



Eugenics, sexual pedagogy and social change: constructing the responsible subject of governmentality in the Spanish Second Republic

Belén Jiménez-Alonso

UNED – Facultad de Psicología, Dpto. de Psicología Básica I, Apdo. 60148, Juan del Rosal 10 (Ciudad Universitaria), 28040 Madrid, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Spain
Latin eugenics
Sexual reform
Gender identities
Governmentality
Responsibility

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on eugenics in Spain, and more specifically on the 'official' eugenics whose platform was the Primeras Jornadas Eugénicas Españolas (First Spanish Eugenic Days, FSED). The aim of this paper is to relate eugenics to 'governmentality' rather than to State politics alone and to 'Latin eugenics' rather than to 'mainline eugenics'. On the one hand, the FSED were largely centred on the development of a *new sexual code* which would set Catholic sexual morality aside. For this reason, sexual *pedagogy* was one of the most relevant topics during the FSED, personal *responsibility* becoming the first step to social change. The concern about making people play an active role in their own self-regulation is typical of governmentality. The latter refers to societies where power is decentered and where the objective is to structure the field of action of others (the conduct of conduct). On the other hand, the FSED emphasised preventive eugenics such as welfare programmes and health campaigns rather than negative eugenics such as the sterilisation of the unfit. The situation in Spain was mirrored in countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, which allows us to think about them in terms of 'Latin eugenics' rather than 'mainline eugenics' from countries such as Great Britain, Germany and the USA.

© 2008 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

When citing this paper, please use the full journal title *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*

1. Introduction

Becoming aware of responsibility, yes ... But, what an awful idea, dear Huerta, the intelligent contest of couples well-disposed to breeding! (Bello, 1934, p. 317)¹

The historical significance of eugenics has stimulated a substantial increase of studies on the topic in the last decades. Some of these recent works, such as the excellent contribution of Nancy L. Stephan (1991) to the Latin American sphere, allow us to appre-

ciate the importance of considering eugenics in the context of national intellectual and scientific traditions. The fact that science is a social activity, which cannot be sealed off from the values of the society, requires us to pay attention to the social and political life within which it is practised. In the light of the above I have examined eugenics in Spain, specifically 'official' eugenics whose platform was the Primeras Jornadas Eugénicas Españolas (First Spanish Eugenic Days, FSED) in 1933:² that is, as a scientific venture that was shaped by different factors particular to the historical place in which it appeared. Thus we should take into account the fact that

E-mail address: bjimenez@bec.uned.es.

¹ All translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

² I have decided to name 'official' the eugenics specially developed during the Second Republic and represented in the 1933 conference, which received the approval of the Spanish Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts (as stated in the paper, the Minister himself attended to the inauguration of the meeting). I considered it appropriate to use this adjective—for example, rather than the term 'institutionalised'—to differentiate it from other eugenic positions such as the one led by Catalan anarchism, studied in this issue by Richard Cleminson. In addition, the meeting on eugenics was attended by a significant number of high ranking professionals who represented the very wide range of theoretical positions on eugenics in Spain. Note also that before the FSED, there had been the Primer Curso Eugénico (First Eugenics Course), which had been intended to take place in 1928 and counted several intellectuals such as the criminologist and jurist L. Jiménez de Asúa or the psychiatrist J. Sanchís Banús (both authors were influenced by Freudian psychology; see Glick, 2003). The program was interrupted by the regime of General Primo de Rivera and condemned as 'pornographic entertainment'. It was reestablished in 1932 during the Republic as a real victory over the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera.

the eugenics movement in Spain reached its highest point of development in the early 1930s, the years of the Second Republic (the national context) and the inter-war period (the international context). This double context is one of the keys to understanding why eugenics was deemed to be a relevant strategy (although not the only one) for *social change*.

Regarding the national context, eugenics was accepted as a new procedure to improve the nation by cleansing it of the factors considered to be damaging the people's hereditary health and consequently by regenerating populations through control over the quality of sexual reproduction. Eugenics in Spain was a programme of rationalising sexuality that stressed the troubles implied by the conventional sexual roles of men and women. There was general concern about making people responsible for their sexual actions and about setting aside Catholic sexual morality. This last was considered to be the origin of a range of what were thought of as specifically Spanish evils such as the neurosis caused by sexual repression and the double standards that apparently justified man's search for sexual satisfaction with prostitutes, a source of venereal diseases (this being a form of satisfaction that a wife supposedly could not or should not be able to offer to her husband). For this reason, official eugenics in Spain was largely centred on *sexual pedagogy*.

