best possible conditions,” condemning neo-Malthusianism and its derivatives: contraception and abortion (Gomá Isidro, 1931).

Based on these arguments, towards the end of the 1930s, the Catholic Church published works on premarital counseling, which referred to eugenics always along the lines mentioned above.

In 1943, the Capuchin monk, Agapito de Sobradillo, published the book *El certificado médico prematrimonial* (The premarital medical certificate), with a foreword written by Vallejo-Nágera, revealing how closely intertwined religion and science were during the dictatorship. The book in question was divided into three parts. In the first, Sobradillo provided a neutral review of the scientific views on the medical certificate and eugenic thinking, showing a good knowledge of the scientific literature of the time. The second part consisted of a lavish description of the Catholic doctrine in relation to the physical and psychic impediments to marriage, thus recognizing the principles of eugenics. His arguments revolved around the purposes of marriage, which he divided into primary and secondary. Among the primary purposes were “the procreation and education of the offspring,” while secondary ends were “mutual help and remedy against concupiscence” (Sobradillo, 1943, p.87). Based on this standpoint, he rejected sterilization and contraception, together with the health-based impediments to marriage that could be imposed by the State. Along the same lines, he also rejected a “diriment or simply impedient” mandatory premarital medical certificate, unless “the ecclesiastical authority establishes an impediment due to ill-health,” which according to him is very unlikely in practice. Conversely, he accepted the medical certificate in the two modalities, whenever “freely accepted by the contracting parties” (p.162). Likewise, he highlighted that the Church accepted without any reservations “medical advice,” making recommendations in much the same way as the encyclical *Casti Connubi* (p.156-157).

Vallejo-Nágera (1938b, 1965) also wrote about this matter, publishing two books on the theme: *Eugamy: selección de novios* (Eugamy: choosing a spouse, 1938), with a foreword written by the Bishop of Vitoria; and *Antes de que te cases* (Before you marry, 1946), which was released in at least three editions up to 1965. Both books revisited some of the arguments he had developed in other works, but in a rather more informative and lighter tone, since they were part of an attempt to educate people about eugenic and sexual practices upon which science and Catholic morality undoubtedly converged. Vallejo-Nágera (1938b, p.XIV) believed that eugamy was the branch of eugenics concerned with “the selection of spouses from a nonsomatic characterological point of view, like eugenics.” The distinction lay in the fact that eugenics was concerned with the “union of healthy genotypes,” while eugamy centered on “the fusion between biopsychic types that complement each other in accordance with the laws of genetic psychology to ensure that the personality of the

offspring will be well-balanced” (p.XIV). In this respect, the concept of “eugamy” proposed by Vallejo-Nágera had the strong behaviorist slant also present in *Antes que te cases*, which was written in the vein of eugenics according to the Catholic doctrine, since it suggested that choosing a spouse implied providing assurances regarding moral standing and racial purity in advance of the act of reproduction. Vallejo-Nágera (1965, p.271) advised spouses to arrive at a mutual understanding before marriage as to “all temperamental and characterological aspects ... [so as to] ascertain the family’s blemishes that are capable of being hereditarily transmitted,” but gave them absolute freedom to decide. It is worth noting that the above works were not the only books published for informative and educational purposes. Other doctors followed similar paths, such as Bosch Marín, Puig and Roig, and Fernández-Ruiz (Álvarez, 2007, p.161).⁷

Final considerations

I have shown that there were both intellectual and practical concerns regarding eugenics during the Franco regime. The substantial importance of Catholicism for the ideological grounding of the “new State” clearly marked its approach to eugenics, leaving out any hint of negative measures such as sterilization, elimination of the weakest and people who were considered abnormal, abortion, and contraception. However, the repressive nature of the regime favored the elaboration of a coercive eugenic discourse with a strong racial hygiene bias, whose objectives included the redefinition of abnormality as a characteristic that belonged to the political enemy. In this respect, Francoist eugenics between 1936 and 1950 was primarily punitive, whereby racial hygiene succeeded in carrying out extreme acts of cruelty without the need to apply negative eugenic measures. The regime’s hallmark behaviorist plan, originating from the communion between psychiatry and Catholicism and the dictatorship’s repression mechanisms opened the way for the regeneration of the offspring of those defeated in the Civil War through their insertion into a cruel and brutal moral environment. In this respect, it may be wondered to what extent negative eugenics differs from positive eugenics, where the latter is assimilated with Latin eugenics. In light of the information set out by this paper, it is apparent that the behaviorist Catholic eugenics that stood against neo-Malthusianism was more than mildly aggressive. Its coercive and openly punitive nature contributed decisively to the construction of homogenous society in which otherness was seen as a danger to the social whole.

Nonetheless, Spain was not the only case in which Catholicism and eugenics overlapped to generate behaviorist and discourse and practices. Important works in this vein show how this relationship was woven Argentina, with a strong influence from the eugenic formulations from Fascist Italy (Vallejo, Miranda, 2014). Vallejo and Miranda explore the idea that the Vatican adopted a “variant of Galton’s science, more centered on environmental changes than on what we could call today genetic selection” (p.7) and insist that this idea was deeply connected with the Argentinean eugenics framework which, moreover, was notably influenced by Vallejo-Nágera. In this sense, according to these authors, an environmental eugenics was propagated in Argentina that invaded “the civil normative plexus,” enabling it “to be less resounding in its application,” but more effective and “able to endure over time.”

On balance, a more comprehensive review of the eugenics framework in Latin America is required that promotes comparative studies in order to revisit and obtain a more in-depth understanding of the undertones of the postulates defended by Stepan and by more classical historiography of eugenics.

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NOTES

¹ The Second Republic was established on 14 April 1931, putting an end to the reign of Alfonso XIII (1902-1931). The democratic Republican regime implemented deep structural reforms. From the outbreak of the Civil War on 18 July 1936, the Second Republic had to deal with military uprisings from groups of fascists, monarchists, and Catholics. During the three years of the Civil War, there were two States: the Francoist State, which was built during the war, and the republican State. The latter was defeated and permanently removed on 1 April 1939.

² General Miguel Primo de Rivera's regime lasted from the coup d'état led by him on 13 September 1923, until his resignation on 28 January 1930. The coup d'état had the approval of Rey Alfonso XIII, who sided with Primo de Rivera against the constitutional government. Primo de Rivera was replaced by General Damaso Berenguer, who resigned in March 1931. Finally, the monarchists called local elections, which were won by the republicans, who proclaimed the Second Republic on 14 April 1931.

³ The Franco dictatorship, Francoism, was established during the Civil War (1936-1939) in the territories where the coup d'état of 18 July 1936 had triumphed and in those progressively won over the course of the conflict. With the defeat of the Second Republic, the dictatorship was instituted across the national territory on 1 April 1939, ending with the death of the dictator, Francisco Franco, in November 1975.

⁴ The use of the term *Homo patiens* here should not be confused with the use made by the historiography of medicine, especially in Germany, when referring to subjective experiences of patients. In this respect, see Schipperges (1985) and Stolberg (2003).

⁵ The book was published in 1951, but various editions were released. The citation is from the sixth edition published in 1961.

⁶ The work *Problemas de mi tiempo y de mi patria*, made up of six volumes, was published in Valladolid by the publisher Librería de Santarén. The titles of the volumes are: v.1: *Cuestiones político-biológicas* (1936); v.2: *Revoluciones políticas y selección humana* (1937); v.3: *Universidad y grandeza nacional* (1937); v.4: *Mentalidad y progreso humano* (1938); v.5: *Temas de la crítica diaria* (1938); and v.6: *Los grandes errores nacionales de los españoles* (1938). The present study used volumes one and six.

⁷ The books in question cited by Raquel Álvarez are: *Catecismo de puericultura* (Bosch Marín, 1944), *El hijo ideal (sano, bueno, inteligente): prontuario de Puericultura, precedido de unos resúmenes de higiene de ladegeneración y de maternología* (Puig y Roig, 1959), and *Eugenesia y esterilidad* (Fernández-Ruiz, 1939).

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