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Paradox of the pill: oral contraceptives in Spain and Poland (1960s–1970s)

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Abstract

This chapter analyses the early circulation of oral contraceptives in Spain and Poland (1960s–1980s) using comparative historiographic methodology and a variety of sources, including: archival documents, medical literature, daily press, women's and Catholic magazines, legal sources and opinion polls.

In Spain, where the sale and advertisement of all contraceptive methods were illegal between 1941 and 1978, the pill began to circulate in the early 1960s and was officially introduced as a prescription drug for the treatment of a variety of gynaecological problems. Despite the legal ban on disseminating information about contraception, the pill was widely discussed in both the medical and general press, the ongoing discussions being stimulated by contemporary debates about the pill within the Catholic Church. Demand for the pill grew dramatically during the first two decades of its circulation, enhanced, among other factors, by the successful medical marketing and advertising of anovulatory drugs by international pharmaceutical companies operating in Spain.

In Poland, despite a lack of legal restrictions regarding contraception, the pill circulated to a far lesser degree. While Western brands began to appear on the Polish market in the early 1960s, local pharmaceutical industry only started to manufacture the first Polish pill towards the end of the decade. Easy access to abortion since the mid-1950s meant authorities placed little emphasis on providing women with effective contraceptive methods. Coupled with inefficient management of pharmaceutical production and distribution on the centrally planned market, this contributed to the limited circulation of the pill in Poland. A close examination of Polish medical literature reveals that most Polish doctors defended the pill's safety if used under medical supervision. The same argument was put forward in the general press, which played a key role in promoting the pill and other contraceptive methods, but also highlighted problems with access to the drug and criticised the alleged preference of Polish women for abortion as birth control resource.

The main conclusion is that in Spain, the pill was one of the vectors that enhanced transition of values attached to reproduction and sexuality during the last years of Franco's regime. It also

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contributed to enhancing doctors' involvement in family planning provision and counselling. In contemporary Poland, in contrast, the pill only played a marginal role, failing to catalyze a similar value transaction.

Introduction

In 1977, a year before the sale and promotion of birth control was decriminalized in Spain after an over 35-year prohibition, more than 8 million blisters of oral contraceptives had been sold in the country. The same year in state-socialist Poland, a country with a comparable population size and where contraception was not only legal, but also enjoyed official support from the regime, only about 1.5 million packages of oral contraceptives were purchased¹. Why were oral contraceptives far more popular in Spain, where the circulation of all contraceptive methods had been banned during decades, than in Poland, where the State officially supported contraception? This chapter aims at examining this paradox.

The temporal framework for my analysis are the first twenty years of circulation of the pill on international markets. Oral contraceptives made their debut in 1960, when the American Food and Drug Administration authorized pharmaceutical company Searle to commercialize *Enovid*, a combination of synthetic progesterone and oestrogen, which had been circulating in the US since 1957 for the treatment of “menstrual disorders” and endometriosis, on prescription as a hormonal contraceptive. Almost immediately, the pill began circulating on the Spanish and Polish markets, but, as this chapter will demonstrate, its subsequent trajectories developed differently.

Over the past two decades, there here has been a growing academic interest in the social and cultural itineraries of the pill in Anglo-Saxon and Western European contexts². The comparative

¹ Gerardo Hernández Rodríguez, *Aborto y planificación familiar. Aspectos sociológicos*, in: *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 5 (1979), p. 137-163; Marek Okólski, *Abortion and contraception in Poland*, in: *Studies in Family Planning* 14(11) (1983), p. 263-276 (268).

² Lara Marks, *Sexual chemistry. A history of the contraceptive pill*, New Haven; London 2010, p. 60–88; Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, *On the pill: A social history of oral contraceptives, 1950–1970*, Baltimore 1998; Eva-Maria Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last: Die Pille als Weibliche Generationserfahrung in der Bundesrepublik 1960–1980*, Göttingen 2010; Ulrike Thoms, *The contraceptive pill, the pharmaceutical industry and changes in the patient–doctor relationship in West Germany*, in: Teresa Ortiz-Gómez, María Jesús Santesmases (eds.), *Gendered drugs and medicine: Historical and socio-cultural perspectives*, Farnham 2014, p. 153–174; Eva-Maria Silies, *Taking the pill after the ‘sexual revolution’: Female contraceptive decisions in England and West Germany in the 1970s*, in *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D’histoire* 22(1) (2015), p. 41–59.

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approach³, applied by historians of the pill to the British, American and West German cases⁴, has proven a fruitful way of studying the impact of social, medical and economic factors on the pill's local trajectories. In this chapter, my intention is to examine these trajectories in non-democratic regimes, the historiography of which remains embryonic⁵. Applying a comparative perspective to two countries under dictatorships with contrasting underlying ideologies and different market organizations, but with a similar predominance of the Catholic religion amongst their citizens, allows for examination of the intersections of dictatorial States' reproductive policies and changing social perceptions of –and values attached to– contraceptive practices in these regimes. Central to this enquiry is the concept of drug circulation, which takes pharmaceuticals as entities onto which multiple cultural meanings of health and illness, medicine, gender and sexuality are inscribed, and which travel through space and time, spreading ideas and values⁶.

This study compares the circulation of the pill in Spain and Poland during the 1960s and 1970s, using historiographic methodology with a gender perspective. It is based on a variety of sources: archival documents, particularly of the pharmaceutical firms which operated in Spain and Poland, legal sources, opinion polls, medical literature, and daily press as well as general interest, women's and Catholic magazines. In what follows, I firstly briefly discuss the specificities of the Spanish and

³ Stefan Berger, *Comparative history*, in: Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner, Kevin Passamore (eds.), *Writing history: Theory and practice*, London 2003, p. 161–179.

⁴ Marks, *Sexual chemistry* (as in n. 2); Silies, *Taking the pill* (as in n. 2).

⁵ Social historiography of birth control in Central and Eastern Europe after 1945 has focused on gendered constructions of abortion policies and practices (Amy E. Randall, »Abortion will deprive you of happiness!«: Soviet reproductive politics in the post-Stalin era, in: *Journal of Women's History* 23 (3) (2011), p. 13–38; Yuliya Hilevych, *Abortion and gender relationships in Ukraine, 1955–1970*, in: *The History of the Family* 20 (1) (2015), p. 86–105; Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, *Making up for the losses of war. Reproduction politics in post-war Poland*, in Maren Röger, Ruth Leserowitz (eds.), *Women and men at war. A gender perspective on World War II and its aftermath in Central and Eastern Europe*, Osnabrück 2012, p. 307–328). This literature has left circulation of oral contraceptives in the region largely unexplored. Recent studies on East German (Annette Leo, Christian König, *Die 'Wunschkindpille'. Weibliche Erfahrung und staatliche Geburtenpolitik in der DDR*, Göttingen 2015) and Polish cases (Agata Ignaciuk, »Clueless about contraception«: The introduction and circulation of the contraceptive pill, in: *Medicina nei secoli. Arte e scienza* 26 (2) (2014), p. 491–518; Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, *Międzynarodowe aspekty działalności Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa w latach 50. i 60. XX w.*, in: Bożena Płonka-Syroka, Aleksandra Szlagowska (eds.), *Problem kontroli urodzeń i antykoncepcji. Krytyczno-porównawcza analiza dyskursów*, Wrocław 2013, p. 265–282) aim to bridge this gap. Similarly, contraceptive policies of dictatorial regimes of the Southern Europe in the second half of the 20th century have only recently attracted academic attention: Ana Maria Prata Amaral Pereira, *Women's movements, the state, and the struggle for abortion rights: Comparing Spain and Portugal in times of democratic expansion (1974–1988)*, Michigan 2008; Teresa Ortiz-Gómez, Agata Ignaciuk, »Pregnancy and labour cause more deaths than oral contraceptives«: The debate on the pill in the Spanish press in the 1970s, in: *Public Understanding of Science* 24 (6) 2015, p. 658–671; Agata Ignaciuk, Teresa Ortiz-Gómez, Esteban Rodríguez Ocaña, *Doctors, women and circulation of knowledge on oral contraceptives in Spain: 1940s–1970s*, in: Ortiz-Gómez, Santesmases (eds.), *Gendered drugs and medicine* (as in n. 2), p. 133–152.

⁶ María Jesús Santesmases, Christoph Gradmann, *Circulation of antibiotics: An introduction*, in: *Dynamis* 31 (2) (2011), p. 293–303.

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Polish cases, focusing on gender regimes, the States' reproductive policies, the roles of the Catholic Church and the particularities of each country's drug markets and pharmaceutical industries. These remarks sketch a background for a more detailed discussion of the introduction and subsequent trajectories of the pill in Spain and Poland during the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, I draw some concluding remarks, linking the success of the pill in Spain with the change of values related to family, sexuality and reproduction it catalyzed in this country and failed to catalyze in Poland, the second case study.

Contraception, the State and gender in Spain and Poland in the sixties and seventies

During most of the period under discussion, Spain and Poland were dictatorships and as such shared the presence of a State repression apparatus and its control over the media. Also, in both countries, the Catholic Church played an important role in promoting models and values related to gender, family and sexuality. Its relationship with the authorities, although complex and changing throughout the 1960s and 1970s, may be summarized as collaboration in Spain and conflict in Poland. The opposite underlying ideologies: national-Catholicism (Spain) and state-socialism (Poland), also forged different birth control policies, gender regimes and the shape of markets – including the drug market– in each country during the early years of the pill's circulation.

Spain between 1939 and 1975 was ruled by the military regime of General Francisco Franco, a regime which was self-defined as national-Catholic. Indeed, and especially during the first decades of the dictatorship, the Spanish Roman Catholic Church was Franco's regime ideological backbone. As a result of the State-Church alliance, acts considered sins by the Church, were codified by the regime into crimes. One example of such codification was the 1941's law »for the protection of natality, against abortion and contraceptive propaganda«⁷. Serving the purpose of reconstructing the nation after a devastating war, it criminalized all "non-spontaneous" abortion and banned selling, advertising, distributing and publicly exhibiting contraceptives. The ban was officially lifted only in

⁷ Ley de 21 de enero para la protección de la natalidad, contra el aborto y la propaganda anticoncepcionista, in: Boletín Oficial del Estado 33 (1941), p. 768-769.

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1978– three years after the dictator’s death, which in 1975 triggered the beginning of the democratic transition in the country⁸.

The national-catholicization of Spain under Franco also influenced the installation of specific gender models. Especially rigid during the first two decades of the dictatorship (1940s-1950s), gender norms imposed on women promoted their removal from the workforce. After getting married, women were typically expected to become full time housewives and bear numerous children⁹. Yet, the regime aged with the dictator and although political repression continued until Franco’s death in 1975, the 1960s and first half of the 1970s brought slow erosion of state control of the press¹⁰, increased participation of women in higher education and paid employment, and transformation of the economy from the autarchy of the early decades of Francoism to internationalization from 1959 on¹¹. This transformation had an immediate effect on the local drug market, which, although it continued to be heavily regulated, in the 1960s and 1970s was undergoing an intense process of internationalization and faced expansion of international pharmaceutical companies¹².

After the Second World War and until 1989, Poland became a communist dictatorship under the rule of the Polish Unified Workers’ Party. The Catholic Church, stronger in Poland than in any other Central and Eastern European country and with a great proportion of Poles declaring themselves Catholics, stood in opposition to the state-socialist regime. As an institution which succeeded in maintaining itself independent from the dictatorship, the Church was perceived as freedom and democracy’s defender. After 1945, the relationship between the hierarchy of the Church and communist authorities balanced between fragile tolerance and open conflict and persecution of the clergy by the authorities.

⁸ Agata Ignaciuk, Políticas reproductivas y práctica médica en España y Polonia (1941-1983), in: Anticoncepción hormonal en España y Polonia: Discursos, debates y prácticas entre 1960 y 1980, Granada 2015.

⁹ Gloria Nielfa Cristóbal (ed.), Mujeres y hombres en la España Franquista: Sociedad, economía, política, cultura, Madrid 2003.

¹⁰ Enrique Borderia Ortiz, La prensa durante el Franquismo: Represión, censura y negocio, Valencia 2000.

¹¹ Pablo Martín Aceña, Elena Martínez Ruiz. The golden age of Spanish capitalism: Economic growth without political freedom, in: Nigel Townson (ed.), Spain transformed. The late Franco dictatorship, 1959-7, New York 2007, p. 60; Monica Threlfall, Feminist politics and social change in Spain, in: Monica Threlfall (ed.), Mapping the women’s movement: Feminist politics and social transformation in the North, London 1996, p. 115-51 (151).

¹² Laura Chaqués Bonafont, Política industrial farmacéutica, in: Estructura y política farmacéutica, Madrid 2002, p. 166–213 (196-197).

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As opposed to contemporary Spain, promotion of contraceptives and the provision of information about birth control in Poland were not only legal, but also financed by the State, which sponsored the establishment of the Society for Conscious Motherhood (1957), the organization designated to disseminate contraceptive information throughout Polish society with the aim to prevent abortion from becoming a standard birth control method¹³. Pregnancy termination was legalized in Poland in April 1956 and was made available free of charge in public clinics and hospitals to women declaring to face personal or economic difficulties¹⁴.

The laicization of the Polish society the communist authorities aimed for was also reflected in state-proposed gender models. Polish women, whose equality with men was inscribed in the People's Republic of Poland 1952's Constitution¹⁵, were expected to participate in paid employment. The encouragement to this participation had different intensity in different moments of the regime's history, varying from promoting women taking 'male' jobs in heavy industry, mines and agriculture during the Stalinist period¹⁶ to conceptualizing them as a 'reserve army of labour' (especially 1970s and 1980s)¹⁷. On the other hand, the Polish pharmaceutical industry, similarly to other industries, was nationalized and surrendered to the principles of central planning, and manufactured drugs for a largely autarchic market. Similarly to what happened in neighbouring countries, Western pharmaceutical companies were banned from establishing a strong presence in Poland until capitalization of the communist economy commenced in the 1990s.

Despite the differences between the two regimes, oral contraceptives appeared in both Spain and Poland almost simultaneously: at the beginning of the 1960s, very soon after they were launched in the US. *Enavid*, together with *Anovlar* and *Lyndiol*, the best-selling products of Europe-based pharmaceutical firms *Schering* and *Organon*, were also the first brands to circulate in both Spain

¹³ Kuźma-Markowska, Międzynarodowe aspekty (as in n. 5); Agata Ignaciuk, »Ten szkodliwy zabieg«: Dyskursy na temat aborcji w publikacjach Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa/Towarzystwa Planowania Rodziny, in: *Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej* 2 (20) (2014), p. 75–97.

¹⁴ Aleksandra Czajkowska, O dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży. Ustawa z dnia 27 kwietnia 1956 r. i towarzyszące jej dyskusje, in: Marcin Kula (ed.), *Kłopoty z seksem w PRL. Rodzenie nie całkiem po ludzku, aborcja, choroby, odmienności*, Warszawa 2012, p. 99-186.

¹⁵ Art. 66 Konstytucja Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej uchwalona przez Sejm Ustawodawczy w dniu 22 lipca, in: *Dziennik Ustaw* 33 (1952), p. 345-370 (364).

¹⁶ Małgorzata Fidelis, *Women, communism, and industrialization in postwar Poland*, Chicago 2010; Ewelina Szpak, Female tractor driver, labour heroine and activist: Images of new socialist rural women in the Polish communist press (1950–75), in: Steven G. Ellis, Lud'a Klusáková (eds.), *Imagining frontiers, contesting identities*, Pisa 2007, p. 413–428.

¹⁷ Jacqueline Heinen, Monika Wator, Child care in Poland before, during, and after the transition: Still a women's Business, in: *Social Politics* 13(2) (2006), p. 189–216 (193).

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and Poland. They were initially used on a small scale in some of the gynaecological clinics of each country, which received samples of the products for testing from the manufacturers¹⁸. Yet, the subsequent trajectories of the pill in each country took a radically different shape.

Making contraception respectable: First two decades of the circulation of the pill in Spain

The introduction of the pill in Spain followed the same mechanism as in the US in the late 1950s: it was officially commercialized as a therapeutic drug for the treatment of a wide range of gynaecological problems and sterility. Yet, while the FDA's authorization for *Enovid* to be sold in the US as an oral contraceptive in 1960 updated formal indications for prescription beyond therapy, in Spain therapeutic indications continued to legally back the sale and advertisement of these products until the ban on contraceptive propaganda was lifted in October 1978¹⁹. The drugs commercialized in countries such as the UK, United States or West Germany as oral contraceptives were known in Spanish medical circles and in wider society as *anovulatorios* or anti-ovulation drugs, a technical name that connoted their contraceptive potential without appealing to it directly.

Between the early 1960s and late 1970s, *anovulatorios*' brands and sales multiplied on the Spanish market. While in the mid-1960s, there were at least 5 brands in circulation, this number tripled before the end of the 1960s, with some 24 brands at the beginning of the 1980s. Similarly, sales of *anovulatorios* rocketed from some 35.000 blisters in 1964, reaching, according to different sources, between 1.700.000 and 3.300.000 in 1970, and peaked at almost 9.700.0000 in 1978²⁰. With their growing offer and consumption, Spain was similar to the US, Britain, the Netherlands or West Germany, where no legal restrictions existed to the sale and promotion of contraceptives²¹. The early trajectory of *anovulatorios* in Spain can be divided into three phases: preparation (first half of the 1960s), discussion (mid-1960s to mid-1970s) and consolidation (after 1975).

During the first half of the 1960s, *anovulatorios* started circulating on the Spanish market. Initially, this circulation was limited to selected research clinics in major hospitals, where they became

¹⁸ Agata Ignaciuk, *Anticoncepción hormonal* (as in n. 8), p. 154.

¹⁹ Ley 45/1978 de 7 de octubre por la que se modifican los artículos 416 y 343 bis del Código Penal, in: *Boletín Oficial Del Estado* 243 (1978), p. 23604.

²⁰ Carmen Sánchez Carazo, *Introducción de los anovulatorios orales en España: aspectos morales, sociales y médicos*, Madrid 1998, p. 315.

²¹ Marks, *Sexual chemistry; Silies, Liebe, Lust und Last* (as in n. 2).

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objects of small-scale clinical trials. Following the introduction of a new law regulating the activities of pharmaceutical companies in Spain in 1963²², *anovulatorios* also began to be widely advertised in medical journals. Local medical knowledge on these new drugs built upon Spanish doctors' familiarity with international research on nor-steroids, particularly the works of Gregory G. Pincus, John Rock and collaborators, the team involved in the making of synthetic progesterone into a contraceptive pill in the US in the second half of the 1950s²³. Despite the ongoing Spanish legal ban on contraceptive propaganda, up-to-date information about international developments regarding the pill was discussed in Spanish medical journals freely and without obscuring its contraceptive properties²⁴.

First local trials, conducted mainly in Barcelona and Madrid and reported between 1963 and 1965 on the pages of key local journals for obstetrics and gynaecology, focused on therapeutic possibilities and mechanisms of action of early brands *Enovid*, *Lyndiol* or *Anovial*²⁵. *Anovial 21*, distributed in Spain by the local branch of *Schering AG Berlin, Productos Químicos Schering*, was also the first brand to be advertised in Spanish medical press in 1964. This and other early adverts of *anovulatorios* focused on their therapeutic indications, such as painful menstruation, sterility, endometriosis and irregularities of menstrual cycle.

Advertising aimed at physicians was one of many resources used in the careful and coordinated marketing strategies pharmaceutical companies operating on the Spanish market carried out with the aim to foster medical and, consequentially, also social acceptance for ovulation inhibitors, acceptance which ended up projecting onto contraception in general. These marketing resources²⁶

²² Decreto 2646/1963, de 10 de agosto que regula los laboratorios de especialidades farmacéuticas y el registro, distribución y publicidad de las mismas, Boletín Oficial del Estado 240 (1963), p. 14303.

²³ Marks, *Sexual chemistry*, p. 57

²⁴ For a detailed discussion of the methodology used for the analysis of the publications about *anovulatorios* in Spanish medical press, see Ignaciuk, *Anticoncepción hormonal*; Esteban Rodríguez-Ocaña, Agata Ignaciuk, Teresa Ortiz-Gómez, *Ovulostáticos y anticonceptivos. El conocimiento médico sobre la píldora en España durante el Franquismo y la transición democrática (1940–1979)*, in: *Dynamis* 32 (2) (2012), p. 467–494.

²⁵ Pere Pujol Amat, *Progestagenos de síntesis e inhibición de la ovulación*, in: *Medicina Clínica* 41 (5) (1963), p. 396–405; M. Márquez Ramírez, J. Massanas Rosado, P. Pujol Amat, *Proyección sobre el endometrio de los inhibidores hormonales de la ovulación*, in: *Acta Ginecológica XVI* (1964), p. 33–35; P. Pujol Amat, J. Massanas Rosado, M. Márquez Ramírez, *Primeras experiencias con inhibidores hormonales de la ovulación*, in: *Acta Ginecológica XV* (1964), p. 648; Víctor Cónill Serra, *Anovulatorios y deporte femenino*, in: *Revista Española de Obstetricia y Ginecología* 22 (142) (1965), p. 206–207; Víctor Cónill Serra, *Consideraciones ginecológicas sobre anovulatorios y deporte femenino*, in: *Medicina Deportiva* 2 (1965), p. 155–156.

²⁶ On the historical development of drug marketing in the West: Jean-Paul Gaudillière, Ulrike Thoms, *The Development of scientific marketing in the twentieth century: Research for sales in the pharmaceutical industry*, London 2015.

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included provision of drug samples for trials, visits of the firms' sales representatives to physicians, sponsored medical literature and persuasion of 'opinion-leaders' to research with, write about and publicly endorse *anovulatorios*, as well as physician-aimed advertising in key Spanish journals for obstetrics and gynaecology.

The beginning of advertising campaigns for *anovulatorios* in Spain coincided with first articles dedicated to the pill in Spanish media. In »Triunfo«, which in 1962 became one of the key Spanish opinion magazines critical of the regime, its regular collaborator, liberal theologian Enrique Miret Magdalena introduced the pill to the magazine's readers, and praised it as a 'natural' cycle regulator, useful for enhancing the effectiveness of cycle-observation based birth control²⁷. Miret Magdalena's discussion of the pill in terms of its potential utility for Catholic spouses anticipated key discursive nodes of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s discussions about *anovulatorios* in Spain. These discussions, taking place in medical circles as well as in wider society, as reflected in growing coverage of this drug in professional as well as general press, were facilitated and legitimized by the intensification of the debates about the pill within the Catholic community.

The question whether the pill could be used in a Catholic marriage had raised controversy since the late 1950s. In 1958, in a discourse given during international Congress of Haematology, widely circulated within the Spanish Catholic community²⁸, Pope Pius XII's condemned artificial contraception and insemination, and emphasized moral difference between the 'direct' and 'indirect' sterilization achieved through the employment of oral contraceptives. 'Indirect sterilization', when 'ovarian rest' produced by the pill was a side-effect for medical treatment, was morally acceptable, whilst 'direct sterilization', when temporary infertility was the main objective of prescribing and taking the drug, was not.

These declarations by no means ended the controversy. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) discussed the idea of 'responsible parenthood', or the right of married Catholics to decide upon the number of children they would bear into the world. In making this decision, parents would have to be as generous as possible, but take into account their particular circumstances and (temporarily or

²⁷ Enrique Miret Magdalena, La Iglesia y la natalidad, in: Triunfo 194 (1964), p. 36-37. See also Ortiz-Gómez, Ignaciuk, »Pregnancy and Labour« (as in n. 5).

²⁸ Pio XII, Discurso a los participantes en el Congreso Internacional de Hematología del 12 de Septiembre de 1958, in Ecclesia 899 (1958), p. 317-319; see also Sánchez Carazo, Introducción de los anovulatorios orales (as in n. 20), p. 105.

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permanently) limit the number of children if health problems or economic difficulties occurred. While recognizing that sex served not only reproductive purposes but was also a mean of enhancing love and communication between (Catholic) spouses, the Council did not publish any official statements about the possibility of using the pill for the purposes of responsible parenthood²⁹.

This possibility has been endorsed by many theologians and renown secular Catholics, such as doctor John Rock, a key figure in the early history of oral contraceptives, responsible for their early testing³⁰, and a firm defender of the pill as a ‘natural’ contraceptive method that, as such should be included within the one-item-catalogue of the Catholic Church accepted contraceptive methods: the rhythm method. Behind many of the voices endorsing the pill laid the defence of it being a ‘natural’ contraceptive method in a double sense. First, it did not interfere with the ‘normal’ course of coitus (the penis penetrating the vagina and ejaculating inside it), ‘corrupted’ by birth control methods such as coitus interruptus or a condom. Second, temporary sterility produced by the pill was achieved by substances analogue to those naturally present in women’s bodies and mimicking natural states of sterility female organisms were going through during pregnancy, breastfeeding or menopause. They also criticized the rhythm method as ‘unnatural’ in a sense that the preparation (careful menstrual cycle observation) and abstinence it required severely interfered with a couple’s sex life, and complained about its limited reliability³¹.

In 1963, the same year as Rock’s book »The time has come: A Catholic doctor’s proposal to end the battle over birth control«³² was first published, Pope John XXIII established the Pontifical Commission on Birth Control. Its aim was to deliberate about contraception, and in particular, about oral contraceptives’ compatibility with the Catholic doctrine. John XXIII’s successor, Paul VI, expanded the Commission from six to over 70 members, including bishops, theologians, medical physicians and lay Catholics. In 1967, the Commission’s report endorsing the married Catholics’ right to choose contraceptive methods they would employ to exercise “responsible parenthood” was made public; a minority report was also issued stating that the Church should continue with its rejection of all ‘artificial contraception’, including the pill. In 1968, the publication of Pope Paul

²⁹ Karina Felitti, *El mundo católico ante la paternidad responsable*, in: *La revolución de la píldora. Sexualidades y política en la Argentina de los años sesenta*, Buenos Aires 2012, p. 153-188 (157-158).

³⁰ Marks, *Sexual Chemistry*, p. 57.

³¹ Sánchez Carazo, *Introducción de los anovulatorios orales*, p. 132.

³² John Charles Rock, *The time has come: A Catholic doctor's proposals to end the battle over birth control*, London 1963.

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VI's Encyclical »*Humanae Vitae*«, which reiterated in banning all 'artificial' contraception, and authorized the pill only if used for 'indirect sterilization', proved expectations raised towards the possibility of changing the Catholic Church's official birth control politics vain³³. Yet, the pill continued to be the object of passionate discussions among the Catholics worldwide. Many theologians continued to defend the couple's right to choose contraceptive methods best suited to their needs, and to encourage them to prioritize their own consciousness over the Encyclical. In the same fashion, many interpreted the papal document as guidance but not as a norm, whose non-observance would equal mortal sin and exclusion from the Catholic community.³⁴

In the Spanish context of the legal ban of contraceptive propaganda, these ongoing debates contributed to the dissemination of information about the pill and contraception in general, especially during what I call the "discussion" phase of the pill's Spanish trajectory, between mid-1960s and mid-1970s. This dissemination was prominent in Spanish print media, where the pill was discussed freely despite the ongoing prohibition of divulging information about birth control. From 1966 on, the press in Spain was regulated by a new Press Law, which replaced preventive censorship with 'volunteer consultation', fines and the suspension of publication³⁵. The new legislation triggered a gradual loss of state control over the media and amplified spaces available for pluralism and dissension³⁶. Amongst these spaces, Spanish 'democratic' opinion magazines, such as the already mentioned »Triunfo« or »Cuadernos para el Diálogo«, which flourished after 1966, played a key role. In these magazines, *anovulatorios*, or simply 'the pill', were habitually represented in the second half of the 1960s as a legitimate resource for Catholic couples who wanted to space their children's births or limit their family size³⁷. Similar discussions were also prominent in daily press titles such as »ABC« or »La Vanguardia«, which, apart from echoing ecclesiastic discussions, focused on the pill's side effects' controversy³⁸. At the same time, conservative approaches to contraception remained prominent in some titles. Contemporary women's magazines, such as widely read »Ama« and »Telva«, aimed at housewives, tended to

³³ Felitti, La revolución de la píldora (as in n. 29).

³⁴ Sánchez Carazo, Introducción de los anovulatorios orales, p. 189-190.

³⁵ Santos Juliá Díaz, España, 1966, in: Hoy no es ayer. Ensayos sobre historia de España en el siglo XX, Barcelona 2010, p. 233-244 (235).

³⁶ Juliá Díaz, España, 1966 (as in n. 35), p. 235.

³⁷ Ignaciuk, Anticoncepción hormonal, p. 224-227.

³⁸ Ortiz-Gómez, Ignaciuk, »Pregnancy and Labour«, p. 664-667.

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promote a conservative vision of femininity and family, rejecting all forms of birth control as a threat to women and the Catholic family³⁹.

During the first half of the 1970s, focus of the Spanish press' coverage of the pill shifted towards representing its use as a widespread and 'normal' practice, no longer necessarily confined to married Catholics. While both general press and women's magazines continued to reproduce sensational news about the pill's alleged dangerous side effects, the media also increasingly depicted oral contraceptives as something ingrained in the Spanish society. It was common for the print media to publish women's (including young and single women's) opinions on the pill and contraception in general, together with surveys on the pill's consumption and its sales' data, thus contributing to consolidation of social approval for its widespread use⁴⁰. Contemporary large-scale sociological surveys indeed showed that the pill was the most widely known contraceptive method amongst most Spanish married women. According to a poll on women's attitudes towards family planning conducted in 1971, 70% of those interviewed »had heard of the pill« compared to 58% who knew the rhythm method⁴¹.

From mid-1960 to mid-1970s, equally heated debates on *anovulatorios* took place within the medical community. The discursive nodes for these debates were the new drugs' mechanisms of action, their side effects, and social and moral aspects of their use. Many contributors to Spanish medical journals echoed in their articles the conservative Catholic rejection for contraception in general, which is not a surprise considering that during 1960s, a large proportion of Spanish doctors declared themselves Catholics and admitted religious beliefs had considerable impact on their medical practice⁴². While discussions on religious or moral aspects of the pill and its ultimate rejection was commonplace in Spanish medical literature, especially before 1975⁴³, at least since the second half of the 1960s medical journals gave space to doctors publicly speaking against the

³⁹ Agata Ignaciuk, The contraceptive pill in the magazines for women in Spain and Poland (1960s–1970s), in: Aleksandra Różalska, Marek Wojcieszek, Elżbieta H. Oleksy (eds.), *Personal of the political: Transgenerational dialogues in contemporary European feminisms*, Cambridge 2015.

⁴⁰ Ignaciuk, *Anticoncepción hormonal*, p. 232-235.

⁴¹ Juan Díez Nicolás, *Actitudes de las mujeres españolas hacia los métodos de planificación familiar*, in: *Revista Española de la Opinión Pública* 31 (1973), p. 27–59.

⁴² Salustiano del Campo, *Los médicos ante el problema de la limitación de la natalidad*, in: *Cambios sociales y formas de vida*, Barcelona 1968, p. 230–244.

⁴³ Ignaciuk, *Anticoncepción hormonal*, p. 181-191.

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convergence of medical and religious discourses and calling for deeper engagement of medical professionals in the provision of family planning methods and advice⁴⁴.

The notion of ‘therapy’ was central to the debates on social aspects of *anovulatorios* in Spanish medical press⁴⁵. Following the legal norm, prescribing the pill was legal as long as there were therapeutic indications for such a prescription, but the meaning of ‘therapy’ in Spanish medical journals stretched or shrank in correlation with the author’s ideology. Many doctors rejected the pill altogether⁴⁶, and others only recommended its prescription for the treatment of irregular menstruation or endometriosis, adhering to the papal authorization of pill use in ‘indirect [temporary] sterilization’⁴⁷. However, from the mid-1960s on, numerous professionals supported prescribing the pill in situations where pausing ovulation was the primary aim, in other words, to induce ‘direct [temporary] sterilization’, condemned by Pius XII and by »*Humanae Vitae*«. This was the case, for example, when the pill was prescribed to guarantee ‘rest’ to a new or breastfeeding mother⁴⁸. For a growing number of doctors, who increasingly made their stance public towards the mid-1970s, providing the pill to a patient facing personal or economic difficulties could also be justified as therapeutic and thus legitimate and legal⁴⁹.

This was the idea behind the first semi-clandestine outpatient birth control clinics, which started to be established in some of the major university hospitals in Madrid and Barcelona during the first half of the 1970s. Under the names of ‘sterility’ or ‘puerperal’ clinics, they were initially aimed for hospitals’ patients who had undergone difficult pregnancies or had health problems which made pregnancy inadvisable, but soon expanded their target patients to workers of the hospital and

⁴⁴ Los médicos ante la píldora. Segundo coloquio de Doctor, Dr. Doctor. Información profesional y administrativa Diciembre (1967), p. 49–57; Santiago Dexeus Font (ed.), Tratado de ginecología, Barcelona 1970; Vicente Salvatierra Mateu, Apuntes de ginecología, Granada 1973; Victor Cónill Serra, La planificación familiar en la práctica hospitalaria, in: *Progresos de Obstetricia y Ginecología* 17 (1) (1974), p. 29–36; Enrique Solano Berral, Planificación familiar. Métodos anticonceptivos, *Hispalis Médica. Revista Sevillana de Medicina y Cirugía* 31 (362) (1974), p. 689–741.

⁴⁵ Ignaciuk, Anticoncepción hormonal, p. 171.

⁴⁶ i.e. Juan Jimenéz Vargas, Guillermo López García, Aborto y contraceptivos, Pamplona 1973; G. López García, Aspectos médicos sobre el control de natalidad, aborto y contraceptivos, in: *Gaceta Médica de Bilbao* 24 (6) (1974), p. 555–567.

⁴⁷ i.e. E. de la Fuente, M. Alemán, Control de la natalidad por regulación de la puesta ovular, in: *Acta Ginecológica* 20(12) (1969), p. 946-959.

⁴⁸ i. e. Lorenzo Abad Martínez, Las nuevas drogas anticoncepcionales. Puntos de vista deontológicos, in: *Revista Española de Obstetricia y Ginecología* 21 (137) (1964), p. 317–326; Los médicos ante la píldora (as in n. 50); A. Novo, Regulación de la natalidad, in: *Toko–Ginecología Práctica* 28 (268) (1969), p. 39–50; A. Caballero Gordo, Efectos colaterales de los contraceptivos orales. Sus peligros y contraindicaciones, in: *Acta Ginecológica* 21 (5) (1970), p. 341–354.

⁴⁹ i.e. Cónill Serra, La planificación familiar (as in n. 44)

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general public. Oral contraceptives, probably in most cases donated by the manufacturers, were the most frequently recommended contraceptive method in these early clinics⁵⁰.

From the second half of the 1960s, apart from donating free oral contraceptives to doctors involved in the early family planning clinics, pharmaceutical companies developed the marketing of the pill also through the intensification of doctor-aimed advertising. Advertisements of *anovulatorios* in medical journals multiplied⁵¹, while the centrality of their therapeutic potential gave way to new promotional narratives which skilfully blended suggestions of contraceptive properties with images that conveyed safety and potential use by young, single women. These adverts were to fulfil a double objective: to represent emerging demands of women for the pill, and normalize prescription by encouraging doctors to meet these demands⁵².

Franco's death in 1975 signified the beginning of the democratic transition in Spain. For the pill, it meant consolidation on the Spanish market. While some conservative magazines for women, such as »Telva«, whose publisher was owned by the ultraconservative Catholic organization Opus Dei, continued to attack oral contraceptives as dangerous and immoral⁵³, articles mushroomed in most opinion magazines, demanding the urgent revision of the anti-contraception law, criticized as disconnected from social reality⁵⁴. In some newly established titles, like the feminist magazine »Vindicación Feminista« and the popular liberal magazine for middle-class women »Dunia«, both founded in 1976, discussing the pill (alongside other contraceptive methods) became a pretext to bring into the spotlight new issues such as women's sexuality and also the right to abortion⁵⁵. These topics were raised also in opinion magazines »Triunfo«, »Cuadernos para el Diálogo« and »Cambio

⁵⁰ Teresa Ortiz-Gómez, Agata Ignaciuk, The fight for family planning in Spain during late Francoism and the transition to democracy, 1965-1979, in: *Journal of Women's History* (forthcoming 2017).

⁵¹ Agata Ignaciuk, Publicidad farmacéutica y género: Anuncios de la 'píldora' en España (1964–1985), in: *Medicina e Historia* 1 (2014), p. 4–21.

⁵² Lisa Malich, Standardization in French and Western German marketing of oral contraceptives: Reducing variability, producing variation in drugs and women (1961– 2006), in: Thoms, Gaudillière, The development of scientific marketing (as in n. 29)

⁵³ i. e. Florinda Salinas, Cuestión polémica. La planificación familiar. ¿Solución o conflicto?, in: *Telva* 15 Dec (1977), p. 52-56; Dolores Lanzas, España hoy ¿Qué pasa con los anticonceptivos? La batalla de su despenalización, in: *Telva* 1 Jun (1978), p. 25; José López Navarro, En España la píldora de nuevo sobre el tapete, in: *Telva* 1 Nov (1978), p. 72-73; Florinda Salinas, Los efectos de la píldora, a uno a uno. Tres especialistas analizan las consecuencias de los anticonceptivos, 15 May (1979), p. 30-31.

⁵⁴ i. e. Juan I. Sáenz Diez, La demografía española en perspectiva, in: *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* 37 (1973), p. 98-103; Montserrat Roig, Julia Luzán, Anticoncepción. Mesa redonda, in: *Triunfo* 7 Aug (1976), p. 30-33; Trini de León Sotelo, Planificación familiar: sólo los hijos deseados, in: *Blanco y Negro* 10 May (1978); Elisa Valero Maluenda, Las madres solteras, en España, in: *ABC*, 9 Mar (1975), p. 158-161.

⁵⁵ Ignaciuk, Anticoncepción hormonal, p. 232.

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16«⁵⁶, such publications contributing to the further dissemination of knowledge about this and other contraceptive methods and to consolidating their social acceptance.

At the same time, activism in favour of legalization of birth control grew and intensified in medical and emerging feminist circles, incarnated in a rising number of family planning clinics, including the feminist family planning centre Federico Rubio in Madrid, founded around 1976, and new outpatient hospital clinics established in large Spanish towns beyond Madrid and Barcelona⁵⁷. Doctors who established and worked in these clinics increasingly reported on their experience of prescribing the pill in professional journals, publicly defending contraception as a human right, especially after the decriminalization of contraceptive provision and propaganda was made effective⁵⁸. Several years prior to the lifting of the legal ban, consolidation of social and medical acceptance for contraception was reflected in medical advertising campaigns for the pill. As an illustration, *Neo-Lyndiol*, *Organon's* star-anovulatory product, was introduced onto the Spanish market in the mid-1970s. In 1976, it was advertised in *Acta Ginecológica* journal for gynaecology and obstetrics with the slogan »the pill of the day«⁵⁹. A year later, in the same journal, *Neo-Lyndiol* was promoted as »method of choice« for preventing pregnancy in women with health problems⁶⁰. In spring 1978, when the Spanish parliament had been discussing and eventually agreed to lift the ban on contraceptive propaganda, *Organon's* new campaign for *Neo-Lyndiol* ceased to invoke health problems as justification for using the pill, and simply referred to the drug as »contraceptive method of choice«⁶¹.

A wasted chance: circulation of the pill in Poland

The Polish trajectory of oral contraceptives can be divided into two phases: before and after the introduction of *Femigen*, the first local brand, onto the market in 1968-1969. The first phase may be called that of "high hopes" related to the new form of contraception and the second can be summarized as that of "problematic production", when manufacturing and dissemination obstacles and little social interest in the pill began to be evident. Modern contraception failed to change a

⁵⁶ Ignaciuk, *Anticoncepción hormonal*, p. 232; p. 251.

⁵⁷ Ortiz-Gómez, Ignaciuk, *The fight for family planning* (as in n. 50).

⁵⁸ J. González Merlo et al., *Nuestra experiencia sobre planificación familiar*, in: *Ginedips* 10 (1979), p. 525–532.

⁵⁹ i. e. *Organon*, *Neo-Lyndiol*, in: *Acta Ginecológica* 28 (1978).

⁶⁰ *Organon*, *Neo-Lyndiol*, in: *Acta Ginecológica* 32–34 (1978).

⁶¹ *Schering*, *Microgynon*, in: *Acta Ginecológica* 32–33 (1978).

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Polish couple's preference for unmedicalized contraception, backed with legal abortion. Between 1972 and 1978, the percentage of Polish married women who used the pill increased only slightly, from, 4.7% to 6.9%⁶² (compared to 17% in Spain in 1978⁶³). Domestic production of the pill in Poland in the period under examination never exceeded the peak of 1.700.000 million blisters, reached in 1976⁶⁴. The production's growth, although systematic, was not as lineal as in the Spanish case and its peaks and drops reflected the difficulties experienced by the centrally planned pharmaceutical industry.

Yet, when the pill appeared on the Polish market, the medical community and the media were optimistic about the new drug's future success. As already mentioned, the first brands to appear in Poland in the early 1960s were essentially the same Western brands that circulated in Spain. *Anovial*, *Enovid* or *Lyndiol* entered the Polish market as donations from international manufacturers. Amongst receptors of these donations were the Pharmaceutical Institute [*Institut Leków*, public organism responsible for drug research and testing], along with the most prestigious university clinics of obstetrics and gynaecology (like I and II Clinic of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of Warsaw University)⁶⁵. Also, public family planning clinics were offered large batches of pills for their distribution amongst clients. The Conscious Motherhood Clinic in Gdańsk, north Poland, for instance, received enough *Anovlar* to be used by 85 women over 10 months. The outcome of this experience was positive: one of the clinic's doctors later praised *Anovlar*'s efficacy in an article published in the 1968 local professional family planning journal, »Problemy Rodziny«⁶⁶.

»Problemy Rodziny« journal, funded by the Society for Conscious Motherhood, organization responsible for contraceptive propaganda, hosted regular contributions on the pill as scientific novelty throughout the early 1960s⁶⁷. The family planning journal also frequently reported on

⁶² Zbigniew Smoliński (ed.), *Dziśność kobiet w Polsce*, Warszawa 1980, p. 160

⁶³ Juan Diez Nicolás, Jesús M. de Miguel, *Control de natalidad en España*, Barcelona 1981, p. 241.

⁶⁴ Okólski, *Abortion and contraception* (as in n. 1).

⁶⁵ Ignaciuk, »Clueless about Contraception«, p. 499

⁶⁶ Irena Łukasik, *Anovlar 21 – skuteczny środek antykoncepcyjny*, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 43 (1968), p. 52–55.

⁶⁷ Jan Lesiński, *Od estrogenów i progesteronu do Enovidu*. Amerykańskie Sympozjum na temat doustnych środków antykoncepcyjnych, styczeń 1961, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 2 (1961), p. 31–36; Stanisław Liebhart, *O doustnych środkach antykoncepcyjnych*, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 2 (1961), p. 26–30; W. Michałkiewicz, Jan Grzesiak, Marian Obara, *Aktualny stan antykoncepcji w świecie i w Polsce*, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 6 (1962), p. 45–51; Jan Lesiński, *Czy gestageny hamują rozrodczość*, in: *Problemy Rodziny*, 16 (1964), p. 11–18; Barbara Trębicka-Kwiatkowska, *O doustnych środkach antykoncepcyjnych*, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 20 (1964), p. 47–50; Adam Cekański, *Doustne środki antykoncepcyjne cz. II*, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 22 (1965), p. 3–11; Leokadia Grabowiecka, *Na drodze walki z poronieniami*, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 26 (1965), p. 42–46; Irena Łukasikowa, *Skuteczność środków antykoncepcyjnych*

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discussions about the new drug in Western European mainstream media in its permanent column »What is going on aboard«⁶⁸; so did the general medical journal »Polski Tygodnik Lekarski«, in its section dedicated to abstracts from international medical journals such as »The Lancet« or »The Journal of American Medical Association«⁶⁹.

Information about contraception, including the pill, had also circulated widely in the Polish mass media, when the press, especially women's magazines (such as »Przyjaciółka«, »Zwierciadło«, »Ty i Ja«), had become a vehicle for the State's anti-natalist population policy, which in the mid-1950s had substituted pronatalism of the early postwar years⁷⁰. In »Przyjaciółka«, an extremely popular magazine for rural and working-class women, the pill was presented to the readers as early as in 1960⁷¹. A report from a conference of International Planned Parenthood Federation in Hague, praised the pill as an effective contraceptive which unfortunately was unavailable locally and too expensive for massive use. In the Catholic opinion magazines, such as »Tygodnik Powszechny« or »Więź«, the pill received limited if negative coverage, authors focusing on side effects of the pill and praising the rhythm method⁷². Opinion magazines both allied (»Trybuna Ludu«) and critical to the regime (»Polityka«), reported on oral contraceptives being tried in Polish gynaecological clinics and the pharmaceutical industry preparing itself for launching local production, declared imminent

na podstawie materialow Wojewódziej Przychodni Świadomego Macierzyństwa w Gdańsku, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 23 (1965), p. 57–61.

⁶⁸i. e. N. W., [Co słycać za granicą] Stany Zjednoczone: Zwiększony popyt na doustne środki antykoncepcyjne w Wielkiej Brytanii, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 13 (1963), p. 44-45; [Co słycać za granicą] Francja: Pigułka czy inne środki, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 15 (1964), p. 66; [Co słycać za granicą] Niemiecka Republika Federalna. Tabletki nie są rakotwórcze, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 23 (1965), p. 101; [Co słycać za granicą] Australia. Rekord spożycia tabletek antykoncepcyjnych, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 32 (1966), p. 70-71; [Co słycać za granicą] Holandia: Przedwczesne starzenie się na skutek tabletek?, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 38 (1967), p. 69; [Co słycać za granicą] Dania: Zastrzyki antykoncepcyjne, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 39 (1968), p. 65; [Co słycać za granicą] Stany Zjednoczone: zastrzyk zamiast pigułki, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 45 (1969), p. 93.

⁶⁹i. e. J. Loraine et al., Doustne środki antykoncepcyjne [summary of an article previously published in *The Lancet*], in: *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski* 7314 (1963), p. 902; E. Tyler, 8-letnie doświadczenia z doustnymi środkami zapobiegającymi ciąży i stosowanie małych dawek noretisteronu [summary of an article previously published in *British Medical Journal*], in: *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski* 5431 (1964), p. 943; M. G. Perlroht, Doustne środki antykoncepcyjne w leczeniu ostrej nawracającej porfiri [summary of an article previously published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*], in: *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski* 194 (1) (1965), p. 1037; V. Wynn, J. W. H. Doar, Niektóre skutki doustnych leków antykoncepcyjnych na metabolizm węglowodanów [summary of an article previously published in *The Lancet*], in: *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski* 7466 (1966), p. 71; E. E. Wallach, C. R. García, Aspekty psychodynamiczne doustnego stosowania środków antykoncepcyjnych [summary of an article previously published *The Journal of the American Medical Association*], in: *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski* 203 (11) (1968), p. 927.

⁷⁰ Klich-Kluczevska, Making up for the losses of war (as in n. 5); Małgorzata Fidelis, Women astray. Debating sexuality and reproduction during the Thaw, in: *Women, Communism, and Industrialization* (as in n. 16), p. 170-202.

⁷¹ Maria Karaś, Od naszego specjalnego wysłannika. Rodzinę trzeba planować, in: *Przyjaciółka* 5 May (1960), p. 5.

⁷² i. e. Andrzej Bardecki, Problem regulacji urodzin, in: *Tygodnik Powszechny* 21 Apr (1968), p. 1-2; Karol Bednarski, W sprawie tzw pigułki, in: *Więź* 6 (1967), p. 83-88; Anzelm Hertz, Wokół encykliki, in: *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1 Sep (1968), p. 1-2.

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in 1963 and again in 1965 and 1966⁷³. While anticipating benefits (e.g. possible exportation of the locally manufactured oral contraceptives to neighbouring countries), some authors were critical of the process of the pill's local production excessively dilated in time, preventing the drug from circulating on a larger scale and being available to women across the country⁷⁴.

Until 1967, the pill continued to be available in Poland through donations or "private drug import", which meant individuals had pharmaceuticals sent from abroad by their relatives or friends, and could use them for their own consumption or sell them to the State, which distributed them in special "foreign drug pharmacies" which existed in the largest Polish cities⁷⁵. In 1967, the Ministry of Health launched small-scale official importation of some Western brands (*Lyndiol* and *Stediril*). Wider availability of the pill began only in 1968 with the introduction of *Ovosiston*, a pill brand initially imported from East Germany and later manufactured by the national pharmaceutical industry under the name of *Femigen Forte*, whose production was started in its factory in Jelenia Góra in late 1968 to hit the pharmacies in early 1969. Contrary to *Lyndiol* and *Stediril*, both *Ovosiston* and *Femigen Forte* were available in regular pharmacies, which greatly improved women's potential access to the pill; both were also 'advertised' in »Polski Tygodnik Lekarski«. The purpose of these adverts, or rather 'notices of introduction', was not to persuade doctors, but to announce the launching of the new product. Such simple, schematic structure, communicating only the product's name, composition, indications, counter-indications and possible side effects, was a commonplace among adverts of pharmaceutical products manufactured by the domestic pharmaceutical industry in Poland.

The launching of *Ovosiston* and *Femigen Forte* in Poland was instantly noted in the media, especially in magazines for women, which began disseminating practical information about new drugs: their properties, side-effects and counter indications. A frequent journalistic strategy was to introduce the pill through the story of a satisfied user or to discuss it in agony columns dedicated to health and marital advice⁷⁶. Catholic magazines, on the other hand, remained critical of the pill and

⁷³ Kor., Pigułki antykoncepcyjne, in: Trybuna Ludu, 14 Sep (1963); [Prasa krajowa pisze]. Co z tą tabletką u nas, in: Problemy Rodziny (quoting Trybuna Ludu) 31 (1966); M. Koreywo, Żółte światło dla doustnej pigułki, in: Trybuna Ludu 31 Aug (1966).

⁷⁴ i.e. Jerzy Urban, Pigułka do przełknięcia, in: Polityka 27 Jan (1968), p. 3–9.

⁷⁵ Ignaciuk, Anticoncepción hormonal, p. 163.

⁷⁶ Ignaciuk, The contraceptive pill, 179-181.

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adhered to the Encyclical »*Humanae Vitae*«, reproduced and commented extensively in »*Tygodnik Powszechny*«⁷⁷.

The beginning of the 1970s, with Edward Gierek as the new leader of the Polish Unified Worker's Party, brought another shift in the State's population policy, and, towards the end of the decade, the intensifying economic crisis. Media discussions became dominated by the population decrease scare, for which unlimited access to abortion was blamed. In 1972, the government introduced its key pro-natalist measurement: women were allowed and, in fact, encouraged to take childcare leaves which lasted up to 3 years per child. The policy removed surplus (female) workers from paid employment and solved shortages in (public) childcare services⁷⁸.

The same year new childcare leaves were announced, Polish pharmaceutical industry launched the second Polish pill brand, *Angravid* (with an identical composition to Searle's *Ovulen*), whose production and sales in the mid-1970 was a fraction of that of *Femigen*'s⁷⁹. In the context of low-cost pro-natalism, the expansion of domestic pill brands was even less a priority in the 1970s than it was in the previous decade. *Femigen* and *Angravid*, together with small scale official and private import, continued to provide for the Polish oral contraceptive market. Yet, the pharmaceutical industry permanently struggled with a deficit of raw materials and outdated technology and suffered from deficient coordination between the manufacturer and CEFARM, the state drug distributing agency⁸⁰. Consistent maladjustments existed between planned and actual production of *Femigen*, and isolated attempts to improve the offer by local production and importation of contraceptives fell through⁸¹. Permanent shortages of foreign currency obstructed drug import in general and forced the Ministry of Health to prioritize other drugs, considered more essential than oral contraceptives⁸².

⁷⁷ Andrzej Bardecki, Encyklika *Humanae Vitae*, in: *Tygodnik Powszechny* 25 Aug (1968), p. 1–2; Encyklika Papieża Pawła VI *Humanae Vitae* z zasadach moralnych w dziedzinie przekazywania życia ludzkiego, in: *Tygodnik Powszechny*. 19 Jan (1969); List Episkopatu o Encyklice Ojca Św. Pawła VI *Humanae Vitae*, in: *Tygodnik Powszechny* 20 Apr (1969), p. 1–2.

⁷⁸ Heinen, Wator, Child Care in Poland (as in n. 17), p. 195.

⁷⁹ Ignaciuk, *Anticoncepcja hormonalna*, p. 159-160.

⁸⁰ Polish Central Archives of Modern Records (henceforth PCAMR), Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Farmaceutycznego Polfa. Wydział Ekonomiczny, 963/16/77 Plan techniczno-ekonomiczny na rok 1974 Jeleniogórskich Zakładów Przemysłu Farmaceutycznego; PCAMR, Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Farmaceutycznego Polfa, Wydział Postępu Technicznego, 963/8/6 Andrzej Jaryczewski, Uwagi do programu rozwoju produkcji leków steroidowych w Polsce w latach 1980-1985 (1980); PCAMR, Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Farmaceutycznego Polfa, Wydział Postępu Technicznego, 963-8-6, M. Czeszek, Notatka dotycząca współpracy z firmą Organon (1980).

⁸¹ Ignaciuk, *Anticoncepcja hormonalna*, p. 167-168.

⁸² Ignaciuk, »Clueless about contraception«, p. 498.

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Despite the turn in official population policy, contraception, including the pill, continued to be discussed in Polish general interest and women's magazines as well as medical journals during the 1970s. During this decade, media discussions of the pill continued to focus on practical information about the method and pointed to shortages of supplies of the pill and other contraceptives⁸³. Side effects of the pill, a recurrent topic in both general and professional titles, were frequently represented as a by-product of the limited variety of brands available in Poland and their relatively high doses⁸⁴. Key Polish gynaecologists defended the pill's safety if used under medical control and repeatedly pleaded for the improvement of the variety of available pill brands in medical and general interest forums⁸⁵. Throughout the 1970s, professional journals such as »Ginekologia Polska«, »Problemy Rodziny« and »Terapia i Leki« offered contributions from doctors who tested local pill brands in terms of safety and tolerance. Most of these tests concluded oral contraceptives to be an attractive and safe alternative to repeated abortions⁸⁶.

Conclusions

This chapter demonstrated the relatively limited impact of legal norms regarding contraception, whether prohibitive or permissive, on the pill's consumption in Spain and Poland. The organization of pharmaceutical markets, the possibilities of pharmaceutical companies to set up in these markets, and the availability of other birth control methods, including abortion, had proven to be more decisive factors.

⁸³ i. e. Beata Dzięgielewska, Antykoncepcja bez koncepcji, in: *Zwierciadło* 15 Dec (1977), p. 3-5; Anna Śpich, Antykoncepcja w powijakach, in: *Przyjaciółka* 6 Feb 1977, p. 10.11.

⁸⁴ Janina Krocin-Karasek, [Zdaniem lekarza] Zapobieganie ciąży (1), in: *Przyjaciółka* 27 Nov (1974), p. 12; Janusz Okła, W sprawie unowocześnienia metod planowania rodziny, in: *Biuletyn Instytutu Leków* 20 (3) (1973), p. 109-112; Janusz Okła, W sprawie unowocześnienia i popularyzacji aktualnych metod planowania rodziny w Polsce, in: *Zdrowie Publiczne* 85 (1974), p. 297-303; Zbigniew Sternadel, [Rozmowy intymne] Rozmowa 56, in: *Przyjaciółka* 5 Nov (1978), p. 14; Zbigniew Sternadel, [Rozmowy intymne] Rozmowa 57, in: *Przyjaciółka* 12 Nov (1978), p. 14; Zbigniew Sternadel, [Rozmowy intymne] Rozmowa 58, in: *Przyjaciółka* 19 Nov (1978), p. 14.

⁸⁵ i. e. Janusz Okła, W sprawie unowocześnienia (as in n. 86); Janina Krocin-Karasek, O nowych środkach zapobiegania ciąży, Warszawa 1969; Zbigniew Sternadel, ABC życia małżeńskiego, Warszawa 1969; Barbara Trębicka-Kwiatkowska, Świadome czy nieświadome macierzyństwo, Warszawa 1971; Krystyna Jordan, Antykoncepcja współczesna, Warszawa 1973; Barbara Trębicka-Kwiatkowska, Zapobieganie czy przerywanie ciąży, Warszawa 1974; Zbigniew Sternadel, Andrzej Łysikiewicz, Praktyczne metody regulacji urodzeń, Warszawa 1978.

⁸⁶ i. e. Małgorzata Bulska, Zbigniew Sternadel, Stosowanie Ovulenu w celach antykoncepcyjnych i innych stanach ginekologicznych, in: *Problemy Rodziny* 55 (1970), p. 38-42; Zbigniew Sternadel, Krystyna Jordan, Anna Pęksa, Maria Wójcik. Ocena kliniczna preparatu Angravid stosowanego w antykoncepcji, in: *Terapia i Leki* 3 (25) (2) (1975), p. 64-70; Eligiusz Wieczorek, Mieczysław Cisło, Preparat Angravid w antykoncepcji doustnej – uwagi kliniczne, in: *Ginekologia Polska* 46 (9) (1975), p. 995-999; Mieczysław Cisło, Eligiusz Wieczorek, Ocena kliniczna preparatu antykoncepcyjnego Angravid, in: *Terapia i Leki* 4 (24) (1) (1977), p. 14-18; Zbigniew Sternadel, Anna Pęksa, Zapobieganie niepożądaney ciąży przy pomocy preparatu Yermonil, in: *Ginekologia Polska* 49 (2) (1978), p. 139-142.

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The comparison of the pill's trajectories in two ideologically opposite dictatorships between 1960 and 1970 makes it possible to conclude that the pill was one of the vectors that enhanced the transition of values attached to reproduction and sexuality during the last years of Franco's regime in Spain. Vivid discussions about the pill in religious and medical circles and in the print media facilitated the shifting of reproductive models from 'compulsory' parenthood of large families, through 'responsible parenthood' in the Catholic family or prescribing *anovulatorios* to women with health problems, towards contraception as a choice and key for sexual pleasure. The 1960s pill controversy within the Catholic community legitimated the opening of the discussion about oral contraceptives in the Spanish general and medical press despite the ongoing ban of contraceptive propaganda. In the following decade, this discussion promoted normalization of contraception as a social practice in Spain and offered a pretext for bringing themes such as female sexuality to public attention. Throughout the 1960s and until 1975, blurred boundaries of what "therapy" with the pill meant, offered safe space for doctors to explore and expand their implication in family planning provision, allowing physicians themselves to set boundaries of what was therapeutic. While many doctors opposed contraception, the discussions on the pill in the Spanish medical press of the late 1960s and 1970s made those who considered it a human right increasingly visible. They also legitimized the transition of professional models for physicians, from a doctor representing the Catholic morale to doctor-as-knowledgeable-advisor. Through their marketing campaigns for the pill, pharmaceutical companies also played an important role in popularizing contraception and legitimating doctors' engagement in family planning.

In contemporary Poland, in exchange, the pill only played a marginal role, failing to catalyze value transition *a la española*. While a Polish domestic pill was introduced when moderate anti-natalism was still the official population policy, production of oral contraceptives was not given priority by the health and pharmaceutical authorities. Failing to invest in the improvement and expansion of contraceptive methods' offer, promotion of birth control under Gomułka remained on a discursive and declarative level, failing to dethrone coitus interruptus, the rhythm method and abortion as most popular birth control resources in state-socialist Poland. For the State, abortion proved to be a low-cost birth control method, as it relied on existing medical infrastructure and did not require investment in pharmaceutical technology. This low-cost orientation, together with the problems of the pharmaceutical industry deriving from difficulties of central planning, was the reason for the delayed introduction of the domestic contraceptive pill onto the market and its limited development.

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With abortion legal and free of charge, the pill did not have the breakthrough potential to stimulate social debates as it did in Spain.