Regarding the international context, the regeneration of Spain also meant working towards the achievement of the same level of social, political, and economical competence as other European countries. Eugenics was seen as a scientific instrument for so doing, that is to say, eugenics was judged to be an excellent tool for progress. In addition, eugenics was thought of a peaceful way of maintaining the propagation and survival of the human race. After the First World War, and even in the wake of the aggressive colonialism of some countries, there was a demand to transform social morality based on *force* and *instinct* towards one based on *science* and *reason*. For some authors, such as Quintiliano Saldaña, professor of Penal Law and Criminology at the University of Madrid, eugenics allowed man not only to develop artificial selection, but also to create some kind of *universal* subject and society which could overcome the crisis of European culture. It is interesting to note that Saldaña (1934a) knew about and accepted Nicola Pende's biotypology, which could probably be considered as one of the first steps from the left to the right in the ideology of eugenics in Spain, in the same way as happened in Argentina, according to Stepan.

The aim of this paper is to study eugenics in Spain in relation to the period of social and political change that starts with the inception of the Second Republic. Even if there was a common intention to bring about collective improvement, there was no actual consensus on the way to carry it out. Far from being a uniform approach, eugenics in Spain was an eclectic movement which reflected the diverse positions of Spanish intellectuals (the Republic itself was ruled by different groups ranging from moderate to radical left-wing). Specifically, the most important disagreement between the authors participating in the FSED was about the suitability of using negative eugenics (eugenics used to eliminate 'the unfit' from the social body, such as sterilisation), and in general about how far the State should be allowed to take direct control of citizens' private life.

My aim is to show how the Spanish debate concerning the adoption of voluntary or non-voluntary measures was not fundamentally promoted by a religious feeling that defended the *free will* of subjects, but by the dialectical logic typical of liberal democracies between the State and the individual. I propose to place eugenics within the framework formed by the discussions about the compromise between the guarantees of civil rights and a State action that could limit them in order to protect collective interests. For this reason, I think that even if it were important to bring about the improvement of sanitary conditions and hygienic reform by making interventions in factors affecting heredity, concern about the possible abuses of power led the

majority of Spanish intellectuals to a *preventive eugenics* based on State mechanisms that would be in harmony with people (that is, there would not be reliance on either individual self-discipline or on State politics alone).

Ultimately, my objective is to pursue the connection between eugenics and the construction of 'governmentality' which refers to the new form of power that emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This modern political space is characterised by sovereignty and discipline, but also *government* in the way Foucault (1999) indicates, that is to say, the conduct of conduct. The latter includes political structures and the management of states, but is not limited to them: government also entails the practices through which we govern others and we govern ourselves in a range of personal, non-political, and often non-economic relationships. In these societies, power is decentered and its members play an active role in social regulation. Personal autonomy is not, then, the antithesis of political power, but a key term in its exercise: government develops mechanisms in order to make people regulate themselves. Governmentality implies the relational and self-regulating accountability of an (ethical) subject that takes responsibility for its own conduct (Michman & Rosenberg, 2002).

For this reason, my emphasis in this paper is on the concern of intellectuals about promoting personal responsibility regarding sexual conduct. Note that the promotion of personal responsibility implies taking into account some of the individual and collective identities which are involved in conducting sexual and health practices. As Fernando de los Ríos, minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, asserted at the opening ceremony of the FSED:

Eugenics raises a problem of *ethical character* that is translated into a series of imperatives of conduct for all individuals, absolutely, for everyone that has the awareness to project their *individuality* in the future and seeing it with a view of tomorrow; and it raises, in addition, an imperative of *collective character* for all political men who have a feeling for the future of their country. (Ríos, 1934, p. 13)

I will offer some examples of how the management and promotion of personal responsibility would to a certain extent imply the reformulation of images concerning sexual matters.

This paper is organised in three parts. In the first, I focus on the historical context in which eugenics appeared in Spain and I analyse in depth the two contexts mentioned above. In the second, I explore in some detail the eugenic tools employed for collective improvement in Spain, that is, 'preventive' eugenics as social welfare programmes, hygienic reform and, specifically, sexual pedagogy and the reconstruction of gender identities in the Spanish context. In the third part, I turn to eugenics in the problematic arena of negative measures. I introduce the 'utopian' proposal of Quintiliano Saldaña regarding 'racial responsibility' in order to illustrate that the exigency of a State that imposes constraints upon citizens, that is, one of the extremes of the compromise between civil rights and a State intervention, place him at the limits of acceptable intervention in liberal government.

2. The Spanish moment: two spheres of change and improvement

As happened in other countries, Spanish 'official' eugenics acquired its significance in the context of national self-construction which was carried out by intellectuals, and specifically by scientists, most of them doctors; an occurrence that is easy to understand given that the universal discourse of science was held to be the key to interpret progress and modernity. Below I propose three spheres in which, according to Spanish authors, it was thought change and improvement might be brought about.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات